Dear Reader

I am pleased to send you today the first CERP Newsletter after a break of more than a year.

CERP completed its restructuring in 2011, streamlining its organisation and moving its focus to its core areas.

These changes are due in large measure to the establishment of the European Regulators Group for Postal Services (ERGP), which took up its work at the end of 2010. To avoid overlap and duplication, CERP has now ended its activities in those areas for which ERGP has set up sub-groups.

In this new structure, set out in detail in this issue, CERP will concentrate on postal policy and on its role as a Restricted Union of the UPU. In this connection you will also find a contribution in this issue from the Internal Market and Services Directorate-General, Postal and Online Services of the European Commission on the forthcoming Universal Postal Congress in Doha, Qatar.

The CERP Newsletter will continue to give postal stakeholders a regular forum for depicting market developments from their particular point of view. We plan to issue up to four Newsletters a year. The 2012/2 issue is scheduled to appear in July aiming to include interviews with each of the candidates for UPU posts.

I hope you enjoy reading this edition of the CERP Newsletter. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any queries or proposals.

Best regards

Ulrich Dammann
CERP Chairman
The new CERP – Structural changes from 2011

Over the last decade, CERP established nine project teams dealing with issues related to NRA tasks, as well as those within the responsibility of the ministries and governments. These project teams dealt with consumer issues, cost accounting, universal service financing, NRA tasks, policy, sustainable development, statistics, market/supervision and universal service.

The European Regulators Group for Postal Services (ERGP) was created at the end of 2010, based on a decision by the European Commission, as a body facilitating consultation, coordination and cooperation between the independent national regulatory authorities in the Member States, and between those authorities and the Commission, with a view to consolidate the internal market for postal services and ensuring the consistent application of the Postal Directive. The ERGP approved its annual work programme, which installed five working groups in 2011 related to NRA tasks, dealing with cost allocation/price regulation, net cost of USO, end users/market monitoring, cross-border products and access regulation.

To avoid any overlap or duplication of work, CERP started amending its structure by streamlining responsibilities of its project teams and working groups in the course of 2010. Its role shall focus in examining postal regulatory affairs in a European context, to assess the influence of international regulatory policies in CEPT countries, to establish and maintain relations with relevant bodies and associations concerned with postal regulation issues and, where appropriate, to develop proposals based on the results achieved by the Working Groups. A decision was taken to create two working groups, the “Working Group Policy” chaired by Anna Karolak from Poland and the “Working Group UPU” chaired by Egil Thorstensen from Norway, and to set up Project Teams by decision of the Working Groups only if needed.

The task of the Working Group Policy is the coordination of European positions in policy matters in line with a liberalized postal market with the following issues:

- Role of ministries in a liberalized market including sustainable development and its consequences for future political decisions
- Comparison of the legislation in the respective member countries
- Legal issues related to the Directive
- Analysis of the field of postal policy to give input for the evolution of the regulatory framework and the further development of the postal directive (including size, definition and scope of Universal Postal Service)
- Exchange of information between Ministries and NRAs
- Common approach concerning customs issues
- Developing Common Positions.

Currently, the main focus of the CERP Policy Working Group is on its study which aims to gather ideas for a possible forthcoming amendment of the EU Postal Directive. For this purpose, a questionnaire has been distributed to all CERP members enquiring about any problems and/or need for amendments. The results of this study will be available in autumn 2012.

The responsibility of the Working Group UPU is the coordination of European positions in the UPU context with the aim of promoting a competitive postal environment, including:

- Role of CERP as a restricted union within the UPU
- Preparation of annual Council meetings
- Preparation of UPU Congress
  - Consideration of proposals
  - Drafting of proposals
  - Developing Common Positions
- Cooperation with the European Commission in UPU matters
- Support to the IB in the provision of UPU projects (guidance to UPU members in the development and introduction of new strategies and applications)
- Contributions to the UPU activities on regulatory issues and postal regulation
- Developing Common Positions.

The CERP Working Group UPU is currently preparing for the forthcoming UPU Congress in Doha. A subgroup has been installed for this purpose which will look into the regulatory and political proposals submitted to the UPU for a congress decision, with the aim of reaching a CERP position if possible.

