The European Social Dialogue Committee for the Postal Sector

Joint Declarations of the Social Partners

2001 - 2016
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Introduction

In the story of the Social Dialogue Committees, the Joint Declarations of the Social partners represent a very important moment.

Joint Declarations are, in fact, the final result of extended, often hard debates, animated discussions and pursued dialogue between employers and unions on matters jointly considered as important for the whole sector.

Joint Declarations, thus, represent common points of view resolutely reached by the Social partners and, due to this sharing, should be considered as the way in which the social dialogue finds a concrete form.

At the same time, Joint Declarations should be seen as starting points for new confrontation and dialogue in the relations between employers and unions at company level. Despite not mandatory in terms of implementation, Joint Declarations can anyway represent a guidance, a reference for the industrial relations of our companies.

This collection, which incorporates all the Joint Declarations so far signed (precisely from 2001 to 2016) by Social Partners in the European Social Dialogue Committee, aims at working as a consultancy tool able to inspire and support the social dialogue at national level.

The review of these Joint Declarations will help you become aware not only of the important matters faced, but also of the quality evolution of the Dialogue of Social Partners for the European postal sector.
Joint Declaration by the Conference of the European Social Partners from the
Postal Sector on Enlargement

Bucharest, 14 December 2001

1. The organisations of the postal sector's social partners from the Member States of the European Union and the applicant countries wishing to accede to the European Union, meeting on 14 December in Bucharest, are pleased to have organised this conference on enlargement.

2. The process of enlarging the European Union must be regarded not just as a major challenge, but also as a great historic opportunity for the citizens of Europe.

3. The postal sector's social partners declare their willingness to participate in the European social model, of which the social dialogue on a European level is an essential element.

4. The postal sector's social partners are prepared to assume fully their responsibilities and to play an effective role in all aspects of the European social dialogue.

5. The postal sector's social partners display their readiness to promote, in an adequate manner, the process of enlargement.

6. The social partners meeting in Bucharest will strive to find a way in which to pursue together an effective and sustainable co-operation within the postal sector.
Joint statement of the EU social partners in the postal sector
on Corporate Social Responsibility

Introduction:

In 1999 the Social Dialogue Committee for the postal sector was set up by the Postal Enterprises under the umbrella of PostEurop and UNI Europa Postal as Social Partners which represent employers and workers in the postal sector.

The Social Dialogue Committee was created with the following aims:

- To advise the European Commission on initiatives relative to social policy and on the developments in European policy which could have a social impact on the postal and allied services sector
- To encourage and promote social dialogue within the postal and allied services sector in order to contribute to the development of jobs and to the improvement of working conditions of those working in this sector
- To discuss appropriate structures to allow negotiations between the partners in the sector

The following initiatives were pursued by the Social Dialogue Committee:

- Equal Opportunities
- Training and competencies development
- Enlargement
- Corporate Social Responsibility
- Accident Prevention

Besides, the Social Dialogue has created a web-site with the financial backing of the European Commission. It groups together good practices gathered from postal services and trade unions on a theme which includes, training, development of skills and equal opportunities. It was expanded in 2005 with a new collection of good practices relating to life-long training and the social responsibility of companies.

Against the background of the ongoing CSR debate in Europe and the different initiatives launched by the European Commission in the last years, the Social Dialogue Committee has considered CSR a relevant topic for the Postal Sector. The first collection of good practices from 2003/2004 as well as the second one from 2005 contribute to this and form the basis of a joint conference held in Rome on 27th – 28th of October 2005. The conference was in line with other conferences to promote life-long learning, equal opportunities or the better understanding of Social Dialogue for the new member states.
CSR-Conference Contribution:

The conference in Rome contributed to the initiated process on CSR in the Postal sector. Its aim was to analyse and share the best practices collected by Employers and Trade Unions in order to identify the role of CSR in the Postal Sector and its possible further evolution and to foster the dialogue on CSR between them.

It brought together Representatives from the European Commission as well as high level Experts and the Social Partners to debate the key specifics of CSR, the impact on the Postal Sector and its further activities. The Conference included speeches, plenary discussions and a round table.

Objectives and key principles:

1. The Postal industry employs more than 1,85 mio. people in the European Union and contributes with around 0,9% to the GDP of the Union. The Postal Sector recognises its role as integral part of society, offering goods, services and employment. Therefore, the postal sector needs to operate in a responsible and sustainable manner, alongside other actors.

2. The Postal enterprises under the umbrella of PostEurop and UNI Europa Postal note the Commission Green Paper on promoting a European framework for Corporate Social Responsibility, the Commission Communication concerning Corporate Social Responsibility, as well as the Council resolution of 2-3 December 2002, defining CSR as a “concept whereby companies integrate social and environmental concerns in their business operations and in interaction with their stakeholders on a voluntary basis”.

3. Accordingly, the baseline understanding of the Postal enterprises under the umbrella of PostEurop and UNI Europa Postal is that CSR involves the integration of the principles and values of the individual enterprises in their internal methods and processes. CSR goes beyond compliance with legal requirements and contractual obligations, not replacing or avoiding them. CSR is about the core business activities of a company and is based on dialogue with stakeholders to balance their expectations.

4. Facing a continuous technological evolution and new market demands in a globalised world, CSR can help the Postal Enterprises to add value to their business.

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1 Application Report KOM/2005/0102/ Study of WIK-Consultants from 2002
2 COM(2001) 366 final
3 COM(2002) 347 final
4 Resolution of the Employment and Social Policy Council on CSR, Brussels, 2-3 December 2002
For example, by responding to customers’ and societal needs, by attracting and retaining good employees, by developing innovative products, by improving the quality of service, efficiency and productivity, by enhancing their brand and reputation in the eyes of their customers, employees and other stakeholders. Thus, ensuring their financial health and sustainability and contributing to the long-term progress in the European Postal Sector, not only on internal level, but also for the community/society in general.

5. The Postal Enterprises and UNI Europa Postal support a balanced and broad approach to CSR, including economic, social and environmental issues. In their social dialogue, both promote the contribution to the CSR agenda as one important means amongst many for achieving economic, social and environmental progress, and for integrating these concerns into the business practice of the companies.

