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Postal services - Harmonized track and trace events - Part 1: Forward flow

Postalische Dienstleistungen - Harmonisierte Sendungsverfolgungs-Ereignisse - Teil 1:
Weiterleitung

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Postal services - Harmonized track and trace events - Part
1: Forward flow

Postalische Dienstleistungen - Harmonisierte
Sendungsverfolgungs-Ereignisse - Teil 1: Weiterleitung

This draft Technical Specification is submitted to CEN members for Vote. It has been drawn up by the Technical Committee CEN/TC 331.

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EUROPEAN COMMITTEE FOR STANDARDIZATION
COMITÉ EUROPÉEN DE NORMALISATION
EUROPÄISCHES KOMITEE FÜR NORMUNG

CEN-CENELEC Management Centre: Rue de la Science 23, B-1040 Brussels

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European foreword

This document (FprCEN/TS 18055-1:2024) has been prepared by Technical Committee CEN/TC 331 “Postal services”, the secretariat of which is held by AFNOR.

This document is currently submitted to the Vote on TS.

This document has been prepared under a standardization request addressed to CEN by the European Commission. The Standing Committee of the EFTA States subsequently approves these requests for its Member States.

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Introduction

International track and trace capabilities are a crucial element of Cross border E-Commerce. Predicting the delivery moment of an E-Commerce item can be difficult because the item may be long distances, undergoing complex customs and security processes. Therefore, recipients are keen on following their order via track and trace services.

These services, the provided events, their descriptions and the quality of these events differ per logistical service provider (LSP).

This leads to an opaque supply chain with limited or no visibility on the progress of the E-Commerce item on its way to its destination, causing uncertainty for the recipients, increasing call centre calls and costs whilst reducing the trust in cross border E-Commerce services.

In some cases, over 20 events with unclear descriptions, or even repetitive descriptions that make no sense to the intended recipient of the E-Commerce item are shared.

An increase of the quality of track and trace services with a focus on the recipient, will lead to an increase of consumer trust and supply chain cost reductions. In turn, this will lead to growth of cross border E-Commerce both internationally and domestically.

This document (being the result of a CEN project) will focus on events related to cross border E-Commerce to and from Europe to and from non-European countries as well as cross border E-Commerce within Europe. A generic increase of trust in cross border E-Commerce will be beneficial for the flows within Europe, potentially leading to an increase in cross border trade within the European Union.

The main purpose of this document is to provide a minimum set of progress updates (Events) that are well-defined and easy to understand for the recipient of the E-Commerce items.

The starting point for this is the Consumer buying the goods from the E-Commerce seller. Therefore, in this document, when describing the individual events related to the progress of the execution of the delivery of an E-Commerce item, the language we will use is the language of the Consumer. This in contrast to most other technical specifications for events that take the perspective of the Logistic Service Providers (LSP) and therefore assume a level of knowledge about transport and logistics operations that is simply not there with Consumers. Furthermore, this document aims to describe only the events that deliver the most useful information to the recipient.

This document contains a list of nine (9) track and trace events for LSP's to share with the recipients of E-Commerce items to update them regarding the progress of delivery execution. Chapter 5 describes these events in detail.

The document also includes a description of the basic data set for these events. Chapter 6 provides more detail on that.

This short list of events (defined from the recipient perspective) can be a starting point for LSP's currently not providing any tracking events as well as a reference for LSP's improving the transparency of their track and trace solution.

Although this document has been developed with E-Commerce and cross border shipments in mind, harmonization of track and trace events can benefit other logistic flows, such as domestic shipments and direct (offline) shop orders.

Therefore, this document may be applicable for goods flows and parcel flows outside the scope of cross-border E-Commerce that this document covers. E.g. a number of the events mentioned may be applied also in domestic contexts and/or for transportation of goods that have been traded without using the Internet.

In general, an LSP will have identified and defined events for itself. Therefore, we fully expect that LSPs will need to translate or map their own events to the 9 events defined in this document.

In the addendum you will find a mapping of these nine events to a number of track and trace event lists currently in wide use. The addendum is in no way intended to be comprehensive; many LSPs will need to make the mapping from their own event set to the set in this document for themselves.

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1 Scope

The scope of this document is the forward flow of E-Commerce items. Starting point is arrival at a logistic service provider, end point is the final delivery, or at least the attempt to final delivery.

The returns flows, either caused by unsuccessful delivery, “return to sender” or as a service for recipients to send a received shipment back, are not covered by the forward events. To keep this document unambiguous and easy to understand, these return flows are excluded. Return flows may be covered in a separate technical specification.

Not in scope are the logistical flows within the facilities of the producers and sellers of the items. These fall outside the responsibility of the CEN/TC 331 domain.

Excluded as well, are all events necessary for an LSP to track items within its own facilities. It is up to the LSP how to run its business, and internal standards are in place for the management of internal processes. Internal events are considered to be of no interest to a recipient, with the exception of some of the last mile events which are mentioned later in this document.

