



## SDC WORK PROGRAMME 2021-2023

Postal Sector Evolution Working Group

## THE WORLD OF WORK IN THE POSTAL SECTOR IN 2030

POSTAL CHARACTERS FOR THE FUTURE

PostEurop<sup>•</sup>

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**EUROPEAN SOCIAL GRANT AGREEMENT  
DIALOGUE COMMITTEE 2021/2023  
FOR THE POSTAL SECTOR VS/2021/0034**

**SDC WORK  
PROGRAMME  
2021-2023**

Postal Sector Evolution  
Working Group

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With the support of the European Commission  
DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion



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The production of this publication was made possible thanks to the efforts provided by the members of the Postal Sector Evolution working group of the European Social Dialogue Committee of the Postal Sector and with the contribution from PostEurop, CESI and UNI Europa.

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# 1. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The success of the project largely relies on the project team and the fruitful cooperation between European social partners. Thus, we would like to address a special thanks, on the trade unions' side, to Stéphane Chevet from CFTD, Dimitris Theodorakis from UNI Europa, Hendrik Meerkamp from the European Confederation of Independent Trade Unions (CESI), and on the employers' side, to Maja Mostarčić from HP - Hrvatska pošta d.d., Jurgen Joos from DHL Group, as well as Anthony Deydier and Margaux Meidinger from La Poste Groupe, who led the project and implemented it. Their commitment contributed to make this project a success. PostEurop also played an essential role in the project management and the organisation of the main events. A special acknowledgement goes to Antonino Scribellito and his team including Waqas Ahsen and Angjelo Andoni for their support at each step of the project.

We also express our gratitude to the 3 postal operators which hosted the different workshops which were essential to the project success: HP - Hrvatska pošta d.d., Österreichische Post, PostNL and Cyprus Post. Their warm welcome ensured productive work.

We also thank the consultant InProcess, who supported us throughout the different phases of the project. They aggregated the outputs from the social partners that led to the creation of the postal characters. They also participated in the facilitation of the break-out sessions, along with Madeleine Ferland and Samia Bouzenad from La Poste Groupe. Lucie Guitton from La Poste Groupe assisted the finalisation of the project.

The constant support of the European Commission, especially from DG EMPL which followed each step of the project, was crucial to deliver this project. We would also like to thank Guillaume Roty, from DG GROW, for giving us at the final conference the perspective of the European Commission on its foresight study on the postal sector.

We are particularly grateful to Botond Szebeny, Secretary General of PostEurop, and Oliver Roethig, Regional Secretary of UNI Europa, for formally opening the project final conference, sharing their thoughts on the opportunities and challenges in the postal sector.

We also would like to thank the other speakers that intervened during the final conference to give us strategic insights on their way of looking at the future. First the speakers external to the sector, Marie-Hélène Chavigny from Carrefour, Sarah de Greef from Yeast One and Nicolas Petitjean from Collectivehood, who shared experiences about the transformation opportunities in other sectors. We also had valuable inputs from postal sector representatives with Javier Esplugas Cuadrado from DHL Group, Dovile Konciene from Lietuvos Pastas, Samuël Goldberg from CNV Connectief and Seán McDonagh from CWU Ireland

Finally, a special thanks to all the participants to the different workshops who have actively been involved in the process by contributing to shape the postal characters. Their consistent engagement and contributions to the brainstorming throughout the workshops enabled to elaborate solid postal characters. Moreover, they were and will be key actors in the dissemination of the project's outputs by communicating within their organisation about the work done to implement change.









## 2. INTRODUCTION

### A. GENESIS OF THE PROJECT

During the last project of the European Social Dialogue Committee for the postal sector “Trend research for the postal sector in 2030”, which was conducted between 2017 and 2019, five scenarios were built to anticipate the future of the postal sector according to a variety of trends. This previous project enabled to put forward hypotheses about what the sector and the world might look like in 2030.

The previous project was built on a solid foresight methodology which through a step-by-step approach enabled European social partners to elaborate five scenarios:

#### IDENTIFICATION OF 12 RELEVANT MEGA TRENDS



### THE MORPHOLOGICAL BOX

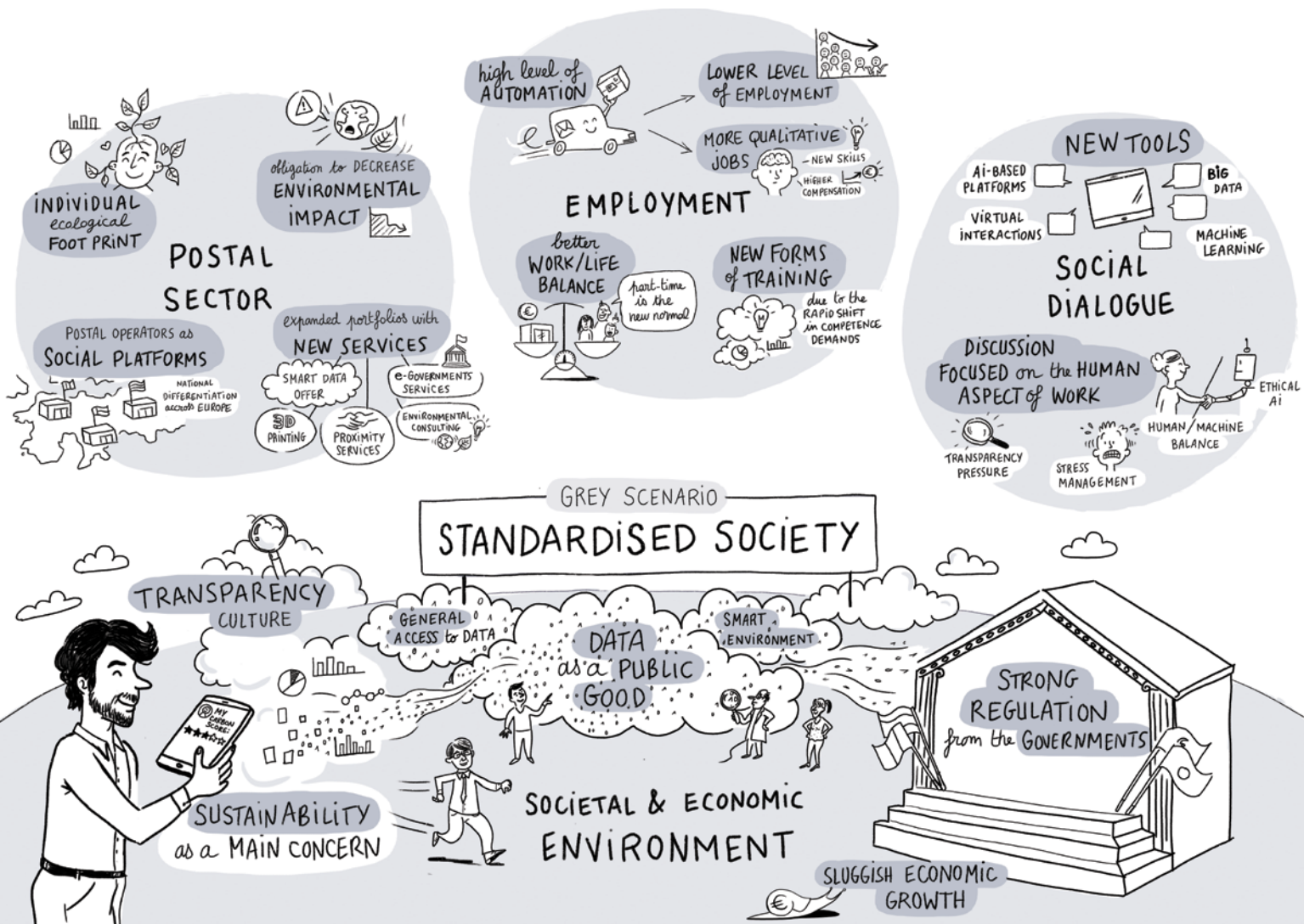
COMMUNICATION PATTERNS	CONSUMPTION PATTERNS AND CONSUMER PROTECTION	COMPETITION AND REGULATION IN THE POSTAL SECTOR	ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	INNOVATION DYNAMICS	TRAFFIC INFRASTRUCTURES	DATA MANAGEMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURES	CHANGING WORLD OF WORK	CHANGE OF (FURTHER) EDUCATION SYSTEMS	SOCIETAL DIVIDE	CLIMATE CHANGE AND ECOLOGICAL DISTORTIONS	DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIAL DIALOGUE
Digital high culture	Mainly conspicuous consumption, low consumer protection	Strong competition (new players as leaders), reluctant regulation	New growth dynamics (average EU growth above 3%)	Incremental change, incremental acceptance	Ailing infrastructure due to underinvestment	Hyperconnected world, Internet of Everything	Hybrid working world, growing variations/differentiations	Low access, predominantly traditional structures	Growing societal divide and tensions	High temperature rise, rapid deterioration of ecologic conditions	Business as usual (incremental adjustment)
Digital fragmentation, hybrid use	Mainly conscious consumption, high consumer protection	Strong competition (new players as challengers), high political will to regulate	Continuing growth path (average EU growth between 2% to 2.5%)	Disruptive change, forced technological openness	Lighthouse projects while other infrastructure is ailing	Mostly closed systems (Splinternet)	New work prevails, diminishing variations/differentiations	Broad access, evolution of traditional structures	Closing gap, new forms of coherence	Paris agreement world: containment of climate change, high regulation	Renewal and new forms of social dialogue
Digital fatigue	Mainly individualised consumption, low interest in consumer rights	Reduced competition (traditionalists with niche share), reluctant regulation	Slowed growth and stagnation in Europe	Slowing innovation dynamics, technological scepticism	Good infrastructure in cities, mostly ailing in countryside	Expanding digital gaps between countries and regions	New work prevails, growing variations/differentiations	Broad access, new approaches	Fragmented societies (differentiated living worlds), mostly tolerant	(Surprising) Mitigation of climate change, lower regulation	Deterioration of social dialogue
	Mainly service-oriented, high interest in consumer rights	Reduced competition (withdrawal of new players), high regulation	Worsening economic framework conditions, new economic indicators		Infrastructure boom with high investments				Fragmented societies (differentiated living worlds), mostly indifferent		End of social dialogue

The social partners considered the different possible evolutions for each of these 12 key factors. For instance if you consider the Communication patterns, they can evolve in 3 different ways: 1) Highly digitalised society, 2) Digital fatigue and 3) Digital divide.

