International Post Corporation

Increase in e-commerce volume drives up returns

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Over the course of 2020, e-commerce saw exceptional growth due the COVID-19 pandemic and resulting health measures. As a result of this boom in e-commerce volumes, e-commerce returns have increased as well.

returns

In 2020, a record number of 13.6m return labels were generated through the IPC Common Returns Platform (CRP), an increase of over 60% compared to 2019. Almost 5m items were returned through the system, which represents an increase of 30% by comparison to 2019. The biggest amounts of return labels generated are found in November while the biggest volumes of e-commerce returns are found in December. We believe these peaks are linked to Black Friday and Christmas online purchases.

The IPC Common Return Platform (CRP) allows postal operators to offer e-retailers an easy-to-use and hassle-free returns system for cross-border items. The system enables e-sellers to have an item returned to another country or to a warehouse in the destination country.

Currently, 30 posts are accepting return items through the platform. Free and easy returns remain a key priority for customers shopping online, also when making a cross-border purchase. Recent IPC research showed that up to 9% of cross-border online shoppers returned their most recent purchase or part of it. The highest return rates were found in India (42%), the United Sates (23%), Australia (16%) and Cyprus (16%).

Source: IPC