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Belgian Institute for Postal services and Telecommunications

Realisation of a statistical survey and analysis regarding the preferences, the needs and the willingness to pay of domestic private and professional users of services relating to the universal postal service

Final report

November 2015

Colofon

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Executive summary willingness to pay universal postal services

This study assesses the end-users' preferences, the needs and the willingness to pay for postal products and services relating to the universal postal service. To this effect an online survey was chosen with telephone assistance for the respondents. Following a general inquiry on postal services, the respondents were submitted to the conjoint analysis method asking them to choose from different scenarios. The advantage of this method is that it allows to determine the willingness to pay, and therefore also the needs.

In general it turns out that both residential and professional users think of low rates as a priority.

Residential users

The results show that half of the residential users only want to walk 500 meters to deposit their mail at the most. It would moreover appear that the idea of mail delivery in a centralised and secure pick-up point did not receive a very warm welcome at all. Residential users also feel a great need to have a postal service point nearby their place of residence.

Furthermore the abolition of postal offices and/or postal points in the vicinity of the place of residence is considered to be the change entailing the highest degree of negative impact for the residential users. On the other hand 10% of the residential users indicates not having experienced an impact while 70% of the residential customers states that they would find a way to deal with this change.

The residential customer is not opposed to a longer delivery term (D+2) but does think a day-certain[1] delivery is important. Residential users also feel a strong need to receive mail at home: letter mail 5 days per week and parcels 4 to 5 days per week.

Professional users

Although the private companies feel the need to have a delivery frequency of 5 days per week for administrative letter mail, the government bodies are not opposed to a 4 -days delivery per week. As regards publicity mail however, a decrease in the delivery frequency is acceptable to both professional users.

[1] Day-certain delivery means that one knows with great certainty (90%, 95%, 99%) on which day the mail sent will arrive at its destination.

Professional users are not opposed to a D+2 delivery term for administrative and publicity mail. Furthermore professional users wish for the addressee to be able to receive his mail at home or at the company's headquarters. Just like the private users, professional users think a day-certain delivery to be very important as well.

In addition the study shows that professional users have a strong need to be able to either deposit their administrative or publicity mail in a postal office or a postal point at the current rates, or to deposit them in a MassPost or national sorting centre provided that operational discounts are offered.

Both private companies and public bodies have a great need to have parcels delivered within a D+1 delivery time. Sent parcels need to be collected 5 days a week and be delivered at the addressee's home address. Parcels received by the professional users need to arrive in the company headquarters.

Finally, professional users attach importance to the fact that a postal service point is available within a distance of 3 km.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Structure of the study report

In this introductory chapter the study is situated in its context and the objectives and scope of the study are stated.

In the second chapter an explanation is given about the research method used (see technical report).

In chapters three and four the **results of the study among respectively residential users and companies (including public authorities)** are reported, including their preferences, needs and willingness to pay.

1.2 Context of the task

Until 31 December 2018 bpost is the company tasked with providing the universal postal service on the entire territory. Article 142 of the Act of 21 March 1991 defines this universal postal service as follows:
"§ 1. The universal postal service shall include the following facilities:
- the clearance, sorting, transport and delivery of postal items up to 2 kg;
- the clearance, sorting, transport and delivery of postal parcels up to 10 kg;
- the delivery of postal parcels coming from other Member States up to 20 kg;
- the services relating to registered items and insured items.
The universal postal service includes both domestic and cross-border services.
§ 2. The universal service provision entails the following obligations:
1° in each municipality of the Kingdom, including the amalgamated municipalities that constituted separate administrative units on 31 December 1971 there shall be at least one access point for the deposit of postal items referred to in § 1;
2° in each municipality referred to in 1° there shall be not less than five days a week, except on Sundays and legal holidays, at least one clearance, one transport and one delivery of such postal items;
3° the delivery of postal items shall involve every home of the Kingdom, provided they have a letter box situated within reach at the border of the public road and complying with the regulations decreed by the Minister at the proposal of the Institute.
This obligation is extended to the parcels referred to in § 1, second indent. If the presented parcel could not be received by the addressee, it is saved at a location in the addressee's municipality, the latter being informed about this by means of a message inserted in his letter box. That location shall be accessible not less than five days a week, except on Sundays and legal holidays.
§ 3. The universal service provision shall meet the following requirements:
it shall guarantee compliance with the essential requirements;
it shall offer an identical service to users under comparable conditions,
it shall be made available without any form of discrimination whatsoever, especially without discrimination arising from political, religious or ideological considerations,
it shall not be interrupted or stopped except in cases of force majeure,
it shall evolve in response to the technical, economic and social environment and to the needs of users."

Within the context of designating a new provider of the universal postal service and of the possible adaptation of the content of the universal postal service, BIPT wants to know the preferences, needs and willingness to pay of users of this universal postal service. This mission fits in with Article 133, 1°, of the Act of 21 March 1991.

1.3 Purpose and scope of the study

The current study needs to focus on the needs and willingness to pay of the users of the universal postal service (in previous surveys the behaviour and wishes of users of the respective services were examined).

Especially, BIPT wants to know the preferences, needs and willingness to pay (or willingness to accept) of the users of the universal postal service:

- the delivery time;
- the reliability of the delivery times;
- the place of deposit;
- the number of deliveries per week;
- the number of clearances per week (linked to the delivery time);
- the moment and the latest guaranteed time of delivery;
- the concepts of evening delivery and delivery on Saturdays (and Sundays) (within the context of parcel delivery);
- the access to the post offices;
- the access to the postboxes;
- the opening hours;
- the uniform price;
- the scope of the number of services per postal point (which products / which services?).

This study is aimed at the users of the universal postal service, i.e. both residential users (citizens) and professional users (big firms, SMEs, self-employed persons, public services).Furthermore, both senders and addressees are involved.

For each subject mentioned above to be studied, a distinction must be made according to:

- as for the companies:
    - administrative mail[2];
    - direct mail[3];
    - postal parcels;
    - postal service points (post office, postal point, postal stop);
- as for residential users:
    - items of correspondence;
    - parcels / packages;
    - postal service points.

[2]Administrative mail means any administrative correspondence to/from customers, suppliers, employees and public services, such as tenders, invoices, claims, contracts, etc.

[3]Direct mail means brochures, catalogues, publicity material, etc.

2. METHOD - TECHNICAL REPORTING

The method used by M.A.S. as to set-up and analysis of the study is inspired by the study performed by the RAND Institute[4].

2.1 Survey method

The survey among the various target groups needed to be done by means of telephone interviews (CATI), combined with a visual questionnaire (on screen, by letter of by e-mail).

This method implies that the survey has to be held by means of CATI telephone interviews, where the respondent needs to have a screen (PC, laptop, tablet, smartphone, etc.) and has to be able to log on to the web server of the research bureau. It is important for the respondent to be able to see and follow the scenario questions, in this case on the screen. The respondent is "guided" through the scenario questions by the poll-taker.

If for some reason the respondent is unable or unwilling to answer the questions by telephone (no Internet, no means to go online, no PC, no time at the moment of making contact, bad timing, etc.), but still wants to cooperate, he/she can still fill out the questionnaire either in writing (by letter) or online (by e-mail).

2.2 Questionnaire

Based on the description of the mission, the further briefing after the award of the procurement and our experience, a questionnaire has been drafted in Dutch and French, both for residential users and companies.
These questionnaires have been submitted to BIPT and were revised by M.A.S. where necessary after discussion.
The pre-test of the questionnaires was held face-to-face (by M.A.S. staff members) among 10_test respondents with 5 residential users and 5 companies.
Upon validation of the final versions (Dutch + French) the questionnaires were programmed with the Limesurvey software.

The questionnaire for "residential customers of Belgian postal services" consists of 6 parts, namely:

1. Residential customer profile;
2. Use of the postal services;
3. Accessibility of the postal services;
4. Change of behaviour;
5. Improvements of the postal services;
6. Preferences, needs and willingness to pay: analysis of the choices - scenarios.

The questionnaire for "professional users of Belgian postal services" consists of 7 parts, namely:

1. Professional user profile;
2. Importance of sending and receiving postal items;
3. Use of the postal services;
4. Accessibility of the postal services;
5. Change of behaviour;
6. Improvements of the postal services;
7. Preferences, needs and willingness to pay: analysis of the choices - scenarios.

[4] Rohr, Charlene, Urs Trinkner, Alison Lawrence, Priscillia Hunt, Chong Woo Kim, Dimitris Potoglou and Rob Sheldon. *Study on Appropriate Methodologies to Better Measure Consumer Preferences for Postal Services: Final Report*. Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2011. http://www.rand.org/pubs/technical_reports/TR1140.

2.3 Sample

2.3.1 RESIDENTIAL USERS

The population of the residential customer survey consists of all persons living in Belgium aged 18 and upwards.

The number of valid inquiries to be made for residential users was set at N = 3,350 in consultation with BIPT.

As for the sampling a proportional stratified sample with a known sample frame based on Nielsen zone, age and gender was opted for, so that the reported basis is a reflection of the underlying populations[5]; the interviewed persons are represented proportionally based on their respective number, e.g. Nielsen zone, gender and age.

After holding the survey - in order to verify the validity of the final sample - the sample realised was compared for various characteristics with the population. The imbalance between the sample data and the population data was corrected by weighing the sample results with a weighting factor that takes account of the real proportion of the sub-groups, so that the net results are representative of the Belgian population as a whole and at sub-group level.

In total **3,627 private inquiries** have been made, the maximum error rate equalling 1.47% (with a confidence interval of 95%). Thanks to this realised sample significant and statistically reliable results could be obtained, both for the entire population and for the various parts (age, gender, region).

2.3.2 PROFESSIONAL USERS

The population of the research among the business or professional users is composed of all self-employed persons, SMEs, large businesses and public services located in Belgium.

The number of valid inquiries to realise for the private companies and public bodies has been fixed at **N=2,150** in consultation with BIPT (N=1,750 and N=400 respectively).

As for the sampling a quota sampling with a known sample frame was opted for here based on business category (self-employed persons, SMEs, large businesses and public services), number of employees, industry sector and geographical areas (Nielsen zones).[6]

Similar to the approach followed for residential users, after holding the survey, the sample realised was compared to the population and the sampling results were weighed (according to the parameters region, sector of employment and number of employees).

A total of **2,190 inquiries among business users** was accomplished, i.e. 1,673 private and 517 public users, with a maximum deviation of 1.98%, 2.29% and 4.25% respectively.
The respondent was the person responsible within the company or public service for postal items and/or logistics.

[5] Basis population data: FPS Economy, Directorate-General Statistics Belgium
[6] Based on available figures, e.g. those of the National Social Security Office, Social Security Self-employed Entrepreneurs and Directorate-General Statistics Belgium.

2.4 Response data

2.4.1 RESIDENTIAL USERS

In total 39,424 contacts have been established. The result is as follows:

Table1: Response total - residential users

Result attempts to contact	N	%
OK, inquiry finished	**3,627**	**9.2%**
Partially finished	4,810	12.2%
No cooperation	10,329	26.2%
No answer	13,365	33.9%
Wrong telephone number (not a residential person)	2,247	5.7%
Non-existent telephone number / fax	1,340	3.4%
Insufficient Dutch/French	907	2.3%
Lower age limit (18 years) not present	591	1.5%
Quota already reached (age, gender, region)	2,050	5.2%
Working for BIPT, bpost, TBC Post, DHL, UPS, Kiala and other postal operators/courier services	158	0.4%
Total attempts to contact	**39,424**	**100%**

2.4.2 PROFESSIONAL USERS

In total 32,268 contacts have been established. The result is as follows:

Table2: Response total - professional users

Result attempts to contact	N	%
OK, inquiry finished	**2,190**	**6.8%**
Partially finished	7,214	22.4%
No cooperation	10,853	33.6%
No answer	5,249	16.3%
Person responsible for mail/logistics not present (on leave)	4,541	14.1%
Wrong telephone number (not a company)	1,384	4.3%
Non-existent telephone number / fax	837	2.6%
Total attempts to contact	**32,268**	**100.0%**

3. RESULTS SURVEY RESIDENTIAL USERS

3.1 Respondents' profile

The dispersion of the sampling (N=3,627) according to sociodemographic characteristics of the respondents (age, gender, region) is a reflection of the population dispersion, considering the proportional sample and weighting.

Therefore the sample consists of 51.4% women and 48.6% men.

As to age it can be noted that the share of people between 18 and 35 amounts to 26.9% in the sample. 25.9% of the residential users is situated in the age category of 36-50 years and 24.8% is between 51 and 64 years old. Finally, 22.4% of the respondents is 65 or older.

The average age of the respondents is 49 years. All respondents are between 18 and 95 years old.

58% of the respondents live in the Flemish Region (of which 34% in the provinces of Limburg, Antwerp and Flemish Brabant (region II Nielsen) and 24% in the provinces of East and West Flanders (region I Nielsen)).

32% of the residential users interviewed live in the Walloon Region (of which 16.5% in the provinces of Liège, Namur and Luxemburg (region V Nielsen) and 15% in the provinces of Hainaut and Walloon Brabant (region VI Nielsen)).

10% of the respondents live in the Brussels Capital Region (region III Nielsen).

The dispersion of the professional activity shows that 1 out of 3 respondents is (early) retired[7], 22% works as an office worker and 9% as a labourer.6% is in search of employment, 3% is unemployed and 8% is a student.

2% of the respondents has no diploma. More than 4 out of 10 respondents has a diploma of higher education (30% non-academic and 13% academic) and another 36% of the interviewees has a diploma of higher secondary education. For 15% the highest diploma is that of lower secondary education, while 5% has primary school diploma.

For 54% of the respondents the family consists of 2 to 3 persons (themselves included) and a quarter of the respondents is single. 18% of the interviewees is part of a family composed of 4 to 5 persons (themselves included) and for 3% his/her family consists of more than 5 persons.

[7]In 2010 the share of retired people in the total Belgian population amounted to 19%. During the sampling no quotas as to professional activity (and other socio-economic parameters) have been set and therefore those parameters have not been guided.

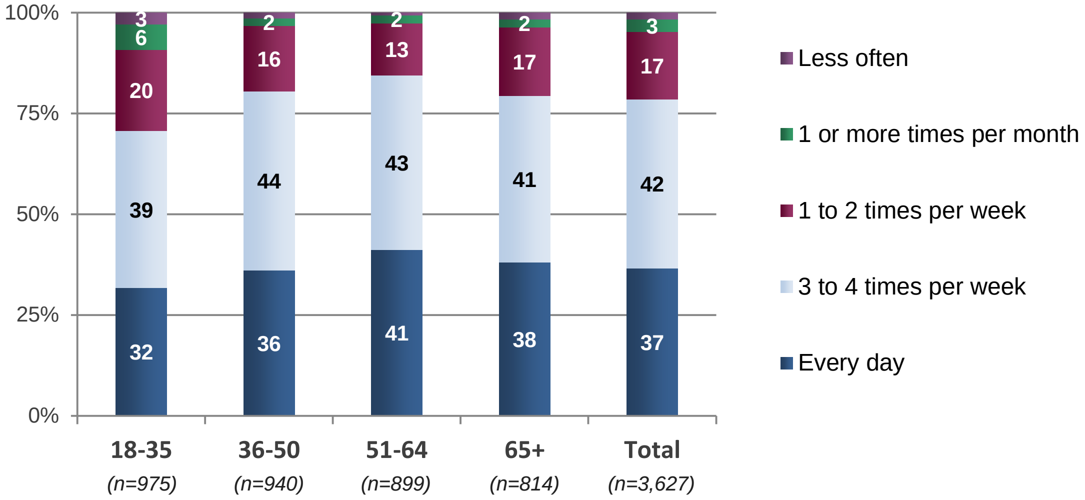
3.2 Use of the services

3.2.1 RECEIVING MAIL IN LETTERBOX IN AVERAGE WEEK

Four out of five residential users receive mail in their letterbox on average at least 3 to 4 times a week; for 37% this is even daily. 17% receives once or twice a week mail in the letterbox, and 5% receives mail less frequently (several times a month at most).

