

# UNION POSTALE



September 2010

Moving the postal sector forward since 1875



Universal Postal Union,  
a specialized agency  
of the United Nations

# 3



# Regional quality takes off



## Mail Daters and Mail Roller Dater

### 1 Mail Daters Type 26 and 242

Standard head diameters: 30 and 35 mm  
Figure size: 3 mm  
Various date configurations

### 2 Ink Pad for Mail Daters Type 123

Plastic case with removable cover, 135 mm Ø

### 3 Dater D28c with Textplate

Date in figures, full year, stylo set.  
Figure size: 3 mm  
Textplate of steel: 29 mm Ø

### 4 Mail Roller Dater Type 130

Figure size: 3 mm  
Diameter of Roller: 26 mm  
Diameter of postmark: 29 mm max.

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Cover: Jared Muralt, BlackYard

# September 2010

Editor-in-chief: Faryal Mirza (FM)  
English and French editor: Rhéal LeBlanc (RL)

Contributors: Caitlin Brown (CB), Jérôme Deutschmann (JD), Ted O'Callaghan

Photographers: Sophia Paris, Alexandre Plattet  
Illustrator: Jared Muralt, BlackYard

Translation: Andrew Benson, James Holden, Summer Nesrallah

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Union Postale  
International Bureau  
Universal Postal Union  
P.O. Box  
3000 BERNE 15  
SWITZERLAND

Phone: +41 31 350 35 95  
Fax: +41 31 350 37 11  
E-mail:  
faryal.mirza@upu.int  
Website:  
www.upu.int

## Financial services

### More Latin American countries to offer Correogiros

A second tranche of Posts have signed an agreement in July in Madrid, Spain, to improve electronic money transfers in the Spain-Latin America corridor. Argentina, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, Colombia, Chile and Dominican Republic have signed up to Correogiros, following a successful project launched in 2008 between the Spanish, Chilean and Uruguayan Posts. The express international service promises to provide transfers within 15 minutes at affordable rates.

Participating Posts will use International Financial System (IFS), an application developed by the UPU's Postal Technology Centre, to join the worldwide financial network managed by the UN specialized agency for postal services.

Attending the signing, the UPU's director general, Edouard Dayan, said he was delighted with the role the UPU had played in bringing together these Posts around a strategic partnership concluded in 2007 with the Spanish government.

"It is in this way that the UPU must go forward by involving governments that make strategic choices for the postal sector and join us on ambitious and concrete projects," he said.

Innovation

The Spanish minister of development, José Blanco, explained: "Posts, far from remaining impassive to the increasing use of electronic communication among people, are offering new and better

services. The innovation and cooperation that characterize this project show a commitment for the future of public services."

Dayan added: "We find here all the partners, united around an integrated approach to provide the Spain-Latin American corridor with a new opportunity for facilitating money transfers through a service that is reliable, accessible to all without discrimination, secure and affordable."

In 2009, remittances worth an estimated \$58.4 billion were sent to Latin America and the Caribbean, according to World Bank data. More than one million citizens from the nine participating Latin American countries live in Spain. **RL**

## Environment

### Taking stock of postal CO<sub>2</sub> emissions



United States Postal Service's green roof in New York

The UPU continues its fight against climate change by taking stock of the carbon footprint of its member countries with a new questionnaire. This follows last year's survey, which enabled the UPU to publish its first global inventory of carbon emissions caused by Posts.

The latest questionnaire includes a wider range of questions to determine a more detailed carbon footprint of the postal sector. Along

with electricity consumption in buildings and vehicle fleet, the new survey will also determine the amount of carbon dioxide emitted by air conditioning, heat, travel, electric vehicles and staff commuting.

The UPU report on member countries' carbon footprint will be published at the end of 2010. The previous questionnaire evaluated emissions generated by postal-vehicle fleets and electricity consumed in postal facilities. According to its results, Posts emitted an estimated minimum of 26 million tonnes of carbon dioxide in 2008. **CB**

## The figure

# 4,100

...participants have taken courses on TRAINPOST, the UPU's online platform, between 2006 and 2010 (September).

## Editor's note

It's been 135 years since the first *Union Postale* went to print on October 1, 1875. From a black and white newsletter in French, German and English to a quarterly colour magazine in seven separate language versions, *Union Postale* has undergone many changes in look, coverage and outreach.

The magazine looks back on a long history, of which it is proud. The recent changes it has undergone show that it has firmly positioned itself in the modern world of communications. To an extent, *Union Postale* reflects the organisation of which it is the flagship magazine. Separately, it plays a crucial role in holding up a mirror to the postal sector, charting its rises and falls, its triumphs and failures.

As this issue's vibrant cover illustrates, we at *Union Postale* are proud of our history but are anchored in the

present and look forward to the future, all the while reporting on the postal sector. One way to ensure our Posts have a viable future is to improve service levels, as our cover story on the regional workshops to improve quality of service reveals.

Furthermore, to celebrate, dear readers, not only do we have a special cover but also two interviews instead of the usual one and a glimpse of what Bern was like when *Union Postale* came off the presses for the first time. That's all in addition to our regular coverage of news and UPU efforts to modernize the global postal network.

Special thanks to the readers, who took the time to write in the last few weeks. It is always good to hear from you and I hope that others will not hesitate to do the same. **Faryal Mirza, Editor-in-chief**

## Disasters

### Call to help Pakistan

As Pakistan faces the aftermath of the worst natural disaster in its history, the UPU has pledged financial help to rebuild its postal structure and set up a special fund for donations. The Union has already earmarked 100,000 Swiss francs (\$98,700) to purchase delivery vans and set up mobile post offices in the most affected areas to get emergency aid to victims. "We have to address the most urgent needs since we do not yet know the extent of the damage," says Abdel Ilah Bousseta, the UPU's director of development cooperation.

The August floods in Pakistan affected an estimated 17 million people, forcing many to abandon their homes, with the country's infrastructure in tatters in the worst-affected areas. According to Pakistan Post, over 1,300 postal offices were damaged or destroyed.

The UPU is in daily contact with Pakistan Post about the country's postal situation, and is keeping its

member countries informed through its Emergency Information System or EmIS. The country is still able to send and receive international mail.

#### UN family

As a United Nations specialized agency, the UPU is part of the UN's network for coordinating aid. The World Health Organization (WHO) has just requested the UPU's help in gathering as much information as possible on addresses, postcodes and maps. The WHO urgently needs this information to locate the country's health infrastructure, organize humanitarian aid and the work of experts on site.

#### Donate now

Member countries may donate to the special fund to assist the flood-stricken country. Donations should be sent to IBAN CH48 0483 5014 3996 6106 0 or CH58 0023 5235 9020 8452 0 and marked "Assistance Pakistan". For

more information, contact Keiji Takemoto on +41 31 350 31 10 or keiji.takemoto@upu.int. **JD/FM**

## Who's who at the UPU

### Moving the mail

**Name** Liz Phelan  
**Position** Standards support and administration  
**Department** Standards and Certification  
**Nationality** Irish

"Nowadays, you need codes to move your mail fast and efficiently and of course without them you don't have interconnectivity such as tracking. Along with standards, codes guarantee that Posts can carry out their core business of moving the mail," says Liz Phelan.

