

Equal opportunities in the postal sector

Good practices

POST EUROPE



with the assistance of the European Commission



A great deal of additional information on the European Union is available on the Internet. It can be accessed through the Europa server (<http://europa.eu.int>).

Cataloguing data can be found at the end of this publication.

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Introductory note by Mrs Anna Diamantopoulou, Commissioner responsible for employment and social affairs



The European Union has a strong commitment to promote equal opportunities and to combat discrimination. In the year 2000, the Community adopted a series of legal measures to prohibit discrimination at work on a wide range of grounds — racial and ethnic origin, religion and belief, disability and sexual orientation — to add to the existing measures on sex discrimination. But legislation on its own is not enough. Important priorities for promoting equal opportunities and anti-discrimination for people with disabilities include raising the employment levels and supporting socially inclusive policies for people with disabilities.

It is clear that we need to substantially reinforce practical action to prevent and combat discrimination in the European Union in the coming years. This includes making equal opportunities every-

body's priority — a priority within every field of policy and at every level of activity, whether European, national or local.

Much remains to be done to ensure that women and men enjoy equal opportunities, in practice as well as on paper. Women are still under-represented in senior positions; the gender pay gap has yet to be closed; the way work is organised needs to change, with family-friendly policies allowing for men and women to reconcile work and family life.

The social partners in the postal sector have shown through the development of this compendium that they are prepared to shoulder their responsibility and take concrete measures to promote equal opportunities.

The efforts currently being made by the social partners in the postal sector also highlight the potential of the sectoral social partners to conclude agreements and work together to identify best practice, as well as initiate benchmarking exercises at European level using their competence in the relevant sector.

I personally welcome this important achievement and look forward to the further outcome of the social dialogue in the field of equal opportunities and the fight against discrimination in the European Union.

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Introduction



Mr John Pedersen, Mr Edouard Dayan and Mr Ralf Stemmer

The social partners in the postal sector — PostEurop's Social Affairs Committee on the management side and UNI and Eurofedop on the labour side — decided within the framework of the sectoral European social dialogue to compile a compendium of good practices in the field of equal opportunities. A working group was therefore established charged with the preparation of this compendium. At present, the European Commission deals with the subject of equal opportunities as part of the EQUAL set of measures, the amendment of Council Directive 76/207/EEC on the implementation of the principle of equal treatment for men and women as regards access to employment, vocational training and promotion, and working conditions as well as the proposal for a new social agenda for the years 2000 to the end of 2005. This compendium of good practices represents the contribution of the social partners in the postal sector towards the current discussion on equal opportunities in the European Union.

This document is characterised by the diversity of its individual reports. However, what postal companies have in common is the competition-oriented environment. We particularly requested contributors to cite both large-scale programmes and smaller individual, concrete examples to provide an impression of the many facets of this subject. It is clear from each of the reports that there has been a general change in attitude. These reports offer an indication of the strong commitment on the part of the contributors.

The participating companies were given a free hand in deciding which projects they wanted to cite. This does not, however, mean that the participants are not involved in other unmentioned areas of equal opportunity or do not have good practices to show in those areas as well.

We also expressly requested participants to mention issues which are considered to be taken for granted in their respective company. This is because issues which are a matter of course in one company are not necessarily so in another, although it is not always possible to transfer things from one context to another on a one-to-one basis.

Many of the activities cited entail joint national-level projects in which the social partners participate. The reports were organised according to topic, which revealed overlaps in certain areas.

Equal opportunities for men and women along with the various aspects of this subject constitute one of the areas targeted by the reports in this compendium. This is logical because the postal sector has traditionally employed large numbers of women. For this reason, numerous activities are already being developed in this area. However, equal opportunities and equal treatment should not be reduced to the equality of men and women, but also viewed against a background of race, ethnic origin, disability and age.

An examination of these good practices reveals that the various measures which were implemented with a view to establishing equal opportunities offer not only social benefits, but also have economic benefits for the companies. To name just one example, a working climate that is free of discrimination fosters employee productivity.

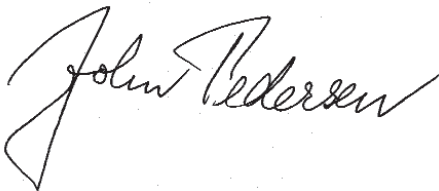
This compendium wishes to offer food for thought about the possible approaches to tackling the subject of equal opportunities which exist in the face of Europe's cultural diversity. It is not, however, to be understood as a universally applicable model for measures which, implemented elsewhere, would require different conditions and/or fundamentals. We do not make any claim to completeness or scientific character. This document is the product of our simple desire to draw up, with the help of the social partners, a compendium of relevance to this subject, offering everyone guidance and insight into the enormous field of equal opportunities in the postal sector. We hope that this document achieves that aim.



Mr Dayan
Chairman of the Social Dialogue Committee



Mr Stemmer
The spokesman of PostEurop's Social Affairs Committee



Mr Pedersen
Spokesman for the unions, UNI




Mr van Caelenberg
Representative of the second trade union federation

Equal opportunities for men and women

*Applications
Recruitment
Careers*

'It is no longer enough to take work-related skills into account.

What matters here is the endeavour to integrate new values.'



Edmond Toussing, Director-General of P&T
Luxembourg

*Bringing about change through raising awareness is the focus of efforts at **P&T Luxembourg***

Luxembourg's postal service drew attention to the subject of equal opportunities in a special way by publishing the information brochure 'Masculin, féminin — l'égalité dans la différence' ('Male/female — equality in diversity'). It is aimed at changing attitudes within the company. In keeping with this, the company pursues a comprehensive, integrated approach in its equal opportunities policy. In other words, the equal opportunities issue has been elevated to a fundamental principle which is observed in all areas.

P&T Luxembourg's professed aim is to make it easier to combine family life and working life with the help of flexible working hours, part-time positions and unpaid leave. Teleworking is also being promoted. A teleworking project was launched in 1996 and has met with a high level of acceptance among those involved. Today, six of P&T's employees are teleworkers.

This comprehensive approach has also had the effect of pushing other developments ahead. The company attaches particular importance to vertical and horizontal career development. P&T also considers the integration of the long-term unemployed to be one of its responsibilities.