There is a weak, but nonetheless significant link between the age of the respondent and the frequency of receiving mail. The figure below shows that the youngest respondents (18 to 35 years) receive daily mail less frequently than the group of people aged between 51 and 64 (respectively 32% against 41%) and that they report more frequently that they receive mail once or twice a week than the latter (respectively 20% against 13%).

Figure 1: receiving mail in letterbox in average week - according to age

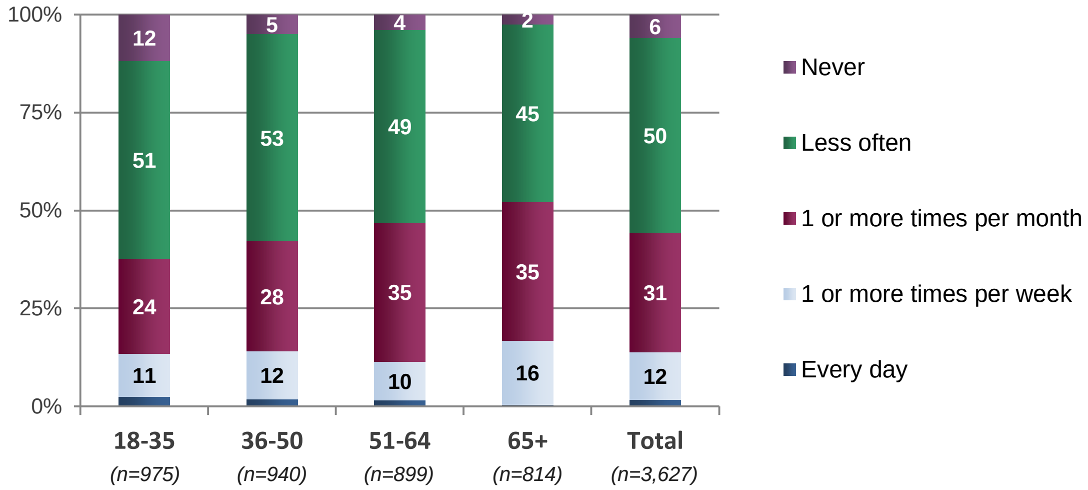


Basis: all respondents (N=3,627)

3.2.2 SENDING MAIL IN AVERAGE WEEK

In an average week 14% of residential users sends mail at least once a week. The vast majority sends mail less frequently: 31% sends mail once or several times a month, 50% sends mail less than once a month and 6% never sends any mail in an average week.

Figure 2: sending mail in average week - according to age



Basis: all respondents (N=3,627)

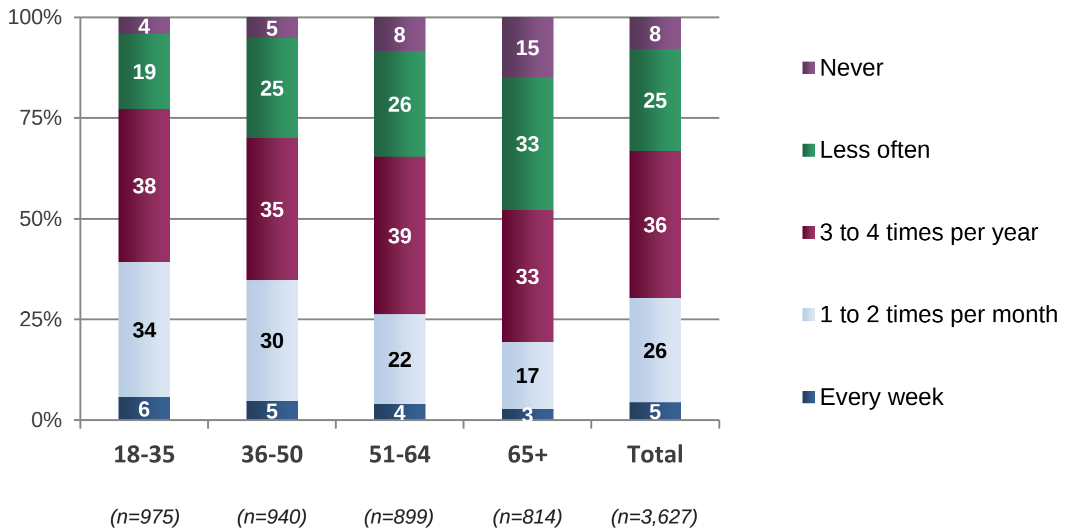
In this case too, there is a weak link between the respondent's age and the frequency of sending mail: the older the respondent, the more often he/she sends mail.

3.2.3 RECEIVING PARCELS AT HOME

5% of the residential users indicate they receive a parcel[8] at home at least once a week. A quarter of the respondents receives a parcel at home once or twice a month, 36% 3 to 4 times a year and 33% less often or never.

The younger the respondent, the more often he/she receives parcels at home: 35% to 40% of the people younger than 50 receives a parcel at home at least once a month; in the case of people over 50 this decreases to 20% to 26%.

Figure 3: receiving parcels at home - according to age



Basis: all respondents (N=3,627)

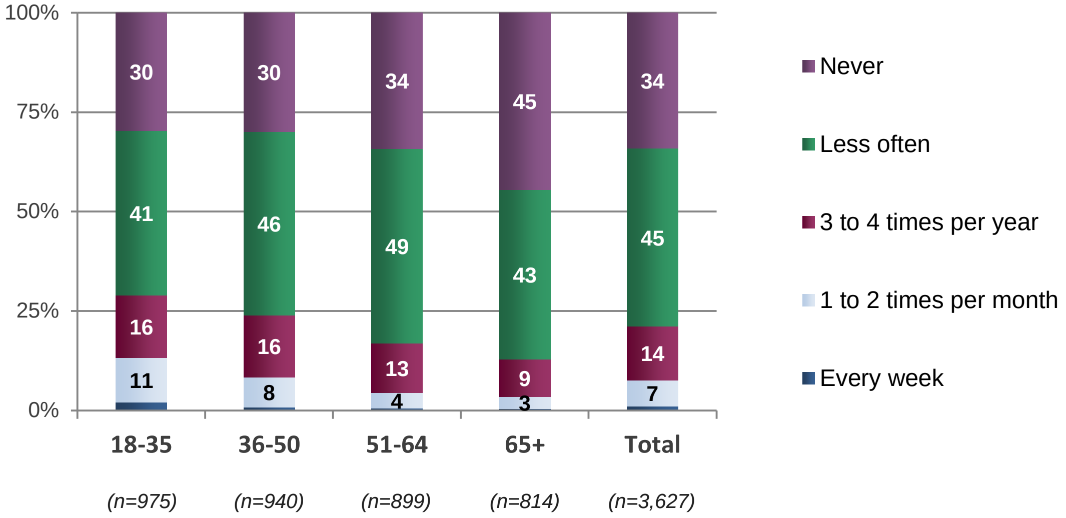
[8] A parcel is defined as a small shipment that cannot be inserted in the letterbox (more than 3 cm thick) and not weighing more than 10 kg.

3.2.4 SENDING (OR RETURNING) PARCELS

Almost 1 in 10 residential users (8%) sends a parcel at least once a month and 14% 3 to 4 times a year. The vast majority sends a parcel less often (45%) or never at all (34%).

Younger residential users do not only receive parcels more often than older respondents, they also send parcels more frequently.

Figure 4: sending (or returning) parcels - according to age



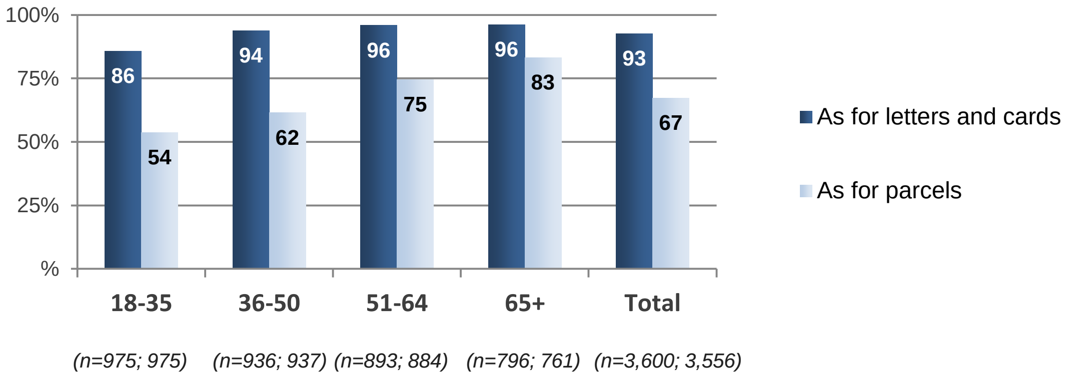
Basis: all respondents (N=3,627)

3.2.5 USE OF BPOST AND OTHER COMPANIES TO SEND LETTERS AND PARCELS

More than nine out of ten residential users (93%) only use bpost for sending letters and cards. In the case of parcels this share is higher: 33% of the residential users (also) uses companies other than bpost to send their parcels.

As regards age it can be noted that compared to other age categories the youngest age category uses proportionally less exclusively bpost for both sending letters and sending parcels (respectively 86% and 54% as opposed to 96% and 83% for people over 65).

Figure 5: exclusive use of bpost for sending letters and parcels - according to age



Basis: all respondents (N=3,627)

3.2.6 Internet access

Internet access is an important parameter within the context of this study, because as a communications channel it may pass as a substitute for letter post, but may also lead to receiving and possibly returning parcels because of the growing phenomenon of e-commerce.

93% of the respondents has an Internet connection at home. 43% has Internet access over the mobile phone, smartphone, tablet, etc. and a quarter of the residential persons has Internet at work. 4% of the respondents does not have Internet.

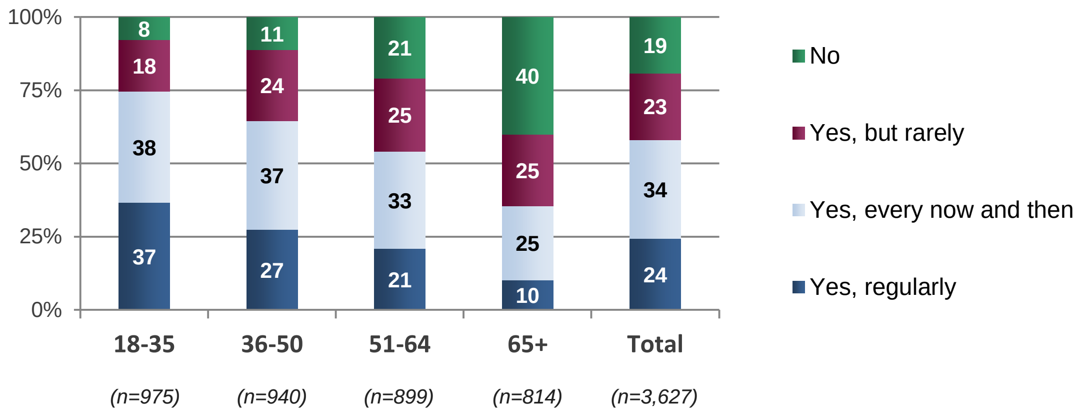
Regarding age, people over 65 proportionally have the least an Internet connection at home (85%), on their mobile phone, tablet, etc. (15%) and elsewhere (2%). As a consequence this group has the highest share of "no Internet connection" (14%). By contrast, compared to other age groups, the youngest age category (18-35 years) proportionally has the most Internet over the mobile phone, smartphone, tablet, etc. (74%), and elsewhere (12%).

3.2.7 Internet purchases delivered by mail

One in four respondents regularly buys things on the Internet, which are delivered by mail. For 34% this happens from time to time and for 23% only rarely. 1 in 5 does not buy anything on the Internet that is delivered by mail.

We notice a very strong link between the frequency of Internet purchases delivered by mail and the respondent's age: the older one is, the less Internet purchases one does that are delivered by mail.

Figure 6: Internet purchases delivered by mail - according to age



Basis: all respondents (N=3,627)

Conclusions about the use of the postal services by residential customers

- *Four out of five residential users receive mail in their letterbox at least 3 to 4 times a week on average. On average 14% of the respondents sends mail at least once a week.*
- *Three out of ten residential users receive at least once or twice a month a parcel at home; one in ten sends a parcel at least once or twice a month.*
- *To send letters and cards the vast majority of the respondents only uses bpost (93%). To send parcels this is significantly lower (67%).*
- *A quarter of the residential users regularly makes Internet purchases delivered by mail; the younger the person, the more frequent such purchases are made.*

3.3 Accessibility of the postal services

Legal basis:

Article 3 of the Third Postal Directive (Directive 2008/6/EC) of the European Parliament stipulates that *the density of the points of contact and of the access points takes account of the needs of users.*

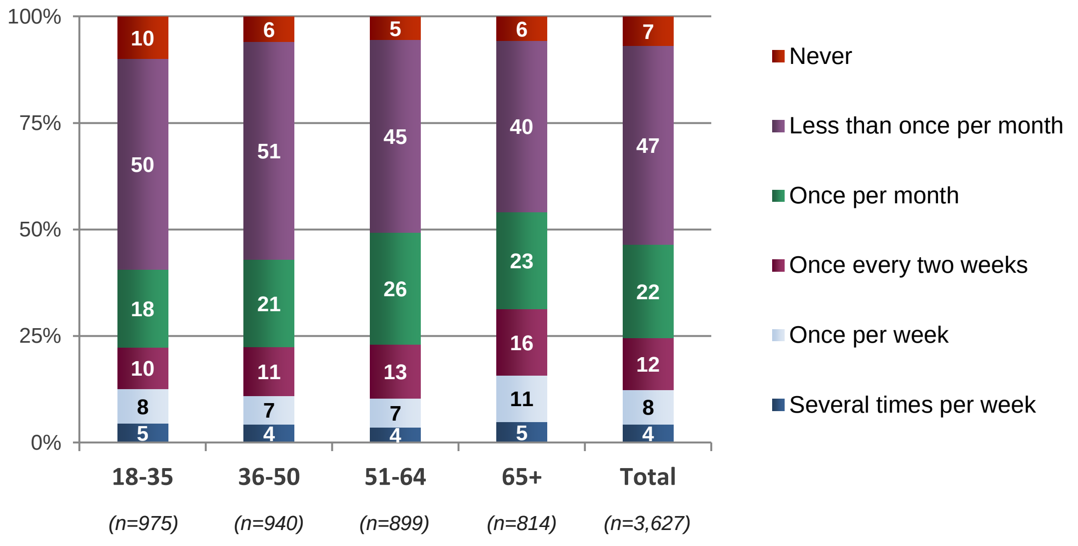
Article 16 of the fifth management contract concluded between the State and bpost stipulates that *bpost's retail network should consist of at least 1,300 postal service points with a minimum of 650 postal offices, of which at least one in every municipality.* Article 18 of the same management contract stipulates *moreover that at least 95% of the population should have access to a postal service point offering the basic assortment within a 5 kilometres' distance and at least 98% within a 10 kilometres' distance (by road).*

3.3.1 Use of red postboxes

Almost half of the respondents (46%) makes use at least once a month of the red postboxes to send mail; a little more than 1 out of 10 does this at least once a week.7% of the residential users interviewed never uses the red postboxes.

The younger the respondent the less he or she uses the red postboxes.

