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English Version

Postal services - Reverse envelope - Design and printing requirements

Services postaux - Enveloppe inversée - Exigences de conception et d'impression

Postalische Dienstleistungen - Briefumschlag mit rückseitiger Adressierung - Anforderungen an Ausführung und Druck

This Technical Specification (CEN/TS) was approved by CEN on 13 May 2018 for provisional application.

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EUROPEAN COMMITTEE FOR STANDARDIZATION
COMITÉ EUROPÉEN DE NORMALISATION
EUROPÄISCHES KOMITEE FÜR NORMUNG

CEN-CENELEC Management Centre: Rue de la Science 23, B-1040 Brussels

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European foreword

This document (CEN/TS 17217:2018) has been prepared by Technical Committee CEN/TC “Postal services”, the secretariat of which is held by NEN.

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Introduction

This Technical Specification will serve as a reference for large or small mailers willing to benefit from the enhanced marketing capabilities offered by the reverse envelope, without compromising the reliability and cost of the mail preparation, and the envelope manufacturers willing to supply them.

With the exception of bulk mailings (>100K), batches of reverse envelopes are typically in the range of 2K to 10/20K. Reverse envelopes are likely to be handled in high end desktop and production mail inserters. Both permit mail and franking will be considered. Reverse envelopes will be processed by designated operators in existing sorting machines. Envelope and equipment manufacturers have participated in the development of this TS, through the design, production and testing of a large batch of envelopes.

As the materials used to manufacture and print on reverse envelopes are basically the same as for existing envelopes, no specific environmental impact is expected. However, consumer associations representing the recipients of the printed advertising or communication may be consulted.

Despite a general decrease in letter volumes across Europe, promotional mail is resisting and even growing in some countries, as it is still perceived as one of the most effective media to communicate directly with consumers. Moreover, physical mail becomes triggered by Internet sales or inquiries and benefits indirectly from the expansion of e-commerce. The reverse envelope is a means to make letters more appealing to customers by using the full plain face for advertising and communication.

Reverse envelopes already exist in various countries, with windows on either side. Postage marks are printed on the flap. Because the address is on the same side, the content is inserted upside-down. This has many implications and potential drawbacks for the manufacturing, inserting, addressing, franking and sorting. The challenges are predominantly experienced during the fulfilment phase.

Reverse envelopes are currently processed by several designated operators in Europe but are not standardized. The purpose of this TS is to define a set of physical properties and manufacturing requirements for reverse envelopes in order to guarantee the proper insertion of mail, the printing of addresses and postage marks on the flap side, and the sorting of letters in existing equipment.

1 Scope

This document covers physical properties and manufacturing requirements for envelopes having an address window on the flap side. It covers the main design features of the reverse envelope, notably of the flap and address window, and the materials used for the manufacturing thereof. It applies to reverse envelopes with advertising or communication printed on the plain side, eventually on its entire surface.

This document covers empty envelopes, but also finished mailpieces that have been properly inserted, addressed and franked (reversed mailpieces) and are submitted to Postal Operators. In particular, reverse mailpieces will be compliant with relevant Postal standards applicable in the member states.

By extension, these requirements also apply to non-window envelopes used for reverse mailpieces and having the address printed on the flap side.

This document does not apply to:

- envelopes with a large window on the plain side (opposite to the flap) as these are already common and widely accepted;
- paper requirements to ensure print quality (except for the postage mark and address) and notably colour rendering.

2 Normative references

The following documents are referred to in the text in such a way that some or all of their content constitutes requirements of this document. For dated references, only the edition cited applies. For undated references, the latest edition of the referenced document (including any amendments) applies.

UPU S19a-10, *Encoding on envelopes - Placement area definitions - Part A: General concepts and definition of the coordinate system - October 2008*

UPU S19b-10, *Encoding on envelopes - Placement area definitions - Part B: Areas used by postal handling organisations for the encoding of ID-tags and routing information - October 2008*

UPU S19c-9, *Encoding on envelopes - Placement area definitions - Part C: Areas used for postmarks, indicia and service endorsements - October 2008*

UPU S19d-2, *Encoding on envelopes - Placement area definitions - Part D: Areas used for the printing of addresses and associated customer applied encoding - October 2008*

EN 13619, *Postal services - Mail item processing - Optical characteristics for processing letters*

EN 14615, *Postal services - Digital postage marks - Applications, security and design*

CEN/TS 14826, *Postal services - Automatic identification of items - Two dimensional bar code symbol print quality specification for machine readable Digital Postage Marks*

3 Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this document, the following terms and definitions apply.

ISO and IEC maintain terminological databases for use in standardization at the following addresses:

- IEC Electropedia: available at <http://www.electropedia.org/>
- ISO Online browsing platform: available at <http://www.iso.org/obp>