

annual review 2003

ADDED VALUE

working solutions for member postal operators

“ The International Post Corporation (IPC) is a cooperative association of 23 national Postal operators from North America, Europe and the Pacific. Our corporate mission is the provision of assistance and expertise to facilitate the development and improvement of postal services. ”



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Enhancing the postal network

- 2003 I P C ANNUAL REVIEW -

“IPC’S UNIQUE STRUCTURE BRINGS US TOGETHER IN A COLLABORATIVE ENVIRONMENT WHERE THE CUSTOMER IS OUR MAIN FOCUS.”

Trading conditions have been challenging for IPC members in 2003. Continued recession in most of the OECD countries has led to a slow-down in activity at national level. This, and the growing use of electronic communication has placed pressure on sales of traditional postal products.

In the coming year, economic activity is expected to begin a gradual recovery but competition will intensify further. IPC members today need to plan strategically for success in a competitive, global marketplace. Even in countries where the postal monopoly appears more durable, competitive forces will impact on the business. Volume that was previously considered as within the domestic sphere will be susceptible to capture by operators from abroad; in future, electronic forms of messaging will have the potential to replace whole sectors of the mail business.

The structure of the postal marketplace has changed. As Postal operators, we have always been fellow members of a worldwide community; today, however, we are also sometimes business partners, collaborators or downright head-to-head competitors. As an industry, we have matured to understand that our relationships with each other will be more complex in future. Through IPC we can develop and strengthen the positive aspects of cooperation while accepting that there will be times when we

must look out for ourselves and keep our own counsel. IPC’s unique structure brings together postal chief executives in a collaborative environment where the customer is the main focus. The quality of service measurement and upgrading efforts that we undertake via IPC’s tools and systems have a direct impact on our customers’ experience of the services we provide. IPC’s technical infrastructures provide us with the means to offer our customers enhanced postal products such as the E-Parcel and the Exprès letter developed by the PRIME group. These are areas for positive collaboration between Postal operators and they enhance our competitiveness.

This year I have been pleased to welcome two new members to the IPC Board: Elmar Toime, from Royal Mail Holdings, and Johnny Thijs, from De Post/La Poste. I feel sure that CEOs who are new to IPC will have understood very quickly that the solutions it provides us, and the opportunities it gives us to work effectively together, prove we can add yet more value to a great resource: the international postal network.

HELGE ISRAELSEN

Chairman of the IPC Board
Chief Executive Officer,
Post Danmark A/S



CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT

Working solutions for member Postal operators

“IPC MEMBERS SUBSCRIBE TO COMMON GOALS OF IMPROVED QUALITY BETTER TO SATISFY THE POSTAL CUSTOMER.”

The past year has been a time when IPC members, like most industry sectors, have generally “stuck to their knitting” and concentrated on their core business while economic activity worldwide remained sluggish.

In North America, the President's Commission on the United States Postal Service published its report recommending major structural changes: in Europe, Postal operators prepared for European Union (EU) enlargement in 2004 when central and east European Postal operators will open their markets in line with the EU liberalisation programme. In preparation for enlargement, we continued our work with accession and candidate Postal operators to help in their efforts to improve quality and prepare for a liberalised environment.

In October, the European Commission finally exempted the REIMS II terminal dues Agreement from the application of the EU competition laws until 2006. This was the culmination of two years of intense negotiations which represented a major collective effort involving a countless number of members' staff from chief executives to Steering Committee members and technical experts. The exemption means that REIMS will continue to ensure a stable compensation environment for international mail delivery based on quality of service and progressing towards cost-related terminal dues. Within our regulatory services function, we have been working this year on an analysis of the universal service obligation (USO) and its future development in the liberalised postal marketplace. Our findings will be the subject of a round table debate between our members' CEOs during our annual Shareholders' Conference in January 2004. The extent of the USO and the way in which it is funded is a crucial issue in the light of coming liberalisation.

Our marketing services took a significant step forward in 2003. We reviewed our research methodology and developed

our Postal Brand Performance study, which benchmarks the strengths and weaknesses of Postal operators' brands. The postal customer base is now dominated by a small number of large mailers in each of our members' home markets; through our research, we aim to track the share of this group's business held by Postal operators and their competitors. As a further enhancement we are offering members in-depth, tailor-made studies to determine the strategic views of major mailers on key issues such as outsourcing, electronic substitution and above and below the line promotion.

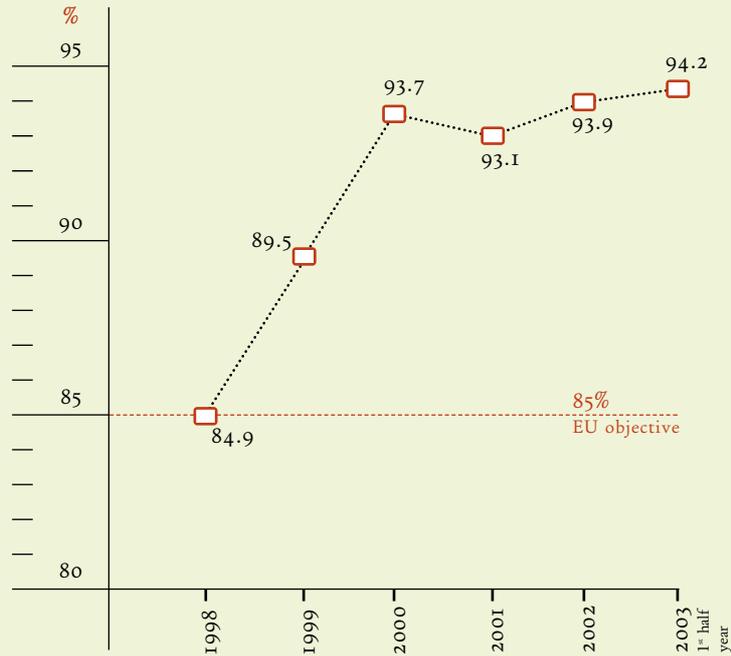
Many of the competitive setbacks in the postal community have arisen from a failure to work together. Recognising this, our members have always cooperated, via IPC, to build and enhance technical infrastructures that throw a light on the mail as it passes along the processing chain. The improvement in international quality of service in the past 10 years bears witness to the success of that cooperation. We have continued to expand our networks, bringing radio frequency identification (RFID) diagnostic tracking to Postal operators in 40 countries, and EMS item monitoring to operators in more than 90 countries. During 2003, we looked at more new applications for our network tools, including the extension of RFID to trucks and mail cages.