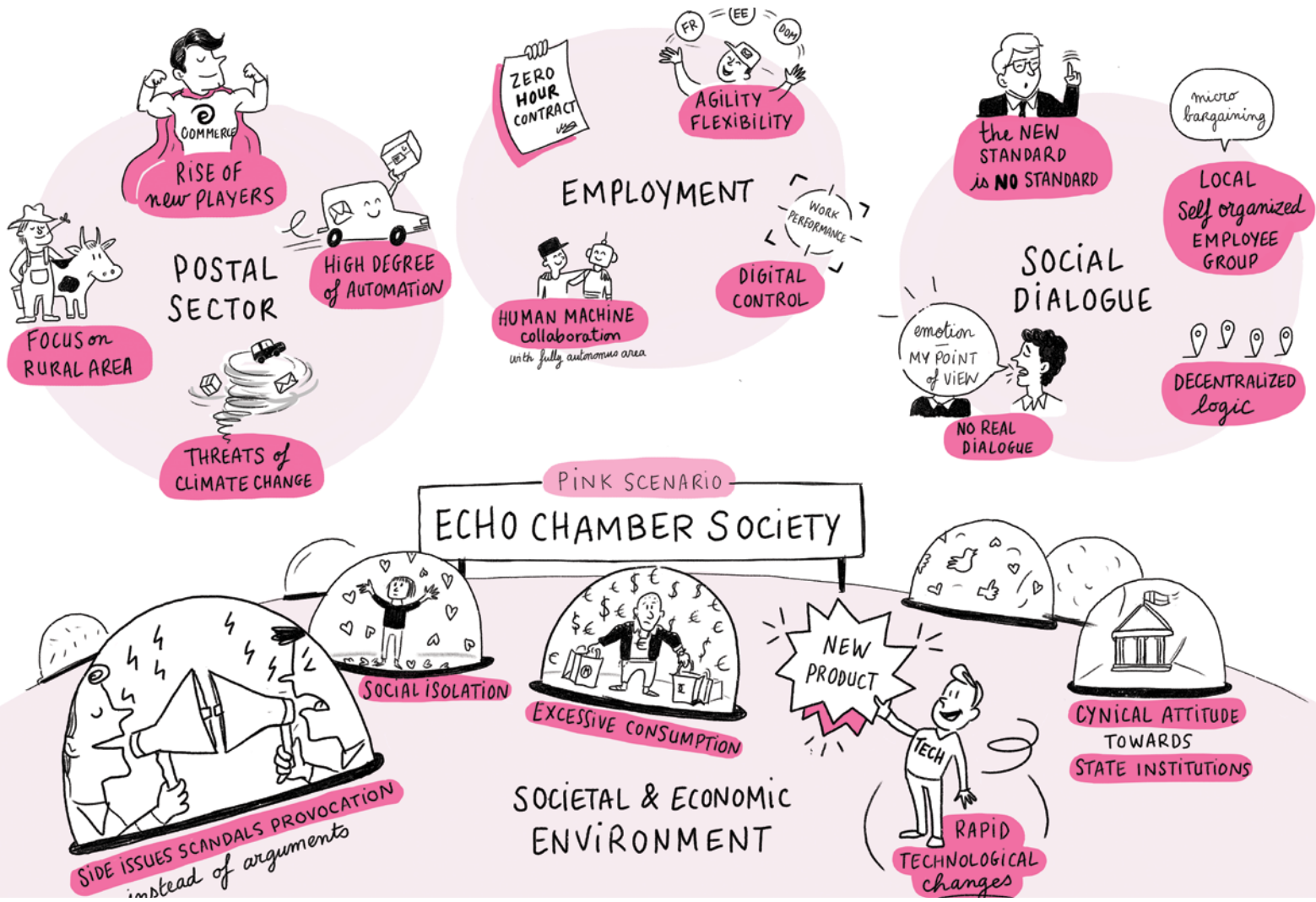
The combination of the projections of the possible evolutions for each factor results in a morphological box which enabled to establish 5 scenarios.

THE 5 SCENARIOS ON THE POSSIBLE FUTURE OF THE POSTAL SECTOR IN 2030

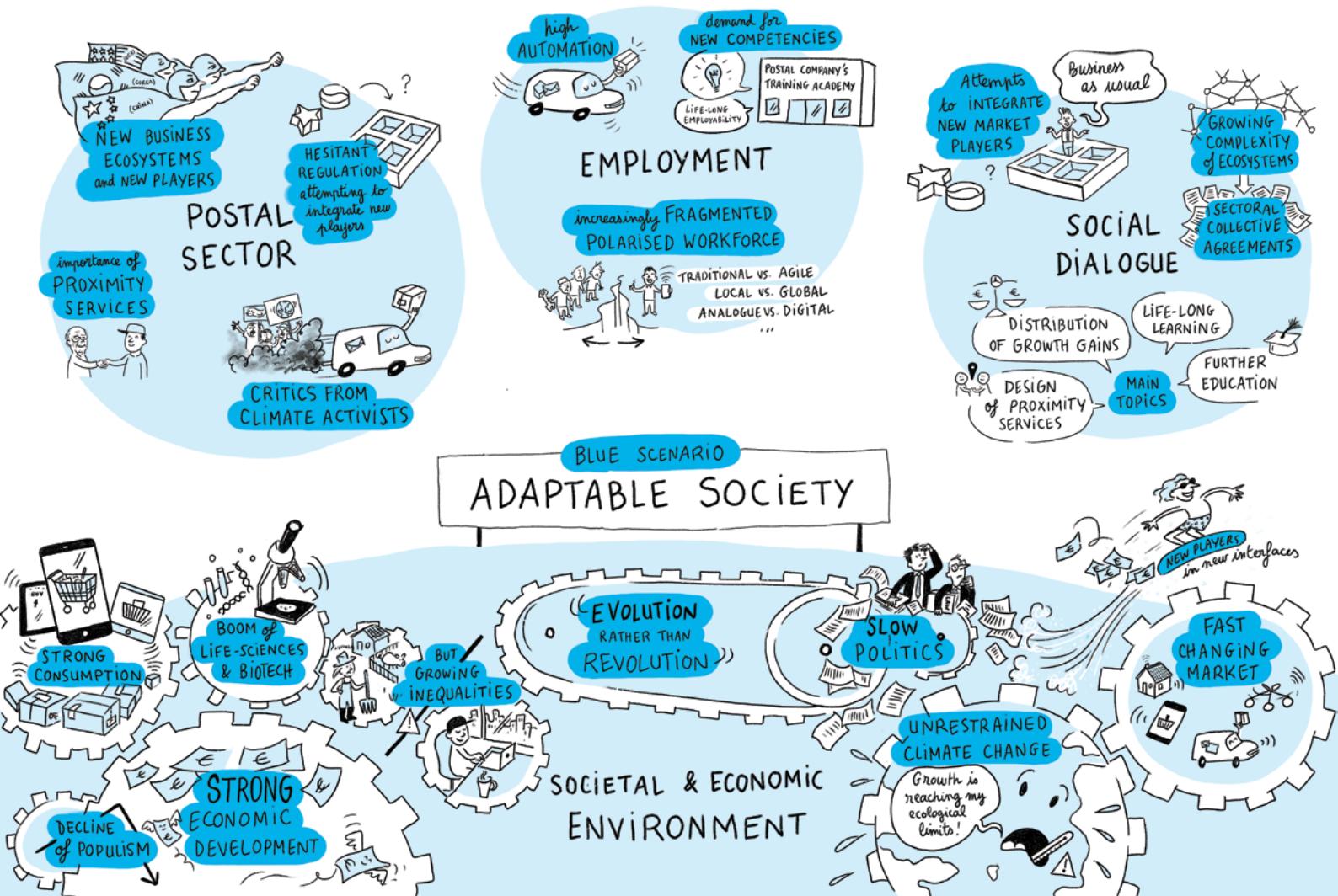
**1. The Standardised Society:** technological change could accelerate, with a rapid digitalisation of the society. Algorithms would permeate everyday life to achieve efficiency gains. Data would be a common good and the open access to data would drive a new wave of entrepreneurship. This new status quo could lead to a radical transformation of the postal sector's activities, with new services such as smart data offers and e-government services. Social dialogue would be renewed to negotiate new standards for the radically changed world of work.



**2. The Echo Chamber Society:** digitalisation would lead to stronger individualisation and polarisation of society. Citizens would live in digital closed bubbles with like-minded people. Disparities in society would be reflected in the economy. Mail and post offices' activities would hit a new record low and the USO would be kept to a minimum. Massive gaps among the workforce would reduce solidarity among postal workers and weaken unions. Micro bargaining platforms on decentralised formats would replace collective bargaining.



**3. The Adaptable Society:** politics would adapt only gradually to new dynamic conditions, using old tools to cope with new phenomena. In a booming economy, new players could emerge in the postal sector with non-European tech companies entering European markets. Slow regulation of these new actors would create a distorted competition. USO would be extended to all relevant players, including proximity services.



**4. The Innovative society:** strong social dialogue would foster a proactive regulation to reduce inequalities in a digitally hyper-connected world. There would be high public investment in infrastructure, education and climate change mitigation. Postal operators would diversify their service portfolio with proximity services and e-government solutions, while many of these new services would become part of USO. Forms of employment would diversify but come with comparable rights and access to social security. Social dialogue would be both expanded and renewed, with more actors involved, such as platform companies.





**5. The Vicious cycle society:** due to a security focus and the fear of cybercrime, citizens could be prone to authoritarian tendencies and protectionism. Cooperation between EU Member States would become much more difficult and the society could experience a technology backlash with the deconstruction of cross-border digital infrastructures. This would lead to a revival of the mail business while e-commerce would stagnate. Competition in the postal sector would decrease but the business environment would be difficult, with ailing infrastructure and budgetary limitations. Economic hardship and high unemployment would create a fear of job losses. Social dialogue would deteriorate in a context of overall tensions in the society, it would mainly focus on job cuts and employment guarantees.



The varied workshops gathering trade unions' and employers' representatives that lead to the creation of these 5 scenarios underlined the need for both parties to work together to plan for the future and anticipate the evolution of trends. The five very diverse scenarios were deemed likely covering both positive and more challenging potential changes for the society and the sector. These scenarios show that global crisis such as climate change, pandemics and wars can affect all segments of the population and society as a whole but these also provide opportunities for change.

## B. DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT AND ITS MAIN OBJECTIVES

The five scenarios were the basis of the project. Social partners felt that there was a need to make the scenarios more operational to the postal sector and its jobs. “The world of work in the postal sector in 2030” aimed to look at future postal jobs and identify crucial skills which may be needed.

For that purpose, the projects enabled to create 13 postal characters who embody the diversity of positions and activities in the postal sector. These characters are the translation of the scenarios into concrete jobs within the postal industry. The project also analyses the relations between future employees in a work environment under transformation.

As the postal sector will be transforming considerably in the future, these characters enable reflections on which postal jobs will be created, will evolve or will even disappear in the given scenarios or how jobs can evolve in different directions. These characters enable thinking about the adaptation of postal operators’ workforce and business model in an uncertain world. They facilitate discussion between the stakeholders to think ahead, to anticipate and to prepare for the future evolutions.

Overall by personifying future changes, this project aims to bring a more foresight and innovative reflection on the world of work in the postal sector in 2030. It explores the tasks, tools, missions and working environment of future postal employees. One of its objectives is to develop suggestions on how to adapt the work organisation to the new challenges in a fast-changing postal sector.

## C. STAKEHOLDERS GATHERED IN THE PROJECT

This project was carried out by the Postal Sector Evolution (PSE) working group of the European Social Dialogue Committee for the Postal Sector (SDC), a joint committee for postal companies and trade unions in the EU 27 Member states established in 1999. The SDC has conducted several EU co-funded projects since 2006 to better understand the main social evolutions in the postal sector, notably regarding change management and diversification of activities, along with the evolution of the wider environment. The PSE working group is chaired by Margaux Meidinger from La Poste Groupe and its spokesperson is Stéphane Chevet from CFDT. The project is another good example of a fruitful social dialogue between representatives from employers and trade unions.

## **3. COMMENTS FROM THE PROJECT LEADERS**



## 3. COMMENTS FROM THE PROJECT LEADERS

Building on the foresight study, this second SDC project is more operational, identifying postal characters responding to the respective scenarios' challenges and opportunities. Representatives of employers and employees embraced a different working dynamics than usual. In a regular day-to-day business it is often difficult to think and plan ahead. The general tendency is to find a solution when a crisis arises, rather than before it occurs. In this project it is key to be part of a transformation process, without knowing exactly what its nature will be or when it will happen exactly. The whole point is about being proactive and inclusive. All facets of a scenario are on the table and all the players of the company are involved. This engaging method requires a great deal of maturity and mutual trust between social partners. The projects we have conducted during recent years underlined that it is always possible to take the necessary step aside from daily issues and potential conflicts to work together in the interests of our sector.

