

**Comparison of prices of the providers of the Universal Postal
Service in the European Union in 2015**

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3. Executive Summary

This study compares the prices charged to residential customers of mail services and postal parcels services included within the Universal Postal Service (US) provided by the Universal Service Providers¹ (USP) of the Member States of the European Union (EU), in 2015, and also analyses their trends relative to the previous year (2014) and to 2008.²

The services included in this price comparison are:

- Priority national mail, weighing up to 20 g;
- Non-priority national mail, weighing up to 20 g;
- Priority cross-border mail, sent to EU Member States, weighing up to 20 ;
- National parcels, weighing up to 2 kg.

Bearing in mind the intention is to compare prices from the residential customer's point of view, the information on the prices in each country does not consider any discounts. For the same reason, the comparison uses the final price with value added tax (VAT) included, where applicable,³ and any other taxes. Note that this aspect is only relevant for Sweden, the only country where VAT is currently applied to the products analysed herein, at a rate of 25 per cent, and Cyprus, where 0.02 euro is charged for every postal item.⁴

Prices were compared based on current exchange rates and purchasing power parities (PPP). This latter approach is intended to pinpoint the differences in income levels between the various countries, which could lead to misinterpretations of the comparisons made using current exchange rates.

The analysis shows that prices in Portugal are below the EU average, for the set of prices analysed.

¹ In Germany there is no designated USP, so this study considers the prices charged by the incumbent operator, Deutsche Post.

² Information for 2014 and 2015 prices relates to April, while that for 2008 and 2011 relates to October. This should be taken into account when considering the conclusions about price trends presented in this study.

³ The Sixth Council Directive (77/388/EEC) of 17 May 1977, with its various amendments, allows the provision of public postal services to be exempt from VAT. Member States, however, have interpreted this provision differently (ANACOM, 2011b). It should also be noted that in April 2009, the European Court of Justice, in an action (C-357/07) between TNT Post and the United Kingdom's tax authority, decided that the exemption from VAT provided for in the Sixth Directive should only be applied to the services provided by a public postal operator in its capacity as a USP, and not to all its services.

⁴ In Cyprus, postal items are subject to a 0.02 euro tax, called refugee fund stamp.

The cost of sending a 20 g priority national mail item was 15 per cent lower than the EU average (excluding Portugal) in 2015, whereas in 2014 it was 16.5 per cent lower. Although the price rose by more than the EU average in 2015, Portugal's ranking in terms of the lowest price changed from 10th, in 2014, to the 9th position, in 2015, jointly with Estonia. Compared to the prices in force in 2008 and 2011, the price in Portugal grew at a slower pace than the average of the other Member States.

In the non-priority national mail service, the price for sending a 20 g item in Portugal is 16.4 per cent lower than the EU average (excluding Portugal), and it is the 9th lowest price of the countries that provide this service. Compared with the prices in force in 2008 and 2011, the price in Portugal grew at a faster pace than the EU average.

The cost of sending a 20 g cross-border mail item to the other Member States is 28 per cent lower than the EU average (excluding Portugal), moving from 7th place in the lowest price ranking, in 2014, to 5th in 2015. As with the national priority mail, this price has increased more slowly than the EU average, compared with the prices in force in 2008 and 2011.

Regarding national parcels, the cost of sending a 2 kg national parcel in Portugal was 3.8 per cent lower than the EU average (excluding Portugal) in 2015, which is the 15th lowest price of the Member States. In 2014 the price was 6.6 per cent lower than the EU average and was also the 15th lowest price. Compared with 2008 and 2011, the cost of this service grew at a faster pace than the EU average price.

Taking PPP into consideration, the prices in Portugal in 2014 and in 2015 were below the EU average, except for national parcels, which cost more than the European average.

4. Introduction

This study presents a comparison of the prices of some of the main postal and parcel services used by residential customers, covered by the US and provided by the USP⁵ of each EU Member State in 2015. It also characterises the price trend over the previous year (2014) and relative to the 2008 prices.

The services assessed were: priority and non-priority national mail, priority international mail sent to other EU Member States (hereinafter, Member States), and national parcels postage.

Directive 97/67/EC (Postal Directive), as amended by Directives 2002/39/EC and 2008/6/EC, establishes the principles under which the provision of the US must be provided in Member States. Article 12, relating to charging principles, is particularly relevant to this study. According to the principles mentioned therein, the tariffs for each of the services included in the US must be:

- affordable, such that all users can have access to the services provided;
- cost-oriented, and give incentives for an efficient provision of the US, while Member States may decide that a uniform tariff shall be applied, throughout their national territory and/or cross-border, to services provided at single piece tariff and to other postal items;⁶
- transparent and non-discriminatory.

At international level there has been a decline in postal traffic, mainly due to the replacement of postal correspondence by electronic communications (EGIDE and IMR (2015)). This sector is characterised by economies of scale (NERA (2004)), that is, by a reduction of unit costs through increased traffic, which means that the decrease in traffic

⁵ Germany does not have a designated USP, so this study has used the prices charged by the incumbent operator, Deutsche Post.

⁶ The application of a uniform tariff does not exclude the right of the USP to enter into individual price agreements with customers.

will influence the cost of sending items by post. In a context of prices geared to costs, there could well be a price increase.

Portugal has seen important changes recently to the legal framework applying to postal services, notably the entry into force of Law 17/2012 of 26 April, which transposed Directive 2008/6/EC, thus completing the liberalisation of the sector in Portugal.⁷ The same happened in the other Member States, since Directive 2008/6/EC provided for this liberalisation to occur by the end of 2012. CTT-Correios de Portugal, S.A. (CTT) will be the USP in Portugal until 31 December 2020. Equally noteworthy is the total privatisation of CTT, which occurred in two stages, the first in December 2013, and the second in September 2014.

