

# POSTAL NEWS

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- 1. German postal workers hold warning strikes over pay. April 20, 2008.**
- 2. Direct postal communication resuming between Georgia and Russia. April 20, 2008.**
- 3. Rural postal service 'absolute necessity' for seniors, Brison says. April 20, 2008.**

1. German postal workers hold warning strikes over pay  
Sun Apr 20, 2008 7:48pm EDT

DUESSELDORF, Germany (Reuters) - German postal workers began staging warning strikes early on Monday to raise pressure on Deutsche Post in a dispute over pay, trade union Verdi said.

The strikes, held in cities including Berlin, Hamburg, Stuttgart, Hanover and Dresden, meant some 3 million letters would go undelivered for the time being, Verdi said.

Warning strikes in Germany usually involve temporary stoppages. However, Verdi also called on postal workers at the weekend to vote for full-blown strike action from May 2 after the failure of wage talks with Deutsche Post.

The talks broke down after the employers made a new offer that fell short of the union's demand for a 7 percent pay increase. The two sides were also negotiating working hours and job protection.

Dubbed a "mega wage year" by Germany's biggest industrial union, 2008 has already delivered the biggest pay increases in 16 years for the public sector and steel workers.

In the last two years, Germany has enjoyed its strongest burst of economic activity since reunification in 1990 and workers want a greater share of the success after years of wage moderation that helped boost firms' profitability.

(Reporting by Matthias Inverardi; Writing by Paul Carrel; Editing by Jan Paschal)

## **2. Direct postal communication resuming between Georgia and Russia**

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TBILISI, April 21 (Itar-Tass) - Direct postal communication is resuming on Monday between Georgia and Russia that was disrupted in early October 2006, representatives of the Georgian Economic Development Ministry said.

Last week, the Georgian side received from the Russian Post an official letter that says it has been decided to resume from April 21 the direct postal service between the two countries. Besides, the two countries will resume postal money transfers.

In October 2006, after Russian Post announced the suspension of the postal communication exchange with Georgia, Russian Minister of Information Technologies and Communication Leonid Reiman said that he regarded the Russian side's actions justified. He said then that "in the course of interaction between the postal administrations of Russia and Georgia recently the Georgian side has repeatedly violated international and bilateral agreements, as well as established norms." In particular, many questions were raised, for instance, over parcels and packages delivered from Georgia, as well as the tardy payment in Georgia of mail payment remittances from Russia.

Direct postal service between Russia and Georgia stopped in early October 2006, as well as direct air and transport service. All services were suspended when Georgia detained five Russian officers on September 27, 2006 and accused them of espionage. Moscow considered Tbilisi's actions "provocative." On October 2, Russian officers were released with the OSCE mediation. Tbilisi described Moscow's cessation of air, postal and transport service as "inadequate." From October 2006 Russian and Georgian citizens were travelling to each other, as well as their postings were sent via third countries.

Russian Post is a founding member of the Universal Postal Union created in 1874. In 1902 Chief Postal Service was made part of the Internal Affairs Ministry and in 1917 under the Provisional Government it became part of the Ministry of Post and Telegraph. During the Great Patriotic War Soviet postal service - part of People's Commissariat of communications - was delivering up to 70 million mails per month to the Soviet army front from the rear under extremely difficult and often very dangerous conditions.

In 1993, Russian Post became a part of the Ministry of Communications and in 2002, its status changed from a government ministry to a Unitary enterprise within the framework of the restructuring of the federal postal communication agencies. The company's headquarters are located in Moscow.

In 2008, Andrey Kazmin, previously CEO of Sberbank (Savings Bank) was appointed CEO of Russian Post.

On March 25, this year, the two countries resumed the direct air service and on March 28 – restored maritime traffic between them.

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### **3. Rural postal service ‘absolute necessity’ for seniors, Brison says**

By PAUL PICKREM  
Sun. Apr 20 - 4:46 AM

CANNING — Liberal Scott Brison wants Canada Post to stand and deliver when it comes to rural route mail in his riding.

During a town hall meeting in Canning on Saturday, the MP for Kings-Hants said he met in Ottawa recently with Canada Post president Moya Greene to express his concern that the Crown corporation’s rural mail safety review will be used to reduce what he called an essential service for seniors.

Canada Post intends to examine every rural route mail delivery location across the country for safety issues affecting mail carriers and their drivers. Mr. Brison said on his website the review will include 10,000 boxes in Kings and Hants counties.

"I’m not going to allow Canada Post to use safety issues as a red herring to reduce services to Canadians I serve," he told nearly two dozen supporters at the meeting in the town’s fire hall.

"Rural mail delivery is an absolute necessity to seniors living on a fixed income in rural Nova Scotia. Those are not my words, but their words. Our rural communities are facing enough challenges."

On its website, Canada Post says many rural mailboxes are on roads with narrow shoulders or no shoulder at all, making it risky for mail carriers who cannot get out of the path of other drivers and have to manoeuvre around parked vehicles.

But Mr. Brison said the postal union does not support the review and he wants the government to work with provincial transportation departments to improve road conditions and signs rather than cutting service.

"All kinds of things can be done before going to a centralized delivery system," Mr. Brison said.

Liberal party member Avril Harwood, who has her mail delivered to a rural route delivery box near Canning, agreed with her MP. She said she needs her mail delivered every day and prefers not to drive in to Canning.

"It would be crazy to have everyone drive to a centralized mail delivery location rather than have a mail carrier drive around in one vehicle delivering everybody’s

mail," Ms. Harwood said. "A lot of other people don't drive or don't want to drive. It would really affect them."

Mr. Brison also spoke about the contentious debate in Parliament last week after the RCMP raided Conservative party headquarters in Ottawa while executing a search warrant for Elections Canada.

In response to an audience member who asked when the Liberals might bring down the government, Mr. Brison said that probably won't happen soon.

"You can't sustain a 36 day election on a single scandal," he said.

In an interview later he said the Liberals are ready for an election, but that is not what the majority of Canadians want.

The government's "credibility is in tatters," he said. "But we have to do more than attack the government. We have to provide a positive vision for the future."

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