As we conclude our work, the method we used for these two foresight projects seems obvious and straightforward. This working method, at this level of quality and intensity, is exceptional. We have found the words, the attitude and the commitment needed to achieve this collective success. This is even more important because the output of these two projects is not the end of the method. The mindset in which we have placed ourselves at European level must continue to exist in sectoral social dialogue, but also in each of our countries, our discussions to adapt our companies to present and future transformations. This method is the path to collective success.

Nobody knows what tomorrow will bring, let alone the day after tomorrow. We cannot be sure of anything when it comes to the future. Nobody knows precisely the intensity and speed of the impact of social and societal transformations and the influence of new tools such as AI and predictive consumption. However, whatever happens, European citizens will need social link and a guarantee that their data will be secure and protected. Only postal operators can provide these guarantees. Therefore, the important thing is to work together, to transform ourselves in a kind of mirror effect, with disruption in both companies and trade unions. We are all involved in this process, thus we are all players in it. The common objective is to grow, build and imagine together, not necessarily the precise elements of the future, but the possibility of being in the position to welcome this possible future. We must continue to be part of an active process that enables us to listen to what the future will bring and to be ready to perceive the ways and means of building together the future jobs in the future posts.



*Margaux Meidinger*  
PSE Working group Chair



*Stéphane Chevet*  
PSE Working group Vice-chair





## 4. METHODOLOGY

“The World of work in the postal sector in 2030” is a 30-month project, which started in May 2021. It built upon the previous project “Trend research for the postal sector in 2030”, by using its innovative way of working among European social partners. It pursued a foresight approach, immersing European social partners in a foresight exercise applying the personas approach to postal jobs. The participants of the project investigated the evolution of jobs in key areas for the postal sector: 1) delivery of postal items, 2) post offices networks and 3) back office operations. To create the personas, two digital workshops and four physical meetings took place between May 2021 and May 2023. The project ended up with a final conference aiming at disseminating its outputs to a wider audience. The different events, related preparation and follow-up work represented an intensive work of 2,5 years for European social partners.

### AN INNOVATIVE PROCESS

A common thread throughout the project was to require participants to think outside of the box. This particular work environment was possible thanks to new tools and highly interactive sessions in small groups. The approach initiated a dynamic that was outside most participants’ habits, with a new way of working in co-construction, interaction and ideation. Moments for open mic welcomed any question, suggestion or remark. The process stayed agile and flexible throughout the entire project. The collection of participant’s feedback and expectations enabled build next steps, to move forward and to select the most relevant ideas. Working in unbiased collective intelligence opened new perspectives for discussions and exchanges between all participants. This atmosphere created an adaptation-centred mindset releasing lots of creativity and optimism from both sides. Participants were highly motivated to engage into live-discussions, creative exercises and to see the outcomes of their reflections take form. A step-by-step process and numerous break-out brainstorming sessions at each meeting, helped social partners to elaborate the postal characters. All participants to the project appreciated this experience and many underlined the necessity to further pursue this approach. It is to be underlined that many participants took part in more than one workshop and were engaged throughout the project. The innovative methodology applied in this project strongly illustrated the forward-looking stance of the postal sector.

During every workshop, particular attention has been paid to the collective dynamic with several ice-breakers and energizers. The objectives of these moments were to mingle and to raise the group’s energy. Creating synergy between participants was a crucial part to have a productive ideation phase and generate solutions. The work process relied on the combination of digital and physical workshops, taking into account the constraints and opportunities brought by the Covid crisis. The digital meetings prepared the physical sessions by enabling participants to remember the five scenarios and better understand the opportunities and challenges in each of them. The physical workshops crucial to enable effective brainstorming started in early 2022.





### FIRST VIRTUAL WORKSHOP - 08/12/2021

The first virtual workshop took place on 8 December 2021. It enabled 31 participants to re-appropriate the first two scenarios (Standardised Society and Echo Chamber Society) and to lay the foundations for further discussions and debates. The participants were separated into two break-out groups to each deep dive into one of these scenarios. They zoomed into the four parts of each ecosystem, meaning its 1) societal, 2) economic, 3) employment and 4) social dialogue environments and its specific stakes for the postal sector. Visual inspirational stimuli set the scene and gave a taste of the atmosphere of both scenarios. The participants detailed out the core elements and explored the implications of various factors. Discussions left plenty of room for feedback and exchanges. This first virtual workshop was crucial to recall the main outputs of the previous project “Trend research for the postal sector in 2030”.



### SECOND VIRTUAL WORKSHOP – 23/02/2022

The second virtual workshop took place on 23 February 2022. It enabled 39 participants to identify the challenges of two more scenarios: the Adaptable Society and the Vicious Cycle Society. Taking the same methodology as the first virtual workshop, the participants made a list of all glitches and spotted core issues and stakes for these two scenarios. Once again, participants were divided into two break-out groups, each group working on each scenario one after the other. The results of both groups were presented in a plenary session. The reflections and thoughts of participants were shared and discussed.

## GOING FROM VIRTUAL TO PHYSICAL WORKSHOPS

Considering the Covid related work and travel restrictions, the first two sessions were held remotely. The virtual workshops aimed to maintain a momentum and encourage people to participate and be further involved in the project. It gave the opportunity to participants to connect with the project, have an overview of the complex scenarios, and prepare the next in-person sessions. Digital tools such as Miro or Mentimeter stimulated interactive discussions, animated workshops and fostered a link between participants. The Committee switched from online sessions to physical sessions as soon as it was possible, as in-person meetings are much more productive and efficient. Physical workshops fostered brainstorming and ease debates, which is essential in this type of creative and collaborative exercise.



**FIRST PHYSICAL WORKSHOP – ZAGREB, CROATIA, 31/03/2022 TO 01/04/2022**

The first physical workshop was hosted by Croatian Post and took place in Zagreb between 31 March and 1 April 2022. This meeting gathered 25 participants and a remote group was included via “touch-up points”, which were planned into the agenda. The main objectives were to elaborate the postal characters for the first two scenarios: the Standardised Society and the Echo Chamber Society, and to engage participants in new ways of working. To do so, the participants produced idea cards and assigned them to postal characters in order to define postal character templates, with relevant and needed resources, tools and skills. Starting with a brief immersion into the scenarios and their inherent challenges enabled participants to be on the same level of information. The ideation phase generated solutions for the identified challenges, fostering participants to take the floor and collectively shape the characters. The consultant also brought into the reflection examples from other industries and sectors to get additional ideas which could inspire the relevant jobs, skills and tools for the postal sector of 2030. This first physical workshop was the opportunity for social partners to discuss job functions related to the first two scenarios and to gain a relevant vision of the wider environment of postal operators, taking also into consideration the economic issues and the social conditions of these possible futures. The participants engaged a reflection on what the operational realities will be for the postal sector in 2030, including both missions and tools.



**SECOND PHYSICAL WORKSHOP – VIENNA, AUSTRIA, 21/06/2022 TO 22/06/2022**

The second physical workshop was hosted by Austrian Post and took place in Vienna on 21 and 22 June 2022. This session focused on two other scenarios: the Vicious Cycle Society and the Adaptable Society to elaborate the related postal characters. The participants intensively discussed on the missions, tools and skills of postal employees that would be needed under the specific conditions of these two scenarios. Split into several break-out groups, the participants were incentivised to share their ideas and reflections. The brainstorming was productive and common job families started to emerge. This second physical workshop also aimed to actively engage all participants through new and innovative exercises, such as a role plays.





### THIRD PHYSICAL WORKSHOP – THE HAGUE, NETHERLANDS, 27/10/2022 TO 28/10/2022

The third physical workshop was hosted by PostNL and took place on 27 and 28 October 2022. Two sub-groups were formed to divide the work between participants and to better facilitate discussions. The first group worked on the Innovative Society Scenario to get acquainted with its specific challenges. Building on what has been elaborated during the previous workshops, the other group worked on the definition of postal characters within the four other scenarios, creating categorisations and families of characters. This group started reflecting on the project's deliverables in particular the final report and operational dissemination tools, with dynamic and visual communication depicting the postal characters and their ecosystem. These two days were crucial to enrich the postal characters gallery. The activities fostered discussions, active listening and ideation during the presentations of the achievements.



### FOURTH PHYSICAL WORKSHOP – LIMASSOL, CYPRUS, 25/04/2023 TO 26/04/2023

The fourth physical session was hosted by Cyprus Post in Limassol on 25 and 26 April 2023. Around 50 employees' and employers' representatives attended the workshop aiming at deepening and fine tuning all postal characters. Participants were asked to enrich the activities, missions, skills and tools of the 13 postal characters. Participants also engaged in "in case of..." activities which encompass different situations in which each postal character would be particularly necessary and needed. Potential impacts of specific trends, such as climate change, digitalisation or black out, drove discussions into more operational realities and projections. Moreover, the participants reflected on links with existing postal functions and if and to what extent the newly designed characters represent a transformation for the sector. The audience discussed about operational recommendations intended at postal companies but also social dialogue representatives to enable the new postal characters to emerge. It is to be noted that a dozen of Cyprus Post's employees, from a wide range of operational functions, joined this workshop and had the opportunity to discover the work done so far.





## FINAL CONFERENCE – BRUSSELS, BELGIUM, 20/06/2023

The final conference was held in Brussels on 20 June 2023. Around 80 participants including postal companies' and trade unions' representatives but also Commission experts attended this event which aimed at disseminating the project's main results. The event consisted in panel sessions but also a break-out session.

### ***Introduction***

The conference was formally opened by Botond Szebeny, Secretary General of PostEurop, and Oliver Roethig, Regional secretary of UNI Europa, as the European social partners' organisations of the SDC. As new participants joined this conference, the project leaders recalled the genesis of the "World of work in the postal sector in 2030" project, going back to the five scenarios. They briefly summarised the project history and content to emphasise on the innovative methodology used in this European project.

### ***Break-out sessions to enable first-hand experience of the final postal characters***

The participants broke into small groups according to four job families. They were given the task to create an attractive job offer for each of the postal characters elaborated throughout the project. This break-out session enabled participants to engage in the process, even for those who did not participate in the previous workshops. This exercise offered participants the opportunity to discover the 13 final postal characters in a new context and especially to deep dive into one job family of the postal ecosystem. The participants were asked to react on every job description, finally for the postal character that they found the most representative or emblematic of what the postal sector will look like in 2030. The four jobs were then presented to everyone in a plenary session.

### ***Inspiring discussions***

Moreover, two high-level round tables discussed about transformation and foresight studies, as well as social, economic and regulatory evolutions. The first one gathered three speakers outside the postal sector to exchange on change management and social transformation. The second one focused on the postal sector's challenges and transformations with four speakers representing postal employers and trade unions.

Finally an interview with G. Roty, Deputy Head of Unit at DG GROW who presented the scope and objectives of the foresight study conducted by the European Commission enabled to get the European Commission perspective on the main opportunities and challenges ahead for the postal sector.





## **5. PROJECT'S MAIN OUTPUTS**

## 5. PROJECT'S MAIN OUTPUTS

### A. THE JOB FAMILIES

This project resulted in 13 postal characters with specific skills and missions that may be useful in 2030. These characters are categorised into four job families: On the field, Front office, Back office data and Back office human resources. These job families reflect the diversity of actions and activities of European postal operators.