Figure 7: use of red postboxes - according to age



Basis: all respondents (N=3,627)

3.3.2 Location most used postbox

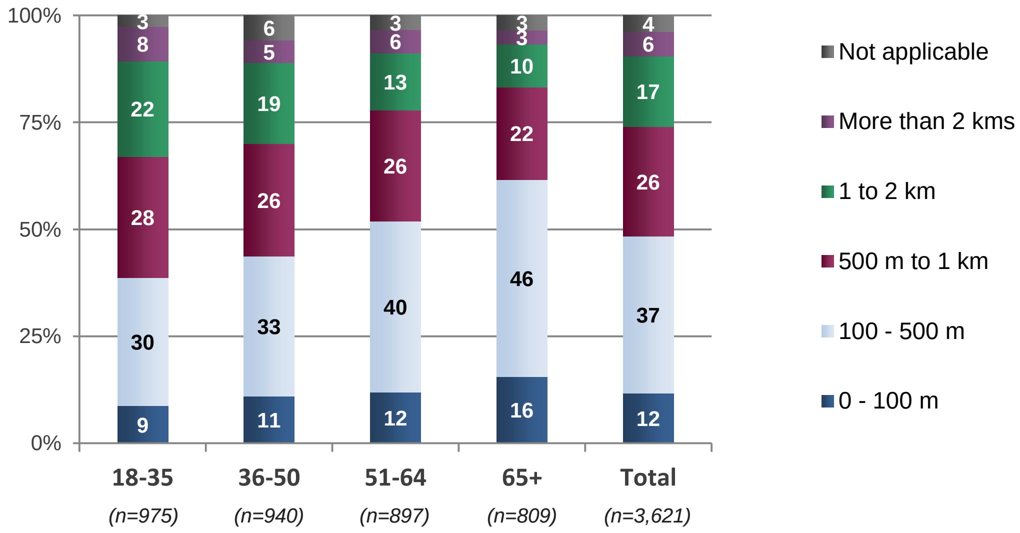
When asked which postbox is used most often to send his or her mail, 66% of the respondents answer that it is the postbox closest to their homes. 10% mostly uses the postbox in a postal office. Another postbox close-by is most often used by 7%. Another 6% goes to the postbox in a postal point and the same percentage deposits his or her mail in a postbox on the way from home to work.

3.3.3 DESIRED MAXIMUM DISTANCE TO POINT OF COLLECTION

For half of the respondents (49%) the maximum distance they are willing to travel to deposit their mail in the nearest collection point (a red postbox, a postal point, a postal office) is 0 to 500 meters. A quarter of the respondents is willing to travel 500 meters to 1 km; 17% is willing to travel 1 to 2 kms and 6% more than 2 kms.

The length of the maximum distance one is willing to travel is related to the age of the respondents: the younger, the further one is willing to travel.

Figure 8: maximum distance to point of collection - according to the age

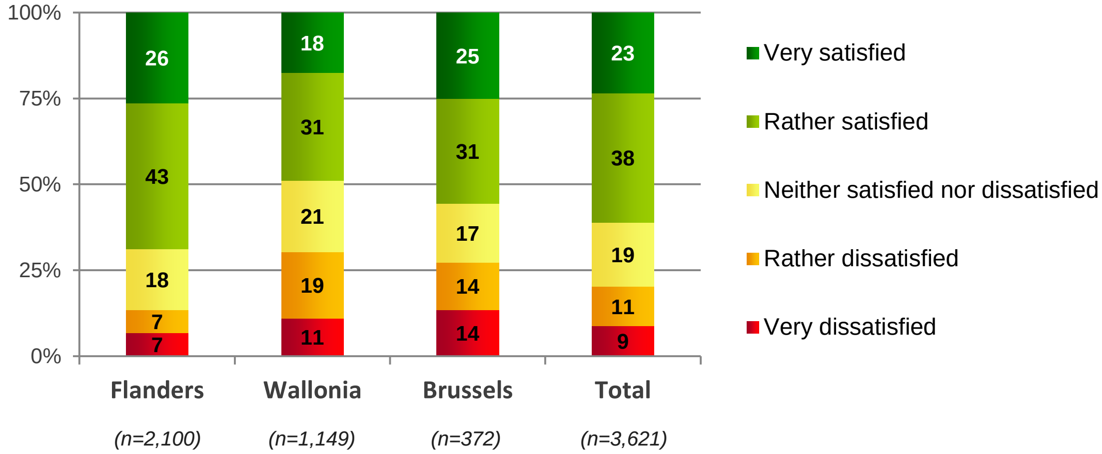


Basis: all respondents (N=3,627)

3.3.4 SATISFACTION LOCATION POINTS OF COLLECTION

6 out of 10 residential users are rather satisfied to very satisfied with the location of the point of collection of the mail in their vicinity (namely a red postbox, a postal point or a postal office). 20% of the private customers is rather dissatisfied to very dissatisfied with the location of the collection point. One out of five respondents is neither satisfied nor dissatisfied and is rather indifferent.

Figure 9: satisfaction with the location of the collection points in the vicinity - according to region



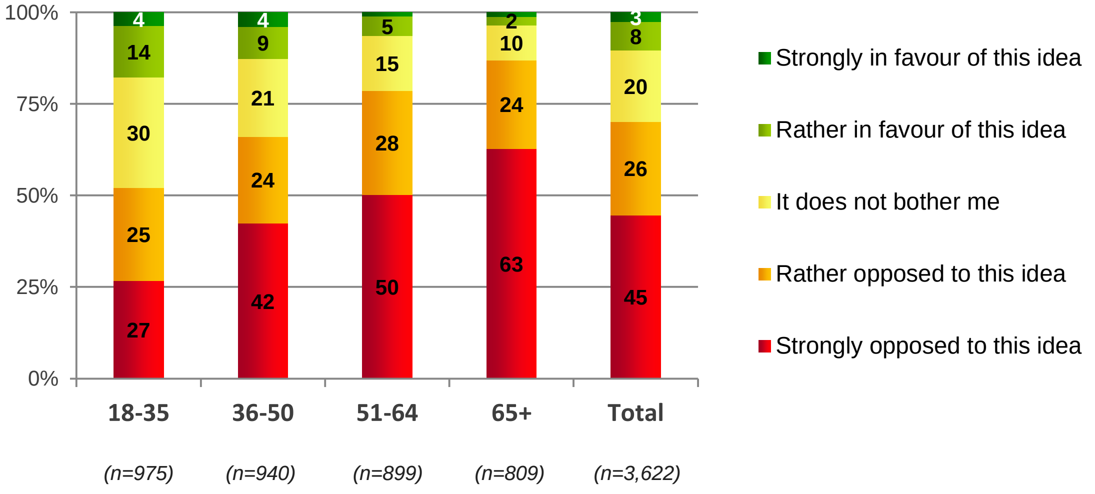
Basis: all respondents (N=3,627)

3.3.5 Attitude towards a central, secured collection point

When asked what one would think if his or her mail - instead of being delivered in his or her letterbox at home - would be delivered in a secured, watertight postbox in a central point such as the train station, a shopping mall, the city or town centre, 45% replies that they are strongly opposed against this idea and another 26% is rather opposed. 7 out of 10 respondents therefore do not fancy the idea.

Being in favour of or opposed against this idea is clearly related to the age of the respondents: the older a person is, the more opposed to the idea of the secured postbox on location.

Figure 10: attitude towards a secured, central point of collection - according to age



Basis: all respondents (N=3,627)

Conclusions about the accessibility of the postal services by residential customers

- *Almost half of the respondents uses a red postbox to send mail at least once a month; especially the postbox closest-by their homes (66%).*
- *Half of the respondents (49%) moreover states being willing to travel maximum 500 meters to deposit their mail (i.e. in a red postbox, a postal point, a postal office).*
- *Six out of ten respondents are satisfied with the location of the point in their vicinity where the mail is collected; a quarter is even very satisfied.*
- *A secured, watertight postbox in a central collection point (e.g. train station, shopping mall, etc.) in which the mail is delivered instead of a letterbox at home is only considered to be a good idea by 3 out of 10 respondents. The older a person is, the more opposed against this idea.*

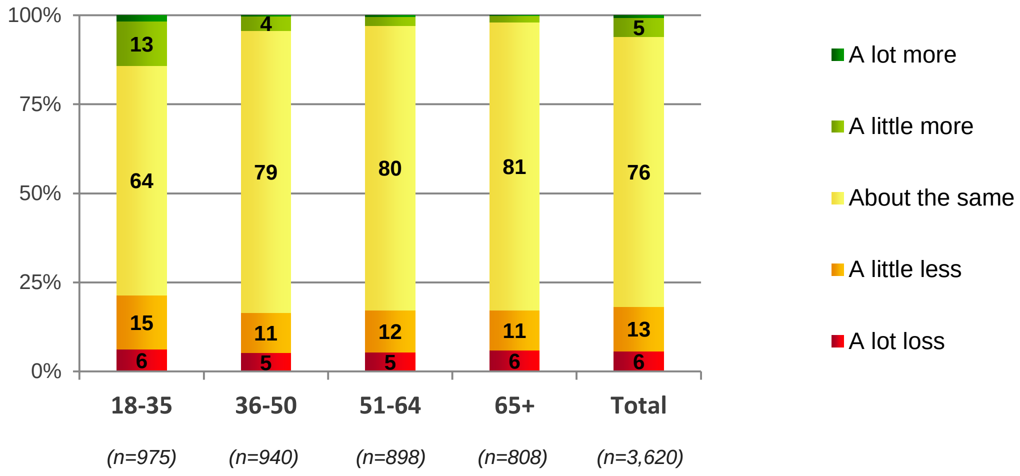
3.4 Change of behaviour

3.4.1 Evolution of sending letters in the next 3 years

Three out of four respondents (76%) expect to send about the same volume of letter mail during the next 3 years as compared to today (July 2015).

Remarkably, when breaking down the data according to age, the youngest age group of 18-35 years expects to send considerably more letters over the next 3 years than the other age categories (respectively 14% compared to 4%, 2%).

Figure 11: expected number of letters sent the next 3 years as compared to today - according to age



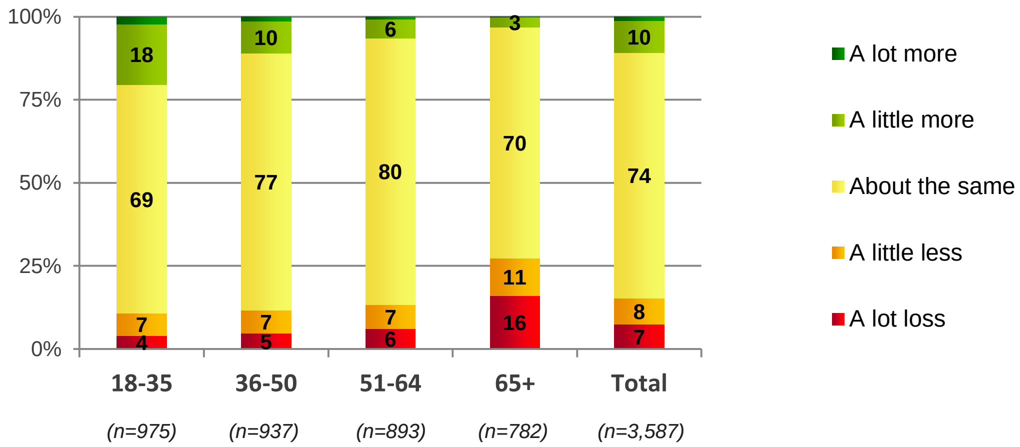
Basis: all respondents (N=3,627)

3.4.2 Evolution of sending parcels in the next 3 years

The respondents were also asked whether they would, according to them, send more or less parcels compared to today the next 3 years. Here as well three out of four respondents (74%) expect to send about the same volume of parcels during the next 3 years as compared to today (July 2015).

The younger the respondents, the stronger they believe that they will send more parcels the next 3 years as compared to today.

Figure 12: expected number of parcels sent the next 3 years as compared to today - according to age



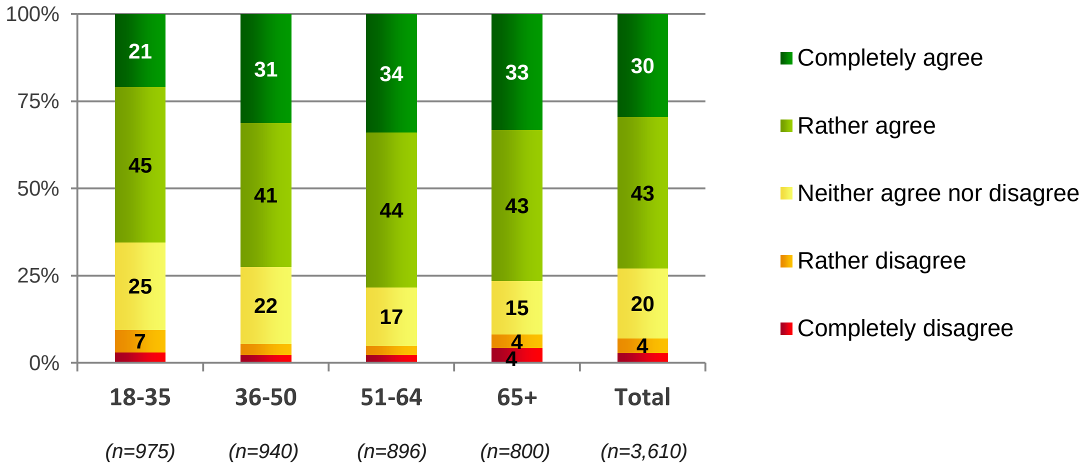
Basis: all respondents (N=3,627)

3.4.3 ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE STATEMENT 'I WILL ALWAYS HAVE TO SEND THINGS BY MAIL'

73% of the respondents agrees with the statement that one will always have to send certain items by mail, 7% does not agree and 20% neither agrees nor disagrees.

Figure 13 shows that the higher the respondent's age, the more he agrees to the statement that one will always have to send certain items by mail.

Figure 13: I will always have to send certain items by mail - according to age



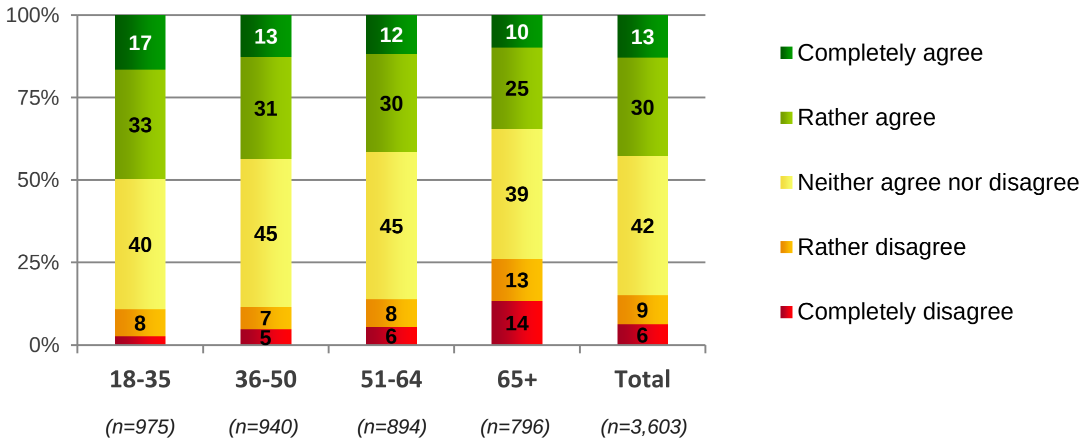
Basis: all respondents (N=3,627)

3.4.4 ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE STATEMENT 'ORDERING MORE ARTICLES IN THE NEXT 3 YEARS THAT WILL BE SENT BY MAIL'

When asked whether the respondent agrees to the statement that one expects, in the next 3 years, to be ordering more articles that will be sent by mail, 43% answers yes. 42% neither agrees, nor disagrees and 15% disagrees.

