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UNION POSTALE



Universal Postal Union,
a specialized agency
of the United Nations

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Anatomy of a
postal strategy

Colour-coding
quality of service

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Safety first



China's **first** professional integrated supplier of express and post material

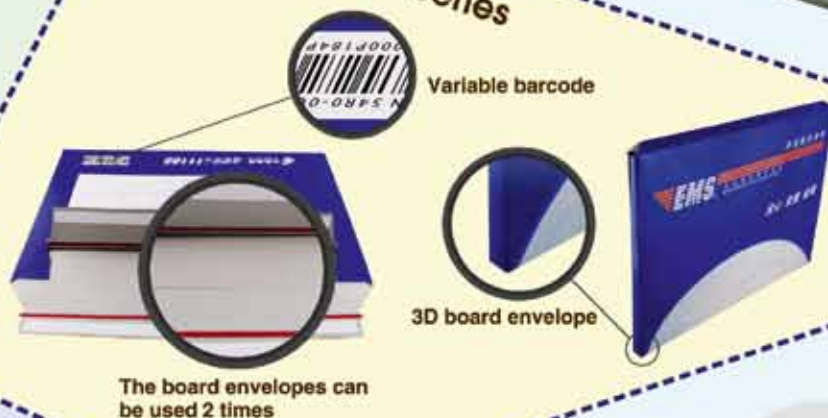
bubble mailer series



Packing tapes series



Board Envelope Series



Plastic mailing bags series



barcode waybills series



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(Photo: Jonathan Saruk / gettyimages)

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June 2012

Union Postale is the Universal Postal Union's flagship magazine, founded in 1875. It is published quarterly in seven languages and takes a closer look at UPU activities and features international news and developments from the postal sector. The magazine regularly publishes well researched articles on topical issues facing the industry, as well as interviews with the sector's leading individuals. It is distributed widely to the UPU's 192 member countries, including thousands of decision-makers from governments and Posts, as well as other postal stakeholders. All regard it as an important source of information about the UPU and the postal sector at large.

Union Postale is also published in French, Arabic, Chinese, German, Russian and Spanish.

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Remittances

Technical bridge facilitates money transfers



Mosad Abd El Ghani, Egypt Post's chair, centre, transfers money from Rome to Cairo (Photo: Poste Italiane)

Poste Italiane and Egypt Post have launched the first electronic money-transfer service using a technical bridge created by the UPU and Eurogiro to interconnect their financial networks.

The technical solution connects the UPU's International Financial System (IFS) network – used by 56 Posts, including Egypt's – and Eurogiro's network, used by Poste Italiane and 64 other Posts. Thanks to the technical bridge, any Post connected to the IFS system can transfer money to Posts on the Eurogiro network.

At the first service's launch in Rome in May, Poste Italiane CEO-Massimo Sarmi said Italy's 92,000-member Egyptian community could now "benefit from a system that will guarantee efficient money transfers at competitive fees". The service is available in 14,000 Italian and 4,500 Egyptian

post offices. Money can be collected at destination in local currency within 48 hours. Egypt Post will not charge a fee to convert euros to pounds.

Extended benefits

UPU Director General Edouard Dayan underlined the importance of money transfers. "Remittances have a significant economic impact on communities and countries and contribute to poverty reduction. Making remittances more accessible through the postal network is a UPU priority," he said. **RL**

Who's who at the UPU

Anticipation is key to success

Name: Virginia Bernardini

Position: Executive assistant, Office of the Director General

Nationality: American



(Photo: Alexandre Plattet)

If you want to send something to Director General Edouard Dayan, you are going to have to get it past Virginia Bernardini first. "I manage everything that goes to his desk," she says.

As Dayan's executive assistant, she's the last set of eyes to approve all correspondence going through his office. "It's really important that we are not sending out or submitting something for him to sign that isn't as

it should be in terms of accuracy, language, format or even tone," she says.

Bernardini is often a trouble-shooter and has a keen eye for wrinkles that need smoothing. "I can see who needs what and who doesn't understand what the other person said," says Bernardini. "Ideally, I can put out the fire before it burns," she says, smiling.

After two degrees in vocal performance in America, Bernardini pursued a career in singing. When she moved to Switzerland with her family, circumstances made it hard to continue down that path.

Her English skills landed her a job at the UPU, although she also speaks French. Bernardini started at the International Bureau in 2002 as a part-time, secondary secretary in the postal financial services programme. A year later, she moved to the director general's office.

After working in the director general's office for nine years, its hustle and bustle keep things interesting, she says. "It's not a job where you can just wait for your boss to give you something to do. You have to constantly look ahead and anticipate what he might need or what could go wrong," she remarks.

What Bernardini enjoys most is the UPU's multicultural atmosphere and welcoming visitors from all over the world to the International Bureau. "No matter what background people come from, there's a common denominator, a sort of humanity we all share. And I really like meeting and trying to help people from all these different countries."

And, although a new director general will arrive at the UPU in January 2013, Bernardini says the last eight years have been a pleasure. "Mr Dayan is a very steady and kind person. He is the ultimate diplomat." **KR**

Editor's note

When a crisis occurs, sometimes what follows is a very human tendency to act quickly and in isolation. The very mandate of the international organization enables it to hold out its hand soothingly to those forging their own crisis plans, fashioning a coordinated response that reaches beyond borders.

When certain actions reverberate across the world, creating difficulties for the global supply chain, it is not for the international organization to point fingers but to step up and facilitate the creation of a solution. This is a key theme of this issue's cover story, which shows it pays well to be coordinated when extraordinary events occur, throwing the normal order into chaos.

In other news, the main interview demystifies the Doha Postal Strategy, the global roadmap for the Union's future activities. A case study from Barbados Post reveals a cost-effective and beautifully simple way of sorting mail.

And, as the world meets again in Brazil for discussions on sustainable development, the UPU presents the latest snapshot of the postal sector's carbon footprint. Showing how one country is taking the results to heart is Togo Post's successful foray into solar energy to power operations.

Faryal Mirza, editor-in-chief, *Union Postale* magazine

Quality of service

Asian Posts get good marks

Members of the Asian-Pacific Postal Union (APPU) are on the right track in advancing quality of service and postal financial services in their region, according to UPU data.

"Quality of service in the Asia-Pacific region is progressing very well, both in terms of actual results and the use of quality testing and enhancement solutions," said UPU Director General Edouard Dayan, in a speech before the APPU's executive council meeting on May 14 in Hongkong, China.

