



NewsLetter



The Impact of COVID-19 in Postal Industry

COVID-19 has set the world upside down. Everything has been affected. How we live and interact, how we work and communicate, how we move and how we travel. It has affected every aspect of our lives. While the world is in lockdown, governments, epidemiologists, school administrators, businessmen and families around the globe are already preparing the next steps: how to reopen schools and businesses safely, how to drive and travel without infection spreading or catching, how to help those most affected by the pandemic – the millions who have lost their livelihoods or their loved ones, how to cope with it.

Posts across the world are increasingly being recognized and acknowledged as an essential service provider as people are forced to stay home to prevent the spread of the virus. Posts can offer those stuck at home a lifeline. Their physical reach, the trust and confidence they generally hold with the public and their knowledge of people and local communities make Posts an obvious partner to support the broader government response to the pandemic. Many have already assumed additional responsibilities, introducing new services, or expanding existing ones to lend a helping hand to those in need. Some of the most relevant postal services include wellness checks for the elderly, prescription medicine delivery, remittances, and pension payment delivery.

European Postal Operators unite to tackle COVID-19 pandemic

In response to the demand for a collaborative action to this emergency, a strategic task force which included members of the Management Board was formed, led by Jean-Paul Forceville, PostEurop Chairman. At an operational level, the Coronavirus Crisis Group (CCG) was efficiently organized. Both the strategic task force and the crisis group will be focused on ensuring the continuity of the operations, focused on resource challenges faced by its members and ensure the effective communication and spread of best practice.

PostEurop provides Business Continuity Managers and key contacts with the opportunity to key in pertinent data and participate in a forum through its existing extranet platform. The larger community is able to consult a dedicated coronavirus webpage (<https://www.posteurop.org/CCG>) accessible via PostEurop's homepage which contains a wealth of information. The Association works closely with the Universal Postal Union (UPU) and International Post Corporation (IPC) to monitor the impact of the crisis postal operators face internationally.

- **Preliminary findings**

European postal operators are making up an essential network across Europe and the world. They connect public authorities, companies of all sizes and consumers of all ages. Mail and parcel deliveries are at the very heart of postal enterprise. As part of our long-standing cooperation with the European Commission, in a recent report to Commissioner Thierry Breton, PostEurop had the opportunity to gather and share some preliminary insights that give an indication of how the pandemic has affected European postal operators so far.

The rapid spread of the coronavirus (COVID-19) and the containment policies aimed at managing the pandemic have changed the way we live and consume. In terms of transportation for postal operators, the closure of borders with added restrictions and commercial flight cancellations have resulted in delays. This is the new reality the industry faces for an indefinite period of time.

The larger actions have undoubtedly had a strong and direct impact on postal operators, and a negative impact on cross-border letter and parcel flows both within and outside the EU. For the vast majority of postal operators, we observe a decline in both domestic and international letter volumes. Some postal operators

have noted an increase in the volumes of domestic parcels in the e-commerce area while others are still seeing a decrease. For most postal operators, too, international parcel volumes have declined. These developments have the potential to have negative financial implications for different postal operators.

- **Freedom of transit for postal deliveries**

The current COVID-19 pandemic has led, for an indefinite period of time, to major disruptions to our daily lives and to the European economy. European postal operators understand the global challenges posed by the pandemic and are affected by the virus containment measures in place. It remains a priority for the health and well-being of postal workers, their families, customers, and the entire society. At the same time, citizens keep on relying on the post for deliveries. Postal operators are committed to fulfilling their universal service obligations and always delivering the highest quality of service possible. The industry therefore urges authorities to help postal operators maintain this critical infrastructure for all citizens and ensure the freedom of transit for all postal items to be transported throughout Europe.

The members of PostEurop are an essential factor for the European economy. They are the physical connection between different regions, consumers and producers, institutions, and citizens during these troubled times. The current COVID-19 pandemic has been causing unprecedented events and for an indefinite time period. Border restrictions or closures are being implemented in a global effort to curb the pandemic, with many countries going into partial or full lockdown. As a result, traffic disruptions cause postal delivery delays within and outside the EU. Nevertheless, postal operators constantly adapt their operations in order to ensure continuity of service.

Operators of the postal services form a global network. It is part of the framework of the Universal Postal Union (a specialized UN agency), and we rely on the smooth interconnection between countries, both in Europe and around the world. While we understand the need to combat the pandemic, we draw the decision-makers' attention to supporting the postal operators through all possible means. This would include, in particular, the need to guarantee the freedom of transit for postal items (letter mail, e-commerce, parcel, express) for all modes of transportation, particularly connections to road transport. This will significantly enable postal operators to continue to serve Europe-wide society in the most efficient manner and contribute to the health protection of our colleagues and all citizens.

- **COVID-19 impact on NEWPOST Project**

During the COVID-19 all the postal providers have searched ways on how to be fully functional via teleworking according to the strict measures that every country implemented in order to prevent the pandemic in spreading further.

PostEurop recommended the Consortium Members to adapt their work plan of projects such as NeWPOST Project, if necessary, to ensure the impact of COVID-19 on ongoing projects is minimized as much as possible. Essential meetings should, whenever possible, be held via videoconferencing instead of postponing them completely. Tasks can be shifted and reorganized, if needed. The coordinator should keep track of the changes so they can be reported in the periodic report.

There has been also a delay in reorganizing the workshops and trainings for the NEWPOST Project, some of them according to the measures in different countries, have been postponed until further noticed, the others have been organized in virtual meetings via Microsoft Teams, Google Zoom etc.

Partners



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