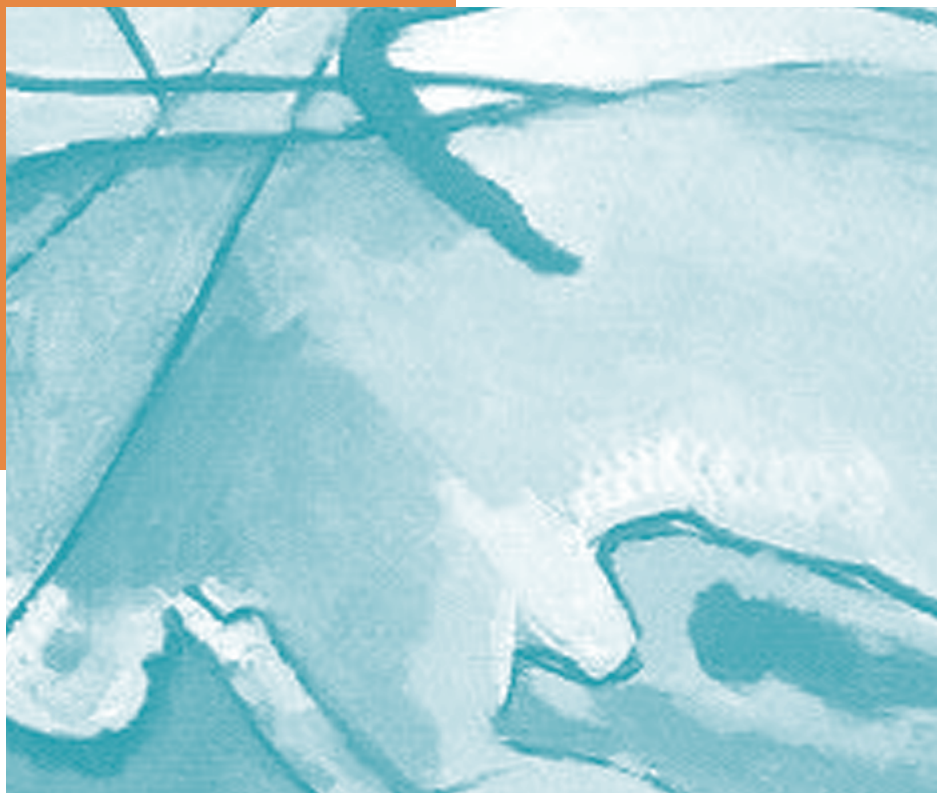


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'Equality of opportunity is a living part of our corporate culture, a part that will be bolstered even further in the future.'

Walter Scheurle,
Board Member for Personnel and
Director of Industrial Relations,
Deutsche Post World Net



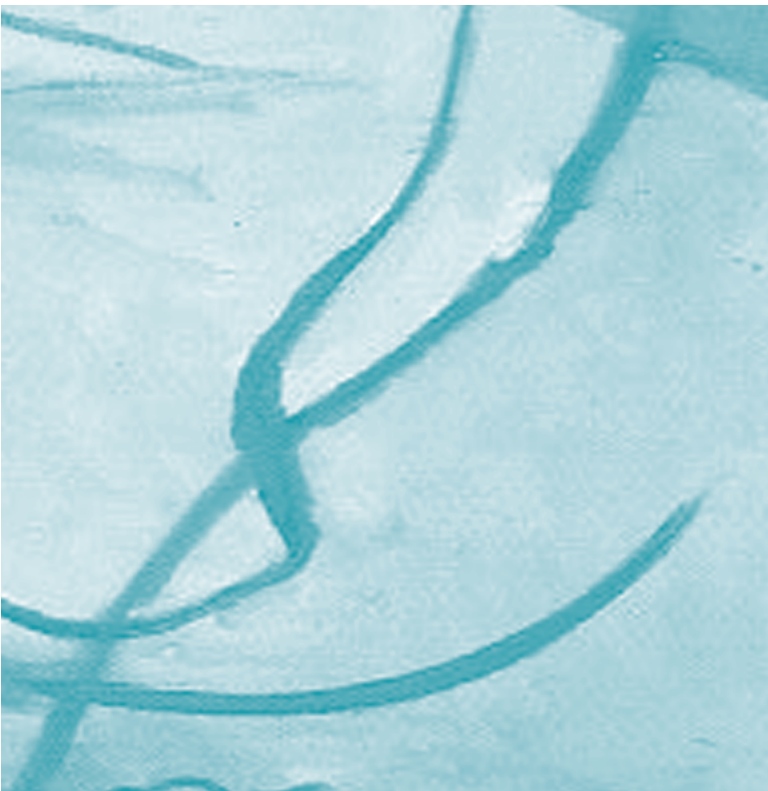
Deutsche Post AG has been awarded the Total E-Quality rating

After just four years of intensive equal opportunities work, Deutsche Post AG's personnel policy was able to meet the stringent standards laid down by the organisation Total E-Quality Deutschland e.V. (where 'E' stands for equality).

This award is granted to companies which foster women's commitment, skills and qualifications. Companies that apply for this rating must provide detailed information about issues such as the employment situation of women in the company, personnel marketing, continued training, and measures for reconciling work and family life. The evaluation also takes into consideration whether equal opportunities have already become firmly established in the company and whether they will be part of the management strategy in the future. Equality of opportunity has long been a subject at Deutsche Post, where all corporate divisions operate on the basis of the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) concept. 'Women are just as qualified, motivated and dedicated as men. From an economic point of view, it would be irresponsible not to make use of this potential,' explains Christa Dinkelborg, the equal opportunities representative at Deutsche Post AG. Today, women comprise 20.6 % of mid-

dle management at Deutsche Post, substantially more than the German average, which is just 9.2 %. At large companies, women account for an average of just 6.4 % of middle management.

The award, which the board member for personnel accepted together with the equal opportunities representatives and the chairperson of the group works council, is granted for a period of three years, at which time the company must apply again. Deutsche Post is confident that it will receive this rating again because its equal-opportunities-based personnel policy is to be extended to the entire group.