UPU data reveal that the region is improving on several key quality of service indicators. More Posts are tracking all classes of mail, including registered letters and parcels, and using the UPU's systems to exchange electronic data interchange messages and better manage their mail flows. In 2008, only 15 countries had active track and trace on parcels; now



Service with a smile
(Photo: Hongkong Post)

there are 36. Only 16 countries used internet-based inquiry systems for parcels in 2008; today there are 28.

Asia-Pacific is also performing well in EMS. On-time deliveries remained steady at 90.8 per cent last December and the region has an 98.9 per cent rate for timely customer-service response.

Not to be forgotten is the rise of e-commerce, a market that Asia-Pacific dominates. "Customers know no borders and are increasingly

demanding integrated and secure international postal services," Dayan said. The .post initiative, which is now entering the implementation phase, will be one way the UPU can help countries "bridge the gap between the physical and electronic dimensions of the postal network as Posts move online", he added.

As the region looks onwards to the UPU Congress, it has chosen the following priority areas for 2013–2016: improving quality of service and remuneration systems. The director general said the UPU will continue to work closely with the APPU to tackle these goals.

The APPU is a UPU restricted union, which facilitates and improves postal relations between 40 designated operators in the Asia-Pacific region. **KR**



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DOHA
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25th Universal Postal Congress

All systems go for Congress

The Qatari minister of culture, arts and heritage has assured the UPU all necessary measures will be taken to ensure the success of the 25th Universal Postal Congress. It will be held in Doha from 24 September to 15 October 2012 under the patronage of the Emir of Qatar, His Highness Sheikh Hamad Bin Khalifa Al-Thani.

Meeting a delegation from the International Bureau (IB) in early June in Doha, Minister Hamad Bin Abdulaziz Al-Kuwari assured his guests that Qatar has vast experience in organizing international conferences. With just three months to go before the 25th Universal Postal Congress begins, preparations are indeed on schedule and Qatar is fine-tuning its plans to welcome some 2,000 UPU delegates to its capital.

The IB delegation, including Juliana Nel, director of the executive office and communication, and Daniel Le Goff, director of logistics, travelled to Doha one last time



QNCC at night (Photo: QNCC)

before Congress to discuss logistics, security and communication with the Qatar team. "The preparations are well advanced – proof of the host country's commitment to making the Congress a success," said Nel. "We have seen the Qatar National Convention Centre (QNCC) rise from the dust since our first visit two years ago. Today, the QNCC offers all the necessary state-of-the-art facilities to ensure a pleasant meeting environment," added Nel.

For his part, Le Goff added: "Content aside, logistics is key to the success of Congress, in terms of accommodation, transportation, food and working conditions. Qatar is very conscious of this and is

pulling out all the stops to ensure it is a success."

Abdul Rahman Al Aqaily, Qatar Post chair and designated Congress chairman, says his priority is to ensure the Congress goes well. "Our goal is to make sure everyone is happy during and outside meetings. When we have a conference, everyone is a guest of Qatar, not just a delegate," he says.

The 25th Universal Postal Congress will officially open on 24 September. A ministerial conference on 8 October will see a number of high-level participants discuss the impact of technology on communication, how the postal sector can foster economic and social inclusion and what the future holds for Posts and the UPU.

In the lead-up to the event, the Qatar team urges all delegates to make their travel arrangements, such as hotel bookings and visa applications, well in advance to avoid unnecessary delays or difficulties. **RL**

Postal sector

UPU continues to meet global postal sector's needs

As the only representative of the global postal industry, the UPU is well placed to serve the current and future needs of the sector, its deputy director general, Guozhong Huang, recently told Posts from industrialized countries.

"At the end of the day, customers will use the service providers offering the best quality and security," Huang added. The UPU would continue to closely monitor economic, social and market developments and to prepare its members to respond effectively to future challenges and changing customer needs, said the deputy director general.

New doors

Despite the financial crisis and the rise of new communications



Shanghai played host (Photo: gettyimages)

technology negatively impacting the traditional business, Huang said new doors were opening for Posts. "The first sign [of the internet era] was a drop in traditional letter-mail volumes as a result of substitution by email and mobile phones," Huang explained.

However, e-commerce would increasingly provide more business for Posts. Financial services provider JP Morgan estimates that global e-commerce could be worth more

than 900 billion USD in 2012. "Online sales are growing, as are small packets and parcels volumes," Huang said.

The deputy director general emphasized that the UPU would not rest on its laurels. "There is still room for the development of services, such as e-signatures, electronic notification of deliveries, online address changes, registered electronic mail, electronic customs documents and digital identities," he added.

Huang was speaking at the International Postal Corporation's annual conference in Shanghai, China. This private company's shareholders are 24 postal operators from industrialized countries. **RP & FM**

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Since 1875, *Union Postale* has reported news from the international postal sector for the benefit of

stakeholders across the industry. Readers include chief

executives, regulators, operational experts, managers, strategic thinkers, post-office employees, suppliers, academics, philatelists and anyone else with a keen interest in Posts.

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Safety first

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In October 2010, a series of events outside the universal postal network went on to interrupt the flow of international mail to the United States. The UPU's response was to seek a coordinated response from all stakeholders to find a solution fitting for everyone.

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By Faryal Mirza

Less than two years later, an extraordinary flurry of activity has seen a myriad of discussions take place among key players from the UPU community as well as the aviation world, customs authorities and governments.

The result: draft standards, which, if accepted by Congress later this year, will set a minimum baseline in postal security with the goal of making international airmail safer. The norms will reinforce existing UPU standards, which are recommendations only.

Member countries will have the final say on whether the new norms S58 and S59 should be universally applied. If adopted, compliance would be mandatory. S58 covers security measures of a more general nature for the Post, covering areas such as structure, windows, doors, locks and procedures for handling dangerous goods. S59 relates to risk assessment and actual physical screening of items.

Heeding all views

The Inter-Committee on Security Group (ICSG) was set up in April 2011 as a joint ad-hoc working group between the UPU Council of Administration and Postal Operations Council after an urgent call from the International Bureau. Its mandate: to create new postal-security standards.

The views of all stakeholders were carefully considered when drafting the norms. "We took the time and effort to develop these standards with a lot of input from many countries and other international organizations to come up with norms that suit the postal sector's needs," says Akio Miyaji, UPU director of operations and technology.

The international bodies consulted included the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) – the UPU's aviation counterpart – the International Air Transport Association, the US Transportation Security Administration (TSA), the World Customs Organization (WCO), the World Trade Organization and the European Commission. "The security of airmail and ICAO's involvement

with the ICSG's work has enabled us to work closely with the postal sector to develop standards that will meet all our needs," says Jim Marriott, chief of ICAO's Aviation Security Branch. Ebbe Andersen, Post Danmark's head of security and ICSG chair, echoes this. "We had good meetings with the stakeholders. Everyone agreed they had to help each other, solve the problem and get the mail and goods flowing. It was great," says Andersen.