When considering the age we see that the younger the respondent, the more he agrees with the statement that in the next 3 years he will order more articles that will be sent by mail: for the age group 18 to 35 this regards 50% and for the group over 65, this is 35%.

Figure 14: ordering more articles in the next 3 years that will be sent by mail - according to age



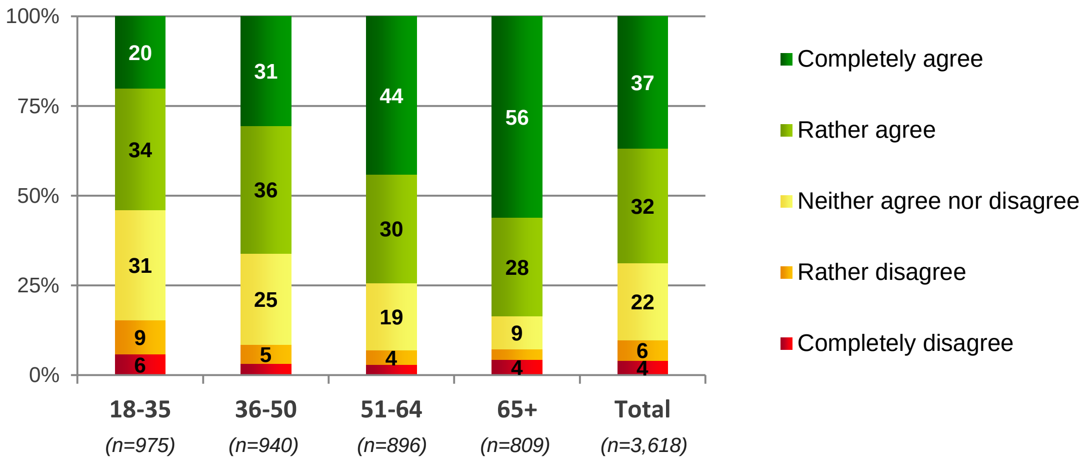
Basis: all respondents (N=3,627)

3.4.5 Attitude towards the statement 'I would feel closed off if I were no longer able to send or receive mail'

69% of the respondents would feel closed off from society if they were no longer able to send or receive mail; 22% neither agrees nor disagrees, and 10% of the respondents would not feel closed off if they would no longer be able to send or receive mail.

There is a relatively strong connection with the respondent's age: the older the respondent, the more he agrees with the aforementioned statement. That is also shown in figure 15.

Figure 15: I would feel closed off from society if I were no longer able to send or receive mail - according to age



Basis: all respondents (N=3,627)

Conclusions on attitude changes in residential customers

- *Three out of four respondents not only expect to send about the same volume of letter mail during the next 3 years but also the same number of parcels as compared to today (July 2015).*
- *Two out of five residential users interviewed think they will order more articles during the next 3 years that will be sent by mail.*
- *That one will always have to send items by mail is confirmed by three quarters of the respondents and seven out of ten respondents would feel closed off from society if they were no longer able to send or receive mail.*

3.5 Improvements

Legal basis:

Tariffs:
Article 3 of the Third Postal Directive (Directive 2008/6/EC) of the European Parliament stipulates that the prices of the postal services that come under the universal service should be affordable for all users.

Clearance and delivery
Article 3 of the Third Postal Directive (Directive 2008/6/EC) of the European Parliament stipulates that not less than five working days a week there is one clearance and one delivery of the postal services that are part of the universal service. *In case of circumstances or geographical conditions deemed exceptional it is possible to derogate from this rule.*

3.5.1 PREFERENCE REGARDING POSSIBLE CHANGES IN POSTAL SERVICES

The respondents were asked to indicate which possible changes in the postal services they prefer (if they could choose)[9]; more answers than one were possible.

The possible changes that were most often cited as preferable for the postal services are lower rates (40%), followed by the delivery of parcels in the evening and in weekends (38%) and the delivery and clearance of mail 6 days per week (33%).

A quarter of the respondents (26%) chooses a much later time than now for the clearance of red postboxes and 22% wishes for the mail to be delivered at an earlier time than now.

12% of the respondents says it does not want to change anything.

The 18-35 age group prefers the delivery of parcels in the evening and in weekends as a possible change (53% more than for the other age groups), followed by lower tariffs (42%) and the delivery and clearance of mail 6 days per week (38%). This age group, together with the 36 to 50 year olds also mentions less often than the 51 to 64 year olds and the group older than 65 that it does not want to change anything (respectively 7% and 10% compared to 16% and 17%).

The group of 36 to 50 year shares the top 3 changes with the 18 to 35 year olds (respectively 45%, 44% and 31%). For the 51 to 64 year olds and the group older than 65 lower rates constitutes the most important change (36% each time).

3.5.2 MOST PREFERRED CHANGE IN POSTAL SERVICES

The respondent was then asked which of the possible changes he **preferred most;** only one answer was possible.

The lower rates appeared to be number one (24%), followed by the delivery of parcels in the evening and in weekends (22%) and the delivery and clearance of mail 6 days per week (16%).

[9] Several answers possible: Delivery and clearance of mail 6 days per week; Delivery of the mail at an earlier time than now; A much later time than now for the clearance of red postboxes; Delivery of parcels in the evening or in weekends; A postbox much closer to my home; Delivery of my mail in a postal office or postal point, rather than at home; Lower rates; Other (please specify); Nothing.

All age groups have the same top 3 (albeit in a different order sometimes), with the exception of the group older than 65 who would also like their mail to be delivered earlier (16%) in addition to lower prices (21%) and a delivery and clearance of mail 6 days per week (20%).

In the age groups from 18 to 35, 35% remarkably choses the delivery of parcels in the evening and during weekends while this percentage is situated between 7% and 27% for the other (older) respondents. One fifth of the respondents older than 65 would like their mail to be delivered and collected 6 days per week while this is 13% to 14% for the age group between 18 to 50.

3.5.3 CHANGE IN POSTAL SERVICES WITH THE BIGGEST NEGATIVE IMPACT

Some changes in the postal services could have a negative impact on the daily activities of the respondents. They were asked which of the propositions[10] given would have the most negative impact according to them (they could only indicate one proposition).

For 35% of the respondents the abolition of postal offices and or postal points in the vicinity of their residence would have the most negative impact. For the majority of these respondents (70%) this would imply a major discomfort, although they would find a way to solve the problem. For 20%, however, this would have a strong influence on their lives and this would render them nearly unreachable for persons or companies they have to contact. 10% states that this would have only a small or no impact.

The change with the second biggest negative impact would be the abolition of red postboxes in the vicinity of the residence (15%). 68% among them indicated that this would be a great inconvenience but not insurmountable. For 14% this would have a strong negative impact on their lives; but almost as many (18%) stated that this would barely have an impact.

In third place we find the decrease of the delivery frequency of mail to four days per week; namely for 14% of the respondents. For about half of these respondents this would entail a great inconvenience. For about a quarter each time this would have a strong negative impact on their lives, or on the contrary no (or little) impact.

Conclusions on the improvements of the universal postal services - residential users

- *When asked to choose among the possible changes they prefer, respondents most often cite the lower rates (40%), followed by the delivery of parcels in the evening and in weekends (38%) and the delivery and clearance of mail 6 days per week (33%). One out of ten respondents says he does not want to change anything. The said top 3 is also found when indicating possible changes that are most preferred.*
- *Some changes in the postal services could have a negative impact on the daily operation of the respondents.*
  The most negative impact would come from the abolition of postal offices and/or postal points in the vicinity of their residences (35%). For 70% of these respondents the abolition would entail a great inconvenience although they would find a way to solve the problem.
  The change with the second biggest negative impact would be the abolition of red postboxes in the vicinity of the residence (15%), followed closely by the decrease of the delivery frequency to 4 days per week (14%). Almost 15% of the respondents states that none of these changes will have an impact.

[10] It regards the following possible answers (propositions): A reduced frequency for the delivery of mail to 4 days per week; A much earlier clearance of the red postboxes during daytime; No guarantee for the Prior service; The price for a postage stamp fixed at 1 euro; Abolition of the red postboxes in the vicinity of the residence; Abolition of the postal offices and/or postal points in the vicinity of the residence; None of these changes will have an impact.

3.6 Preferences, needs and willingness to pay

3.6.1 RESIDENTIAL USERS' WILLINGNESS TO PAY FOR SENDING AND RECEIVING LETTERS

In this section we verify the willingness to pay of the residential users following hypothetical changes in the service. Changes in the willingness to pay, that may encompass both an additional fee and a desired discount, shall be used to define the preferences and needs. Significant changes in the willingness to pay shall be interpreted as preferences or needs. This willingness to pay can be both positive and negative.

If it regards a significant increase in the willingness to pay, we can consider this to be a preference to change the service. In the case of significant changes in the willingness to pay we can even talk about needs.

In the case of a decrease of the willingness to pay we can conclude that there is a preference or need to maintain the current service or the acceptation of the alternative scenario provided that the rates are lowered.

Legal basis:

Tariffs:

Article 3 of the Third Postal Directive (Directive 2008/6/EC) of the European Parliament stipulates *that the prices of the postal services that come under the universal service should be affordable for all users.*

Delivery term and trustworthiness

Article 16 of the Third Postal Directive (Directive 2008/6/EC) of the European Parliament stipulates *that the Member States lay down the delivery term, the frequency and the reliability of the services falling within the universal service.*[11]

From the analysis displayed in table 3 we can deduce that a short delivery term (D+1 as is the case today), is not an absolute necessity. For the willingness to pay for a longer delivery term, D+2 instead of D+1, is not significantly lower. However there is a strong aversion to a D+5 delivery term.

Residential users on the contrary do have a day-certain delivery and wish to have more certainty about the day on which their mail will arrive at its destination.

There is an explicit need to keep receiving mail at home, residential users are strongly opposed to the delivery of mail in a secured postbox at a postal point or a postal office. This observation is also a confirmation of the results of the general part of the survey: when asked how one would feel about a delivery of the mail in a secured, watertight postbox in a central point - instead of at home - 7 out of 10 people reply that they are opposed to the idea.

[11] These numbers are published annually on BIPT’s website.

Legal basis:

Clearance and delivery:
Article 3 of the Third Postal Directive (Directive 2008/6/EC) of the European Parliament stipulates *that not less than five working days a week there is one clearance and one delivery of the postal services that are part of the universal service. In case of circumstances or geographical conditions deemed exceptional it is possible to derogate from this rule.*

As for the number of deliveries per week the residential users appear not to wish a decrease. The less deliveries per week, the lower the willingness to pay for the service.

Table3: willingness to pay for sending and receiving letters - residential users

Variables	Levels	Willingness to pay	Sig. ?
Delivery term / Delivery speed	D+1 (basis)	0.00	
	D+2	-0.03	([12])
	D+5	-0.42	***
Reliability of delivery time	95% (basis)	0.00	
	90%	0.04	*
	99%	0.15	***
Place of delivery	Home (basis)	0.00	
	In a secured postbox in a public place	-0.82	***
Number of deliveries a week	5 days (basis)	0.00	
	3 days	-0.47	***
	3 days + Saturday	-0.29	***
	4 days	-0.29	***
	4 days + Saturday	-0.25	***
Number of clearances a week	5 days (basis)	0.00	
	3 days	0.17	***
	4 days	0.30	***
	6 days	0.13	***

*Legend level of reliability (Sig.): * for 90%, ** for 95% and *** for 99%.*

3.6.2 Residential users' willingness to pay for sending and receiving parcels

From the analysis of the results of the willingness to pay for sending and receiving parcels it would appear that a number of results are not significant or unequivocal. These will consequently not be discussed.

The analysis shows that the residential users are not opposed to a delivery term which is longer than a day than is the case today (D+2); however, they are not interested in a longer delivery term (D+5) considering the low willingness to pay. The reliability of the delivery term is an aspect of the service that is very important to the residential users.

[12] P value: 0.177018; the significance level is 82.3%.

It was also observed that the residential users attach great importance to the location for delivery of the parcels. They prefer a delivery at home in comparison with a delivery in a secured postbox.

Based on the data no unequivocal decisions can be made regarding the number of deliveries per week neither regarding the number of clearances per week.

Table4: willingness to pay for sending and receiving parcels - residential users

Variables	Levels	Willingness to pay	Sig. ?
Delivery term / Delivery speed	D+1 (basis)	0.00	
	D+2	3.83	***
	D+5	-6.18	***
Reliability of delivery time	95% (basis)	0.00	
	90%	-8.36	***
	99%	-0.27	
Place of delivery	Home (basis)	0.00	
	In a postal point or a postal office	-11.84	***
	In a secured postbox in a public place	-22.71	***
Number of deliveries a week	5 days (basis)	0.00	
	3 days	-3.07	***
	3 days + Saturday	0.61	
	4 days	4.72	***
	4 days + Saturday	-2.73	**
Number of clearances a week	5 days (basis)	0.00	
	3 days	-4.94	***
	4 days	7.75	***
	6 days	7.39	***
Last guaranteed time for clearance	5 p.m. (basic)	0.00	
	9 p.m.	-0.83	**

*Legend level of reliability (Sig.): * for 90%, ** for 95% and *** for 99%*

3.6.3 Residential users' willingness to pay for the postal service points

Residential users were also asked to choose from different scenarios including information on a number of important aspects of the universal postal service regarding the postal service points.

The analysis shows that the residential users attach the greatest importance to the distance between their residence and the nearest service point. The greater the distance from the residence to the nearest service point, the lower the willingness to pay.

This observation is also a confirmation of the results of the general part of the survey: when asked what is the maximum distance one is willing to travel to deposit his mail in the nearest mail collection point, 75% of the respondents answers 'up to 1 kilometre'. In addition the abolition of postal offices and or postal points in the vicinity of their residence would have the most negative impact on the daily activities for 35% of the respondents.

Legal basis:

Network access:

Article 3 of the Third Postal Directive (Directive 2008/6/EC) *of the European Parliament stipulates that the density of the points of contact and of the access points takes account of the needs of users of the universal service.*

Article 18 of the fifth management contract stipulates *moreover that at least 95% of the population should have access to a postal service point offering the basic assortment within a maximum distance of 5 kilometres and at least 98% within a 10 kilometres' distance (by road).*

As regards the available services in the postal service point, the residential respondents wish that the service points provide a very large range of services; they prefer the total offer of postal services including financial and other services as well.

As regards the opening times the residential users prefer the current opening times (7 hours per day and 4 hours on Saturdays).

Table5: willingness to pay for the postal service points - residential users

Variables	Levels	Willingness to pay	Sig. ?
Distance residence - the nearest service point	Less than 1 km (basis)	0.00	
	1 to 2.99 km	-0.11	***
	3 to 5.99 km	-0.45	***
	6 to 9.99 km	-0.79	***
	More than 10 km	-1.21	***
Available services	Basic postal services (basis)	0.00	
	Total offer of postal services + financial services	0.09	***
	Total offer of postal services + financial services + other services	0.22	***
Opening times	7 h/day Monday to Friday + 4 h/ Saturday (basis)	0.00	
	4 h/day Monday to Friday (alternately morning/afternoon)	-0.33	***
	7 h/day Monday to Friday	-0.08	***
	9 h/day Monday to Friday	-0.09	***
	9 h/day Monday to Friday + 6 h/Saturday	0.00[13]	

*Legend level of reliability (Sig.): * for 90%, ** for 95% and *** for 99%*

[13] The coefficient that is not rounded down, is 0.004394.