#### THE “ON THE FIELD” JOB FAMILY

The “On the field” job family gathers what can be associated to current delivery positions. These are the people who are out on the streets every day. However, this traditional postal activity is expected to be under heavy transformation due to massive changes of needs and a rapid evolutions of the work environment. The decrease in volumes of mail will lead to the creation of new jobs, which would meet the challenges of society, such as the ageing of the European population or climate change. Three characters embody the future daily presence on the streets and roads of postal employees, which will be completely different of what we know today. These characters provide proximity services bringing added value to the society as a trustworthy third party.

#### THE “FRONT OFFICE” JOB FAMILY

The “Front office” job family gathers employees who work in post offices. Thanks to their expanded network, postal operators are present overall the national territory<sup>1</sup>. This network is a direct link with customers and sometimes the only incarnation of public services in rural areas. With the growth of digital communication and social networks, the need for physical presence and in-person contacts is even more relevant, in the post-Covid context. Moreover, post operators have already been identified in the past as key infrastructures, notably during Covid-19, taking on a larger role than just supporting last mile delivery. Therefore, post offices’ network is a valuable and major asset of the postal sector. However, this network is increasingly expensive and unprofitable to maintain. Thus, the elaboration of the five characters of this job family took into consideration the digital transformation and the call for human contacts and interactions to provide better and more efficient services while adding a different purpose to the postal physical network.

#### THE “BACK OFFICE DATA” JOB FAMILY

Data is a massive asset for postal operators while there is a need to ensure that data is processed in a secure and compliant way. In an increasingly connected world, the three characters of this job family take benefit from the high volume of available data, they analyse it and make informed decisions on that basis. This job family has to keep up with all technological innovations in order to feed all the other job functions of postal companies. These characters work in back office functions but they largely rely on the employees who are on the field to collect this data.

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1. For those postal operators which still have own post offices.



### THE “BACK OFFICE HUMAN RESOURCES” JOB FAMILY

The “Back office human resources” job family captures the transformation of the employment market and the changing expectations of future employees. Postal employees are the most valuable asset of postal operators and meeting the needs of the workforce is crucial to stay competitive and attractive. In fact, the postal sector is a labour-intensive industry, as postal operators are among the largest employer in every European country. Nevertheless, the labour market is rapidly evolving and transforming drastically. People are having longer work careers but are moving more easily from one company to another. Thus, the postal workforce will vary a lot. As a result, it will be crucial to train postal workers to update their skills and to develop their employability. Moreover, work-life balance and quality of life in the workplace are becoming increasingly important to attract and maintain new talent. Employees are more and more expecting personalised responses to their specific needs. The two characters of the “Back office human resources” family are there to respond to these challenges.

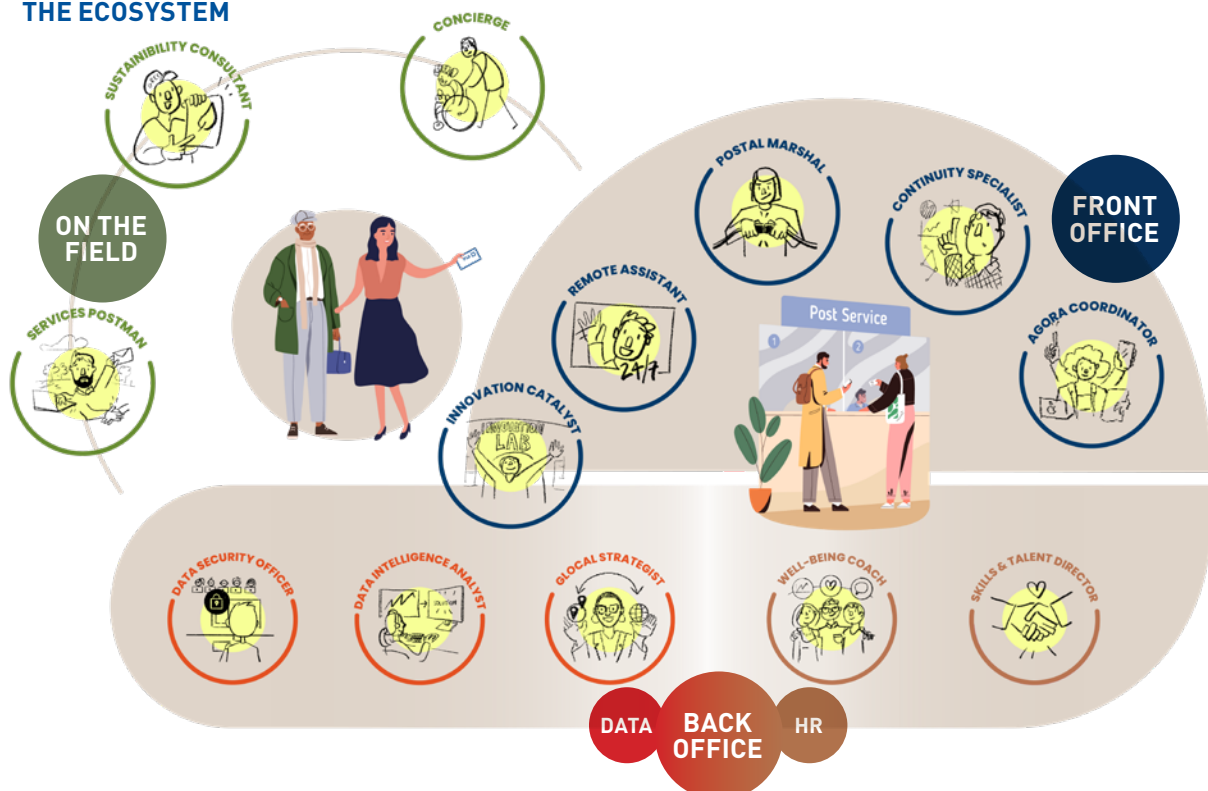
### AN ECOSYSTEM OF FOUR JOB FAMILIES

The four job families interact and influence each other constantly as each of them is essential for the others. The close relations between all characters underline their interdependency and the need for them to work together to achieve postal operators’ ambitions and transformation in an efficient way.

The back office functions are a basis for the smooth running of both on the field activities and front office jobs. They support operational activities and employees who have direct contacts with customers. Thus, the two back office families are the building blocks on which operational functions rely on to carry out their mission. They are the foundations that enable the transformation in operational positions.

The “on the field” functions collect data, thanks to their daily contact and proximity with the local population. They transmit the data to the “back office data” characters who are then in charge of aggregating and analysing it in order to make the most of it and use it to create new business opportunities and improve the business model. The “front office” family also collects valuable data and sends it to the “back office data” family to consolidate the overview of the postal operator and create consistency between local and national level.

### THE ECOSYSTEM



## B. THE 13 POSTAL CHARACTERS

### POSTAL CHARACTERS AS FOOD FOR THOUGHTS

The project created 13 postal characters. Some postal characters are more innovative than others while other characters could have well been designed too. In some more mature postal companies, elements of some characters may start to exist while in others they are still far from being a reality. These characters do not aspire to become reality but they aim to bringing in new ideas to signal the transformation of the postal sector and its need to adapt to a new normal. It is also important to note that some personas represent not necessarily one job role considering the wide scope of their expertise and activities, but they could correspond more to a group of missions which are carried out by a whole department. Postal operators and postal trade unions should adapt the personas to their own future realities and could use them as a basis and source of inspiration for further internal discussions.

### POSTAL CHARACTERS IN THE “ON THE FIELD” JOB FAMILY

The “On the field” family gathers the delivery functions and postal employees who connect directly with the local population. Three future jobs have been designed in this family: the concierge, the sustainability consultant and the services postman. All these jobs can be ensured in addition to the mail and parcels’ delivery function as services of add-on social value but also revenues.

A core component of these characters is their knowledge of the local population and its specific needs, as they benefit from the fact that postal employees are in each vicinity every day. These characters fully integrate and meet the foreseen major challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The concierge responds notably to the need of proximity and human contacts in the context of an ageing European population. The sustainability consultant helps to face climate change and uncertain energy prices, by carrying out energy consumption analysis. The services postman/woman answers the needs of a society which is increasingly focused on a services. These three on the field characters share relational skills and great communication competencies to maintain a special connection with the local population.





**The concierge** is a provider of social services. He<sup>2</sup> helps the elderly, checks that they are doing well and delivers meals to them or babysits and looks after children. He has a complete and diverse knowledge of the territory and of its inhabitants by collecting structured and informal data to better meet their needs. He also has a solid co-worker network. He is a well-known figure and people recognise him as the go-to person to provide essential services. This job needs strong soft and people skills to be able to assist customers in an empathic way. Communication skills are also crucial to interact with the customers as well as with the professionals and local authorities, notably healthcare services. Some basic medical and healthcare know-how is welcomed to properly provide child and elderly care. Local knowledge is also important to best meet customer needs and help to promote local features through local guides and blogs. Digital skills are useful to access assignments, collaborate with colleagues and share information. This character would be particularly meaningful if the future of employment becomes multitasking or if part-time becomes a new work model, as the number of hours for this activity is highly flexible. It would also be particularly relevant if local becomes the only way of life or there is a growing digital scepticism, with an increased interest in proximity and human contacts.



**The sustainability consultant** is in charge of measuring, calculating and analysing energy consumption and efficiency in order to identify opportunities for improving practices and reduce customers' energy footprints. With a sensibility towards environmental issues, the sustainability consultant also raises awareness of green solutions internally within the postal operator and among inhabitants. This position includes both an operational and a theoretical or administrative element. Consequently, the sustainability consultant is at the same time a field worker and a back officer. He is building relationships with experts, external partners and universities to keep up with the measurement methods and sustainability initiatives that are being developed, as well as the financial opportunities that could help customers to achieve concrete energy savings. The sustainability consultant must have technical and analytical skills to be able to calculate and evaluate energy consumption as well as digital skills to use adapted tools and software and communication platforms to follow up on advice. Analytical skills are also needed to draw conclusions and make concrete recommendations to customers. Moreover, the sustainability consultant has local and field knowledge to create networks and partnerships with local authorities, energy suppliers and energy experts. He is curious about science, new trends and initiatives. Finally, he has some basic knowledge of applicable laws and regulations to keep up to date with the latest legal developments at national and European level in the fields of energy efficiency and CSR.



**The service postman's** main objective is to ensure access to postal and social services for those living in primarily rural areas to transform the postal presence into added value for all. He is a multi-tasker with a two-folded mission. On one hand, he collects data on the area and transfer them then to the Data Intelligence Analyst who analyses aggregated information. On the other hand, he delivers basic social and healthcare services to inhabitants. The services postman becomes part of the continuity team in case of emergency and heavy disruptions, under the leadership of the Postal Marshal. He shares common fundamental skills with other on the field postal workers, such as relational skills, thoroughness, organisation and knowledge of his area. On top of that, he must have ICT skills and master tech tools for data collection. With the best qualitative service in mind, he stays open, creative and flexible, as his tasks and functions can evolve. He is a well-known figure in his area and people recognise him as the go-to person in case of need. In time of crisis, he can provide essential services. He contributes to the diversification of postal activities, as his role will enable postal operators to move forward and further develop innovative services.

2. Disclaimer: for the sake of comprehension the text will not use both the male and female forms; the personal nouns and pronouns "he, his, him" used in this text therefore also apply in their female form."