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Österreichische Post AG encourages women through its comprehensive women's advancement programme

Based on the Austrian Federal Equal Treatment Act, the Austrian postal operator Österreichische Post AG decided to implement a comprehensive women's advancement programme within the company. Aimed at preventing any kind of discrimination against women in the company and facilitating equal opportunity, this programme also targets an increase in the proportion of women in executive positions. This special programme addresses all internal and external female applicants.

Österreichische Post AG viewed the establishment of an objective, transparent selection process as a fundamental prerequisite for reaching these goals. The following are some of the specific measures taken with this in mind.

Job advertisements directly address women with the sentence, 'We endeavour to increase the proportion of women in higher-level positions and invite your application.' In order to increase the number of female applicants, equal consideration is given to women when applications are evaluated. All job interviews are structured and are conducted on the basis of interview guidelines or with the help of objectivisation tools such as work samples, tests and assessment centres. Final interviews with the most suitable candidates are subsequently conducted by the immediate superior.

In addition to amending the selection process, Österreichische Post AG arranged awareness training for those employees who conduct the process. As a result, the recruiting team it set up had learned, not least in focused training courses, to avoid typical 'perception errors' during the selection process.

Österreichische Post AG has experienced that objective, transparent processes are more productive than specific selective measures. It also points out that 'based on experience, "excessive" emphasis on the advancement of women often carries the risk of putting off qualified, self-confident female applicants'.

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Poste Italiane's goal: more women in senior executive positions

Poste Italiane SpA is a company that is facing major changes. As part of an umbrella project to change company structures, Italy's postal operator also set up a very extensive women's advancement programme. The goal of this programme is to increase the proportion of women in executive positions. At present, women comprise 43 % of Poste Italiane's workforce and 35.9 % of its salaried employees but only 20.4 % of its executive staff. The programme is financed by Italy's labour ministry and Poste Italiane.

Poste Italiane's women's advancement programme is divided into three phases and will cover a period of approximately 21 months. During the first phase, specific problems are to be localised, described and analysed. An accurate and detailed status description is considered to be a requisite foundation for further action.

During the second phase, a pilot project is to be launched introducing a competence catalogue for 60 women employees. This project will include a training course for women on the subject of change management during adaptation to new organisational models.

The third phase focuses on ascertaining, evaluating and subsequently communicating the results of the first two phases.

Three specific initiatives are already planned. The first envisages providing special awareness training for 18 senior personnel managers and union representatives. These persons negotiate on specific equal opportunities matters and the competence catalogue. In addition, Poste Italiane's ⁽¹⁾ Equal Opportunities Committee is supposed to meet on a regular basis in order to find new rules and models which do not discriminate against women (for example greater flexibility, part-time positions). In addition,

an open meeting is to be held for the purpose of discussing new models.

The unions have been involved in the entire project. Similar committees also exist at regional level, which has the effect of decentralising the tasks. The entire project is based on interdisciplinary cooperation. Accordingly, a wide variety of areas within the company are participating in the project, and external experts from various fields are drawn upon during different phases. Progress will be monitored at periodic meetings of the involved parties. The opinions of the participants in the pilot project are to be ascertained by means of a questionnaire. The Equal Opportunities Committee will guide and support ongoing activities. The entire procedure makes systematic use of scientific evaluation methods.

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⁽¹⁾ The Equal Opportunities Committee is composed of three employee representatives, one representative from the company and the same number of representatives from the major unions (SLC-CGIL, SLP-CISL, UIL-POST).

TPG takes an integrated approach to equality of opportunity for men and women

TPG has an equal opportunities policy which is aimed at ending the disparity between the position of female employees and that of male employees in the company. Men and women are to be equally represented at all levels within the company. Affirmative action measures are to be used to achieve this. As part of these efforts, TPG is setting quantitative goals and monitoring progress in reaching them. Two focal areas are described later in this compendium in a specific topic-related section. These two 'spearheads' are, however, only part of a comprehensive equal opportunities programme which was collectively agreed upon by the employers and the central works council.

The focus is on the selection of women who are equally suited for a position. This concerns internal and external hirings; increasing the number of women in managerial positions; providing women with more continuing training in internal and external courses within the framework of personalised personnel development which is accomplished by expanding the scope of positions and integrating women into projects to a greater degree.

Special provisions have been made to facilitate women's return to the working world, such as the provision of information about job vacancies and preferential consideration of persons re-entering the workforce. TPG is responsive to the wishes of pregnant employees regarding the final phase of their pregnancy and the period following delivery. As a result, women can choose from different options during the maternity protection period, including part-time work that can be credited towards the total maternity protection period.

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Supporting pregnant employees is an important part of equal opportunities activities at **Correos y Telégrafos, Spain**

The Spanish postal operator Correos y Telégrafos assists pregnant working women with measures aimed at incorporating them into the working environment. These measures vary according to the particular stage of the pregnancy because they take the respective employee's changing condition into account. Following notification of the pregnancy, Correos y Telégrafos assigns the respective employee to an equivalent post in the same town, should she not be able to perform her normal job during her pregnancy. For female delivery staff,

this would, for example, be back-office work. The demands of the new position take her physical condition into account. During this time, the employee is guaranteed the same pay level that she received for her previous position — to which she can return following her maternity leave.



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'The experience which I gained in the 'Crossing the boundaries' project rekindled my interest in people and so, out of the recent past, I broke out of my routine and have become re-energised.'



One individual participant on the impact of this project

Two initiatives by An Post, Ireland, to provide equal training and career development opportunities

An Post is an organisation which successfully managed a two-stranded project under the ADAPT phase one initiative during the period 1996–97. The two projects were known as ‘Heralding change’ and ‘Crossing the boundaries’.

‘Heralding change’ targeted change in relation to equality of opportunity of staff at middle management level within the organisation. Change was brought about through the medium of motivating the key decision-makers to encourage groups and individuals to question the status quo in relation to a broad range of equality issues in relation to all aspects of ‘diversity’.

This project was based on two generally held beliefs: (i) that organisations must adopt tangible goals outlining what positive action programmes on equality are meant to achieve, and (ii) that real and lasting change can only come about when existing structures are questioned by the ‘power groups’ in an organisation.