2 Normative references

There are no normative references in this document.

3 Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this document, the following terms and definitions apply.

ISO and IEC maintain terminology databases for use in standardization at the following addresses:

- ISO Online browsing platform: available at <https://www.iso.org/obp/>
- IEC Electropedia: available at <https://www.electropedia.org/>

3.1

E-Commerce

trading of goods over the Internet

Note 1 to entry: According to [Britannica Money](#), E-Commerce covers “maintaining relationships and conducting business transactions that include selling information, services, and goods by means of computer telecommunications networks. It consists of business-to-consumer and business-to-business commerce as well as internal organizational transactions that support those activities.”

Note 2 to entry: Within this document we have simplified the definition to better fit the context of this document.

3.2

E-Commerce company

company engaged in E-Commerce

Note 1 to entry: Examples include, but are not limited to, manufacturers, shops, web-shops, e-merchants, platforms, marketplaces, intermediaries, and information service providers.

3.3

E-Commerce item

package containing products bought/sold as part of an E-Commerce transaction

Note 1 to entry: This definition means that this document covers a specific sub-set of services provided within the UPU context. Refer to UPU standards and documentation for the determination of that sub-set.

3.4**Logistic Service Provider
LSP**

organisation that provides transport and logistic services

Note 1 to entry: In this document this includes postal operators, couriers, express and parcel carrying operators. In case there is some kind of temporary storage involved in the end-to-end journey, the storage service provider is also included in the term LSP.

3.5**recipient**

person to whom the parcel is destined, whose name and address are written in the addressee zone on the shipping label

[SOURCE: prCEN TR XXXXX Safe, secured and contactless delivery of postal items]

3.6**journey**

<of goods/items> set of consecutive transport movements and other logistics activities needed to move the goods or items from the seller's facility to the buyer's (recipient) facility as specified in the Sales Order (Trade transaction)

3.7**transport movement**

conveyance (physical carriage) of people, goods, or other objects from place to place

[SOURCE: UN/CEFACT: https://unece.org/DAM/cefact/rsm/RSM_CargoTracingAndTracking_v0.2.1.pdf#page=9]

3.8**transportation hub**

place of any size where cargo or goods are exchanged between vehicles and/or between modes of transport

3.9**first mile**

transportation of goods from a seller's premises or warehouse to the next hub from where the goods are forwarded

Note 1 to entry: This transportation may be done by the seller itself. E.g. MSMEs or private senders may take their E-Commerce item to a Post Offices or Parcel Shop, which is then considered the first transportation hub in the items journey to the buyer/recipient.

3.10**last mile**

final part of a journey of goods (e.g. an E-Commerce item) comprising the movement to the final destination from a transportation hub near to that destination

Note 1 to entry: A collection point is considered to be the end of the journey when the goods are picked up by a recipient. Transportation from the collection point to the recipient premises is then under the responsibility of the recipient.

3.11**collection point**

place where the intended recipient of goods/items may retrieve those goods/items

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Note 1 to entry: Places include but are not limited to post offices, stores with a service desk, and so-called “parcel lockers”.

3.12**first mile operator**

LSP responsible for executing the first mile transportation

3.13**last mile operator**

LSP responsible for executing the last mile transportation

4 Harmonized track and trace events**4.1 Goal of harmonized track and trace events**

The goal of this document is to introduce a minimum set of track and trace events that are consistent, easy to provide and easy to understand for recipients and buyers of cross border E-Commerce goods. Standard events, provided to a recipient with a meaning that is completely independent of the logistic service provider and easily understood, bring a level of comfort to the recipient and leads to a more transparent supply chain from a consumer perspective.

This will lead to an increase of consumer trust, which is beneficial to all parties in the supply chain.

To achieve this increased level of comfort and consumer trust, this document applies the below criteria to determine which events have to be in the minimum set.

1) Comfort for consumers/recipients

The event will provide recipients with clear information on the whereabouts of their packet/parcel.

In case all LSP's provide the same events as defined in this document, the consumer/recipient does not have to interpret or translate events depending on the LSP. The LSP carries the responsibility for translating its own events into the events defined in this document. Providing the same events to the recipient, regardless of the LSP (Logistics Service Provider) who logged the milestone, will generically increase the trust in cross border E-Commerce.

This will lead to fewer questions from the recipient, which will reduce (call centre) costs for the LSP's.

2) Ease for e-Merchants and platforms to share events

A standardized set of events makes it easier for E-merchant to share these with their customers, independent of the LSP's the e-Merchant is dealing with.

The e-Merchant may insist that the LSPs they work with provide as a minimum, the events as defined in this document to them.

3) Fair comparison of services, e.g. transit times

Transit times are built up by the time passing between the occurrence of events. If logistic service providers use different events and different definitions it is harder to compare their services. Calculations based on different events will lead to different outcomes. The same goes for the calculation of CO₂ emissions.