In a context of harmonising legislation at the European level, the comparison of the services provided in the different Member States, specifically the prices charged, is important. It contributes to a better understanding of how the principles established in the Postal Directive are actually reflected in the various European countries, and of how Portugal stands as regards the other Member States. Moreover, given the changes implemented in the sector, this study aims to help to update the view of the tariffs used in the EU's USs and their trend in recent years.

5. Methodology

The information on US prices used in this study was obtained through a questionnaire sent to the members of the European Regulators Group for Postal Services (ERGP), and in some cases it was supplemented by consulting the websites of Member States' USPs. Information was collected on the prices in force at the beginning of April 2014 and 2015 in the various Member States.⁸ This was supplemented with information from previous tariff studies published by ANACOM, for the years 2008 to 2011, so as to gain an insight into the trend over a longer timeframe.

⁷ However, CTT will remain the sole provider of registered mail services used in legal or administrative proceedings until 31 December 2020.

⁸ For Portugal, in 2015 the prices in force from 01.03.2015 were used (available at http://www.anacom.pt/streaming/Apendice_de_precos_decisao12fev2015.pdf?contentId=1347514&field=ATTACHED_FILE). Regarding 2014, the prices in force from 07.04.2014 were used (available at http://www.anacom.pt/streaming/apendice_decisao27marco2014proposta_precosCTT.pdf?contentId=1195013&field=ATTACHED_FILE).

It should be noted that while the information on 2014 and 2015 concerns the prices in force at the beginning of April, the information available in the studies from 2008 to 2011 relates to October. Therefore, when comparing the 2008 and 2015 tariffs, we are looking at an interval of six and a half years. Given the broad timeframe, the cumulative growth from October 2008 to October 2011, which is a three-year period, and from October 2011 to April 2015, which is three and a half years, was also analysed.

The prices presented in this study are the final price paid by the consumer, without discounts, including VAT (where applicable), and any other taxes that may apply.⁹

It is also important to note that Croatia only joined the EU on 1 July 2013. Therefore, only 2014 and 2015 US prices were used for this country.

The average prices mentioned in this study include Portugal. The indicators concerning the price difference between Portugal and the European average, however, were calculated excluding Portugal.

To compare prices we first have to convert them to a common currency, and the euro was chosen because a number of Member States now use this currency. The exchange rate used was the annual average rate of the year to which the prices refer, with the exception of 2015, where the monthly average for March 2015 was used. The information on exchange rates was obtained from the Bank of Portugal website.

The comparison based on exchange rates has some limitations, however. It does not take into account the cost of living differences in each country. Generally speaking, in countries with higher salary levels product prices also tend to be higher. Comparing only the price of a given service in two countries without considering differences in the salary levels of their populations could lead to the conclusion that the country with the higher price would have the less affordable price. It is possible, however, for the difference in salary levels to more than offset the price difference between the two countries. Therefore, it is important to take into account the countries' different levels of purchasing power.

For this purpose, US product prices based on purchasing power parity (PPP) were also compared. The use of PPP in the price comparisons for the postal sectors is quite

⁹ Currently, VAT is only applied to the analysed US products in Sweden, at a rate of 25%. Additionally, all postal items in Cyprus are subject to a 0.02 euro tax, called the refugee fund stamp.

interesting, notably because the postal sector is fairly labour-intensive.¹⁰ It is important to note, however, that PPP indicators should be interpreted taking some of their limitations into account, particularly in terms of trends over the years and cross-country hierarchy comparison. As noted by Schreyer and Koechlin (2002), due to the level of uncertainty underlying any statistical indicator, small differences in the GDP level of each country can result in different hierarchies, which may not be statistically significant. In the context of this study, this means that although it is possible to conclude at the outset that there are significant differences between the countries at the top of a given hierarchy and those with lower prices for that hierarchy, the comparison between one country and those with similar rankings may not be that precise. It is also important to stress that the PPP-based comparison for each year is done at current prices and does not consider inflation. Thus, comparisons based on PPP should be interpreted according to the prices in several countries in that year.

The PPP indexes used in this study were those provided by Eurostat. Portugal was used as a benchmark, so the prices there are always the same in PPP and in euros. Therefore, the price of a service in PPP may be interpreted as being the price that service would have if it were provided in Portugal. The index used was that of the year of the corresponding prices, with the exception of 2015. For this year, since Eurostat indexes were not yet available, 2014 values were used. Therefore, since the same PPP index is used for 2014 and 2015, price variations (in PPP) between these two years will only reflect price variations in the local currency of each country.

¹⁰ According to WIK (2013), labour costs are over half of total costs for most USPs in Europe.

6. National and International Mail

6.1. Priority national mail

The service selected for this category was that which enables a residential user to send a letter using the universal postal service (US), in a standardised format, weighing up to 20g, within most of the national territory and delivered on the business day after collection.

In Portugal the service in this category is *Correio Azul*. The service standard announced by CTT provides for delivery the day after collection in mainland Portugal, and up to two days after collection for mail sent from and to the Autonomous Regions, at the same price.

Spain is the only Member State where the US does not include a service with these characteristics. Although, according to its USP, the *Cartas Ordinárias* service guarantees a delivery time of one day after collection, within the same locality, the delivery time in other Spanish regions is two business days in the same province, and three business days for all other national deliveries. It was therefore decided to include this service only in the comparison of prices of non-priority national mail. It should be noted that in previous price comparison studies conducted by ANACOM this was considered a priority service. The inclusion of this service in the comparison of prices of non-priority national mail is in line with the practice in similar studies by ERGP.¹¹

In Slovenia there are two deliveries under the US that fit the category of national priority mail. The difference is whether it is possible for the item to be read automatically by a machine, in which case the service is cheaper. Both services may be used by residential customers. As with ANACOM's previous study, as well as other studies (Deutsche Post, 2015), the lowest price taken for 2015 was 0.34 euros, while the alternative service costs 0.40 euros.

