

POSTAL NEWS

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1. Deutsche Post chief in €1m tax probe

By Gerrit Wiesmann, Richard Milne and Ralph Atkins in Frankfurt and Hugh Williamson in Berlin

Published: February 14 2008 10:01 | Last updated: February 14 2008 12:18

Klaus Zumwinkel, one of Germany's best known businessmen, was fighting to save his career on Thursday night after state prosecutors raided his house and office shortly before dawn to investigate claims that he failed to pay €1m in taxes.

Prosecutors in Bochum, north-west Germany, said the veteran chief executive of Deutsche Post and chairman of Deutsche Telekom was suspected of putting money into a trust in Lichtenstein and failing to tell tax authorities in Germany.

In a sign that Mr Zumwinkel could prove to be only the first of many people facing such allegations, the prosecutors said he was one of several suspects. A source close to the investigation told the Financial Times: "We're only at the beginning."

In pictures unprecedented in German broadcasting, ZDF public television covertly filmed prosecutors as they confronted Mr Zumwinkel.

The filming appeared to be the result of a leak from authorities and infuriated some investigators.

After searching his house in a leafy suburb of Cologne, his office at Deutsche Post headquarters in Bonn, and 11 other sites, prosecutors took Mr Zumwinkel in for

questioning at lunchtime and released him on bail – the amount of which was not disclosed – in mid-afternoon.

The postal company later released a statement saying Mr Zumwinkel had “responded in detail to the authorities in charge with respect to the allegations against him”. His legal and media advisers declined to comment any further.

Deutsche Post said the “board of management including [the] chief executive [. . .] continues its business as usual”, a sign that the 64-year-old has no inclination to give up his posts at the postal and telecoms groups before his retirement later this year.

This could put him at odds with the government, which owns a third of both groups and installed him at Post in 1990 and at Telekom in 2003. Officials said they expected him to step down soon. “He should know what he has to do,” one said.

The government recently agreed to allow Mr Zumwinkel to become Post chairman when he retired as chief executive. This move was now very unlikely, the official said. Such a move would leave Mr Zumwinkel without any influential posts in German business for the first time in nearly 20 years.

Mr Zumwinkel caused a storm of protest in December when he sold Post shares only days after Berlin buoyed the stock by introducing a minimum wage for postal workers. The move caused rivals to end plans to compete with Post in Germany.

Speculation that Mr Zumwinkel, the man behind Post’s ill-fated expansion in the US, could leave the company earlier than expected seemed to buoy the stock. It was the day’s best performer in the Dax on Thursday, rising 2.8 per cent to €22.25 .

An accomplished political operator, Mr Zumwinkel has been a trusted ally of successive German governments for many years. He shepherded the former state postal monopoly on to the Frankfurt stock exchange in 2000 and established the group as a global force in logistics in the following years. However, his ambition to take on US rivals Fedex and UPS has long drawn criticism from investors.

Mr Zumwinkel has never officially outlined his plans to retire from either of his posts this year. But the Financial Times reported this month that he would give up his chairmanship of Deutsche Telekom in May and hand over operative control of Deutsche Post later this year.

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Thursday, February 14, 2008 - 11:33 AM CST

2. FedEx to partner with French postal firm

FedEx Corp. has announced that it will partner with the French postal service firm La Poste to cut parcel delivery time across Europe.

The Memphis-based worldwide logistics company will use 20 French high-speed TGV trains capable of traveling 186 miles an hour.

The trains will pick up airfreight containers at the Roissy Airport in Paris where more than 50 FedEx planes land and leave daily.

The FedEx (NYSE: FDX) partnership will also connect Paris with other European locations.

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Thursday, February 14, 2008

3. Postal patrons address the lack of mail delivery

By Linda Bock TELEGRAM & GAZETTE STAFF
lbock@telegram.com

NORTHBRIDGE— The U.S. Postal Service delivers hundreds of millions of messages each day to more than 141 million homes and businesses, but not to the homes and businesses in the village of Linwood.