Shortly after the ICSG was set up, Janet Napolitano, head of the US Department of Homeland Security, praised UPU efforts to create global security standards. "We should all support the work underway within the UPU," she told delegates at a meeting of the WCO in June 2011.

Napolitano also underlined the importance of not impeding international trade. "The global supply chain system must be able to continue to function and quickly recover from major disruptions, because the efficient functioning of the global logistics system – of real-time inventories – is essential to the global economy."

Part of the Department of Homeland Security, the TSA was the organization forced to rapidly introduce tougher security measures on mail destined for the US in the aftermath of intercepting packages containing explosives on private-courier planes in October 2010.

Safety first

Public safety and safeguarding employees were and remain at the forefront of deliberations in both the postal and aviation sectors. The UPU is keenly aware of these dual requirements.

"Airlines have responsibilities and cannot accept the transport of dangerous merchandise, which might put the lives of passengers and crew at risk," says UPU Director General Edouard Dayan. "We, too, have a responsibility to the public and cannot take the risk of distributing dangerous goods among them. We must also ensure that postal staff work in safe conditions," he adds.



Draft norm S58 covers physically securing postal infrastructure, such as sorting facilities (Bloomberg/gettyimages)

The same holds true for ICAO. "One of the main operational challenges faced by the aviation industry is to ensure that airmail meets safety and security requirements before being carried on an aircraft. It is obviously of vital importance that shipments of airmail do not contain dangerous goods or restricted articles that could endanger the safety of an aircraft in flight," says ICAO's Marriott.

As for the proposed standards themselves, many voices in the postal sector believe they are achievable. "I think they are quite acceptable. An ICSG survey looked at existing levels of security in postal operators. The responses proved that, especially at offices of exchange, 60 per cent of Posts already have a lot of security in place, including in developing countries," said Andersen.

According to David Bowers, the UPU's postal security programme manager, the majority of industrialized countries are already probably meeting the proposed standards. Some least developed countries (LDCs), however, would require more support to comply, especially in the area of training.

Compliance is possible for some LDCs, says the Pan African Postal Union (PAPU), a UPU restricted union. It counts 26 LDCs among its members and is a strong supporter of introducing universal standards in postal security. "Speaking from experience, many countries in

Africa will be able to implement the minimum standards, once they are approved," says Nathan Mkandawire, PAPU's head of quality of service and customer care.

Mkandawire added that Posts in Africa were not left untouched by the TSA's measures in 2010. "We were very much affected because some of the mail originating from this region and going to other parts of the world was returned or subject to severe delays. When we enquired why this was happening, it was clear that some of our organizations were not applying security standards in place in some of the countries [to which international mail was being sent]," explains Mkandawire.

But that was not all. "We lost the confidence of customers and that impacted the revenues we collected. It was a spiralling effect on all our mail activities, so we were glad the UPU took the initiative to come up with minimal security standards with which all countries will comply, assuming the Congress proposal passes," he adds.

Ghana review

While the draft UPU norms were being refined, it was time to test the concept with an inspection of postal facilities. With PAPU's support, Ghana opened its doors to a two-day security assessment of their Accra office of exchange and international airport.

The UPU inspection team, supported by resources from the UPU's Postal Security Group, were encouraged by what they saw. "One telling result was that physical infrastructure did not need an upgrade but processes did. These included areas such as business continuity plans, for example, in case of flooding, or training in dangerous goods," says Bowers. "In my mind, those things are easier and cheaper to improve and handle than changes to the physical infrastructure, such as putting up a wall or introducing card access or changing buildings," he adds.

For its part, Ghana Post welcomed the opportunity to participate in the review. "Our objective has always been to improve on what we have. At any point in time, we want to assess [our operations] because no one wants their postal administration to be blacklisted by others for [alleged] movement of prohibited items," says Abdulai Abdul-Rafiu, its managing director.

As for the review's results, the Post accepts that there is room for improvement. "We are certainly happy but we are not just going to rest on this. There is no perfect system but we should always make the effort to improve whatever we are doing," the managing director explains.

Practical concerns

Ghana Post already operates a scanner in the office of exchange at the international airport in Accra, screening outbound international mail not only for itself but also for nearby countries, such as Burkina Faso and Côte d'Ivoire. Training staff to detect dangerous and prohibited goods on a regular basis remains a challenge. "Staff operating the scanner need to be well-trained and abreast of current changes because certainly those involved in that kind of business are always trying to devise new ways of beating the system," Abdul-Rafiu says.

The Ghanaian managing director is confident that the proposed norms can be implemented. "At the end of the day, it is for our benefit and the survival of the industry. After the 2010 incidents, we have all learnt our lesson. If we do not have minimum standards that meet the requirements of every country, then we are bound to have a lot of problems in moving mail from one destination to the other," he says.

Canada Post's Peter O'Neill, charged with capacity-building under the ICSG, said the Ghana exercise was an important one. "It is all very well creating standards but what about the practicalities? What resource impact will there be in both human and financial terms?"

He added that the Ghana review proved that "it was not that daunting after all for countries to step up" and solutions could be found for any potential issues.

Southern Africa hub

In another part of the continent, South Africa serves as a hub for outbound and international mail for no less than nine southern African countries. Its highly sophisticated systems ensure that the mail is as secure as possible before leaving the continent. Its international

airports and relevant offices of exchange comply with the South African programme to protect airmail from unlawful interference, says Janras Kotsi, the South African Post Office's group executive for the mail business. This, in turn, meets the requirements of ICAO's Annex 17 to the Convention on International Civil Aviation (Safeguarding International Civil Aviation Against Acts of Unlawful Interference) – the definitive standard for airline security.

Kotsi says his country has learnt much from participating in the UPU's postal security group. "It's global, not regional and not continental. As a result, it touches more parts of the world. It can't come any better than this," he says. "It is not only about learning what you need to do in your country but also about what others are experiencing, so that you can implement measures proactively to make sure the same things do not happen in your country," Kotsi adds.

Game-changer

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Packages containing explosives bound for the US were discovered on planes belonging to private couriers in October 2010. As a result, tougher screening measures came into force on all mail destined for the US.

Posts worldwide had to change their operational procedures overnight. Some Posts stopped accepting or delayed US-bound mail items, while others faced higher transportation costs and the shutdown of major mail transit hubs. This caused mail backlogs around the world.

More than 400 million letters, packages and express mail items are sent to the US annually.

No standard is an island

In the meantime, discussions are continuing on fully harmonizing the new standards with ICAO's Annex 17. "S58 and S59 cannot be standalone standards because we are part of a global supply chain," says Miyaji.

