



Brussels, 09 October 2008
M/428 EN

STANDARDISATION MANDATE
ADDRESSED TO CEN
IN THE FIELD OF POSTAL SERVICES AND EQUIPMENT.

1. BACKGROUND

The postal services sector offers an essential communications infrastructure of major economic and social importance for commercial users and consumers. Postal services have a substantial impact on the competitiveness of other sectors and on European socio-economic cohesion in general. In particular, the effectiveness of postal services is crucial for the development of business to business and home delivery in Europe.

The postal sector is estimated to handle 135 billion items per year, reflecting an annual turnover of approximately 1% of EU Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and providing employment to around 1.7 million people.

The Community's aim is to accomplish the Single Market for postal services and ensure a high quality universal service, in line with Directive 2008/6/EC¹. The improvement of the quality of service, in particular in terms of delivery performance and convenient access are fundamental elements of this policy.

The Postal Directive, in particular, in article 20, recognizes the importance of the role of standardization for the benefit of postal customers. The Commission continues to further support the process of technical standardisation in the postal sector through inter alia, issuing mandates to the European Committee for Standardisation (CEN). A first standardisation mandate (M/240) was issued in March 1996 and a dedicated CEN Technical Committee (TC/331) was created to work on European Standards for postal services. Based on the progress achieved within this mandate, a second CEN mandate (M/312) was issued by the Commission in 2001.

The track record of the CEN/TC 331 is positive and a total of 22 CEN standards have been approved to date:

- Six standards have been developed in relation to the measurement of quality of service. These include notably EN 13850, which provides for a EU wide

¹ O.J. L 52/3, 27.2.2008- Directive 2008/6/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 February 2008 amending Directive 97/67/EC with regard to the full accomplishment of the internal market of Community postal services.

measurement method used to track the transit time of priority letters; and EN14012 which set high quality requirements for handling complaints.

- Sixteen technical standards related to interoperability have been developed. These include notably minimum requirements for delivery letter boxes, a list of identification marks which makes it easier for larger cross border services to automatically sort mail items.

In view of the results obtained by the TC331 within the framework of the two previous mandates, the importance of standardisation in the context of an evolving postal sector derived in large part from market opening and the entry of new Member States in the European Union, the TC331 has been engaged in a wide debate on the further needs for European postal standardization. This process, supported by the European Commission, has also involved a wide range of industry stakeholders.

The proposals resulting from the consultation process were discussed among all stakeholders of the TC331 and endorsed by the TC331 in June 2007, before formally being forwarded to the European Commission by the Chairman of the TC331 on 13 July 2007.

This third standardisation mandate reflects the need to enable the maintenance of the existing European Standards for postal services, to develop new technical standards to improve the interoperability in the postal sector, and to study the feasibility of new standards in the area of quality of service.

The request for a mandate was submitted on November 19, 2007 to the Committee established under Directive 97/67/EC as amended by Directive 2002/39/EC and 2008/6/EC. The Committee gave a favorable opinion on the proposals, urging the TC331 to increase transparency, improve its communication strategy and ensure adequate involvement of customers in its future work.

2. DESCRIPTION OF MANDATED WORK

CEN is invited to develop and carry out a standardization work program to support the internal market for postal services, notably in establishing tools for measurement of quality of postal services and for facilitating interoperability between actors in the postal value chain.

In addition to the items mentioned below, CEN is invited to undertake a periodical review of the relevant existing postal standards, technical reports and specifications.

Quality of service

There is a widely shared consensus on the need to update standards so as to contribute to maintaining high quality universal services in the rapidly evolving postal market.

CEN is requested to revise the following European Standards:

- *EN 13850 (Transit time priority)* in order to better take into account the local/regional/ national specificities as well as the experience since its implementation, with the aim of having a more generic method in order to satisfy regulatory needs. The opportunity for complementary adaptation for marketing purposes will be assessed.

- EN 14508 (*Transit time non-priority mail*)
- EN 14534 (*Transit time bulk mail*).

In addition, CEN is invited to study the feasibility and, if considered appropriate taking into account the results of the study, to develop a standard, technical report or specification in the following areas:

- *Measurement of wrong delivery*: this work item will specify requirements for a method which aims at measuring the proportion of ordinary mail delivered to letter box/plate other than the one specified on the postal item (correctly addressed).
- *Measurement of incorrect delivery*: this work item aims at measuring another aspect of the quality of delivery registered postal items delivered to someone not authorized to receive it.
- *Quality of delivery: re-forwarding*
- *Consistency of daily delivery times*
- *Damage to postal items*

Interoperability standards

Interoperability contributes to the productivity and efficiency of the postal sector. Based upon conclusions of feasibility studies, CEN is invited to develop Technical Specifications or Technical Reports or European standards in the following areas:

- *Interface between Bar Code Reader / Verifier and Machine Control*
 - *Management Information System (MIS) data transfer format*
 - *Sorting Plan format*
 - *Postal Product Description Extensible Model and Language*
- *Interface between Bar Code Reader / Verifier and Machine Control* (protocol to be used between a bar code reader and the control of the mail processing equipment on which the reader is installed).
 - *Management Information System (MIS) data transfer format* (protocol between any mail processing equipment and the computer –usually known as Management Information System – which collects all statistical data and event reports in a sorting centre).
 - *Sorting Plan format* (information needed by any mail processing equipment to know to which output a mail piece is to be sent). This is not only based on the components of the delivery address but in the future, the sorting plans may be also based on the selection of specific attributes of the mail pieces (eg: type, size, weight, value of the mail piece)

In addition, CEN is invited to assess the opportunity to develop technical work in the field of interfaces between electronic communications and mail in order to contribute to facilitating interfaces for new postal services with the rapidly evolving communication technologies used in the postal sector.

3. ORGANISATIONS TO BE ASSOCIATED

The work will be developed in co-operation with CENELEC and ETSI if necessary; and, where appropriate, and as specified in the memorandum of understanding, with the

Universal Postal Union (UPU). In particular, close involvement from customers is requested, notably ANEC.

The works should be undertaken in co-operation with the broadest possible range of interested groups. Those involved should include postal operators (private and public), industry manufacturers, other actors having an interest in the development of postal services, customers, national regulatory authorities and the European associations representing the groups listed above and postal workers (ETUI-REHS).

4. EXECUTION OF THE MANDATE

(1) Within five months following the acceptance of this mandate, CEN will submit the programme (a prospective timetable and a detailed proposal for the execution of the mandate) to the Commission.

(2) CEN shall present the normative documents listed therein by the target dates specified and at the latest within 3 years of the acceptance of the programme by the Commission. The said documents shall be available in German, English and French.

(3) While carrying out the mandated work, CEN will take account of the technical specifications, standards and regulations currently available or being prepared in the sector at the international and European levels. In particular, account will be taken of the technical work of the ISO.

(4) CEN will submit a progress report to the Commission at least once a year during the execution of the mandate. In view of the importance of standards for postal customers, CEN is invited to communicate its work to contribute to the use and implementation of postal standards.

(5) Acceptance by CEN of this mandate shall trigger the start of the standstill period referred to in Article 7 of Council Directive 98/34/EC.