

# Postal Diary

## 15 October 2009 – 11 January 2010

by Joseph Fenech

### Corrigendum

With reference to the Postal Diary appearing in Vol. 38/3 (December 2009) of the Journal of The Malta Philatelic Society, it has to be pointed out that the heading of the said Diary should have read “Postal Diary: 7 May 2009 – 9 October 2009”.

### 15 October

MaltaPost plc notified that the letterbox in Ġnien il-Kunsill ta' l-Ewropa, Ta' Xbiex, had been damaged by fire. The last collection from this letterbox had been effected on Monday, 12 October 2009, at 19.44 hrs. and MaltaPost officials became aware of the incident at about 20.05 hrs. on Tuesday, 13 October 2009. Some mail items may have been totally destroyed in this incident. MaltaPost advised those persons who had posted letters between the times indicated, to verify receipt or otherwise with the addressees. MaltaPost informed that due to this incident, for a brief period the letterbox was temporarily out of service. However, the letterbox was quickly repaired and rendered fully operational again.

### 30 October

By means of notification No. 871 appearing in the Malta Government Gazette No. 18,500 dated 30 October 2009, it was notified that the Telephone Box and the Letter Box in Triq il-Marina corner with Triq it-Telgha ta' Guardamangia, Pieta`, should be classified as Grade 2 Monuments in terms of Structure Plan Policy UC07. The Malta Environment and Planning Authority will exercise its powers of enforcement, as set out in sections 46, 52, 53 and 55 of the Development Planning Act (CAP. 356) in the case of any contravention to the provisions of this Act as regards to Scheduled Property.

### 2 November

On 2 November 2009, the Malta Communications Authority (MCA) published an overview of the MCA's Small Businesses Market Research on Postal Services. The key purpose of this research was to assess the extent of consumer satisfaction with the services provided by MaltaPost plc (the Universal Service Provider). The target population for this survey consisted of companies employing between 1 and 20 employees. The total net valid sample size consisted of 258 entities. The 2009 research

contained in the MCA report was based on a survey carried out by EMCS – the survey was conducted by telephone during June 2009. Where applicable the report provides trends with a similar survey conducted in 2006 by the National Statistics Office.

The research report concluded that small businesses are sending and receiving fewer letters in 2009 than in 2006. The use of e-commerce (60.5%) and e-mails (33.3%) were the main reasons given for this decline. The majority of small businesses were satisfied with various aspects of the postal service offered by MaltaPost. 38% of the small businesses interviewed claim that they do not use MaltaPost's website. 94.6% of the small businesses interviewed stated that they had used the post office services/facilities during the previous 12 months, an increase of 14.8% when compared to the results obtained in 2006. Of these, 96.3% highlighted that they used the post office to buy stamps, 93% to post letters and 75.4% to register mails. The majority of small businesses (39.8%) highlighted that they spend between 11-20 minutes queuing for a postal service at a post office. The majority of the small businesses interviewed (86.5%) claimed that they were satisfied with the services/facilities provided by the post office. The use of MaltaPost's registered mail service (78.3%) increased slightly when compared to 2006 (77.5%). The level of satisfaction (96.5%) increased considerably when compared to 2006 (72.8%). The use of MaltaPost's parcel post service has increased (57%) when compared to 2006 (21%). Of those who have used MaltaPost's parcel post service, 72% claimed that they had used this service in relation to orders placed via distance selling methods to their firm. The majority of small businesses (53.5%) indicated that they were not aware of MaltaPost's complaint handling procedures compared to 83.8% in 2006. The main type of complaint related to mail delivery or collection. A higher percentage of small businesses (43%) – when compared to 2006 (27.1%) – claimed that the service provided by MaltaPost over the previous year had improved. A lower percentage of small businesses (69.8%) – when compared to 2006 (79.8%) – indicated that the services provided by MaltaPost were fairly good or very good.