In the run-up to Congress, an interim group is ensuring that the work of the ICSG continues, including activities in the area of customs and electronic information exchange, potentially benefitting both border and transport security.

An ongoing collaboration with ICAO is also vital. The two organizations signed a memorandum of understanding in 2009, enabling them to work better on issues of common interest. "Of critical importance is the UPU's input to the ICAO processes for setting international standards, recommended practices and guidance material for aviation security," says Marriott. "It is then the task of the authorities in each state to ensure that effective security measures are being implemented for air mail," he adds.

A strengthening of relations is on the cards, with a Congress proposal on forming an ICAO-UPU contact committee. "ICAO and the UPU have a long history of working together to ensure the efficient and safe movement of air mail... We look forward to continuing that work to ensure our respective measures are harmonized to the greatest degree possible and to enable postal operators and regulators to deliver shipments of mail that meet the needs of aviation security in the twenty-first century," emphasizes Marriott.

Global response

As for some postal representatives, it was a pleasant surprise to see how rapidly the proposed security standards came into being. "These results were achieved so quickly. With the International Bureau's support, it was done in a way that was acceptable to everyone and maybe that's the way forward for other tough questions," says Andersen.

And international coordination shall prevail, says the UPU director general. "The work will never end because the problem is not to simply act but also to anticipate in the face of threats. That is why it is necessary for us to reinforce our role not only in action but also prevention and international cooperation," Dayan emphasizes. "The question of security has to be addressed not only nationally but also internationally," he says. "There is a risk that individual countries cannot find appropriate solutions in an effective way, which is why coordination at an international level is required, bringing all the affected stakeholders together." **FM**



A postal worker unloads mail from a cargo plane
(Peter Macdiarmid / gettyimages)

ICAO Secretary General Raymond Benjamin on air security

“ ICAO's first priority is to develop and promote the implementation of aviation security measures that are effective at countering the evolving threat and that inspire confidence in the security of the aviation industry as a whole.

At the same time, ICAO remains conscious of the need to apply practical counter-measures that do not impose excessive burdens on travellers, shippers and the air-transport industry.

Air-cargo security has come under increased scrutiny following the discovery in 2010 of a plot to sabotage two freighter aircraft using explosive devices hidden inside parcels. This incident was yet another sign that terrorists will exploit any perceived vulnerability in the air transport system.

In light of the real risk of explosives being planted inside cargo during multimodal shipping processes, regulators and the industry alike agree on the need to establish more effective and comprehensive supply chain security. Appropriately, ICAO Annex 17 has been amended and now requires that each member state establish a formal supply chain security process. States are also required to apply security controls to cargo and mail, including appropriate methods of screening.”

Raising awareness

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Preventing dangerous goods from entering the mail stream remains a challenge. That's why training postal employees to be vigilant is crucial.

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By Faryal Mirza

Proving that the UPU takes this need seriously is the inclusion of a provision in the draft standard S58 on awareness and training measures. This calls upon the designated operator to implement a dangerous goods training programme that complies with ICAO Annex 18 and its Technical Instructions for the Safe Transport of Dangerous Goods by Air (Doc 9284) or their national civil aviation regulations.

"E-commerce is developing rapidly, as is the fulfilment of these orders by Posts, but there can be no growth in volumes without increased security. An entirely secure postal network will contribute to the growth of sending online purchases by post," said UPU Director General Edouard Dayan.

Targeting staff

Training is to be given to all postal employees and contractors, such as acceptance personnel and 'individuals, who interface with the public for mail induction and individuals handling mail articles at the office of exchange'.

One particular area of recent concern is the rise of electronic goods containing lithium cells or batteries being sent by airmail. Evidence shows that, if cells or batteries are not packaged carefully before shipping – for instance if they are loose and not installed within electronic equipment – fires may occur.

Currently, in accordance with ICAO rules, equipment with lithium cells and batteries is listed as dangerous goods prohibited from

travelling by air in the international mail stream. UPU member countries, however, requested changes to this rule, in view of the growth in e-commerce, to be able to better meet customers' delivery needs.

Together with the amended UPU Convention, the revised ICAO rules will allow the air transportation of postal items containing some lithium cells or batteries that are properly packed from January 1, 2013. This was a result of the UPU and ICAO working together to harmonize their respective legal instruments on the matter.

From 2013, If a Post decides to handle goods containing a limited number of cells, it will have to coordinate staff training in this area. Dangerous goods handling procedures and training programmes need to be approved by its country's national civil aviation authority (CAA). After the CAA's approval, the Post will then be able to accept international mail items containing equipment with up to four lithium cells or two lithium batteries, providing the latter have already been installed.

Public view

However, another challenge looms: persuading the public of the dangers of sending electronic items containing lithium cells or batteries through the post.

"If you try to convince customers that lithium cells or batteries are dangerous, they do not understand because today these batteries are everywhere: in your mobile phone, computer, camera or mp3 player," explained Ebbe Andersen, head of postal security at Post Danmark. **FM**



Barbados puts colourful twist on quality of service

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This island Post uses a simple yet effective way of improving service levels.

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By
Kayla Redstone

Photos:
Barbados Post

Since 2007, Barbados Post has been using reusable tags in different colours, called Service Quality Control (SQC) labels, to sort letter mail. When mail arrives at the processing plant, supervisors mark the mail with a label denoting the day it was received. The Post deals annually with 17 million pieces of letter mail, some of which are sorted by hand. This means the labels facilitate the process of prioritizing which mail goes out first.

Barbados Post marks letter mail to indicate whether it arrived in the morning or afternoon, Monday to Friday, adding separate labels for priority mail and 'no tab' mail (items that have already been physically counted). Flats and packets are not marked with SQC labels because they are sorted daily.

Though the new sorting system has not necessarily sped up the sorting rate, it has increased efficiency and



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Sorted in Barbados!

processing standards, says Michael Ashby, Barbados Post's postal superintendent, letter mail. "Before the introduction of the SQC labels, it was challenging at times to determine the correct order for sorting during heavy mail flows," Ashby says. "This resulted in mail being sorted out of sequence." Now, senior management can see at a glance how time-bound mail is sorted when they enter the mail room, he adds.

Inspiration

But Barbados wasn't the first to simplify the sorting process. The Post was inspired by a Canadian example, called the Service Industry Standard (SIS) labelling system. When Canada Post was transformed from a government department to a federally owned enterprise in 1981, one of the



Service Quality Control labels from Barbados Post

first problems identified was poor quality of service, says Rochelle Duhaime, a former employee, who went on to help create the SIS labelling system. “Service, as it was measured by the test-mail system, was always perfect, yet there were many complaints from customers that the service was bad,” says Duhaime.