It should also be noted that in some Member States the first weight step, which in Portugal is items up to 20 g, includes heavier items (for example Hungary, where the first weight step includes items up to 30 g, Denmark, Slovakia, Luxembourg and Sweden, where the

¹¹ ERGP reports (12) 33 and (13) 33 Rev. 1, available at http://ec.europa.eu/growth/sectors/postal-services/ergp/index_en.htm.

first weight step includes items up to 50 g, and Poland where the first weight step includes items up to 350 g). These differences in the definition of the service should be taken into account when comparing the respective prices, since it is expected that a higher price limit in the weight step means that the cost of the service will be also higher.

Analysis of prices in euros and in local currency

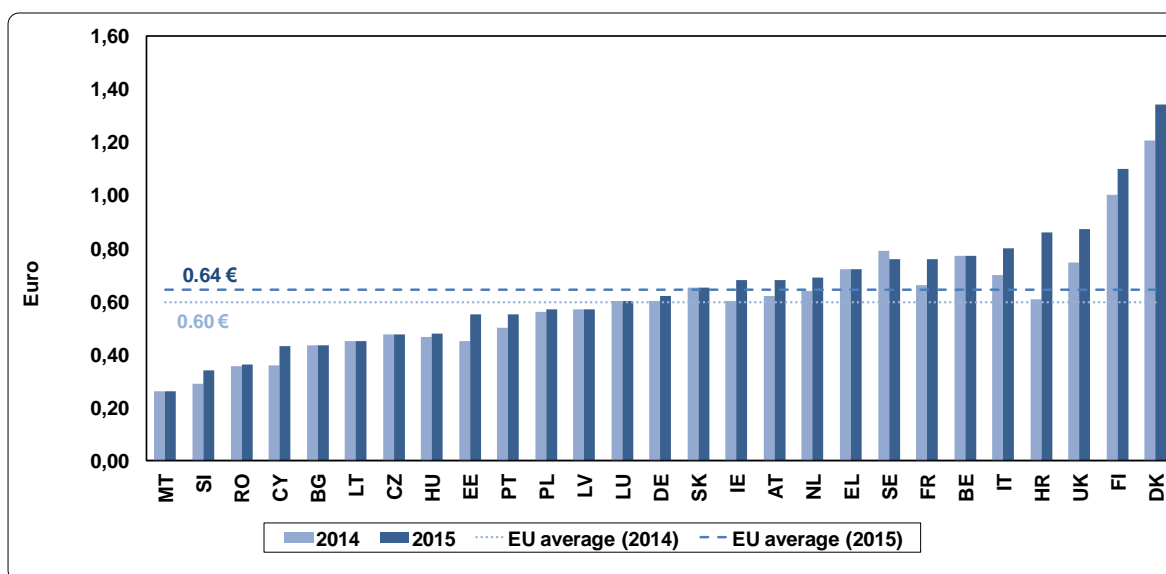
Of the twenty-seven countries analysed, with the criterion of the price being in local currency, in April 2015 fourteen¹² Member States were charging more than in April the previous year (Annex I), while the other thirteen countries had the same price. No country was charging a lower price for this service. In percentage terms, the country with the biggest increase was Croatia, with a 41 per cent rise, while the United Kingdom recorded the smallest increase, 1.6 per cent. In Portugal the increase was 10 per cent.

Analysing the prices in euros (Figure 1), there was an increase in the average price of national priority mail in the EU, from 0.60 euros in 2014, to 0.64 euros in 2015. From the twenty seven countries analysed, fourteen,¹³ including Portugal, had the price recorded in 2015 below the European average (including Portugal). In 2015, the price charged in Portugal, 0.55 euros, was the 9th lowest price together with Estonia, while in 2014 it was the 10th lowest price.

¹² Germany, Austria, Croatia, Cyprus, Denmark, Slovenia, Estonia, Finland, France, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, Portugal, and United Kingdom

¹³ Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Germany, Estonia, Hungary, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Latvia, Malta, Poland, Portugal, Romania, and Slovenia

Figure 1 – Comparison of prices, in euros, of priority national mail



Source: ANACOM
 Note: EU averages include Portugal

Portugal's price was 16.5 per cent lower than the European average (excluding Portugal) in 2014 and 15 per cent below the average in 2015 (Table 1).

The coefficient of variation¹⁴ was 1.6 per cent higher in 2015 than in the previous year, which signifies an increase in the price variability of the priority national mail service in the EU.

Table 1 – Statistical indicators for the prices, in euros, of the priority national mail

	2014	2015
EU average incl PT	€0.60	€0.64
EU average excl PT Dev	-16.5%	-15.0%
Coefficient of Variation	33.8%	35.4%

