

Quality of international letter mail service in Europe reflects structural challenges faced by postal operators

20-03-2024

Brussels, 20 March 2024 - The IPC UNEX™ 2023 CEN measurement results released today show an overall decrease in the quality of the postal processes within Europe. In 2023, mail was delivered in 3.9 days, on average. 56.6% of the mail has been delivered in three working days (speed indicator) and 84.4% in five working days (reliability indicator).

Holger Winklbauer, IPC CEO said: *“Over the past few years, postal operators have continuously experienced operational and structural challenges which have made it difficult to maintain the same levels of letter mail performance. Despite a slight recovery in 2021 and 2022, the 2023 results show a decline in cross-border transit times again, reflecting operational changes linked to letter mail volume decline but also structural challenges such as the lack of flight capacity for untracked envelope-letter mail within Europe and increasing relaxation of service standards at domestic levels”.*

One of the key challenges for European postal operators to recover pre-Covid years' quality levels are the low availability of flight connections and the limited capacity to transport untracked letter mail on these flights. While road transportation can be organised efficiently for short distances and neighbouring European countries, bottlenecks are faced when road transport is replacing transportation by air, generally increasing the times of delivery.

The decline in mail volumes in Europe has reached around 30% in Europe over the past six years and is expected to decrease further. That decrease and the continuous strive for cost-efficiency meant that postal operators have shifted their operational focus from untracked letter mail to tracked and

registered products. For e-commerce postal products, posts are actively working on quality aspects to maintain or expand their market shares. Furthermore, in many countries, regulators adjusting national service standards for the postal operators, have a direct effect on several cross border postal flows no longer being able to achieve the required international J+3 or even J+5 service standards.

Finally, the 2023 performance levels of postal operators in Europe were also affected by the consequences of cyber-attacks and the ongoing difficulty to attract and retain staff in specific functions and/or areas.

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. 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 2023 results of the UNEX™ CEN module are based on a total of 135,000 test letters sent and received by 4,600 volunteers spread within 31 countries, participating in the measurement, the 27 EU Member States together with Iceland, Norway, Switzerland and the United Kingdom. Overall, 710 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. For more information, please visit our website.

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The UNEX™ results 2023 brochure is available at: [Results | International Post Corporation \(ipc.be\)](#)

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



PostNL and Trade Unions agree negotiation outcome

22-03-2024

The Hague, the Netherlands, 22 March 2024 – PostNL and trade unions BVPP, CNV and FNV have agreed a negotiated outcome for a new collective labour agreement (CLA) for PostNL's 15,000 mail deliverers. The CLA will run for two years, from 1 January 2024 through 31 December 2025. PostNL is pleased with this solid outcome for its mail deliverers, who are looking at a pay rise of at least 19% over this period. The agreement fits in with the financial outlook PostNL has communicated to the markets. The trade unions will now put the outcome to their membership.

Maurice Unck, Director of Mail in the Netherlands, said: "From voting cards in elections to season's greetings in December: receiving mail remains vitally important to a great many people – and our mail deliverers play a pivotal part in this. That's why I'm delighted we have an outcome that reflects appreciation for the important work they do. An outcome that should make a job as a mail deliverer more attractive in today's tight labour market. Despite the challenging conditions facing our postal business, all mail deliverers can count on better employment terms and conditions as well as a pay rise – with extra attention focused on the large group of people who have been with us for many years."

New pay structure and employment benefits
A key element of the outcome is the new pay structure. This incorporates the recent

increase in the legal minimum wage, which had pushed beyond pay scales for mail deliverers with effect from 1 July 2023. The new structure has five scales and once again reflects the work experience built up by mail deliverers. The deal envisages four pay increases in the course of the new CLA, the last of which will take effect on 1 July 2025. By that date, mail deliverers' pay will have added at least 19% relative to 31 December 2023.

In addition to these pay rises, the negotiators agreed to raise pay for 16- and 17-year-olds, to end youth wages from age 18, and to grant various benefits and monthly payment of the holiday allowance to new mail deliverers.

Developments in the postal market

PostNL is doing everything in its power to keep mail accessible, reliable and affordable. For many years now, it's been facing major challenges in the wake of changing consumer needs, declining postal volumes and rising costs. It recently announced that it is looking to adapt the service network for its postal services to its changing environment. A change to postal laws will be necessary for it to be able to further adjust its network and so keep the postal service future-proof and financially healthy.

Consulting memberships

The outcomes of union member consultation are expected to be announced by mid-April.