6. CSR means an effort by all those concerned towards meeting shared objectives by entering into dialogue with all relevant stakeholders, including the company’s own employees as integral part of the company and their representatives. Therefore, CSR is not only related to external aspects, but also to internal aspects such as e.g. development of skills and competencies, health & safety at work, equal opportunities.

7. The Postal enterprises under the umbrella of PostEurop and UNI Europa Postal have already undertaken many initiatives related to CSR. The recent approaches to promote life-long learning, accident prevention, equal opportunities or the better understanding of Social Dialogue for the new member states have to be mentioned in this respect.

Besides, the significant number of collected good practices through which CSR is expressed, reflects the particular characteristics of the involved Social Partners. Both sides welcome these positive and active approaches and support the further implementation of CSR practices together with their stakeholders.

8. CSR is an ongoing learning process for the postal enterprises and stakeholders. The development of tools and practices is work in progress. The Postal Enterprises and stakeholders need to consider their approaches carefully and to choose tools which suit their particular culture, operational styles and needs and respond well to stakeholders’ expectations. Approaches might have to be refined and developed over time, responding to changing circumstances and expectations. Scope for flexibility, innovation and refinement is important for successful CSR.

Conclusions:
Responding to the challenge of promoting social corporate behaviour, the Postal Enterprises under the umbrella of PostEurop and UNI Europa Postal, would like to endeavour to:

- promote corporate social responsibility throughout daily business activities among our members, with a special focus on the new members.
- **raise awareness** about CSR in the European postal sector through dialogue, exchange of information, expertise, best practices and appropriate communication as CSR is a learning process, involving quality improvement over time,

- **inform on and further develop** the social dialogue between employers and employees at European, national and company levels, on appropriate issues related to corporate social responsibility,

- **familiarise** our members about existing good practices and initiatives. To make them easily available, the web-site of the Social Dialogue shall be used as platform for the collection, the diffusion and the exchange of this relevant information,

- contribute to the development of a CSR-approach in accordance with the **Lisbon Strategy**.

The outcome of the conference shows that corporate social responsibility is developing in the Postal Sector and that **CSR is an important concept for a company's management and work force and is helpful for company's long term success** as stated by the Commission in the green paper on CSR and the Lisbon Agenda.

The Postal Enterprises under the umbrella of PostEurop and UNI Europa Postal encourage the postal sector to **further develop and demonstrate own initiatives**, taking account of national company practices.

Inspired by the results of the **CSR-conference** the Social Dialogue Committee aims at continuing the work on CSR, identifying possible matters for the further evolution and next steps. The Postal Enterprises under the umbrella of PostEurop and UNI Europa Postal will keep track of the progress of the CSR initiatives in the context of the Social Dialogue Committee of the Postal Sector.

The Postal Enterprises under the umbrella of PostEurop and UNI Europa Postal share the objective of **long-term prosperity of the postal industry** in Europe and consider that an **essential ingredient** for its success within the field of CSR is a **mutual respect and understanding** of the individual interests of both companies and employees.

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Brussels, 23. November 2005

Ralf Stemmer  
President SDC Postal Sector

John Pedersen  
Vice-President SDC Postal Sector
Introduction

- The development of skills represents one of the essential levers for implementing the Lisbon strategy (2000) that aims at Europe becoming “the most competitive and most dynamic knowledge economy of the world, capable of sustainable economic growth alongside a quantitative and qualitative improvement in employment and greater social cohesion”.

- Defined at the European Council meeting of Barcelona in 2002, the « Education and Training 2010 » programme has defined the aims, and supplied the general framework of the European policies in this field. The declaration of Copenhagen in 2002, supplemented by the declaration of Maastricht in 2004, specifies the priorities with respect to professional training, in particular stressing the importance of transparency, information, and orientation, the recognition of skills and qualifications, and quality assurance.

- The social partners of the postal sector take these objectives into account, and consider the development of skills as an essential factor in adapting and developing postal activities and to facilitate enlargement process. Several good practice examples have been selected since 2000. These selections have been used, in 2000 and 2001, in workshops for exchanges, and round-tables, as well as in publications. A web site was set up in order to maintain and to share in a wider basis all the results of this work. In 2004, a contribution has been made by the Social Dialogue Committee for the postal sector in the annual report of the framework of actions on life long learning of UNICE [Union of Industries in the European Community]/UEAPME [European Association of Craft, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises], CEEP [European Centre of Enterprises with Public Participation and of Enterprises of General Economic Interest], ETUC [European Trade Union Confederation] signed in March 2002.
This joint declaration takes its place in extending these initiatives. Highlighting the strategic role of training and the development of skills in the evolution of the sector, this declaration deals with:

- The general context of change within the postal sector
- The contribution of training and the development of skills in the success of the evolutions
- The orientations proposed by the Social Dialogue Committee for defining and implementing the policies on training and the development of skills within the postal sector
- The follow-up

1- CONTEXT

The postal sector is one of the largest employers in Europe (1.8 million workers). It also represents an essential historical role in the economic and social life of Europe.

The postal sector has, for several years, been faced with a movement towards fundamental transformation.

This transformation is the consequence of the on going liberalisation of postal activities on the one hand, where the gradual opening-up to competition has been organised by two successive directives with the perspective of a possible full liberalisation in 2009.

But it is also on the other hand the consequence of the introduction of competing new technologies, the development of which in the field of communication constitutes a major threat to the activity of traditional mail.

The postal operators have adapted their activities and their organisation in order to confront these new challenges.

One of the methods of this adaptation consists of broadening the scope of their activities, by diversification in particular in the express, parcels, transportation and logistic sector.

But another method of adaptation is also - to an equal degree - to strengthen and develop the traditional activities of the sector.

- Firstly, to modernise the infrastructures and the methods of handling, carriage and distribution of mail so as to improve the competitiveness and the quality of the services provided.
- Secondly, to enrich the range of products and services offered, in the different fields, by relying on the use of new technologies, and by drawing, in particular, on acquired knowledge and on the proximity developed with the consumers.

In all cases, the emphasis is on developing customer satisfaction, in particular through the use of appropriate and flexible organisations that favour fast and personalised response according to need.

2. THE CONTRIBUTION OF TRAINING AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF SKILLS.

In this context of the in-depth and sustainable change of the sector, the development of skills in a life long learning perspective must be considered as a priority investment.