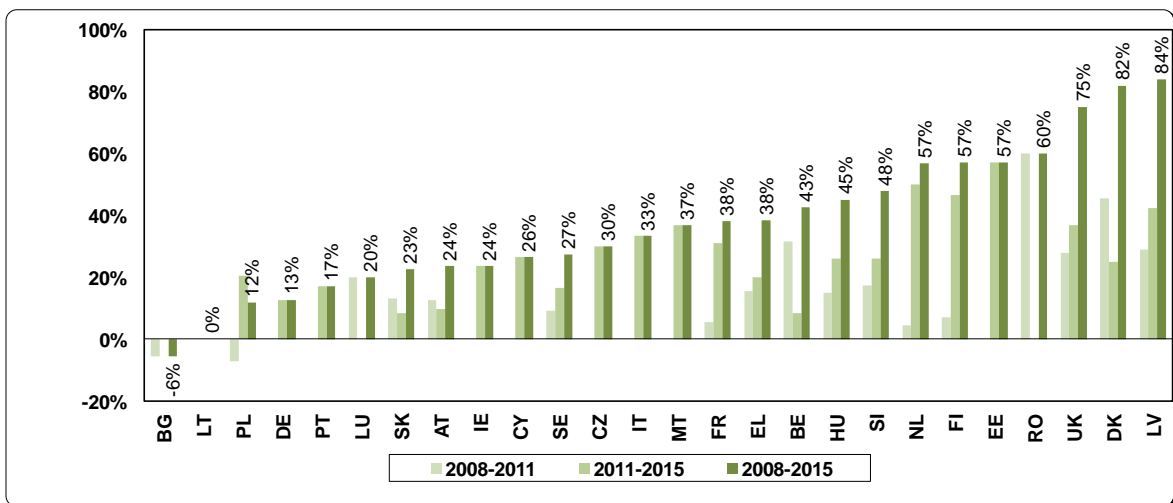
Source: ANACOM

Figure 2 presents the accumulated percentage change in prices, in local currency, for the priority national service between 2008 and 2015, as well as the changes in the first few

¹⁴ The coefficient of variation is the relative standard deviation, expressed as a percentage of the mean. This measure of dispersion was chosen to express the variability of the data without taking into account the impact of the variable's own magnitude, thus enabling the comparison of the variability of variables with different orders of magnitude (the coefficient of variation of the prices of the various postal services, or of the cost of a service in euros and PPP, in the case of this study). For guidance, the coefficient of variation is usually deemed low when it is 25% or lower.

years of that period (2008 to 2011) and in the other years (2011 to 2015).¹⁵ If we compare 2008 and 2015 price levels we can see that the price of this service increased in twenty-four countries, the greatest increase being in Latvia (84 per cent). Lithuania was the sole Member State with no price change and the only reduction was in Bulgaria (-6 per cent). In the group of countries where prices increased between 2008 and 2015, Portugal recorded the third smallest price increase in that period.

Figure 2 – Price changes, in local currency, of priority national mail (2008-2015)



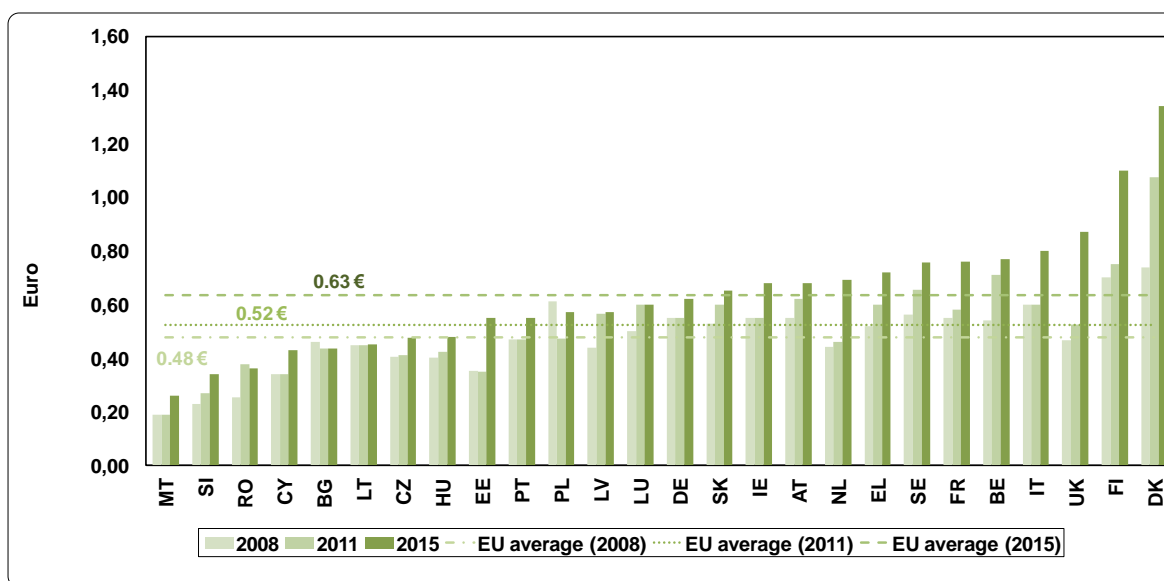
Source: ANACOM

Note: Prices from 2008 to 2011 for October of those years. 2015 prices for April.

Figure 3 presents the price changes of the priority national mail since 2008, expressed in euros. Comparing the price levels for the periods in question, the average price for Europe was 0.52 euros in 2011, 9.7 per cent higher than in 2008, while between 2011 and 2015 there was a 21.3 per cent increase. Thus, at European level, the prices of the priority national mail services presented a higher growth rate between 2011 and 2015 than in the period from 2008 to 2011.

¹⁵ Croatia is missing from the analysis of the price changes since 2008, because it only joined the EU on 1 July 2013.

Figure 3 – Price changes, in euros, of priority national mail¹⁶



Source: ANACOM

Notes: Prices from 2008 to 2011 for October of those years. 2015 prices for April. EU averages include Portugal.

Comparing the price in Portugal with the European average (Table 2), the price in Portugal has increased more slowly than in the EU overall. While in 2008 the price charged in Portugal was 1.5 per cent below the European average (excluding Portugal), the 13th lowest price in the EU, in 2011 it was 10.5 per cent below the average and was the 10th lowest price. In 2015, the price of this service in Portugal was 13.8 per cent below the European average, excluding Croatia (see Table 2), and 15 per cent below the European average, including Croatia (see Table 1).