As members of IPC, Postal operators subscribe to common goals for improved quality of service for postal customers. We add value by finding working solutions that will allow them to achieve those goals together. Our organisation aims to be nimble and responsive, and we strive to produce the results that are required by the modern businesses that our members are today.

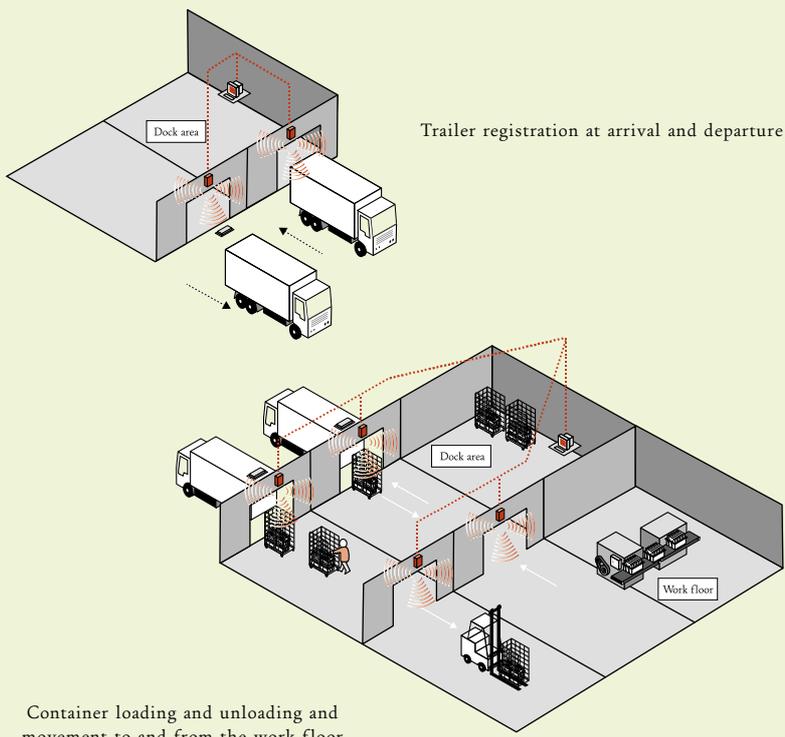
GEORGES CLERMONT

President &
Chief Executive Officer





UNEX END-TO-END
QUALITY OF SERVICE IN EUROPE
DELIVERY PERFORMANCE
WITHIN THREE DAYS (J+3)



RFID POSTAL ASSET TRACKING
AND MANAGEMENT

The operational benefits of asset tags include asset visibility, loss prevention, accurate forecasting of container requirements, and automatic tracking and tracing. Postal operators can prepare and consolidate mail despatches more easily and access real time information on container availability.

Radio frequency Identification Installations

- 497 fixed and mobile sites
- 4,355 antennae
- 2,289 readers
- 40 countries worldwide

QUALITY OF SERVICE

End-to-end performance measurement

“OUR UNEX AND RFID TECHNOLOGY SYSTEMS PROVIDE IPC MEMBERS WITH COMPREHENSIVE DATA ON THE DELIVERY PERFORMANCE OF INTERNATIONAL LETTERS.”

IPC's core purpose is to help Postal operators upgrade quality of service in line with customer expectations. IPC published the best ever UNEX end-to-end measurement results for the first six months of 2003, showing that 94.2 per cent of first class international letters in Europe were delivered within three days of posting (J+3).

The quality of service achieved by IPC members outperforms greatly the European Union (EU) objective for 85 per cent of first class international letters to be delivered within three days. It demonstrates Postal operators' continuous and successful commitment to providing customers with a high-quality, consistent and reliable postal service.

UNEX measurement is carried out continuously by an independent contractor via a network of panellists who record posting and delivery times for test letters. We monitor around one million test letters which mirror the real flows, patterns and characteristics of international mail.

A proportion of test mail carries Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) transponders which are activated as they pass through antennae in gates installed at offices of exchange. This RFID technology provides our members with operational information on the movement of mail through the different stages of international processing. It also provides data from which terminal dues payments can be calculated under the REIMS agreement.

Postal operators in countries due to accede to the EU participate in UNEX Lite, a separate, lower cost UNEX measurement system, which provides a simplified statistical design and concentrates on city-to-city mail flows. Nonetheless UNEX Lite meets the full UNEX system's criteria for information reliability.

The Unex Lite "pre-accession" system will merge with the full UNEX system in January 2005 when a new seven-year contract will take effect. A call for tender process to find an independent contractor began in May 2003 and ended in October. Contract negotiations were due to be completed by the end of December so that the new contractor could develop the merged system in time for a 2005 start.

The RFID network

Our RFID diagnostic tracking network for international mail expanded significantly during 2003 to cover 40 countries. New installations are now in place in Australia, in six Balkan states—Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Romania, Slovenia and Yugoslavia (FRY)—and in Estonia and Latvia in the Baltic. In South America we conducted site surveys in Chile, Mexico and Uruguay and began pre-installation work in the last quarter of the year.

Expansion into the Balkans, the Baltic and South America is being funded by the Universal Postal Union's (UPU) Quality of Service Fund (QSF). With Postal operators in many

EU pre-accession countries already participating in UNEX Lite, the addition of RFID technology gives an opportunity to monitor mail through its international journey, and to pinpoint stages where improvement action is needed.

RFID monitoring will also be used to provide data for a UPU terminal dues system which is due for introduction in a group of industrialised countries in January 2005. The installation network will expand further when three Postal operators not currently members of IPC set up RFID in order to participate in the terminal dues scheme.