Phelan acts as the secretariat to the UPU Standards Board (SB) and its related working groups. The SB develops technical standards and electronic data interchange (EDI) message specifications that facilitate the exchange of operational information between Posts.

One of Phelan's main tasks is maintaining the reference databases, which let Posts and airlines exchange EDI messages. She is the focal point in publishing standards in both paper and CD format. When the SB or working groups meet for their quarterly meetings, Phelan helps to develop the agenda and drafts and coordinates many of the meeting documents.

Phelan likes being in contact with member countries. "I'm involved in operations where people require information and advice on codes, standards publications and help in interpreting the information. It's very satisfying to know that you can be of help," she says. **CB**

Photo: Alexandre Plattet



## Technology

### Postal services need broadband



Dayan (middle behind Paul Kagame) with his fellow commissioners (Photo: ITU)

At the first meeting of the Broadband Commission for Digital Development in July, the UPU said the postal network needs broadband to facilitate financial and digital inclusion. UPU Director General Edouard Dayan, one of 44 commissioners, said that broadband could help protect the security and authenticity of people on the Internet via the UPU's .post initiative.

The Commission was launched in May by the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

#### Universal access

The commissioners met in Geneva, Switzerland to discuss the importance of accelerating universal access to broadband networks, define a vision to achieve this goal and show how broadband can help the United Nations achieve their Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Commissioner Angel Gurria, secretary general of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, said governments share the responsibility of implementing broadband as they digitally connect post offices, healthcare networks

and other public services, creating a demand for more effective and efficient use of these critical services.

"The global deployment of broadband networks will be as powerful a transformational force for the 21st century as the progressive installation of electricity networks was in the first decades of the 20th century," said ITU Secretary General Hamadoun Touré. "Just as connection to the power grid is now seen as a basic element of social and economic empowerment, ubiquitous connectivity to broadband networks will be vital to the ongoing development of every nation worldwide."

The Commission discussed its 10-point action plan in development for the deployment of broadband. The meeting was co-chaired by President Paul Kagame of Rwanda and Carlos Slim Helú, honorary lifetime chairman of Grupo Carso. The report will be presented to the UN secretary general on 19 September during the MDGs summit in New York. **CB**

## Technology

### .post spotlight at security workshop

When .post eventually goes live, it will be the first top-level domain to utilise Domain Name System Security Extensions (DNSSEC) from day one to be the secure platform it intends to be. DNSSEC help to prevent phishing and other cyber crimes by signing and authenticating legitimate websites.

Relevant discussions took place at a two-day workshop in July at the Global Cybersecurity Centre, organised in association with the UPU, on the benefits of DNSSEC and the latest implementation initiatives to increase the security and reliability of the Internet Domain Name System. The Rome-based centre is backed by Poste Italiane.

Edouard Dayan, UPU director general, spoke by live video link to participants.

#### Crucially secure

Paul Donohoe, the UPU's electronic postal services manager, says DNSSEC is crucial to positioning .post as a secure platform. "For us to be able to ensure trust and security, we need the underlying technical infrastructure of the Internet to be secure as well."

Security is the major challenge facing the Internet today. According to VISA and other credit card companies, fraud worth \$10 billion is committed online every year.

Thanks to a longstanding cooperation between Poste Italiane and the UPU, the latter's member countries will benefit from the Rome centre's know-how due to a recent agreement.

The UPU made Internet history in December 2009 when it became the first United Nations agency to be granted a sponsored top-level domain. This is an Internet suffix like .mobi or .aero. **CB**

## The mailbox

### Mauritian emissions

**Write to us!**  
 We welcome letters to the editor. Post a letter by mail, or send it by e-mail, to faryal.mirza@upu.int, with your name, address, telephone number and e-mail address. When necessary, letters chosen for publication may be condensed.

Mauritius was mentioned in the Market Focus section of *Union Postale* in March 2010, referring to a figure of 280 tonnes of carbon-dioxide emissions generated in 2008 by the Post. We would like to point out that the figure for Africa as a whole is one million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>. Mauritius Post has undertaken to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and embrace the concept of "green growth" as advocated by the UPU. Concrete actions since 2008 are:

1. The reduction from 22 to 16 in the number of routes used to transport domestic mail.
2. Intensive training for our drivers, with an emphasis on eco-driving.

3. A campaign to encourage our staff to reduce energy consumption by switching off equipment not in use.
  4. Cooperation with authorities to improve the environment around post offices and throughout the island.
  5. Negotiations with a recycling company on the collection of disposable inkjet cartridges.
- We congratulate you on the quality of the articles in your magazine.

**M. Peechen**  
 Acting operations manager  
 Mauritius Post

## Global

### UPU gears up for Nairobi Strategy Conference



The Universal Postal Union will hold its Strategy Conference in Africa for the first time, where postal leaders will discuss the most important challenges facing the industry and steer the work of the Union in years to come.

From September 22–23 in Nairobi, Kenya, up to 500 delegates are expected to attend the conference. UPU stakeholders will take stock of progress made in implementing the current world postal strategy and tackle questions such as Posts remaining competitive and utilising their extensive networks to offer new services. **FM**

For more information, check:  
<http://www.upu.int/en/the-upu/strategy-conference/2010-strategy-conference.html>

# Asian quality takes off

The UPU's new approach to field support in quality of service is bearing fruit. Nine Posts participated in Asia's quality of service project in 2008 and 2009 and made giant strides in adopting the mechanisms needed to better manage and improve their service performance.



Now faster than a speeding bullet... or close Photo: Malaysia Post

Offering regional support on the ground to improve quality of service is a novel approach, requiring integration of the entire supply chain. And manager of the Asian regional project, Thakur Subhash Sinha, can talk for hours about what it takes to improve quality of service. From methodology to practicalities, Sinha is well versed in mail operations. He recently returned to India Post after working for five years as a lecturer on international mail management and quality issues at the Asia-Pacific Postal College, one of the sector's most important training colleges for postal employees and managed by the Asia-Pacific Postal Union.

For two years, Sinha was also the regional manager for Asia's quality of service project, developed under the UPU's new approach to field support. In this capacity, he took nine countries through the motions of learning how to improve their quality of service domestically and internationally.

The project generated positive results in the nine countries, whose Posts serve an estimated 500 million people and employ more than 100,000 staff. It's clear

that the quality of postal services in this region, as in others, has an overall impact on the efficiency of the worldwide postal network.

Over a series of six regional workshops held from August 2008 to December 2009, the designated operators of Bhutan, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Malaysia, Maldives, Mongolia, Laos, Sri Lanka and Thailand made excellent progress in structuring and monitoring their quality of service. India was initially part of the project but pulled out mid-way.

#### Traffic lights

Sinha helped participants with these improvements using report cards. The report cards tracked achievements in meeting 14 milestones using green, yellow and red colours. Just like the lights of a traffic signal, green meant the country was "on target", yellow revealed "partial results attained" and red indicated "improvements necessary". All countries were at red or yellow at the beginning of the project, but, after just four workshops, designated operators were already meeting most of the milestones (see box).

#### Capacity building

Developing expertise and capacity building was a main objective of the project, according to Sinha. And it was important to help countries adopt the mechanisms and tools to improve service and thus be eligible for performance bonuses under the UPU programmes for letter post (terminal dues), parcels (inward land rates) and EMS (pay for performance). This, he felt, would inspire confidence in participants' abilities to improve quality of service. "Sri Lanka, for example, was potentially losing bonuses equivalent to the salaries of 80 staff members for a full year. It did not meet the basic criteria, such as using barcodes or EDI messaging and setting home-delivery standards, to be eligible for bonuses from the parcel programme's inward land rates."

