

Postal service quality in Europe challenged by changing market conditions

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Brussels, 24 March 2017 – The IPC UNEX[™] 2016 measurement results unveiled today show that 83.2% of international priority and first-class letter mail in Europe was delivered within three days of posting and 95.2% within five days. Average delivery time was 2.7 days. These results cover a total of 32 countries: the 28 EU Member States together with Iceland, Norway, Serbia and Switzerland.

Posts continue to provide a high quality of letter mail service in Europe despite ongoing decline of traditional mail volumes and the steady increase of untracked e-commerce products going through the mail stream. However, for the first time since 1998, performance levels dropped below the European Union's speed objective of 85% of intra-EU mail delivery within three days of posting, and its reliability objective of 97% within five days.

Commenting on the results, Holger Winklbauer, Chief Executive Officer, IPC, said: *"With more than half of the mail in Europe being delivered on the second day, the 2016 results of the UNEX[™] monitoring of letter mail performance show that postal operators are committed to quality of service. Despite evolving and challenging market conditions, in particular, in terms of mail products mix, posts have demonstrated their ability to maintain a reliable service for customers".*

The need to reduce operational costs related

to the declining international letter mail volumes in a majority of European countries explains the overall performance decrease for letter mail at a European level. To reduce costs, some operators have for example, changed transport options, by converting air transport into ground transportation methods where possible. Others have revised their domestic service standards, and hence, impacted the international mail transit times from posting to delivery to the addressee.

"The need for a process review is emerging to accommodate on one hand the continuous decline of letter mail volume and on the other hand the rapidly increasing volume of mail products related to e-commerce such as untracked packets, including changing customers' demands. The pressure on the existing traditional postal infrastructure and resources therefore remains high", added Winklbauer.

Quality of service performance is measured by IPC's UNEX[™] end-to-end letter mail monitoring system which is conducted independently by the external research firm Ipsos in Hamburg, Germany. The results for 2016 were based on 65,000 test letters sent and received by 1,225 volunteers spread within the measured countries. More than 40% of the test letters was containing Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) tags, which is recorded by the RFID readers as it passes through the postal facilities. The test letters move anonymously through the international

mail processing system, from posting to delivery.

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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 24 member postal operators in Asia Pacific, Europe and North America. IPC's solutions and services are used by over 180 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. For more information please visit our website.

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The UNEX™ results 2016 brochure is available [here](#).