Many of those who live and work in Linwood are tired of being ignored and have petitioned the U.S. Postal Service to get mail delivery.

The village of Linwood has 20 streets with more than 270 houses and 560 residents, according to the town's Jan. 1, 2007, street listing. There are approximately 30 businesses on Providence Road (Route 122). Residents who have never had mail delivered to their homes must pick up their mail at the Linwood Post Office, 166 Linwood St. There are two other post offices in town, in Whitinsville at 44 Church St. and at 76 Sutton St. in Rockdale. However,

the post office in Linwood is the only one in town not to deliver mail.

Donna M. Miller of Arthur Street moved to Linwood last May.

"I had no idea when we bought our house we wouldn't get mail delivery," Ms. Miller said. "That's not right."

Ms. Miller said the village is not a rural location and includes a number of older residents who must navigate the post office's dangerous location on a dangerous "S" curve and lack of safe parking. There is limited street parking, and Ms. Miller said the building itself is antiquated for the number of residents who use it. Additionally, Ms. Miller said, the hours are limited, especially for those who work. She said she can't even pick up her mail on her lunch break because the post office is closed for a 90-minute lunch break during the week.

“It’s very dangerous, there’s only room for four cars to park on the street,” Ms. Miller said. “And on Saturday — it’s craziness.”

Ms. Miller said she began researching the issues shortly after moving into the neighborhood. She decided to start a petition because others also wanted their mail delivered. She downloaded petitions from the postal service’s Web site. She collected signatures from residents who live on Arthur Drive in Linwood, and sent the petition in September to Postmaster Vickie B. Robinson. Ms. Miller said Ms. Robinson denied their request, and the residents appealed the decision on Oct. 7 to the consumer affairs unit of the U.S. Postal Service in North Reading.

Meanwhile, others in Linwood heard of the petition and decided to file a petition on Jan. 14. Robert A. Parker Jr., a community representative, sent a letter on behalf of Linwood to Ms. Robinson, Massachusetts’ U.S. Sens. Edward M. Kennedy and John F. Kerry, U.S. Rep. Richard E. Neal, state Sen. Richard T. Moore, state Rep. George N. Peterson Jr., and the Board of Selectmen. He said residents have tried unsuccessfully for years to get mail delivery.

“This petition contains the names of 200 residents who want their mail delivered to their homes,” Mr. Parker said.

Mr. Parker said they have not yet had a response, but Ms. Miller said she didn’t hear a response to her appeal until about two weeks ago when someone from consumer affairs called her.

“She said she didn’t want me to think I forgot about you,” Ms. Miller said, and that the postal service was taking a closer look at the request.

Ms. Robinson said yesterday it is up to the district office in North Reading to make the decisions.

“If it was up to me,” Ms. Robinson said. “There would have been a route here 20 years ago.”

Postmaster since March 1985, Ms. Robinson said she was not sure why Linwood never had mail delivery.

“I think they should have some form of delivery, but I don’t know if it will be door-to-door delivery. Compromises will have to be made,” Ms. Robinson said. “They want door-to-door delivery, but I don’t think that is going to happen.”

She said the U.S. Postal Service says everyone is entitled to some form of free delivery. An example of a compromise, Ms. Robinson said, is a shared postal box at the end of each street. She said not all residents are opposed to picking up their mail at the post office.

“Some people are so used to it; they’ve been coming for years and years,” Ms. Robinson said. “They like the fact their mail is safe and secure.”

Robert Boisselle, a spokesman for the U.S. Postal Service, said the citizens' request is being reviewed at the district level. At this time, he said, "There is no timetable for the decision."

Meanwhile, residents appear to have found support in their legislators.

Mr. Peterson and Mr. Moore wrote to Ms. Robinson on Jan. 17, and both of the state's U.S. senators contacted postal officials in Washington, D.C., and Massachusetts to express support for the Linwood residents.

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4. Sending 'money' in better 'order' than Postal Department

Patna, (Bihar Times) 14/02/2008: Its full form may be the Automated Teller Machine, but the ATM in many districts of North Bihar, especially Vaishali is fast emerging as Any Time Money.