One issue was that mail was tested internally and easily identified as test mail. The Post’s first step was to develop an independent measurement system. Next, the Post designed a sorting method that would help improve service; that’s where Duhaime and the SIS came in. “The colour-coding system was designed so that as mail came into the plant and as it was offloaded from the truck, a colour code was put directly on the big cage of mail,” says Duhaime.

Canada Post tagged mail containers according to the day they should leave the plant. “The origin day plus two was how we designed the system, so that on a Monday, all the mail that came in would have a Wednesday tag,” she says. “We would talk about blue, orange or pink mail and everyone knew instantly what that meant.”

Before implementing the SIS, Canada Post was meeting on-time delivery standards at around 60 per cent, remembers Duhaime. Once the system was fully implemented, the Post had increased that rate to 90 per cent, she says.

Cultural shift

Duhaime explains the biggest challenge to implementing the system was the cultural shift from a budget to service culture. Previously, supervisors were told to put their efforts into meeting budget requirements and service was left by the wayside, she says.

The cooperation of the Post’s sorters was a vital part of making the system work, she explains. “All [the SIS] does is show you where your problems are, so you need to be ready to move in and do what the system is telling you needs to be done,” says Duhaime.

Barbados took a different approach. The smaller Post has placed responsibility for the SQC labels with three supervisors. “The staff has recognized the importance of the labels, however it is the responsibility of the supervisors, who have been trained to ensure that quality standards are maintained with regard to the correct insertion, use of the priority label and the first-in-first-out system,” says Ashby.

Duhaime has some words of wisdom for other Posts interested in adopting a similar system: “You must be committed because it’s easy to put in [but it is not simple to make it] work well. You need to be viscerally engaged about improving your service because it is going to get tough,” she said. **KR**

Kayla Redstone is currently an intern with the UPU Communication Programme.

Anatomy of a postal strategy

Member countries are gearing up to determine the future course of the Union. Their most important task at Congress is to discuss and approve the Doha Postal Strategy, the roadmap for the UPU's work from 2013–16.

Terry Dunn, general manager, international relations, Canada Post, as chair of the Council of Administration/Postal Operations Council joint committee on strategy, describes what to expect.

By Faryal Mirza

Union Postale: Is the Doha Postal Strategy (DPS) a seismic shift or business as usual?

Terry Dunn: Actually it is a bit of both. From a business-as-usual-point of view, you'll see some familiarity with the Nairobi Postal Strategy (NPS).

The strategy committee decided very early on that there was no need to start from scratch. Many of the areas of the NPS remain extremely relevant; as it represented a major change from previous strategies, we incorporated a number of its key components into the DPS. These include, for example, the three-dimensional network – a real strength of the organization – and the axis of inter-connection, governance and development as supporting core focuses of the UPU.

That said, the world has changed since 2008 and our strategy also needs to change with it.

Something old, something new, something borrowed...?

The DPS is much more than business as usual. A key building block was a series of strategic analyses. The first examined global developments, including those of a political, economic, social, legal and environmental nature. These developments are relevant given the UPU's inter-governmental nature.

A second was an examination of key trends directly linked to the postal sector. These included changes in global postal volumes and product mix, such as declines in letters but growth in merchandise fulfilment services. The pace of change has accelerated since the NPS and this is expected to continue. Technology is obviously a key driver of change.

And the final [aspect] looked at the UPU's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. [They all] point to the need for the UPU to

adapt and build capacity, to be more nimble and flexible so it can deal with the pace of change, address current risks and seize opportunities.

What are the most significant trends affecting the sector?

Customer needs and market realities are changing and the UPU needs to react. Ensuring the satisfaction of customers' changing needs is very much a component of the UPU's mission.

Technology is also providing opportunities for greater access to postal services as well as opportunities for operators to better serve customers. It is also helping drive convergence and compatibility of the UPU's three-dimensional [physical, electronic, financial] network.

More and more, the lines are becoming blurred between the physical, electronic and financial

parts of the network. For example, if you think about an electronic network, it can, but does not necessarily, mean standalone e-services. It can mean using information communication technologies and electronic-data-interchange messaging to support core physical services under the universal service obligations. Take basic things like being able to scan items and use this scanning information to serve our customers.

What else lies ahead?

A huge opportunity – and we are living it already today – is e-commerce. Perhaps it is the golden nugget designated operators are looking for at a time of globally declining letter volumes.

At its very basic core, e-commerce is you or I going online and ordering something, which in turn creates the demand for fulfilment and, in most cases, physical delivery. The delivery of that order is a core service under the universal service obligation that is regulated internationally by the UPU. That's an opportunity we can't miss.

From a government-policy perspective, facilitating e-commerce offers opportunities to support and build regional, small business and trade-based economic growth and social inclusion.

But we have to get it right and get ourselves organized fast because there are alternatives out there.

E-commerce as a concept can mean different things to different people. For example, there are some very comprehensive end-to-end e-commerce solutions today that involve hosting a web-mall and an online-payment facility. Depending on individual market needs and national policies, this may be an interesting and worthy aspiration. But I also know that such an ambition for many countries could appear overwhelming as a short-term goal.



Terry Dunn ponders the future (Illustration: Sascha Tittmann)

My message is this: an important first step is having the international postal network organized to ensure we can collectively meet customer needs for secure, reliable and quality-delivery of items ordered through e-commerce. We need to get this right, including ensuring that all members share in the benefits and opportunities of international e-commerce exchanges regardless of being the importing or exporting country.

Do changing times require adapting the UPU's structure?

Let's look at how the UPU and our work are structured today. We have definitions, regulations and structures based on letter post, parcel post and other services. These definitions and structures have served us well over our history but the environment is changing. Twenty years ago, packets in the letter-post concept often were bulky letters and documents, but today the packets we are seeing internationally are goods fulfilment.

Let's look at this from a perspective outside the UPU. E-commerce customers order merchandise; they do not order packets or parcels. Customs and border security officers are similarly not concerned about internal UPU definitions and rules for parcels versus packets. All they see are goods and they often have their own processes for handling and inspecting merchandise versus documents.

It is important that we remind ourselves and approach what we do at the UPU cognizant of the perspective of those using the services and those we count on as part of the broader supply chain.

Are existing definitions appropriate for the current times, are there opportunities to consolidate and streamline regulations across services and how do we ensure fair and efficient remuneration systems to secure a long-term sustainable model that supports the maintenance of a universal network?

The interview

What about the work on reforming the Union?

During this work cycle, the Council of Administration and the International Bureau made a deliberate and concerted effort to better align the work on strategy and reforming the Union. Strategy led on 'here's where we want to go' and reform on 'what do we have to do to make sure we have the best chance of succeeding'.

