

A NEW ERA IN THE GLOBAL POST: POSTAL SOLIDARITY AND UNIVERSAL POSTAL UNION

31ST CONFERENCE ON POSTAL AND DELIVERY ECONOMICS

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**MEHMET SUKRU YAMAN, PhD
TURKISH POST CORPORATION**

INTRODUCTION

PRE-COVID TOP TOPICS

- RELEVANCY OF THE POSTAL SERVICE/POSTS
- TERMINAL DUES/REFORM OF THE UNION

THE ROLE OF UPU

CURRENT SENSITIVE ISSUES

- OPENING UP OF THE UNIVERSAL POSTAL UNION [UPU] TO THE WIDER SECTOR PLAYERS
- POSTAL SOLIDARITY

TERMINAL DUES

A topic of discussion since 1874 till today.

Remains as one of the most sensitive issues.

A constant agenda item of international gatherings/UPU`s annual meetings.

Of vital importance for UPU member states.

RELEVANCY OF THE POSTAL SERVICE OR THE UPU

The COVID-19 pandemic; the Ebola outbreaks; the financial crisis, and climate change have demonstrated that we live in a highly globalized and interconnected world, where a crisis or a virus in a small part of a country can spread to the entire world in a short span of time with devastating global impacts.

During the course of these issues, UPU and postal service maintain their crucial roles.

UPU is vital for the continuity of basic needs to sustain human life and human relations.

UPU`S MISSION

The Universal Postal Union`s mission is to facilitate social, cultural, and commercial communications among all people within its **single postal territory** through the efficient operation of postal services.

UPU assumes the role of safeguarding the right of individuals and communities to access communication and information.

UPU has rendered record service for nearly one and half century and survived two world wars.

UPU continues to develop international postal cooperation worldwide.

UNIVERSAL BY NATURE

The universal character of UPU is one reason for bringing about cooperation of all countries in the postal sector.

There is no country on earth that does not require UPU`s product and services.

Whether in war or in peace, UPU`s existence is crucial and required.

FRIENDLY EXCHANGE OF CORRESPONDENCE

“What a good thing it would be if there existed throughout the world a friendly exchange of correspondence between the nations.” [Paul Jacob Marperger-18th Century]

Before the foundation of UPU there was a lack of global system for the exchange of correspondence between nations. Such a system was yearned for.

Within the historical evolution of international mail, notable figures emerge within the postal community, such as **Heinrich von Stephan** and **Rowland Hill**. However, we also encounter intellectuals like **Paul Jacob Marperger** who contributed from outside the postal family.

KEY PRIORITIES

UPU inherently embodies all the values that contribute to creating peaceful, just and inclusive societies that are free from fear and violence.

The functioning of the postal service is disrupted by any form of threat to the civilian population and the environment, whether caused by war or natural disasters.

The world is facing growing poverty, hunger and malnutrition, inequality, human crisis violations, digital divides, postal divides, complex humanitarian emergencies and armed conflicts, insecurity, pandemics, environmental degradation, climate change and disasters.

As an example, the war between Russia-Ukraine has shaken everyone, individually and collectively.

There can be no sustainable development without peace and no peace without sustainable development.

UNIQUE CAPACITY

Postal operators/organizations are critical engines for sustainable growth, development and inclusion in today's global digital economies.

Every day, more than five million postal employees worldwide contribute to building a prosperous, inclusive and equitable future for everyone.

There are over 650,000 post offices worldwide, and more than 100,000 remain unconnected.

❖ To enable a fully digital and connected global network, UPU is implementing some significant projects such as **.post** and **connec.post**.

FACILITATING INCLUSIVITY

World population [8 billion]

Number of people without connectivity [2.7 billion]

Population in the least developed countries will reach 1.3 billion, with an increase of 269 million between 2020-2030.

❖ **At this point:**

With its unique capacity, UPU is promoting worldwide inclusion and participation.

To further promote inclusion, UPU is helping the posts in the least developed, incapacitated, deprived and oppressed countries.

UNIFYING POWER OF SIMPLICITY

Mail serves as a symbol of vitality and existence.

A mailbox stands as compelling evidence that an individual is present and alive.

It signifies the presence of life in a particular location.

Similar to fundamental human necessities, the postal service is among the most essential requirements.