New RFID Applications

We provide RFID monitoring services for members' international operations and REIMS terminal dues calculations, but use of RFID technology extends beyond these applications.

Many Postal operators have purchased additional equipment in order to monitor domestic mail; some are using mobile kits to check for bottlenecks in mail processing in different locations.

The benefits of an expanding market for RFID are passed on to our members because IPC owns the manufacturing licence for transponders and associated RFID tracking equipment. We

purchased the licence to ensure long-term supply and price control, and sub-contract production management.

During 2003 development work resulted in a new product: asset tags. These extend the use of our RFID transponders and equipment to trucks and mail cages. Asset tags provide us with an opportunity to gain further advantages from our investment for the benefit of members. The movement of trucks and cages fitted with transponders can be monitored by antennae in both existing and new gates located in offices of exchange.

Holders of the Certificate of Excellence
 in the Management and Processing of International Mail

OFFICE OF EXCHANGE	CERTIFIED	RE-CERTIFIED
Copenhagen	December 1999	December 2001
Frankfurt	March 2000	March 2002
Montreal	May 2000	May 2002
Zurich	March 2001	March 2003
Stockholm	April 2001	April 2003
Innsbruck	April 2002	
Milan	June 2002	
Copenhagen for Posten AB	January 2003	
Vancouver	September 2003	
Amsterdam IMC	November 2003	

CERTIFICATE OF EXCELLENCE

Three offices of exchange gained certificates of excellence during 2003. One, in Copenhagen, is operated by Post Danmark for Posten AB of Sweden. The others were in Vancouver—the second Canada Post office of exchange to be certified—and Amsterdam. Our certification scheme is based on rigorous self-assessment followed by a certification audit. It acknowledges effort by local managers and staff who have set their mind on achieving excellence.

Operational Surveys 2003

POSTAL OPERATOR	OFFICE OF EXCHANGE	DATES
An Post	Dublin	May
TPG Post	Amsterdam	May
US Postal Service	New York JFK	May
US Postal Service	Chicago O'Hare	August
De Post/La Poste	Brussels	August
Department of Postal Services, Cyprus	Larnaka	October
Eesti Post	Tallinn	October
Österreichische Post	Vienna	November

OPERATIONAL SURVEYS

We conduct operational surveys at offices of exchange where we review processes that impact on international mail service quality. In 2003, Eesti Post of Estonia volunteered to host the first operational survey in a European Union accession country. Observers from Latvia Post and Lithuanian Post joined our survey team. The exercise was initiated by Deutsche Post and made possible by support from Deutsche Post and Post Danmark.

OPERATIONS SERVICES

Upgrading the International Mail Service

“IPC MEMBER POSTAL OPERATORS AGREE TARGETS AND ACTION PLANS FOR UPGRADING THEIR SERVICE QUALITY; WE SUPPORT THEIR EFFORTS THROUGH OUR PERFORMANCE CENTRE.”

The significant improvement in quality of service for international letters highlighted by UNEX results is due in to upgrading efforts by IPC members. We undertake a whole range of activities designed to help Postal operators improve their quality of service. All of these are underpinned by outbound and inbound performance targets.

Our members' senior postal operations directors meet to set upgrading targets and decide the improvement strategy for the following year. These targets are confirmed by the IPC Board for inclusion in the IPC business plan, which is approved by the chief executive officers of all IPC members. Improvement action plans are then prepared by members for each stage in the international end-to-end process to show how individual targets will be met.

Upgrading targets are based on data gathered from our tracking and quality of service measurement tools: UNEX end-to-end measurement, RFID central monitoring, CAPE mail receptacle monitoring, and item monitoring. Each year we calculate the performance level that each member Postal

operator is capable of achieving, taking account of factors such as transport constraints on certain international links, the spread and density of population in rural areas, and national infrastructure. The result has been a highly challenging but feasible set of targets.

Performance Centre

Our Performance Centre supports members' upgrading efforts by using our tracking and quality of service measurement data to monitor the progress of mail segment by segment, link by link, against key indicators.

A new initiative at the beginning of 2003 was our monthly performance alert showing the current status of each individual link: green for well within target; orange for on target but requiring action to ensure quality of service during times of peak volume; red for below target. Each IPC member receives an alert tailored to its own links. The graphical representation gives senior management an instant view of their operational performance and highlights the location of any problems. We show current performance against the level achieved 12 months earlier, and indicate what action is required in order to meet

targets. A commentary accompanying the alert each month describes how far the Postal operator has gone towards completing the year's action plan.

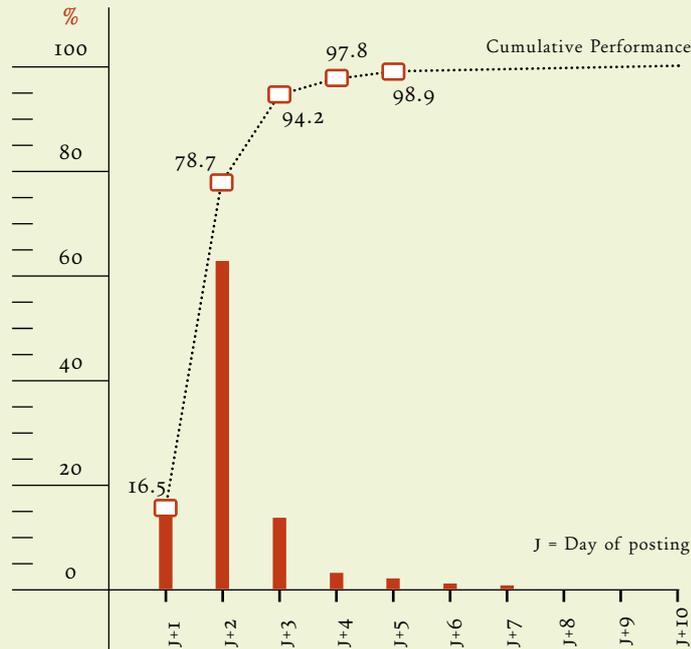
Members communicate via the Performance Centre to inform each other when severe weather, security alerts, or other unexpected events are interrupting the normal end-to-end process. We report the impact of these unexpected events on quality of service.