## THE FRONT OFFICE FAMILY

The front office characters work in post offices. They welcome customers and organise postal presence and operational activities within local areas. The front office is a key stakeholder in the vicinity and is highly connected to other major local and national actors, as a point of contact to an extended network of crucial players. The front office characters fully integrate the digital transformation of post offices, by including innovation within daily activities. They also respond to the need for human contact. The front office family ensures continuity in context of crisis, by both anticipating and reacting to emergencies. Therefore, these postal characters require skills and capacity to lead and to be empowered to do so. Five characters compose the front office family: the postal marshal, the remote assistant, the continuity specialist, the agora coordinator and the innovation catalyst.



**The postal marshal** plays an essential role in the disaster response strategy of postal operators. In an increasingly uncertain world in which plural crisis multiply, he ensures the continuity of services. When power knocks out the latest technologies, he is here to coordinate the smooth switch to old-fashioned know-how. He is also here to support local communities and connect them with relevant support services in cases of a natural disaster. He knows well the territory in which he operates and his action is location-oriented. He has an extended and close network of actors that he can activate in case of emergency. He applies security policies on the field and makes sure all the basics for safe service are covered at all times. When there is no emergency, he is constantly following up on risk preventions and policies, conducting scheduled screenings of planning and anticipatory protocols. He interacts with local postal key actors, such as the agora coordinator and the service postman, as well as with remote experts, like the continuity specialist, that keep him posted on the detailed evolution of the situation and provide critical training and tools. The postal marshal has practical knowledge of low-tech delivery techniques and a varied set of skills focused on service continuity. He is constantly reskilled to face new challenges. The postal marshal must develop leadership as he coordinates response in time of crisis when there is intense stress and disruptions can create disorganisation. Thus, he should know how to keep his team focused, empowered and safe.



**The remote assistant** helps to determine the best solution based on the problem and details provided by the customer. In an increasingly digitalised world where self-service post offices are the new norms, customers are fully autonomous and can do everything on their own thanks to AI. However, when one of the customers in the post office needs help, the remote assistant is there to virtually assist customers or even send someone from his team into the field to help physically. The remote assistant is particularly useful for digitally illiterate people or in case of possible technological failure. He also provides remote administrative support to customers without them having to go to the post office, such as tax payments and transactions. Although he is in constant connection with the ground, the remote assistant can work from home, making his job more flexible. His working hours are flexible and he can choose to work full-time or part-time. Beyond mastering digital skills, he has excellent communication skills via phone, email and instant messaging. In time of high demand, he is able to organise himself, manage different requests and have fast reactions.



**The continuity specialist** ensures that postal service continues, under any circumstances. He imagines and defines a variety of crisis scenario (health, climate...) and then plans for the adequate resources and processes that would allow postal services to be delivered. He works with a large range of internal and external stakeholders. Internally with managers who develop postal services, postal employees on the field who keep him updated with valuable and live information, and intervention teams lead by postal marshals who can deploy continuity plans. He also largely interacts with data analysts in order to predict risks. Externally he interacts with national and local government to prepare and coordinate disaster response plans that involve all stakeholders. He also is in touch with researchers and academics to keep the protocols up to date with the latest findings and technologies. In time of crisis, the continuity specialist needs to have leadership and stress management skills. His technical knowledge also enables him to understand and evaluate the risks of different situations (earthquakes, power shortages...). In times of prevention, he must be creative to imagine crisis scenarios and think long-term. He also masters project management and relational skills to coordinate a vast group of actors and pull together effective continuity plans.



**The agora coordinator** coordinates the Agora post office, a hub for public life and local economic development. The need for more proximity and human contacts has pushed post offices to transform into a welcoming and agile place for social interactions, projects and multiple activities, as the post operator caters for a wide range of needs and performs multiple services that benefit the community. For instance, post offices support job findings or local art, they provide information on touristic places around as well as on sport, cultural or humanitarian associations. The agora coordinator supervises the Agora post office's bustling activity. He is a mediator and a connect between all front office activities, fostering synergies. He also works with the network of Agora Post Offices across European countries, making sure the service is consistent, while keeping the offered activities relevant at a local level. The agora coordinator has logistic and organisational skills to ensure the proper functioning of the Agora and facilitate activities within this space. He has an excellent knowledge of the local community activities and needs. He is solution-oriented and has good relational skills to deal with different stakeholders. He is particularly meaningful in case of a crash of digital tools, to ensure continuous contact among people and still meet customers' needs. He can also be very active in a cashless society to ensure money transfers and organise exchanges of services. In case of economic crisis, he fosters community supports and promotes local resources.



**The innovation catalyst** coordinates and lead all the activities of the Postal innovation lab, regional R&D centres. He coordinates and leads working sessions between postal managers, the R&D department, laboratory researchers and engineers to identify postal needs and areas where innovation is required. He also organises events, such as open days at the lab to showcase the latest innovations and provide post offices with the latest trends. He conducts market research and benchmarks and analyses worldwide trends to identify the best experience to offer to customers.

The innovation catalyst is both creative and analytical and has management skills as he oversees the lab. He also has good communications skills to voice out his ideas and get stakeholders on board. The innovation catalyst is particularly meaningful in case of full digitalisation and technological boom or war for natural resources by developing effective solutions to prevent the misuse of local resources. The raise of this function means that post offices acting as local innovation labs are managed in a highly decentralised way and have a very large autonomy in the activities they can develop and provide.

### THE BACK OFFICE DATA FAMILY

The back office data characters analyse data collected on the field by postal employees to transform them into business opportunities. They massively use IT technologies and AI to assist them in their daily work and process the high volume of heterogeneous data. They build models using statistics to understand the needs and habits of the population, which will enable postal operators to provide better-targeted services. They are a bridge between humans and smart technologies to create value. The back office data positions require both analytical and technical expertise to foresight the necessary goods and actions. The back office data family is made of three postal characters: the data intelligence analyst, the data security officer and the “glocal” strategist.





**The data intelligence analyst** translates collected data into business opportunities for posts. He exploits and interprets the data to derive useful business observations and formulate strategic recommendations for local post offices but also to develop new business models and improve performance of the overall company. He also keeps an eye on new tools to improve data analysis. His analytical skills and his strategic mindset are crucial to make difficult decisions, solve complex business problems and provide relevant business recommendations. He masters Big Data tools and informatics systems. He also knows how to analyse cybersecurity risks and develop solutions for them. The data intelligence analyst is particularly meaningful in case of full digitalisation to benefit from the multiple available data or in case of economic and financial crisis to find solutions and business strategies. He is also useful in case of cyber-attack to analyse the level of risk.



**The data security officer** works closely with the data intelligence analyst to ensure the protection of data collected and processed by postal operators. He is also in charge of raising awareness of data protection compliance among employees and users. His mission is to make clients, people and society feel safe and secure about their personal data. He trains postal staff involved in data collection and processing, ensuring that applicable data protection rules are respected. He is raising awareness on data security issues within the organisation. He puts in place personal data clear out operations to ensure that sensitive user's data is used and stored wisely according to the user consent. Thus, his works includes technical but also legal, ethical and human stakes. He has technical expertise in data but should also be in touch with regulatory experts who follow legal evolutions at national and European level. He is pedagogical and has good communication skills to talk in simple terms about technical data-related processes and rules. The data security officer is particularly meaningful in case of full automation and digitalisation as a mediator bridging the gap between humans and AI. In case of cyber-attacks, he reassures the company and users and prevents it by data management beforehand. In case of power shortage, he provides crucial information stored in alternative ways.



**The "glocal" (global/local) strategist** examines the needs and challenges of remote territories to identify opportunities for the local community to thrive. He is a powerful link between the central government and one local area that he knows perfectly well and follows closely its social and economic development. He peers through the needs and stakes that the territory presents to detect development opportunities that will benefit the local population. He collects diverse data and continuously exchanges with employees on the field to keep a good sense of local priorities. Then, he coordinates with central government to pull budgets and resources to implement what needs to be done, while keeping in mind the bigger picture of global stakes. He fosters innovation that is demanded and executes it in a meaningful way for people and their environment. He also encourages local training and upskilling according to strategy plans. He has a mediator and result-driven approach including all stakeholders. He masters listening skills to understand local specificities and has a multi-disciplinary toolbox to navigate political, anthropological, environmental and financial issues. He also masters public relations and coordinate with other glocal strategists to ensure a common strategy.

### THE BACK OFFICE HUMAN RESOURCES FAMILY

The back office human resources family is in charge of adapting the work environment within postal operators to the changes of the employment market. Its mission is to meet current and future employees' needs in order to attract and keep talent within the postal sector. Personas in this job family have knowledge in human behaviour and psychology and are good listeners. They have inspiring personalities and are open minded. They have great communication skills to motivate and convince people. Following established social dialogue structure in each country, this family is in direct contact with trade unions and implements the work environment adaptation strategies of the postal operators, as developed in each context. Two postal characters are included in the human resources family: the skills & talent expert and the well-being coach.







**The skills & talent expert** finds new talent for his postal organisation. Once on board, he supports them in their integration process and in their professional progression nationwide and where possible across Europe. He is also in charge of training. He works closely with the well-being coach to identify employee needs in terms of technical training and soft skills and then provides employees with relevant training courses. He makes sure employees feel at ease and develop their full potential. Helping to build new career pathway, he takes into consideration both employees'

personal appetences and the needs related to the implementation of the company's vision and strategy. He is in close contact with worker's representatives and trade unions. He constantly interacts with universities, training centres and other postal organisations across Europe to benchmark the latest training initiatives as well as to identify and nurture new talents. He promotes mobility and supports employees' advancement across Europe. One of his core missions is to engage people in their own development and provide them relevant upskilling and reskilling opportunities. Therefore he needs relational and listening skills to detect the true needs and aspirations of employees. His hands-on approach enables him to lead by example, foster proximity and trust with employees. He has knowledge in psychology and human behaviour to understand and anticipate employees' needs, aspirations and expectations. He masters the latest educational technologies such as innovative content creation and dedicated digital platforms. The skills & talent expert is particularly meaningful in case of a full freelance economy or if part-time jobs become the rule to create a sense of community around the postal operator with new hiring and integration processes. He is an ally to concertation, engage directly with postal workers representatives and trade unions and supports the dialogue among the stakeholders to move in constructive directions through reskilling opportunities for all.



**The well-being coach** looks after all employees and fosters an empowering work environment. As anxiety and mental health are more topical than ever, postal operators must take into consideration employees' emotional and social well-being at work to build a more powerful and sustainable workforce and achieve performance. The well-being coach puts in place regular check-ups to follow the evolution of employees throughout their life and career. He puts special emphasis on accompanying them through job transitions and new functions. His mission is to maintain the employees' engagement and give them new perspective to look at the future in a constructive way. He also raises awareness at an organisational and an individual level on the importance of emotions at work. He acts as a facilitator between employees and between employees and their employer by working both on individual and collective levels. He has the ability to engage in meaningful social dialogue bringing together the postal workers' representatives and trade unions perspectives with the implemented strategies of the postal operators. He can conduct conciliation activities and manage conflict within groups and between individuals. Thus, he ensures employees' satisfaction. He needs a lot of empathy and masters relational skills. He knows very well the structure and processes of the postal organisation to always be relevant in his coaching inputs. He also has design thinking and facilitation skills as well as the capacity to connect people. The well-being coach is particularly meaningful in case employees face challenges in their work life balance or challenges with a huge psychological impact.