- The development of skills helps and supports the orientation of employees towards new activities and, in particular, the developing activities. In this way it assists the redeployments of activities and the professional mobility, aiming also at facilitating the transferability of skills.
- It is also vital for constant adaptation at the place of work. In particular, it helps the learning of new technologies, and in this way supports the modernisation and diversification of the postal activities.
- The development of skills allows the polyvalence of employees, and their autonomy, to be improved: it helps the setting in place of flexible and responsive work organisations, always favouring rewarding professional paths.

- Training and the development of skills can also contribute very directly to developing a culture and behaviour directed towards customer satisfaction.

- Training and the development of skills are, therefore, key factors of permanent adaptation of the activities, and of improving the flexibility of the organisations.

- They also constitute an essential component of the employability of staff, and of strengthening staff motivation.

3. - **Orientations proposed for defining and implementing policies concerning training and the development of skills within the postal sector**

- Several selections of good practices have allowed the policies and practices to be clearly shown which favour the development of skills according to conditions adapted to the needs of companies, and to the aspirations of staff. In 2006, these selections have been supplemented by a study carried out by the employers on the evolution of skills development needs and practices within the postal sector.

- On this basis, the European social dialogue committee for the postal sector considers that the following six orientations may be regarded as a priority for assisting the evolutions of the sector:

  - The first orientation aims at **narrowly connecting training and the development of skills with the professional activities**. In particular, this involves promoting work organisations that encourage the polyvalence and the improvement of qualifications.

  - The second orientation aims at **promoting the validation of training and the recognition of skills**, in particular when these skills have been acquired through the professional activity, according to identical or closely-linked terms to those in the external labour market.

  - The third orientation aims at **staff being broadly and continuously informed concerning training, the development of skills and professional career paths**. The implementation of this orientation relies, in particular, on a high level of management involvement, with the active support of services specialised in training.

    The fourth orientation aims at **sharing the responsibility of the development of skills between the company and staff**. In particular, this orientation assumes assistance in training being accessible outside working hours. This orientation underlines the role of social dialogue in training and skills development issues.

  - The fifth orientation aims at **developing the anticipation of needs**. This involves encouraging management forecasting practices, and improving communication on evolutions that can be foreseen.

  - The sixth orientation aims at **diversifying learning and skills development approaches**. By mixing several forms of learning and using notably the possibilities given by the new technologies, such a diversified approach allows to adapt the actions close to specific needs and improves in this way the efficiency of learning and skills development.
4. - FOLLOW-THROUGH

The signatories agree that a review of this declaration takes place after one year. During this year there will be the following actions:

- A collection of contemporary good practices from employers and trade unions linked to the six orientations will be made.
- The social partners at national level will be invited to take the orientations into account.

A report will be made to summarise the results of the actions taken. The report will be discussed and validated by the Social Dialogue Committee for the Postal Sector.

Brussels, 22 June 2006

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POSTAL SECTOR EVOLUTION WORKING GROUP

JOINT STATEMENT
ON POSTAL SECTOR EVOLUTION

1. The members of the Social Dialogue Committee for the Postal Sector discussed the evolution of European postal services in the light of the further proposed liberalisation. A workshop was held with the support of the European Commission (EC) on 2 April 2007 in Brussels entitled “Postal Sector Evolution within a changing communication market”. The subjects of Regulation, Social impact, Change management were dealt with in detail. The workshop built on the work conducted over many years by the Training/CSR Working Group of the Social Dialogue Committee for the Postal Sector and the Joint Declaration on Training and Skills Development signed in June 2006.

2. According to its Rules of Procedure, the Committee aims to advise the Commission on initiatives relative to social policy and on the developments in European policy which could have a social impact on the postal and allied services sector. Despite the large difference of views regarding the liberalisation process, the members of the Social Dialogue Committee for the Postal Sector want to address the important issue of the social impact of the Postal Sector Evolution.

3. The members of the Social Dialogue Committee for the Postal Sector emphasise that the postal sector is one of the largest employers in Europe (1.8 million workers). It also represents an essential historical role in the economic and social life of Europe.

4. The members of the Social Dialogue Committee for the Postal Sector take into account the competitive nature of the sector (including electronic substitution) and the perspective of proposed full market opening.

5. The significance of universal service is emphasised in this context. The members of the Social Dialogue Committee for the Postal Sector are mindful that the EC recognise that good quality affordable and sustainable postal services are essential for economic and geographical development and social cohesion in the European Union (EU) as vital infrastructure services in the communication sector as a whole. They agree that the regulatory framework in the EU shall ensure by
adequate measures the continued provision of universal postal services in each Member State.

6. The members of the Social Dialogue Committee are convinced that the proposed future market opening must go hand in hand with socially acceptable employment conditions. The postal sector is and will remain highly labour intensive and competition must not be based on wage dumping and worst working conditions.

7. The members of the Social Dialogue Committee for the Postal Sector therefore recommend that under the third Postal Services Directive Member States are invited to take measures in the mail market by encouraging collective bargaining or by regulation in compliance with Community law in order to prevent wage dumping and worst working conditions. Competition should occur on the quality of services in particular. Fair competition in the postal sector can only be successful if appropriate employment conditions are ensured and negative structural trends are prevented.

8. The members of the Social Dialogue Committee give mandate to the Postal Sector Evolution Working Group with the support of the European Commission:
   a) to collect and share practices of social regulation at national level,
   b) to analyse the evolution of working organizations and skills development policies,
   c) to discuss with the European Commission all the possible actions (including Social Funds use) aiming at facilitating and supporting the change management of the Universal Service Providers,
   d) to monitor the continued provision of universal postal services in each Member State.

Brussels, 22 June 2007

[Signatures]

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ACCIDENT PREVENTION WORKING GROUP

JOINT DECLARATION ON ACCIDENT PREVENTION IN THE POSTAL SECTOR

Introduction

The postal sector constitutes both a highly industrialised and labour intensive activity, particularly in the collection, sorting, transport and delivery of postal items, as well as in the service activities developed depending on the different diversification strategies pursued by postal operators. In the course of these activities, postal employees face certain hazards that need to be addressed in order to create a safe and efficient working environment. Occupational safety is therefore critical for the sector.