Table 2 – Changes in the statistical indicators for the prices, in euros, of the priority national mail

	2008	2011	2015
EU average incl PT	€0.48	€0.52	€0.63
EU average excl PT Dev	-1.5%	-10.5%	-13.8%
Coefficient of Variation	27.1%	32.4%	36.0%

Source: ANACOM

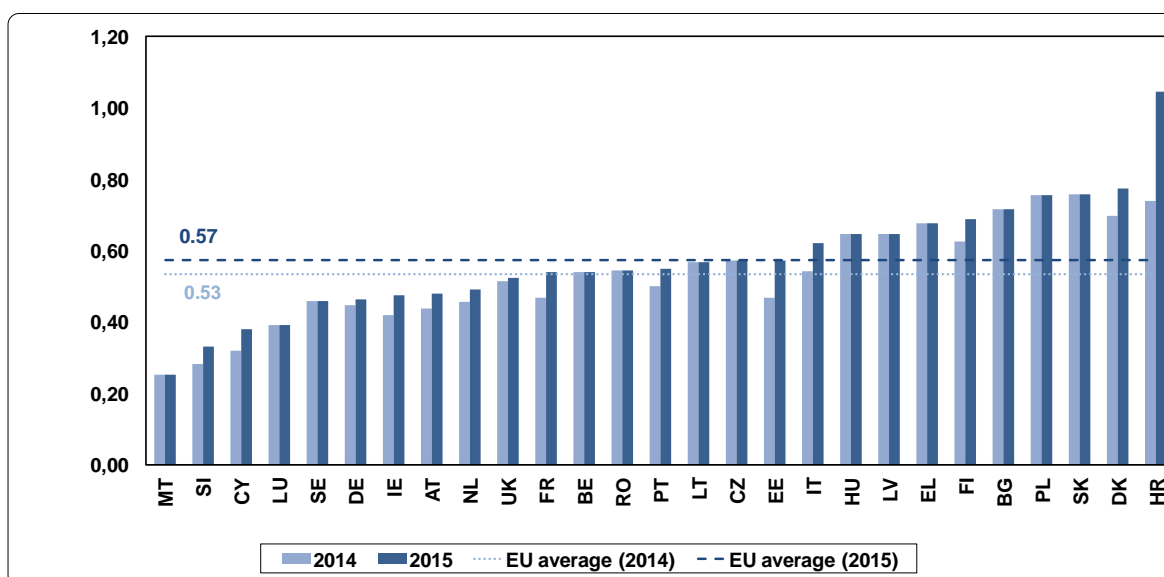
Notes: Prices from 2008 to 2011 for October of those years. 2015 prices for April. Croatia is not included in the calculation of the average, since it only joined the EU on 1 July 2013.

¹⁶ Note: the averages presented in the figures and tables concerning the price changes since 2008 only cover the countries where the service was provided as part of the universal service in 2008, 2011 and 2015, and do not include Croatia since it only joined the EU in 2013. For that reason, the average price mentioned for 2015 may differ from that given in the 2015-2014 comparison.

Analysis of prices in PPP

As shown in Figure 4, the analysis of prices in PPP demonstrates that Portugal had the 14th lowest price for the priority national mail service in the EU in 2015, considering the purchasing power in the different countries, against 12th position in 2014. In 2015 there is a difference of five positions in the ranking compared to Portugal's 9th position when the price is analysed in euros. This is because the purchasing power of the Portuguese is lower than that of some of the countries where the price of this service is higher, and this difference more than offsets the difference in the cost of the service in those countries.

Figure 4 – Comparison of prices, in PPP, of priority national mail



Source: ANACOM
 Note: EU averages include Portugal

Table 3 shows that from 2014 to 2015 there was a 7 per cent increase in the average price of priority national mail in the EU, considering prices in PPP. Although the price in Portugal was still below the EU average, there was a greater difference from the European average in 2014, when Portugal's price was 6.8 per cent below the average of the rest of the Member States, than in 2015, when the price in Portugal was 4.1 per cent below the average of the remaining countries.

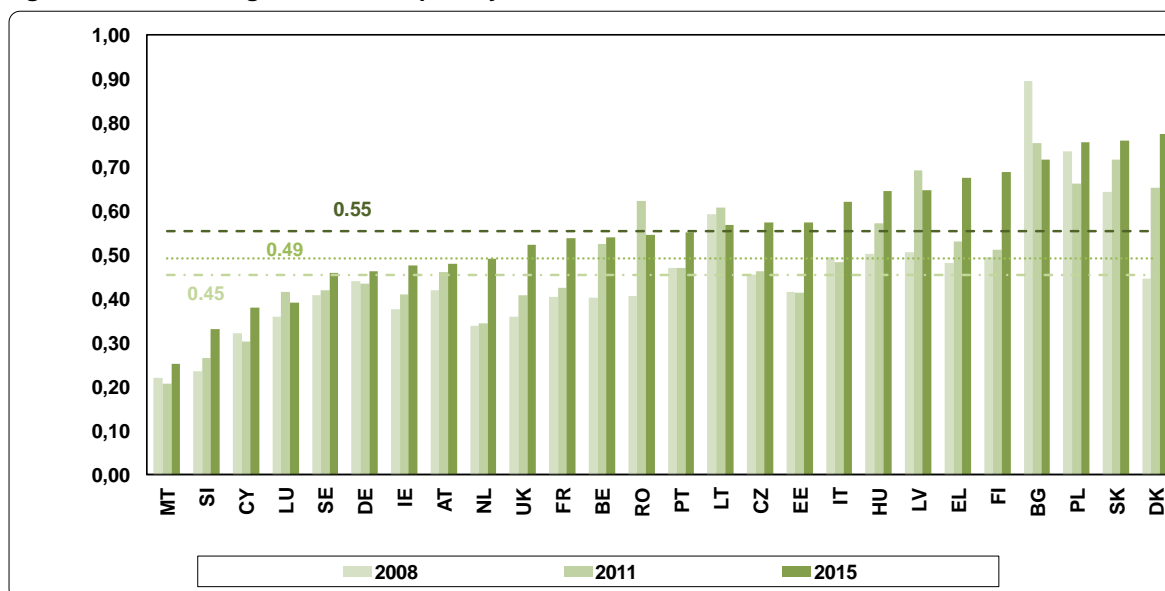
Table 3 – Statistical indicators for the prices, in PPP, of priority national mail