The Performance Centre's activities extend beyond letter mail, however. We analyse data and produce performance reports on all the products that we measure on behalf of Postal operators: international letters, registered and exprès letters, E-Parcels, and EMS express packages.

Trays

The IPC Universal Mail Tray is helping to improve quality of service. The tray circulates in a common pool which balances stocks held by each member and ensures that no shortages occur at peak times. We track trays via our CAPE receptacle monitoring system, which also provides data that identify locations to which additional, empty trays need to be moved. After almost three

years' operation, no tray has yet required replacement owing to wear and tear, therefore members are enjoying considerable cost benefits. The success of the tray led Hellenic Post ELTA and CTT Correios both to adopt the specification for their domestic trays which are identical to the universal tray except for their colour (this identifies them as outside the tray pool).



UNEX END-TO-END QUALITY OF SERVICE IN EUROPE: 1ST HALF 2003

Our weekly reports to members show performance results for delivery within two days (J+2). Overall figures for the first half of 2003 (left) show that IPC's European members delivered 78.7 per cent of intra-European first class letters within two days of posting.



AN EXAMPLE OF HOW A PARCEL LICENCE PLATE IS CONSTRUCTED ACCORDING TO UPU STANDARD S26

- a Location pattern
- b Data title
- c Code 128 bar code, 27 mm high, here with x = 0,4 mm
- d Human readable interpretation, with:
 - e Data identifier - J for a licence plate
 - f Issuing Agency Code
 - g UPU S31 Issuer Code
 - h Data value
 - i UPU standard S40 validation check value
- j Vertical separation of between 2 and 5 mm (here 3,5 mm)

TECHNICAL INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES

Monitoring a controlled process

“OUR MONITORING AND MEASUREMENT TOOLS FORM AN ELECTRONIC NETWORK AROUND THE WORLD FOR GATHERING DATA ON LETTER, PARCEL AND EXPRESS MOVEMENTS.”

Our technical infrastructure services form an electronic network around the world. From this we gather letter, parcel and express movement tracking data, which we analyse to produce performance measures for our members.

We use our four principle tools for quality of service monitoring: UNEX, RFID central monitoring, CAPE, which now incorporates Version 7 enhancements, and item monitoring. These create a controlled process that allows us to pinpoint small fluctuations in performance. Our monitoring tools form an intrinsic part of members' operations by tracking letters, parcels and express items through all the stages of international transport and processing from posting to delivery.

We monitor the data exchanged between members and distribute weekly reports, which now include measurements for

the speed of mail processing within offices of exchange.

In our weekly reporting for international letters, we show results for delivery within two days (J+2) a faster delivery time than our J+3 standard. In Europe, Postal operators deliver most first class international letters within two days of posting—78.7 per cent in the first six months of 2003.

Our members' ultimate aim is to give customers the best service the postal system can deliver. To achieve that we have to be sure that every part of the end-to-end postal network performs to its optimum level.

Enhanced CAPE messages

During 2003, we worked with the Universal Postal Union (UPU) to revise our message structure for CAPE receptacle and item monitoring. We also developed our systems to support a UPU implementation of the ISO standard for a “licence plate”, a barcode up to 35 characters long which creates a unique identifier for items in transit.

The licence plate can be used by shippers to track their goods regardless of the carrier selected, however carriers must be capable of reading the barcode and of using the data in their own systems. Postal operators using our tracking and monitoring tools can now choose either to continue with their existing barcodes or to transfer to the licence plate format. Meanwhile,

changes to our message structure have made individual messages technically more complex. A single event report now offers new information highlighting misrouted or mis-sent trays and bags. It can be used in place of three original CAPE messages.

Our quality of service monitoring tools are not restricted to operational applications. Increasingly, Postal operators are introducing performance criteria to the terminal dues they pay each other for delivering international items. Quality of service data produced by our monitoring tools are being used as the basis for performance related payments under the REIMS terminal dues system for letters; the Pay-for-performance Plan for EMS, and performance related payments for E-Parcels and Express letters.

SAMPLE

In September 2003 we completed development of standard messages and a prototype for electronic pre-clearance of postal items by Customs. The project, called SAMPLE, was part-funded by the European Union (EU) and concluded formally after participating Postal operators and Customs authorities conducted successful pilot tests.

Our project team worked with a small group of Postal operators and their Customs authorities to develop electronic

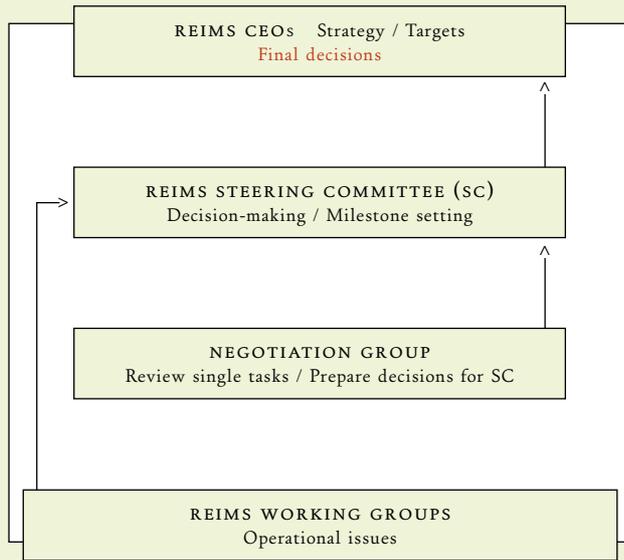
messages pre-advising Customs of postal items being despatched to their territory. Members that participated in or observed the prototype development are now working with their Customs authorities to develop production systems.

The intention is for SAMPLE messages to become World Customs Organisation recommendations, the equivalent of UPU standards.