## ALLOWING THESE POSTAL CHARACTERS TO DEVELOP

Both postal operators and trade unions will have to prepare their organisations and mindsets not only for predictable changes but also for new and unpredictable challenges, opportunities and crisis. Transformation is first of all a matter of mindset and this type of foresight exercise represents one step into this direction. Postal operators and trade unions should be open to change by setting an enabling framework. Favourable conditions include implementing a framework and a methodology for an efficient transformation. As highlighted by this project, social partners should openly **address issues before they become a problem**. Both parties should plan ahead for the future and anticipate potential challenge and **work together** to face these challenges within the postal sector. The transformation strategy should be co-constructed by both parties, with a focus on finding the right balance between the company's and employees' interests. Employers and trade unions should be fully involved in every aspect of the transformation process **starting from the beginning**. Constant dialogue is necessary to maintain a link and transmit information.

As the world is becoming increasingly uncertain with fast and deep transformations, employers and trade unions do not have all the answers on what should be done but they share some common views.

The human capital will remain the main asset of postal operators. Jobs relying on soft skills and interpersonal contacts will become more and more crucial in the future, notably with the digitalisation which will increase the need for proximity and human contact. **Postal companies should support their employees through the transformation process** and ensure that every employee finds a place in this transformation. Thus, postal operators and trade unions should **discuss concrete measures, like training, reskilling and upskilling to develop the employability of the workforce and give to employees the tools to support the transformation**. They have an important role to identify new career paths and map the new skills and new jobs needed in the future as well as to put in place the tools to support these transformations. These co-constructed measures would enable to protect both companies' and employees' interests and exemplify the support of the companies for change.

The transformation of postal operators is taking place in a wider environment, which is also rapidly changing, in particular with the development of new technologies from which postal operators should take advantage of. Postal operators need indeed **new appropriate tools** to face the challenges and implement transformation. For instance, as most of financial transactions are digital and postal activities are increasingly carried on digital platforms, postal operators should have **the necessary equipment to face cyber-attacks**.

Postal companies should train employees on the best ways to use or leverage artificial intelligence and digitalisation in the future. However, not every postal operator has employees with the knowledge and hard skills to perform data management functions. Some qualified staff exists within postal companies but external employees will also have to be hired to enlarge the pool of data and digital related functions. As postal companies are considered as a trustworthy third-party, **cyber security is a priority, and all the employees should have some knowledge of how to deal with that issue** both from an ethical and technical point of view. Regulations in the area of data, such as GDPR, must be taken into consideration. Therefore, there is **a need for both external recruitment and internal training and upskilling to enable postal companies to face the digital evolutions ahead, as well as specific equipment and applications to protect and manage data**. It would be necessary to conduct both internal and external campaigns to attract talents for these new skilled jobs. Dedicated financial resources will be needed for accompanying this phase of the digitalisation. It will also be important to monitor best practices in the field.

The recommendations in terms of change anticipation for postal employment in the future must be discussed in the framework of an effective social dialogue at all levels. Social dialogue is a lever of transformation to anticipate, follow and implement the upcoming transformations of postal companies in the interest of both employers and employees.

## **6. INTERVIEWS OF PARTICIPANTS**

## 6. INTERVIEWS OF PARTICIPANTS

During the final conference of the project in Brussels, we interviewed several participants, who were involved in the project at different stages and from diverse perspectives. Some participants attended all the workshops while others just discovered the project and its results at the final conference. We collected their feedback, feeling and perception on the work that has been done in the framework of the project and its main outputs.

### AS PARTICIPANTS EXTERNAL TO THE POSTAL SECTOR, WHAT IS YOUR PERSPECTIVE ON THIS PROJECT?



**Marie-Hélène Chavigny, Carrefour**

*"I find your work really interesting, extremely mature and well structured. I have rarely seen an approach of such quality. Above all, I find very interesting that it led to something concrete, i.e. the transformation by postal characters. I sincerely believe that employees will be able to imagine themselves as part of the transformation and grasp the change in the best possible conditions."*

*"It is not enough to decide to change; the postal sector has to create the conditions for change, which means building trust."*

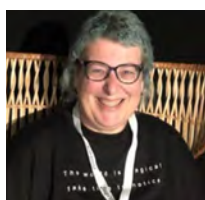


**Nicolas Petitjean, Collectivehood**

*"I think these discussions are very relevant. It is time to collectively evaluate the changes that are coming. Nowadays, the transformation we face in terms of work environment is so massive that we can no longer do it alone."*

*"The conducted workshops are an excellent way to give to social partners the necessary means to plan ahead and accompany the changes that are coming. I am very curious to see how the participants will jointly take action afterwards."*

### AS EMPLOYER'S AND TRADE UNION'S REPRESENTATIVES, WHAT IS YOUR VISION OF THIS PROJECT?



**Maja Mostarčić, HP - Hrvatska pošta d.d. (employer representative, Croatia)**

*"I expect that new people who have not been part of the process so far will be able to convey the message of what we were doing, about the characters we came up with. We had some really interesting ideas thanks to different people coming in different workshops."*



**Inga Rinkeviciene, Lietuvos Pastas (employer representative, Lithuania)**

*"It was really nice to communicate and meet new people in this project. It was really interesting to join this project, especially after the pandemic. It was exciting to participate, discuss and meet all these different posts of Europe. I think that the future of the postal sector is bright and that there are a lot of new competences that would be in this industry. I really hope that we can implement what we found."*



**Deimante Zebrauskaite, Lietuvos Pastas (employer representative, Lithuania)**

*"I expect to get more information and get ready for the changing employment environment in the postal sector."*



**Soulla Michaelidou, Cyprus Post (employer representative, Cyprus)**

*"We all recognise that nowadays the postal employees need further skills to be able to face the new challenges that are coming in the future. During this project, we worked on new skills and each country added its own opinion on these postal characters. It was really interesting to see new things coming out. I encourage all countries interested in the topic not to lose opportunities to participate and exchange with other countries on this topic. This methodology encourages people to participate and interact, it was really good. Many people have sometimes pretty different opinions, sometimes convictions are very common."*



**Ibrahim Damatoglu, Media Communication & Postal Employees Union HABER-SEN (trade union representative, Türkiye)**

*"I think this project is very useful and very productive. For example, we recommended to have exchanges programmes such as the Erasmus programme that is applicable to universities: exchange programmes for the postal offices."*

*"It is important to incur the employees with the necessary skills for the future so that they can provide the services in an efficient way to the companies. It is important to talk to the employers in this field and profession. My union is more than happy to join this type of sustainable and productive initiatives."*



**Régis Crunchant, CGT (trade union representative, France)**

*"There are many more discussions at international level than at the national one. Seeing that things are moving in other countries gives us hope and shows that trade unionism is not an abstract notion but that it serves a purpose. It would be great if we could move forward together on the basis of the declarations which are made at European level."*



**Kadri Kangur, Estonian Trade Union Pro (trade union representative, Estonia)**

*"I liked this project very much. For some countries, it is something we already use and for others it is new and they are learning to use it."*

*"I liked this feeling when we worked together at the time of the workshop, we were talking with other countries, trade unions and employers. That is an amazing feeling. Hopefully, there will be more of these workshops."*



**Alfredo Manas, UGT SP (trade union representative, Spain)**

*"I hope that we will continue these types of meetings and workshops in the future. 2030 is close and we should be positive and proactive. The attitude is very positive, we are working in the right direction. What we are doing is very effective and really works. I am looking forward to reading the results and proposals."*





## 7. CONCLUSIONS

As a result of our project, we have been able to identify several characters who can meet society's needs in 2030, according to the scenarios that formed the basis of our work. The aim is not to determine the jobs of the future but to identify trends which may also represent prospects for new missions beyond the current activities of postal companies in order to better answer evolving needs. Postal operators with their postal offices' network, their expertise in logistics and their knowledge of new usages can answer the evolving needs of the society. The digital divide in an increasingly connected society will represent a challenge for social cohesion in Europe. Here again, through their territorial presence and trained staff, European posts remain essential players to foster digital literacy and enable all citizens, independently of their digital skills, to access basic services.


This project is in line with the ongoing initiatives conducted at European level. The project's outputs might be a common contribution to the foresight study launched by the European Commission on the postal sector. It also contributes to the wider reflections on the social dimension of Europe regarding the new world of work and society of tomorrow. Postal operators will need to work in cooperation with the European representatives to respond to the challenges of the society in a sustainable manner and mitigate the negative impacts of these evolutions.

Employers and trade unions should now disseminate these outputs and present them proactively within their companies and organisations. The aim is also to engage all European posts in this approach to convey both the results and the methodology. The postal characters are thought provoking and should be promoted and discussed at company level.

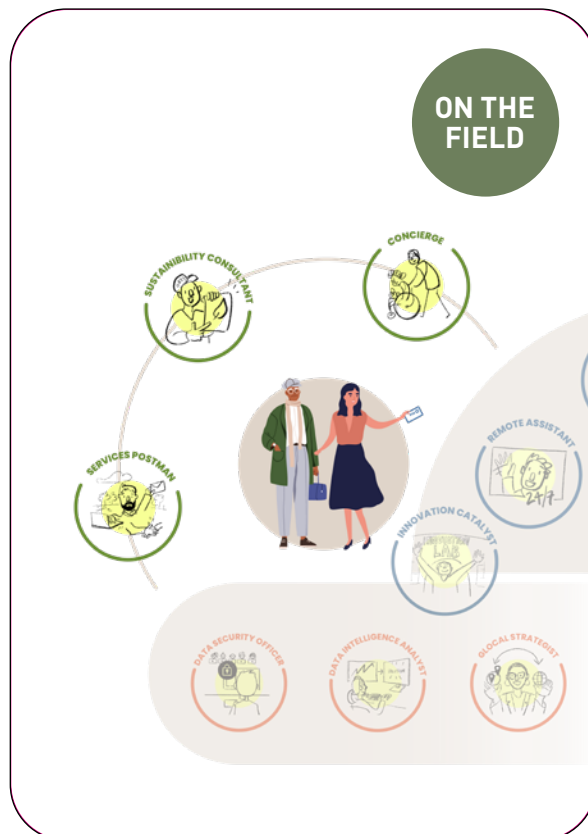
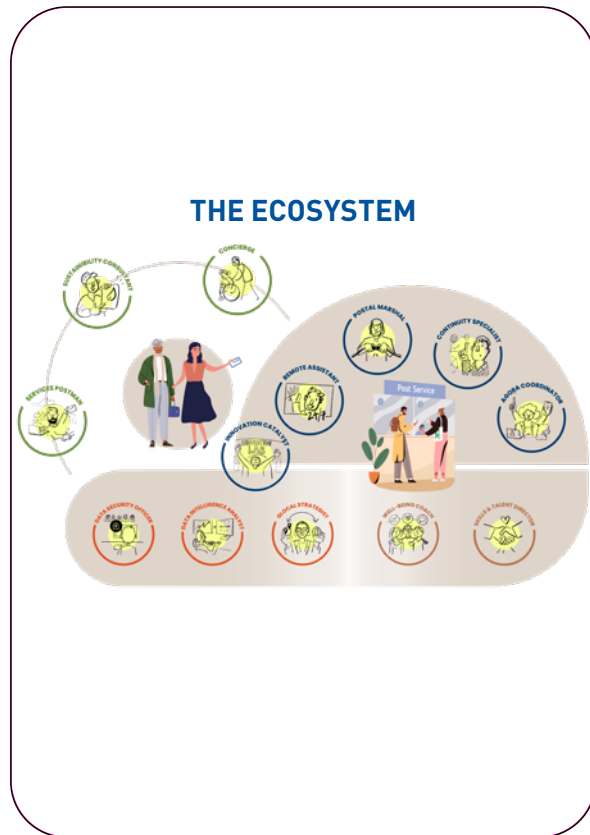
Overall postal operators will be major stakeholders of the upcoming transformation of society, notably by ensuring social link. Their territorial anchorage gives them the legitimacy and the strength to further provide new services. To meet the need for changes, postal operators will face strategic choices on their business models.