	2014	2015
EU average incl PT	0.53	0.57
EU average excl PT Dev	-6.8%	-4.1%
Coefficient of Variation	25.9%	27.6%

Source: ANACOM

Figure 5 presents the changes in the price of the priority national mail service since 2008, in PPP.¹⁷ This figure shows that, taking the entire period under analysis, Bulgaria and Lithuania were the only countries where the price fell. The greatest reduction was recorded in Bulgaria, where the price charged in 2015 was 19.8 per cent below the 2008 price.

Figure 5 – Price changes, in PPP, of priority national mail



Source: ANACOM

Notes: Prices from 2008 to 2011 for October of those years. 2015 prices for April. EU averages include Portugal.

Comparing the price of this service in Portugal with the European average (Table 4) we find that the price charged in Portugal in 2008 was 3.6 per cent above the European average. In 2011, while the prices in the other countries, when adjusted for purchasing power, grew more than in Portuguese, the price charged in 2011 was 4.4 per cent below the European average, and 0.8 per cent below that average in 2015.¹⁸

¹⁷ This analysis does not include Croatia, for the reasons given above.

¹⁸ Including Croatia, the price charged in Portugal was 4.1 per cent below the EU average (see Table 3).

In 2008 Portugal ranked 17th among countries charging a lower price in PPP, and moved to 10th place in 2011 and 2015. Therefore, Portugal rose three positions in the overall ranking.

Table 4 – Changes in the statistical indicators for the prices, in PPP, of priority national mail

	2008	2011	2015
EU average incl PT	0.45	0.49	0.55
EU average excl PT Dev	3.6%	-4.4%	-0.8%
Coefficient of Variation	30.7%	27.8%	23.6%

Source: ANACOM

Notes: Prices from 2008 to 2011 for October of those years. 2015 prices for April.

Croatia is not included in the calculation of the average, since it only joined the EU on 1 July 2013.

6.2. Non-priority national mail

The analysis of the price of the non-priority national mail services includes the services that enable residential users to send, through the universal postal service (US), a postal item in a standardised format, weighting up to 20 g, within most of the national territory of their country, with delivery of the item within 3 working days after the collection. In the case of Portugal, the service that fits this category is *Correio Normal*.

In only seventeen Member States does the provision of the US include a service with these characteristics. In Belgium, although a non-priority mail service is included in the US, it is not meant for the typical residential customer. Therefore, this service was not included in the present study.

In Cyprus there was no non-priority national service under the US before 1 August 2014. Therefore, the comparisons presented here only show a value for the service there for the year 2015.

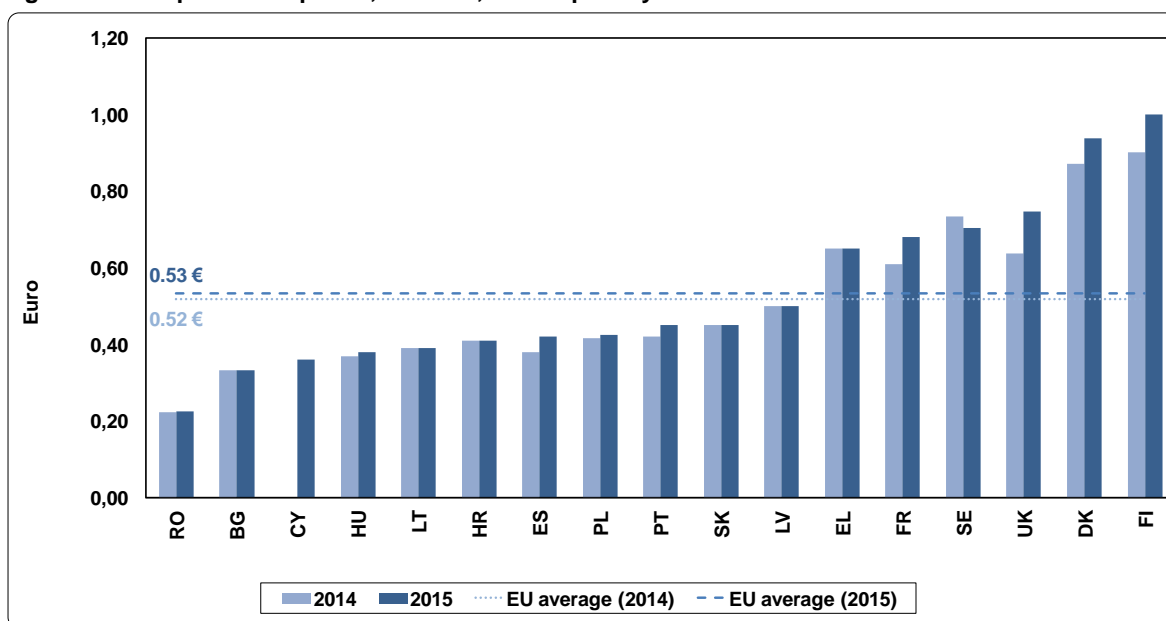
For Spain, as previously mentioned, the *Carta Ordinaria* service is taken as non-priority in this study.

Analysis of the prices in euros and in local currency

As shown in Figure 6, when considering the price of the service in euros, in 2015 eleven¹⁹ of the seventeen countries under analysis, including Portugal, charged a price that was lower than the European average of 0.54 euros. In April 2015, Portugal shared the 9th lowest price in the EU with Slovakia.