[This covers] proposals dealing with organization of Councils, budgeting and process improvements, including how we make decisions, run meetings and manage documents. On first reading, this may not sound like ground-breaking stuff but it will very much influence the success of implementing the strategy.

For example, documents requiring decisions need to be available to members well in advance of meetings, ensuring insightful discussions and reaching informed decisions as opposed to just reaching decisions. The absence of documents was an issue raised on many occasions during the current cycle at Postal Operations Council and Council of Administration meetings.

What UPU weaknesses did the analyses leading to the DPS reveal?

A significant weakness is the UPU's inability to prioritize. At the 2008 Congress, decisions were made to approve work that required resources far in excess of the ceiling approved by the very same Congress. Trying to do everything without the required resources is noble, but it sets us on a path that dilutes overall focus.

Should this scenario repeat itself in Doha, I believe a key strategic issue for Congress will be: how do we wish to go forward as an organization? Do we continue to dilute ourselves by trying to do a little bit of everything or do we focus on a fewer number of things but do them extremely well and really move the organization forward?

In a perfect world, we would love to do everything, but we can't. This is a real challenge and I understand how difficult prioritization can be.

However, the postal sector is more complex today than in the past. There are more and more demands on the organization, and the capacity for UPU members to increase their funding for the UPU is challenged by economic realities worldwide.

What help is at hand?

A starting point for Doha will be a Congress document that sums up the resources required for all the proposals to be considered. This will provide members with information before Congress on the possibility of a potential resource gap, which they can consider during deliberations on proposals.

If, however, we end up in a situation where what has been approved in the various committees requires resources that exceed what has been adopted, a process will be followed to help Congress consider this outcome.

What are key areas to prioritize?

While I have my own personal views, ultimately, it will be up to members at Congress to decide which proposals to adopt and prioritize.

There are opportunities out there for the postal sector but waiting four years to get ourselves organized is far too long. I can say, as chair of the Strategy Committee, that member countries still see the quality of the various postal services we offer as a prime driver.

Markets are demanding consistent reliable performance, so [quality of service is] an area where the UPU will continue to focus. This means getting the basics right, which is quality, and looking for opportunities to grow, such as leveraging e-commerce. These things fit together nicely.

The DPS is global and yet the regions are setting their own priorities...

It is a global strategy for the UPU but there is a key recognition that it must be implemented on a regional basis. Each region went through a process at the 2011 strategy round tables to identify their respective priorities for their regional development plans. This was to ensure that when we come out of Doha, we can get moving immediately; the regions' priorities will already be known.

This is different to the NPS, where the global strategy was adopted in 2008 but it was only after the Geneva Congress that we went through the process of trying to prioritize the activities.

How will the results of the DPS be measured by indicators?

The indicators are an incredibly important part of implementing the strategy. If we don't know where we want to get to and don't have benchmarks along the way, then we are just driving down a road, hoping it will take us somewhere nice and [that] we arrive.

Measuring and evaluating results are very important. The starting point was to ensure at least one indicator for each of the proposed DPS programmes so that we are ready to start measurement on day one of work.

During the current cycle, there was considerable work done to identify as best we could a set of indicators for the DPS. Admittedly, some areas were much easier than others to address. Are they all perfect? Perhaps not, although they are all based on active input from members. I anticipate there will be opportunities in the next cycle to build on this work. We are going to learn as we go forward. **FM**

Doha Postal Strategy

Goals

1 Improve interoperability of international postal networks

The UPU should ensure that postal networks can operate efficiently. This includes the postal sector's physical, electronic/digital and financial networks.

In the physical sphere, the efficiency and integrity of the global supply chain should be continually improved through an integrated and coordinated approach to addressing the issues facing the circulation of postal items.

2 Provide technical knowledge and expertise related to postal sector

Exploit UPU expertise to position the organization as a key forum for the exchange of ideas and best practices and the development of analytical tools, such as statistics.

3 Promote innovative products and services (develop three-dimensional network)

Postal operators that have diversified their activities and invested in the postal network's three dimensions have fared better than other operators. The UPU should continue to encourage its members to take advantage of opportunities for diversification and foster innovation.

4 Foster sustainable development of postal sector

Sustainable development has now been redefined more broadly for the next cycle. It should be understood in its broadest sense to encompass the sustainability of postal business models and not only environmental or social issues.

This explains why improvement of remuneration between Posts appears as a priority under this goal.

Regional priorities 2013–16

Africa

- 1 Improve quality of service of international mail; promote use of Quality of Service Fund
- 2 Stimulate growth of designated postal operators by developing e-commerce and parcel and small packet services

Latin America

- 1 Improve operational processes and implementation of quality-of-service plans
- 2 Reform postal sector

Asia-Pacific

- 1 Enhance quality of service, reliability and efficiency of postal networks
- 2 Improve remuneration systems between designated postal operators

Caribbean

- 1 Improve quality of service
- 2 Develop human resources through training

Europe and the CIS countries (RCC member countries)

- 1 Improve quality of service and efficiency of postal network
- 2 Develop e-commerce

Arab countries and observer

- 1 Modernize and diversify postal parcels service
- 2 Develop and modernize money transfer service

Europe and CIS countries (PostEurop member countries)

- 1 Enhance quality of service, reliability and efficiency of postal network
- 2 Improve remuneration systems between designated postal operators

.post takes a leap forward

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The UPU has chosen Afilias, a global provider of internet infrastructure services, as the registry operator for .post, the organization's privileged space on the web for postal e-services.

.....
By Faryal Mirza

The agreement, signed on June 1, brings the UPU's sponsored top-level domain (TLD) one step closer to implementation. Under the terms of the agreement, Afilias will operate the technological infrastructure required to enable .post to go live.

A registry operator handles the technical aspects of ensuring a TLD runs in a manner that maintains the safety and security of the internet. Among many behind-the-scenes activities, the registry maintains the master database of domain names and their matching internet protocol (IP) addresses for a particular TLD. IP addresses are the numeric equivalent of domain names; they enable computers to direct traffic to the address indicated by the domain name.

Crucial partnership

UPU Director General Edouard Dayan emphasized that choosing a strong technical partner was crucial to making .post live. "If we are able to adapt postal services to the new technical and commercial environment, we are creating value for our members and we will also be in line with the times in which we are living," Dayan said.

At the signing, Ram Mohan, Afilias' executive vice president and chief technology officer, said: "We are excited to be part of what is likely to be the next generation of the evolution of Posts and about the



innovation that is likely to be unleashed as a result of .post going live."

