

Political delays put further pressure on the sustainability of postal delivery in the Netherlands

New Dutch Postal Act has been awaiting consideration by the Dutch parliament since 2020, costs of essential public duty becoming unsustainable

The Hague, 20 October 2026 – A financially sustainable postal service is of social and economic importance to the Netherlands. However, the necessary political decisions about its future have yet to be taken. The current Dutch Postal Act dates from 2009, and the bill for a new Postal Act has been awaiting consideration by the Dutch parliament since 2020. Decisionmaking has been repeatedly postponed in recent years, including again in recent months. As a result, PostNL remains bound by outdated requirements for the Universal Service Obligation (USO, primarily letterbox mail), while mail volumes have declined by 70% over the past twenty years. The costs incurred by PostNL in carrying out this essential public duty are therefore continuing to rise. With political decisions still pending, PostNL will be unable to implement important changes to postal delivery next year and is forced to apply for compensation for the net costs of carrying out the imposed obligation in 2027. PostNL calls on political decision-makers to treat the Postal Act as a matter of urgency, in the interests of postal service users and the thousands of employees in the postal sector.

“PostNL cannot be expected to bear the costs of an essential public duty”

Maurice Unck, Director of Mail in the Netherlands at PostNL: “Consumers and businesses must be able to continue to rely on their mail being delivered, whether it is a card, a voting card or an important letter. The new Postal Act has been awaiting consideration by the Dutch parliament since 2020 and, six years later, has still not been considered. Meanwhile, mail volumes have declined sharply. At the same time, we are required to maintain a full Saturday delivery service, even though very little mail is delivered on that day. The law also requires us, for example, to maintain a large number of letterboxes that are increasingly empty. Postal delivery under these outdated rules will cost PostNL more than €148 million in total for 2025, 2026 and 2027. By comparison, the Mail in the Netherlands segment recorded a result of €2 million for 2025. PostNL cannot be expected to bear the costs arising from a statutory obligation. This uncertainty puts unacceptable pressure on the mail business and our employees. It also affects PostNL’s competitiveness and investment capacity as a whole.”

Swift political decisions needed to ensure reliable postal delivery

In July 2026, the delivery timeframe for standard mail was changed to within two delivery days. This was a necessary first step in adapting the postal service to the sharp decline in mail volumes. To keep postal delivery reliable, accessible and affordable, a further change is needed: delivery within three delivery days. Mail would then be delivered throughout the Netherlands four days a week, from Tuesday to Friday, with no delivery on Saturdays.

The transition to delivery within three delivery days requires a major overhaul of the logistics system. This includes changes to IT systems and operational processes. The change will also affect employees, whom PostNL wants to inform in good time and involve carefully. At least one year is needed for these preparations. As long as political clarity is lacking, PostNL cannot start the careful preparation process. Implementation will therefore be possible no earlier than the beginning of 2028, provided that a political decision is taken by January 2027 at the latest.

PostNL calls on political decision-makers to introduce the new Postal Act quickly so that preparations towards a future-proof postal service in the Netherlands can begin.

Compensation for the costs of the essential public duty

As long as the statutory requirements have not been adapted to the sharp decline in mail volumes, the costs of the USO will continue to rise. As a result, PostNL is unable to carry out this essential public duty on a cost-covering basis and is applying for €80 million in compensation for the net costs in 2027. These are the additional costs that PostNL incurs as a result of the statutory obligation. Providers of the universal postal service in neighbouring countries are also compensated for these net costs. The European Postal Services Directive allows member states to compensate the designated provider when the statutory obligations constitute an individual and disproportionate financial burden. PostNL previously applied for compensation for the net costs for 2025 and 2026. Legal proceedings concerning these applications are ongoing.

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