Regarding prices in local currency (Annex II), there was a price increase from April 2014 to April 2015 in six²⁰ Member States, while the other ten countries kept the previous year's price. The largest increase occurred in France, where the price charged in 2015 was 11 per cent above the 2014 price.

Figure 6 – Comparison of prices, in euros, of non-priority national mail



Source: ANACOM

Note: EU averages include Portugal

Regarding changes in the price of the service in the EU (

¹⁹ Bulgaria, Cyprus, Spain, Croatia, Hungary, Lithuania, Latvia, Poland, Portugal, Romania, and Slovakia.

²⁰ Denmark, Spain, Finland, France, Portugal, and United Kingdom.

Table 5), in 2015 there was a 2.8 per cent increase in the average price relative to 2014, when the EU average price was 0.52 euros. The price charged in Portugal in 2015 was 16.4 per cent below the average of the prices of the other EU countries, while in 2014 it was 20 per cent lower.

Table 5 – Statistical indicators for the prices, in euros, of non-priority national mail

	2014	2015
EU average incl PT	€0.52	€0.53
EU average excl PT Dev	-20.0%	-16.4%
Coefficient of Variation	36.5%	39.6%

Source: ANACOM

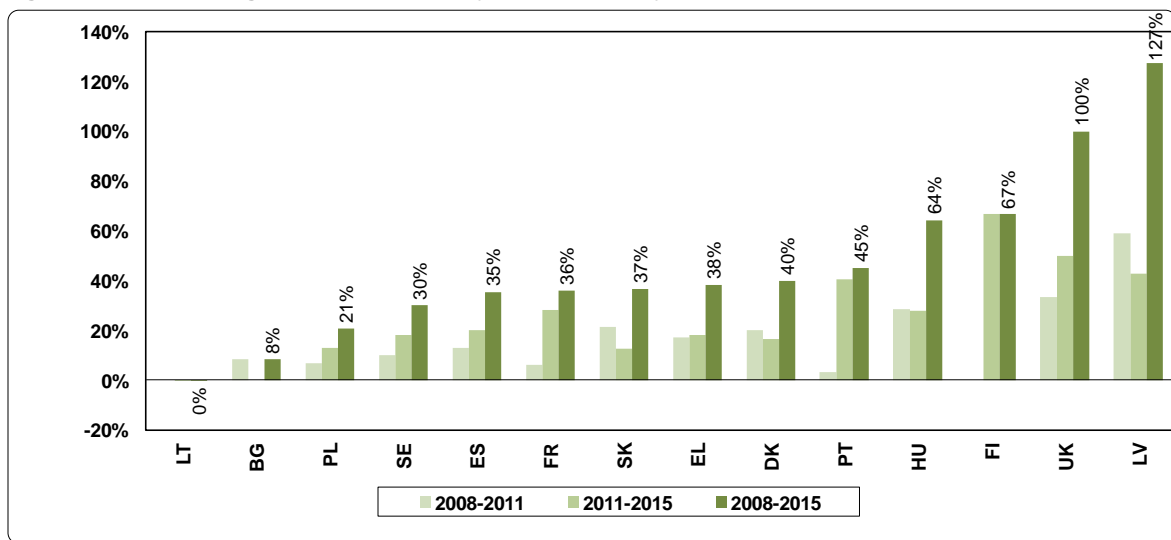
Figure 7 shows the changes in the prices of this service, in local currency, between 2008 and 2015. Of the fourteen countries where this analysis could be carried out,²¹ the price in local currency of the non-priority national mail increased in all except one, Lithuania, where it was unchanged. The biggest price increase was 127 per cent in Latvia. In Portugal, the increase from 2008 to 2015 was 45 per cent.

Between 2008 and 2011 the prices were constant only in Finland and Lithuania and they increased in the other eleven countries. Of the countries where the price of this service increased, Portugal recorded the smallest increase (3.2 per cent), while Latvia recorded the largest (59 per cent).

Comparing the prices of 2011 with those of 2015, there was no change in Lithuania and Bulgaria, and an increase in the other countries, with the largest being in Finland, 67 per cent. Portugal recorded a 41 per cent increase in this period.

²¹ Countries not included were Cyprus, which only started a service with these characteristics in the US in August 2014, Romania, where the same situation occurred in 2009, and Croatia, which joined the UE on 1 July 2013.

Figure 7 – Price changes, in local currency, of non-priority national mail (2008-2015)



