International Post Corporation

Quality of international letter mail service in Europe

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Operators shift focus in a changing postal landscape

Brussels, 21 March 2025 – The IPC UNEX™ 2024 CEN measurement results released today show that in 2024, mail was delivered in 3.9 days on average. 55.5% of the mail has been delivered in three working days (speed indicator) and 84.2% in five working days (reliability indicator).

Holger Winklbauer, IPC CEO said: "*This year's UNEX™ results reflect the changing market reality posts are operating in. In a market with continuously declining letter mail volumes, European postal operators face the challenge of maintaining cost-efficient and reliable cross-border logistic operations, complicated by the unavailability of air transport for letter mail on most flows within Europe. At the same time, operators are increasingly prioritising e-commerce postal products, in line with consumers' demand*".

Declining mail volumes in Europe have pushed posts to shift their operational attention away from letter mail towards tracked and registered products. In addition, the relaxation of domestic service standards for the postal operators accepted by many national regulators also has an impact on the overall performance and makes it even more challenging to achieve the regulatory end-to-end postal objectives defined by the EU Postal Directive.

The 2024 performance levels of postal operators in Europe were also affected by the structural challenge to attract and retain staff in specific jobs and/or geographical areas, the consequences of cyber-attacks and multiple strikes, as well as the natural disasters which hit different European countries, disrupting postal domestic operations and end-to-end cross-border mail traffic.

The IPC UNEX™ CEN measurement is end-to-end: from posting in the origin country, to delivering to the final addressee in the destination country. Due to the end-to-end nature of the measurement, the challenges encountered in the posts impacted their postal partners and vice versa. This includes the postal operations' time for collection in the origin country, sorting, international transportation, and processing and delivery in the destination country.

The UNEX™ results published today are from the UNEX™ CEN measurement, which is conducted independently by the external research firm Kantar in the United Kingdom.

The 2024 results of the UNEX™ CEN module are based on a total of 130,000 test letters sent and received by 4,100 volunteers spread across 31 countries participating in the measurement; the 27 EU Member States together with Iceland, Norway, Switzerland and the United Kingdom. Overall, 674 country-to-country flows were measured. IPC's UNEX™ mail monitoring system measures quality of service performance for end-to-end cross-border priority letter mail. The test letters are representative of real mail in terms of mail formats, induction and franking methods, delivery methods and geographical spread within each of the measured European countries. All test letters contained Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) tags, which are recorded by the RFID readers as they pass through the postal facilities.

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About International Post Corporation

International Post Corporation (IPC) is the leading service provider of the global postal industry that provides leadership by driving service quality, interoperability and business-critical intelligence to support posts in defending existing business and expanding into new growth areas. It is a cooperative association of 26 member postal operators in Asia Pacific, Europe and North America. IPC's solutions and services are used by over 190 posts worldwide. Since 1989 IPC has set standards for upgrading quality and service performance and developed technological solutions that help members enhance service for international letters, packets and parcels. IPC engages in industry research, creates business-critical intelligence, provides a range of platforms and programmes for member post CEOs and senior management to exchange best practices and discuss strategy. IPC also manages the system for incentive-based payments between postal operators.

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The UNEX™ results 2024 brochure is available at: Results | International Post Corporation (ipc.be)

More information about UNEX™: https://www.ipc.be/services/operational-performance-services/unex

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