

Contribution of La Poste Group to « EU 2020 strategy »

Both the Lisbon strategy and the EU 2020 strategy emphasize the fact that new technologies and knowledge will be key characteristics of tomorrow's economy. This is indeed a major trend that has direct consequences on the evolution of the postal sector activities. However such a focus on these two characteristics undermines another essential trend: the fact that EU's economy is increasingly evolving into an economy of services. This evolution should not be underestimated in EU 2020 strategy. Indeed services which represent more than 70% of the current employment are of a unique nature: they cannot be dealt with like other industrial products and cannot be all relocated. The growing importance of services will therefore have major consequences in terms of social developments and employment.

La Poste itself has made the choice of becoming a group of services of proximity and this has become a guiding principle of its strategy. The Group bases its development on the trust that it has built over years with its employees, its clients and its partners. This immaterial and priceless asset is a unique competitive advantage for La Poste. This choice to promote services of high quality leads the Group to closely articulate its growth with the exercise of its social responsibility and to promote a particular social model.

The mutation of the economy into an economy of services entails a different measurement of the creation of added value. Unlike in the industrial sector, it is not only productivity but also quality, especially the quality of the customers' relations, which is essential for the development of a company. The quality of the customers' relation is closely linked to the quality of the human resources management.

On the human resources field, the development of an economy of services has two antinomic consequences: it creates a demand for both more high-qualified labour force and more low-qualified one; the real impact of the later phenomenon is often underestimated. The growth of such a diversified need of competences leads to two kinds of issues: on the one hand, the threat of future shortcomings in the available skills and on the other hand the risk of a growing gap between the level of education of the youth and the existing job offer on the market. Indeed the level of education of the youth is constantly rising while a significant part of the new jobs created require different and often lower skills. To avoid the perception of a drop in status among the young employees, a situation which could create social unrest, it is essential to enrich the nature and increase the attractiveness of these new jobs. In tomorrow's economy, the perception of services, which entail a wide range of skills, needs to be upgraded. Furthermore as widely underlined in EU 2020 strategy a better matching between skills and jobs is essential.

These observations bring us directly to the question of what social model is foreseen for 2020. The answer to this question will define the nature of the future skills and jobs required and the way employees are considered in the economy. The key principle of flexicurity which is promoted in EU 2020 strategy should be an essential element of the future social model.

Going against tendencies often observed, La Poste has made the choice to have an ambitious social model of "employer-developer". It promotes an internal flexicurity in order to combine the company's commitment in favour of an employment of quality and the employees' commitment to the adaptation to change and the services to customers. A good example of this double commitment is the program called "Facteurs d'avenir" which aims at conciliating

the flexibility required by a variable activity with a stable employment of quality. More concretely, postmen are organized in teams of 12 to 15 individuals around a manager and are responsible for a specific territory. The organization of the team enables mutual substitution between postmen and the adaptation of their working time to the variations of the activity. This program enables a more flexible organization of work as well as the promotion of mobility and the upgrade of competences. It enables postmen to become more polyvalent, more flexible and more responsible. This initiative and the social model promoted by La Poste contrast with the low cost model, especially developed by the new entrants, which is spreading in the postal sector and is based on the use of part-time and independent workers.

EU 2020 strategy is a key document for setting the key challenges and opportunities for EU's future. The recognition of the specific role of services in tomorrow's economy is essential for fully grasping the future social and economic developments in order to achieve a more responsible but also more competitive EU.