The stated aims of ‘Heralding change’ were:

- to develop equality by encouraging participants to see themselves as ‘change agents’ in their organisations;
- to initiate a dialogue with a college or university with a view to developing the project as the basis for a programme of study which would lead to an accredited business qualification;
- to examine the feasibility of an international network to share work experience throughout the European postal industry.

The task of adopting this approach to the postal sector was aided by a fruitful relationship with Royal Mail (UK).

Presentations were also made with the assistance of external consultants. Based on the core

aims of the project, a training model was developed.

There was also a networking process at national, transnational and European Union levels. Many sectors within the wider economy were actively involved in ‘Heralding change’. Examples of such non-postal organisations include Aer Rianta (the Civil Aviation Authority), ESB (Electricity Supply Board), and the Bank of Ireland. The partnership also benefited the ‘Crossing the boundaries’ project as the second group of this project had a woman manager from the Human Resources Division of Royal Mail (UK).

Both projects were selected by ‘Leargas’, the technical support unit of the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment, and Europe as contributions for discussion at two international seminars, one in Brussels and the other in Stockholm.

The aim of the project ‘Crossing the boundaries’ (a transnational initiative) was to provide training and education to women in public sector management in Europe. The overall objective was to develop learning — both through an academic approach and through a process of exchanging actual work experiences — in the areas of gender, international management and leadership.

The structure of the project was to run six separate modules of over a week’s duration each. These were delivered over a six-month period and were attended by all participants. Each module was hosted in a separate European city and dealt with a separate theme. A key meeting was a ‘diversity conference’ which was held in Paris. The purpose of this event was to benchmark best practice organisations and to exchange experiences through a process of networking.

The impact on the organisation can best be summed up by noting that, in An Post, all participants have subsequently been promoted. The result of networking for them in both the national and European arenas has been a most enriching experience and has succeeded in broadening the range of their management skills.

Indeed, the benefits have extended far beyond those acquired by the original participants as new and productive solutions on equality issues can be formulated and exchanged by all within the workplace.



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Posten AB would like to see more women in top leading positions

Posten AB is facing major changes. As part of an umbrella project to develop a new leadership, in line with a new vision and structure, a special women's development programme was started. The programme ASTEP addresses internal female executive managers from five large Swedish companies. The five companies are partners in running and financing this programme. It was important for Posten to have a cross-company programme because there are not enough women in upper managerial positions to start a separate programme for Posten. Partnership was important.

The programme grew out of a need to support a change in patterns in leadership and management structure within the companies. Posten and its partners believe in diversity and heterogeneity in today's leadership, of which the present management committee is a good example — four women and six men. The main target of this programme is to continually support and develop women for top managerial positions.

Posten with its partners have hired two consultants to coach and coordinate the programme. ASTEP covers a period of one year. The participants meet seven times in two- to three-day seminars. The individual targets for each of the women participating are to feel strengthened in her professional role, increase her confidence as a person, and gain knowledge about leadership within a multicultural environment so that she will be better qualified for a top management position. She will have the qualifications to be a member of boards of direction, and during the programme she will have had the role of a mentor.

ASTEP is an investment in women and good leadership, a cross-company programme for the future. Posten believes that the participants will build a strong network on their way to a more qualified managerial position.



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Reconciling work and family life



*Financial assistance for childcare is aimed at making childcare easier for female **TPG** employees*

TPG's special childcare programme gives employees a helping hand with childcare for children aged from 0 to 12 years. Since 1985, the company has provided financial assistance for childcare by offering openings at various daycare facilities. An external organisation is in charge of the financial and organisational aspects of these daycare centres. Mothers whose children attend one of these centres make a financial contribution towards the cost of this care. In addition to being good, the childcare programme does not have any waiting lists. Employees are very satisfied with this offer and make frequent use of it. These facilities provide daycare services for approximately 500 children of female TPG employees. A topical point of discussion is the question of opening the system to fathers. Male employees have expressed a desire to be allowed to enrol their children at these daycare centres too. The programme was set up on the basis of the TPG collective labour agreement reached by labour and management.

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*With its special return programme, **Deutsche Post AG** makes it easier for its employees to return to work following parental leave*

Deutsche Post AG is the largest employer of women in Germany today, making it only logical for it to incorporate parental leave into personnel plans. Deutsche Post AG has developed a special return programme with the aim of reintegrating employees into the working world following parental leave.

The programme takes a comprehensive approach — rather than coming into effect when an employee returns, it moves into action before the employee leaves, accompanying him or her until he or she returns to work. For this reason, the return programme is divided into three phases in which Deutsche Post offers employees a wide variety of assistance measures.

Phase 1: This phase starts even before employees take parental leave. During this phase, they are offered guidance regarding the parental leave options available to them and what their occupational outlook could be when they return. This helps the respective employee to start preparing at this early stage for resuming his or her career.

Phase 2: During their leave, Deutsche Post AG offers employees not only guidance but also concrete assistance to maintain and raise their skills and qualifications. For example, arrangements can be made for employees to undergo individual continuing training or to work part-time. This allows them to use their parental leave to develop their occupational skills.

Phase 3: During the reintegration phase, Deutsche Post AG helps to make its employees' reintegration into working life as easy as possible. Besides guidance, it also offers special

return seminars and selective continuing training.

Deutsche Post AG conducted a large-scale advisory campaign in the autumn of 1998. More than 50 % of the employees on leave indicated interest and received advice. Since 1999, the return sem-



inar has been offered as part of Deutsche Post AG's general continuing training seminars. The two-day seminar covers a large number of areas such as Deutsche Post AG's new corporate structure, the company's financial and political situation, the structure of the organisational units, quality principles and goals, the interdependencies between internal and external customer/supplier relations, teamwork, and measures to encourage self-initiative. In addition, an initiative to allow the intermittent employment of employees on leave was launched in 1998. The advantage this arrangement offers these employees is that they can keep up with things and maintain contact with the company. On the other side, Deutsche Post AG is interested in maintaining and developing the

skills of trained employees who are already familiar with the company and the job. The central works council and the unions participated in developing the entire programme.