3.6.4 Conclusion willingness to pay of residential users

In the annexed table the various aspects of the universal postal services are mentioned in function of the degree of willingness to pay for them. In the columns it is indicated each time which postal service is important to whom. Example: there is a very high willingness to pay (a high degree of need or importance) as regards the distance to the sender's nearest postal service point.

The table gives a survey of the importance of the various aspects. A ranking has been established based on the weight of the calculated willingness to pay (see coefficients willingness to pay previous tables).

A moderate willingness to pay means that it is situated between the values of 0.01 and 0.5. If the willingness to pay is situated between 0.6 and 1 there is a high willingness to pay and in case of a very high willingness to pay the value is higher than 1.

As mentioned before, in the columns it is indicated which aspect of the universal postal service is important to whom - i.e. the sender, the postal service or the addressee.

That way it can be established that the variables distance to the nearest service point, opening times and available services are important to the 'Sender' but the distance to the nearest service point is the most important (cf. the very high willingness to pay).

As to the postal service itself, the biggest need is noted for the variables regarding the sending and receiving of parcels. Finally, for the addressee, the location of the delivery is the most important aspect.

Table6: ranking of the various aspects of the universal postal service according to the degree of willingness to pay - residential users

	Sender	Postal service	Addressee
Very high willingness to pay	Distance to nearest postal service point	Speed of delivery (parcels) Reliability of the delivery time (parcels) Number of deliveries a week (parcels) Number of clearances a week (parcels)	Place of delivery (parcels)
High willingness to pay			Place of delivery (letters) Last guaranteed time for delivery (parcels)
Moderate willingness to pay	Available services postal service points Opening hours service point	Reliability of the delivery time (letters) Speed of delivery (letters) Number of deliveries a week (letters) Number of clearances a week (letters)	
No willingness to pay			

Conclusions willingness to pay residential users

- *As to sending and receiving letters:*
  - *The respondents hold to the delivery of mail at home (and nowhere else). Consequently there is a high willingness to pay for this aspect.*
  - *A D+1 delivery time is not an absolute necessity for the residential customer; the latter is however strongly opposed to a D+5 delivery term.*
  - *Residential users wish to have more certainty about the day on which their mail shall arrive at its destination (99% reliability) in spite of the average willingness to pay for this aspect.*
  - *The residential customer seems to prefer to maintain the number of deliveries per week (5 days per week).*
- *As to sending and receiving parcels:*
  - *As regards the delivery of parcels, a delivery at home is preferred. This aspect also obtains a very high willingness to pay.*
  - *Residential users are not opposed to a D+2 delivery time.*
  - *Residential users want to know with a 95% reliability when their parcel shall arrive at its destination. The willingness to pay for this aspect is very high.*
- *As for postal service points:*
  - *Residential users attach the greatest importance to the distance between their residence and the nearest service point. A service point nearest to the place of residence is preferred. The degree of importance attached is consequently translated into a very high willingness to pay.*
  - *They also prefer an availability of a comprehensive offer of postal services as well as the financial and other services. The willingness to pay for this however is not so high; rather average.*
  - *The current opening hours seem to meet the needs of the respondents; they do wish to have opening times on Saturdays.*

4. RESULTS SURVEY PRIVATE AND PUBLIC BUSINESS USERS

4.1 Respondents' profile

4.1.1 PRIVATE COMPANIES (N=1,674)

Eight out of ten of the private companies interviewed (82%) are self-employed (without employees). 12.4% regards a small company with 2 to 4 employees, 5% an average company with 5 to 49 employees, and 1% a large company with 50 or more employees.

Seven out of ten private companies declare to be self-employed (a one-man business), 14% practices a profession and finally 16% regards a private company such as an NV, BVBA, etc.

6% of the companies in our weighted sample belongs to the primary sector.[14] 20% falls under the secondary sector[15] and the activities of 74% of the companies constitute the tertiary sector[16]. Companies of the quaternary sector (being in this case the private companies exercising activities in the social and socio-cultural service) are categorised within the service sector.[17]

4.1.2 GOVERNMENT (N=517)

Almost half (46%) of the government bodies interviewed has 2 to 4 employees, a third (34%) declares having 5 to 49 employees and finally 21% is a government body with 50 employees or more.

Almost two thirds of the government bodies interviewed has its seat in Flanders, 20% in Wallonia and 15% in the Brussels Capital Region.

The large government companies (50+ employees) have their seat in the Brussels Capital Region significantly more often than in Flanders and Wallonia (respectively 36% compared to 8% and 13%).

Seven out of ten government bodies are a public administrations body. Furthermore 13% belongs to the education sector, 7% to the healthcare sector, 9% provides social services and finally 1% states being active in the art, entertainment and recreation sector.

[14] Primary sector: agriculture, hunting, forestry and fishery.
[15] Secondary sector: extracting minerals, industrial sector/manufacturing of products, production and distribution of electricity, gas, ... and construction.
[16] Tertiary sector: wholesale and retail, hotel and catering, transport and storage, financial services (insurances, credits, banks, ...), services to companies (among other things HR, consultancy, IT, interim, ...), services to private persons (among others hairdressers, care, travel agencies, ...), social services, art, recreation, etc.
[17]Quota are laid down based on the population divided over three sectors: primary, secondary and tertiary. The weighting was consequently based on these three sectors. In the questionnaire the respondent had to indicate which sector the company belongs to, distinguishing between the primary, secondary, tertiary and quaternary sector; the quaternary sector was included because government services were also interviewed (and the quaternary sector mainly refers to the public service).The activities of the quaternary sector that actually fall under the 'government', are therefore categorised with the 'public companies'; the activities of the quaternary sector that are private by nature with 'social and socio-cultural services', are ranged under the tertiary sector of the private companies, as in terms of activities (services) they relate to this and the population is composed in this manner (quota/weight) as well.

4.2 Importance of sending and receiving postal items for companies

4.2.1 Private companies

Administrative mail

To respectively 60% and 70% of the private companies sending and receiving administrative mail is (very) important for their activities. Administrative mail means any administrative correspondence to customers, suppliers, employees and public services, such as tenders, invoices, claims, contracts, etc.

A quarter of the private companies states that sending administrative mail is not important for their operation, and to 13% the same applies for receiving administrative mail. Finally, 16% to 17% takes a neutral position.

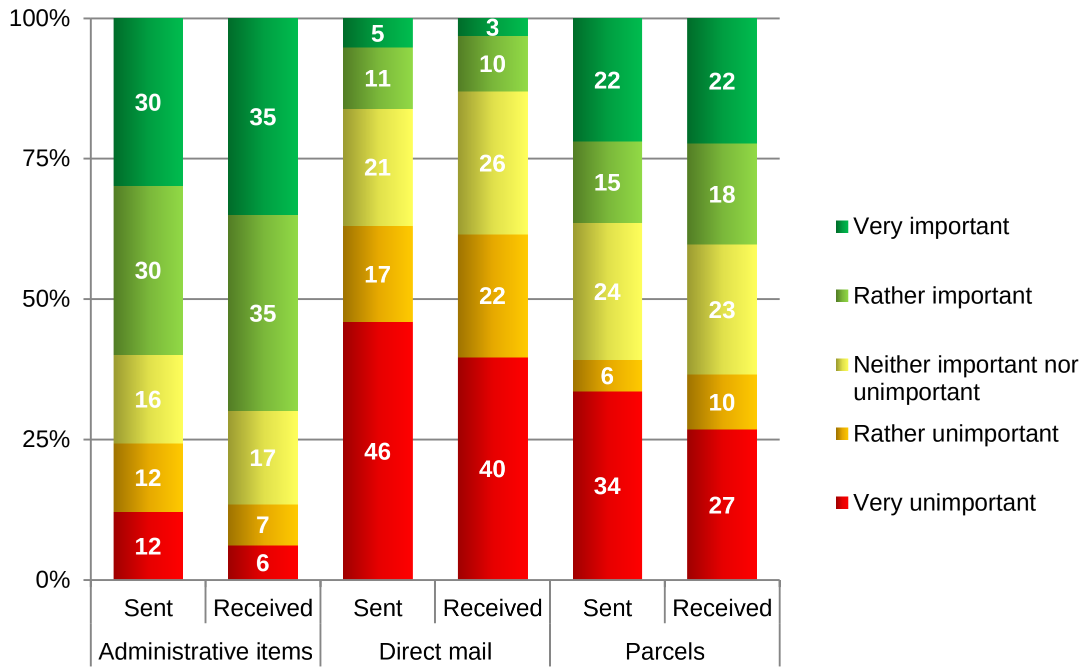
Direct mail

Sending and receiving direct mail (brochures, catalogues, publicity material, etc.) is quite a lot less important for the private companies who have participated in the survey; respectively 16% and 13% find it important, 21% and 26% take a neutral position, and 63% and 62% find it not important.

Parcels (up to 10 kg)

Three out of ten companies (32%) find sending parcels (up to 10 kg) to be important to their activities. Receiving parcels is important to four out of ten companies (42%).

Figure 16: importance of administrative mail, direct mail, parcels (private)



(n=1.674) *(n=1.674)* *(n=1.674)*

4.2.2 PUBLIC AUTHORITIES

Administrative mail

The vast majority of public companies interviewed (89%) reports that both sending and receiving administrative mail is important for their operation; for two thirds this is even highly important.

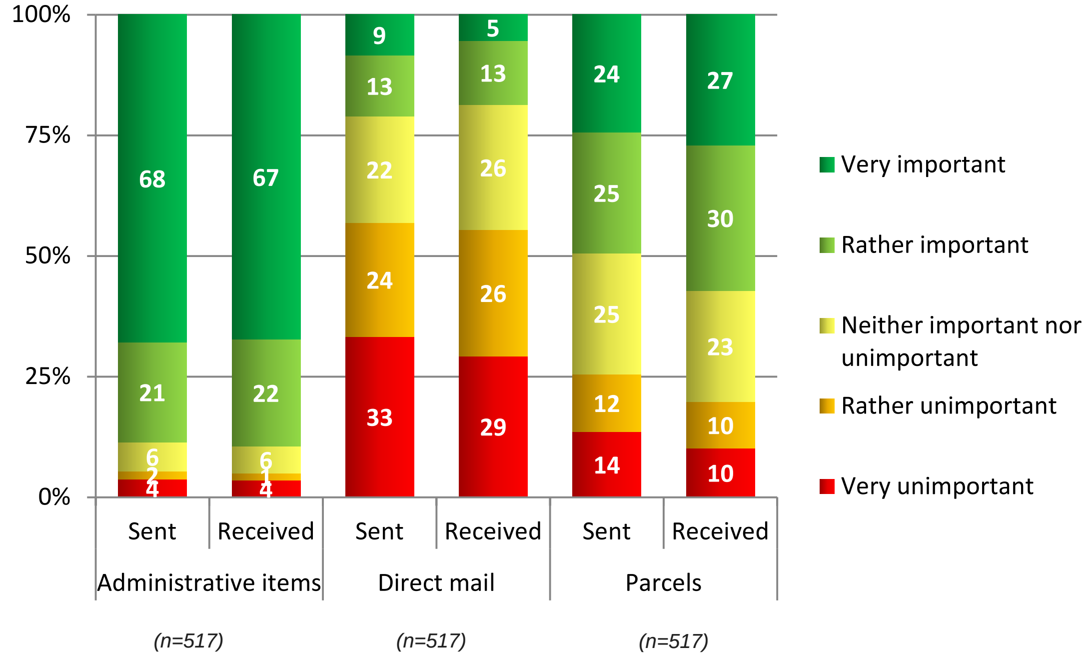
Direct mail

For the activities of the public bodies too sending and receiving direct mail proves to be far less important. 57% states that sending direct mail is not important for their activities and 22% reports that it is neither important, nor unimportant. To about a fifth of the public companies interviewed (22%) sending direct mail is important. The same proportion is noted for receiving direct mail: 55% reports that this is not important, 26% takes a neutral position and for 18% it is important to their operation.

Parcels (up to 10 kg)

The importance of sending and receiving parcels up to 10 kg is situated between that of administrative mail and of direct mail: to half of the public bodies interviewed (49%) sending parcel is important for their activities and to 57% receiving parcels is important for their activities. About a quarter (23% to 25%) takes a neutral position as to both sending and receiving parcels, and to 20% to 28% respectively receiving and sending parcels is not important for their activities.

Figure 17: importance of administrative mail, direct mail, parcels (public)



Conclusions importance sending and receiving postal items for professional users:

- *<u>As to administrative mail</u> (i.e. any administrative correspondence to customers, suppliers, employees and public services, such as tenders, invoices, claims, contracts):*
  - *Sending and receiving administrative mail is (very) important to respectively 60% and 70% of the <u>private companies</u> for their activities. A quarter of the private companies states that sending administrative mail is not important for their operation, and to 13% the same applies for receiving administrative mail.*
  - *Every time nine out of ten <u>public services</u> interviewed report that both sending and receiving administrative mail is important for their operation; for two thirds this is even highly important.*
- *<u>As to direct mail</u> (i.e. brochures, catalogues, publicity material, etc.) :*
  - *Sending and receiving such items is far less important for the <u>private companies</u> than administrative mail: respectively 16% and 13% find it important, 63% and 62% find it unimportant.*
  - *This finding also applies to <u>public bodies</u>: to 57% of the services sending is not important for their activities and for 21% it is. The same proportion is noted for receiving direct mail: 55% reports that this is not important to their operation, and for 18% it is.*
- *<u>As to parcels</u> (up to 10 kilo):*
  - *Three out of ten <u>private companies</u> find sending parcels to be important to their activities. Receiving parcels is important to four out of ten companies.*
  - *Each time for half of the <u>public companies interviewed</u> both sending and receiving parcels is important for their activities and to a quarter of the public bodies respectively receiving and sending parcels is not important for their activities.*

4.3 Use of postal services

4.3.1 PRIVATE COMPANIES

Average number of postal items received and sent per week

The results show that for all companies more mail (administrative, parcels, addressed items) is received than sent: on average for all companies interviewed together 89 administrative items are received per week against 53 items sent. For parcels this is an average of 84 receptions and 58 shipments a week and finally for direct mail we note 117 receptions against 81 shipments.

Average frequency mailing of postal items per week

72% of the companies never sends direct mail, 59% of the companies never sends parcels and 23% never sends administrative mail.

The frequency most often reported proportionally by the companies regarding sending administrative mail, advertising mail and parcels is once to twice a week (49%, 17% and 26% respectively).

Table7: frequency mail items sent (private) - total

	Never %	once or twice a week %	3 to 4 times a week %	Every day %	*Other* %
Administrative mail	23%	49%	11%	11%	6%
Direct mail	72%	17%	5%	3%	4%
Parcels	59%	26%	4%	3%	9%

Basis: all respondents (N=1,674)

Franking method (more than one method possible)

Almost 9 out of 10 companies interviewed (89%) uses postage stamps as a franking method and 6% has a franking machine. Furthermore, 6% uses postage paid (either by contract 3% or not by contract 3%).

Use of companies other than bpost for postal items

92% of the companies only use bpost to send administrative mail, 94% does it for direct mail. For sending parcels 24% of the companies use other enterprises/companies than bpost.

Manner in which the Internet is used within the company

72% of the companies uses the Internet to spread information about themselves and their activities. 7% sells products/services by way of an e-shop, which are delivered by mail.

One in five private companies (21%) uses the Internet in the company for other purposes, e.g. for administrative business, banking, reservations, orders, etc.

Statements most applicable concerning the degree of the company's dependency on the Internet as a sales channel

A little more than half of the companies interviewed does not use the Internet as a sales channel. 20% uses the Internet as a sales channel, but also uses other channels within the company. To 14% the use of the Internet as a sales channel is very important and another 14% is very dependent on the Internet because they use it as a sales channel.