Confronted with common safety issues and taking into account the European, National and Postal policies on safety at the workplace, the Social Dialogue Committee believes cooperation between social partners is essential in promoting and enforcing accident prevention schemes.

For that purpose, the Social Dialogue Committee decided to launch at the end of 2004 a new working group which could address Accident Prevention issues.

The working group fulfils its role:
• by the collection and sharing of good practices of postal operators and unions in the field of accident prevention
• a continuing dialogue between the social partners
• by facilitating exchanges of experience between the social partners
• by encouraging the communication between accident prevention experts from both social partners in the sector by establishing and supporting network activities
• by benefiting from the advice and assistance from external experts and other sectors’ experience

Working Group Activity

As the first step of its work the working group prepared and circulated a questionnaire about the social partners good practices on accident prevention in the postal sector. The results of the questionnaire and the good practices submitted showed the great variety of safety issues addressed in the postal sector. The responses to the questionnaire also confirmed that the social partners are aware of the importance of accident prevention for such a labour intensive industry. One of the main conclusions was that there was a pressing need for the organisation of a communication forum to exchange views and to define objectives for the improvement of accident prevention in the postal sector.

Following the analysis of the questionnaire responses the SDC decided to organise a conference to debate accident prevention in the postal sector. The conference was held in Budapest with active cooperation between the social partners through all the phases of preparation realisation and follow up. During the conference there was an extensive debate with experts on the current and future situation of accident prevention in Europe. It was a way to jointly present the best practices of the social partners. The conference was complemented by an exhibition where the social partners displayed their latest publicity material and protective equipment.

The conference was a first step to building a communication platform among safety experts to facilitate the regular exchange of information. A glossary of terms was also created and there was a
wide dissemination of the work programme, the good practices collected, the conference proceedings and the final report.

The outcome of the conference was that the working group focused on two main tasks:

- it worked on publishing the relevant information from the conference on the website of the SDC
- it organised a technical seminar in September 2008 in Brussels. Experts from 10 countries discussed various issues including the analysis of accident records and risk assessment. In addition the European Commission presented the health strategy 2007-2012

**Enlarging the objectives of the Accident Prevention working group**

In order to keep building on a solid network of relevant experts from both social partners, the Social Dialogue Committee mandates the working group to:

- continue its tasks of collecting and sharing best practices in the fields of occupational safety and accident prevention, disseminating information on progress as wide as possible,
- promote and develop the network activities between experts from both social partners in the sector,
- identify new topics to be analysed and included in the future work programme,
- broaden its activity to health issues related to occupational safety and accident prevention. Such topics and the related detailed activity - to achieve agreed goals - will be contained in an annual working group programme.

**Conclusions**

Responding to the challenge of promoting a safe and efficient working environment and convinced that occupational safety is a key success factor for the modernisation process the postal sector is undergoing, the Social Dialogue Committee:

- believes that accident prevention calls for a shared responsibility of the companies, employees and their unions,
- emphasises the importance of preventative systems to reduce risk situations and accidents, while promoting a safer working environment.

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EUROPEAN SOCIAL DIALOGUE FOR THE POSTAL SECTOR WORKING GROUP CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Joint Conclusions on Environment

I. Introduction

The postal industry moves goods and information all around the world. Providing employment to 1.7 million people in the EU and generating an annual turnover of approximately 1% of EU GDP, the sector is of major economic and social importance.

Due to the nature of its core business with thousands of circulating vehicles each day, its widespread buildings and its intensive use of paper, the postal sector has a particular responsibility to minimize the environmental footprint of its business. Ready to be a responsible player and inspired by the EU 2020 agenda with its target of sustainable growth, it is committed through active environmental policies and initiatives to address these issues and become an integral part of the solution.

The postal operators and the trade unions are aware of the many ways in which postal business activities affect the environment and they are working to limit the impact. They are integrating principles of sustainable development into policies and programme to minimise the loss of environmental resources. This is also the result of rising expectations in terms of sustainability and green solutions from the main stakeholders from the sector: employees, clients, shareholders/market, consumer associations/ NGOs and the general public.

In this respect, sustainable development has become an essential element of the activities of the European Social Dialogue Committee for the postal sector and the social partners have commonly agreed to focus their 2011/2012 CSR work program on environmental issues. A questionnaire disseminated to the postal operators and trade unions from the 27 Member States as well as a technical workshop gathering environmental experts from within and outside the sector enabled to identify key initiatives put in place. These Joint Conclusions aim at highlighting the commitment of the social partners from the sector in environmental issues and at presenting some interesting practices put in place by postal companies and trade unions.

II. The contribution of the postal sector to manage the impact on environment

The initiatives presented below are the main output from the observations made in the framework of the CSR working group activities. The analysis of the collected data from the questionnaires and of the material presented during the CSR technical workshop enables to highlight a number of significant achievements.

Due to the nature of the postal sector’s core business, the primary focus of operators’ and unions’ efforts is the emissions of carbon dioxide. However, environmental policies also cover a broad range of aspects such as water, waste, local pollution.
Enhancing carbon efficiency as a top priority

- Vehicles

One of the biggest sources of emissions from the postal sector is the large fleet of vehicles it uses.

Many postal operators are reducing their emissions by developing a sustainable fleet with high energy efficiency and alternative fuels, with in particular an increasing use of electric vehicles, bikes, mopeds. Other measures put in place to reduce transport emissions include fuel conservation and reorganising mail routes.

- Buildings

Buildings account for a high amount of postal providers' CO2 emissions. In addition to post offices, operators possess many other premises such as sorting centres, hubs, warehouses, headquarters...

Postal operators are adopting a range of measures to reduce the emissions from postal buildings. Interesting practices are conducted in terms of ensuring that buildings satisfy energy efficiency conditions; requiring new buildings to use improved technology such as solar energy and specifying that energy will be generated from renewable energy sources.

- Subcontractors

It is a responsibility of the NPOs to make sure that their numerous sub-contractors also share and respect their commitment.

The objective is to give guidance on sustainability, identify relevant purchasing areas and give environmental aspects a higher consideration in major purchasing decisions.

Offering green products and solutions for customers

Operators and unions offer a growing range of carbon-neutral, carbon-reduced and environmental friendly products and services to help customers to reduce their carbon footprint and to generate value.

