

Business users use postal services on a daily basis and have plenty of choices among services that can be tailored to their needs and those of their customers. However, in order to make effective use of the opportunities offered, it is important that they are constantly informed. EETT's "Guide for business users: Postal services" is a useful "tool" providing information about the available postal services, criteria for selecting a postal services company, as well as the rights of business users for using the specific services.

Hellenic Telecommunications and Post Commission (EETT), through its actions ensures the rights of consumers and their access to more competitive choices. At the same time, it shapes the regulatory framework under which companies provide postal services, supervises the market and monitors developments, in order to intervene, where necessary.



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The "Guide for business users: Postal services" is updated until 31/05/2018.



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## 1

# **Available options**

You have at your disposal a variety of services that can meet your company's needs. The basic categories of postal services are the following:

Universal Service: It is a basic level of postal services provided on a regular basis and also, at an affordable price and defined quality, regardless of the geographical location of users.

The company that provides the Universal Service is the Hellenic Post-ELTA (until 2028). Also, other companies, granted with Individual Licence from EETT, provide similar to ELTA services, mainly to business users (relevant information is available on EETT website, <a href="https://www.eett.gr">www.eett.gr</a>).

Courier Services: Courier services concern express delivery of mail (letters, parcels). These services differ from Universal Service, regarding mainly the assurance of delivery time, the ability to track delivery process and also the provision of a variety of services. Mail delivery is monitored at all phases of the procedure by a special track and trace system (Special Postal Items Track & Trace System-SPITTS).

According to the abovementioned services, the following options are available.

## Letters/Bills/Small parcels

**Universal Service: Ordinary Mail** 

This category mainly includes letters, cards, bills and small par-

cels (the latter concerns postal items exceeding the limits of an envelope) that weigh up to 2 kilos. This category is described as "ordinary mail", because the dispatch of items is not monitored by a track and trace system.

This specific service is provided by ELTA, based on the following options for the dispatch of items.

- Domestic mail is normally delivered (provided that the item has been posted until 12 noon and not from "excluded areas"):
  - Either the next working day from posting date (A' priority mail).
  - Or up to 3 working days from posting date, at a lower charge (B' priority mail).
- A' priority international mail is normally delivered in:
  - 3 working days within the European Union<sup>1</sup>.
  - 3-5 working days for other countries.

In the case of B' priority, time varies according to the delivery time-limits of the country of destination.

You can send ordinary mail through either service points, such as ELTA post offices, postal agencies and mail boxes, or a special service with scheduled daily delivery from your place, with an additional charge.

Ordinary mail is delivered through the mailbox of your customer. Concerning small parcels, if it is not possible to place them (due to their size) in the mailbox or to deliver them to the recipient (or co-resident), the distributor places a notice for picking-up from the post office.

It is noted that, in the context of Universal Service, postal services companies, granted with Individual Licence, also provide B' priority services.

In all the above cases, you have the option to request for special services that meet the needs of your business, e.g. information about placing the item in the recipient's mailbox, or trace an item through Geographic Information System (GIS).

## Special delivery mail

#### **Universal Service**

You have at your disposal special services for the delivery of letters provided by ELTA and the companies granted with Individual Licence. A unique tracking number is assigned to special delivery mail and thus, it is possible to search for information regarding delivery to the recipient (through the website, by written search request, or by the customer service line of the company). The applied delivery time-limits are the same as ordinary mail.

Special delivery services for domestic and international mail are the following.

Registered Mail: For these items, the sender receives a postage receipt, while the recipient (or other authorized person) must sign for delivery.



<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> In the case of Denmark, time limits are longer.

Declared Value/Insured items: Items of considerable value may be insured up to a certain amount with an additional charge. In case of loss/damage/theft, the recipient is compensated (please see section "Business users' rights").

Additionally, other services are available, such as prepaid envelopes for next day delivery (deposit in red mailboxes up to 17:00), recorded delivery mail (recipient's signature is required), mail with proof of delivery, cash on delivery (accompanied by postal money orders). Moreover, upon request, the option of redirecting mail temporarily (up to a semester) to a new address is provided.