4.3.2 PUBLIC AUTHORITIES

Average number of postal items received and sent per week

The public authorities interviewed say they send in an average week about 728 administrative mail letters, 38 parcels up to 10 kilo and 190 direct mail items. They receive in an average week some 548 administrative mail letters, 36 parcels up to 10 kilo and 47 direct mail items.

Average frequency mailing of postal items per week

95% of the public bodies sends administrative mail every week (79% every day), 66% sends parcels every week (18% every day), and 35% sends direct mail every week (16% every day).

Table8: frequency mail items sent (public) - total

	Never %	once or twice a week %	3 to 4 times a week %	Every day %	*Other* *%*
Administrative mail	5%	8%	6%	79%	2%
Direct mail	54%	16%	3%	16%	12%
Parcels	25%	37%	11%	18%	10%

Basis: all respondents (N=517)

Franking method (more than one method possible)

Half of the public bodies (52%) say they use a franking machine. The most used franking method but one is the use of postage stamps, i.e. by 27% of the public bodies. Furthermore, 16% applies "deferred payment" and 16% postage paid (either by contract 11% or not by contract 5%).

Use of companies other than bpost for postal items

Nine out of ten public companies interviewed indicate to appeal exclusively to bpost for sending administrative mail (89%) and direct mail (90%). A bit less, but still eight out of ten (81%) only use bpost to send parcels.

Manner in which the Internet is used within the public service

The public bodies were also asked to indicate in what manner they use the Internet. The results show that 86% of the public companies uses the Internet to spread information. 4% has a web shop with products/services that are then distributed by mail.

Statements most applicable concerning the degree of the company's dependency on the Internet as a sales channel

Seven out of ten public companies do not use the Internet as a sales channel. 17% uses the Internet as a sales channel, but also uses other channels within the public company. Finally, to 7% the Internet is very important as a sales channel and 6% says it's highly dependent on the Internet, because it is used as a sales channel.

Conclusions about use of postal services professional users:

- *Concerning the average number of postal items received and sent per week:*
  - *The private companies receive more mail (administrative, parcels, addressed items) than sent by them.*
  - *However, in an average week the public services send more postal items than they receive.*
- *Concerning average frequency mailing of postal items per week:*
  - *72% of the private companies never sends direct mail, 59% of the companies never sends parcels and 23% never sends administrative mail. The mailing frequency most mentioned is one or twice a week.*
  - *95% of the public bodies sends administrative mail every week (79% every day), 66% sends parcels every week (18% every day), and 35% sends direct mail every week (16% every day).*
- *Concerning use of companies other than bpost for postal items:*
  - *92% of the private companies only use bpost to send administrative mail, 94% does it for direct mail. However, for sending parcels 24% of the companies use other enterprises/companies than bpost.*
  - *Practically an equal share of public services indicates to appeal exclusively to bpost for sending administrative mail (89%) and direct mail (90%). Here too, a bit more than eight out of ten (81%) only use bpost to send parcels.*
- *Concerning the manner in which the Internet is used within the company:*
  - *72% of the private companies uses the Internet to spread information about themselves and their activities. 7% of the private companies sell products/services by way of an e-shop, which are delivered by mail.*
  - *In the case of public bodies a higher share is noted as regards providing information over the Internet, i.e. 86%. 4% of the public authorities has a web shop with products/services that are then distributed by mail.*
- *Concerning the degree of the company's dependency on the Internet as a sales channel:*
  - *A little more than half of the companies interviewed does not use the Internet as a sales channel. To 14% the use of the Internet as a sales channel is very important and another 14% is very dependent on the Internet because they use it as a sales channel.*
  - *Seven out of ten public authorities do not use the Internet as a sales channel. 17% uses the Internet as a sales channel, but also uses other channels within the company. To 7% the Internet is very important as a sales channel and 6% says it's highly dependent on the Internet, because they use it as a sales channel.*

4.4 Accessibility of postal services

Legal basis:

Article 3 of the Third Postal Directive (Directive 2008/6/EC) of the European Parliament stipulates *that the density of the points of contact and of the access points takes account of the needs of users.*

Article 16 of the fifth management contract concluded between the State and bpost stipulates *that bpost's retail network should consist of at least 1,300 postal service points with a minimum of 650 postal offices, of which at least one in every municipality.*

Article 18 of the same management contract stipulates *moreover that at least 95% of the population should have access to a postal service point offering the basic assortment within a 5 kilometres' distance and at least 98% within a 10 kilometres' distance (by road).*

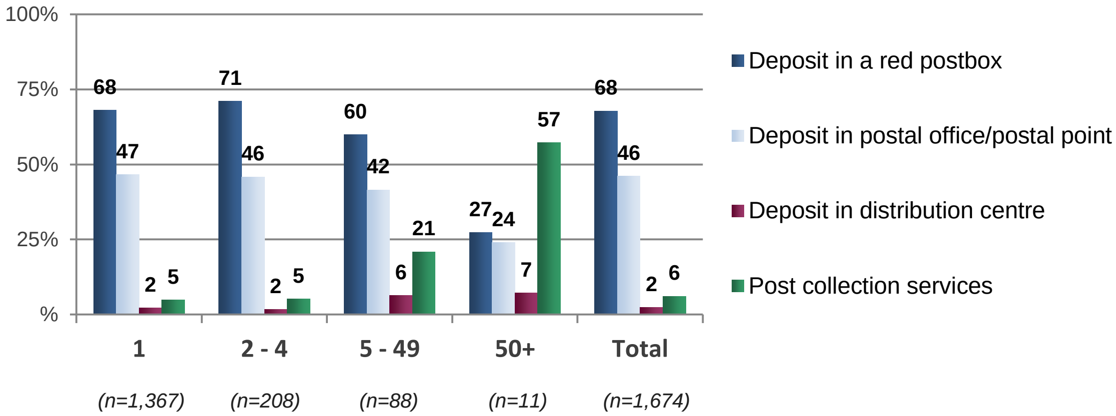
4.4.1 PRIVATE COMPANIES

Method of sending postal items

In order to send their postal items the companies interviewed mainly use a red postbox (68%) or a postal office or postal point (46%). Only 6% makes use of mail collecting services and 2% takes their mail to a distribution centre.

However, these figures differ (significantly) according to the size of the company: the more workers a company has, the more often it uses mail collecting services, and the less frequently the mail is deposited in a red postbox.

Figure 18: method of sending postal items (private) - according to number of workers



Basis: all respondents (N=1,674)

Post collection point most frequently used to send postal items

The companies that use a post collection point to send their postal items (94%) most frequently use a red postbox situated closest to the company (63%); to a lesser extent use is made of a red postbox in a post office or postal point (25%) or another postbox in the neighbourhood (9%). Only 1% uses a MassPost centre in the neighbourhood of the company.

Principal element in choosing the post collection point

Of all the interviewed companies saying that they deposited their postal items to be sent in a post collection point (94%), eight out of ten (80%) indicated that the choice of the post collection point is determined by the location of the post collection point (close by and easily available), rather than by a later time of collection (20%).

Frequency of use of post collection services

Earlier we have seen that 103 out of 1,674 companies interviewed has the postal items to be sent collected by a post collection service, i.e. 6%. For half of these companies this is done daily (N= 49), for 9 companies 3 to 4 times a week, for 19 companies once or twice a week and for 26 companies less than that.

Maximum acceptable distance to post collection point

More than half of the companies wants to have a post collection point within 1 km from the company: 43% of the companies is prepared to go up to 500 metres to get to a post collection point, and for 24% it is OK for the post collection point to be at a distance between 500 metres and 1 km from the company. Furthermore, a quarter of the companies (26%) sees no problem in having to travel between 1 and 3 km to the closest post collection point. For 7% it is acceptable for the closest post collection point to be located more than 3 km from the company.

Satisfaction about the location of the post collection point

Six out of ten companies interviewed (63%) say they are satisfied with the location of the post collection point in their neighbourhood: 22% is very satisfied, 41% is rather satisfied 14% of the companies interviewed is dissatisfied with the location (6% very dissatisfied and 8% rather dissatisfied), and 23% is neither satisfied, nor dissatisfied.

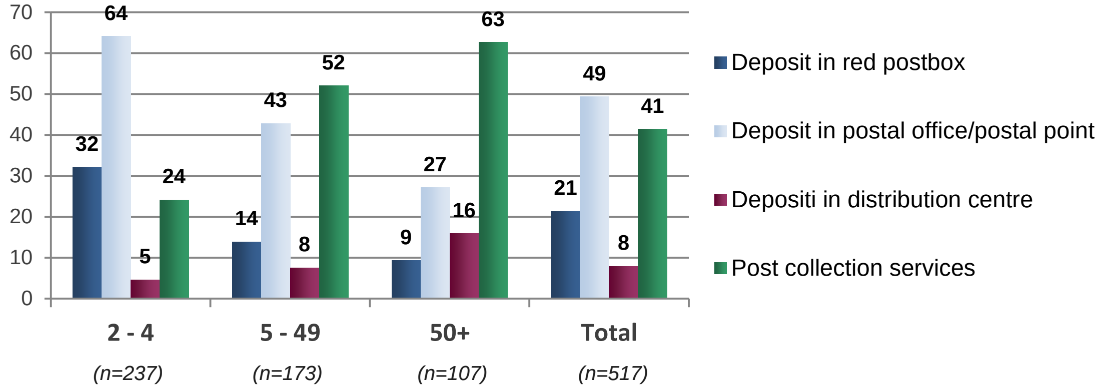
4.4.2 PUBLIC AUTHORITIES

Method of sending postal items

Four out of ten of the public companies interviewed (41%) appeal to a post collection service to send their mail. Those who don't, mostly deposit the mail in a post office or postal point (49%), in a red postbox (21%), and/or take the mail to a distribution centre (8%).

The size of the public company plays an important role in the way mail is sent: the smallest public companies (2 to 4 employees) use a post collection service the least and also take their mail less often to a distribution centre, compared to bigger ones. Therefore the smallest public companies make more often use of a red postbox to send their mail than the bigger companies.

Figure 19: method of sending postal items (public) - according to number of employees



Basis: all respondents (N=517)

Post collection point most frequently used to send postal items

The public services who take their mail to a post collection point, use in the first place a postbox in a post office or postal point (45%). 34% uses the nearest postbox. To a lesser extent use is made of yet another postbox in the neighbourhood (5%) or MassPost centre close by (4%).

Principal element in choosing the post collection point

Public companies that (sometimes) take their mail to a post collection point, let their choice mainly depend on the location (close by and easily reachable) (85%), rather than on a later time of collection (15%).

Frequency of use of post collection services

Most public companies that have their mail collected by a collection service, use this system every day (94%) or at least once a week (6%). Only one company makes even less use of the collection service, namely once every two weeks.

Maximum acceptable distance to post collection point

To the question what the maximum distance is which one is prepared to go to the nearest post collection point, slightly over half of the public companies interviewed (57%) replies that the post collection point should be within a 500 metre radius. 22% is prepared to go a distance of 500 metres to 1 kilometre to deposit mail, 16% wants to have a post collection point within a radius of maximum 1 to 3 kilometres, and 5% is willing to travel more than 3 kilometres to get to the nearest post collection point.

Satisfaction about the location of the post collection point

Seven out of ten public companies interviewed are satisfied (35% even very satisfied) with the location of a post collection point in their vicinity. A little more than 1 in ten (12%) is dissatisfied; 18% takes a neutral position.

Conclusions accessibility of the postal services for professional users:

- *As to the method of sending postal items:*
  - *In this context the private companies mainly use a red postbox (68%) or a postal office or postal point (46%). Only 6% makes use of mail collecting services and 2% takes its mail to a distribution centre (such as a MassPost centre in the vicinity of the company)..*
  - *Of the public bodies 41% makes us of a mail collecting service. Those who don't, deposit the mail in a post office or postal point (49%), in a red postbox (21%), and/or take the mail to a distribution centre (8%).*
- *As to the post collection point most frequently used to send postal items:*
  - *The private companies that use a post collection point to send their postal items (94%) most frequently use a red postbox situated closest to the company (63%).*
  - *The public service that takes its mail to a post collection point, uses in the first place a postbox in a post office or postal point (45%) and 34% uses the nearest postbox.*
- *As to the principal element in choosing a post collection point:*
  - *For eight out of ten private companies using a post collection point to send their mail the choice of the post collection point is determined by the location of that point (close by and easily available), rather than by a later time of collection (20%).*
  - *Public services that take their mail to a post collection point, let their choice also mainly depend on the location (close by and easily reachable) (85%), rather than on a later time of collection (15%).*
- *As to the maximum acceptable distance to a post collection point:*
  - *Almost seven out of ten private companies want a post collection point within a maximum distance of 1 km from the company: 43% of the companies is prepared to go up to 500 metres, and for 24% it is OK for the post collection point to be at a distance between 500 metres and 1 km from the company.*
  - *Among the public bodies eight out of ten companies want to have a post collection point within a maximum distance of 1 km: 57% wants this within a 500 metre radius and 22% is prepared to deposit mail at a distance between 500 metres and 1 kilometre.*
- *As to satisfaction with the location of a post collection point:*
  - *63% of the private companies interviewed says they are satisfied with the location of the post collection point in their vicinity; 14% is dissatisfied with the location.*
  - *In the case of public bodies 70% is satisfied with the location of a post collection point in the neighbourhood. 12% is dissatisfied.*

4.5 Change of behaviour

4.5.1 PRIVATE COMPANIES

Evolution of sending administrative post in the next 3 years

A bit more than half of the companies interviewed expect to send in the next 3 years about the same amount of administrative post as today. Three out of ten companies (29%) expect a decrease (12% even a strong decrease). 14% expects to send more administrative post in the next 3 years than today.

Evolution of sending direct mail in the next 3 years

As for direct mail too, six out of ten companies (62%) expect to send in the 3 years to come about the same amount as today. Three out of ten companies (31%) expect a decrease (23% even a strong decrease). Only 8% expects to send more direct mail in the next 3 years than today.

Evolution of sending parcels in the next 3 years

Finally, also the expected number of parcels to be sent is comparable: 66% expects to send in the 3 years to come about as many parcels as today, 20% of the companies expect a decrease and 15% expects to send more parcels in the next 3 years compared to today.

Attitude towards 'Our company will always have to send things by mail'

Six out of ten of the companies interviewed (64%) agrees with the statement that their company will always have to send certain things by mail; 21% takes a neutral position and 15% indicates not to agree.

4.5.2 PUBLIC AUTHORITIES

Evolution of sending administrative post in the next 3 years

64% of the public organisations interviewed expects to send in the next 3 years about the same amount of administrative post as today. One in five (22%) expects a decrease (only 5% a strong decrease). 15% expects to send more administrative post in the next 3 years than today.

Evolution of sending direct mail in the next 3 years

As for direct mail too, the majority of interviewees (70%) expects to send in the 3 years to come about the same amount as today. One quarter of the organisations (24%) expects a decrease. Only 6% expects to send more direct mail in the next 3 years than today.

Evolution of sending parcels in the next 3 years

80% of the respondents think they will send more parcels in the next 3 years than today. 13% of the public organisations expects a decrease and 7% expects to send more parcels in the next 3 years than today.

Attitude towards 'Our company will always have to send certain things by mail'

86% of the public bodies interviewed agrees with the statement that their organisation will always have to send certain things by mail; 10% takes a neutral position and 4% indicates not to agree.