"We completely believe in the .post vision of preparing the postal services of the world for the future. We dedicate ourselves to help bring this to life," added Roland LaPlante, Afilias' senior

vice president and chief marketing officer.

Afilias specializes in providing domain-name registry services and internet infrastructure services to TLDs across the globe. It started business in 2001 with the launch of the .info TLD, which it manages along with the .mobi and .pro TLDs. Currently, Afilias provides services to 17 TLDs with more than 20 million domains, including almost eight million .info domains and one million .mobi domains. Afilias also supports the .org, .aero and .asia TLDs, among others.

Road ahead

Before .post can become operational, the .post registry must undergo a period of technical testing. Once complete, the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (better known as ICANN) will officially delegate the .post domain to the UPU. After this, it will be possible for eligible entities to register and use .post domain names, subject to specific application procedures and conditions of use approved by the UPU. **FM**

Inventory charts green future

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In the fight against climate change, knowledge is power.

.....
By Ruby Pratka

The UPU has released the results of its third global inventory of greenhouse gas emissions, estimating that the world's postal activities emitted 56.5 million tonnes of carbon dioxide (CO₂) in 2010 or 0.15 per cent of total global greenhouse gas emissions. As a comparison, the maritime sector produces 3.3 per cent of total global emissions or 1.02 billion tonnes of CO₂. The aviation sector produces 2.2 per cent of total emissions or 705 million tonnes.

Postal footprint

Posts in North, South and Central America, Western Europe, South Asia and Oceania account for 95.5 per cent of the sector's emissions. Postal operators in Africa, Eastern Europe and North Asia account for the rest.

2010's inventory was far more thorough than previous ones as it included rail and sea transport for the first time. Posts from 133 countries participated in the voluntary survey, nine more than the previous year.

Participation in the inventory can help Posts prove to clients and governments that they are taking measures to protect the environment. It also provides a springboard to take concrete action to go green.

"History tells us that those who do not measure do not go forward," says Patrick Widloecher, head of the UPU sustainable development working group during this work cycle. "You can't develop actions to reduce emissions if you don't know what your starting point is."

Mauritius Post has participated in each of the three carbon inventories. "As nature lovers, the inventory gives us a forensic insight into the amount of CO₂ that we emit and allows us to take corrective measures," says Mauritius Post's operations manager, Mike Peechen.

After the first inventory, the operator launched an ambitious plan to consolidate mail routes on the island

from 33 then to 16 today. "There was an immediate and significant reduction in emissions and fuel costs," says Peechen. Other measures include using energy-efficient lightbulbs and recycling batteries and waste-paper. "All these little things that we and other operators do form a big pyramid of action; all these little things together are going to change the world," he adds.

For La Poste du Togo, participating in the inventory is one way to contribute to the global push for sustainable development (see page 22). "It's part of the overall modernization of our operations, which will address pollution, eco-driving [and] sustainable purchasing," says Martin Kwasi, auditing director and sustainable development project manager.

Assistance

After receiving their inventory results, operators may ask the UPU for help in devising concrete ways to reduce emissions. Correos del Ecuador has taken that route. "The amount of emissions that our Post produces has caused staff and management to worry about the [environmental] impact of our work," says Diego Rendon, head of corporate social and community responsibility. "We still don't know what concrete changes we will make but we will make changes."

Correo Argentino took part in the inventory for the first time, consequently setting up a working group to tackle emissions. "We have already started to switch all our office lighting to energy-efficient bulbs," says Luis Brodin, international operations director at the Argentine operator.

For the next inventory on 2011, the UPU is cooperating with the International Civil Aviation Organization to gain a view of emissions stemming from airmail. **RP**

Ruby Pratka is currently an intern with the UPU Communication Programme.

Bright idea lights up Togo Post

During West Africa's 2007 energy crisis, waves of power outages hit Togolese post offices. Such happenings are now almost a thing of the past, thanks to solar energy.

By Ruby Pratkanis

Frequent power cuts would plunge employees and customers into darkness, cutting off inter-office communication for hours at a time. Postal financial services, which rely on an internet connection, also ground to a halt.

But Martin Kwasi and his colleagues noticed one light never went out: the sun. "We tested two solutions – generators and solar energy – and found that solar energy worked best," says Kwasi, auditing director and sustainable development project manager at La Poste du Togo.

Of the country's 80 post offices, 12 are now generating electricity from rooftop solar installations. The chosen offices are mostly in rural and suburban areas where power cuts are more frequent. "The panels power all of our equipment, notably the routers, modems,

computers and printers, which allow us to render services in real time," said Kwasi.

The panels have a steady supply of sunlight, as periods of three or more days without sun are almost unheard of in Togo. "We'll be able to progressively replace polluting generators with solar energy, which is clean," says Kwasi.

But the project's benefits go far beyond helping the environment. Several offices now provide mobile phone charging points, according to Kwasi, an essential service in a country where landlines reach only three per cent of the population. Some post offices in rural areas have become a popular gathering place in the evenings. Students, whose own homes lack electricity, come to study in front of the lit postal buildings, says Kwasi.



Postal operations in Lomé, Togo (Photos: Noel Tadeignon/EPA/keystone)



Solar panels are installed at a rural post office in Pagala, Togo (Photo: Bernard Bérout)

"In western Africa, there is almost never electricity in the villages and even the cities are sometimes affected," says Bernard Bérout of Swiss-based Ingénieurs et Architectes Solidaires, which fitted three of the solar installations. "The post offices are central to the villages." They are the centres of money and communication, where electricity is essential.

"We have been able to break the isolation of several rural communities," Kwasi adds. "It's a way to fight financial and social exclusion of vulnerable communities."

Future plans

The goal is to fit out 50 of Togo's post offices with solar panels. Kwasi says the main obstacle to the project's expansion is cost – each solar panel installation requires

around 21,000 CHF (USD 22,630). Eleven installations were financed out of the operator's own budget. The most recent, which came into action in February 2012, was financed by Swiss Post.

Kwasi believes solar energy could be the way of the future for African posts. "Especially for Posts in developing countries where the question of electricity is crucial, I would advise using solar energy. Particularly in Africa, where we have sun on a permanent basis!" **RP**

Ruby Pratkanis is currently an intern with the UPU Communication Programme.