## **2 November**

On 2 November 2009, the Malta Communications Authority (MCA) published the communications market review report for the period January – June 2009. This report provides up-to-date information on key areas of the Maltese electronic communications industry, the postal sector and eCommerce. The review also provides a summary of the main regulatory developments during the period under review.

With regard to the postal sector, the report indicates that the provision of postal services is characterised by the designated Universal Service Provider, namely MaltaPost plc, falling within the universal area and another 16 registered postal operators, falling outside the universal service area. Premiere Post Ltd. also holds a licence to provide non-reserved postal services within the scope of the universal service area. Overall,

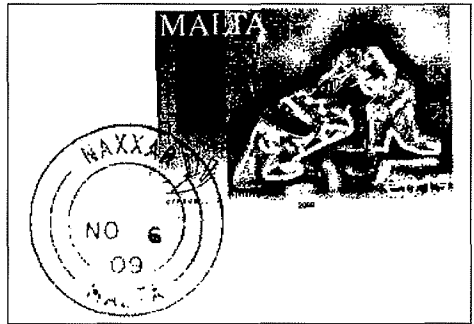
postal activity in the first half of 2009 was lower than that registered in the corresponding period for 2008. During the first half of 2009, MaltaPost delivered around 17.9 million *Domestic Mail* items and 2 million *Inbound Cross Border Mail* items. Compared with the corresponding period in 2008, *Domestic Mail* items delivered by MaltaPost declined by 2 million (9.9%). *Inbound Cross Border Mail* volumes remained practically unchanged whilst *Outbound Cross Border Mail* reached 1.4 million items, 0.4 million items less than that registered in the first half of 2008.

## 4 November

MaltaPost plc notified that as from Wednesday, 4 November 2009, the Sub-Post Office at ‘Mimics’, Triq Giovanni Curmi, Iklin IKL 1070, ceased to operate as a Sub-Post Office.

## 6 November

MaltaPost plc notified that the €0.19 stamp of the XIII Edition of the Games of the Small States of Europe set which had been issued in June 2009, was reprinted for the second time and made available for sale as from Friday, 6 November 2009. The stamp is 44.0mm x 31.0mm in size with a perforation of 13.9 x 14.0 (comb). The stamps were printed on Maltese Crosses watermarked paper by Printex Limited, and are available in sheets of ten.



## 13 November

A special handstamp inscribed “Gozo Philatelic Exhibition – 13-21 November 2009”, was used during the Gozo Philatelic Exhibition organised by the Gozo Philatelic Society, and held at the Ministry for Gozo Exhibition Hall, St. Francis Square, Victoria, Gozo between Friday, 13 November and Saturday, 21 November 2009. The exhibition was open to the public between 8.30am and 12.00 noon and 1.15pm and 4.30pm from Monday to Friday, and between 9.00am and 12.00 noon on Saturdays and Sunday. Five different personalised stamps were also issued to mark this tenth edition of the Gozo Philatelic Exhibition.



To commemorate this special event, as well as MaltaPost plc's first participation in the Gozo Philatelic Exhibition, MaltaPost issued an Occasion Card. This Occasion Card, No. 23 in the series, features the imprinted €1.07 (46c) stamp from the Scenery set issued in 2007 (depicting the harbour at Mgarr, Gozo). The card itself shows the Azure Window in Dwejra, Gozo.

## 25 November

On the occasion of the visit of King Juan Carlos I to Malta, a special postmark “Il-Miġja tar-Re Juan Carlos I u r-Reġina Sofia ta’ Spanja – Valletta – Malta – 25-26-XI-2009”, was used on Wednesday, 25 November and Thursday, 26 November 2009 at the MaltaPost Valletta (Dar Annona) Branch. This special postmark was designed by artist and philatelist Alfred Caruana Ruggier, a Committee member of The Malta Philatelic Society.