Intelligent mail

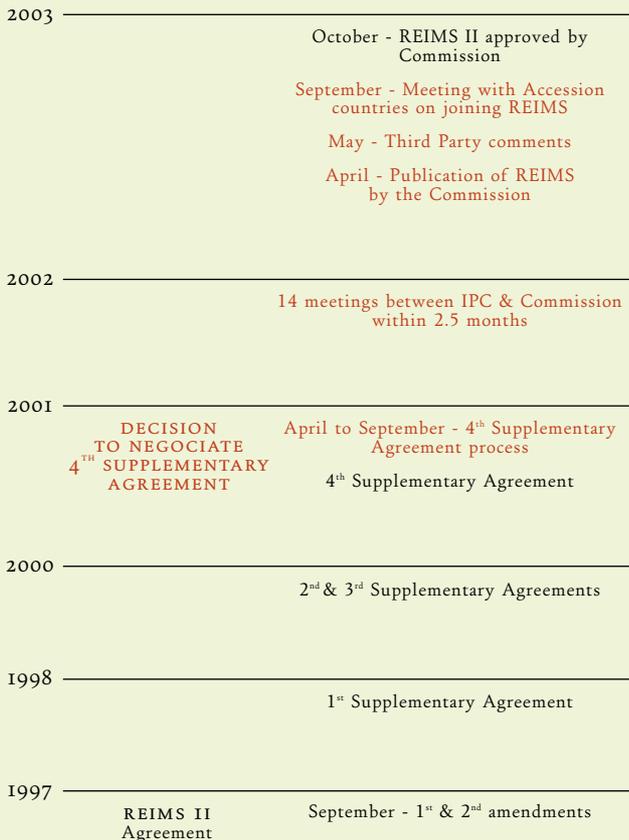
In 2003, about seven million letters posted to the UK from Australia, Canada, Ireland, Singapore, Spain and the United States carried the UPU Standard id tag developed under IPC leadership. Mail carrying id tags is linked to electronic infor-

mation and can be processed quicker without the need for extra handling or video encoding. Id tagging will, we feel sure, provide another important diagnostic tool for managing mail flow internationally.



THE REIMS ORGANISATION

Clear rules for meetings, the decision process, and reporting to the Steering Committee and CEOs produce fast and efficient progress towards agreement between the parties to REIMS.



DEVELOPMENT OF THE REIMS AGREEMENT

The European Commission granted an exemption to the REIMS II agreement on October 23, 2003. The exemption is valid until 2006. It lays down a condition that third parties be permitted direct access to postal infrastructures.

REGULATORY SERVICES / REIMS TERMINAL DUES

Information, liaison and coordination

“OUR REGULATORY DATABASE PROVIDES A SINGLE, UP-TO-DATE INFORMATION SOURCE ON POSTAL REGULATION IN EACH IPC MEMBER’S NATIONAL MARKET.”

For the past two years, we have been developing services to members in the area of postal regulation. Our objective is to provide both an information source, and a forum where members can share views and experiences on regulatory issues.

During 2003, we enhanced networking between members’ regulatory experts. We updated our Internet database of national regulation and regulatory proposals, and made available to members all the original documents that we use to feed the database, including case law and legislation. We added regulatory profiles of the postal environment in countries due to accede to the European Union (EU). Our quarterly newsletter called Regulatory Flash updates members on developments in regulatory affairs across the IPC area. We expanded readership in 2003 to include executives at vice-president level as well as regulatory experts.

The Universal Service

A special project for 2003 was an analysis of the universal service obligation (USO) and its future development in the postal marketplace. We worked during the year towards production of a paper for member chief executive officers to discuss at their annual IPC Shareholder meeting in January 2004.

The project examined the future shape of the USO in the light of changing customer demands for postal services, and the regulatory framework best suited to its delivery. Members’ regulatory experts participated in workshops which drove

forward the study to develop possible scenarios for the USO in a regulated environment.

We presented scenarios based on different patterns of customer demand to the IPC Board. In the final months before the Shareholders’ meeting, we analysed the market forces that could emerge under each of the scenarios in order to identify implications for Postal operators and the likely shape of future regulation.

REIMS Terminal dues

In October 2003, the European Commission granted the REIMS II terminal dues agreement an exemption from EU competition law until December 31 2006.

REIMS II has two main aims: to provide the 17 Postal operators that are party to the agreement with appropriate compensation for delivering international mail, and to improve the quality of the international mail service within Europe. Under the agreement, the payments made by Postal operators to each other for delivering international mail are linked to quality of service standards; terminal dues are reduced if the Postal operator does not meet the standards.

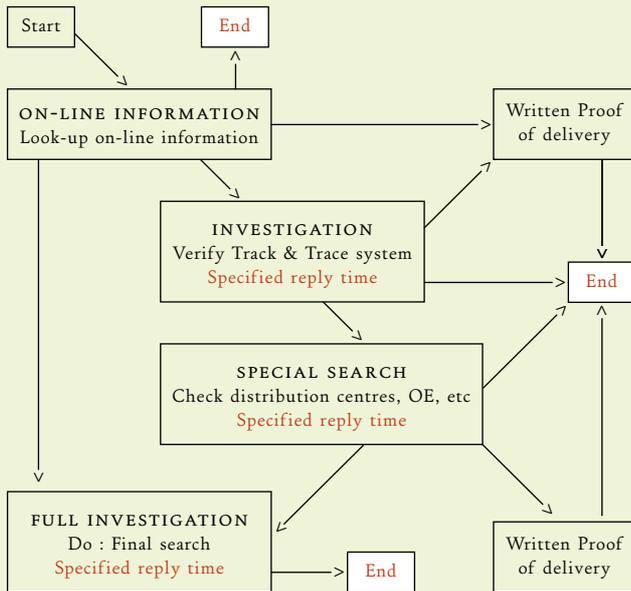
IPC coordinates development of REIMS II. We provide a central bureau for contact with the Commission and for discussions between parties on the terms of the agreement. We gather the quality of service data used to calculate payments via our UNEX and RFID quality of service measurement systems.