Migrant semi-skilled and unskilled labourers from Bihar working elsewhere in the country are now relying more and more on the private money order agencies or couriers. These agencies are posing a big challenge to the Postal Department in many parts of the country as they are run more professionally by the Biharis living in those places. And the ATMs and combined phones are proving very helpful to them.

Anyone sending money from any of these cities or towns just approaches the private agencies functioning there and deposit the amount to be transferred. They have their agents spread in villages and towns all over Bihar, especially its trans-Ganga northern half. With the help of phones they communicate to their agents that the money be sent to such and such person on the given address. Thus in no time the money is delivered at the rate charged by the postal department, that is, Rs five per hundred—but then more promptly.

In case the amount to be transferred is heavy the money is deposited in the office of the courier service in that particular city. The courier service then conveyed to the agents in Bihar over phone to withdraw the said amount from the ATMs and deliver it to the concerned clients. Thus in no time the amount reaches its destination.

It needs to be mentioned that at least Rs 9,000 crore comes to Bihar every year in the form of remittance. This has been revealed in a recent migration study by Overseas Development Institute (ODI) in Bihar. Bihar is only next to Uttar Pradesh as far as the number of out migrants is concerned. With the mushroom growth of private courier or money order agencies all over the country—mostly managed by Biharis living there—it has become all too easy to transfer money to the nooks and corners of the state.

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5. Postal Service recommends Express Mail

Published: Wednesday, February 13, 2008

COLUMBIANA — Last-minute gift-givers need not worry: Customers can ship Valentine's Day gifts as late as today for guaranteed Thursday delivery using the U.S. Postal Service's Express Mail service, according to Columbiana Postmaster Charles Mulidore.

Express Mail, the Postal Service's premier package service, provides overnight delivery to most destinations nationwide at prices lower than other carriers, and includes a money-back guarantee, tracking, proof of delivery, and insurance at no additional cost.

"Express Mail is the only overnight service that delivers 365 days a year, and we offer it at a competitive price, with a guarantee," said Mulidore.

Customers can even send Express Mail without leaving their homes. By visiting usps.com, customers can print shipping labels and postage for Express Mail and schedule a postal carrier to pick packages up through Carrier Pickup or Pickup on Demand services. Customers can also use usps.com to look up ZIP codes and find nearby USPS Express Mail collection boxes or post offices.

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February 13, 2008 - 9:23 A.M.

6. When IT people go postal

Flashback to a decade ago, when this pilot fish is the on-site support guy for a moderately large post office. But there's just so much he can do. "I was authorized only to swap out various components for the point-of-sale window computers," says fish.

"Anything involving opening the CPU case could only be done by a contract technician from the vendor. The equipment was custom-designed for post office windows, and was not hot-swappable."

But one morning, an impatient window clerk finds that his printer isn't working. He unplugs his own printer, unplugs the printer from the next window and plugs that into his own system -- without bothering to shut either system down.

Result: Fuse inside the custom system blows, and the impatient clerk's window is useless for serving customers. So is the next window when that clerk arrives an hour later.

"I got a call at home to get in as fast as possible and get both windows back up and running," fish says. "Getting the second window back up was easy. I just shut the system down and attached the printer from the spare system.

"Getting the impatient clerk's window back up was another story. I couldn't get it working -- blown internal fuse -- which meant a call to the help desk, working up the food chain to Tier 3 and getting them to send a contract tech out to open the system CPU and replace the fuse."

Meanwhile, fish has to swap in the spare CPU for the one with the blown fuse. That means disconnecting the blown-fuse CPU from the rest of its hardware -- seven cables plus an octopus cable that combines eight or 10 other cables.

Then fish has to disconnect everything in the same way from the spare system, and finally reconnect the spare CPU in the window where the blown-fuse CPU used to be.

After two hours of crawling around under the counters, fish is filthy but everything is reconnected.

