



Macro-, micro- and long-term perspectives to the UPU: the three dimensions for international harmonization

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The presentation will be based on three points: macro-, micro- and long-term perspectives. The UPU is imperative for the modern world to maintain safe, speedy and reliable services for our lives and communications. What are the key points to understanding the importance of cross-border cooperation for an efficient system of postal services?

First, I will focus on the features of the UPU regarding international harmonization buttressed by the macro perspective. Transnational postal harmonization is *per se* hard to implement in a fully-fledged style because of the differentiated individual systems among member states. This point would be a commonality for international standard-setting bodies across the world. In forging international cooperation in postal services, it is not an easy task to discern which subjects should be standardized and which issues should be left for member states to apply a discretionary interpretation. I will discuss the extent to which we should converge the definite and common benchmarks in order to make international postal transactions smooth sailing.

Secondly, based on a micro-perspective, we will approach international harmonization at the UPU from the individual standpoint. Focusing on the diversified approach to making an international agreement at the UPU's various Congresses, the study considers the question from the member states' points of view. For instance, the UK and Japan would be candidates for insight, through analyses based on several publications including archival records. Although there are various approaches to postal services, we may be able to grasp the quintessential points of diversity between each different mailing system.

Thirdly, I will look from a "long-term perspective". A historical perspective of the UPU since 1874 shows the organization's magnificent achievements and the organization's 150th anniversary will be a monumental milestone in 2024. Focusing on the ninth UPU Congress in London in 1929 and the 16th UPU Congress in 1969, we will draw on the records to explain the situation at these respective moments, against the global background of political and economic circumstances. Through the British Postal Museum's archival records, as mentioned above, I hope to touch upon the reality of historical experiences to provide a clear message for the present and the future.

Nevertheless, the current status in 2024 is different from the historical experiences. We have a complex mission to pave the way to thrive as service providers, in tandem with the competition with private sectors. In a general sense, the common trend of privatization of postal services should be accepted. Therefore, services with quality, speed and assurance are indispensable to ensure reliable services among member states. To that end, free and open discussion in the UPU during both general and technical meetings is essential.