TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION

SPÉCIFICATION TECHNIQUE

TECHNISCHE SPEZIFIKATION

CEN/TS 17073

February 2020

ICS 03.240; 35.240.69

Supersedes CEN/TS 17073:2017

English Version

Postal services - Interfaces for cross border parcels

Postalische Dienstleistungen - Schnittstellen für grenzüberschreitende Pakete

This Technical Specification (CEN/TS) was approved by CEN on 26 November 2019 for provisional application.

The period of validity of this CEN/TS is limited initially to three years. After two years the members of CEN will be requested to submit their comments, particularly on the question whether the CEN/TS can be converted into a European Standard.

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EUROPEAN COMMITTEE FOR STANDARDIZATION
COMITÉ EUROPÉEN DE NORMALISATION
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European foreword

This document (CEN/TS 17073:2020) has been prepared by Technical Committee CEN/TC 331 “Postal services”, the secretariat of which is held by NEN.

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This document supersedes CEN/TS 17073:2017.

In comparison with the previous edition, the most significant technical modifications are new descriptions of the item identifier barcodes and their location in the item-identifier zone (Zone E). Updates are also made for the layout, dimensions and content of the parcel label as well as new requirements added for label materials. Informative Annex A has been removed since requirements for addresses can be found in EN ISO 19160-4, and informative Annex E *Data capture at source (EDI)* has been removed since it was considered out of scope.

According to the CEN/CENELEC Internal Regulations, the national standards organisations of the following countries are bound to announce this Technical Specification: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Republic of North Macedonia, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey and the United Kingdom.

Introduction

Using new communication and information technologies, postal operators move beyond what is traditionally regarded their core postal business. They are meeting higher customer expectations, expanding the range of products and value-added services and use electronic advanced data for interconnecting global networks.

Standardized processes in operations and communication are the foundation for effective postal operations. The Technical Committee CEN/TC 331 “Postal Services” maintains and develops a growing number of standards to improve the exchange of Postal item related information between postal operators. One of the leading aims is to promote the compatibility of CEN/TC331 standardization efforts with those of the Universal Postal Union and its international initiatives and standardization undertaken by the wider postal service stakeholders.

The European Commission has identified the completion of the Digital Single Market (DSM) as one of its 10 political priorities, which was adopted on the 6 May 2015, with 16 initiatives to be delivered by the end of 2016.

The Digital Single Market Strategy is built on three pillars which the first goal is to improve the access for consumers and businesses to digital goods and services across Europe, including e-commerce selling channel. E-commerce has significant potential for contributing to economic growth and employment. Through this Roadmap, the Commission aimed to ensure quick improvements in parcel delivery.

The Commission's Communication on e-commerce and online services identifies the delivery of goods purchased online as one of the top five priorities to boost e-commerce and its importance has been reiterated by the Council of the European Union and the European Parliament. Delivery is indeed critical as it has a substantial impact on facilitating e-commerce trade and is a key element for building trust between sellers and buyers.

Under the framework of the Union Work program for European standardization for 2015, requesting for a focus on the cross border parcel services to emphasize the development of this market with a specific focus on the small and medium size e-merchants by easing the use of cross border shipments by simplifying the initial interface, improving the track and trace event management if different logistics operators involved in the delivery chain, improving the integration with software solutions commonly used by e-merchant.

In response to the ever-growing need for more effective and integrated cross-border e-commerce solutions, designated Postal Operators in Europe have developed “E-Commerce Interconnect” using proprietary specifications and standards, such as a UPU Standard, adopted in February 2016 on “Postal-item label”.

E-commerce associations, courier-, express- and postal services in Europe came together to bridge between proprietary specifications and non-for-profit solutions, already used by the wider European e-commerce community for supply chain management, to standardize delivery chain management, so that all (including the UPU designated operators representing the UPU member states) can use the same standard.

1 Scope

This document will specify the interface between the e-merchant (any commercial customer sending parcels) and the first logistic operator, including both public and private carriers. For the application of this document, a cross border parcel is a parcel crossing a border into and within Europe.

The interface is composed of two items:

— the physical label attached on the parcel: contents, sizes, minimum requirements to guarantee the quality and efficiency of the logistic process (sorting, delivery).

— the electronic exchanges between the sender and the logistic operator with the description of the data to be provided, the format of the exchanges.

While designated operators of UPU have drawn up business requirements using proprietary standards and related data components, online merchants have developed open, not-for-profit standards for final delivery which are integrated into their existing supply chain management environment.

NOTE 1 The data element enables the growth of integrated, data-driven systems which support highly efficient and customer-driven cross-border ecommerce. This reflects the current trend to B-to-B-to-C delivery solutions in the European and international cross border e-commerce markets. Delivery from original source to final consumer can be split over more than one service provider.

NOTE 2 C-to-B-to-B-to-C solutions will be an extension, in particular when returns are specified. The “first C” would indicate that consumers wishing to return items, or induct items themselves, will be able to print labels following the fundamentals specified in this standard.

E-merchants exchange data with logistic operators (i.e. the postal operators, but not limited to those designated to fulfil the rights and obligations of UPU member countries) to help, simplify and enable the consequential logistic and transactional tasks. The establishment of common definitions and electronic formats safeguards the reliability and decreases the overall costs by avoiding software development costs, multiple printing equipment, over-labelling during the process, and the manual sorting.

2 Normative references

The following documents, in whole or in part, are normatively referenced in this document and are indispensable for its application. For dated references, only the edition cited applies. For undated references, the latest edition of the referenced document (including any amendments) applies.

EN ISO 19160-4, *Addressing - Part 4: International postal address components and template language (ISO 19160-4)*

ISO/IEC 15459-1, *Information technology — Automatic identification and data capture techniques — Unique identification — Part 1: Individual transport units*

ISO/IEC 15415, *Information technology — Automatic identification and data capture techniques — Bar code symbol print quality test specification — Two-dimensional symbols*

EN ISO/IEC 15416, *Information technology — Automatic identification and data capture techniques — Bar code print quality test specification — Linear symbols (ISO/IEC 15416)*

ISO 15394, *Packaging — Bar code and two-dimensional symbols for shipping, transport and receiving labels*