Conclusions change of behaviour for professional users:

- *As to expected evolution of sending administrative post in the next 3 years:*
  - *57% of the private companies interviewed expects to send in the next 3 years about the same amount of administrative post as today (July 2015). 29% expects a decrease and 14% expects to send more administrative post in the next 3 years than today.*
  - *64% of the public organisations interviewed expects to send in the next 3 years about the same amount of administrative post as today. 21% expects a decrease and 15% an increase.*
- *As to expected evolution of sending direct mail in the next 3 years:*
  - *62% of the private companies expects to send in the next 3 years about the same amount as today. 31% expects a decrease and 8% expects to send more direct mail in the next 3 years than today.*
  - *70% of the public authorities interviewed expects to send in the next 3 years about the same amount as today. 24% expects a decrease and 6% expects in the next 3 years an increase compared to today.*
- *As to expected evolution of sending parcels in the next 3 years:*
  - *66% of the private companies say they will send in the next 3 years about as many parcels as today, 20% of the companies expect a decrease and 15% expects an increase.*
  - *80% of the public bodies expect to send in the next 3 years about as many parcels as today. 13% of the public organisations expects a decrease and 7% expects to send more parcels in the next 3 years than today.*
- *The statement that certain things will always have to be sent by mail is endorsed by 64% of the private companies and 86% of the public organisations. 21% of the private companies takes a neutral position against 10% of the public bodies.*

4.6 Improvements

Legal basis:

Clearance and delivery

Article 3 of the Third Postal Directive (Directive 2008/6/EC) of the European Parliament stipulates *that not less than five working days a week there is one clearance and one delivery of the postal services that are part of the universal service. In case of circumstances or geographical conditions deemed exceptional it is possible to derogate from this rule.*

4.6.1 PRIVATE COMPANIES

Preference regarding possible changes in postal services

If companies are allowed to choose what elements they would change in postal service, they opt in the first place for lower rates (37%), in equal proportion followed by a later time of collection in the post collection points (24%), delivery and clearance of mail 6 days a week (21%) and delivery of mail at an earlier time (19%). Only 8% would like to have a post collection point situated closer to the company. One fifth of the companies (20%) would change nothing at all and indicates to be satisfied with elements mentioned above.

Most preferred change in postal services

If from all possible changes the one which is most preferred by the company has to be chosen, it is lower rates (31%). In a shared second place we find a much later time of collection of the post collection points (18%) and a clearance and delivery of mail 6 days a week (17%). The top three is closed by mail delivery at an earlier time (13%).

Change in postal services with the biggest negative impact

The companies were also asked to indicate on a list of possible changes the one that would have the most negative impact on their company. The negative change most selected (by 16% of the companies) is the limitation of mail delivery to 4 days a week, closely followed by the removal of post collection points in the vicinity of the company (15%) and the price of a stamp set at 1 euro (13%).

Definitely noteworthy is that for a third of the companies interviewed (34%) not a single one of the possible changes listed would have a negative impact on the operation / activities of the company.

Degree of negative impact regarding changes in postal services

The most mentioned possible change that would have the most negative impact is **limiting the frequency of delivery** of mail to four days a week; i.e. by 16% of the respondents or 244 out of 1,674 companies. For 18% of them this lower frequency would have a strong impact on the company's activities and render them practically unreachable. Apart from that a little more than half of them (55%) indicates that this would mean a great discomfort. To 28% of the companies (i.e. 68 companies) this discomfort would remain limited or even have no impact at all.

We have already read that for 15% of the companies, i.e. 230 out of 1,674 companies, the **removal of post collection points** in the vicinity of the company would constitute the most negative change. For a little over half of these companies (56%) this would imply a major discomfort, although they would find a way to solve the problem. To 5% it would even have a very strong impact on the company's activities and mean that they would be unreachable for persons or companies they have to contact. For 36% this would rather mean a small inconvenience and 4% would experience little or no impact.

The third most mentioned possible change that would have the most negative impact is **setting the price of a postage stamp at 1 euro**, namely by 13% of the companies (i.e. 203 out of 1,674 companies). 12% of them indicates that the price setting would have a very strong negative impact on their company's activities and for 35% this would mean a great inconvenience. However, for half of them (53%) this would imply a rather small discomfort or even have little or no impact.

4.6.2 PUBLIC AUTHORITIES

Preference regarding possible changes in postal services

Lower rates is the change concerning postal services most mentioned by the various public users (44%). A much later time of collection in the post collection points is mentioned by 17% of the respondents and 15% opts for mail delivery at an earlier time than the current one. A quarter of the respondents says it does not want to change anything.

Most preferred change in postal services

If from all possible changes the one which is most preferred had to be chosen, it is lower rates (34%). In second place we find mail delivery and collection 6 days a week. Mail delivery at an earlier time and a much later time of collection of the post collection points is preferred by 10% of the respondents.

A post collection point much closer to the company comes in first place for only 4% of the interviewees.

19% of the public respondents prefers “nothing / no change”.

Change in postal services with the biggest negative impact

The public bodies were also asked to indicate on a list of possible changes the one that would have the most negative impact on them. The negative change most indicated (by 30% of the interviewees) is the limitation of mail delivery to 4 days a week. 16% mentions in the first place the removal of post collection points in the neighbourhood of the company and to 10% of the interviewees the price of a stamp set at 1 euro has the most negative impact.

One in five respondents says that none of the changes listed will have an impact on the body's activities.

Degree of negative impact regarding changes in postal services

The most mentioned possible change that would have the most negative impact is **limiting the frequency of delivery of mail to four days a week**; i.e. by 30% of the respondents or 114 out of 517 public bodies. For almost half (48%) of them this limitation of the frequency would have a strong impact on the body's activities and render them practically unreachable. Furthermore, 39% also indicates that this would mean a great discomfort but that it would find an alternative (to solve the problem).

To 23% of the public authorities (N = 20) this discomfort would remain limited or even have no impact at all.

We have already established that for 16% of the public users, i.e. 78 out of 517 organisations, the **removal of post collection points in the vicinity of the organisation** would constitute the most negative change. For nearly three quarters of these bodies (72%) this would imply a major discomfort, although they would find a way to solve the problem. To 18% it would even have a very strong impact on the company's activities and mean that they would be unreachable for persons or companies they have to contact.

For 9% this would rather mean a small inconvenience and 1% would experience little or no impact.

Conclusions improvements postal services for professional users:

- *As to preference regarding possible changes in postal services:*
  - *37% of private companies opt in the first place for lower rates, in equal proportion followed by a later time of collection in the post collection points (24%), delivery and clearance of mail 6 days a week (21%) and delivery of mail at an earlier time (19%). Only 8% would like to have a post collection point situated closer to the company. One fifth of the companies (20%) would change nothing at all and appears to be satisfied with elements mentioned above.*
  - *Lower rates is the change concerning postal services also most mentioned by the various public users (44%). A much later time of collection in the post collection points is mentioned by 17% of the respondents and 15% opts for mail delivery at an earlier time than the current one. A quarter of the respondents says it does not want to change anything.*
- *As to most preferred change in postal services:*
  - *If from all possible changes one has to choose the change which is most preferred by the company, we see the same top 3 in the same order of preference as above: lower rates (31%), a much later time of collection of the post collection points (18%) and delivery and clearance of mail 6 days a week (17%).*
  - *The same applies to public bodies: lower rates (34%), delivery and clearance of mail 6 days a week (25%), mail delivery at an earlier time (10%) and a much later time of collection of the post collection points (10%).*
- *As to change in postal services with the biggest negative impact:*
  - *The change in postal services that would have the biggest negative impact for the company is the limitation of mail delivery to 4 days a week (indicated by 16% of the companies), followed by the removal of post collection points in the vicinity of the company (15%) and the price of a stamp set at 1 euro (13%).*
  - *The negative change most indicated by the public bodies is the limitation of mail delivery to 4 days a week (indicated by 30% of the respective interviewees). 16% mentions in the first place the removal of post collection points in the neighbourhood of the company and to 10% of the public authorities interviewed the price of a stamp set at 1 euro has the most negative impact.*

4.7 Preferences, needs and willingness to pay

4.7.1 PRIVATE COMPANIES

4.7.1.1. PRIVATE COMPANIES' WILLINGNESS TO PAY FOR SENDING AND RECEIVING ADMINISTRATIVE POST

By analogy with the analysis for residential users we discuss hereafter the private companies' willingness to pay regarding postal services and the resulting preferences and needs.

In the tables below the willingness to pay is represented in percentages, because the price of the universal postal service is not uniform for all companies, but depends on the volume of postal items per company.

If the results are not significant or unequivocal, they are not discussed.

Legal basis:

Tariffs:

Article 3 of the Third Postal Directive (Directive 2008/6/EC) of the European Parliament stipulates that the prices of the postal services that come under the universal service should be affordable for all users.

The analysis shows that the companies need more certainty about the day when their mail will reach the addressee.[18]

The preference of the location where the company deposits its mail, goes to a postal office of a postal point. An important price compensation is asked when the company has to deposit its mail in a MassPost centre or a national sorting centre. This already exists: a bpost customer can indeed enjoy preferential rates if a certain volume is deposited in a MassPost centre or a national sorting centre.

As for the number of deliveries per week the companies appear not to wish a decrease. The less deliveries per week, the lower the willingness to pay.

Legal basis:

Clearance and delivery:

Article 3 of the Third Postal Directive (Directive 2008/6/EC) of the European Parliament stipulates *that not less than five working days a week there is one clearance and one delivery of the postal services that are part of the universal service. In case of circumstances or geographical conditions deemed exceptional it is possible to derogate from this rule.*

[18] A 99% reliability of delivery times - 99% day-certain delivery - means that one has 99% certainty about which day the sent mail will reach the addressee.

Table9: willingness to pay for sending and receiving administrative post - private companies (in %)

Variables	Levels	Willingness to pay (%)	Sig. ?
Delivery time	D+1 (basis)	0.00	
	D+2	2.16	
	D+5	-9.16	*
Reliability of delivery time	95% (basis)	0.00	
	90%	12.42	***
	99%	15.47	***
Place of delivery to addressee	Home (basis)	0.00	
	Postbox in a public place	-1.96	
Place of mail delivery for the company itself	Company location (basis)	0.00	
	Postbox in a public place	-3.35	
Place where company deposits its mail	In a post office or postal point (basis)	0.00	
	In a MassPost centre	-87.48	***
	In a national sorting centre	-75.87	***
	Direct collection at the company site	-38.47	***
Number of deliveries a week	5 days (basis)	0.00	
	3 days	-18.27	***
	3 days + Saturday	-23.71	***
	4 days	-12.23	
	4 days + Saturday	-31.38	***
Number of clearances a week	5 days (basis)	0.00	
	3 days	3.44	
	4 days	-2.96	
	6 days	-2.51	

*Legend level of reliability (Sig.): * for 90%, ** for 95% and *** for 99%*

4.7.1.2. PRIVATE COMPANIES' WILLINGNESS TO PAY FOR SENDING AND RECEIVING DIRECT MAIL

The results show that the companies attach utmost importance to day-certain delivery.

When sending direct mail the companies wish for the addressees to receive it at home or at the company site.

The private companies show the strong need to deposit their advertising mail at the current rates in the post office or a postal point, or to deliver it in a MassPost centre or national sorting centre, if price compensations are granted (which is already the case).

As for the number of deliveries per week, 3 deliveries per week appear to be sufficient for the companies (with one delivery on Saturdays).

Table10: willingness to pay for sending and receiving direct mail - private companies (in %)

Variables	Levels	Willingness to pay (%)	Sig. ?
Delivery time	D+1 (basis)	0.00	
	D+2	4.35	
	D+5	-25.37	***
Reliability of delivery time	95% (basis)	0.00	
	90%	28.89	***
	99%	51.61	***
Place of delivery to addressee	At home or HQ of addressee (basis)	0.00	
	Postbox in a public place	-15.41	***
Place of mail delivery for the company itself	Company location (basis)	0.00	
	Postbox in a public place	5.42	
Place where company deposits its mail	In a post office or postal point (basis)	0.00	
	In a MassPost centre	-70.41	***
	In a national sorting centre	-41.16	***
	Direct collection at the company site	-28.21	***
Number of deliveries a week	5 days (basis)	0.00	
	3 days	20.45	***
	3 days + Saturday	25.14	***
	4 days	15.87	***
	4 days + Saturday	4.89	
Number of clearances a week	5 days (basis)	0.00	
	3 days	6.92	
	4 days	-26.43	***
	6 days	0.18	

*Legend level of reliability (Sig.): * for 90%, ** for 95% and *** for 99%*

4.7.1.3. PRIVATE COMPANIES' WILLINGNESS TO PAY FOR SENDING AND RECEIVING PARCELS

The analysis of the willingness to pay for sending and receiving parcels shows that the private companies have a great need for a D+1 delivery time.

As for parcels sent it can be said that the preference goes to delivery at the home address or company site of the addressee; parcels destined for the company itself are preferably received at the company site.

The companies want to deposit their parcels at a MassPost centre or to have them collected at the company site.

The analysis further shows that three to four deliveries a week meet the needs of the companies and no decrease of the number of clearances of parcels per week is wished for.

Table11: willingness to pay for sending and receiving parcels - private companies (in %)

Variables	Levels	Willingness to pay (%)	Sig. ?
Delivery time	D+1 (basis)	0.00	
	D+2	-71.41	***
	D+5	-97.87	***
Reliability of delivery time	95% (basis)	0.00	
	90%	-13.11	
	99%	-12.14	*
Place of delivery to addressee	At home or HQ of addressee (basis)	0.00	
	Postbox in a public place	-32.02	***
Place of mail delivery for the company itself	Company location (basis)	0.00	
	Postbox in a public place	-20.03	***
Place where company deposits its mail	In a post office or postal point (basis)	0.00	
	In a MassPost centre	52.72	***
	In a national sorting centre	6.81	
	Direct collection at the company site	67.38	***
Number of deliveries a week	5 days (basis)	0.00	
	3 days	29.00	**
	3 days + Saturday	28.58	**
	4 days	-2.71	
	4 days + Saturday	-6.73	

Variables	Levels	Willingness to pay (%)	Sig. ?
Number of clearances a week	5 days (basis)	0.00	
	3 days	-86.21	***
	4 days	-81.30	***
	6 days	-88.36	***
Time of delivery	9 AM - 5 PM (basis)	0.00	
	7 AM - 9 PM	-2.98	

*Legend level of reliability (Sig.): * for 90%, ** for 95% and *** for 99%*

4.7.1.4. PRIVATE COMPANIES' WILLINGNESS TO PAY FOR THE POSTAL SERVICE POINTS

Legal basis:

Network access:

Article 3 of the Third Postal Directive (Directive 2008/6/EC) of the European Parliament stipulates *that the density of the points of contact and of the access points takes account of the needs of users.*

Article 18 of the fifth management contract stipulates moreover that at least 95% of the population should have access to a postal service point offering the basic assortment within a maximum distance of 5 kilometres and at least 98% within a 10 kilometres' distance (by road).

The companies appear to be satisfied with the basic assortment of services in the postal service points, as well as with the current opening hours of the postal service point.

More importance is attached to the nearness of the service point (distance between the company and the service point); from 3 kilometres the rule is: the longer the distance, the lower the willingness to pay.

Table12: willingness to pay for the postal service points - private companies (%)

Variables	Levels	Willingness to pay	Sig. ?
Distance between company site and nearest service point	Less than 1 km (basis)	0.00	
	1 to 2.99 km	-1.86	
	3 to 5.99 km	-17.32	***
	6 to 9.99 km	-77.68	***
	More than 10 km	-89.80	***
Available services	Basic postal services (basis)	0.00	
	Full postal services + financial services	-2.51	
	Full postal services + financial services + other services	-14.65	**

Variables	Levels	Willingness to pay	Sig. ?
Opening hours of service points	7 h/day Monday to Friday + 4 h/ Saturday (basis)	0.00	
	4 h/day Monday to Friday (alternately morning/afternoon)	-44.76	***
	7 h/day Monday to Friday	-24.99	***
	9 h/day Monday to Friday	-3.82	
	9 h/day Monday to Friday + 6 h/Saturday	-9.78	

*Legend level of reliability (Sig.): * for 90%, ** for 95% and *** for 99%*

4.7.1.5. CONCLUSION PRIVATE COMPANIES' WILLINGNESS TO PAY

In the annexed table the various aspects of the universal postal service are mentioned in function of the degree of willingness to pay for them. In the columns it is indicated each time which postal service is important to whom. Example: there is a high willingness to pay (a high degree of importance) among the companies as regards the distance to the sender's nearest postal service point.