The new extension is backdated to January 2002 when a request was first made for the original exemption to be renewed. During its deliberations, the Commission examined the impact of the agreement on postal quality of service and acknowledged that delivery times had improved substantially.

Announcing its exemption decision, the Commission said REIMS had produced prices that reflected more properly the actual cost of delivering incoming international mail. REIMS terminal dues are based on stamp prices for domestic mail in the delivery country. Under the agreement, the charges for incoming mail can be increased gradually during the exemption period from 73.3 per cent in 2002 to 78.5 per cent in 2006.

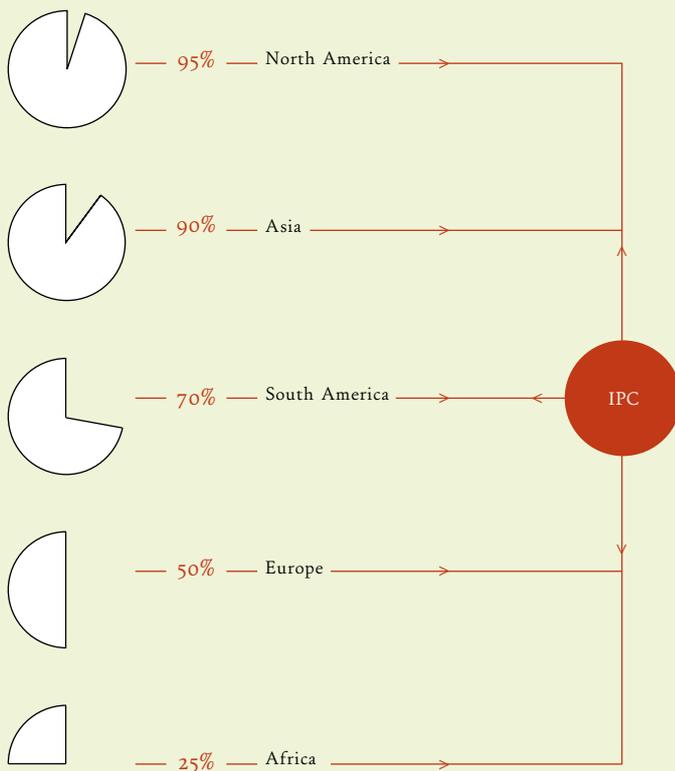
Private sector operators stand to gain from the exemption renewal. Outgoing cross-border mail has been open to competition since January 2003 under phased postal liberalisation within the EU. The 17 Postal operators in REIMS II are obliged to deliver incoming mail for third parties on the same terms as they apply among themselves, provided third parties observe REIMS II conditions, including participation in our UNEX quality of service measurement system.

Each Postal operator party to the REIMS agreement is responsible for agreeing contracts with individual third parties. We worked with members during 2003 to prepare third party access and we have established a task group to support members setting up quality of service measurement systems for this.



INTEGRATED CUSTOMER SERVICE

IPC's internet-based customer service system links call centre staff at either end of the delivery chain. It is based on a standard workflow (left) which provides a uniform process for investigating enquires



EMS MONITORING COVERAGE VIA IPC IN BRUSSELS

Item monitoring for EMS, the Post's international express service, is available to IPC members and members of the Universal Postal Union's EMS Cooperative. The network extends to more than 90 countries worldwide.

PRODUCT RELATED SERVICES

E-Parcels, EMS, Exprès and Registered Mail

“ WE MONITOR THE MOVEMENT OF PREMIUM INTERNATIONAL POSTAL PRODUCTS AND SUPPORT A GLOBAL NETWORK OF CUSTOMER SERVICE CENTRES. ”

IPC provides a range of services for premium, international postal products that groups of Postal operators are working to develop further. Our efforts focus on helping to integrate networks so that Postal operators can track movements, improve quality of service, and communicate with their customers on item status.

Premium products carry barcodes, therefore, Postal operators can use CAPE messages and barcode data to track individual items through to final delivery. We manage the item monitoring system, and produce performance reports from our analysis

of the data. Postal operators use our reports to monitor their operational efficiency against agreed targets, and as the basis for calculating delivery payments linked to the quality of service achieved.

Customer service

Customers for premium products require access to information about the status of their international shipments. To answer this need, IPC has developed a customer service system that integrates Postal operators' national customer centres via the Internet. The system is based on a standard workflow which provides call centre staff with a uniform process for investigating enquiries and reporting their findings to counterparts at the other end of the delivery chain.

Worldwide, 94 Postal operators are linked to the customer service system, using it to investigate and answer enquires

about the delivery status of E-parcels, EMS express items, and Exprès and Registered Mail. Hundreds of customer service agents at 127 call centres are registered as users.

At IPC we support customer service system users via a helpdesk. We monitor response times, send out monthly monitoring reports, and support expansion across the world by providing user training material. We have facilitated operation across different time zones, and our Version 5.2 enhancements in 2003 include support for the Chinese language — call centres in both the Republic of China and Hong Kong are linked to the system.