## 27 November

The Malta Communications Authority published an overview of the Large Business Mailers Market Research on Postal Services. The key purpose of this research was to assess the extent of consumer satisfaction with the services provided by MaltaPost plc. (the Universal Service Provider). The target population for this survey consisted of companies which send large quantities of mail on a regular seasonal basis. 32 companies decided to participate in the survey. The 2009 research contained in this report was based on a survey carried out by EMCS – the survey was conducted through personal interviews during June 2009. Where applicable, the report provides trends with a similar survey conducted in 2006 by the National Statistics Office. Results show that the proportion of Large Business Mailers sending less than 3,000 mail items has increased (+20.8%) when compared to 2006. The percentage of companies which send more than 30,000 letters per month increased as well, though to a lesser extent (+6.3%). 37.5% of the large businesses interviewed claimed that they use other providers, besides MaltaPost plc, for their postal services. The majority of these (50%) claimed that the level of quality of the services provided was fairly good. The mean level of satisfaction, when compared to 2006, has improved for the ‘last collection times’, ‘time at which post is delivered’, and ‘value for money’. It decreased for the ‘duration taken to deliver letters’ and ‘information available about the services provided’. A slight decrease was registered in the percentage of Large Business Mailers who use the

post office service facilities (2006 – 79.2%, 2009 – 75%). The main purpose for visiting the post office was for registering (95.8%) and posting (91.8%) letters.

Out of the 24 Large Business Mailers who used the post office, 29.2% spent between 11-20 minutes queuing at a post office. The majority of the respondents (73.9%) highlighted that they were satisfied with MaltaPost's post office service facilities. 96.9% of the Large Business Mailers interviewed indicated that they used MaltaPost's registered mail service. Of these, 90.3% highlighted that they were satisfied with this service. 40.6% (13) of the Large Business Mailers interviewed highlighted that they had used MaltaPost's parcel post service within the last 12 months. Of these, 92.3% indicated that they were satisfied with the service. 93.8% of the Large Business Mailers interviewed highlighted that they have used MaltaPost's bulk mail service within the last 12 months. A higher level of satisfaction was expressed for this service when compared to 2006. 93.8% (30) of the large businesses interviewed indicated that they did not use MaltaPost's addressed or unaddressed advertising services. The majority of the Large Business Mailers interviewed (56.3%) were not aware of the appropriate letterbox standard size. 75% of the large businesses interviewed were aware of MaltaPost's complaint handling procedures. The majority of the Large Business Mailers interviewed (56.3% - 18) highlighted that they have made some form of complaint to MaltaPost in the last 12 months. The main type of complaint (4 out of 18) related to loss or substantial delay of postal items. Nearly all of those who made some form of complaint (17 out of 18) highlighted that their complaint had been solved. Out of those who made some form of complaint, the majority (88.8% - 16) were not compensated for loss, damage or delay of postal items or for non-compliance with established quality of service standards. A higher level of satisfaction was expressed with the overall level of quality of postal services provided by MaltaPost when compared to 2006.

### **30 November**

On Monday, 30 November 2009, MaltaPost plc issued the set of Christmas stamps for 2009. The three stamps in this set depict images of three nativity paintings, two found at the National Museum of Fine Arts in Valletta, and one preserved in a private collection. The stamps, which were designed in-house by MaltaPost plc, have values of €0.19 ("Mater Admirabilis" – tempera on panel in the manner of Alessandro Botticelli), €0.37 ("Madonna and Child" – oil on canvas by Corrado Giacchino) and €0.63 ("The Madonna and Child" – oil on canvas by a follower of Simone Cantarini). The stamps are 44.0 mm X 31.00 mm in size, with a perforation of 13.9 X 14.0 (comb). The stamps were offset printed on Maltese Crosses watermarked paper by Printex Limited, and are available in sheets of ten. MaltaPost plc issued a special commemorative double-ringed handstamp to cancel the stamps

on the first day of issue (on FDC No. 8\2009). The handstamp was inscribed “MALTAPOST - ----- MALTA” in the outer ring and “CHRISTMAS/JUM IL-HRUĠ/30.11.09” in the inner ring. The MaltaPost Philatelic Bureau featured these stamps in the stamp bulletin No. 278. Together with the stamps, MaltaPost also issued for sale a Christmas card bearing the image of the painting shown on the €0.19 stamp (“Mater Admirabilis”).