#### **Courier Services**

Courier services, as mentioned above, concern express delivery of mail (letters, parcels). These services have the following features:.

- You receive a delivery receipt.
- You are fully informed, through the company's website, e-mail or customer service line and according to the unique tracking number, about the delivery of your mail (day and time of delivery, name and surname of the recipient) or the reasons for non-delivery.
- You can specify the time and place of mail receipt/delivery, according also to the time-limit specified in the Charter of Obligations towards Consumers-COC (please see section "Business users' rights").
- You can change destination or recipient while delivery is in progress.

 Before dispatch, you sign a contract regarding the terms of delivery.

For more information about the above courier services you may visit the website of EETT (www.eett.gr) and the companies operating in the specific sector.

#### **Parcels**

#### **Universal Service**

ELTA and companies granted with Individual Licence, provide the option of sending parcels weighing up to 20 kilos:

- Within Greece, in 3 working days.
- Abroad, with delivery time and fees varying according to destination and priority. In case of customs clearance fees, the company is obliged to inform you in due time about the fees.

You can find relevant information about the delivery of all types of parcels (e.g. standard, bulky, fragile, insured, delivered at home), using the unique tracking number, through the company's website and customer service line, and also by sending a written application form. The parcels are received from the company's service points.

#### **Courier Services**

You can send items via courier companies within Greece, with delivery normally on the next day of the dispatch, while for worldwide delivery, time differs depending on the country of destination.

The company collects the item:

- from your place and then delivers it to the recipient's place.
- through its service point and delivers it to the recipient's place.
- from any service point and delivers to another service point.

It is noted that, you have at your disposal additional options regarding delivery time, e.g. on the same day, early in the morning, within two hours deadline, on public holidays/non-working days, with an additional charge.

### **Bulk Mail**

Bulk Mail includes bills, newspapers, magazines, advertising leaflets with recipient's address, parcels/small parcels etc. Companies operating in the Universal Service sector and courier services companies, offer special prices and services (e.g. delivery at your place) for these items. For bulk mail, a minimum quantity is required, as well as an in advance and in a specific way preparation/classification of items. The charge depends on the quantity, destination and weight (please see section "Company selection"). In addition, many companies provide additional services, such as address validation and undelivered items return.

It is noted that, besides the above options, you can tailor ser-



vices to the needs of your business, with a relevant provision in the contract you sign with the company.

## **Specialised courier services**

You can choose from specialised services, such as the following, which are provided in combination with basic courier services.

Cash on delivery service: Delivery of merchandise to your customers and collection of its charged value, either on the spot or via electronic deposit in the beneficiary's bank account.

Item return: Ability to return letter/parcel that has already been delivered to the recipient. This service mainly facilitates business users involved in e-commerce, providing a variety of choices.

Please note that these specific services are not regulated by EETT, but their provision depends on the commercial policy of each company.

## **E-commerce deliveries**

In order to meet the increasing needs of e-commerce, courier companies, apart from receiving parcels from their service points or your place, provide to business customers the additional option of receiving postal items from their partner's selected points, such as petrol stations, super markets, automated lockers. These service points, have extended oper-

ating hours (holidays or weekends also included), whereas in some cases the option of delivering at a 24 hours basis is provided. The recipient is electronically informed (via SMS/e-mail) about the process of picking-up from the selected service point and the tracking number.



## **Company selection**

## **Criteria for selecting services**

Decide which services are suitable for you.

Select the service that meets your business and your customers' needs. For example, are you interested in ordinary mail/bills/leaflets delivery or in mail with proof of delivery signed by the recipient? Do you prefer ordinary deposit in the mailbox or having a notice of delivery? Are you interested in delivery at a pre-agreed time, having the option of compensation in case of delay, insurance of the item or personalized services? Do you often send bulk mail? Is it possible to enclose in an envelope the item you are interested in sending, in order to be delivered as ordinary mail or should it be sent as a parcel?

Specify the criteria for selecting a company, such as:

- Cost and quality of services.
- Volume and frequency of dispatch.
- Geographical coverage you are interested in.
- Your needs based on your business activity (e.g. "store" and/ or online store).
- Type of products and possible restrictions concerning time and way of delivery.
- Flexible item return options.
- Electronic notification and ability to track and trace the item.

### **Market Research**

Do market research, gather information and compare

the available services and prices.

Information about the services provided by ELTA, companies with Individual Licence and courier services companies, is available on EETT website (<a href="www.eett.gr">www.eett.gr</a>), as well as at the companies' service points, customer service line and website.

You can also find information about courier services through EETT special electronic application "Price Observatory for Telecommunications and Postal Services", <a href="www.pricescope.gr">www.pricescope.gr</a>. Through this user-friendly and reliable application you can search for the available courier services and compare their prices. Information regarding bulk mail is provided, as well. The application is also available for iOS and Android operating systems.



The special application on EETT website, www.pricescope.gr.

In many cases, companies offer the following services:

- Special prices.
- Ability to use applications for the electronic management

- of dispatches and also information regarding item delivery and scheduled orders.
- Scheduled delivery hours.
- Informative SMS or e-mail about delivery performance and any problems that may have occurred.

Also, take into consideration the following issues:

### **Licensed companies**

EETT
Registry No: XX-XXX
Postal Services
General
Authorisation/
Individual Licence

Postal services companies must be registered in EETT Register and indicate their registration number, in a distinct frame, on their documents and especially on the voucher. This number proves that a com-

pany is legal and is authorised to provide postal services. Moreover, on EETT website (<u>www.eett.gr</u>) you can find information about the <u>authorised companies</u> or search for a <u>specific company</u> according to its registration number.

## **Pricing policy issues - Pricelist**

According to European and national legislation, EETT is not competent to intervene in the pricing policy of companies. However, EETT is authorised to control whether the invoices of ELTA -since it has significant market power- comply with the law, before their release to the market.

It should be noted that, the companies' pricelist should reflect



the current total prices and should be updated each time the charges, services and also the terms and conditions are altered. Companies are obliged to inform consumers about price modifications prior to implementation. Offers, if applicable, must be available to all users and the relevant information should be provided in a clear and comprehensible manner.

Please pay attention on the following:

- The implementation date of the pricelist.
- The description of each service, which must be accompanied by the relevant price/charge, including VAT.

#### **Express Delivery Voucher**

Express Delivery Voucher (EDV), or simply voucher, is the document/sticker where all the necessary information is indicated, and is used to track and trace mail (please see also section "Business users' rights"). The voucher includes the specific requirements regarding the process of delivery (on the same day, on a non-working day etc.).

#### **Networks**

In order to send items, postal services companies use either their own networks or use the networks of collaborating partners. In the context of Universal Service, ELTA must provide at least one service point per 1000 residents in urban areas and per settlement in rural areas. Usual service points are, ELTA post offices and agencies (companies co-operating with ELTA), distributors and mailboxes.

Companies with Individual Licence, apart from their own network, can make use of ELTA network, after signing a relevant contract.

You can locate the nearest service point you are interested in on the company's website. Also, many companies have developed applications for finding the available service points and relevant information.

### Information and monitoring regarding delivery process

In case that, the service you have selected involves tracking and tracing of the item through an information system (Special Postal Items Tracking and Tracing System-SPITTS), the company sends you, on a monthly basis (or at frequency of your choice), information about the total number of dispatches handled on behalf of your business. You can also be informed about the delivery of a specific item, or the reasons for non-delivery, through the company's website, e-mail or customer service line and according to the unique tracking number. Also, many companies send automatically updates about the delivery, via SMS or e-mail.

