

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

New Joint Declaration on Postal Sector Evolution

1. Objective

The purpose of this Joint Declaration is:

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

2. Introduction

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

The market opening has occurred at the same time as a significant decrease in letter mail volumes which was further accelerated by the global economic crises.

The post sector is in a process of continuous and profound change which has led to an intensive reorganization process of the NPOs, coupled with modernisation and diversification of activities.

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

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

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

3. A Shared Assessment

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

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

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

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

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

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

4. Principles to accompany the transformation

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

- To better anticipate the ongoing evolutions and their consequences on the provision of postal services and on the organisation of work, employment and skills. This necessitates adequate policies accompanied by a constructive social dialogue.
- To recognise that the management of change can benefit from country specific social dialogue. The implementation of this policy relies on constructive co-operation between the social partners.
- To develop the employees' employability to promote their internal and external mobility as a shared responsibility of the social partners and of each employee. Training, re-deployment programmes and internal communication, notably based on the full use of information and communication technologies, will contribute to the goal of quality postal services
- To encourage investment in the sector, in terms of modernisation of operations to address physical and electronic substitution and to improve the adaptability of the work organization in order to better cope with new customer requirements and to increase productivity.

5. The way forward

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

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

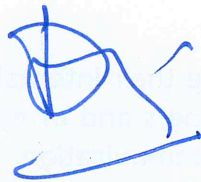
The social partners recognise that a single solution to the challenges and opportunities in the sector cannot be applied in every member state. They call on all postal operators and trade unions to implement the principles contained in this Joint Declaration and to share experiences to ensure mutually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

The social partners commit:

- to raise the awareness of key stakeholders of the social impacts of change

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

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