

Posts ensured reliability of international letter mail in Europe during the COVID-19 pandemic

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The IPC UNEX™ 2020 CEN module results unveiled today show that, on average, international priority letter mail in Europe was delivered in 4.4 days, despite the COVID-19 crisis. Transit times and service quality were impacted by the pandemic and the lockdown measures imposed in different countries throughout Europe in various ways. Nevertheless, the 2020 results show that posts still managed to deliver more than half of the mail in three days (speed indicator) and almost four fifths in five days (reliability indicator).

The IPC UNEX™ CEN measurement is end-to-end: from posting in the origin country, to delivery to the final addressee in the destination country. This includes the postal operations' time for collection in the origin country, sorting, international transportation, and processing and delivery in the destination country. All posts, as origin and/or destination, were impacted by national restrictions to fight the COVID-19 pandemic, at domestic sorting, collection or delivery level due to staff shortages. Due to the end-to-end nature of the measurement, the challenges encountered in the posts impacted their postal partners and vice versa. Lastly, the time for transportation was also heavily affected by a major international transport disruption, in particular the drastic reduction of both air transport capacity and capability in Europe, requiring solutions and adjustments almost daily, such as shifting to road or sea transport, using transit countries, or finding freight space on the remaining active air connections.

The UNEX™ results published today are from the UNEX™ CEN measurement, which is conducted independently by the external research firm Quotas in Hamburg, Germany. An external audit by Mieloo & Alexander (based in Hoofddorp, the Netherlands) has proven this module to be compliant with the

CEN EN 13850:2012 standard for measurement of the transit time of end-to-end postal services for single piece priority mail and first-class mail.

The results for 2020 from the UNEX™ CEN module are based on a total of 80,000 test letters sent and received by 900 volunteers spread within 32 countries, participating in the measurement, the 27 EU Member States together with Iceland, Norway, Serbia, Switzerland and the United Kingdom. Overall, 802 country-to-country flows were measured. The IPC's UNEX™ mail monitoring system measures quality of service performance for end-to-end cross-border priority letter mail. The measured transit times cover the whole process from posting in the origin country to delivery to the final addressee in the destination country, including the time for collection, sorting and transportation. These 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. About half of the test letters contained Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) tags, which are recorded by the RFID readers as it passes through the postal facilities.

The UNEX™ results 2020 brochure is available at: <https://www.ipc.be/-/media>

[/documents/public/unex/full-year-results/unex_leaflet_2020](#)

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Source: IPC