- ❖ While it may not be feasible to provide healthcare or education services to the most remote areas, it is crucial to consider the inclusivity of the postal service, as it plays a vital role in reaching and interconnecting even the most isolated individuals.

OPENING UP OF UPU TO THE WIDER SECTOR PLAYERS

UPU member states, designated postal operators [DOs], and external stakeholders are sharing the joint responsibility of maintaining a healthy and dynamic postal ecosystem.

This commitment led by UPU will enable the inclusion of non-designated actors in the private sector, namely, think tanks, companies providing software and technical equipment for postal operations, non-governmental organizations, and academia.

Opening up of UPU to the wider sector players remains a topic of intense debate, with differing opinions and perspectives being actively discussed.

Thus, it has brought many conceptual and structural questions to it.

[UPU 4th Extraordinary Congress – Riyadh, 1-5 October, 2023]

OPENING UP - 2

Need to analyse the differences between designated postal operators and wider sector players.

Competent DOs and wider sector players in Europe reflect both the spirit of cooperation and the degree of competition involved.

A great number of DOs are still having difficulties fulfilling their missions.

There are towns, cities, and villages without postal infrastructure, which indicates that the postal service still draw very little interest in many parts of the world.

Many DOs exist in a state that can be described as somewhere between existence and non-existence.

OPENING UP - 3

Significant gaps in technical, physical, digital and managerial and professional skills among postal operators and wider sector players.

While European DOs are experiencing the highest level of satisfaction with the quality and variety of postal product and services, African DOs are struggling to meet the basic needs of their customers.

Given that this gap will not be closed quickly, DOs in Africa and beyond will continue to rely on the Universal Postal Union.

OPENING UP / MOVING FORWARD

Listening to African DOs and wider sector players.

Listening to African DOs and wider sector players while taking decisions and shaping the future of postal service.

Taking into account their interests when determining the way forward.

- ❖ If there is the acceptance that the concerns in relation to struggling posts has no place in today`s commercial rivalry, we should bear in mind the implications that such an attitude could have for the further impoverishment of the folks in deprived and neglected geographies.
- ❖ UPU shall advocate an approach that benefits everyone and facilitates inclusivity for all.

POSTAL SOLIDARITY IN THE EXAMPLE OF RUSSIAN-UKRAINE WAR

Postal service has traditionally been viewed as a specialized field that should be kept separate from politics.

However, the ongoing war has reversed this approach.

The global postal family came together to speak with one voice.

- ❖ Russian Federation was subjected to sanctions that resulted in deauthorization in both the Universal Postal Union and restricted postal unions such as PostEurop. The termination of chairmanships of working groups and board membership was a result of majority decisions taken by respective authorities.

POSTAL SOLIDARITY IN THE EXAMPLE OF RUSSIAN-UKRAINE WAR - 2

If the postal solidarity witnessed in Europe can be applied worldwide as a universal priority, it will enable the elimination of a significant deficiency suffered by all humanity on a permanent basis.

The postal solidarity embodied during the current war could become a reference for geographies that have been suffering for many years and for similar crises that may occur in the future.

The world postal community has taken a stance in support of Ukraine's aggrieved postal operator, underscoring the importance of cooperation and solidarity in addressing global crises.

The expansion of this stance to other conflicts could further enhance postal communities' constructive role in conflicts worldwide.

POSTAL SOLIDARITY IN THE EXAMPLE OF RUSSIAN-UKRAINE WAR - 3

The Russian-Ukraine war is bearing deep scars for human life and environment which serve as a testament to the destructive nature of war.

Not to mention the destructive effects of such destruction on human psychology.

In a global and civilized world, wars should no longer have a place.

No neighbourhood, street, or settlement should be exposed to explosive devices that harm human life and nature.

CONCLUSION

The Universal Postal Union has demonstrated impressive resilience when confronted with wars, crises, and global conflicts. Despite temporary disruptions in communication during periods of hostilities, UPU ensured its continuity between neutral countries, as well as between neutral countries and belligerents, and even among belligerents aligned on the same side. UPU sustains a wide array of activities and functions, even during times of war. This underscores the enduring significance of postal services in facilitating communication, regardless of the obstacles posed by armed conflicts.

Thank you for your attention!

