

TG GRISET

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

Dunwei Liu

Deputy General Manager

David Derache

Managing Director

TG GRISET: a historic industrial business

Founded under the Griset family name, the history of this metalworking company based in Villers-Saint-Paul in the Oise region dates back to 1760, even before the French Revolution. The company also made its mark on the industry, since it was the first to roll aluminum at the end of the 19th century. The company's history, subject to international competition in a complex market, could have ended in 2014 following its liquidation. **Its acquisition by TNMC**, China's leading copper producer, enabled it **to rise from the ashes** under the name TG Griset. The company, based in the south of the Hauts-de-France region, has **enjoyed steady and promising** growth and has hired over 50 employees in just a few years.



VILLERS-SAINT-PAUL



DUNWEI LIU

Deputy General Manager



DAVID DERACHE

Managing Director

REAL PROSPECTS FOR DEVELOPMENT



TG Griset is a subsidiary of the Chinese group TNMG*. Tell us about your parent company.

As China's leading copper producer with a refining capacity of over 2 million tons in 2025 and 40,000 employees, TNMG is one of the world's major players in this market. It covers the entire copper value chain: mining, production, refining, recycling, and product processing. It mainly manufactures electrolytic copper, ingots, wires, and alloy pro-

ducts for the electronics, automotive, avionics, and electrical infrastructure sectors. Faced with international pressure and competition for resources, TNMG's strategy is to focus on vertical integration, upgrading the technology at its industrial sites, and developing recycled copper.

*Tongling Nonferrous Metals Group

How did you come to join this group, and what is the company's current situation?

We have known this group for about thirty years. This prior relationship led us to propose the creation of a joint venture in 2014, despite the very difficult economic climate we were facing at the time. At the time, it had 120 employees, but this did not prevent the company from going into liquidation in 2016. The group then took us over. We restarted the business with only 12 employees, no cash flow, and no customers. Business has picked up, allowing us to break even in 2020. Today, our workforce consists of 68 employees, including two Chinese expatriates. We have reached the €60 million turnover mark.

The entire cumulative result to date, i.e., €5 million, has been fully reinvested in industrial equipment and our working capital requirements.

What have you learned from your past difficulties?

In 2014, the company disappeared, but not its expertise or its image, which is well known and appreciated in China. Bear in mind that 25 years ago, the technology developed by Griset was not available in China. TNMG came to us to learn how to set up a factory based on our expertise, namely the manufacture of high-tech copper and copper alloys for advanced technologies used in the automotive, electronics, avionics, and electrical engineering industries. They asked us to design their future machines. Even though the Chinese market has made significant progress, we still have an attractive expertise in France. I regret that TG Griset—which employs French staff—is unable to benefit from certain grants because our capital is Chinese. We also feel that we are being excluded from certain sensitive markets. It's a shame because we are currently the only TNMG subsidiary outside China. We are one of the last copper producers in France, which is a crucial factor in reindustrialization.



What are TG Griset's current priorities and future prospects?



We continue to contribute our expertise to the group. Since our acquisition, the group has benefited from a technological building block that it was lacking, which has enabled it to develop its expertise and product range. We recently carried out a technology transfer in the transistor market, with four of our lines being transferred to China. These exchanges also work the other way around. We are therefore looking into the possibility of introducing a technology that has been mastered in Asia to France. Regionally, we had a project in the pipeline with the gigafactories in Hauts-de-France, but it has been put on hold due to Covid. More broadly, our goal is to ramp up production from 7 to 10 KT within five years. We have real prospects for development and already have the necessary land for this.

We enjoy complete autonomy from our Chinese parent company when it comes to development and commercial strategy, which is reassuring as it demonstrates that we have genuine local decision-making power.

You have hired around fifty people in just a few years in a highly specialized industrial field. How did you do that?

We are experiencing recruitment difficulties due to the lack of the steel industry's appeal, even though our operators are paid 30% more than elsewhere for equivalent positions. As for training these employees, we provide in-house training over periods ranging from 2 to 18 months, with the exception of foundry trades, for which we rely on the Lycée Marie Curie in Nogent-sur-Oise, which has been awarded the Lycée des Métiers label.

How do you source your supplies, and what are the challenges facing your business in terms of sustainable development?

60% of our supplies come from a German supplier who is able to meet our new metal requirements, given that it is not possible to purchase this raw material from the group due to transportation costs. 40% also comes from industrial waste streams that we collect for recycling. We also provide tolling services. This consists of collecting copper waste or concentrates from a customer, smelting and purifying them, processing them, and then returning an equivalent quantity of refined copper to

the customer after deducting the processing costs. In terms of sustainable development, we are seeking to further increase our already significant recycling rate, which is good for the environment as well as economically, given the volatility of metal prices. Finally, as an ICPE (Installation Classified for Environmental Protection) site, the treatment of our waste and refuse is subject to constant monitoring. We have invested in furnaces to meet current standards and optimize our performance in this area.

When China comes looking for french excellence in the Hauts-de-France region

Europe is quite wary of China economically. But it must be acknowledged that without the Chinese group TNMG, Griset would probably no longer exist today, which would have had two consequences. The first would have been the net loss of 120 jobs. Having started with only 10% of its workforce following its liquidation, TG Griset now has nearly 70 employees and is expected to hire more in the coming years. The second lies in the desire for European reindustrialization. Although France no longer has any primary copper mining production, it continues to manufacture copper mainly through recycling and industrial processing. It is also interesting to note that China's leading copper producer decided to take over our company because of its excellence in rolled products. Finally, it is worth noting the presence of several companies in the copper metallurgy sector in the Hauts-de-France region, including Nexans France in Lens and Fonderie Davergne in the Oise department.

A DEVELOPMENT PROJECT IN HAUTS-DE-FRANCE?

CONTACT US!



NORD FRANCE INVEST
ECONOMIC PROMOTION AGENCY
FOR HAUTS-DE-FRANCE

Espace International,
299 boulevard de Leeds
59777 LILLE - France



FINANCED BY