## 1 December

To further enhance its service during the peak Christmas period, MaltaPost extended the opening hours of the Head Office Branch at Triq Hal Qormi, Marsa, so as to enable clients to pick up their notified non-dutiable parcels, bulky parcels and EMS items until 21.00 hrs. between Mondays and Saturdays. Besides, postal services and customs clearance service at the MaltaPost Head Office were made available between 8.00 hrs. and 12.45 hrs. and from 13.45 hrs. to 19.00 hrs. between Mondays and Fridays, and from 8.00 hrs. to 12.45 hrs. on Saturdays. MaltaPost could also clear items from customs on behalf of customers at a nominal fee upon authorisation from clients. The country-wide delivery service was extended until 21.00 hrs. from Mondays to Sundays, as well. This extended service was to be continued until 23 December 2009.

## 1 December

On Tuesday, 1 December 2009, the Malta Communications Authority (MCA) published its Decision Notice on “Postal Sector – Managing Common Operational Issues in a Multi-Operator Environment”. In order to create the conditions for an environment that is conducive to the onset of competition and in preparation of full market opening of the postal sector by the end of December 2012, the MCA had issued a consultation document in August 2009 proposing a set of minimum standards setting out the duties and obligations of licensed postal operators (i.e. postal operators operating services falling within the scope of the universal service) relating to common inter-operator issues that arise in a multi-operator environment. The objective of these minimum standards, which the MCA issued as a Decision Notice, is to minimise postal operator and consumer confusion in a multi-operator environment, thereby ensuring prompt handling and delivery of postal articles. These minimum standards will also help to maintain mail integrity, preserve customers’ confidence in the postal system and provide operational certainty to new entrants. The common operational issues discussed in the consultation

document related to: (a) the identification of mail as carried by a postal operator; (b) accessing elements of the postal infrastructure and services; (c) the timely and efficient extraction and repatriation of mail which has entered the postal facilities of a postal operator which is not the intended operator; and (d) the redirection of misdirected customer enquiries.

## 2 December

On Wednesday, 2 December 2009, the MaltaPost plc Philatelic Bureau issued Occasion Folder no. 1 to mark the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Bush - Gorbachev Summit held in Malta in 1989. This folder, with a retail price of €5.00, includes the Bush and Gorbachev 1989 stamp as well as a personalised stamp commemorating the occasion. This personalised stamp portrays the two leaders during the 1989 summit, and is cancelled with a Valletta circular date stamp (marking 2 December 2009).



## 3 December

On 3 December 2009, the National Statistics Office issued News Release 217/2009 highlighting the post and telecommunications statistics for the third quarter (July – September) 2009. According to these statistics, in the quarter under review, total postal traffic amounted to around 10.4 million items, a drop of 3.7% when compared to the corresponding quarter in 2008 (when the amount stood at circa 10.8 million items). The total number of parcels sent through the national post in the period under review was 18,269 (compared to 16,131 in the same quarter of the previous year, and 20,830 in the second quarter of 2009).

## 11 December

MaltaPost plc notified that service from the letterbox situated in Misrah Dorell, Santa Luċija, was temporarily suspended due to maintenance works. The nearest letterbox which could be used in the interim was LB No. 013 located at the Civic Centre, Dawret it-Torri, Santa Luċija.

## 22 December

MaltaPost plc notified that the letterbox in Misrah Dorell, Santa Luċija, which had been temporarily inaccessible due to maintenance works, was back in service.

## 24 December

By agreement with the Malta Communications Authority, an early collection from all public letterboxes took place on 24 December 2009 (at 14.00 hrs.).

## 24 December

The St. Julians MaltaPost Branch situated within the Lombard Bank plc branch in Triq Paceville, was open for business between 8.30am and 12.30pm (early closure) on Thursday, 24 December 2009.