In order to provide support within the framework of UPU projects, CERP has installed a pool of experts. The first projects were already started last year:

- A mission to Swaziland was undertaken in August 2011 with experts from Lithuania and Germany aiming to install a roadmap for a postal reform. A second mission is scheduled for April 2012.
- In November 2011 a one-week regulatory workshop was conducted with six experts from Serbia and Germany in cooperation with the organisation of Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA). The aim of the workshop was again to develop a roadmap for postal reform and was attended by 26 participants from Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Mauritius, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe as well as representatives from the UPU and PAPU.

CERP also created a Communication Task Force responsible for the coordination of external contacts, the maintenance of the CERP website and the editing of the CERP newsletter.

As far as relations with other organizations concerns, the contact committee CERP/European Commission continues, the contact committees CERP/POSTEUROP has been revitalized and CERP/European Express Association shall be revitalized. CERP is currently working in order to agree on a memorandum of understanding with UPU and create a contact committee.

The CERP website has been moved under the umbrella of the website of the European Conference of Postal and Telecommunications Administrations – CEPT (http://www.cept.org/cerp).

Here you will find all relevant information regarding the activities and meetings in CERP.

With its new structure, CERP will continue to contribute to the development of European Postal policy and actively support the activities in the Universal Postal Union, in its function as a restricted union.

**EU PERSPECTIVES REGARDING THE 25TH UPU CONGRESS IN DOHA**

The 25th UPU Congress is taking place at a time where the postal sector is facing substantive challenges from the changes in communications. At the same time, there are new opportunities opening up for the sector, notably the growth of electronic commerce and the delivery of parcels.

The European Community has a long-standing relationship with the Universal Postal Union. It has on a regular basis been invited as a de facto observer to Congresses of the UPU and also participated as a de facto observer at meetings of other bodies of the UPU as well as at conferences organised under its auspices. With the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty on 1 December 2009, the European Union has replaced the European Community. The EU and the UPU have substantial related interests and share a number of common objectives, such as ensuring close cooperation to secure the organisation and improvement of international postal services and promot-
ing the development of international collaboration.

It is thus appropriate to grant the EU a formal ("de iure") observer status to the UPU and its organs. While this will not change the substance of the cooperation between the UPU and the EU, it can be considered an important sign of the importance of global cooperation in the postal sector.

In 2004 the Commission adopted a Communication to the Council on the UPU Congress (1) which was accompanied by a Council Resolution (2). These set out a number of principles to guide Member States in their negotiations at the Congress. These principles are also relevant for the 25th Congress of the UPU and should, thus, continue to be guidelines for Member States' positions, interventions and votes. In the light of the substantive developments in the postal acquis that have taken place since the last UPU Congresses, coordination amongst EU Member States is more necessary than ever. From an institutional viewpoint, it is clear that the final coordination for the UPU Congress has to take place under the scrutiny of the Council whereas technical and operational preparations for the Congress will take place in other specialised fora under the auspices of the European Commission. In this context, the Commission has assisted the work of the UPU Working Group of CERP. The substantive work done by CERP members is all the more important as their knowledge and expertise needs to be pooled at a time of scarce resources. Equally, the European Commission is availing of the expertise of postal operators, and notably of PostEurop when it comes to issues that have more operational and technical implications.

Preparatory steps – such as the analysis and evaluation of Conference proposals undertaken by CERP – are particularly welcome as a first step in the coordination of an EU position. In the run up to the Congress it will be important to ensure, first, that the proposals that are of relevance for the EU are determined and second, that consensus on them is reached before the Congress. During the Congress, all relevant proposals and their amendments will need to be followed-up. A number of preparatory measures have already been taken in order to co-ordinate the negotiating position of Member States. Particular attention needs to be paid to issues such as: (a) terminal dues/cost based tariffs; (b) standardisation; (c) customs/security related items; (d) electronic services in the postal sector; (e) electronic commerce/delivery; (f) the reform of the Union.

Werner Stengg,
Head of Section Postal and Online Services, Internal Market and Services Directorate-General, European Commission