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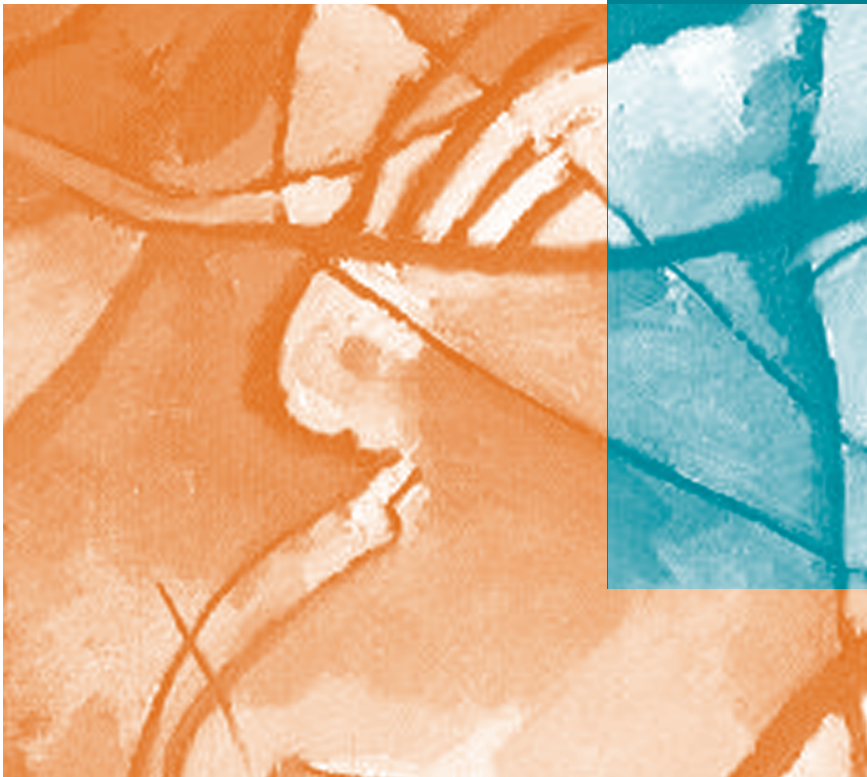
In certain cases, women can share executive positions at Deutsche Post AG

Following family-related leave, Mrs L., an attorney, and Mrs S., an economist, wanted to return to work. Having heard about each other through colleagues at work, they applied jointly for the position of departmental head of administration and personnel and were given the job. Mrs S. holds 56 % of the job, Mrs L. the other 44 %. In consultation with the branch director, they have both found an ideal working time arrangement with positive implications for all parties involved.

The advantage of this arrangement for Deutsche Post AG is that it now has two highly educated academics filling one position. Deutsche Post AG offers a rich choice of part-time working models, also for executive staff.

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Sexual harassment and discrimination

'Don't give up — take action!'



Drawing on a detailed internal study, Deutsche Post AG was able to assess the need for action and take concrete steps

In 1997, Deutsche Post AG commissioned a comprehensive empirical study on the subject 'Im Kontext von Betriebs- und Arbeitsklima — sexuelle Belästigung am Arbeitsplatz' ('In the context of the work environment — sexual harassment in the workplace') to obtain sound data on the need for action to foster collaborative behaviour in the workplace. The study took a particularly broad approach to the subject and covered both men and women.

The study's findings were made known to Deutsche Post AG's executive staff and other employees in 1998. The dissemination of this information underscored the importance of this subject and kept it from becoming an unmentionable taboo. In addition, a number of measures were taken to increase employee awareness of the issue and to make points of contact known. For example, an information brochure entitled *Reagieren statt Resignieren* (Don't give up — take action) was compiled and distributed to all Deutsche Post AG's employees. This brochure explains the areas where sexual harassment can happen and encourages persons who are subject to sexual harassment to confide in a contact person. Furthermore, a special seminar entitled 'Für partnerschaftliches Verhalten — gegen sexuelle Belästigung am Arbeitsplatz' ('Up with cooperation — down with sexual harassment in the workplace') was organised. This seminar increased employee awareness of the subject and pointed out alternative courses of action. Deutsche Post AG tackled this issue head-on with these extensive

measures, thus establishing awareness within the company. In addition, regional equal opportunities representatives are in constant contact regarding this subject with local equal opportunities contact persons and with executive staff and employees. The social partners were also integrated into both the study and subsequent activities. The brochure lists the works council as a point of contact.

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TPG has set up a special committee to deal with sexual harassment cases and develop preventive measures

TNT Post Group (TPG) has had an anti-sexual harassment policy since 1986, devoting itself at an early stage to a subject that is often taboo. This policy is aimed at ensuring that all TPG employees can work in an environment that is free of intimidation and discrimination. TPG stands by its responsibility to provide this type of work environment. In order to meet this responsibility, it has chosen a variety of measures at various corporate levels. For example, a special committee was set up to deal with employee

complaints. The committee gives information and advises on the treatment of complaints. Furthermore, the different parts of the company have a liaison person whom employees can contact. These persons are often members of the personnel department or from the social welfare field. Any cases of sexual harassment in the company are investigated thoroughly. Should the investigation reveal that an employee is guilty of sexual harassment, the managers decide what steps are to be taken against him or her. Sanctions may vary from a formal warning to a job transfer or even dismissal. The committee receives an average of 15 complaints every year, ranging from verbal to physical harassment.



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Equal opportunities for the disabled



France's La Poste has concluded a three-year agreement on the employment of disabled persons and adopted a policy to prevent occupational disease

La Poste concluded a three-year agreement on 3 June 1999 regarding the employment of disabled persons and persons who have become occupationally disabled in the course of their work. This agreement is part of La Poste's employment policy and is aimed at the improved integration of the disabled into the working world.

The agreement lays down the goals of recruiting more persons with disabilities and improving support measures for the disabled. It also provides for the development of a policy to prevent physical incapacity.

A concrete catalogue of concrete measures was developed which relates to the employment and the integration of disabled persons.

These measures provide for the recruitment of 500 disabled staff. Besides, a plan to make workplaces more disability-friendly (for example by improving access to buildings, and tailoring workplaces and jobs to the particular person's disability) and to improve continuing training for the disabled is to be developed and implemented.