**THE WORLD OF WORK IN THE POSTAL SECTOR IN 2030**  
Postal Sector Evolution Working Group





**ON THE FIELD**

## THE CONCIERGE




Promote local knowledge

Local authorities

A solid co-worker network

Empathetic

EUROPEAN SOCIAL DIALOGUE COMMITTEE FOR THE POSTAL SECTOR



After working for years as a delivery postman in a big city, I decided to return to my native region to enjoy my family and get back in touch with my roots.

To do this, I decided to become a full-time Concierge for the Post. What I liked about my last delivery job was the social spirit, the fact that I could drop in on people's homes and help them... and today, being able to do that is more than I can ask for from a job, especially in a **neighborhood I know well and where I have always felt at ease**. Here, people know each other, so the concierge job is motivating, especially if you have the necessary skills and tools.

To briefly explain my job, **I provide social services. This includes helping the elderly, looking after children, directing customers and so on. And knowing the village I work in by heart makes it easier for me to meet the needs of my job.**

### MY SKILLS...

- **Soft and people skills:** to be able to assist customers and provide them what they need
- **Communication skills:** ability to communicate empathetically with customers and with professionals (e.g. in the healthcare field)
- **Knowledge of healthcare basics** (child and elderly care) without being an expert
- **Digital skills:** being able to use digital platforms to access my assignments and collaborate with colleagues to share information
- **Local knowledge:** to best meet customers needs and help promote local features through local guides and blogs



**ON THE FIELD**

**BACK OFFICE DATA**

## THE SUSTAINABILITY CONSULTANT



Raising awareness

Measure, calculate & analyse

Link with experts & universities

EUROPEAN SOCIAL DIALOGUE COMMITTEE FOR THE POSTAL SECTOR




Sustainability has become a necessity not only for companies but also for households. It was in this spirit and with my "green" sensibility that I pursued my studies and my career with the **aim of raising awareness of the importance of greener solutions**.

Today being a postal employee enables me to put my knowledge into practice. Behind the title of consultant, there is **both the operational and the theoretical side, a field worker and a back officer**.

In other words, I observe customer households to **measure, calculate and analyze energy consumption and efficiency in order to identify opportunities for improving practices to reduce customers' energy footprints**. I also **work with external experts and universities to raise awareness on "green" solutions** in the public. I also have to **keep abreast of the latest sustainability initiatives and the various "green" solutions** that are being developed, as well as the **financial opportunities** that could help our customers become more environmentally-friendly and achieve concrete energy savings.

### MY SKILLS...

- **Technical and analytical skills:** to measure, calculate and evaluate energy consumption and uses
- **Digital skills:** use of tools and software to measure consumption and use of communication platforms to follow up on advice.
- **Communication and soft skills:** to raise awareness and understand consumers' needs in terms of green solutions
- **Local and field knowledge** to create networks and partnerships with local authorities, energy suppliers and energy experts
- **Curiosity** about science and new trends: keep abreast of the latest research and initiatives in green solutions




ON THE FIELD

## THE SERVICES POSTMAN




Deliver social and healthcare services



Data intelligence officer

EUROPEAN SOCIAL DIALOGUE COMMITTEE FOR THE POSTAL SECTOR



You may be wondering what's behind my title? Well, I work to **transform the postal presence, especially in rural areas, into added value for all**. My position can be **part-time** in addition to a **delivery role for full-time employment**.

I am a multi-tasker with a two-folded mission:

- > **I collect data on the territory** (social, climatic, traffic, topography...) that I then transfer to the **Data Intelligence Analyst**
- > **I deliver social and basic healthcare services** to inhabitants (health self-check kits or meals for example)

My role is to make sure inhabitants, especially those in rural areas (with less access to post offices and other services) get **the best access to social services**, while **contributing to the big picture of knowledge** that allows the Post to **anticipate** the needs of my territory.

In case of emergency and heavy disruptions, I become part of the Continuity team, under the **leadership of the Postal Marshal**.

### ✂ MY SKILLS...

**My fundamental skills as a postman remain crucial**

- Relational skills and customers' service orientation
- Thoroughness and organisation
- Knowledge of my area

**On top of that, a varied set of skills allow me to achieve my multi-folded mission:**

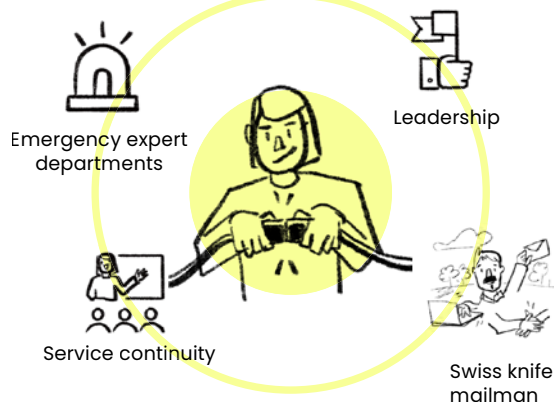
- ICT skills for data collection, mastering tech tools and practices
- Communication and relational skills as my relationship with users spans wider than before
- Basic medical know-how (testing etc.)
- Openness, creativity and flexibility: being a service postman, I know that my tasks and functions can evolve, and I am always ready to go with the flow of transformation, with the best service in mind





FRONT OFFICE

## THE POSTAL MARSHAL



EUROPEAN SOCIAL DIALOGUE COMMITTEE FOR THE POSTAL SECTOR

PostEurop\*

I play an essential role in the Post **disaster response strategy**. Climate change has brought frequent and unpredictable natural catastrophes, that impact territorial and infrastructure organisations as well as energy supply across the territory. I sprint into action to **ensure service continuity** when a power shortage puts the latest technology out of order and only the “old ways” can save the day. My activities are location-oriented, I know well my territory and its network of actors to activate in case of emergency. I apply security policies on the field and make sure all the basics for safe service are covered at all times. I coordinate with local postal key actors (**Agora Coordinator, Services Postman**) and remote experts that keep me posted on the evolution of the situation with a bird’s eye view and provide me with critical training and tools (**Continuity Specialist**).

### MY SKILLS...

**Territorial knowledge:** I know well the specificities and main public and private actors of my region.

**Low-tech delivery techniques:** my founding skill is the practical knowledge of how to deliver postal services in low-tech ways. Moreover, I have a varied set of skills centered on service continuity:

- **Planning and anticipatory protocols:** when there are no emergencies, I am constantly following up on risk preventions and policies, conducting scheduled screenings
  - **Budget management** to keep my crisis toolbox updated and ready to use
  - **Training “safety officers on the field”** that become my team in case of an emergency (ex the mailman that turn into a member of a local taskforce)
- In the midst of a crisis, my most crucial skill is **leadership**, in order to keep my teams on the field focused, empowered, and safe.

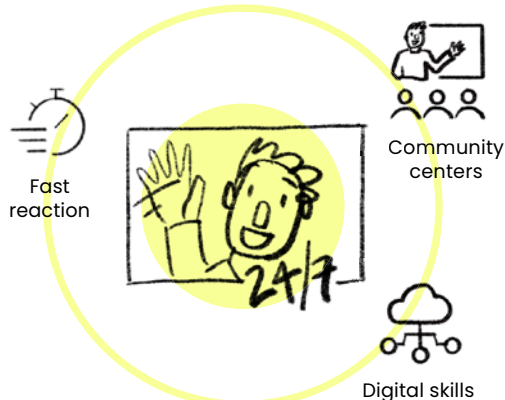
#### Evolutive toolbox

Tools will be different depending on the disaster event. The toolbox will be recommended by the Expert Emergency Dpt (EED) considering the disaster. Essential tools include: State-of-the-art channels of communication, live mapping of assistance from support teams on the field.



FRONT OFFICE

## THE REMOTE ASSISTANT



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The post office where I work has become a self-service post office; **it's fully autonomous and customers can do everything on their own thanks to AI**. You think this would have an impact on the people who used to work in post offices, myself included? Well, that's not the case.

I'm now a remote assistant and in fact for personal and family reasons, it suits me well because **I can work from home**.

If one of the customers in the post office I'm attached to needs help, I **determine the best solution based on the problem and details provided by customers**.

Indeed, even technology can fail or be complicated to use for some people, so I'm **there to help virtually or to send someone from our team out into the field to help physically if necessary**.

> **I also provide remote administrative support to customers without them having to go to the post office (tax payments, transactions, etc.)**

My working hours are also flexible. **I can choose to work full-time or part-time**.

### MY SKILLS...

- **Digital skills:** being able to use communication platforms with customers and colleagues, as well as tools that enable me to do my job properly
- **Communication and pedagogical skills** via telephone, e-mail and instant messaging
- **Time management & organisational skills:** in times of high demand, I need to be able to organise and manage different requests in terms of priority and urgency
- **Previous experience in front office**



FRONT OFFICE

### THE CONTINUITY SPECIALIST

Deal with crisis situations

Crossroads of numerous teams

Leadership

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I am driven by one fundamental goal: **ensure that postal service never stops**, under any circumstances. I am both involved in times of crisis to deploy quickly a continuity plan and in "normal" times to prepare and anticipate any risk situation. My work consists of imagining and defining a **variety of crisis scenario** (health, climate etc.) and then plan for the adequate resource and processes that would allow postal services to still be delivered. **I work at the crossroads of numerous teams**: parallel managers who develop postal services, postal workers on the field who keep me updated with valuable, live information, and intervention teams that can deploy our continuity plans (**Postal Marshall**). **I coordinate with national and local governments** to prepare disaster response plan that involve local actors. Finally, new, effective protocols need innovation: that's why **I collaborate with a group of researchers to keep our protocols up to date** with the latest findings and technologies.

#### MY SKILLS...

I juggle multiple skills and interact with a large spectrum of professionals. My activities make my days very rich and diverse and I have to be ready to work at different paces.

**In times of crisis my key skills are:**

- Leadership
- Effective communication
- Stress management
- Technical knowledge allowing me to understand the unfolding and the risks of different situations (earthquakes, power shortages, floods...)

**In times of anticipation and prevention my key skills are:**

- Creativity: imagining crisis scenarios and "playing" with them, through iterative tests
- Sustainable directions and long-term thinking: I plan ahead for the year to come but also for the next 100 years
- Project management and relational skills to coordinate a vast, diverse group of technicians and pull together effective continuity plans
- Good knowledge and relations with public government that we rely upon to set up our continuity plans
- Data analysis: a crucial asset for risk prediction



FRONT OFFICE

### THE AGORA COORDINATOR

Planner

Relational skills

A connecting piece

EUROPEAN SOCIAL DIALOGUE COMMITTEE FOR THE POSTAL SECTOR




The Post Office's today **caters to a wide range of needs and performs multiple services**, providing a space for social interactions, projects, activities...it has become a hub for the community's life and supports local economic development, job creation and matching, local art, decision making, conflict settling... Like the Agora in Ancient Greece, **the Agora Post Office is a space for public life to thrive**.

I am the **versatile, highly relational professional** who supervises the Agora's bustling activity. First and foremost **I am a mediator and a connecting piece** between all the Agora's activities, fostering synergies and making space for the paramount projects that benefit the community.

**My goal is that the Agora is identified as a welcoming place for all, and that it stays agile**, always ready to face new requests and turn them into a success for inhabitants. **I coordinate with the network of Agoras across European countries**: we make sure the service is consistent while keeping our activities relevant at a local level.