When Sinha took over the project in 2007, he says there was a great variation in quality of service among the Posts due to structure and economic development. Participants also did not understand international mail rules very well. "There was a total lack of quality-process management," he explains. "Also, despite having

good technology, countries were often not using it or not using it properly. We decided to look at the entire mail flow pipeline and we asked Posts to do a complete mapping of their mail operations to pinpoint weaknesses in the systems. We also reminded them of Article 20 of the UPU Convention, which says member countries must establish and publish delivery standards."

#### Sharing best practices

The six main workshops, hosted by the participating countries, covered every aspect of letter-post, parcel and EMS quality of service, including customs, security and the use of UPU applications, such as IPS (International Postal System), to manage mail. An additional series of specialized workshops were held at the Asia-Pacific Postal College, bringing together UPU and postal experts.

An important aspect of the regional project was to get postal experts from the various countries to share information and best practices. "There was tremendous learning from each other," says Sinha. "Thailand's quality of service, for example, is very good and its post

By  
Rhéal LeBlanc



Indonesia  
Post goes the  
extra mile



Sorting mail  
at Maldives  
Post

## 14 milestones

1. Implement continuous testing of letter-post delivery between major links
2. Test domestic end-to-end letter-post delivery
3. Adopt a postcode and addressing system
4. Implement process-management methodology
5. Adopt diagnostic testing equipment
6. Use barcodes on items and receptacles for all mail classes
7. Adopt IPS to better manage mail at offices of exchange
8. Use EDI messaging
9. Adopt and use customer service systems for EMS, parcels and registered letters
10. Use UPU performance reports on EMS, parcels and continuous testing results to identify weaknesses and make improvements
11. Implement UPU certification methodologies
12. Develop and adopt a security policy
13. Adopt a quality of service policy
14. Implement measures to better comply with customs requirements

offices are very clean and organized. And Malaysia showed how it uses radio frequency identification or RFID technology to check clearance of mailboxes.”

### Good students

Sinha is pleased with the countries’ progress and a firm believer in the UPU’s new approach to improving quality of service in the field. The approach “turned out to be a success and many of the apprehensions felt at the beginning proved to be wrong,” he says. “This has a lot to do with the design of the project, which places emphasis on capacity building and continuous sharing of operational best practices. It was also emphasized that the Post sending the mail, the one handling mail in transit and the one receiving it at destination must take ownership for the international mail in their leg of the journey, thus covering that journey from beginning to end in a responsible manner.”

By project end, all nine countries had implemented domestic end-to-end testing of mail delivery, developed and implemented security and quality-of-service policies and implemented measure to better comply with customs requirements. Eight of them were also now using IPS to manage mail at their offices of exchange as well as all required EDI messages. No countries remained in the report card’s red zone. The regional project also led to Bhutan setting up a postcode and addressing system and Bangladesh joining the EMS Cooperative, among other things. Eight of the nine participating countries also gained UPU quality-of-management certification.

### Top marks

Lars Vesterlund, a senior consultant in postal services overseeing the various regional projects, says the project in Asia was a tremendous success. “The project manager had the right theoretical and practical background. He was engaging and used straight-forward language with the participants,” he said. “The idea of sharing best practices over several sessions worked very well. There was a very open and good spirit in the workshops. At the end, it was amazing to see that all milestones on the report cards were out of the red and most countries had achieved green,” he added.

The UPU’s International Bureau, which monitors quality of service globally on letter-post, parcels and EMS service, has also noticed improvements. Christine Bétré-mieux manages the parcels programme. “More coun-

tries, such as Bangladesh, Bhutan, Sri Lanka and Indonesia, are using track and trace for parcels and exchanging electronic data to inform other countries about the dispatch of items. This is critical to improving quality of service. Countries better understand the UPU’s parcel strategy and realize that it’s not so hard to improve quality of service once you have a system like track and trace,” she says.

The EMS Unit is also seeing better results among some Asian countries in terms of on-time delivery and transmission of electronic data. These criteria are very important to customers, says Chokri Ellili, the EMS Unit’s regional coordinator for Asia-Pacific. Between December 2008 and June 2010, several countries made double-digit improvements in on-time delivery. Bhutan, for example, raised its performance by 36 per cent to 72 per cent, Indonesia went to 59 per cent from 43 per cent, while Malaysia achieved 94 per cent in June, compared to 82 per cent at the end of 2008. Malaysia Post also reduced late deliveries to a four-per-cent monthly average rate in 2009 from 7.2 per cent in 2008 and currently has 17 pay-for-performance partner agreements, which link quality of service to payment.

“This is significant because the more a country feels confident about its ability to deliver on quality of service, the more it concludes such agreements with other EMS partners,” says Ellili.

In terms of on-time transmission of data, practically all countries are in the low to high 90%. Three of the nine Asian countries that participated in the regional project earned EMS performance awards in 2009. Malaysia earned a silver award, while bronze awards went to Mongolia and Thailand.

For Sinha, a key element of the project was to be very honest with countries about their performance. “Sometimes, we had to be brutal. But everyone understood the importance of improving services.”

A follow-up workshop to evaluate progress since the end of the regional project is scheduled for 2011.

# What going regional means

The regional project on quality of service aims to build up local know-how, so that Posts are less reliant on external expertise. Its success is due to its practicality. As the workshops are already developed, project managers need only pick and choose the ones relevant to the region in question. “A workshop can be amended according to a region’s situation. We customize the project together with participating Posts,” says one of the consultants behind the concept, Lars Vesterlund.

Designated operators also learn how to plan for potential problems at all stages of the mail chain and how to solve them. “Was it the letter carrier, who didn’t collect the mail in time? Was it the air carrier that received the dispatch but didn’t have sufficient space on the aircraft? Did the expected flight never arrive? Has mail been detained at customs? Mail delivery can be delayed at all of these levels,” says Seydou Konaté, manager of the UPU’s letter-post programme.

After each project is completed, the starting and end points are compared to evaluate how far a region has come in terms of quality improvement, what problems remain to be solved and how the designated operators can plan to further improve quality of service.

The overall methodology was successfully piloted in West Africa from March 2007 to June 2008.

### Cooperation

Often countries in the same region experience similar problems. The project conducts on-site studies in these regions to enable designated operators from different countries to share best practices.

“It’s easier for them to learn from another colleague in the region than to learn from an external expert,” says Vesterlund.

The project also promotes the use of new technologies in postal operations. “New technologies are everywhere and we cannot ignore this in the postal sector,” Konaté says. “We encourage participating countries to incorporate information technologies and RFID systems, such as the UPU’s GMS, in their postal facilities to monitor mail movements more accurately.” **CB**



.....  
**Dayan (r.) greets postal staff (l.) as  
 Minister Féthière looks on**



.....  
**Work begins...**

# Jumpstarting Haiti Post

.....  
 Six months after the earthquake, Haiti picks up pace as its new mail processing centre opens in the capital, thanks to the generosity of the UPU and its member countries.

.....  
**By  
 Rhéal LeBlanc**  
 .....  
**Photos:  
 Sophia Paris**

On July 6, the new mail centre in Port-au-Prince was inaugurated in the presence of local and national dignitaries, including UPU director general, Edouard Dayan, and Haitian trade minister, Josseline Colimon Féthière. "This building is something tangible. The UPU kept its word and helped Haiti in its efforts to rebuild. On behalf of the president, the government and the Haitian population, I thank you from the bottom of my heart," said Féthière.

For his part, Dayan said: "The Post, because of its omnipresence and the services it provides to people and businesses, must be a priority in the devastated country's reconstruction efforts. Within the United Nations, we will continue to highlight the importance of integrating postal services in plans designed to stimulate Haiti's economy. Haiti needed emergency assistance and this help remains necessary. But today we must look to the future and develop the essential infrastructure the country needs, including postal services."

About 60 employees work at the 600-square-metre processing centre, where they handle letter-post items,

parcels and Express Mail Service (EMS) items, the Post's fastest service. The facility also acts as an office of exchange for international mail. All mail coming into Haiti and leaving the country goes through the centre, which houses customs too.

The new postal facility, which looks like an enormous tent, is designed to resist winds of up to 225 kilometres an hour and Zone 4 seismic activity, where there is a high risk of damage. For added safety, the structure has been solidly anchored at the base.

### **Optimism**

For his part, Edvard Despeignes, Haiti Post's acting director general, is optimistic about the future. "This new mail processing centre is a major step in helping the Haitian Post function more normally," he said. "Since the resumption of international mail services, volumes have been increasing. Because the earthquake had destroyed the Post's capacity to process mail at its main postal building, it was important and urgent to create an appropriate space to receive and expedite mail. The Haitian Post is now prepared to return to



.....  
Moving the mail



## Post on Haitian government agenda

.....  
Haiti's prime minister said he would make postal services "a priority for the government" at a July meeting with Edouard Dayan, the UPU's director general, in Port-au-Prince. Jean-Max Bellerive recognized the postal services' role in "connecting communities" and helping his government "create the national unity" essential to his country.

Dayan, the first UPU director general to visit Haiti, stressed that the work recently performed to re-establish postal services in Haiti "should not stop now". He said that the postal sector should be considered a priority for the country's development.

Josseline Colimon Féthière, Haiti's trade minister, assured the UPU of her commitment to developing postal services. She said modernizing the Post would be an important objective. "We have an opportunity to rebuild and we must rebuild well," she said. "We must do things differently and we must strive towards modernization and new offerings for customers."

Féthière added products were needed to speed up postal services, improve network interconnectivity and facilitate money transfers. "Every year, Haiti receives more than \$1.8 billion from Haitians living abroad. This is a market we must capture and the postal service, as a function of government, could offer this service (money transfers) at a lower cost," she said.

Féthière also said she was touched by the postal community's solidarity towards Haiti after the earthquake and appreciated the UPU director general's attending the inauguration of the new mail processing centre.

normal mail flows and anticipate an increase of local and international mail volumes."

The centre's equipment was purchased with donations from UPU member countries and the organization's normal budget. Some countries also donated sorting cases, work tables, bags, generators and postal vehicles.

### Disaster

The January 12 earthquake destroyed Port-au-Prince's main post office and the building housing the EMS service. Other post offices in outlying areas were also destroyed or severely damaged. The new postal installation was built as part of an emergency aid project managed by the UPU and developed with the generous assistance of the UN agency's member countries. The latter responded to the UPU's call for assistance and contributed more than \$500,000 to a special fund. They also offered human and material resources to help Haiti and its postal operator resume postal services as quickly as possible.

» See the photo gallery at: [www.flickr.com/universal\\_postal\\_union](http://www.flickr.com/universal_postal_union)

# Did the mail shape globalization?

.....  
Global commerce would be impossible without the movement of information – contracts, arrangements, plans, blueprints. Before the digital revolution transformed many of these things into bits and pixels, there was a postal revolution that improved the speed of information flow around the world.

.....  
By  
Ted O'Callaghan

When you check on the minute-to-minute activities of friends on another continent through a social networking website or read a newspaper report from a distant city, the data travels on fibre-optic cables. Those cables run under the oceans on essentially the same routes as the telegraph lines of an earlier century and the steamship routes that preceded them. The power of feeling connected to people, who are far away, also follows existing patterns. A writer in the 1830s marvelled at the impact of a letter: "Time and distance are annihilated. We are there." Another was astonished by the speed of the postal system: "The ink is scarcely dry...before we find in our hands...a transcript of our dearest friend's mind."

The extent of the globalization that occurred in the 19th and early 20th centuries, ending with World War I, has only been matched in recent years. As the impacts of the Industrial Revolution spread across the world, communication over significant distance took on new importance. Steamships and railroads had exploded the number of goods being traded around the world and facilitated personal mobility. The telegraph was a trans-

forming technology, but it was too expensive for the bulk of correspondence. The postal system provided an affordable means of communication for businesses and for millions of immigrants, while lucrative postal contracts helped underwrite the unprecedented capital cost of creating new transportation systems. However, the process wasn't seamless: creating an efficient system for global mass communication was a new challenge requiring innovative solutions.

### History

Thousands of years earlier, the Chinese, Egyptians, Persians and Romans had figured out how to communicate efficiently across the breadth of their territories through relays of couriers, but these systems were reserved for the state. In the Middle Ages, universities created their own private mail systems, which eventually crossed much of Europe, in part to ensure that students had a way to request tuition money from home. But the free flow of information was troubling to governments. "In Europe, the origins of the modern post office paralleled the rise of the nation state," writes postal historian Richard John.





British staff sorting letters in 1840 at a general post office, the time the penny post was introduced. Illustration: Hulton Archive

“Just as the central government gradually acquired a monopoly over the legitimate use of force, so it sought to monopolize the means of communication.” At times, private enterprises were encouraged, but the most successful were generally absorbed or quashed by government postal systems. Some were seen as threats to revenue. Others were feared as means of conveying secrets to enemies. By the mid-1800s, the system for international mail was based on a tangle of bilateral agreements between nations.

#### Public service

Meanwhile, the idea of the postal system as a public good, affordable to all, advanced in Britain in the 1840s, when Rowland Hill, a social reformer, examined the domestic mail system and proposed a series of changes that made it more efficient and accessible. Letters had previously been paid for by the recipient, necessitating a carrier to find that person and collect money. Hill introduced adhesive stamps, which allowed the cost to be paid up front, with rates that started at a penny. At Hill’s urging, the postal service began to charge by

weight rather than the number of sheets of paper and to move away from variable charges based on the distance that a letter travelled – almost all costs, Hill realized, are incurred at the beginning and end of a letter’s journey. Many of these changes were quickly copied in countries around the world.

The postal system’s value to everyday people was enormous. Nancy Pope, the historian at the Smithsonian’s postal museum, describes a letter from a Norwegian woman who immigrated to the United States: “She uses phrases like ‘I know I will never see you again in this life.’ Families have, through immigration, split, never to see each other again. And the mail is the link. It’s the one thing that keeps you knowing that that other person is still here on this planet.” People cherished letters but sending mail internationally remained expensive and complicated, so many countries faced significant pressure from the public to improve.