Among these environmentally preferable products is in particular the CO2-neutral delivery for mail, parcels and express items.

Other initiatives to improve the carbon efficiency are the use of carbon offsetting schemes by postal operators and unions to reduce their CO2 emissions. Under these schemes, the CO2 emissions produced are balanced out through investments in environmental organisations or projects such as wind farms or solar installations so that product or service’s net emissions are calculated at zero through offsetting and are ‘carbon neutral’.

Strengthening the commitment from all stakeholders

- Employment/ workplace
Postal operators and unions encourage energy efficiency at the workplace and the greening of the workplace. The development towards a green economy can have a potential for the creation of green quality jobs and the way existing jobs are performed.

- **Management system**

The postal operators’ use of ISO 14001 as environmental management system is a measure to improve operational efficiency and minimize the environmental impact of the postal business activities.

- **Training and employees’ engagement**

The objective is to provide employees with adequate green skills, knowledge and ideas in order to improve postal operators’ environmental performance.

Necessary training for postal employees based on management, e-learning and basic training courses combined with tailor made on-the-job-training is implemented by a large majority of operators. Training drivers in energy-efficient eco-driving practices is in particular a core initiative which has enabled to train thousands of employees. The intention is also to offer opportunities for employees to engage in initiatives that contribute to environmental protection. What is key is the awareness and acceptance of green change amongst employees.

- **Communication**

Constant communication with managers, employees, social partners, customers, suppliers is key to raise awareness about environmental impact of business and drive internal and external initiatives.

- **Stakeholders dialogue**

Postal operators and unions engage in dialogue with each other and with key stakeholders to find common interests, set up partnerships and regular contacts, share practices and better understand stakeholders’ issues through surveys, questionnaires. They also work together with external parties to develop sustainable solutions and foster technical innovation, especially regarding latest fleet technologies and standards.

### III. Conclusions

- Social partners acknowledge that the postal sector has a particular responsibility in mitigating the environmental impact of its activities; an engagement which requires concrete initiatives from all stakeholders. Beyond its activities, the postal sector dimension and its implication in the society also provide the sector with an important part to raise public awareness about the environment. The study done by the SDC within its 2011/2012 work program shows an active commitment from the postal companies and trade unions which is to be highlighted. There are many measures that providers can – and do - take to reduce their environmental impact and prevent pollution in all of their activities

- Environmental policies are levers of a sustainable economic performance and enable an effective cost-reduction based on the optimisation of resources consumption; they are key
to the long-term viability of postal companies. The development towards a green economy can also have a potential for the creation of green quality jobs.

- The commitment of all employees is crucial to ensure the success of the postal operators’ environmental policies. Therefore the Social Dialogue Committee considers that social partners can play a role in the on-going developments of this area in supporting communication, dialogue and change in attitude of employees and employers. Promoting sustainable jobs through investments in new low-carbon and resource efficient technologies and innovation. The social partners support the inclusion of environmental issues in social dialogue.

- The increased consideration of postal operators and trade unions for their environmental impact directly contributes to the general effort against climate change. Social partners of the sector commit to continue to follow the main developments in this area and to ensure a constant dialogue between all stakeholders.

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EUROPEAN SOCIAL DIALOGUE COMMITTEE FOR THE POSTAL SECTOR WORKING GROUP ON POSTAL SECTOR EVOLUTION

New Joint Declaration on Postal Sector Evolution

1. Objective

The purpose of this Joint Declaration is:

- to build on the Joint Declaration of 2007 and on the experience and knowledge learned by the social partners
- to fulfil the role of the SDC to offer advice to the European Commission
- to support the continuing evolution of the postal sector in the final stages of the implementation of the 3rd Postal Directive leading to full market opening in all EU Member states in 2013.
- to support the development of sustainable postal services including the provision of universal services at affordable prices as defined in the Postal Directive
- to monitor that the social clause in the 3rd Directive is adhered to in both letter and spirit
- to promote and support social dialogue in the postal sector at both European and national levels

2. Introduction

The 3rd Postal Directive concludes the process of liberalisation of the postal market in the EU. Full market opening took place on 1 January 2011 in 16 member states and the remaining 11 will open their markets on 1 January 2013. During the course of the liberalisation process competitors to the traditional NPOs have entered the market. These companies often rely on business and labour market models that differ considerably to those of the NPOs.

The market opening has occurred at the same time as a significant decrease in letter mail volumes which was further accelerated by the global economic crises.
The post sector is in a process of continuous and profound change which has lead to an intensive reorganization process of the NPOs, coupled with modernisation and diversification of activities.

The evolutions in the sector have social consequences, both quantitative in terms of reductions in headcount and qualitative in terms of the diverse employment models in place in the various member states.

The shared aim of the social partners at European level is to accompany the ongoing change process at the national level specifically in respect of training, internal and external re-deployment based on a dynamic social dialogue within the NPOs.

The 2007 Joint Declaration underlined the importance of “fair competition in the postal sector”. The SDC has put in place an Observatory of the postal sector since 2008. There have been two projects in this period co-financed by the European Commission, PostEurop and UNI Europa. After these projects which have enabled social partners to collect substantial data on the ongoing transformation, this new Joint Declaration aims at formalizing a common evaluation of the situation and at defining key principles to accompany the change.

3. A Shared Assessment

The social partners acknowledge that the postal sector will continue to change rapidly with an impact on all NPOs, irrespective of the diverse situations that exist across the EU.

The social partners acknowledge that one of the main drivers to support change and the delivery of quality postal services is a quality workforce, motivated, trained and adaptable.

The social partners recognise that NPOs and competitors have taken varied approaches to the challenges and opportunities arising from liberalisation of the market and decrease of mail volumes.

The social partners are aware that the provision of universal postal services at affordable prices has always been at the heart of the Postal Directives.

Social partners are convinced that change management will continue to be a necessary tool for the evolution of the sector and its long-term sustainable economic development.

The social partners realise that there needs to be a balance between an appropriately rewarded workforce and the requirement for adaptability to the new market circumstances. Enhancing competences and employability as result of a joint effort between managers, employees and Social Partners is important.
4. Principles to accompany the transformation

In order to accompany the ongoing transformation of the sector, social partners support the principles below:

- To better anticipate the ongoing evolutions and their consequences on the provision of postal services and on the organisation of work, employment and skills. This necessitates adequate policies accompanied by a constructive social dialogue.