#### MY SKILLS...

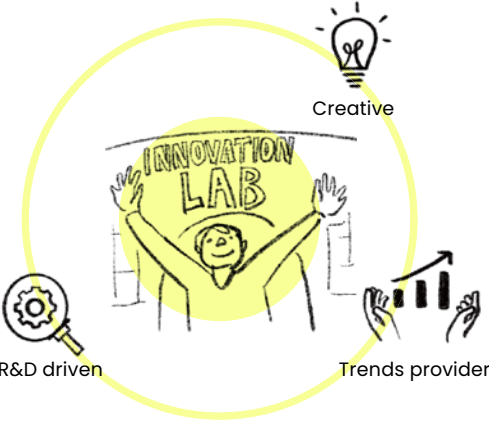
- **Logistic skills**: to ensure the proper functioning of the Agora
- **Organisational skills**: to organise, plan and facilitate Agora activities
- **Solution-oriented mindset**: to develop objectives and solutions after exploring and analyzing current problems
- **Good communication skills**: to deal with the different stakeholders and advise citizens
- Good knowledge of the territory and of its main actors
- **Soft skills**: Flexibility, Adaptability, Self-organising, Rigorous and Relational skills



FRONT  
OFFICE

BACK  
OFFICE  
DATA

## INNOVATION CATALYST






Creative

R&D driven

Trends provider

EUROPEAN SOCIAL DIALOGUE COMMITTEE FOR THE POSTAL SECTOR

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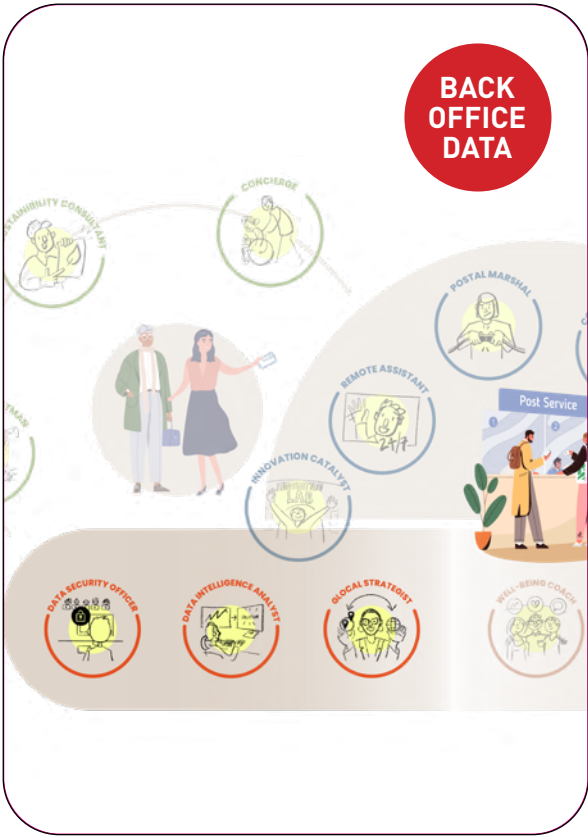
Each European region has its own co-innovation laboratory. I'm **the catalyst** for one of these regional innovation centers. For me, it's a stimulating job that gives me the opportunity to take a look into the future. **I coordinate and lead working sessions** between postal managers, the R&D department, laboratory researchers, engineers as well as customers and the external eco-system to identify postal needs and areas where innovation is required.

**I also organize events: I set up open days at the lab to showcase the latest innovations** and provide post offices and customers with the latest information and trends.

In addition to coordinating the co-innovation lab, I am **also identified as a global solutions expert as I conduct market research and analyze worldwide trends** to identify the best experience to offer our customers.

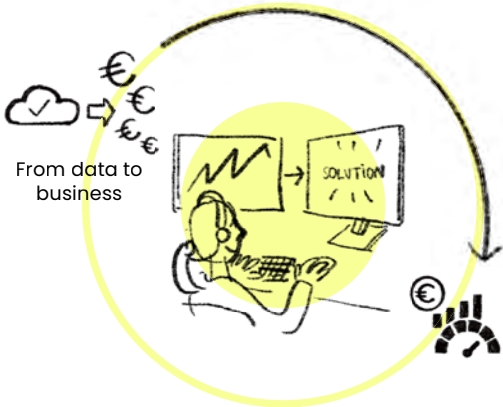
### 🔧 MY SKILLS...

- **Innovative and creative mindset:** to imagine and provide the latest innovation solutions to postal offices and customers
- **Management skills:** responsible for the co-innovation laboratory and coordinate its activities and events
- **Analytical mindset and R&D driven:** analysis of market trends
- **Good communication skills:** to voice-out my ideas and onboard stakeholders





### THE DATA INTELLIGENCE ANALYST



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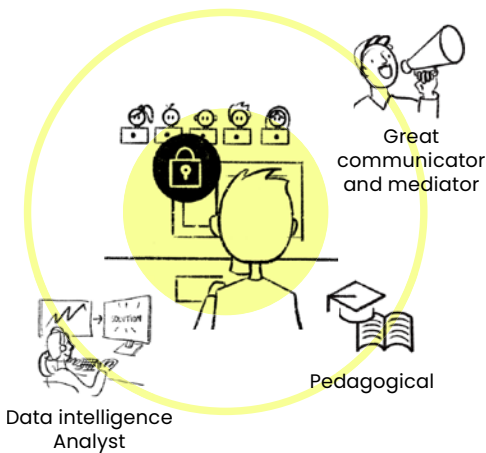
Data has become an inevitable and essential part of our lives. I speak and love the language of data.  
**I collect and extract the data sources collected by our front desk and field desk employees** in order to exploit and interpret the data to derive useful business observations.  
 My greatest strength is my ability to translate data into business opportunities.  
**My analyses are used to formulate strategic recommendations for local post offices but also to develop new business models and improve performance for the postal sector.**  
 Beyond that, I also keep an eye on new tools to improve data analysis.

#### MY SKILLS...

- **Big Data tools & expertise:** working with data means working with systems that process and analyze it
- **Analytical skills:** I have the ability to think critically when analyzing data, make difficult decisions and solve complex business problems
- **Business & strategic mindset:** to provide business recommendations to different stakeholders
- **Able to work and coordinate with different expertises.**
- **Risk analysis:** communicate and analyze the level of risk before and during cyber attacks, and develop cybersecurity solutions



### THE DATA SECURITY OFFICER



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Attached to the Data Department and working closely with the **Data Intelligence Analyst**, my role is to **ensure the protection of data collected and processed by the Post.**  
 I am also **responsible for raising awareness of data protection compliance** among employees and users.  
 > **I train postal staff involved in data collection and processing**, ensuring that applicable data protection rules are respected  
 > **I put in place personal data clear out operations** to ensure that users' data (e.g. health data) is stored with good reason and not beyond the agreed deadline for processing

#### MY SKILLS...

- I work at the crossroad of technical, legal, ethical and human stakes. My skills include:
- **Expertise in big data and data processing.** I don't do that myself but I am able to understand how it works and the technicalities of this area
  - **Legal expertise:** law and regulatory knowledge, always updated with the latest legal evolutions at a national and European level
- In the soft skill realm:
- I am an excellent **communicator and mediator**
  - **Pedagogical** ability, allowing me to **popularise** data-related processes and rules to the rest of my organisation
  - In my personal attitude, I lead myself with caution and respect of data privacy: I respect boundaries and I am great at "reading the room" to know what can be shared and when. This makes me a **trustworthy colleague, one that can be trusted with sensitive information**




BACK OFFICE DATA



## THE GLOCAL STRATEGIST



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I am a **powerful liaison** between the central government and the remote areas, actually ONE area that I know perfectly well and follow closely in its social and economic development. My role is to **peer through the needs and stakes that the territory presents** in order to **detect opportunities** to make the local community thrive. I collect diverse data and continuously exchange with people on the field to keep a good sense of local priorities. Then I **coordinate with central government** in order to pull budgets and resources to implement what needs to be done, while keeping in mind the bigger picture of national and European stakes. My role is to **foster innovation** that is not imposed on a territory but rather demanded and executed in a meaningful way for the people and their environment.

I also foster **local training and reskilling** according to strategy plan, and I make a point of reusing existing assets and available employees for new projects, always under **agreement with local parties**.

### ✂ MY SKILLS...

My perimeter is in-between center and local powers and my mediator, diplomatic, yet result-driven approach is crucial in the achievement of my missions.

**On the local side I need to master:**

- deep listening, in order to understand local specificities
- multi-disciplinary toolbox to understand and navigate political, anthropological, environmental, financial stakes

**On the global side I need to master:**

- public relations: what I say and disseminate about "my" region will have a huge impact in the development of local services and opportunities
- coordination with other glocal strategist to ensure a common European strategy, providing basic opportunities for all

**My digital and physical toolbox is made up of:**

- regional database (needs, assets, relations)
- workstation for data collection
- mathematical models to process data

BACK OFFICE HR





BACK  
OFFICE  
HR

## THE SKILLS & TALENT EXPERT



EUROPEAN SOCIAL DIALOGUE COMMITTEE FOR THE POSTAL SECTOR







I am part of the Human Resources team and **my job is to find new talents for my postal organisation**. Once on board, I support them in their integration process and in their professional progression nationwide and across Europe.

I'm also responsible for ensuring that our employees are properly trained. To do this, I work closely with **the well-being coach** to identify employees' needs in terms of technical training and soft skills, and then put them in touch with appropriate training courses or mentors.

**For that, I need a good training network**. So I'm always in touch with universities, training centers and other postal organisations across Europe to find out what's going on elsewhere in terms of training, **creating new jobs to meet the needs of the new generation, and identifying and nurturing new talent**.

### ✂ MY SKILLS...

**A huge part of my job is relational as I need to onboard and engage people in their own development.**

For this, my key skills are:

- **Effective communication** and leadership
- Management and decision making processes
- **Pedagogical abilities**
- Deep listening, to detect the true needs and aspirations of employees
- Hands-on approach, leading by example, fostering proximity and trust with employees
- **Knowledge of human behaviour and psychology** in a complex organisation
- Networking and public relations, mediating and translating in order to bridge needs and opportunities

When it comes to actually upskilling and reskilling employees, **I also need to master the latest educational technologies:**

- Digital skills: at ease with educational platforms and tools
- Innovative content creation



BACK  
OFFICE  
HR

## THE WELL-BEING COACH



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In a world where **mental health, well-being and work-life balance are more topical than ever**, my role has become essential. Companies increasingly understand that performance cannot be achieved without the employees' emotional and social well-being at work.

Working in the postal Human Resources department, my role is to **look after the well-being of all employees and foster an empowering work environment, wherever that is at the office, on the field, and remotely**.

I put in place **regular check-ups** to follow the evolution of employees throughout their year and their life, and I put special emphasis on **accompanying them through job transitions and new functions**.

I work to disseminate at an organisational and individual level **the importance of emotions at work** and how to act upon (and not against) them to build a more powerful and durable workforce. I provide support tools to employees so that they can express their needs and find adequate solutions to prevent or face any problematic situation.

### ✂ MY SKILLS...

**My job requires a lot of empathy and listening** and a deep knowledge of human behaviour and psychology.

- **Relational skills:** empathy, deep listening, non-violent communication

**At the same time, I have to be an expert of the structure and processes of the organisation** in order to always be relevant in my coaching inputs.

- Mastering HR structure, goals and practices as well as having a good network of HR experts
- Knowledge of trade union processes and social dialogue



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With the support of the European Commission, DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion