

DEPARTMENT OF POSTAL SERVICES

INTRODUCTION

The Department of Postal Services (Cyprus Post) comes under the Ministry of Communications and Works and operates under The Postal Laws Cap.303 and The Regulation of Electronic Communications and Postal Services Law 2004, which is totally harmonised with the relevant European directives for the provision of postal services (97/67/EC and 2002/39/EC).

In accordance with the relevant legislation the Cyprus Post, as the universal service provider has the responsibility to provide qualitative postal services throughout the Republic, in uniform and reasonable prices. The provided service, in urban as well as rural areas, is conducted through a well organised postal network, consisting of 56 Post Offices, 1123 Postal Agencies and 970 post office boxes.

A primary target of the Cyprus Post is the constant improvement regarding the quality of the existing services and products as well as the introduction of new ones in response to citizens/customers' needs, as these change both on a national as well as an international level.

Within this framework, the Cyprus Post aims at the maintenance and enhancement of its leading role in the local postal market, determining targets and applying strategies in order to successfully meet the increasing competition brought about by the gradual liberalisation of the postal market as well as the fast development of technology in the field of telecommunications.

Moreover, the Cyprus Post ascribes great importance to the constant education and training of its staff, in order to be able it not only to meet the changing demands of the postal market, but also to respond to the need for the wide use of information technologies.

Additionally, through proper planning, the Cyprus Post, promotes the improvement of existing buildings and equipment, and even the purchase of new modern equipment, in order to upgrade working conditions for the staff, as well as the quality of the services it provides.

MAIN ACTIVITIES DURING 2008

During 2008 the Cyprus Post provided the traditional postal services, such as letter mail service, parcel service, postage stamps and philatelic service, postal money orders service, as well as a series of complementary special services such as registered and insured correspondence, cash on delivery, etc.

Furthermore, it provided various other competitive services and products such as the international courier service EMS/DATAPOST, the service for the dispatch of advertising material without addressees, the service for renting private post office boxes, cardboard boxes for mailing parcels, bubble padded envelopes for fragile objects and correspondence envelopes for first priority mail.

The Cyprus Post in an attempt to fulfil its targets and mission has directed its main activities to the following areas:

- a) The establishment of constant quality measurements via the use of modern diagnostic equipment and the ability to obtain information on all the stages of the postal chain, served the goal to improving the proportion of timely delivery of mail on the day following its posting.

- b) Upgrading the Track and Trace system for all items bearing a barcode. This system enables the senders of registered, insured, parcels and items

EMS/DATAPOST to track their items themselves and trace their course from mailing to delivery.

- c) Continuing the operation of the accounting/costing system “ZENON”, which allows the efficient costing of the products and services provided, for the benefit of both the Cyprus Post and its customers.
- d) Intensifying the efforts of the Cyprus Post in order to offer better and more efficient service to its customers through the special edition of “the Citizen’s Rights Chart”, which is distributed to the public through the local Post Offices and is also displayed in the Cyprus Post website, www.cypruspost.gov.cy. The chart contains basic information for the terms under which various postal services are provided and also the citizens’ rights stemming from their collaboration with the Cyprus Post.
- e) Completing the necessary research and procedures in order to introduce new services and products during 2009. These services concern the issue of personal stamp and the electronic transfer of money.
- f) Personnel education/training through apposite programmes in cooperation with training centres both in Cyprus and abroad. Special mention needs to be made to the participation of the Department in the European programme Leonardo Da Vinci for the professional training and recognition of the European Postman, as well as the application of the Common Evaluation Framework (CEF) for the Department self-evaluation in collaboration with the Cyprus Public Administration Academy.
- g) Constant improvement for the existing buildings and promotion of plans for constructing new modern buildings to house the Central Offices, the Nicosia District Post Office, the Larnaca District Post Office and the Makarios Avenue Post Office in Limassol.
- h) Promoting the safety and health of employees at their work place, via the establishment of Safety Committees.
- i) Intensifying the consultations with the trade unions with regard to the transformation of the Cyprus Post to a Public Organisation with financial and administrative autonomy which will allow for its successful operation in the new market conditions, giving emphasis on quality and customer needs.

ORGANISATION AND STRUCTURE

The organisational structure of the Cyprus Post consists of:

- a) **The Central Service**, is responsible for the administration, planning, inspection and supervision of the work.
- b) **The District Services**, are accountable to the Central Service and also responsible for the smooth operation of the District Post Offices, the Parcel Service Offices, the sub-offices in towns and rural areas as well as the network of Postal Agencies.

CENTRAL SERVICE

ADMINISTRATION AND INSPECTION SERVICE

The responsibilities of the Administration and Inspection Service concern the employment, placement, transfer and training of the personnel, the smooth operation and inspection of the Post Offices, the gathering and keeping of statistical data and the costing of products and services provided by the Department.

The Administration and Inspection Service includes the following Sections:

- Personnel and Training Section
- Inspection Section
- Costing Section
- Statistics Section

Personnel and Training Section

Personnel

In 2008, the Cyprus Post employed 644 persons on a permanent basis. Simultaneously use has also been made of the services of seasonal personnel for a period of approximately six months, in order to cover the additional needs of the Christmas and summer periods.

Moreover, 202 rural postal distributors were employed on an independent service contract, for the distribution of mail in large rural areas.

Education/Training

After the evaluation of educational needs and through a specific methodology as well as with the participation of the trainees themselves. The Training Section in cooperation with the Cyprus Public Administration Academy, the Productivity Centre, the Centre for Vocational Training of the Hellenic Post and other international educational institutions / organisations prepared a series of programmes in matters of training, customer service, communication, quality etc.

The purpose of these programmes is to give the opportunity to the attending officers to develop behaviours and attitudes which will contribute positively to the improvement of the services standard which the Department **provides and to the effective development of an adaptation to the increasing competition, as well as** the smooth implementation of the acquis communautaire.

Training within the European programme Leonardo Da Vinci “European Postman-Vocational Certification” continued during 2008 and 27 Cypriot postmen were certified.

Altogether 5 training programmes were held in which approximately 50 officers participated island wide.

At the same time, with the training and guidance offered by the Cyprus Public Administration Academy, a group of 9 Officers was set up from all personnel levels which, through regular meetings, has been working on the processing of a Common Evaluation Framework (CEF) regarding the self-evaluation of the Cyprus Post as its main objective and the submission of suggestions for the improvement of work methods that are followed.

Inspection Section

The Inspection Section carried out a series of visits to a number of District Post Offices and Sub-offices in order to ascertain their smooth operation and to identify possible weaknesses, problems and deficiencies in an attempt to reach a more effective management of the work force, and also to contribute to the upgrading of the standard of postal services provided to the public.

Costing Section

This Section is responsible for the costing of products and services provided by the Cyprus Post, in accordance with the principles established in the Order P.I.434/2005 of Commissioner of Electronic Communications and Postal Regulation .

During 2008, the Financial Management Accounting/Costing “ZENON-SAP” computerised system was used to the greatest degree possible. The data to be obtained will be evaluated and then will be used for establishing a new pricing policy for 2009, and will also be included in the financial statements which will be submitted to the Commissioner’s Office for audit.

Statistics Section

During 2008, the Statistics Section collected statistical data regarding the volume and structure of the internal and external mail, as well as the work cycle for each Post Office separately and collectively. The Department’s Management use the collected data to determine various actions but also for the more effective use of the work force.

POSTAL OPERATION SERVICE

The Postal Operation Service is responsible for the organisation and operation of the various postal services offered to the public, as well as the taking of measures for their constant improvement and upgrading.

The Postal Operation Service has also the responsibility for promoting the work of the Postal Services, introducing new services, and for the relations with other postal organisations.

The Postal Operation Service includes the following Sections:

- International Relations Section
- Letter Mail Section
- Parcel Section
- Marketing Section

International Relations

During 2008, the Cyprus Post, as a member of the largest Postal Organisations, participated in several conferences, meetings and seminars.

Among others, it participated in the annual General Meeting of the members of the International Post Corporation (IPC/ UNIPOST), as well as the annual General Meeting of the Association of European Public Post Operators (PostEurop) which took place in Paris and Krakow respectively.

Furthermore, the Cyprus Post participated in the 24th International Conference of the Universal Postal Union (UPU) which took place in Geneva, along with the participation of all member states of the UPU, in order to determine the new “postal policy” for the four-year period 2010-2013.

The International Relations Section also participated in a training programme of the UPU (Twining project) in order to improve the quality in the field of home delivery of mail. Besides Cyprus, Greece and Romania also participated in the programme.

Letter Mail Section

Letter mail covers the traditional mail which constitutes the most important area of the Department’s activities.

This section bears the responsibility of providing a universal service, improving the quality of the provided services to the standards which are determined by the relevant Orders issued by the Commissioner for the Regulation of Electronic Communications and Post Services, as well as collecting and paying the terminal dues regarding the delivery of cross-border mail.

Centre for the Automatic Sorting of Mail

Within the framework of constant improvement of the quality in the field of timely and reliable mail delivery, the Cyprus Post set up the Mail Sorting Centre at Latsia, in April 2001.

The Centre operates a modern Automatic Sorting Machine which ensures the speedy sorting of mail and its timely dispatch to local delivery centres, thus facilitating the target for improving quality standards.

Parcel Section

This Section is responsible for the constant qualitative upgrading of the Parcel Service, which is a particularly competitive service. The operation of the IPS-CAPE system in all Parcel Post Offices, as well as the CRICKET system for tracking the course of postal parcels, along with other measures contributed to a significant increase in the number of parcels transported to and from Cyprus during 2008.

Moreover, the Section bears the responsibility in training and informing the personnel on matters of safe transportation of postal parcels, which are inspected via special x-ray scanner machines, both at the Exchange Office at Larnaca Airport and the local Parcel Post Offices.

Marketing Section

The pending full liberalisation of the postal market and the constantly changing conditions played a decisive role in the further improvement and enrichment the services and products provided by the Cyprus Post, so as to maintain its leading role in the new competitive environment.

Bearing in mind the customer-centred approach and the provision of a high standard service, the Marketing Section implements an annual action plan which includes visits by marketing officers to customers' premises, especially large companies and small to medium businesses aiming at:

- The Constant contact with customers and provision of information on all services and products on offer.
- Increasing the sale of all services and products on offer and the maintenance of the leading role of the Cyprus Post in the postal market.
- Enhancement of the Cyprus Post image as a provider of qualitative and reliable Services at reasonable prices.

Within this framework, the Marketing Section promotes the following services and products:

Services

- **EMS/ Datapost (courier service)**

The EMS/Datapost Service continued to operate successfully, despite the intense competition by large multi-national companies, having always as its target the service to the public. Among other measures, the operation of the pay-for-performance system contributed to the improvement of the quality levels of the EMS/Datapost Service, enhancing its speed and reliability.

- **Private Post Office Boxes**

All natural and legal entities may receive their mail fast and safely, through the Private Post Office Boxes. Besides, the holders of such boxes are offered the possibility of having their mail retained for a period of time, when they are abroad. Additionally, via the Post Office Boxes, holders are provided with a permanent address regardless of possible changes in their address or professional activities.

Post Office Boxes may also be located close to the holders' residence or work since they are installed in all post offices in Cyprus.

- **Franking Machines**

- a) **Official Franking Machines**

Almost all Post Offices in urban areas operate Franking Machines, for the faster and better service of customers with a large volume of correspondence and also for those who wish to prepay postage fees through machines. Thus, customers save valuable time and are spared the trouble of fixing stamps in the traditional way.

- b) **Private Franking Machines**

Customers such as banks, organisations, large companies or private individuals, who deal with a large volume of correspondence, may install Franking Machines in their premises.

The Cyprus Post issues special permits for the purchase and operation of such machines from authorised importers. Thus, customers have the advantage of stamping their correspondence in their own premises, saving valuable time.

In the last few years, the Department in close communication with the owners of such machines informs them on relevant matters that concern them and particularly about the manner and timing of the mailing of their correspondence in order to be delivered the day following posting. This measure has been received with great appreciation by the customers.

- **Direct Mail**

The Direct Mail Service provides direct distribution of advertising material, with or without recipient address, all over Cyprus, or in selected areas, Post Office Boxes or public mail counters at low cost. Through this service, advertisers may send advertising printed material, coupons, small packages, advertising samples and other small advertising items. For the delivery of items without recipient's address through Post Office Boxes and public mail counters, the maximum weight is 1000gr. For home delivery, the maximum weight is 250gr.

- **Service for Mailing Items with the indication "postage paid" (domestic and foreign)**

Customers mailing a large number of items (over 1000 per post), such as letters, advertising material, newspapers or magazines, may use envelopes with the indication "postage paid", instead of stamps.

- **Material posted in sealed envelopes or poly wrapped, with recipient's address**

Customers may use special sealed envelopes that open and close again or transparent poly wraps which bear the indication "sealed printed matter", or "may be opened for postal inspection".

- **Reply Service**

Individuals or companies wishing to receive replies from their customers, without having them to pay postage fees, may use the inland/ international Reply Service.

Products

- **Yellow Cardboard Boxes**

The Department provides yellow cardboard boxes, at seven different sizes and at reasonable prices, in all Post Offices, for the easy, safe and economic dispatch of small packages and parcels.

- **Bubble Padded Envelopes for the dispatch of fragile items**

All Post Offices provide bubble padded envelopes in various sizes for the greater protection of the contents of postal items such as, documents, photographs, video tapes, computer discs, CDs etc.

- **Correspondence envelopes “A” Priority**

The Department provides “A” Priority envelopes in 3 sizes, which are sold by all Post Offices, for the better customer service.

STAMPS AND PHILATELY SERVICE

This Service is responsible for preparing the annual issuing programme for postage stamps, as well as for the supervision, creation, artistic design and printing of stamps and other philatelic items.

It caters for the fulfilment of postal and philatelic needs through the dispatching of postage stamps to local Post Offices, philatelists, as well as the Department’s agents who have been assigned with the promotion and sale of Cyprus stamps abroad.

Apart from the promotion of Cyprus stamps, the Stamps and Philately Service aims at developing philately in Cyprus and promoting abroad our country’s civilisation, culture, history and flora and fauna through stamps.

The Stamps and Philately Service, apart from stamps, also issues First Day Circulation Envelopes (F.D.C.E.), commemorative stamp sheets, stamp issues, illustrated stamp booklets, albums which include all the stamps that were issued during the year, as well as special albums which apart from the stamps also include the F.D.C.E.s of the year.

Through the above mentioned issues both, postal and philatelic needs are fulfilled.

Commemorative Stamp Series and other Philatelic Material

During 2008, the Stamps and Philately Service issued the following commemorative stamp series:

- “Adoption of the Euro” 01-01-2008
- “Refugee Stamp 2008” 01-01-2008
- “Anemones” 06-03-2008
- “Europe 2008” 02-05-2008
- “4rth International Cyprological Congress” 02-05-2008
- “Olympiad 2008” 05-06-2008
- “Summit Meeting of the Francophony Organisation” 05-06-2008
- “Cyprus through the Ages” 02-10-2008
- “Christmas 2008” 13-11-2008

Commemorative albums and special commemorative albums were issued along with the commemorative stamp series “Christmas 2008”

Since October 2, 2008, and particularly when the commemorative series “Cyprus through the Ages 2008” was issued, stamp prices have only been written in euro.

Postage Stamps Agents Abroad

As mentioned above, the Stamps and Philately Service dispatches Cyprus stamps to the sales agents abroad. These agents are assigned with the responsibility to advertise, promote and sell Cyprus stamps to foreign philatelists, who are interested in obtaining them. The institution of stamp sale agents has been operating for many years in most European countries, in the USA, in Australia and the Far East and has proved to be effective and useful, in that the Cyprus stamp is present along with the stamps of other countries in the international philatelic market.

Philatelic Exhibitions

Every year the Stamps and Philately Service participates in international philatelic exhibitions which are organised all over the world. By participating in these exhibitions the Service aims at promoting Cyprus stamps as well as the image of our country.

During 2008, the Department participated in the following Philatelic Exhibitions:

- International Philatelic Exhibition “München” Munich, Germany
- International Philatelic Exhibition “Essen 2008” Essen, Germany
- International Philatelic Exhibition “Planete de Timbre” Paris, France
- World Philatelic Exhibition “Prague 2008” Prague, Czech Republic

- World Philatelic Exhibition “WIPA 2008” Vienna, Austria
- International Philatelic Exhibition “Sindelfingen 2008” Sindelfingen, Germany
- International Philatelic Exhibition “Philatelia 2008” Cologne, Germany

Postal Museum

The Postal Museum has been operating in Nicosia since 1981 and remarkable series of Cyprus stamps, are exhibited, from 1880 till today, as well as items relating to the history of the Cyprus Post, such as weighing scales, seals, old letterboxes, etc. The Museum, renovated and upgraded, is located in Laiki Yitonia in the old town of Nicosia since 1999, in order to be more accessible to local and foreign philatelists. Its operation is entrusted to a person who is thoroughly informed in philatelic issues and from 8.00a.m. to 3.00p.m., offers services daily for both philatelists and other interested persons.

FINANCIAL SERVICES

The Financial Services Division covers a wide range of activities and has various responsibilities in matters concerning:

- The organisation, operation, monitoring and auditing of the various financial activities of the Department of Postal Services.
- The improvement and constant development of postal money orders, domestic and foreign.
- Invitations to tender for various purchases ranging from materials, services and modern electromechanical equipment, as well as the constant monitoring of the implementation of their maintenance schedule.
- The uniform appearance and maintenance of buildings, machines and other equipment in order to ensure the smooth operation of the Department, for better customer service.
- Constant briefing, monitoring and implementation of laws and regulations which harmonise the Cyprus law with the relevant Acquis Communautaire concerning the above activities.
- Safety and health at work.

The Financial Services are divided in the following sections:

Postal Orders Section

This Section deals with matters concerning the improvement and development of the Postal Money Orders both domestic and foreign. During 2008, all Post Offices continued to issue and cash domestic and also foreign money orders. The exchange of international money orders is conducted with 12 countries with which bilateral agreements have been signed. During the 2008 and within the framework of modernisation of this service, all the procedures for the introduction of electronic money transfer in collaboration with relevant private sector providers have been preceded. The new service is expected to start operating at the beginning of 2009.

Purchases and Supplies Section

This section is responsible to promote quality and to meet the needs of the Department in mechanical and other equipment, such as vehicles, private post office boxes, letterboxes, furniture, utensils, personnel uniforms, printed matter, stationery and consumables and for the safety and health at work. The primary purpose and aims of this Section are the adaptation to modern requirements, complete uniformity and unimpeded operation of Post Offices, under conditions of safety.

Postal Buildings

During 2008, the Purchases and Supplies Section continued its efforts for improvement, expansion and renovations of the postal buildings in order to improve their operation, their uniform appearance, and the installation of additional Post Office boxes so as to meet the needs of the business world and other customers, thus increasing the public revenue.

Special attention was given to the promotion of procedures for erecting new modern buildings to cover the needs of the Central Offices, the Nicosia District Post Office, the Larnaca District Post Office and the Makarios Avenue Post Office in Limassol.

Postal Service Vehicles

The Cyprus Post owns 81 vehicles used for the collection, distribution and delivery of mail and parcels among the post offices, the sorting centre and postal agencies.

During 2008, the Department used its own vehicles as well as the services of private transport companies, with which it has contracts, for transferring mail between towns and rural areas. The constant maintenance and proper use of the fleet of postal vehicles continued to be a priority for the Section in order to meet the increasing needs without any problems. One of the targets set by the Section in 2008 was the reduction of car accidents, which were limited to six.