- To recognise that the management of change can benefit from country specific social dialogue. The implementation of this policy relies on constructive co-operation between the social partners.

- To develop the employees’ employability to promote their internal and external mobility as a shared responsibility of the social partners and of each employee. Training, re-deployment programmes and internal communication, notably based on the full use of information and communication technologies, will contribute to the goal of quality postal services.

- To encourage investment in the sector, in terms of modernisation of operations to address physical and electronic substitution and to improve the adaptability of the work organization in order to better cope with new customer requirements and to increase productivity.

5. The way forward

The social partners have monitored the social evolutions in the sector since the Joint Declaration of 2007 and plan to proceed with this work in the future, especially in the member states where the social dialogue concept is less developed.

The social partners emphasise the need for competition to be fair and that they will continue to monitor the regulation of the postal sector, also in social terms.

The social partners recognise that a single solution to the challenges and opportunities in the sector cannot be applied in every member state. They call on all postal operators and trade unions to implement the principles contained in this Joint Declaration and to share experiences to ensure mutually beneficial learning processes amongst EU social partners, taking national circumstances in to account.

The social partners commit:

- to raise the awareness of key stakeholders of the social impacts of change.
• to continue to monitor the provision of the Universal Service
• to disseminate widely the results of the social observatory
• to maintain the social observatory and to provide updated information via the SDC web site
• to ensure a continuous process of observation
• to collect selected good practices and to disseminate widely

Brussels, 18 April 2012

Dominique BAILLY  
President SDC Postal Sector

John BALDWIN  
Vice-President SDC Postal Sector
Context and main challenges

The liberalisation of the European postal market and the competition faced by the National Postal Operators (NPOs), coupled with the ongoing decline of mail volumes, has resulted in deep and continuing transformation of the sector. The NPOs have adapted their activities to the new context introducing new technologies and diversifying in products and services to better meet customers' needs and to face the changes. In most cases this has been done with the involvement of the trade unions who have recognised the need for positive action to challenge the threat in employment and responded positively. The Social Dialogue has in most cases accompanied the changes still playing an important role in this respect.

For the postal sector this evolving situation could mean, on the one hand, the creation of new jobs while developing the need for new competences. On the other hand, that the classic activities of the sector have been deeply impacted upon and have been required to adapt to the new context.

This situation, with particular regards to the impact on jobs and skills and the evolution of training programmes, has always been, and continues to be, at the core of the analysis, research and work of the SDC “Training & Skills Development Working Group”, since its creation. For this research the Declaration of Copenhagen was the basis of the Training working group that concentrated its attention on skills and jobs considered as key for the sector.

The SDC Joint Declaration Training and Skills Development of 2006 took into consideration the objectives of the Lisbon Strategy. It identified six orientations to more clearly define and support the implementation of policies to develop skills and competences aligned with new Jobs.

In this context, the initiative of the European Commission “New Skills for new Jobs” (2008) is to be considered as a key reference for the SDC Training working group. In the years 2012-2013, by means of the project funded by the European Commission “Matching Skills and Jobs in the postal Sector: Reflections of the European Social partners”, the challenges of skills' needs and skills' and jobs' matching in key areas of the sector, from an employer and trade union perspective were examined on the basis of a change management approach. With this study, the key competences required in new and classic activities of the sector have been investigated. Analysis was also undertaken of
the situation concerning competence certification and their transferability within and outside the sector.

### Main shared findings

The project of 2013 “Matching Skills and Jobs in the European postal sector: Reflections of the European Social Partners” enabled the Social Partners the opportunity to collect and share a number of practices implemented by postal operators and trade unions.

The practices and experiences discussed show that the Social Partners are aware of the increased need to follow, adapt and enhance the competences of employees in the current context. In this sense, it is essential to further develop tools to better anticipate skills and jobs needed in the future. At the same time, in view of the diversity of these experiences, Social Partners recognise that a single solution, a single approach to skills and jobs matching cannot be applied for all the European NPOs. The project has also highlighted the need to continue investigating the matter with particular regard to areas of the sector where changes and development could be of more specific importance.

This project, in the framework of the work which has been conducted for several years by the European Social partners, has enabled both parties to draw some shared key findings and principles:

- The social partners of the European postal sector, perhaps more than in the past because of the pace of change in the sector, are aware of the importance of skills needs anticipation, skills and jobs matching, training and re-skilling policies and programmes to face the changes in the sector. The parties also encourage early engagement and involvement of social partners in this work. This awareness goes hand in hand with the diversification process within NPOs’ where new services and products have been developed in order to respond to the changing market conditions and customers’ needs. The adaptation of skills and competences can be considered as an essential answer to manage the changes in and challenges for the sector. The availability and development of skills which meet market demand is relevant in order to produce a suitably qualified workforce.

- In this context, training and skills development should seek to answer the employees’ needs so that they can become responsible for their professional career. It should also ensure the performance of the employees and strengthen the competitiveness of postal operators. The Social Partners are convinced that the development of skills as well as the skills and jobs matching play a key role in internal and external mobility of the employees, under a framework of lifelong learning.
• Re-skilling, up-skilling and redeployment measures are necessary to support the orientation of employees towards new activities within the company/sector or outside the company/sector. The classic activities of the postal sector will be managed by means of updated competences. This means that training, re-training and skills needs anticipation should be seen under a change management and lifelong learning framework. New skills and new competences will be needed for emerging areas of activity of the sector like IT, e-commerce activities, insurance and financial services. For these developing activities, besides re-skilling and up-skilling, the postal sector needs to be able to attract people with the necessary skills.

• Skills and performance assessments of employees are growing in importance for matching skills and jobs and should be seen as a continuous exercise. Nevertheless, to ensure adequate skills and job matching, the employee’s full potential should be investigated. The analysis of the employee’s potential is particularly important for elderly employees as it allows the opportunity to retain knowledge and experience in a succession plan context whilst at the same time acknowledging the challenges of an ageing workforce. This also provides for younger employees to develop a considered and appropriate career path.