## 26 December

By agreement with the Malta Communications Authority, MaltaPost was on shut-down, and all Branches were closed, on Saturday, 26 December 2009. Normal service was resumed on Monday, 28 December 2009.

## 29 December

On Tuesday, 29 December 2009, MaltaPost plc issued a Definitive Set of 17 stamps, celebrating Malta's heritage through stamps. The set was designed by Edward D. Pirotta and Paul Psaila, and each stamp is 44.0 mm X 31.0 mm in size, with perforations of 13.9 X 14.0 (comb). The stamps were offset printed on watermarked paper by Printex Limited, and are available in sheets of ten, or as a souvenir sheet. Each souvenir sheet (face value amounting to €11.42) is 169 mm X 262 mm in size, and is individually numbered. The face values of the stamps are €0.01 (Pleistocene Period), €0.02 (Early Temple Period), €0.05 (Late Temple Period), €0.07 (Bronze Age), €0.09 (Phoenician and Punic Period), €0.10 (Roman Period), €0.19 (Byzantine Period), €0.26 (Arab Period), €0.37 (Norman and Hohenstaufen Period), €0.50 (Angevin and Aragonese Period), €0.51 (Knights of St. John), €0.63 (French Period), €0.68 (British Period), €0.86 (Independence), €1.00 (Republic), €1.08 (EU Accession) and €5.00 (Coat of Arms of the Republic of Malta). MaltaPost plc issued a special commemorative handstamp to cancel the stamps on the first day of issue (on FDC No. 9/2009). The handstamp was inscribed "MALTAPOST - ----- - MALTA/DEFINITIVE ISSUE/JUM IL-HRUĠ/29.12.09", and also included the coat of arms of the Republic of Malta. The MaltaPost Philatelic Bureau featured these stamps in the stamp bulletin No. 279.



To celebrate this new Definitive Set, MaltaPost plc, in collaboration with Midsea Books Ltd., published a book titled "The Historical Collection – Celebrating Malta's Heritage Through Stamps". The book, edited by Heritage Malta, narrates Malta's history through a number of essays by



specialist historians. A uniquely numbered souvenir sheet bearing the 17 stamps in the Definitive Set was also included in the first 2,500 numbered copies of this publication, with both the souvenir sheet and the book having a matching number. The various essays in the book were written by John J. Borg, Reuben Grima, MariaElena Zammit, Nicholas C. Vella, Anthony Bonanno, Charles Dalli, Mario Buhagiar, Kenneth Gambin, Emmanuel Magro Conti, Joseph M. Pirota and Richard Cachia Caruana.

### **31 December**

By agreement with the Malta Communications Authority, an early collection from all public letterboxes took place on 31 December 2009 (at 14.00 hrs.).

### **31 December**

The St. Julians MaltaPost Branch situated within the Lombard Bank plc branch in Triq Paceville, was open for business between 8.30am and 12.30pm (early closure) on Thursday, 31 December 2009.

### **2 January 2010**

By agreement with the Malta Communications Authority, MaltaPost was on shut-down, and all Branches were closed, on Saturday, 2 January 2010. Normal service was resumed on Monday, 4 January 2010.

### **2 January**

The Sub-Post Office at Pen House Stationery, Pjazza l-Eroj, Birkirkara BKR 4252, was closed for business between Saturday, 2 January and Saturday, 16 January 2010, both days included.

### **11 January**

In line with the Malta Communications Authority Decision Notice of September 2009, MaltaPost installed two new public letterboxes. One was installed at Triq Profs Walter Ganado, Pembroke (opposite the ITS, next to the bus shelter), and the other at Triq il-Marfa, Ċirkewwa (on the way to the Riviera Hotel from Ċirkewwa, next to the bus shelter). Service to these letterboxes commenced on Monday, 11 January 2010, with the collection time being after 7.00pm on weekdays and 3.00pm on Saturdays.