In addition to improvements at the workplace, other socially minded campaigns are to be initiated or supported. One example is the provision of assistance to help the disabled improve their living conditions (such as loans for modifications and subsidised housing).


Furthermore, goods and services are to be bought at sheltered workshops with a view to supporting the disabled.

Besides the assistance provided for disabled persons, the development of prevention policy is another important part of the three-year agreement. One important element of this ambitious programme is the implementation of a plan to pre-

vent/reduce incapacity or illness caused by the individual's work.

This plan foresees a variety of measures: drafting workplace descriptions which include an outline of the physical, psychological and intellectual demands, modifying the organisation and the work areas, and holding interdisciplinary meetings where various company representatives and medical/social services experts meet for the purpose of preventing incapacity and to integrate preventive measures into the company's action plan and management's objectives.

In order to monitor the implementation of the planned actions, criteria have been established for each element and an annual assessment has been carried out.



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ELTA, the Hellenic Post, is strongly committed to helping the disabled

The employees manning the switchboard at ELTA's head office are blind or have severely impaired vision. To give persons with severely impaired vision or no vision at all an opportunity, ELTA takes advantage of the fact that the emphasis of this job is on hearing. To support these employees, certain documents are prepared in Braille, or, if the documents are particularly important or urgent, colleagues read them aloud to the disabled telephone operators.

Recently, ELTA has provided the switchboard operators with a high-tech computer which transforms printed text into voice via a scanner.

The following is an example of indirect support for the disabled and their parents by ELTA, the Hellenic Post

At ELTA, the parents of disabled children are given six additional days of special leave for taking care of their children. Normally, parents of children of up to 12 years of age are entitled to six days extra leave for looking after their sick children. Nevertheless, ELTA takes into account the fact that disabled children may require care even after they have turned 12 by granting this arrangement for the care of severely disabled children beyond the age of 12, and in some cases for life. The prerequisite for granting this extra leave is that the child's disability is such that parental care is still necessary at that age.

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*Three per cent of all positions at **Correos y Telégrafos** are reserved for persons with severe disabilities*

The Spanish postal operator Correos y Telégrafos fosters the employment of the disabled in particular by reserving positions for persons with severe disabilities. Three per cent of all positions on offer are reserved for persons with a percentage disability of 33 or greater. This policy ensures that the Spanish postal operator employs a certain number of disabled persons. Of all government employers in Spain, Correos y Telégrafos has the largest share of disabled employees.

Besides guaranteeing employment, the Spanish postal operator also implements concrete measures to ensure that workplaces are tailored to accommodate the employees' disabilities.

This applies not only to disabled staff who have been newly hired, but also to those employees who have suffered permanent physical limitation during their working life. Employees with physical limitations are examined by the company physician who determines how they can be deployed and the limits on the amount and type of work they can perform. Based on the results of this

examination, Correos y Telégrafos offers to transfer the disabled employee to another job at the same pay. All efforts are made to assign the employee to a post that is related to his or her previous job and is at the same location.

These arrangements were negotiated with the trade unions represented in Correos y Telégrafos and promulgated by the Royal Decree of 6 October 1995.



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Disabled employees at P&T Luxembourg

In cooperation with a State-recognised special school, the Centre propédeutique, three disabled youngsters were integrated into the postal and telecommunications company.

In the Centre propédeutique, they were prepared for their professional career at the company.

Following an appropriate probationary period, they received an unlimited contract of employment specifying a 30-hour working week. According to their disabilities, they perform duties in letter sorting, the laundry, the cafeteria or other areas. Thanks to the shortened working time, it is possible to offer these young people work that is suited to their capabilities and skills.

Furthermore, the company is committed to finding other workplaces in the company for

employees who can no longer carry out their former duties for health reasons.



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'Deafness does not constitute a handicap in letter delivery.'



Helmut Gronostay, Manager of the
Wuppertal-Elberfeld delivery base

Supported by the company, Deutsche Post AG's delivery team learns sign language for the sake of a deaf colleague

The fact that living and working together in a fair, socially minded way can start on a small scale, directly in the workplace, and does not necessarily have to be initiated by company programmes is demonstrated by the example of a deaf letter carrier. Born deaf, Ms P. applied for a job as a letter carrier at Deutsche Post AG in 1999 and was hired. Right from the start, her supervising manager took steps to ensure that everything went smoothly with her work. For example, to avoid misunderstandings, he made sure that colleagues and customers in her future delivery district were informed of her deafness. A leaflet was delivered to customers even before Ms P. started work. These efforts have paid off. Because they were aware of Ms P.'s situation, both customers and colleagues have shown understanding for her, allowing her to develop professionally. One reason why the work environment is good is because 10 of Ms P.'s colleagues decided to learn sign language in their spare time so that they could communicate with her. In addition to the branch director, the works council and the representative for severely disabled employees were also involved. With company support, they learned the sign language basics and the alphabet at adult education classes which they attended together on their free evenings. While re-enacting everyday situations from work and private life, they also became better acquainted with other areas.



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Post Denmark offers two deaf people employment as delivery staff

In cooperation with the local authorities, Helsingør Postal Region has employed two deaf delivery staff. In recognition of the need for training and acclimatisation, the two deaf people started with a training service period followed by some months of employment, the payment for which was borne by the local authorities. Hereafter, they were employed on normal terms.

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Equal opportunities for ethnic minorities

Deutsche Post AG fosters the acquisition of key social skills during its training

Deutsche Post AG, whose employees come from a total of some 140 countries, condemns discrimination regardless of reason. Approximately 2 600 young recruits are currently undergoing training in one of eight different occupations at Deutsche Post. All young people are learning a trade through apprenticeship. During their training, all trainees attend a three-day project seminar entitled 'Miteinander Leben' ('Living together') that targets xenophobia and racism and was developed in conjunction with the social partners. One segment of the seminar is dedicated to explaining discriminatory terminology, dealing with prejudices, viewing and digesting films on the subject, and facts and figures, for example on the legal situation of people of other nationalities. Discussions are held with airport social service workers who look after asylum-seekers, and group work is carried out on various aspects of the subject.