• The development of competences should be integrated into an overall approach of professional evolution. Indeed, organized career paths can give employees the opportunity to acquire diversified experiences and to develop a wider range of competences. The professional evolution and the enhancement of skills should go hand in hand, ensuring the adequate articulation between training and mobility, providing an appropriate commitment to the shared objectives of the employers and trade unions.

• In the respect of the different roles, the Social Partners recognise that there is a joint responsibility among companies, trade unions and each employee in implementing training and re-training programmes and measures. Under this approach additional and innovative means of training, with, in particular, e-learning, mentoring and tutoring should be developed and fully utilized.

• There is a growing awareness and more experience on the recognition, validation and certification of skills, and their transferability, within the company/sector and outside the company/sector from the Social Partners of the postal sector. They are considered as an important tool to provide job security, to better support the employees’ redeployment and to enhance their employability.

• The importance of skills development in order to better face changes and challenges of the sector is also reflected in the role of the Social Dialogue in supporting skills and jobs matching. The increased
development of training and re-training programmes as well as the effective cooperation and communication between all stakeholders are important in the development of training measures tailored to skills requirements and in order to foster innovation and job creation.

The Social Partners warmly invite all the postal operators and the trade unions to implement the principles contained in this Joint Declaration, to make their respective experiences available, by means of the SDC postal sector website, and to further raise awareness and draw attention on the matter.

Next Steps

In this context, the Social Partners jointly commit:

- to continue working through Social Dialogue on Matching Skills and Jobs, being inspired by the 2013 project outcomes which have been jointly developed and shared.

- to continue monitoring the evolution of skills and jobs matching in particular in terms of improving the employability of employees under a change management approach.

- to investigate in more details, also by means of the European Commission financial support, specific areas of activities of the sector which emerged as key from the 2013 training project.

- to disseminate among key stakeholders the results of the 2013 initiative on skills and jobs matching as well as the outcomes of future investigations.

- to make all the collected material available as widely as possible and to encourage its use.

- to continue promoting the key role of Social Partners to support the role of training and the strategic importance of matching key skills and jobs.

Brussels, 21st November 2014

Dominique BAILLY
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Jens SAVERSTAM
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SDC Postal Sector
Europe is ageing. The demographic trends across Europe show a steadily ageing population due to the combined effect of decreasing birth rates and continuous increase in life expectancy. According to Eurostat, the size of the working age population in Europe is set to reduce by 50 million by 2060. If not addressed, such trends constitute a serious challenge to economic growth and public finances in the decades to come.

The European postal sector with its approximately 1.7 million workers will be equally affected by demographic challenges in the future. The demographic trends indicate a current median age of the European postal workers of 44 years. The share of workers aged 55 years and more has continuously increased from 2000 onwards in all postal operators. This evolution occurs at a time when the postal sector finds itself in a process of change at a high pace. This process requires diversification of the workforce in its skills- and mind-set to adapt to new business models. Furthermore, the process of change relies on an increased attention to work ability of all workers and demands from them high levels of productivity and flexibility to adapt to change.

At the same time postal operators seem to be more exposed to the issue of demographic change due to the specificities of their organization. First of all, postal workers tend to have a life career within operators and typically always work in the same function. Secondly, with the ongoing restructuring and especially decreasing mail volumes, there is a lower rate of renewal of the workforce. There is therefore an overall reduction of younger workers in the workforce and this is compounded by recruitment freezes and increase in legal retirement age. This leads to a constant increase in the ageing of the sector’s workforce which is even more challenging as it occurs in a labour intensive industry. In this sense, the mail delivery function seems to be affected the most in the future by the effects of demographic change due to the increasing retirement age combined with the physically strenuous nature of this function.

Against this background, the social partners are increasingly aware of the relevance and issues around demographic change. They highlight that future skill shortages may arise as a result of demographic trends and that the constant ageing and the imbalance of the workforce can also have growing consequences in terms of absenteeism.

In this context the working groups “CSR” and “Occupational Health and Safety” initiated the project “Managing Demographic Challenges and Finding
Sustainable Solutions by the Social Partners in the Postal Sector”. The objective was the identification of trends in the demographic landscape of the European postal sector and to raise awareness of the impact of demographic challenges on the postal industry.

**Main generation management activities in the postal sector**

The social partners have been able to observe numerous practices put in place within the sector and recognize the importance of efforts already done to manage demographic change through a number of different strategies relevant to age management within postal operators. These measures cover several key human resource aspects:

- Well-being and health at work policies related to the physical but also psychosocial work environment, including work organization and workplace culture. Among these measures, it appears that there is particular emphasis on preventive health management and individual measures to adapt work tasks and environment in cases where needed.

- Initial and on-going training measures belong to the core of measures established at company level to ensure that all workers have access to and avail themselves of the training opportunities being offered.

- Knowledge transfers in cooperation with social partners by means of coaching or tutoring schemes. This approach enables experienced employees to help younger ones integrate into the company environment and the professional context. Most operators are attentive to the importance of mixed age teams in business units to promote inter-generational exchange.

- Flexible working solutions in the postal sector with a large focus on temporal flexibility. A number of companies in cooperation with social partners retain early retirement measures, particularly for certain groups of workers to achieve a higher participation of older workers in the labor market.

- Age positive recruitment, career development policies and awareness building initiatives along with increased communication about active ageing. These initiatives in the postal sector contribute to build up an intergenerational management strategy.

- Assessment of the financial impacts of the ageing workforce in particular with regard to pension entitlements, salary and health and safety costs, carried out by some operators to further reflect on adapted strategies to generation management.
**Recommendations**

Despite the wide range of relevant measures which have been developed, mainly individual ones, and which can have a positive impact on extending working lives, social partners recognize that most postal operators do not seem to have adopted strategic approaches to generation management for the moment. Moreover only in few countries operators have done a more detailed exercise of overall strategic future workforce projections taking into account future labour force needs and changes of the sector.

Yet, this exercise is even more important as some postal operators have to deal with a growing share of older workers against the context that recruitment freezes do not allow for a rebalancing of the workforce, while others increasingly experience a “war for talent” when recruiting new hires.

In this context, the social partners draw the following recommendations:

- The ageing workforce in the sector requires an increased awareness within postal companies and social partners in the future and the development of projections to anticipate and manage demographic evolutions.