Source: [PostNL](#)

NZpost plans to stream mail into parcel network as mail volumes drop further

26-03-2024

NZ Post Chief Executive David Walsh says NZ Post has been consulting with employees and unions and engaging with transport and delivery partners since October 2023 before coming to this decision.

“The way we deliver mail in the future will look very different and we know our future workforce won’t be the same size and shape as it is today. NZ Post announced in June 2023 that we would be consulting on reducing the number of roles involved in mail as a response to continuing mail decline.”

“Currently we have two separate delivery networks – one for mail and one for parcels. This will over time cease to be commercially viable as mail volumes continue to decline and we have therefore confirmed our decision to progressively stream mail into our parcel network to create a sustainable and cost-effective service through one network.”

“This decision means that there will be significant job losses in existing mail delivery, processing and support roles. Since this is a long-term plan, no employees are directly affected by the move to one delivery network right now and our focus is on supporting our people with this change.”

“For customers – this means your mail and parcels will eventually be delivered by one person, rather than two separate deliveries made by a Postie and a Courier. There is nothing that New Zealanders need to do differently” says Walsh.

NZ Post is going through a period of transformation, as we continue to respond to the ongoing decline in mail volumes while supporting future growth in e-commerce, as we chart a path towards commercial sustainability.

“Twenty years ago New Zealanders sent over 1 billion mail items in the year, which has decreased dramatically to around 220 million mail items in the current year, and we predict that this will decrease to about 120 million items by 2028. Mail decline isn’t unique to New Zealand. Postal services around the globe are responding to the same changes in communication and are focusing on the challenge of maintaining a service that has high operating costs and very low usage,” says Walsh.

“We need to continue to make hard decisions about our future as we evolve to meet the needs of New Zealanders. We are continuing to invest in growing an unmatched delivery business, while managing a transition to a commercially sustainable mail delivery service as we move toward one network for mail and courier delivery. These are not always easy decisions to make.”

NZ Post is committed to supporting our people through this change using a Just Transition support programme recently signed with the E tĀ union, that will support both those that may be affected by redundancies and those that are impacted by the change in other ways.

Source: [NZ Post](#)

Posti will increase prices for stamps due to declining letter volumes

24-03-2024

Letter Services paid in cash include domestic and international letters paid by stamps.

“A genuine letter and card are still highly meaningful as a way to remember those closest to you, so there will be a demand for them for a long time to come. However, people are sending fewer and fewer letters, cards and Christmas cards. The costs are rising, which, together with the declining volumes, has caused a notable increase in unit costs,” says Sami Määttä, who is in charge of the consumer letter business at Posti.

Posti's operations are funded by service charges paid by customers, and the company does not receive any financial support for its operations from the state. These increases will ensure mail delivery as a universal service, i.e. Letter Services paid in cash, throughout the country.

In the 2000s, the number of letters has decreased by roughly 70% due to digital communications. Last year, the number of letters sent by consumers decreased 15%. The downward trend of printed mail will continue as the volumes of printed mail decrease with the progress of digitalization.

Domestic letters are divided into four weight classes, according to the weight in grams. As of April 25, the price of a domestic card or letter weighing no more than 50 g will be EUR 2.50 (EUR +0.20).

The price of an international postcard or letter weighing no more than 20 g will be EUR 2.75

in Priority class (EUR +0.25) and EUR 2.50 in Economy class (EUR + 0.20).

Going forward, the price of a Christmas stamp will be EUR 1.60 (EUR +0.10).

An average increase of two euros per year for consumers

Finnish consumers spend, on average, less than EUR 20 per year on sending letters. For one person, the price adjustments will mean an average increase of two euros per year. On average, stamped mail is delivered to households once a month.

In the lightest class (1–50 g), the postage of a letter or postcard equals one no-value indicator stamp; in the next weight class (51–250 g), the postage equals two no-value indicator stamps; and in the third weight class (251–1,000 g), the postage equals four no-value indicator stamps. In the heaviest weight class (up to 2 kg), the postage of letters equals six no-value indicator stamps.

All domestic and international no-value indicator stamps bought before the price increase will be accepted without additional stamps also after the price increase. Old 1st and 2nd class no-value indicator stamps can still be used for sending mail. Their value equals the domestic no-value indicator stamp, which will be EUR 2.50 as of April 25, 2024.

As of April 25, 2024, previously purchased no-value indicator stamps for Christmas greetings will also have a value of EUR 1.60.

Source: [Posti](#)