Another project — the IDEAL ('In der Arbeit Leben' — 'Living in one's work') project — is currently in the pilot phase. This project is aimed at fostering the acquisition of key social skills and is conducted during the introductory phase of training. Its objective is to establish a climate of mutual understanding and consideration which leaves no room for discrimination.

The seminar uses elements of adventure education. Using a playful approach, participants get to know themselves and their limits, and learn how to deal with others, how to communicate, cooperate and work within a team; they also learn tolerance and motivation that extends all the way to acting in environmentally friendly ways. Taking a holistic approach (head, heart and hands), participants learn in and from nature by jointly solving problems and meeting challenges. This seminar was designed to augment the 'Miteinander Leben' seminar. They will be coordi-

nated when launched. The pilot project is also being conducted in consultation with the social partners.

Furthermore, on 3 October 2000, Deutsche Post World Net, the German postal workers' union and the corporate works council issued a joint declaration against right-wing extremism and xenophobia.

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Post Denmark recruits people from other ethnic groups

Today, recruiting qualified staff to the delivery service may be difficult in certain regions of the country. At the same time, the rate of unemployment is still high in many branches for people from other ethnic groups. In cooperation with the trade unions, the Employment Service and a local day high school, Helsingør Postal Region has launched an integration project. The participants are offered a training course in the postal region covering 12 weeks each of theoretical and in-service training. The aim of the course is to train the participants for employment in the delivery service under normal conditions. Helsingør Postal Region has also entered into cooperation with a local language school to offer the participants a two to four weeks' internship in the postal region.

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*Sweden's multicultural population is reflected at **Posten AB***

The Swedish postal operator Posten AB is a company which employs people from all ethnic groups. It promotes the employment of people from a wide variety of ethnic backgrounds with a view to recreating the diversity of its customers within its own operations. An example of one of the methods it uses to accomplish this is provided here.

Posten AB noticed that customer service was not up to its normal standards at one of its post offices in a multicultural district because of cultural and linguistic difficulties in communication. In order to ensure good customer service, it was decided to purposely deploy personnel from corresponding countries in this outlet. Working together with an international employment agency, it was possible to find suitable applicants. This measure turned out to be so successful that it has also been implemented in a variety of other areas.

This is an example of how important multicultural work is for employers, employees and customers. It also shows that good practices can have positive effects for employers, employees and customers which, in many cases, can even be measured in terms of entrepreneurial value.



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Equal opportunities regardless of age

ELTA — the Hellenic Post's contribution to combating unemployment by developing special programmes for elderly as well as young unemployed citizens

ELTA's commitment to maintaining and even strengthening its social role is proved by the development of two special programmes.

1. Elderly unemployed citizens

ELTA gives people up to an age of 65 years the possibility of working on the basis of a fixed-term contract (usually around eight months). This initiative helps the interested candidates to fulfil the requirements for receiving their retirement pension.

2. Young unemployed citizens — vacation and voluntary work programme

Following a decision of ELTA's board and in cooperation with the General Secretariat of the New Generation, the organisation has given 100 young people the chance to combine holidays and voluntary work. This programme involves six hours of work per day, mainly in tourist areas and particularly on islands, for a period of up to 45 days. In return for their work, the volunteers are offered accommodation, food and travel expenses to and from their place of work. The volunteers are also covered against accidents/ill-

ness during their working period and in case of work on Saturdays and Sundays, they are granted the corresponding number of days off. In this way, their summer holidays are covered by ELTA in return for their six hours of daily work, and ELTA can solve the problem of heavy traffic during the summer peak period.



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Equal opportunities — La Poste's youth policy

La Poste contributes very actively to the national efforts that are being made to find employment for young people thanks to its focused policy of providing periodic training programmes.

Each year, almost 1 000 young people benefit from training programmes in the form of apprenticeships or qualification contracts. They are prepared for occupations in the fields of transport and delivery, in commercial occupations (financial adviser) or even in certain executive positions in production.

This training is integrated into a policy of pre-recruitment: at the end of their training periods, a permanent contract is offered to all those who obtained the required degrees or qualification.

Furthermore, La Poste voluntarily takes part in the governmental programme for the creation of employment for young people ('Emplois-jeunes') in the public sector. In particular, the jobs with special contracts which are limited to specific tasks make it possible to improve the contact with customers in certain postal agencies, especially in sensitive urban areas. During their term of contract, young people are offered training and they have the possibility of joining La Poste on a permanent basis within five years of completing their training. All in all, 5 000 young people are involved in this programme.

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Other aspects

Programme for the integration of offenders and the disabled at CTT Correios, Portugal

The aim of this programme was the integration of people for whom it was difficult to enter working life because of a physical disability or a background which did not follow society's rules — in this case offenders.

The objective was to integrate them into an area of postal operations where these circumstances would not interfere with their performance in the workplace — video encoding. This programme was conducted in cooperation with the general directorate for the prison service (Direcção Geral dos Serviços Prisionais) and CTT, which drew up a protocol listing the conditions under which offenders could work while serving their sentence. In addition, a protocol was signed together with the Institute for Employment and Professional Training (Instituto do Emprego e Formação Profissional) concerning support for the employment of the disabled. The advantage of video encoding is that it is a distinct area of operations in which the tasks can be performed by many different people with regard to education, status as offenders and also to disability. The workplace conditions also fulfil the architectural requirements, for example for people in wheelchairs. Following an internal selection process, the partner organisations propose suitable candidates according to CTT's requirements. The criteria of an offenders' day-release employment programme (RAVE) were decisive — length of sentence served, offenders' conduct during the sentence and the measure of trust put in them. Regarding the disabled employees, the prerequisite was that no deterioration in video-encoding performance was expected. Appropriate physical and psychological tests were carried out, along with a medical check. Experience shows that the candidates perform to the same established standard as concerns quality and quantity. Following initial difficulties, the social integration into the company was success-

ful particularly with regard to the offenders. Currently, two offenders are in employment, and five have already left due to completion of their sentences. Three disabled staff are currently employed, with a further three on a waiting list. An extension of the measure, previously limited to the mail-sorting centre in Lisbon, is being considered. Where the disabled staff are concerned, an expansion to other operational areas is possible, and the inclusion of offenders in this expansion is within the range of possibilities.



