

Speech
of the President of POST
Giorgos Vassilopoulos
at the International UNI Conference in Budapest
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The Hellenic Post (ELTA) was founded in 1828 and has been operating as public limited company (S.A.) since 1970.

90% of its share capital is owned by the State and the remaining 10% has been exchanged for an equal holding (10%) in the share capital of of the Post Bank.

ELTA is a Group of Companies owning three subsidiaries:

1. ELTA Courier S.A. which was set up in 2000 and operates in the Greek courier service market. ELTA owns 99.9% of the company and the 0.01% is held by the employees through the Panhellenic Federation of Postal Associations (POST)

2. V.T.C. (Vocational Training Centre) – ELTA S.A. which was established in 1998. The key activity of the VTC-ELTA is the training and ongoing development of ELTA human resources. ELTA holds 70% of the share capital and the remaining 30% is held by the employees through the Panhellenic Federation of Postal Associations (POST).

3. T.T. ELTA AEDAK. In the framework of the strategic alliance with the Hellenic Post Bank, a Mutual Funds Management Company was set up in 2002, styled T.T. ELTA AEDAK, which is jointly owned by ELTA (49% holding) and the Hellenic Post Bank (51% holding).

By virtue of the Law 2668 / 1998, ELTA is the Universal Postal Services Provider in Greece.

Universal service provision determines the position and role of ELTA in the postal services market in the sense of its commitment to the state to provide the public with adequate quality services at affordable rates. As a result of this commitment a wide network of post offices and agencies is maintained and operated throughout the Greek territory delivering full services throughout this network.

ELTA operates 852 branches with 2,500 post office counters, 3,000 stamp retailers, 914 agencies, 81 Distribution Units, 10 Post Sorting Centres, Automated centres and other special units. Additionally, it has a Parcel Sorting Centre, an Airmail Centre, two Custom Clearance Services for Parcels, a Transit Terminal, 950 rural postmen and 2,400 urban postmen.

Because of the Greece's geographic, demographic and social peculiarities, ELTA incurs excessive operating costs for the provision of Universal Services and maintenance of its vast network.

So far, Universal Service has not been financed; the State has failed to meet its obligation to cover the cost, and to implement the procedures for the establishment of a fund to compensate for the Universal Service.

Law 2668/98, incorporating Directive 97/67/EC, as amended by Law 3185/03, o incorporating Directive 2002/39/EC, it was attempted to combine Universal Service and market deregulation. As a result the legal framework governing the organisation

and operation of the postal market in Greece was set up. The aim was to safeguard competition and provide universal service to the benefit and interest of users.

The postal market in Greece does not operate on fair competition terms. The regulatory authority has often treated the Public Post in a hostile manner and does not exercise adequate control over the private courier companies that operate almost uncontrollably to the detriment of ELTA.

Thus, in recent years the Universal Service work has been increasingly “taken away” by unfair competition significantly impacting the income of the Public Post. Unfair competition and pricing policy imposed by the regulatory authority fail to take into account the environmental peculiarities (pricing is cost-oriented but costs are perceived and calculated in a different manner) and thus induce the economic suffocation of the ELTA’s Universal Service.

Since 1998, ELTA has promoted the integration of new technologies and modern computer systems into its structures and functions. The challenge to meet is the rapid adjustment to new working methods and establishment of new, innovative modes of operation. Though automation, ELTA will be able to promptly respond to the new challenges of our times in terms of quality and productivity.

Automation and technological upgrade projects are co-financed by the EU through the 3rd CSF – “Information Society” Operating Program”. The projects include:

Automated Sorting Terminal in Attica, the largest mail sorting terminal in SE Europe. It has been fully operational since March 2007.

Automated Sorting Terminal in Thessaloniki and Automated Sorting Terminal in Patras, which have been operating since 2008.

Moreover, the largest part of the post offices network is being automated with the aim to operate 464 automated offices and 1,573 automated transaction counters.

The service portfolio is being modernised with the addition of internet services, such as e-payments.

Since, 2008 hybrid mail services have been available and soon the telematic fleet management of ELTA vehicles will be in place.

The investment plans for the purpose of restructuring and optimizing the transactions network is in progress. The aims are to rationalize financial costs, contain social costs due to Universal Service provision by ELTA, improve the quality of transactions and increase the network productivity.

With regard to skills development among the ELTA human resources in order to efficiently respond to new needs (new products, rapid changes in the postal environment, new technologies, etc.) and prepare the Company for the upcoming changes, relevant training courses are implemented by the Vocational Training Centre (VTC ELTA).

The Hellenic Post employees currently number 9,800, instead of the planned 11,500, due to the State and Management policies that impose less recruitments.

The institutional framework governing labour has been agreed in a Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) and, according to the applicable legislation, can only be amended with the consent of employees.

All ELTA employees are full-time and permanent and there is no institutional framework for part-time work, with the exception of emergency cases (cover for leaves or extra workload) where temporary staff is hired for four or eight months.

The Panhellenic Federation of Postal Associations (POST) is a Sectoral Federation and, according to its Statutes, only post employee unions are entitled to membership. So far, only the ELTA Courier employee union is a member of POST. The Unions of all the other companies have failed to join us despite our efforts. We will continue to try and main problem, which is related to employer arbitrariness, is that the vast majority of employees in private companies are not permanent.