Premium parcel, express and letter products

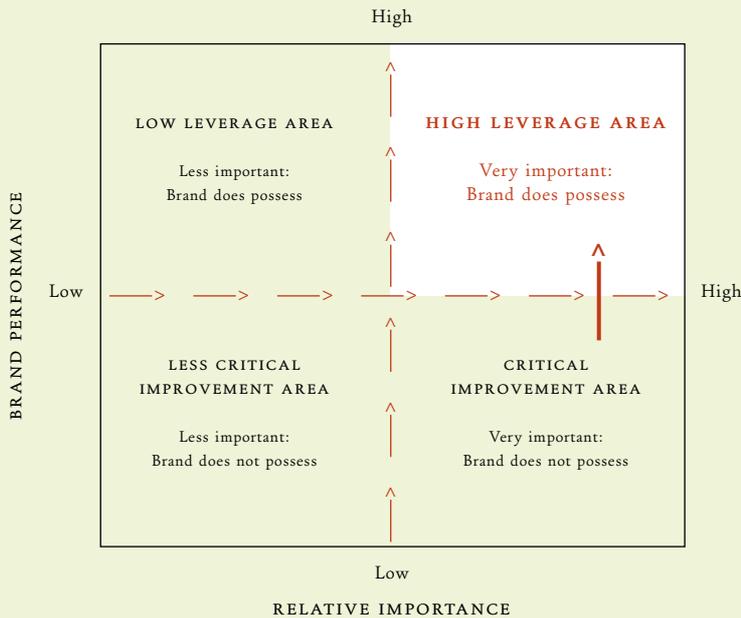
The E-Parcel group has established a premium parcel product for customers in Europe. Their delivery network is underpinned by item-level monitoring and integrated customer service, but our services extend beyond these to project management. We oversee the multilateral contract between E-Parcel operators and have set up a dedicated website to facilitate communication within the group. We deliver our performance reports through the website, and supply group members with product details, operational information, and samples of labels and barcodes.

Item monitoring for EMS, the Post's international express service, is available to IPC members and members of the Universal Postal Union's (UPU) EMS Cooperative. For Cooperative members without access to the CAPE element of

item monitoring, we have developed online tools and reports for tracking the efficiency of international transporters. These tools measure the interval between two scanning events before and after the international transport leg of an EMS item's journey from collection to delivery.

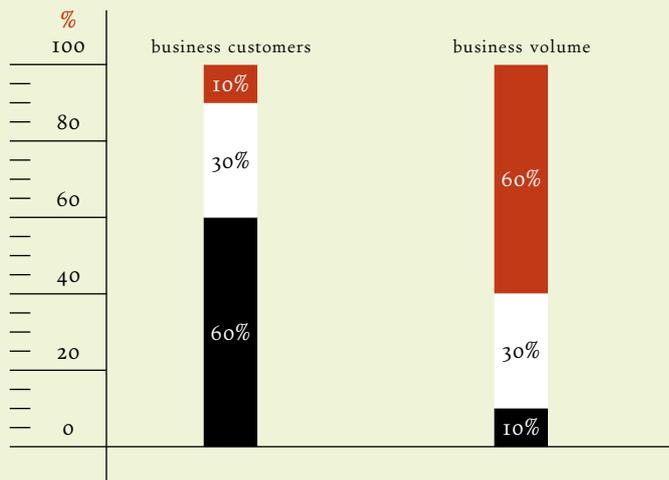
Exprès letters occupy the niche between airmail letters and international express. Postal operators in the PRIME group have developed operational standards for their Exprès products, and we monitor their items from end-to-end. In 2003, the UPU Postal Operations Council approved the inclusion in UPU Regulations of electronic delivery confirmation for Exprès.

Some Postal operators have incorporated PRIME product qualities into their international Registered Mail, and a number are exchanging item monitoring messages for registered items.



**POSTAL BRAND PERFORMANCE
"PERCEPTION AGAINST
RELATIVE IMPORTANCE"**

We analyse customer perception of how the postal brand performs against its competitors in terms of defined service attributes. We use a matrix to highlight the actions required in order to retain business and gain new customers. And we identify the messages that should be communicated in advertising and sales literature.



THE POSTAL MARKETPLACE

We are working with members to refine our research methodology so that a higher proportion of large mailers are surveyed in each market.

Customer Service Attributes	
Reliability of delivery	Tailor-made solutions
Speed of delivery	Flexibility of operations
Price and price sensitivity	Payment terms and conditions
Price transparency	Satisfaction with account manager
Convenience of access to carrier	Return to sender services
Complaints handling process	Staff attitude and demeanour
Customer support service (phone contact etc)	

CUSTOMER SERVICE ATTRIBUTES

The exact service attributes included in Postal Brand Performance studies and face to face interviews can be tailored to suit individual members.

MARKETING SERVICES

Intelligence, research and strategic analysis

“ WE REVIEWED OUR RESEARCH METHODOLOGY FOR THE IPC MARKET INTELLIGENCE SYSTEM DURING 2003 IN ORDER TO ENHANCE THE QUALITY OF INFORMATION WE OBTAIN FROM RESPONDENTS. ”

We asked IPCMIS participating members to supply databases of customers and prospects under a non-disclosure agreement, and we used the information to focus our research on the key contact who negotiates contracts for higher volume mailers.

Participants in the IPCMIS member survey share their data in order to view the market shares of top players in each of their markets.

One of our aims is to separate large, medium and small business customers and to show the share of each group's business held by Postal operators and competitors. To that end, we invited members to confirm the most significant competitors for outbound international letters, parcels, and express in their home markets.

We began development in 2003 of www.IPCMISdata.com, an Internet-based tool for delivering our market intelligence data.

Our aim is to provide flexible, user-friendly access to up-to-date analysis without the need for IPCMIS participants to install software. We completed the on-screen views and reports that www.IPCMISdata.com will provide to members via a simple user name and password.

IPCMIS participating Postal operators will be able to sort bar charts by comparative factors in increasing or descending order. They will have the option to produce tables and bar or trend charts for export to Excel or PowerPoint, and a menu box will allow them to save a specific report structure, which will be updated automatically when new data is delivered quarterly.

Postal Brand Performance

Postal Brand Performance was a further development during the year. This is a study tailored to an individual member's needs, designed to identify and “benchmark” the strengths and weaknesses of their brand against their competitors in their home market.

The study focuses on high-volume customers in key industry sectors and researches service attributes to determine why service buyers choose one brand over another. We analyse the data gathered to identify the strength of the postal brand's

existing attributes and those it needs to develop. Postal Brand Performance studies are action oriented. At the planning stage, we work with a team that includes our member's product and sales managers to identify the specific information need, and how the research findings will be used.

An Post was the first IPC member to request a Postal Brand Performance study. We plan to undertake this in January 2004 and expect to conduct studies for other IPC members during the year.