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*Programme for the support and guidance of employees with addictions or alcoholism at **CTT Correios, Portugal***

Substance abuse has developed into a serious problem in our society, spanning all social strata and age groups and also spreading into the workplace domain. According to experts, 70 % of alcoholics and 62 % of drug addicts are employees. Drug addiction and alcoholism are special types of disease, where the victim not only experiences problems within the family or circle of co-workers, but also causes damage to his or her company (industrial accidents, absenteeism, potential for conflicts, low productivity). Therefore, CTT Correios decided to develop the PAAT programme for the support and guidance of employees. While experimental in nature, the programme aims to reduce the problems mentioned above and also to improve human resources by creating a platform based on prevention, continued training, rehabilitation and reintegration. In so doing, it does not lose sight of the fact that its credibility and quality are based mainly on the following important factors: protection of employees' health and safety; early recognition and remedy of the abuse; guarantee of discretion and basic rights; communication within the company; and cooperation with government, employers and employees in creating a drug-free, alcohol-free working environment. The programme was developed according to a scientific study by Professor Domingos Neto and is advantageous in that absences from work are only necessary during possible detoxification periods. The project is supported by a working group for its implementation (GIP), which works together with CTT Correios and a team of medical advisers (CPT). GIP is composed of internal managers who have been appropriately trained. The team is complemented by a support group composed of employees. Moreover, the company adapted its work regulations as a support measure. The employee representation bodies were

also involved in the process. Therefore, the victims' whole environment is involved, including their families. The results of the programme are positive across the board. Abstinence from or a reduction in abuse were evident. The company's productivity has increased. The works council and the unions were involved in this programme from the very beginning.



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An integrated approach

*Equal opportunities in sensitive urban areas — national agreement with **La Poste, France***

La Poste participates very actively in the urban policy of the government in order to further the presence of high-quality public services in sensitive urban areas, i.e. in problem areas which are often located on the outskirts of large cities.

On 16 March 1999, La Poste, as the first big company to commit itself to this extent, concluded an agreement with four relevant unions in order to:

- improve the quality of public services for inhabitants by adapting the postal service and by identifying local synergies;
- support the staff working in sensitive urban areas by providing special programmes in the fields of human resources management, social support and work environment.

Thanks to these programmes, the staff working in institutions located in sensitive urban areas benefit and experience an acceleration in their career management, and receive a seniority bonus and priority treatment as concerns transfers. A special working time account makes it possible for them to balance better their working time and leisure time. Besides, they are especially intensively trained. Special housing assistance has been defined and special programmes introduced concerning security and healthcare.

This national agreement with a three-year term is implemented via regional agreements and local action plans which make it possible to intensify partnership actions and local initiatives.

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P&T Luxembourg has appointed an equal opportunities commissioner

As part of its comprehensive equal opportunities policy, P&T Luxembourg has appointed an equal opportunities commissioner who acts as a mediator. This person arbitrates between both sides in cases involving job-related or socially related problems.



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'It's all about removing barriers and ensuring no one is excluded from making a positive contribution to our successful future. By helping everyone achieve their full potential, whatever their background, we can build a diverse workforce and avoid wasting good talent.'



John Roberts, CBE, Chief Executive, the Consignia plc

In the United Kingdom, the Royal Mail's recruitment process integrates equal opportunities principles

For commercial organisations, integrating equal opportunities into 'the way they work' requires an approach which is as seamless as possible with practices and procedures and which can be seen to contribute to the business case. Accordingly, the commitment expressed above is also reflected in the Consignia purpose, direction and value statement, which includes the value:

'respect for every individual and recognition of their contribution and aspirations'.

The Royal Mail's equal opportunities policy incorporates the same message:

'we will strive to create an environment in which there is a respect for every individual and recognition of their aspirations'.

The Royal Mail's recruitment process exemplifies the approach to incorporating equal opportunities into 'the way they work'. For a business with over 150 000 employees, recruitment is a strategically significant procedure because it regulates the port of entry into the organisation and is visible both internally and externally.

A major review of the Royal Mail's recruitment process provided the opportunity to ensure the incorporation of equal opportunities good practice for legal compliance and business reasons, and to recognise the contribution a diverse workforce can bring to the business. In keeping with the integrated approach, the target groups were all those addressed by the equal opportunities policy of Royal Mail.

The new recruitment process, developed by a dedicated team, took about a year to prepare. The exercise involved close liaison throughout with the union representing the grades involved in the procedure. The procedure was carefully trialled, during which time applicants were asked to express their satisfaction with the process.

Equal opportunities considerations were incorporated into each stage of the recruitment process. A booklet, *Information about the job*, which is sent to every applicant, contains pictures that visually express a diverse workforce. The application form, which also includes some of the pictures, makes clear the commitment of Royal Mail as an equal opportunities employer. People invited to attend interviews receive a pack of information that also carries the pictures which illustrate Royal Mail's commitment to equal opportunities. The selection process likewise incorporates equal opportunities in that the assessors are trained to interview applicants (their training process includes specific material to ensure interviewers are well aware of equal opportunities issues). Furthermore, the aptitude tests used in the selection process are designed by external experts with the assurance that the tests are not discriminatory. Finally, monitoring is applied to every stage of the process to ensure that it is operating properly.

An integrated approach is therefore taken to equal opportunities throughout the recruitment process which expresses the commitment to equal opportunities of Royal

Mail in a practical way and applies to all categories of people. Royal Mail is satisfied that this integrated approach represents a positive way of applying equal opportunities policies.

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Glossary

Glossary of acronyms

CGIL	Confederazione Generale Italiana del Lavoro (Italian union)
CISL	Confederazione Italiana Sindicata Lavoratori (Italian union)
EFQM	European Foundation for Quality Management
Eurofedop	Europese Federatie van het Overheidspersoneel, Europäische Föderation der Öffentlich Bediensteten, Fédération Européenne du Personnel des Services Publics, European Federation of Employees in Public Services
PAAT	Programa de Apoio e Assistência aos Trabalhadores
P&T	Postes et Télécommunications Luxembourg
PostEurop	Association of European Postal Companies
TPG	TNT Post Group
UIL	Unione Italiana del Lavoro (syndicat italien)
UNI	Union Network International



Mediagraphy

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