China's LOGINK closes: a turning of the tide for the European Union

14 NOVEMBER 2026

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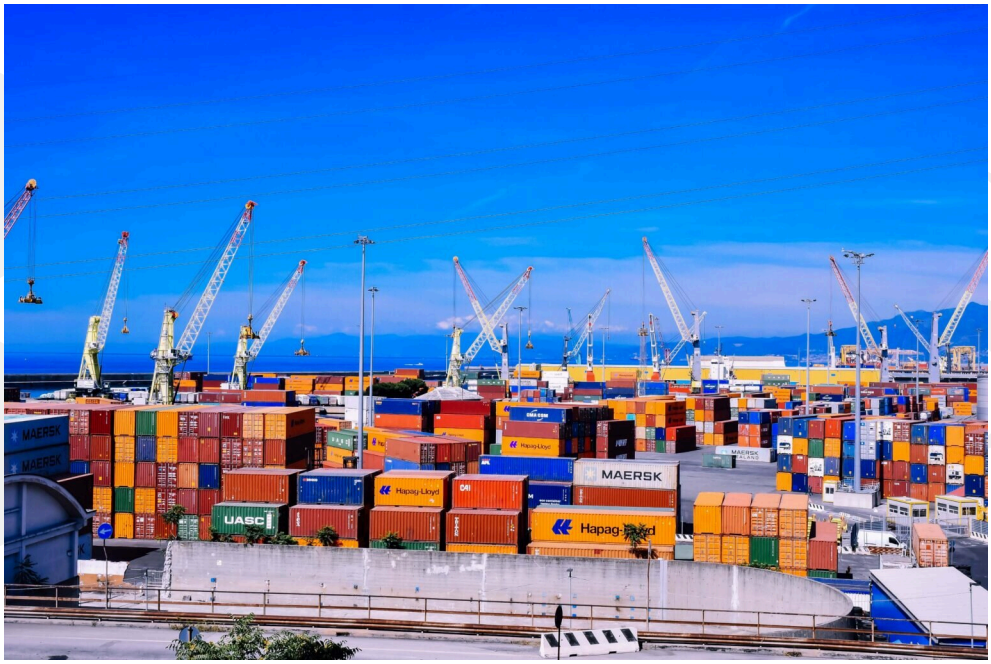


Photo by Andrea Musto on https://www.pexels.com/

LOGINK's downfall

In October 2026, a Reuters investigation exposed that LOGINK, one of the biggest digital logistics platforms and China's flagship tool for dominating global supply chain data, has essentially collapsed: its offices in Wenzhou are completely abandoned, its global partnerships have stalled, and it is reportedly facing multiple domestic lawsuits. LOGINK was always presented by China as a one-stop portal connected with global networks, providing advanced value-added services to both private and public actors. However, it was widely recognised as one of China's most effective instruments of geoeconomic leverage. While LOGINK's collapse will rattle global logistics in the short term, its consequences will be mostly geopolitical in the long

run. What constitutes a major setback for China could be a turning point for Europe: a chance to secure its supply chains as its quest for greater strategic independence gathers momentum.

A strategic blow for China...

Global shipping carries roughly 80% of world trade by volume, and China worked hard to establish hegemony over its data. By signing agreements with some of the world's biggest ports and offering the platform free of charge, Beijing turned the platform into a pillar of the digital Silk Road. An instrument of statecraft, it allowed China's state-owned enterprises (SOEs) to track the operational metrics of foreign logistics rivals (supply chain mapping). Furthermore, knowing how thin rivals' margins were in a given region allowed SOEs to engage in tactical underbidding and win contracts. Finally, by tracking real-time flows, LOGINK showed dips in container throughput weeks before financial markets registered them: while rivals had to rely on historical data and customs reports, SOEs could reroute their ships well in advance. LOGINK, as a platform, presented a deliberately asymmetric architecture that favoured China: a foreign port using it, such as Barcelona, only saw the traffic between itself and its Chinese partner ports. Only Beijing saw the whole global picture. And even if Madrid had spotted a disruption through the platform, it could not have acted on it the way China did: state capitalism lets Beijing turn intelligence into corporate strategy, while European ports are not built to do the same. LOGINK was an asymmetric instrument, not a neutral utility. The edge it afforded China is now gone.

While the official reasons behind LOGINK's shutdown remain shrouded in mystery, the evidence points to two forces compounding one another. The first is pressure from the United States. A domestic ban, paired with a diplomatic campaign urging allies to cut ties, drove LOGINK out of partnerships overseas. The second is financial strain: in 2024, the International Port Community Systems Association (IPCSA) expelled the platform after it failed to pay its membership fee, and domestic lawsuits over unpaid bills and labour disputes hint at deeper mismanagement that might have left LOGINK with no way to recover.

...A huge opportunity for Europe

When LOGINK began winning agreements with major European hubs such as Hamburg and Rotterdam between 2017 and 2019, concerns over espionage overshadowed the geoeconomic implications of handing China a stake in European supply chains. Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine opened Pandora's box in this matter: dependencies once treated as commercial choices turned into security risks. The vacuum left by LOGINK's collapse gives the EU a chance to secure its own trade data. Before venturing into how the EU could concretely replace the Chinese platform, it is worth

ruling out what it cannot do. The absence of a state-capitalist apparatus, logistics firms' wariness of uploading sensitive data to a shared server, and infrastructural fragmentation all make a single, massive database on LOGINK's model unviable. The realistic path is to build on the legal and technical tools Europe already has and create a federated logistics framework: an interoperable data highway rather than a centralised database. Such a framework would do two things.

First, it would provide business-to-government (B2G) reporting. Companies would submit the required transport information to the authorities through standardised digital channels instead of dozens of national systems. The groundwork for this is already available. The Electronic Freight Transport Information (eFTI) will oblige authorities to accept electronic freight information from July 2027, while maritime reporting is being harmonised through the European Maritime Single Window.

Second, it would facilitate business-to-business (B2B) exchange. Centralised platforms have failed before because rivals do not trust each other with their data. Maersk and IBM's TradeLens shut down in 2023 after competing carriers declined to join a platform led by one of their own. A federated model avoids that problem: companies would keep their data at the source and simply format it to a common standard, so that their systems can talk to partners. This is important because real-time, end-to-end cargo tracking was one of LOGINK's commercial charms. A federated model can still offer this service, but differently. Instead of every participant pushing data to a central server, a shipper's request would query each operator's own system and merge the results. This is viable because there's already API standardisation for logistics company data: frameworks such as DCSA's Track & Trace API ensure that whether querying MSC, CMA CGM, or a port's terminal, the tracking events use identical status definitions.

Standards alone will not persuade companies to take part. To achieve that, the framework would need a neutral operator. The EU's role would be to provide co-funding, regulatory backing and integration with customs networks, while guaranteeing data protection and clear competition-law safeguards. This design would tackle the obstacles that sank earlier platforms. Keeping data with its owners addresses the trust deficit, while building on open-source tools like eFTI4EU, rather than coding from scratch, helps avoid the slow start that affects public-private initiatives in Europe.

While it might appear that LOGINK's fall is a story about logistics and business competition, it is about trade only on the surface. If Europe seizes this moment, a federated data framework would do more than replace a lost platform; it would allow for better control of its own critical infrastructure and reduce the vulnerabilities to its economic security.