Digest

Austria

Austria Post has expanded its direct mail network, acquiring a Polish unaddressed-mail company and a 26 per cent stake in a Bulgarian hybrid-mail specialist. Poland's Kolportaz Rzetelny claims a 36 per cent share in the country's direct mail market. Bulgaria's M&BM Express sent 65 million hybrid-mail items last year. **KR**

Chile

CorreosChile has rolled out its first 24/7 parcel terminal pilot project, Citybox. The Post unveiled five installations at petrol stations and supermarkets across Santiago, the Chilean capital. Customers making telephone or internet purchases with businesses linked to Citybox can choose which terminal their package is delivered to. When the parcel arrives, they receive an SMS and email with their access code and have three days to pick up their goods. **KR**



Czech Republic

Czech Post had a good 2011, with profits of 419 million CZK (23.7 million USD), compared to 263 million CZK in 2010. The Post's 33,202 staff will share a 200 million CZK bonus. The company said higher demand for parcel services and a contract to deliver newspapers were responsible. **KR**

Denmark

Post Danmark is partnering with pensions company, ATP, to start a national digitization project. The Post will scan physical mail into electronic documents, also taking over several local government functions, such as payment processing and pension distribution, potentially saving municipal governments hundreds of millions of Danish kroner per year. **KR**

Post Danmark has made parcel delivery more

convenient for customers with a new service that drops parcels off even if no one is at home. Customers may request parcels are left in a safe place, such as a shed or garage. More than 200,000 people have signed up for the service.

The Post is also being proactive in cutting its carbon footprint. In a period of four weeks, Post Danmark said it cut energy consumption from heat and electricity by nearly 20 per cent, saving 1.26 million DKK (217,000 USD) and nearly 300 tons of carbon dioxide. Post Danmark hopes to cut CO₂ emissions 40 per cent by 2020. **KR**

Finland

Itella is expanding its network of self-service parcel terminals in Finland and Estonia. This year, the Post will double the number of existing terminals in Finland to reach 100 and will add 10 in Estonia to reach 62 terminals. Itella has struck a deal with Finnish retailer, Kesko, to install terminals in its 75 current K-citymarket stores and any future stores by the end of 2013. **KR**

France

La Poste has expanded its e-commerce services by acquiring Mixcommerce, a Parisian company specializing in creating and hosting e-commerce websites. La Poste's plan is to incorporate Mixcommerce with its existing service, Box E-Commerce, to create a unit that will provide retailers with outsourced e-commerce services. La Poste's goal is to become a preferred partner for businesses seeking e-commerce solutions. **KR**

Great Britain

Royal Mail has invested 32 million GBP (51 million USD) to refurbish its largest and busiest processing centre, the Royal Mount Pleasant Sorting Office, London. New sorting machines mean the facility can sort 45,000 items per hour, up from 25,000. The centre also has four newly refurbished cancelling machines. **RP**

Italy

Poste Italiane saw a decrease in profits for 2011 but reported that revenues remained stable. Net profits declined from over one billion EUR (1.3 billion USD) to 846 million EUR, while revenues declined 0.5 per cent to 21.7 billion EUR. Postal revenues decreased five per cent, but Poste Italiane saw growth in its financial and insurance services. **KR**

Lithuania

Lithuania Post generated 405,000 LTL (148,000 USD) in net profits for the first three months of 2012, compared to a 2.2 million LTL loss in the first quarter of 2011. An increase in sales – more than 50 per cent from the universal postal service – and courier-service revenues were responsible. **KR**

Malaysia

Pos Malaysia has launched a new prepaid parcel service. Some 300 postal outlets now offer envelopes in two sizes and prepaid boxes in three sizes. The Post says all parcels will be delivered the next day, where possible, or within an additional one to three working days in less accessible areas. **KR**

Mauritius

Mauritius Post employees have been cleaning local beaches as part of its 240th anniversary celebrations, reports *Le Mauricien*. Employees collected 400 kg of rubbish from one beach and plan to clean three more during the next few months. **RP**

Norway

Posten Norge is treading deeper into the logistics sector as it takes over Fredrikstad Transport & Spedisjon (FTS). Posten Norge will oversee the company's shipping, forwarding, distribution and third-party logistics services. FTS's main functions are to receive, store, clear and distribute items that have come through customs. **KR**

Singapore

SingPost revenues increased by 2.2 per cent to 578.5 million SGD (461.5 million USD) in 2011. Inflation and a weak economy were said to have caused an 11.8 per cent drop in net profits, bringing them to 142 million SGD. While domestic mail volumes declined, international mail and philately kept mail revenues steady. Logistics and retail services saw increases of 8.6 per cent and 3.8 per cent respectively. **KR**

Spain

Correos will cut between 1,900 and 2,000 jobs this year after a loss of 164.4 million EUR (228.9 million USD) in 2011. The Post will try to move employees back to central government jobs and offer voluntary redundancies to lessen the impact. Correos president, Javier Cuesta Nuin, says services will not be affected. The Post will also invest 74.3 million EUR in infrastructure. **KR**

Sweden

PostNord is set to take over major Swedish newspaper distributor, Svensk Morgondistribution. The deal was made by the Post's wholly owned distribution subsidiary, Tidningstjänst AB. The latter will now manage the company, which generated net sales of 350 million SEK (54 million USD) in 2011 and distributes about 100 million morning papers. The acquisition feeds PostNord's strategy to

develop new ventures to support its mail business and increase use of existing delivery vehicles. **KR**

Sweden

PostNord's takeover of Green Cargo Logistics has received the green light from the Swedish competition authority. The takeover gives the Swedish-Danish operator access to one of Sweden's largest logistics companies, with over 250,000 square feet of warehouse space and logistics operations in sectors ranging from books to tyres. **RP**

Switzerland

Swiss Post's financial arm, PostFinance, now manages more than 100 billion CHF (106.3 billion USD) in customer assets. Postfinance is now the third largest financial institute in the Swiss retail market. With almost 1.4 million customers logging on to its e-finance banking platform, it is also number one in online banking in Switzerland. **KR**

United States

Falling mail volumes were at the root of a 3.2 billion USD second quarter loss for the **United States Postal Service**. While revenues from shipping and parcel services rose more than 13 per cent to 3.5 billion USD, standard and first-class volumes fell, leading to a drop of 1.8 billion pieces or 3 per cent of total mail volumes. **RP**

The USPS will keep open 3,700 rural post offices that had been slated for closure earlier this year. The offices and others in rural areas will operate with reduced opening hours, while post-office boxes remain accessible. USPS plans to gradually reduce window hours in 13,000 rural offices, completing the process in 2014. Once implemented, the plan is estimated to save the operator 500 million USD annually. **RP**

The USPS is trialling a new parcel terminal system. The gopost service will include 25 terminals in northern Virginia. One terminal was opened at a local mall and six units are already being tested at post offices. **KR**

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Erratum

In the issue of March 2012, mistakes were inadvertently printed in paragraphs 5 and 6 on page 18 as well as an error in the pie chart on postal staff on page 20. A corrected version of the article can be found at: <http://news.upu.int/magazine/archives/2012/>



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