

International Post Corporation's harmonised label to simplify parcel processing and tracking

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The presence of multiple labels and barcodes on a parcel has long complicated and slowed down the handling and distribution process of international deliveries.

- Standardised icons, address structure, and layout to facilitate handling and delivery
- Single barcode based on common postal standard
- Harmonised label IT service rolled out on 14 September 2015 to help posts to create labels

Brussels, 22 October 2015 – The presence of multiple labels and barcodes on a parcel has long complicated and slowed down the handling and distribution process of international deliveries. Therefore IPC worked together with its member posts to develop and implement a harmonised labelling solution, ensuring uniformity based on the existing standard barcode, using a set of standardised address elements, icons and layouts. The new label will present significant improvements for e-retailers and consumers, by reducing overlabelling while also improving track and trace, quality and transit times, and facilitating delivery.

Alan Barrie, Director, Operations & Technology, commented: “This is not just a technical initiative to align the essential data elements underpinning e-commerce fulfilment, it's also a practical visual alignment to give thousands of postal workers clear instructions on how to deal with the rapidly growing e-commerce volumes. Customers are demanding the same experience cross-border that they enjoy in their home country and this is a great

initiative by postal companies to improve the consistency of their service offer”.

The harmonised label is available as part of the INTERCONNECT initiative of posts to improve cross-border parcel operations.

The harmonised label technical capability is fully rolled out and posts are expected to start using the harmonised label by early 2016.

One standard label



The harmonised label was designed and developed to enable postal operators to optimise the end-to-end processing of international letter packages and parcels. During the development process, address data elements and address layout were

assessed and defined. Moreover, a standard set of symbols in support of operations was designed. Further assessments for item identification led to the decision to use the UPU S10 Barcode as a single standardised item identifier to appear on the label.

Different variants of harmonised labels have been designed to cover requirements concerning letter package labels, parcel labels, and labels with integrated postal forms CN22 or CN23 to facilitate customs clearance.

The harmonised label contains following elements:

- Dedicated section to include e-seller's specific elements (barcode, instructions,...) for operational needs
- Standardised address data elements
- Dedicated section to include relevant operational instructions, represented by standardised symbols:



- Standardised use of barcode and UPU S10 identifier

Harmonised Label IT service

On 14 September 2015 IPC rolled out the Harmonised Label IT Service to support INTERCONNECT participants that chose not to implement the full technical capability to create the Harmonised Label in-house. The IT Service was developed in collaboration with three posts that registered to use the system from the start, but other interested INTERCONNECT participants can subscribe to use the Harmonised Label IT Service as well.

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About International Post Corporation

International Post Corporation is a cooperative association of 24 member postal operators in Asia Pacific, Europe and North America. Over the past two decades IPC has provided industry leadership by driving service quality and interoperability, supporting its members to ensure the high performance of international mail services and developing the IT infrastructure required to achieve this. IPC engages in industry research, creates business-critical intelligence, provides a range of platforms for member post CEOs and senior management to exchange best practices and discuss strategy, and gives its members an authoritative, independent and collective voice. IPC also manages the system for incentive-based payments between postal operators. With members delivering some 80% of global postal mail, IPC represents the majority of the world's mail volume. For further information, please contact:

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