When the vendor tech arrives, it takes him 10 minutes to change the fuse -- and then another hour for fish to reconnect the repaired CPU to all the cables for the spare system.

"It would have been a 10-minute fix if the clerk had followed standing orders and waited for me to arrive," grumbles fish.

"If it had been up to me, he would have been given an unpaid vacation -- that incident wasn't the first time he mucked up the hardware because he didn't know what he was doing and was too impatient to wait for somebody who did.

"But I wasn't his supervisor, so all he got was a letter of warning."

Don't go postal on Sharky. Send me your true tale of IT life at sharky@computerworld.com. You'll get a Shark shirt by return mail if I use it. Add your comments below, and read some great old tales in the Sharkives.

Now you can post your own stories of IT ridiculousness at Shark Bait. Join today and vent your IT frustrations to people who've been there, done that.

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12 February, 2008, 01:53 AM Doha Time

7. QATAR has formally submitted its bid for hosting the Universal Postal Union's (UPU) World Postal Congress in 2012.

Qatar's ambassador to Switzerland, Abdullah Falah al-Dossari, made the announcement at a meeting, hosted by the embassy in Berne last week. Giving details of the meeting, Q-Post chairman Ali Mohamed al-Ali said the country's bid for hosting the 25th World Postal Congress had the backing of a large number of countries in the GCC, and Arab regions and also a number of its friends spread through out the world.

The Q-Post chairman recalled that the UAE had made an unsuccessful bid for hosting the 23rd World Postal Congress in 2004. Though it lost the race to Nairobi, ultimately Romanian capital Bucharest was the venue for the 2004 congress.

Queried if any other country had made a bid for hosting the 2012 congress, al-Ali said Australia was also in the race. To our knowledge Russia, who had entered the race earlier, is not in the fray, said the Q-Post chairman.

Asked about Qatar's chances of winning the bid, the chairman said he is optimistic Al-Ali said al-Dossari had made a presentation on the country and highlighted the number of meetings, conferences, and exhibitions that the country had played host to in the past one decade.

The chairman said the Qatar team had given a clear picture of the facilities that the country has for hosting such a major meeting, where there would be delegates from at least 191 countries.

Qatar Airways too made a presentation on the country's national carrier and its network at the meeting held in Berne.

Besides al-Ali, the Q-Post delegation comprised IT manager George Scott Campbell, public relations manager Abdullah Shlash al-Hajiri, head of Quality management centre Catina Aghyan, and head of international relations Jassim al-Malki.

A host of top officials of UPU, led by its director general Edward Dayan and deputy director general Guozhong Huang were present at the meeting hosted by the embassy in Berne.

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8. Letter: Similar problem occurred with postal service

Tuesday, February 12, 2008

I am writing this in response to Karen Coppock's Jan. 25 letter. I had a similar problem with the post office at the Peacock branch.

About two years ago, my street address had been changed. I went to the Peacock branch and was told to fill out a card as if I were moving. I did that and, after a while, I wasn't getting my mail. I did have bills to pay. I went back to Peacock several times, and I mean several times, with no satisfaction.

They were never fresh with me, but kept trying to help. I found it to be very frustrating that I had to call companies and ask where my bills were. This went on for about two months.

Finally, something clicked in my head. I went to the Fort Pierce postal office and was treated with kindness and respect. I spoke to a supervisor there and he said he would

handle the problem. It turned out my new address was never entered into the database, which I blame the Peacock branch for not following up with it correctly.

My advice is to go to the Fort Pierce office in person. They will help you. Trust me. He even gave me a name of a supervisor at the Peacock branch to call, if it continues.

After a week or two, it finally was resolved. I had mentioned to them to contact the database at Peacock, but their answer was they could not get through.

Karen, keep fighting. It will get resolved. There were times that they would pick up my mail, also, and leave my outgoing mail in the mail box. Very frustrating, but it will get better.

Good luck. Hope it gets resolved for you.