- Generation management practice in work places should be supported by active contributions from both sides of the industry, employees and employers.

- Companies and trade unions are encouraged to cooperate on the maintenance of workability. This promotes the overall well-being of the worker, ensures the companies levels of productivity and capability of innovation. In addition, companies and trade unions should work together on measures of employability supporting a workers’ overall capacity for occupational mobility, internally and externally in a context of change. They are among the most effective ways of enabling the extension of working lives.

- To keep an older workforce in good shape and to diversify their skills and mind set it could become essential in the future to develop training measures and methods of learning adapted to the needs of older learners.

- Change management policies should be enabled to maintain high levels of motivation, safeguard health and safety at the workplace, ensure adaptability and updating of skills throughout the employees’ working life.

- A long-term sustainable approach would require company strategies on generation management. These strategies should be reflected in the corporate culture and management values and be supported by all stakeholders, managers and social partners. This should also include a clear communication approach to support and enable successful age management.
Next steps

Social partners jointly commit:

- to disseminate widely the final results of the 2014 initiative on demographic change among key stakeholders
- to share the collected good practices and encourage their use
- to continue monitoring the topic in the framework of the future activities of the Committee

Brussels, 17 July 2015

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EUROPEAN SOCIAL DIALOGUE COMMITTEE FOR THE POSTAL SECTOR
WORKING GROUP ON POSTAL SECTOR EVOLUTION

Joint Declaration on the role of Social Dialogue in the transformation

1. Context

The postal sector has experienced over the last few years a broad transformation both in terms of intensity and of duration, in particular due to the decrease of mail volumes driven by e-substitution and in a context of postal liberalisation. Faced with these evolutions, national postal operators have had to diversify and modernise their activities in order to adapt to technological changes and changing consumer behaviour.

These evolutions are occurring within the labour-intensive sector with an important physical presence across all countries. This changing environment has brought about both new challenges and new opportunities. It has had important social consequences varying amongst countries, in particular in terms of employment, competences and organization, for postal operators and postal workers alike.

These consequences are even more important as the need to find new levers of diversification has led postal companies to further evolve in new and competitive markets.

In this context, the success of the postal transformation has been supported and facilitated by the involvement of social partners and constructive social dialogue, at all levels.

For this purpose, it was essential for the Social Dialogue Committee (SDC), consisting of National Postal Operators’ representatives under the auspices of POSTEUROP and national postal Trade Unions’ representatives under the auspices of UNI Europa Post & Logistics, to understand better the role of social dialogue in this transformation process through an EU co-funded project conducted in 2015-2016. Moreover in view of growing importance of new activities in the sector, the project also aimed at training the European social partners on new services, in particular e-commerce and other innovative ones.

On the basis of this project in which postal operators and trade unions from 16 EU Member states were involved, the Committee brings to the fore the following joint points.

2. Main lessons learnt

The European social partners have noted that national collective labour agreements signed in the postal sector, mainly at company level, are numerous and cover a wide range of measures. Effective social dialogue, in particular through the negotiation of agreements, contributes positively to accompany the process of transformation.
The Committee has noticed that the agreements encompass several variables, such as employment and working conditions, wages as well as the status of employees. These measures have been used diversely and to different extents by postal operators and trade unions. The Committee observes that the content of the labour agreements results from trade-offs between social partners which take into consideration the interests of both parties.

The European social partners have identified that these agreements are enshrined into a broader dynamic context and depend on the stage of the operators’ transformation as well as on their overall strategy.

The Committee has found that agreements set a wide range of concrete measures to be implemented as well as follow-up measures. They have observed that there are specific measures to monitor the respect and the implementation of the agreements.

The European social partners highlight that social dialogue is not limited to the conclusion of agreements, which enable to set fundamental principles in support of the transformation process, but also that day-to-day social dialogue at all levels is essential.

The Committee notes that effective social dialogue and the conclusion of collective labour agreements at national postal operator level has enabled employers and trade unions to avoid a “race to the bottom” in terms of employment levels, wages and labour conditions. Collective labour agreements and their negotiation paved the way for the transformation and adaptation of postal activities to occur in a socially acceptable manner as social partners’ respectively derived trade-offs between competitiveness and increased flexibility imperatives.

The European social partners received consistent training on new services. This training has enabled them to identify that there is a real need for continuing with this topic and that social partners should be more aware about the development of new activities in the sector, in particular digital and e-commerce services. Training on such new activities could be an important tool to increase awareness of the social partners on the matter.

3. Recommendations

The European social partners emphasize the rapid pace and intensity of postal sector transformation. They highlight that in such a labour-intensive sector, social dialogue is an element of high importance for the transformation process both to anticipate and support the evolutions. It takes place at all levels, the European, national and local ones, depending on the nature of the transformation process.

The Committee underlines that social dialogue should take into consideration the interests of all the stakeholders to arrive at the right balance between increased flexibility and good working conditions.

The European social partners stress that social dialogue should fit into a wider and continuous process in line with the broader context and the strategy of postal operators.
The Committee reinforces the importance of ensuring the respect, follow-up and concrete implementation of social dialogue outcomes.

The European social partners support the deployment of collective agreements in accordance with national law and practices.

The Committee considers it is important that social partners are well informed of the evolution of activities and the strategy of postal operators. In this framework, it underlines the need for an adequate follow-up of the impact in terms of jobs and skills of the ongoing evolutions.

The European social partners stress in particular the importance to maintain the awareness, knowledge and competences of social partners in relation to the development of new services. For this purpose they encourage the development of tools to follow the current developments in the sector. In addition they invite all stakeholders to use the tools, in particular the online training, developed in the framework of the Social Dialogue Committee project.

Lastly, the European social partners aim to encourage effective social dialogue at all levels as well as the implementation and wide coverage of collective bargaining at national level to accompany in a socially responsible way the imperative of postal transformation. The Committee will carry out its actions on the following points:

- Monitor the main social evolutions in the sector,
- Observe the social impact of the diversification of postal operators,
- Monitor changes in skills and other requirements,
- Follow-up the development of new services and their social impact.

Brussels, 1st December 2016

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SDC Postal sector, Joint Declaration on the role of Social Dialogue in the transformation