To send a letter abroad in the early 19th century required that a postal clerk calculate its weight in

ounces, grams, and in some cases zolloths, then look up the fee for each leg along the route. Because there were often numerous possible routes, and each leg of each route had a separately negotiated tariff, the cost of the letter and the time of delivery varied dramatically depending on which combination the clerk happened to put together. Rates from the US to Australia along the six possible routes were \$.05, \$.33, \$.45, \$.55, \$.60, or \$1.02 per half ounce, according to a report by the US Postmaster General.

#### Standardization

When an international congress convened in Paris to resolve the mess in 1863, the only existing example of an international governmental organization was a commission that had been established in 1815, at the end of the Napoleonic Wars, to ensure safe navigation on the Rhine. The Universal Postal Union was formed in 1874.

The UPU standardized the process for sending mail internationally by simplifying accounting and administrative procedures. It required that international mail be

sent along the fastest route possible. The unique fees for each leg of the route, negotiated by the bilateral agreements, were eliminated; transit fees were regularized and countries were compensated based on the volume of mail they moved. Many of the benefits of the organization only manifested with time, the result of ongoing interaction and incremental changes. The UPU began with 21 initial signatories and grew to include nearly all independent countries by 1914.

For all the change the UPU facilitated, a key distinction between the globalization of recent decades and that of the 19th century was reflected in the limits of the organization. The UPU oversaw what was effectively an inter-imperial world. The organization replaced many bilateral agreements with a single multilateral framework, but it only improved the connections among the existing domestic hub-and-spoke systems. Into the 20th century, mail between British West Africa and French West Africa had to pass through Paris and London.

#### Global blueprint

Nevertheless, the international cooperation inherent in the UPU created a blueprint for some of the institutions that form the bulwark of the global system today. Craig Murphy, a political scientist at Wellesley College, says: “These first intergovernmental organizations were a place where ideas about how to govern the world find many of their first seeds.” Many civil servants, particularly in Europe, saw postal, telegraph, rail and sanitation systems as keys to a future of health, prosperity, and peace, not just for their own countries but for all. They believed in the idea of efficient systems managed for public good.

For a time there was talk of turning the postal banks found in many countries into a currency exchange system that would facilitate international finance. “When John Maynard Keynes the economist was sitting at Bretton Woods (in 1944) coming up with the International Monetary Fund, the first vision of that had come from within the UPU. There were a lot of people, who had highly visionary ideas about how the world economy was going to develop and become interconnected,” adds Murphy.

This article was first published in *Qn*, a magazine from the Yale School of Management.

# Union Postale magazine then and now



Bern, old town, 1875

In 1875, a secretariat for the General Postal Union – the Universal Postal Union’s predecessor – opened for business. One of its first tasks was to publish a “special journal in French, English and German”.

On July 1, 1875, the Treaty of the General Postal Union came into force for 22 signatory states. Its new secretariat, known as the International Bureau (IB), was set up in Bern, the Swiss capital, and seat of the organization’s founding. On the ground floor of Bundesgasse 14 on what was described as the city’s “high street”, work began on September 15, 1875. The building had a noble neighbour opposite – the Swiss parliament building. At that time, about 40,000 people were living in Bern and nearly 10 per cent were manual workers employed mostly in the textile industry.

Six staff members were appointed to run the IB. The first director, Eugène Borel, came from the Swiss Post, and had an annual salary of 16,000 francs. He was joined by the French-speaking Arsène Morel as first secretary, previously from the Belgian Post, and a second secretary, Hermann Galle, from Germany. Joining them were a translator and two administrators.

## Birth of a journal

It is doubtful whether the secretariat was overjoyed at the prospect of producing a journal alongside all their other duties. According to the IB’s first management report, this “obligation” to provide a review in three languages was “difficult”. The first dilemma to resolve was whether to produce one trilingual review or three separate language versions of the same journal. The trilingual approach won and the decision taken to produce 16 pages monthly.

The first *Union Postale*, published on October 1, 1875, and focusing on the minutiae of setting up an IB, was a hit with its readers. The first run of 2,000 copies was exhausted quickly, leaving the IB to issue a second edition. The second month, 4,000 copies were printed but

the director feared that even this run would not be enough to assuage the demand.

However, Borel’s overall feelings towards this new journal seemed to have been mixed. “...aside from the editorial services, this publication requires a considerable amount of work from our staff and we thought it only fair to pay our translator his entire annual wage (for four months on the payroll),” he wrote.

## The magazine today

*Union Postale* 135 years later is printed quarterly in seven separate language versions and remains a small operation, managed by the IB’s communication programme. Just as Posts have seen their sector rapidly evolve since 1875, so too has the magazine adapted to the ever-changing media landscape and information needs of its readers in form and content.

Fruit market in Bern, 1875



# What *Union Postale* readers say today

Comments collected from the magazine’s most recent readership survey

“*Union Postale* provides information on the wide range of problems faced by Posts. That information is not found in other postal publications, which is why *Union Postale* has its place.”

“The UPU’s magazine has an appealing look, enhanced by the high paper quality, cover and attractive images. It’s a quarterly publication with

serious, educational, instructive and informative articles on the activities of the postal sector as a whole. Emphasis is placed on the latest news. The articles are accurate, concise, clear and easy to understand.”

“A magazine that regularly reports on specific areas of the postal sector, summarizes the main difficulties

and achievements of postal operators, and discusses operators’ activities and key projects.

“*Union Postale* deals with postal life better than any other source of information.”

“I read the magazine on the train when travelling to work!”

## L'UNION POSTALE

LE BUREAU INTERNATIONAL  
L'UNION GÉNÉRALE DES POSTES

1<sup>er</sup> volume. N° 1. Berne, 1<sup>er</sup> Octobre 1875.

Sommaire. — I. Sommaire. — II. Sommaire. — III. Sommaire.

**I. Introduction.**  
On sait que l'importante mission organisée par le bureau central institué par l'article 15 du traité constitutif de l'Union générale des postes, signé à Berne le 9 octobre 1874, fut confiée à l'administration impériale des postes de la Confédération suisse. Cette déléation se trouve inscrite en tête de l'article XXVII du règlement de détail et d'exécution pour l'exécution du traité conclu par le congrès postal de Berne, règlement qui porte également la date du 9 octobre 1874.

Par une disposition additionnelle insérée sous le même article XXVII § 1 du règlement, les hautes autorités contractantes prescrivirent en outre que le bureau international de l'Union générale des postes commencerait à fonctionner aussitôt après l'échange des ratifications du traité.

Mais par suite de difficultés matérielles dans le département fédéral des postes suisses prit soin, dès le 10 juin, de signaler l'existence aux diverses administrations de l'Union. Notification au bureau international, qui aurait dû suivre immédiatement l'échange des ratifications, et par conséquent avoir lieu vers le 1<sup>er</sup> juin 1875, ne trouva forcément retardée et ne put s'effectuer que le 15 septembre suivant.

# Making merger history

.....  
In 2009, the Posts of Sweden and Denmark announced their merger as a market first. Posten Norden, the resulting entity, has just celebrated its first birthday and its CEO, Lars Nordström, offers a look behind the scene.

.....  
By  
Faryal Mirza

.....  
Photo:  
Posten Norden

.....  
Union Postale: Why did this merger have to happen?

