



2.3. Postal Services

2.3.1. Universal Service – Courier Services

Postal services are divided into two categories: The Universal Postal Service and the Other Postal Services, which mainly include Courier Services.

The US is a set of basic postal services, which the State considers its obligation to ensure on a steady basis, at an affordable price and on a defined quality, to all citizens of the country, without exceptions and discriminations, irrespective of their geographic location in the country.

The US includes the handling of:

- ▶ Simple postal items of A and B Priority (letters, bills, magazines etc) Domestic and International, weighing up to 2 kilos.
- ▶ Parcels, Domestic and International, weighing up to 20 kilos.
- ▶ Registered letters, Domestic and International.
- ▶ Letters of a declared value in case of destruction, loss etc.

In Greece, ELTA has been designated as the sole Universal Service Provider (USP). ELTA is under the obligation to meet the quality standards and the delivery times as they are described in the relevant Ministerial Decision (MD)¹⁴. It is noted that the US market is going through a gradual and controlled liberalisation.

As Courier Services are considered the services of special urgent handling of postal items, which are monitored by the Postal Items Special -Track and Trace- System (PISTTS) operated by the undertakings. The Courier and other services market are fully liberalised.

Key aspects in Courier Services and an element that differentiates undertakings providing such services from the USP are the speed in handling a postal item and the existence of a PISTTS capable of monitoring the progress of a postal item through all handling stages, from sender to addressee.

The handling speed and the capability to monitor a postal item through all stages, the time within which an undertaking is able to locate an item, if needed, but –mainly- the method and the resources used for this purpose, are elements of decisive significance for that undertaking's level of organisation and for the quality that the undertaking provides in handling postal items. Moreover, all the above add value to the service offered as compared to the US.

Furthermore, Courier undertakings, depending on their capabilities and their organisation, provide services adaptable to consumer demands, such as:

- ▶ Collection from the sender's address.
- ▶ Delivery to a specific addressee or to a person authorised by the addressee.
- ▶ Delivery of item in the timeframe defined by the sender.
- ▶ Guarantee on the delivery time.
- ▶ Provision of information to the sender or the addressee on the item's location through all handling stages.
- ▶ Information on the item's handling for a long period after its delivery to the addressee.
- ▶ Possibility to alter the destination and the addressee during the handling of the item.
- ▶ Notifying the sender that the item was delivered to the addressee.
- ▶ Provision of delivery receipt to the sender.
- ▶ Delivery on the same day within the city, delivery on the next day before a predetermined time (i.e. before 09:00 or 12:00).

¹⁴ MD 79293/2000, GG Issue 1588/B/29-12-2000.



The undertakings that provide Courier Services are licensed by EETT and are under the obligation to inscribe the relevant Registry Number (recognition sign) provided by EETT, on their documents.

2.3.2. Charter of Obligations to the Consumer

The COC describes in detail the obligations of undertakings towards consumers for the provided services. Each undertaking is under the obligation to uphold what is provided in the COC and is committed to its provisions following the COC publication. The consumers have the option to look for COCs in the undertakings premises or websites.

EETT determined the minimum elements that must be included in the COC and which are the following:

- General information on the undertaking (legal form, goal etc).
- Detailed description of postal services or other products and further facilitations that are provided by the undertakings, i.e. the delivery and collection times of the postal item, the areas serviced by the undertaking, the types and the weights of items it can handle.
- Services quality standards.
- Price list of services and products.
- Description of the resolution method for any disputes between undertakings and consumers.
- Method of establishment and operating procedure of internal Dispute Resolution Committee.
- Compensations and exclusive deadlines for the claiming of compensations.
- Procedure to submit complaints.
- Consumer service.
- Responsibility areas of the undertaking.
- Reference of undelivered postal items handling terms.

2.3.3. Voucher (Accompanying Courier Note – Individual Agreement)

The consumers, during the handling order of a postal item, sign the Individual Agreement and the Accompanying Courier Note (ACN). The individual Agreement and the Note are imprinted on a special document (voucher). EETT determined the minimum elements that must be included in the voucher, which are the following:

- The undertaking's obligations and specifically the handling terms signed by consumers (undertaking's responsibility areas, insurance coverage option, compensation issues).
- The undertaking's distinctive title.
- EETT's Registry Number (recognition sign) for the certification of the undertaking's legitimacy.
- The information of the postal item (i.e. number or code) based on which the handled postal item is tracked.

2.3.4. Postal Items Special -Track and Trace- System

EETT proceeded to the definition of operation specifications for a specialised information system, through which all handling stages of a postal item are monitored.

This is, as mentioned above, the PISTTS, which must satisfy the appropriate specifications so that:

- The undertakings can provide any information to the consumer, with regard to the handled postal item throughout all its handling stages.
- The interconnection of undertakings that are part of the Postal Network¹⁵ of the licensed undertaking, is feasible.
- The ability to exchange information between the collaborating licensed undertakings and their Networks is provided.

¹⁵ Postal Network: The total organisation and every means and persons used by the postal services provider under the status of a General Authorisation, including persons or legal entities not granted a General Authorisation, to which postal work is assigned, according to the provider's Authorisation.



2.3.5. Benefits from Competition

The aforementioned EETT actions for the establishment and ensuring of healthy competition in the liberalised Courier market, contributed to a great extent to the maximisation of benefits for consumers.

Specifically, the main benefits for consumers can be summarised in the following:

- ▶ Establishment of a regulatory framework, which ensures the smooth operation of competition and more specifically a minimum level of Courier undertakings' organisation and a minimum quality level of provided services.
- ▶ Increase of consumer choices concerning the provided services by Courier undertakings.
- ▶ Ensure the provision of postal services and products, which cover an ever-growing part of the Greek state.
- ▶ Ensure the fulfillment of obligations by Courier undertakings towards the consumers, according to the COC, such as compensations.