### **Quality of service**

To a large extent, companies develop systems for measuring the quality of the provided postal services (e.g. registration of undelivered dispatches, delivery time). In addition, companies operating in the Universal Service sector are obliged to publish information about the total number of complaints and their resolution process, as well as other relevant issues. In

particular and according to the law, ELTA services must comply with specific quality standards (e.g. delivery of 87% of A' priority letters on the next working day throughout Greece).

## Before signing the contract

Please consider the following issues before signing a contract with a postal service company.

- Read carefully the terms. If there are any points you do not understand, it is recommended to ask for further information and clarification.
- The contract binds both you and the company, and defines the rights and obligations of both sides.
- Check if the contract includes information, among others, about
  the services provided and the related cost, the delivery time of
  items and the available network, the ways delivery notification
  is provided, as well as issues regarding compensation/returns
  and quality of postal service/customer service. In particular, as
  far as courier services companies are concerned, bear in mind:
  - o The company can provide you, on a regular basis, with a report including information about all the dispatches handled on your behalf (please see above "Information and monitoring regarding delivery process").
  - o You or your client can change the delivery address or recipient's name, by phone or in writing (e.g. via fax or e-mail). Please keep in mind that there may be an extra charge in case the new address is in a different district.
  - o In case of undelivered postal items, the company must at



#### least:

- Notify you in writing.
- Make a second attempt of delivery.
- Inform the sender/recipient (provided that contact information is available).
- Return the postal item (in case of non-delivery or refusal to receive), at a charge not exceeding the cost for its dispatch. In order to facilitate the delivery process, many companies provide you with the ability to define the preferable ways of communicating with your customers (e.g. via SMS/e-mail before delivery).
- Make sure you fully understand the characteristics of the selected services. E.g. postal item insurance service, compensation for delayed delivery/loss/damage, as well as claim deadlines, dispute resolution process, items whose transport is prohibited (under the law), or which must be pre-inspected by the company.
- It is recommended that you search for information regarding the legislative and regulatory framework applicable to the postal services market. Relevant information is available on EETT website.

#### **E-commerce**

Please be informed about the delivery of e-commerce items.

Get information from your company about the following issues:

- Dispatch cost: Please check if dispatch cost is differentiated by area or by factors such as, the size and weight of the item (in case it exceeds the weight limits defined by the company, or/and is bulky, e.g. electrical appliances), delivery to the recipient's address or in inaccessible areas, special services provision (e.g. courier/express).
- Time and delivery process: Check if your customer can pickup the item at his/her place, at the company's service points or from a mailbox. In some cases, special services regarding time and delivery process may be provided, with an extra charge (e.g. same day delivery at a specific time-limit or during holidays).

Please note that EETT is competent for issues related to the delivery of items and not for the financial transaction of the dispatch.



# **Business users' rights**

## **Charter of Obligations towards Consumers**

The Charter of Obligations towards Consumers (COC) defines companies' obligations towards consumers-users (individuals and business users) and must be available through each company's website or service points.

COC mentions, among others:

- Information about the company.
- Characteristics of provided services and pricelist.
- Information about the contract (please see below).
- Problem solving/compensation process.
- Company's obligations.

Each company has its own COC, which in any case, is based on the Code of Conduct issued by EETT and establishes the general principles and procedures to be followed by companies in order to provide postal services to consumers.

# Contract for the provision of postal services

The contract between your business and the postal service company of your choice, ensures proper cooperation of the two sides and defines, among others, issues regarding the provided services and the related cost, delivery time and available network, terms of transportation, as well as compensation/returns, quality of service/customer service (please see also section "Company selection").

## Compensation

As far as special delivery and parcel delivery services of Universal Service and also courier services are concerned, in case the item is damaged, destroyed or lost, while delivery is in progress, you are entitled to compensation. Please refer to the relevant terms of your contract for any special provisions.



It is noted that you are eligible to claim compensation within 6 months from the date the item was dispatched.

In particular, you are eligible to claim compensation in case of total or partial loss/theft/destruction of the letter's or parcel's content, provided that it has a unique tracking number.

The same applies also in cases of insured or declared value letters.