**Lars Nordström:** In order to get necessary advantages in the market, you have to go cross-border. This is true in every industry. There are economies of size, scope and scale to be had. There are possibilities to lower unit costs and the prospect of a stronger capital base. The challenge here is to find one model for two cultures, which is very interesting.

Has the merger started a trend?

Big companies naturally go cross-border in any industry. Ours has been an exception to the rule so far but things are changing. Some Posts might say that they are special and, if they turn into an international business, this jeopardises the universal service obligation. They might say that history says such mergers can't be done but this is wrong in my opinion.

The gap is increasing between what is happening in the market and the views of politicians. The latter expect things to go on as

they have for decades but trends like declining volumes call for a combination of e-communication and more traditional postal business. It is a cost game, facilitated by creating bigger units.

I would not be surprised if we see more mergers in five years from now or more government subsidies. If mail volumes are only 50 per cent of their current levels in five years' time, the only option to subsidize a loss-making machine is to let the taxpayer pay.

How is Posten Norden dealing with its universal service obligations?

It's not easy explaining to politicians that they can't take the notion of all services being provided everywhere for granted. The main challenge is to have the necessary profitability level in ordinary business-to-business areas to help us keep up.

In Denmark, the service level is high. Letters are delivered six days a week and parcels on five. It's easier to provide this service there than in Sweden because of its

geography and climate. In Sweden, it's more complicated and you need support from airlines to meet your obligations. The infrastructure in both countries is highly developed.

How is the Post regarded in Sweden and Denmark?

Posten Norden has a reliable reputation and access and service levels are perceived to be high. Ten years ago if you weren't at home, you would get a slip telling you to pick up your parcel at the post office. Now you get an SMS and our agents at grocery stores and petrol stations help maintain access to postal services.

The traditional Post brand has a great advantage as people recognise it. We considered abandoning the brand as it had an old-fashioned flavour since deregulation in these markets. However, we decided to stick to it as it distinguishes us from the competition.



How can one entity straddle two countries?

The Danish and Swedish Posts operate in different markets under different licences, supervisory authorities and service levels.

In Sweden, deregulation happened 17 years ago. If you and I wanted to start a postal operation there, we could. I wouldn't recommend it because of profitability issues but it would be possible. In Denmark, the market will be liberalized next year.

The two separate operating licences continue to allow both Denmark and Sweden to be represented at the UPU.

How has the economic crisis dampened the business in the Nordic region?

There has been a profound effect on mail volumes. It has speeded up electronic substitution. For example, many banks now provide statements on the web. E-communication is very developed in Denmark and Sweden, the former more so than the latter. In Denmark, we are still delivering 11 million mail items a day and in Sweden 20 million.

Postal operations across the globe are too slow on the e-communication front. We are a communication business, so we should be in e-communication. We are well positioned and can solve customers' problems.

Posten Norden is active in mixed communications. Many bank customers, for example, still want traditional written statements once a year and copies of their important transactions on paper. We have a special business responding to such needs called Informationlogistics. This is a mixture of e-communication and traditional communication and the biggest customers are banks, telecom operators and clothing chains.

In logistics, we are number one in the Nordic region. Our superior distribution network with agents and local representatives covers Nordic areas in a way other market players cannot.

What advantages has the merger brought so far?

In the first wave, there have been the traditional advantages, such as streamlining the procurement and human resource departments and IT systems. Here, we can save up to one billion Swedish kronor (\$0.1 billion). Around a year after the merger, we are on track, harvesting IT and procurement synergies and implementing cost-cutting at the traditional head offices.

What about job cuts?

We have about 47,000 employees, of whom about 500 were directly affected by the merger. However, a general decline in mail volumes would have led to decreasing the workforce in any case.

Interestingly, employee satisfaction is at an all time high. Our staff understand our new business model. They know times are tough but they are still motivated. This proves that we have been successful in communicating.

Turning now to you: how did a former banker end up spearheading an entity born from the historic merger of two national Posts?

I was chief executive of Nordea Bank, which was the result of a banking merger that created the biggest Nordic bank. This all started more than 10 years ago; two years later, I was CEO and spent five years developing the business. So, I know some of the tricks.

I was actually retired but was approached by the board – supported by the Swedish government – as it was important to them to hire someone with experience of cross-border mergers.

Why did you take the job?

Someone calls you and says you are the best person for the job – I was flattered.

# Isn't it time you subscribed?

Since 1875, *Union Postale* has been reporting news from the international postal sector for the benefit of stakeholders across the industry. These include regulators, chief executives, operational experts, post-office employees, strategic thinkers, suppliers, academics, philatelists and anyone else with a keen interest in Posts.

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People

# Witness to change

Teresa Rochas is a letter carrier in Tordesillas, near Valladolid, Spain. Over the past 21 years, she has seen the steady exodus of customers, leaving many buildings on her route empty.

**By**  
Itziar Marañón

**Photo:**  
Juan Miguel Paris Urcaregui

**How did you become a letter carrier?**  
Two of my brothers applied for the job at the same time I did. They thought that, as I was married with two children, I wouldn't be accepted. Anyway, I went along and applied and – *she laughs* – that's how it all started. I found I enjoyed the job very much because I like working with people.

**How does your day start?**  
It begins at 7.30 am, but I like to arrive a bit earlier to get the newspapers ready. Next, we sort the letters by village and by street and stick on the labels. Lastly, we take the registered post and parcels, load them up and set off on our rounds. It all ends around 1.45 pm but then we have to stay in the

office for a while to deal with the registered post that has been delivered or not, as the case may be.

**What do you like least about the job?**  
I wasn't so keen on working in town. I only did it once and it wasn't for me. I'll always be a country person. You deal with people on a more personal level there, they appreciate you and are friendly. The old women even ask me to read them their letters. They tell me about their problems and how their day is going.

**What is the most complicated aspect of your work?**  
The registered items because they take time but they're not really

complicated. What bothers me more is the weather because I feel the cold. I'm also afraid of snow after my car went off the road twice last year.

**You have been with this office for three years now. Was it difficult when you started?**  
A little, yes. You're expected to know from the start what people live in which houses because there are villages where some of the streets have no names or numbers. That means you have to learn them by heart.

**With 20 years' experience, you must have seen some changes?**  
I notice the ageing population in the villages. There are no children in Pedrosa and hardly any in San Román. It's very sad. In Pedrosa, for example, I walk a lot without delivering many letters as there are so many derelict buildings.

**Do you think you'll be doing this job for another 20 years?**  
No, mainly because of my eyesight. Also, it's hard to walk around for so long carrying a heavy load. I would like to continue but I don't think it will happen.

**Are you sometimes frightened?**  
Only when it comes to animals.

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# POST-EXPO 2010

6, 7, 8 October 2010  
Bella Center, Copenhagen, Denmark



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## facts & figures

<b>Spain</b>	
Capital city	Madrid
Official languages	Spanish, Basque, Catalan/Valencian, Galician and Aranese (Occitan)
Country population	46,951,532
Area	504,645 km <sup>2</sup>
GDP per capita	US\$ 35,116
Currency	Euro
Main industries	Tourism, services, construction, metals and metal products, textiles and clothing (including footwear), food and drink products, chemicals, electronic goods, shipbuilding, motor vehicles, machinery

<b>Buying basics</b>		
Milk	0.90 Euro	(1.14 USD)
Bread	1.00 Euro	(1.26 USD)
Coca-Cola	0.51 Euro	(0.64 USD)
Minced beef	6.25 Euro/kg	(7.90 USD)
Fish	14.90 Euro/kg	(18.84 USD)
Carrots	0.64 Euro	(0.81 USD)
Bananas	2.20 Euro	(2.78 USD)
Potatoes	0.39 Euro	(0.49 USD)
Beer (12 cans)	5.37 Euro	(6.79 USD)



**But don't they get to know you too?**  
I don't think they ever get to know the letter carrier. In fact, they can't stand us. I suppose it's because they see us going up to the letter-box. Once, an enormous Alsatian dog jumped on me. It was awful. And my sister-in-law, who's a letter carrier in Madrid, was also attacked by a dog when she was delivering a registered letter.

**What do you do in your spare time?**  
I'm very fond of dancing. We often go dancing on a Saturday. It's my way of recharging my batteries. When I'm a bit down, my boyfriend always tells me that I should go out dancing. I can dance until five in the morning.

# Making a quantum leap

Being in charge of any Post comes with a multitude of challenges but imagine those that come with heading up operations in the world's largest country. Alexander Kisselev, Russia Post's director-general, looks back on his first year.

By  
Faryal Mirza

Photo:  
Alexandre  
Plattet

Has the financial crisis had an impact on Russia Post?

**Alexander Kisselev:** The disruption of markets had an adverse effect on business. Losses included a decrease in mail volumes of about 10 per cent. Nonetheless, the Russian Post is seeking new opportunities. We have observed that companies are cutting spending on express delivery and looking for less expensive solutions. Under these circumstances, we are in a strong position as our services offer good value for money. Our Express Mail Service (EMS) and first-class express delivery are good alternatives to the expensive services offered by our competitors. Revenue from these services in 2009 is a good indicator with an increase of one-third.

At the end of 2009, positive modifications were made to the existing Russian customs legislation. No doubt this change will give a new stimulus to distance-selling from abroad. Now parcels containing goods from foreign mail-order companies destined for

a number of addressees undergo customs clearance as ordinary postal items. Previously, such parcels were treated as consignment goods and customs clearance of these imported goods might have required the presence of an authorized representative of a sending company.

What can Russia Post look forward to?

First, the Russian Post will place emphasis on its efficiency and comprehensive modernization of its infrastructure and for that we count on the state's support. To increase financial stability and find resources to subsidize loss-making yet important social services offered at marginal prices, we are looking to diversify our activities and develop profitable services.

We have started to work jointly with the state-owned corporation Vnesheconombank towards a new federal postal bank. This decision by the Russian government has two goals: to make the Post technologically modern and secure financial



.....

# “We are optimistic about our future.”

resources for infrastructure modernization. The second is to provide the Russian population with equal access to up-to-date financial products via the postal network.

What major challenges do you face in making this bank a reality?  
One problem is training the staff. There is a lack of educated banking personnel in some areas of the Russian Federation. However, we are introducing a distance-learning network, which will help train our personnel to provide banking services. The level of motivation of these people must be much higher than what it is now.

Have there been any recent developments in mail processing?  
Russia Post is looking into optimizing international postal traffic by establishing new offices of international exchange and expanding the existing ones by developing a logistics system for incoming flows. The use of metal cages is envisaged for optimum redirection of mail and for improving safety and reliability of its transportation under customs control.

We have also taken an important step towards reducing the share of manual labour. The first automated sorting centre in Russia, processing items for the central regions of the country, was put

into operation in December 2009.

How are you dealing with the universal service obligation (USO)?  
The USO with respect to domestic mail is still an obligation and a real problem for us because traditionally the cost of its provision is neither adequately paid nor compensated by the regulator from the federal budget. More than 50 per cent of our revenues are generated by mandatory social services, such as pension delivery, which are more or less regulated by the government.

Unfortunately, compensation is decreasing for all the socially important but unprofitable services we have to provide and they are money-losing services at the end of the day. We are now in discussions with the Russian government to try to get just reimbursement of our expenses for the provision of the socially important regulated services.

How are you financing the USO?  
What concerns the USO with respect to domestic mail, Russia Post practically provides it at its own cost. We recover losses only in the regions of the Far North. Somewhat better is the recovery of the Post's expenses for providing the universal communication service in respect of data transmission and

access to Internet, which is offered at the public access points of the postal offices within the country. For this, the Post is compensated by the universal service fund. This makes it possible to avoid serious losses.

Overall, we have to cross-subsidize all the losses made by the USO and obligatory social services with profits from commercially viable services we are developing, among which are catalogue and Internet sales. Russia Post provides a number of popular financial services. These include money transfers and credit repayments. For the latter, the Post works on the basis of agency agreements with the banks. For distant trading, we pick up orders, deliver goods and collect payment from customers. We have also rapidly developed EMS and now have about 16 per cent of the domestic express-service market.

Why do your competitors in express services have more market share than you?  
Our competitors are global leaders and have their own hubs and fleets in Europe, as well as quite different standards. The world-leading couriers mainly operate nationally, collecting in the Moscow and St Petersburg hubs, and they mostly deliver to the big cities with

good transportation possibilities. We are their partners when they have to deliver to distantly located places, which are hard to reach, even for us. This is when they appeal to Russia Post and we do the shipping but, of course, not to the standard transit time of DHL, for example.

The Russian EMS service has been part of Russia Post for five years with its own technology and business planning. We have seriously improved the quality of express delivery services, adding up to three per cent market share every year, and growth currently exceeds 35 per cent annually.

How do you manage a Post in the world's largest country?  
We have a huge, decentralised organisation and it is unfortunately difficult to manage. At present, we have 81 regional branches of the Post, each of which is managing its own networks in its region, covering the last mile to the last village. Of course, it is very difficult to effectively manage all the branches. Some of them are quite big and operating within the territories that are as large as several countries put together within Europe. For example, one of the regions is as large as eight Frances. The regions have their own features, specific climates, such as minus 55 degrees Celsius in winter, and have different logistical problems associated with the regions geographic position.

To improve management efficiency, we considered different ways to modernize the Russian postal network. We came to the conclusion that the most optimal model was to retain the existing branch network, to establish one more management link nominally called interregional centres, which will be assigned some part of the administrative functions, as well as to create business units, each of which will be responsible for a certain business line.

Is there anywhere in your business, which you look at and think “we are doing really well here and don't need to do anything”?  
Unfortunately, I am not ready to mention any specific division within Russia Post where I can say for sure that, yes, we are great here and working with maximum effectiveness. There are objective reasons for this, for instance, the serious underinvestment in the Russian postal industry over the last two decades. In turn, the shortage of financial resources does not allow the Post to upgrade its infrastructure by itself at the required level. The effect is a kind of a vicious circle. It is necessary to escape and we are deeply involved in this.

What is the future looking like?  
A government programme to modernize the postal infrastructure worth 101 billion roubles (\$3.3 billion) is being discussed, co-financed by the Post on a parity basis. With this, the Russian Post plans to modernize its logistics system, to create a network of automated sorting centres all over the

country's territory, to bring the motor-vehicle fleet up to date, have a considerable part of its production processes automated and to develop its IT infrastructure. This quantum leap in the development of the Russian Post will require a further optimization of the business processes and management procedures. Nevertheless, we have set clear goals and know how to achieve them. We are optimistic about our future.