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9. Nairobi snubbed as postal summit host

Written by Okuttah Mark

February 12, 2008: Kenya's standing as Africa's conference hub suffered yet another setback yesterday when organisers relocated the 24th Universal Postal Congress that was to be held in Nairobi later this year.

A Press statement from the organisers — the Universal Postal Union — said the conference for August 13 to September 3 will now be held in Geneva, Switzerland.

It cited as reason the recent outbreak of post-election violence that has left more than 800 people dead and 300,000 internally displaced. More than 1,500 delegates from the organisation's 191 member countries were to attend.

Organisers have also changed the dates from end of August to mid-July. It is the latest setback for the local hospitality and car hire industries that were tipped to be top beneficiaries with the large visitor numbers.

The statement said a resolution had been passed to approve Kenya's chairmanship of the congress as well as the chairmanship of the UPU council of administration from 2009 to 2012.

It also recommends promotion of Nairobi as the venue for the UPU Strategy Conference in 2010. Kenya is yet to respond to the resolution. The statement said the decision to relocate the meeting was taken despite a spirited attempt by Information and Communications minister Samuel Poghiso to have the council continue supporting Kenya.

“Though Kenya has recently experienced some post-election violence, we are confident that the situation has sufficiently stabilised and that complete peace has

been restored in most parts of the country,” Mr Poghisio said. The UPU must hold a congress every four years. The last meet was in Bucharest, Romania, in 2004.

Under UPU general regulations, when circumstances prevent a designated host country of a congress to organise the international meeting as planned, the UPU International Bureau headquartered in Berne organises the meeting in Switzerland. This is done in agreement with the Swiss government.

“Kenya has shown great strength and courage in defending its position, but in the end a decision had to be made in the interest of the UPU and its member countries,” said UPU director general Edouard Dayan.

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10. Euro Parliament: YoueAove got (newly privatized) mail!

Monday, February 11, 2008; Posted: 04:55 AM

Aug 02, 2008 (New World Publishing via COMTEX) -- TNTTY | news | PowerRating | PR Charts -- The European Parliament on January 31 passed long-pending legislation to liberalize local mail services to competition starting in 2011, two years later than sought by some European players such as Deutsche Post AG, TNT NV and other challengers to state carriers like HungaryeAos Magyar Posta Zrt. The European Parliament voted at the end of last month to end monopolies on standard letter delivery, capping 15 years of gradual opening of competition for shipping packages, express and bulk mail. Under an agreement with national governments, 11 countries, including Hungary and several new European Union member states in Eastern Europe, can wait until 2013 to admit competitors. Letters make up two-thirds of the bloceAos eC88 billion mail market and offer twice the profit margin of packages and express delivery, according to the European Commission. eAuPostal operators will have stronger incentives to meet consumer and user needs,eAu Charlie McCreevy, the EU internal market commissioner who put forward the 2006 proposal, said. eAuThe viability of the sector and the high quality of universal postal services will be strengthened for EU citizens and businesses.eAu The law covers letters weighing less than 50 grams, which are already open to competition in the UK, Sweden and Finland, as well as Germany and the Netherlands as of January 1. To guarantee delivery to all homes, the measure gives national governments power to establish compensation funds for providers in unprofitable regions. Some opponents said market forces will harm services to poor and rural customers. Countries may also require that new entrants meet local labor standards, such as GermanyeAos minimum wage for postal workers, criticized as a measure to stave off new Deutsche Post competitors including TNT. Proponents argued that competition will force postal companies to run operations more efficiently and compete with e-mail and other alternatives, not just themselves.