Please note that compensation is not provided for A' and B' priority letters (Universal Service), due to the fact that no tracking number is assigned to them and thus the delivery process is not monitored. Special management services are excluded.

The amount of compensation is set out, for domestic and international postal services, as follows:

#### **Universal Service**

Loss/Total destruction:

• For registered items: 36 euros for domestic mail and 37 eu-

ros approximately (based on 2018 foreign exchange rate - 30 DTS) for international mail.

- For parcels: up to 235 euros.
- Declared value letters/parcels: Compensation equal to the value declared during the dispatch.

Partial destruction/damage:

• Declared value letters/parcels: Compensation equal to the actual cost of the destruction/damage.

Especially in the case of loss or total/partial destruction of parcels with guaranteed delivery date, you are entitled to a compensation, up to the amount of 560 euros approximately (based on the 2018 foreign exchange rate - 450 DTS).

Courier services and items with a unique tracking number

Loss/Total destruction:

- For letters: From 50 to 70 euros.
- For parcels: From 100 to 400 euros.
- Letters/parcels of declared value: Compensation equal to the value declared during the dispatch.

Partial destruction/damage:

- For letters: up to 70 euros.
- For parcels: up to 400 euros.
- Declared value letters/parcels: Compensation equal to the actual cost of destruction/damage.





You have the ability to secure the items you post, in order to be compensated, according to the declared value, in case of loss or damage.

It is noted that, in the case of delayed delivery of a courier service item (in relation to the time-limit specified in the contract), a compensation of 6 euros per day of delay is provided. If the delay exceeds five times the agreed delivery time, the company must refund the postal fee you paid for the specific dispatch. Please note that the total amount of compensation cannot exceed 100 euros.

In all the above cases, you are eligible to claim a refund of the postage charge.



In case that a courier services item is undeliverable for unknown reasons, you are entitled to a refund of the postal charge.

You need to bear in mind that, to be eligible for compensation, you should send a relevant claim form to the company, attaching any relevant documentations, such as a voucher copy with the reference number, purchase invoices (in the case of e-commerce). It is recommended that you contact the company beforehand and get information on the procedure.



Be aware that you are not entitled to compensation, if packaging of the item was proven to be inappropriate or the item was not accurately described, recipient's address was incomplete/incorrect.

Further information on the amount of compensation is available on the companies' websites and their service points.



## Dispute resolution

## Submitting a complaint

In case you have a complaint about a postal services company, initially contact the company directly, submitting a complaint. For your convenience, the complaint form should include the contact number, and also, a clear statement of the issue and all the relevant documentation (e.g. copy of the voucher). It is recommended to keep a record of the relevant EDV, which includes reference number of the item and also any documentation that could support your complaint. Please confirm that the company has received your complaint.



The company is obliged to respond to your written complaint within 20 working days from its receipt or 40 working days, if additional information is needed.

In case your complaint is not resolved, you may ask for the dispute resolution procedure to be activated. The procedure is described in the Charter of Obligations towards Consumers (Amicable Settlement or Dispute Resolution Committee). If, however, the complaint is still not resolved, you may send a complaint to EETT or appeal to the civil courts.

## In which cases may a business user address to EETT

Please address to EETT in case you have already submitted a complaint to the company, in writing or electronically, and there is no response or the dispute resolution procedure is not activated or the reply dissatisfies you.

You can submit your complaint:

- Electronically: info@eett.gr
- By mail: Kifissias Avenue 60, 151 25 Maroussi
- Via fax: +30 210 610 5049

Your complaint to EETT should include any documentation supporting your communication with the company and non-resolution of the problem. In particular, the following information should be included:

- Information about your business.
- Information about the postal services company related to the complaint.
- Telephone number and address, as well as e-mail (if available).
- Clear statement of the complaint.
- Summary of the case (reference to the exact date of the incident).
- Copy of the complaint form you submitted to the company.
- Reference number.
- The company's reply (if available).
- Any involvement of a judicial authority.