## Beating the global financial crisis, Russian style

- .....
- strengthening its position on competitive markets as a result of other players seeing their positions weaken (express delivery, acceptance of payments);
  - making use of new market opportunities from the crisis (distance selling);
  - maintaining a stable position on traditional markets (postal services, subscription services, delivery of pensions);
  - using and strengthening the Post's image as a reliable postal operator, stable provider of a wide range of postal, financial and other services.

## Market focus

# Digest

### Belgium

**La Poste/De Post** has been rebranded bpost before the national market is liberalized in January 2011. One rationale behind the decision was to have a single name for the Post in two languages.

### Canada

**Canada Post** has opened its first new mail processing centre in 20 years in Winnipeg. Costing 100 million Canadian dollars (\$0.9 million), the facility will employ 400 staff when fully operational. The investment is part of a programme to modernise postal operations by 2017.

### Germany

**Deutsche Post DHL** has introduced the e-postbrief, which it says combines the speed of email with the reliability of traditional post. Customers have been invited to sign up for their personal email address with the suffix @epost.de to exchange e-letters securely and confidentially with other users. Deutsche Post DHL is also offering to print out and deliver an e-postbrief like a normal letter.

### Italy

**Poste Italiane** says that its *Postacertificat* service, an email-based messaging service, has the same legal validity as a registered

letter. More details can be found at: [www.postacertificata.gov.it](http://www.postacertificata.gov.it)

### India

**India Post** has become the country's first government organisation to be on Twitter. The operator has been tweeting regularly since April and has more than 5,000 followers. As well as responding to comments about lost parcels, the tweets also inform its user base about India Post products and services. More at: <http://twitter.com/postoffice-india>

### Ireland

An Post has launched a new mobile virtual network operator on home ground, called postfone. In conjunction with mobile provider, Vodafone, the Post has invested more than two million euros (\$2.6 million) in the venture. The latter is hoping to garner up to five per-cent share of the pre-pay market.

### Switzerland

**Deutsche Post DHL's** decision to have its logistics arm and not Swiss Post deliver its parcels in Switzerland has led to job cuts at the latter. Seventy jobs will be lost at the Basel exchange office as 4,600 of the 6,300 parcels processed daily at this facility will no longer pass through its portals. Swiss Post

had cleared parcels from Germany at this plant before channelling them through its parcel network.

### Russian Federation

**Russia Post** has entered the mobile phone business according to local media reports. In a pilot project, it is selling mobiles from 1,000 post offices in three regions.

### United States

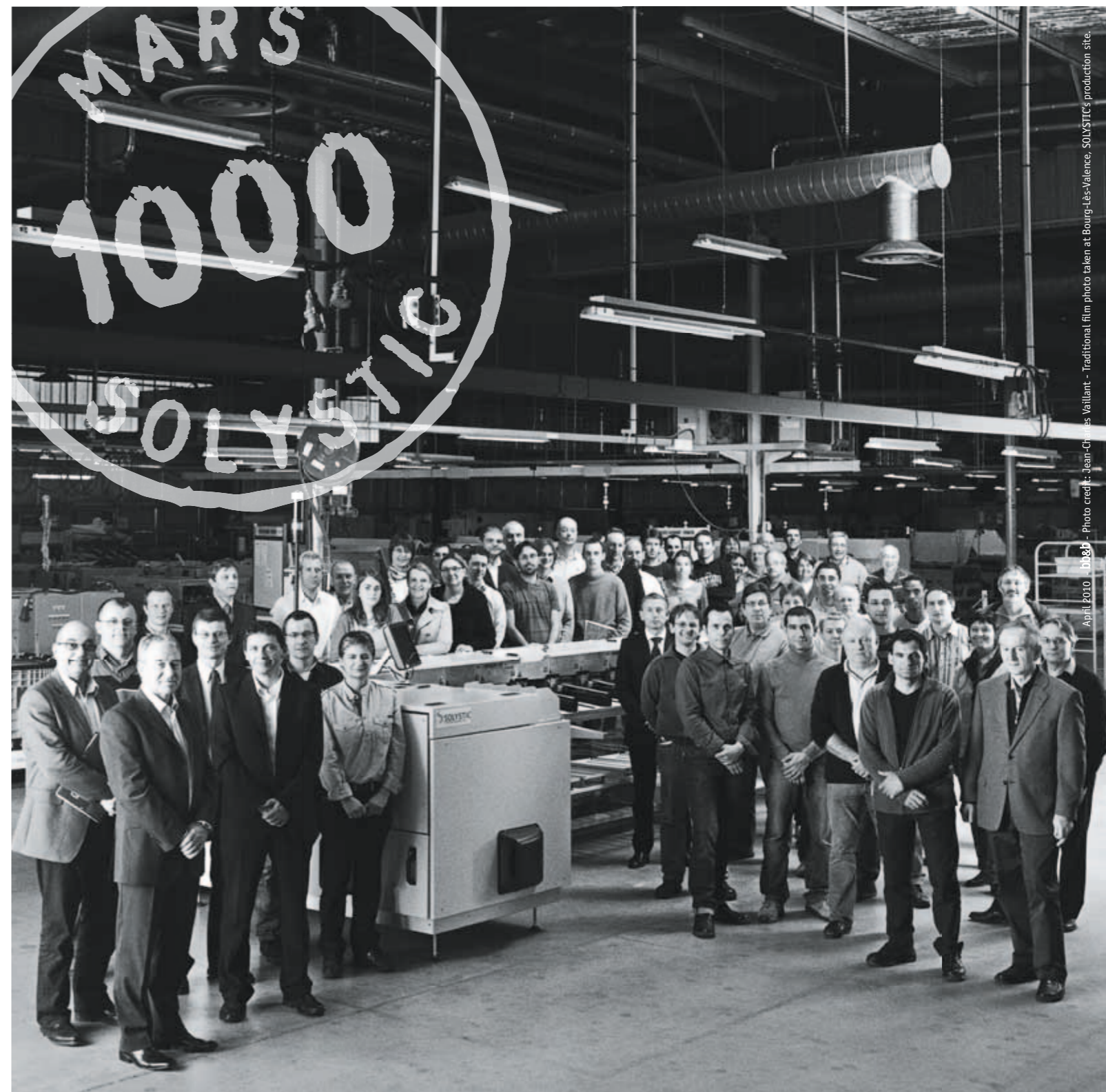
**The United States Postal (USPS)** and the country's commerce ministry have teamed up to help small and medium-sized local businesses to boost exports. The initiative will simplify access to a network of trade and shipping experts specialising in international markets.

**The USPS** has ended the third quarter of its fiscal year with a net loss of \$3.5 billion. During April 1 to June 30, mail volume was 40.9 billion pieces, a decrease of 1.7 per cent or 700 million pieces.

### Great Britain

**TNT Post UK** says it will increase its local workforce by a fifth in 2010.

Because your satisfaction is our satisfaction, **1000** thank yous!



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SOLYSTIC would like to thank all those who have placed their trust in us.

MARS is one of the very first machines to be designed for carrier route sequencing. For the last 10 years, the success it has achieved among postal operators has inspired our teams to go further. Therefore, as the 1000<sup>th</sup> MARS machine is installed, we would like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank you all.

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# Quality information from innovation



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