Face-to-face research in Italy

In a separate initiative, we enhanced Poste Italiane's market intelligence research data by conducting in-depth, face-to-face interviews with a group of the biggest buyers in the Italian market for international letters, parcels and express, split equally between existing and potential customers. The objective was to understand respondents' strategic views on issues such as mailing,

outsourcing, electronic substitution, and above and below the line promotion, as well as the service attributes they require from suppliers.

The face-to-face research was completed in October 2003; we aim to provide other members with similar studies during 2004.

Publications

Market Flash continued to develop during the year to bring members a greater depth of information about key events in the postal marketplace. The fortnightly newsletter has an unbroken, 12-year publishing record.

During 2003, we circulated a Market Flash Update analysing trends in mail volume; we intend to produce this annually.

Our Strategic Perspectives on the Postal Market is an annual study. We present a view of our members' marketplace from inside the postal community, not tied to any particular member's vision, but endeavouring to synthesise them all.

In doing so, we provide some additional parameters to our members' own strategic planning processes.

IPC MEMBERS

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DEPARTMENT OF POSTAL SERVICES

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United States of America



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POST DANMARK A/S

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Chief Executive Officer
Chairman of the IPC Board

ROYAL MAIL GROUP PLC

United Kingdom



ELMAR TOIME

Executive Deputy Chairman
Royal Mail Holdings plc
Member of the IPC Board

PROJECT PARTICIPANTS

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PHILIP DOYLE CAPE, UNEX, PRIME
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AIDEN HUGHES EPG
ALEX JACKSON EPG
DONAL KEANE Id-tag
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GERRY NOBLE PRIME CS
DES O'FLYNN Upgrading, PRIME
SEAN O'TOOLE EMS
DAMIAN O'TOOLE PRIME
EDDIE O'SHAUGHNESSY EPG
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SAM CURRO EMS
CHRISTOPHER GROSSER EMS, Regulatory affairs
ED KOGTEVS RFID monitoring
PAULINE MAU Regulatory affairs
CHRIS REYNOLDS Id-tag
ALAN SMITH UNEX
KERRY WILLCOCK Regulatory affairs

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BRIAN GAUDETTE CAPE
LADAS GIRIUNAS RFID monitoring, UNEX
FRED JOHNS UNEX, Upgrading, Id-tag
JOANNE MCNEISH IPCMIS
GERARD POWER Regulatory affairs
JOSEPH ULVR Id-tag
CAROL WEATHERALL PRIME

CORREOS Y TELÉGRAFOS

MARIA CRUZ DE ANTONIO IPCMIS
ANDRES ARGENTE Terminal dues - Reims
EDUARDO DE BIASI PRIME
GABRIEL GARCIA Terminal dues - Reims
FLORENCIO GARCIA DE TORRES EPG
JUAN RAMÓN DE LAS HERAS FERNÁNDEZ UNEX, UNEX LITE,
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JOSÉ MARIA MARCOS ESPINOSA Regulatory affairs
JOAQUÍN MARTINEZ EPG
CARLOS ROSA MAURETA Upgrading
ADOLFO PUENTE Id-tag
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REYES SANTANA Terminal dues - Reims
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PEDRO ABREU IPCMIS
CARLA ALFACE Terminal dues - Reims
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TEOTONIO MAIA EPG
ANABELA P. MARIÑO PRIME
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PEDRO NAMORA Terminal dues - Reims
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JOSÉ PESSOA CAPE, PRIME
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MARIA JOÃO SANTOS Terminal dues - Reims
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MIGUEL SILVA E SÁ Upgrading
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DEPARTMENT OF POSTAL SERVICES CYPRUS

MILITSA KASTELLANI-GEORGIU Regulatory Affairs
VASSOS VASSILIOU IPCMIS, UNEX

DE POST / LA POSTE

MICHEL D'ALESSANDRO IPCMIS
WOUT BECUWE Terminal dues - Reims
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BERNARD DAMIEN Regulatory Experts
JEAN-PAUL DECRAECKER Terminal dues - Reims
AURÉLIE DELESPIERRE IPCMIS, Value Added Services
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PATRICK KAERTS RFID monitoring
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STEPHEN AGAR Regulatory affairs
DAVID BARNES UNEX, Terminal dues - Reims
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MARINA GRUN PRIME CS
THOMAS GUT PRIME
JEAN-PIERRE HELBLING CAPE, PRIME
ULRICH HURNI Upgrading, Terminal dues - Reims
PIERRE IMER Terminal dues - Reims, Upgrading, PRIME
JACOB KIRCHMEIER PRIME
ANDRÉ MAURER Upgrading
SILVESTRE MICHOU PRIME
RITA NENNIGER IPCMIS
SIMONE NUBER Terminal dues - Reims
RETO PETRIS IPCMIS, Value added services, International direct mail
MARC SCHEURER UNEX, UNEX LITE, Terminal dues - Reims
FABIEN TANNER PRIME
STEFAN WEIGEL Terminal dues - Reims
MATTHIAS ZILLIG Terminal dues - Reims

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WIJNAND AALBERTS Terminal dues - Reims, UNEX, UPGRADING
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UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE

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MICHAEL REGAN Terminal dues - Reims
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PAUL VOGEL Upgrading

Published by

THE INTERNATIONAL POST CORPORATION

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President and
Chief Executive Officer

GEORGES CLERMONT

Directors

EUGENE COLUMBO, MARKET & QUALITY

MICHAEL GESPER, TERMINAL DUES

ROSS HINDS, OPERATIONS & TECHNOLOGY

REMONDA DI VITO, FINANCE & ADMINISTRATION

Administrative Offices

MERCURE CENTRE

RUE DE LA FUSÉE 100

1130 BRUSSELS

BELGIUM

TEL + 32 2 724 72 11

Group Offices

LEIDSEPLEIN 29

1017 PS AMSTERDAM

NETHERLANDS

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THE INTERNATIONAL POST CORPORATION (IPC)

100, rue de la Fusée 1130 Brussels Belgium

Tel +32 2 724 72 11 Fax +32 2 726 04 25 www.ipc.be