The table gives a survey of the importance of the various aspects. A ranking has been established based on the weight of the calculated willingness to pay (see coefficients willingness to pay previous tables).

A moderate willingness to pay means that it is situated between the values of 0.01 and 0.5. If the willingness to pay is situated between 0.6 and 1 there is a high willingness to pay and in case of a very high willingness to pay the value is higher than 1.

As mentioned before, in the columns it is indicated which aspect of the universal postal service is important to whom - i.e. the sender, the postal service or the addressee.

This way it can be noted that the variables distance to the nearest service point, place where the company deposits its letters & parcels & direct mail are important to the 'Sender', but the highest importance (see high willingness to pay) goes to the distance to nearest service point and place where the company deposits its letters and parcels.

As for the postal service itself, the biggest need is noted for the number of clearances a week for parcels and the delivery time for parcels and so the willingness to pay is high in this instance.

As for the addressee importance is attached to the place of delivery for the addressee, but also for the company itself and the times of delivery for parcels. However, this importance is not that big considering the moderate willingness to pay for that.

Table13: ranking of the various aspects of the universal postal service according to the degree of willingness to pay - private professional users

	Sender	Postal service	Addressee
Very high willingness to pay			
High willingness to pay	Distance to nearest postal service point Place where company deposits its mail (letters & parcels)	Number of clearances a week (parcels) Delivery time (parcels)	
Moderate willingness to pay	Place where company deposits its mail (direct mail)	Number of deliveries a week (letters, direct mail, parcels) Delivery time (letters, direct mail) Reliability of delivery time (letters, direct mail, parcels) Number of clearances a week (letters, direct mail)	Place of mail delivery for addressee (letters, direct mail, parcels) Place of mail delivery for the company itself (letters, direct mail, parcels) Time of delivery (parcels)
No willingness to pay			

Conclusions private companies' willingness to pay

- *As to sending and receiving administrative post:*
  - *Companies have a need to know with greater certainty when their mail will reach its destination but the willingness to pay for the delivery time is moderate.*
  - *The companies prefer their mail to be delivered at the company site 5 days a week.*
  - *The place where the company deposits its mail does not need to change; in this case the companies prefer a post office or a postal point. A high willingness to pay is also noted for this aspect of the postal service.*
- *As to sending and receiving direct mail:*
  - *The companies attach very great importance to a day-certain delivery.*
  - *As for the place of delivery to the addressee the companies want a delivery at the home/HQ of the addressee.*
  - *The place where the company prefers to deposit its mail appears to be the post office or postal point or else a MassPost centre or national sorting centre provided that discounts are offered (as is now the case).*
  - *Apparently three deliveries a week are sufficient for the private companies.*

- *As to sending and receiving parcels:*
  - *The companies have a great need for a D+1 delivery time. The delivery time for parcels also has a high willingness to pay.*
  - *Parcels received by the companies need to be delivered at the company site.*
  - *The companies want to deposit their parcels at a MassPost centre or to have them collected at the company site. Here too, a high willingness to pay is noted for this aspect of the postal service.*
  - *Three to four deliveries a week are sufficient to meet the needs of the companies.*
  - *The companies do not want the current number of clearances fixed per week to diminish. The companies show a high willingness to pay for this aspect.*

- *As for postal service points:*
  - *The companies appear to attach great importance to the distance to the nearest service point. This great importance is also translated into a high willingness to pay.*
  - *They are satisfied with the basic offer of services.*
  - *Furthermore, the companies also appear to be satisfied with the current opening hours of the service point.*

4.7.2 PUBLIC AUTHORITIES

4.7.2.1. THE PUBLIC BODIES' WILLINGNESS TO PAY FOR SENDING AND RECEIVING ADMINISTRATIVE POST

As in the case of the companies in the annexed table the public bodies' willingness to pay is represented in percentages, because the price of the universal postal service is not uniform for all public bodies, but depends on the volume of postal items per public authority.

If the results are not significant or unequivocal, they are not discussed.

Legal basis:

Tariffs:

Article 3 of the Third Postal Directive (Directive 2008/6/EC) of the European Parliament stipulates *that the prices of the postal services that come under the universal service should be affordable for all users.*

The public services appear to be willing to receive their mail in a secured postbox in a public place.

As also noted with the private companies the preference as to place for depositing the mail goes to the post office or a postal point. If the mail has to be delivered to a MassPost centre or a national sorting centre, discounts have to be offered.

Table14: willingness to pay for sending and receiving administrative post - public bodies (in %)

Variables	Levels	Willingness to pay (%)	Sig. ?
Delivery time	D+1 (basis)	0.00	
	D+2	8.93	
	D+5	-19.26	
Reliability of delivery time	95% (basis)	0.00	
	90%	0.14	
	99%	9.41	
Place of delivery to addressee	Home (basis)	0.00	
	Postbox in a public place	-15.10	
Place of mail delivery for the company itself	Company location (basis)	0.00	
	Postbox in a public place	27.55	***
Place where company deposits its mail	In a post office or postal point (basis)	0.00	
	In a MassPost centre	-112.04	***
	In a national sorting centre	-103.85	***
	Direct collection at the company site	-38.22	***

Variables	Levels	Willingness to pay	Sig. ?
Number of deliveries a week	5 days (basis)	0.00	
	3 days	-25.21	**
	3 days + Saturday	-32.62	***
	4 days	7.68	
	4 days + Saturday	-61.02	***
Number of clearances a week	5 days (basis)	0.00	
	3 days	-10.25	
	4 days	-6.64	
	6 days	-12.63	

*Legend level of reliability (Sig.): * for 90%, ** for 95% and *** for 99%*

4.7.2.2. PUBLIC BODIES' WILLINGNESS TO PAY FOR SENDING AND RECEIVING DIRECT MAIL

The public services attach no importance to the delivery time for sending and receiving direct mail. In contrast, the public services deem day-certain delivery important.

The public services prefer to deliver the direct mail at people's homes or at the addressee's HQ over delivery in a postbox in a public place.

The post office or postal point being the place where the company preferably deposits its mail, unless there is a discount.

A frequency of delivery limited to 4 deliveries a week seems to be acceptable to the public services.

Table15: willingness to pay for sending and receiving direct mail - public bodies (in %)

Variables	Levels	Willingness to pay (%)	Sig. ?
Delivery time	D+1 (basis)	0.00	
	D+2	16.58	
	D+5	-21.83	
Reliability of delivery time	95% (basis)	0.00	
	90%	20.04	
	99%	36.92	*
Place of delivery to addressee	At home or HQ of addressee (basis)	0.00	
	Postbox in a public place	-25.50	***

Variables	Levels	Willingness to pay	Sig. ?
Place of mail delivery for the company itself	Company location (basis)	0.00	
	Postbox in a public place	11.23	
Place where company deposits its mail	In a post office or postal point (basis)	0.00	
	In a MassPost centre	-62.82	***
	In a national sorting centre	-56.71	***
	Direct collection at the company site	-23.55	*
Number of deliveries a week	5 days (basis)	0.00	
	3 days	15.67	
	3 days + Saturday	10.96	
	4 days	33.74	***
	4 days + Saturday	-6.56	
Number of clearances a week	5 days (basis)	0.00	
	3 days	-18.07	*
	4 days	-8.67	
	6 days	-15.68	

*Legend level of reliability (Sig.): * for 90%, ** for 95% and *** for 99%*

4.7.2.3. PUBLIC BODIES' WILLINGNESS TO PAY FOR SENDING AND RECEIVING PARCELS

The public services interviewed attach great importance to a D+1 delivery time.

Contrary to the point of clearance preferred for administrative post and direct mail - i.e. the post office or a postal point - the public bodies prefer direct collection from the service itself.

The analysis further shows that regarding the number of deliveries a week, the public bodies are not opposed to lowering the current frequency fixed.

On the other hand the public authorities want the current number of clearances a week fixed to be maintained (i.e. 5 days).

Table16: willingness to pay for sending and receiving parcels - public bodies (in %)

Variables	Levels	Willingness to pay	Sig. ?
Delivery time	D+1 (basis)	0.00	
	D+2	-68.20	***
	D+5	-96.99	***
Reliability of delivery time	95% (basis)	0.00	
	90%	3.50	
	99%	-20.22	
Place of delivery to addressee	At home or HQ of addressee (basis)	0.00	
	Postbox in a public place	-47.83	
Place of mail delivery for the company itself	Company location (basis)	0.00	
	Postbox in a public place	4.79	
Place where company deposits its mail	In a post office / postal point (basis)	0.00	
	In a MassPost centre	66.18	
	In a national sorting centre	-22.09	
	Direct collection at the company site	68.40	*
Number of deliveries a week	5 days (basis)	0.00	
	3 days	68.08	**
	3 days + Saturday	39.74	
	4 days	43.40	**
	4 days + Saturday	0.74	
Number of clearances a week	5 days (basis)	0.00	
	3 days	-90.27	***
	4 days	-92.98	***
	6 days	-118.93	***
Time of delivery	9 AM - 5 PM (basis)	0.00	
	7 AM - 9 PM	-7.64	

*Legend level of reliability (Sig.): * for 90%, ** for 95% and *** for 99%*

4.7.2.4. PUBLIC BODIES' WILLINGNESS TO PAY FOR THE POSTAL SERVICE POINTS

Legal basis:

Network access:

Article 3 of the Third Postal Directive (Directive 2008/6/EC) of the European Parliament stipulates *that the density of the points of contact and of the access points takes account of the needs of users.*

Article 18 of the fifth management contract stipulates *moreover that at least 95% of the population should have access to a postal service point offering the basic assortment within a maximum distance of 5 kilometres and at least 98% within a 10 kilometres' distance (by road).*

The analysis of the willingness to pay for the postal service points shows that the public bodies have a need for a service point located at less than 3 km from the service.

The basic postal services offered in a service point are sufficient for the public authorities that have been interviewed.

The public services are also satisfied with the currently prevailing opening hours of a postal service point (i.e. 7 h/day from Monday to Friday and 4 h on Saturdays).

Table17: willingness to pay for the postal service points - public bodies (%)

Variables	Levels	Willingness to pay (%)	Sig. ?
Distance between company site and nearest service point	Less than 1 km (basis)	0.00	
	1 to 2.99 km	17.98	
	3 to 5.99 km	-44.74	***
	6 to 9.99 km	-64.15	***
	More than 10 km	-74.11	***
Available services	Basic postal services (basis)	0.00	
	Full postal services + financial services	-3.83	
	Full postal services + financial services + other services	-28.81	***
Opening hours of service points	7 h/day Monday to Friday + 4 h/ Saturday (basis)	0.00	
	4 h/day Monday to Friday (alternately morning/afternoon)	-36.82	***
	7 h/day Monday to Friday	-15.80	**
	9 h/day Monday to Friday	-10.67	
	9 h/day Monday to Friday + 6 h/Saturday	-59.18	***

*Legend level of reliability (Sig.): * for 90%, ** for 95% and *** for 99%*

4.7.2.5. CONCLUSION WILLINGNESS TO PAY PUBLIC BODIES

In the annexed table the various aspects of the universal postal service are mentioned in function of the degree of willingness to pay for them. In the columns it is indicated each time which postal service is important to whom. Example: there is a high willingness to pay (a high degree of importance) among the public services as regards the distance to the sender's nearest postal service point.

The table gives a survey of the importance of the various aspects. A ranking has been established based on the weight of the calculated willingness to pay (see coefficients willingness to pay previous tables).

A moderate willingness to pay means that it is situated between the values of 0.01 and 0.5. If the willingness to pay is situated between 0.6 and 1 there is a high willingness to pay and in case of a very high willingness to pay the value is higher than 1.

As mentioned before, in the columns it is indicated which aspect of the universal postal service is important to whom - i.e. the sender, the postal service or the addressee.

This way it can be noted that the variables place where the company deposits its letters, distance to the nearest service point, available services and opening hours in the service point are important to the 'Sender', but the highest importance (see high willingness to pay) goes to the place where the company deposits its letters.

As to the postal service itself, the biggest need is noted for the number of clearances a week for parcels.

As for the addressee importance is attached to the place of delivery for the addressee, but also for the company itself and the times of delivery for parcels. However, this importance is not that big considering the moderate willingness to pay for that.

Table18: ranking of the various aspects of the universal postal service according to the degree of willingness to pay - public professional users

	Sender	Postal service	Addressee
Very high willingness to pay	Place where company deposits its mail (letters)	Number of clearances a week (parcels - 6 days/week)	
High willingness to pay	Distance to nearest postal service point Place where company deposits its mail (direct mail, parcels)	Number of clearances a week (parcels) Delivery time (parcels) Number of deliveries a week (letters - 4 days + Saturday; parcels - 3 days)	
Moderate willingness to pay	Available services postal service point Opening hours service point	Number of deliveries a week (letters, parcels) Delivery time (letters, direct mail) Reliability of delivery time (letters, direct mail, parcels) Number of clearances a week (letters, direct mail) Number of deliveries a week (direct mail)	Place of mail delivery for addressee (letters, direct mail, parcels) Place of mail delivery for the company itself (letters, direct mail, parcels) Time of delivery (parcels)
No willingness to pay			

Conclusions willingness to pay public bodies

- *As to sending and receiving administrative post:*
  - *The public services appear to be willing to receive their mail in a secured postbox in a public place.*
  - *Similar to the finding for companies, the public authorities prefer the post office or a postal point as the location to deposit their mail. If the point of collection is a MassPost centre or a national sorting centre, the public services interviewed want a discount. The place where the company deposits its letters is linked to a very high willingness to pay.*

- *As to sending and receiving direct mail:*
  - *The public services attach great importance to day-certain delivery. Yet, as for reliability of the delivery time the willingness to pay is moderate.*
  - *The public services prefer to deliver the direct mail at people's homes or at the addressee's HQ over delivery in a postbox in a public place.*
  - *The post office or postal point being the place where the company preferably deposits its mail. For this aspect the willingness to pay is high.*
  - *A frequency of delivery limited to 4 deliveries a week seems to be acceptable to the public services.*
- *As to sending and receiving parcels:*
  - *The public services interviewed stick to a D+1 delivery time. As shown in the table with the ranking of the various aspects of the postal service, the delivery time of parcels is important for the public services*

and therefore the willingness to pay is high.

- *Contrary to the point of clearance preferred for administrative post and direct mail - i.e. the post office or a postal point - the public bodies prefer direct collection from the service itself.*
- *The public bodies are not opposed to lowering the currently fixed frequency of delivery per week. The aspect of the number of deliveries per week is marked by a high willingness to pay.*
- *The public authorities want the current number of clearances a week fixed to be maintained, i.e. 5 days a week. In this case too, the willingness to pay is high.*

- *As for postal service points:*
  - *The public bodies need a service point situated at less than 3 km from the public service. Distance to the nearest service point constitutes an important aspect and is thus linked with a high willingness to pay.*
  - *The basic postal services offered in a service point are sufficient for the public authorities that have been interviewed. Therefore the willingness to pay is moderate.*
  - *These services are also satisfied with the current opening hours of a postal service point.*