Soft support

Hungary, along with 11 other member states, sought a delay in the liberalization of national postal markets, a move the European Commission originally scheduled for

2009. Hungary supports the idea of liberalizing the national postal markets but the 2009 deadline the commission proposed was too short for the country to prepare for competition, and therefore it carries unacceptable risks for the stability of Hungarian postal services, Balázs Felsmann, state secretary of the Economy and Transport Ministry (GKM), said in an interview with BBJ last fall. At present, some former monopolies such as Magyar Posta Zrt and France's La Poste still have exclusive rights to carry mail weighing less than 50 grams, a vast and lucrative market that many operators are reluctant to share with rivals. The commission's plans came under attack from trade unions and several EU governments. Hungary and other critics fear that liberalization would undermine operator's ability to service remote and thinly-populated regions, a so-called universal obligation of incumbent service providers that is financed from the revenue made in other regions. Under the Hungarian system, Magyar Posta is obliged to ensure that with a few exceptions mail and packages are collected and delivered once a day all over the country. Hungary's Postal Law also obliges Magyar Posta to operate a post office in places with at least 600 residents. In other places, mobile postal units provide the required services. Universal postal services in Hungary also include delivering mail weighing no more than 2 kilograms, postal packages weighing no more than 20 kilograms, and packages containing Braille script that weigh no more than 7 kilograms. Courier and messenger services and express deliveries do not fall into the category of universal services. The Postal Law gives Magyar Posta a monopoly for the postal delivery of mail and targeted advertising materials weighing a maximum 50 grams a segment that accounts for 80% of the company's revenue from mail deliveries, and which the EU now wants to open for international competition. Under the current system, we can finance the cost of universal postal services from the revenue we get from the mail delivery segment, the company said in a statement. This way, we can break even. But if we keep the universal obligations while losing our monopoly in the profitable segment of the mail delivery business, we will be in a disadvantaged position on the market. Potential foreign competitors in Hungary include Germany's DHL, Dutch TNT, and UPS, which have been present on the market with their parcel services. In an official report the Economy and Transport Ministry sent to the Commission in 2007, it pointed out that the market opening proposal does not contain country-specific impact and risk assessments, and does not make note of the differences individual countries have in their definitions of universal services.

Judit Zegny, with Bloomberg newswire reports

Budapest Business Journal

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February 11, 2008

11. Postal Mail is Undergoing an E-volution

Private Box has just started offering a new service to their customers so that they can read their postal mail online. Postal mail is electronically scanned so that customers

can read their postal mail from anywhere via the internet. This new service is set to revolutionise the way postal mail is delivered in New Zealand.

Wellington, New Zealand (PRWEB) February 11, 2008 -- Postal mail remains one of the most antiquated communication channels left in New Zealand. Or it was, until Private Box launched their brand new service - a digital mailroom.

The first of its kind in New Zealand, this online service allows customers to view their postal mail, via the internet from anywhere in the world. Through Private Box (www.privatebox.co.nz), you can set up one central address to which all post is delivered. You then log-into your secure digital mail room and can access electronic images of your mail. You can download these images or electronically forward the file. Then you decide what to do with that piece of mail, recycle it, shred it, or forward mail to your chosen physical address. "Customers are finding this service incredibly simple and easy to use. With one just a few clicks of a mouse they have dealt with all their physical mail," Steven Morley, Private Box CEO commented.

Throughout our sorting and scanning process all mail is securely handled and carefully monitored to ensure the utmost level of security

For businesses, using one central address eliminates customer confusion with a change of address. Or if you regularly travel (for business or pleasure), you can always access and respond to those important pieces of postal mail. But this innovative service not only saves time and money, it also helps the environment. "All paper is recycled here. And because you only forward the mail you need, you're using less resources," added Steven.

With the increasing occurrences of identity fraud, postal mail security is becoming a hot topic. "Throughout our sorting and scanning process all mail is securely handled and carefully monitored to ensure the utmost level of security," Steven commented. And with a digital mailroom, your mail is delivered to a secure post office box, rather than a mailbox on the street.

About Private Box

Set up in 2005, Private Box offers customers an individual address to accept their mail. Customers are sent an alert via email when mail is received, and then advise Private Box where to forward this mail. Now, with the new service, mail can be scanned in and read online. Private Box addresses are used by people over the world, from businesses that need a physical presence in New Zealand, to tourists and immigrants who need a permanent address. Many customers are moving constantly, so a permanent physical address means they're never out of contact with their postal mail.

Contact:

Steven Morey, CEO

Private Box Ltd

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