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English Version

Postal services - Quality of service - Distance to access points

Services postaux - Qualité de service - Qualité de l'accès
aux services postaux

Postalische Dienstleistungen - Dienstqualität - Entfernung
zum Zugangspunkt

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Foreword

This document (CEN/TR 15735:2008) has been prepared by Technical Committee CEN/TC 331 "Postal services", the secretariat of which is held by NEN.

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Introduction

Article 3 of the Postal Directive requires Member States to ensure that the density of access points (postal outlets and collection letterboxes) takes account of the needs of users – it contains relatively general requirements relating to access to Universal Services.

Consequently, Member States have taken very different approaches in defining minimum standards concerning the density of access points. The most important types of requirements that are imposed on Universal Service Providers are listed below:

- Minimum number: the Universal Service Provider must maintain at least x postal outlets (or collection letterboxes).
- Maximum distance: a postal outlet (or letterbox) must not be further away than x kilometres from any home or business location. Usually this requirement does not apply to isolated houses in rural areas but only within populated areas (or similarly defined geographic areas).
- Town size: a postal outlet (or letterbox) is mandatory in each municipality exceeding a population of x. In addition, some countries require the Universal Service Provider to maintain one postal outlet per x inhabitants in towns.
- One outlet per municipality: at least one postal outlet (or letterbox) must be operated in each municipality.

The situation with regard to access conditions and Quality of Service does differ from country to country.

Access conditions refer to the service points of the postal network, like street letter-boxes, post offices and other outlets that provide postal services. The regulatory requirements with regard to the density of these access points vary from 'nonexistent' to detailed guidelines on the location of access points with regard to density, distance, population or community related criteria.

Even in Member States where no specific requirements regarding the density of postal outlets exist, it appears that politics, often locally, strongly oppose Universal Service Providers that plan to close postal outlets, thus adding a soft component to the universal service obligation.

1 Scope

This Technical Report takes into account the existing systems for measuring access to postal services and the targets that are already in use in member states. To get an understanding of the existing systems regarding population coverage, a questionnaire entitled "Methodology for the Measurement of Distance to postal Access Points" was circulated to postal operators and postal regulators (see Annex A).

2 Main issues concerning the measurement of network density

2.1 General

This report is based on two data sources, the results of the questionnaire (Annex B) and the legislative framework for the density of access points to the postal network (Annex C).

An overview of the main issues raised in the legislation and in the questionnaire is given in the following table.

The table is structured in four main parts:

- Legislation on Access-Network Density;
- Measurement of Access-Network Density;
- Available Data necessary for Density Measurement;
- Reservations about Distance Measurement.

A tick mark is given for each European country in which the issue is relevant or dealt with.