It should be noted that EETT does not examine any complaint that either does not include all the information mentioned above or exceeds the deadline set by EETT or is anonymous/unclear.

EETT examines the company's compliance with postal services legislation. In this context, EETT evaluates the complaints and, according to the issue, may carry out audits, call the companies to a hearing, make any necessary regulatory interventions or issues recommendations for business users. If breaches are detected, after hearing, EETT imposes administrative penalties.



## **Useful information**

#### **About EETT**

**EETT** regulates, supervises and monitors:

- The electronic communications market, in which fixed and mobile telephone, wireless communications and Internet companies operate.
- The postal market, in which postal and courier services companies operate.

EETT is entrusted with the competences to act as the Competition Authority in the above markets.

EETT's mission, through its interventions (e.g. issuing regulations, carrying out audits, imposing sanctions) and informative campaigns, is to protect users' rights and to ensure that competition in the postal services market works to their benefit.

# Issues for which EETT intervenes to the benefit of users in the postal services sector

- Establishes the principles and obligations that companies must comply with.
- Supervises compliance with the regulatory framework, intervenes on its own initiative or after complaints and imposes sanctions on companies, in case they fail to fulfill their obligations.
- Intervenes in cases where competition does not function effectively, resulting to negative consequences for consumers, in order to ensure the provision of competitive services.

- Defines, by issuing Codes of Conduct, the obligations of companies towards users and also the terms and conditions for the provision of services.
- Monitors the quality of services provided by the Universal Service Provider.
- Contributes to the resolution of disputes and the examination of users' complaints, according to the regulations EETT issues.
- Informs and makes recommendations to users about their rights and obligations, as well as the developments in the postal market.

#### **EETT** is not responsible for issues regarding

#### Cash on delivery issues.

 Responsible authority: General Secretariat of Trade and Consumer Protection of the Ministry of Economy and Development and Hellenic Consumers' Ombudsman.

## Issues regarding unfair competition and unfair commercial practices.

 Responsible authority: General Secretariat of Trade and Consumer Protection of the Ministry of the Economy and Development and the civil courts.

#### **Customs clearance issues.**

 Responsible authority: Independent Authority for Public Revenue. Information on customs clearance fees for postal items delivered from countries outside the European Union (EU), are provided on **EETT website**.

## Issues regarding the protection of postal services confidentiality.

Responsible authority: Hellenic Authority for Communication Security and Privacy.

#### Sources of information

Independent Authority for Public Revenue
 T: +30 210 337 5000, +30 213 152 5000
 W: www.aade.gr

Hellenic Authority for Communication Security and Privacy
 T: +30 210 638 7600 | F: +30 210 638 7666 |

W: www.adae.gr | E: info@adae.gr

• Hellenic Consumers' Ombudsman

T: +30 210 646 0862 | F: +30 210 646 0414 |

W: <u>www.synigoroskatanaloti.gr</u> | E: grammateia@synigoroskatanoloti.gr

• Hellenic Data Protection Authority

T: +30 210 647 5600 | F: +30 210 647 5628 |

W: www.dpa.gr | E: contact@dpa.gr

• Hellenic Telecommunications and Post Commission

T: +30 210 615 1000 | F: +30 210 610 5049 |

W: www.eett.gr | E: info@eett.gr

The Greek Ombudsman

T: +30 213 130 6600 | F: +30 213 130 6800 |

W: www.synigoros.gr | E: press@synigoros.gr

• General Secretariat of Trade and Consumer Protection



T: +30 1520 | F: +30 210 384 3549 |

W: www.efpolis.gr | E: 1520@efpolis.gr

• Ministry of Finance

T: +30 210 333 2000 | F: +30 210 333 2608 |

W: www.minfin.gr | E: minister@minfin.gr

 European Commission's Online Dispute Resolution platform

https://ec.europa.eu/consumers/ord/main/?event=main. home2.show

Information regarding the legislative and regulatory framework is available on EETT website (mainly in Greek).



