International Post Corporation

La Poste is modernising its mail-service range to meet new customer needs and reduce its carbon footprint

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In order to meet the changing needs of its customers and reduce its carbon footprint, while also ensuring the long-term viability of the universal postal service, La Poste has decided to revamp its mail-service range.

As of 1 January 2023, customers will be able to choose between 3 types of letters. The distribution of letters and newspapers/magazines, as well as parcel deliveries and local services will continue to operate 6 days a week.

Changing customer expectations
While people send fewer priority letters today, other types of mail retain an important place in French society, notably, standard every-day letters, letters which have legal value, or small items sent in letter format. Today, reliable delivery, mail-tracking services and environmental consideration are the top-ranking expectations that came out of La Poste's recent survey conducted among 22,000 business and private customers.

The use of priority "red" letters is decreasing; for example, households sent 45 priority letters a year in 2010, compared with only 5 in 2021. Digital tools, emails and text messages have been widely adopted by consumers who want to send urgent messages and information. On the other hand, the standard "green" letter is still popular among customers for the majority of day-to-day uses, such as sending administrative documents, postcards, or small items.

A letter for each type of need
1/ The more environmentally-friendly "red e-Letter" for sending occasional, urgent letters

The current format of the "Red Letter" no longer corresponds to consumer uses and habits. Moreover, since it must be delivered quicky, sometimes even requiring a plane journey, its energy footprint is significant.

Consequently, for occasional urgent letters (to cancel a subscription, for example), La Poste will now offer the red e-Letter. This type of letter will be sent via the laposte.fr website (service available until 8pm). It will then be printed by La Poste at a branch near the recipient's address – while respecting the

confidentiality of the content – and delivered the next day in an envelope bearing a red-stamp marking.

Customers will be able to consult a log of the letters they have sent and use letter templates to carry out their administrative procedures. For customers who are not digitally literate, La Poste will offer the option of sending red e-Letters from a post office, using an automated postal machine or with the help of an advisor (equipped with a "Smartéo" phone).

The price of a red e-Letter will be €1.49 (for 1 to 3 sheets of paper), compared with €1.43 for a priority "red stamp" today. The cost of the envelope and paper are included.

2/A Green Letter for every-day letters, with no increase in price in 2023 despite inflation

The standard Green Letter will be delivered within 3 days. This type of letter can be used to send a medical bill to the social security office for reimbursement, for example.

The standard Green Letter will be priced from € 1.16, the same as the current price. Like today, customers will be able to add a delivery-tracking option at a cost of 50 cents, and thus receive confirmation the letter has been delivered. The cost of this option also remains unchanged.

3/The Turquoise "services plus" letter for tracked letters, which can be collected from your personal letterbox, with compensation in the event of late delivery:

The Turquoise services plus letter is a new addition to range. It will be proposed for customers' most important letters that require tracking and traceability[1], for sending a cheque or small items, for example. It will be delivered within two days.

By harnessing "smart data" technology, the turquoise "services plus" letter will include (at no extra cost) services such as the tracking notifications, collection of the letter by the postman/woman from the sender's personal letterbox[2] and a flat-rate compensation, in the event the letter is delivered late.

The turquoise "services plus" letter can be used to send documents as well as small items. It will be priced from €2.95. This price can vary according to the weight (up to 2 kg).

4/ The Registered letter service will still be available for sending "formal or procedural" letters, which require legal proof. Registered letters will be priced from €4.83 (compared with €4.55 in 2022), with a three-day delivery time.

For professional customers who have a contract with La Poste and companies that use other methods than stamps for sending letters, there will also be changes to the mail-service range on 1 January 2023. This will

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include more economical rates, adjusted according to the franking method and volumes.

The prices for Colissimo parcel shipments remain stable, taking into account modern lifestyles and consumer habits
Although consumers are sending fewer letters today, they are sending more and more Colissimo parcels. The Colissimo rate for the first weight bracket (less than 250g) will remain unchanged at €4.95 for the fourth consecutive year, despite inflation and the sharp rise in fuel prices. On average, the Colissimo rates for the universal parcel service will increase by around 2.4% on 1 January 2023, i.e. significantly lower than inflation.

Almost no impact on household budgets
Each French household spends an average of €37 a year on postal items, letters and parcels. This budget is steadily decreasing; it was €45 in 2016 and €38 in 2021. The impact of the new letter pricing on household budgets will be very little or even non-existent, given the decrease in the number of letters sent.

Affordable prices
As indicated by ARCEP (French Authority for regulation of the electronic communications and postal sectors) in its pricing assessment of the new universal mail-service range, published on 12 July 2022, the prices meet the principle of affordability set out by the applicable French legislative and regulatory framework. In particular, ARCEP noted that the stability of the prices for the first weight brackets for the Green Letter, the online e-Letter and Colissimo are in line with La Poste's objective of ensuring the affordability of its new range.

A more environmentally friendly mail-service range
By 2030, with the development of the priority "red e-Letter" and the standard "green letter" (with a 3-day delivery), La Poste will have saved 60,000 tonnes of CO2 a year, which represents a 25% reduction compared with the current service offers. This reduction will essentially be obtained by stopping the use of air transport in France (during 2023), more efficient truck loading, and by printing of e-letters closer to the recipient's address (thus reducing transport).

Currently, to deliver priority letters on a daily basis, La Poste has a hundred or so vans that travel all over France. The vans are often only slightly filled, for example, the vehicle that does the Dijon-Rennes link travels 600km every night with only 500 letters.

The need to reduce the universal postal service deficit
In 2020, the fall in mail volumes accelerated rapidly. Due to this, the universal postal service in France, which is one of La Poste's four public service missions, lost a lot of money (to the tune of 1.1 billion euros).

On 22 July 2021, the French Government

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announced it would allocate an annual budget of €500 to €520 million (depending on the quality of service results) to partially compensate for the universal postal service deficit.

In addition to this annual allocation from the State, the new mail-service range presented today will enable the company to save money. By refocusing shipping solutions around the three-day delivery deadline, which meets the majority of consumer needs, La Poste will be able to optimise its processing and transport networks by "loosening up" the logistics chain.

These savings are essential in order to safeguard the universal postal service, which the French people are extremely attached to.

The new mail-service range provides services that are adapted to new consumer habits and uses. It protects the purchasing power of French households and paves the way for more economical and environmentally-friendly logistics for the benefit of society as a whole.

Source: La Groupe Le Poste

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