

France is 'getting back to normal'

Guy Tordjman, president of Paris-headquartered GSA European Cargo Services (ECS), says the company did "better than expected" during 2009, given the economic climate affecting the air freight industry during the period.

This year has also got off to a good start, with ECS winning contracts from AirBridgeCargo and US Airways in January and February respectively, and Tordjman revealed: "We're getting volumes that are not far off our 2008 figures."

France in general has managed to stay relatively stable despite the downturn, he remarked, the country not being a big exporting nation but instead moving a lot of transshipment cargo through its airports, especially those in Paris.

This situation has meant that France is "getting back to normal much more quickly" than countries such as Germany, where traffic declined considerably as demand for that nation's exports dwindled during the crisis.

"Of course we always hope that new export markets will open up for France," Tordjman said, adding that China in particular



Tordjman calls for a measured response to change

holds possibilities in this regard. Asia generally looks promising, and the GSA is also looking to develop its business in India as well as in Central America.

South America remains a weak area, however; recognising the region's importance as a market for Europe's exports, Tordjman said ECS will continue to explore possibilities there.

While he believes that air freight can compete with other transport modes because of its speed, especially with inventories kept low and stock therefore being required at short notice no matter what the cost, Tordjman hopes growth will be steady and the industry more stable in the future.

"We are all dependent on the global economy, and changes in global traffic patterns, but we need to avoid the extreme highs and lows by reacting more sensibly," he stressed.

He pointed out that ECS itself took no measures to restructure when the economic meltdown began, as it felt the downturn would be shortlived – so it is ready to take the upturn in its stride.