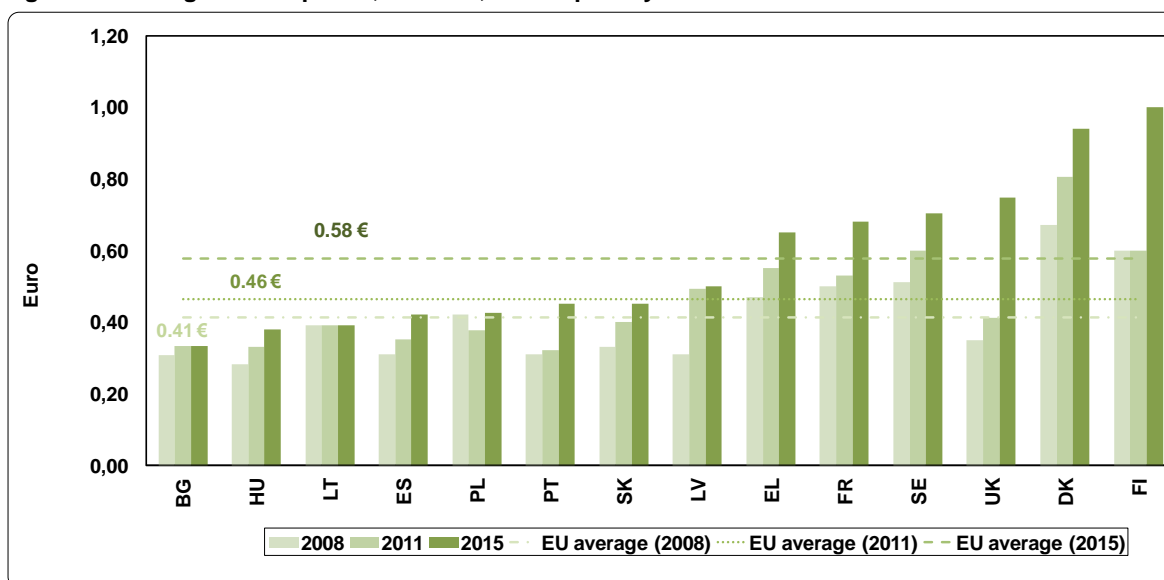
Source: ANACOM

Note: Prices from 2008 to 2011 for October of those years. 2015 prices for April.

Figure 8 presents the price levels, in euros, recorded for each Member State in 2008, 2011 and 2015. Of the fourteen Member States where it is possible to make this comparison, Portugal had the 3rd lowest price in 2008, 26.1 per cent below the European average (Table 6). In 2011 the price charged in Portugal was the lowest and 32.6 per cent below the average of the remaining Member States. In 2015, Portugal had the 6th lowest price and was 23.2 per cent below the European average.²²

²² With Cyprus, Croatia and Romania; the price charged in Portugal in 2015 is 16.4 per cent below the EU average (see Table 5), and the 9th lowest price.

Figure 8 – Changes in the prices, in euros, of non-priority national mail



Source: ANACOM

Notes: Prices from 2008 to 2011 for October of those years. 2015 prices for April. EU averages include Portugal.

Table 6 – Changes in the statistical indicators for the prices, in euros, of the non-priority mail

	2008	2011	2015
EU average incl PT	€0.41	€0.46	€0.58
EU average excl PT Dev	-26.1%	-32.6%	-23.2%
Coefficient of Variation	28.6%	29.1%	35.7%

Source: ANACOM

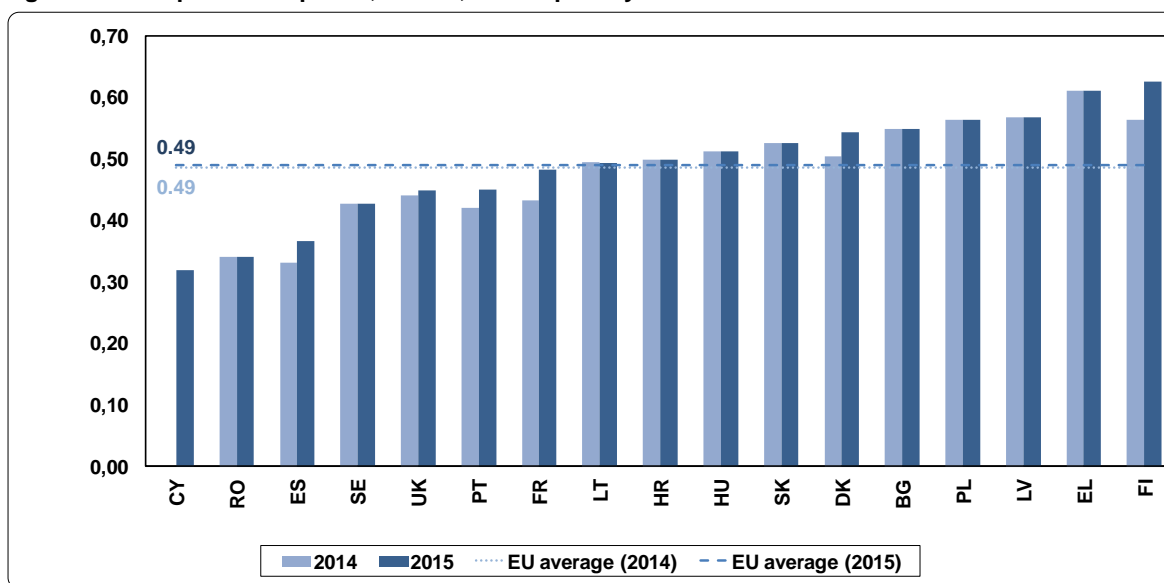
Notes: Prices from 2008 to 2011 for October of those years. 2015 prices for April.

Croatia is not included in the calculation of the average, since it only joined the EU on 1 July 2013. Cyprus and Romania are not included either, since the universal postal service in these countries only started a service with these characteristics in 2014 and 2009, respectively.

Analysis of prices in PPP

Analysis of the prices of the service in PPP (Figure 9) shows that Portugal had the 6th lowest price for non-priority mail in the EU in April 2015. This improved ranking of Portugal, when prices are compared in PPP, is because some countries that have a lower price in euros than Portugal also have a considerably a lower cost of living. The United Kingdom also stands out as one of the countries with a higher price when compared in euros (3rd highest price), but with one of the lowest prices (5th lowest price) when compared in PPP.

Figure 9 – Comparison of prices, in PPP, of non-priority national mail



Source: ANACOM
 Note: EU averages include Portugal

Comparing the price in Portugal with the EU average (Table 7), we see that the difference decreased from 2014, when the price in Portugal in PPP was 14.3 per cent below the average of the other countries, to 2015, when the price was 8.5 per cent lower.

Regarding the coefficient of variation, its change means that there was a slight increase in price variability from 2014 to 2015, with a difference of 1.4 percentage points between the values recorded for these two years.

Table 7 – Statistical indicators for the prices, in PPP, of non-priority national mail

	2014	2015
EU average incl PT	0.49	0.49
EU average excl PT Dev	-14.3%	-8.5%
Coefficient of Variation	16.2%	17.6%

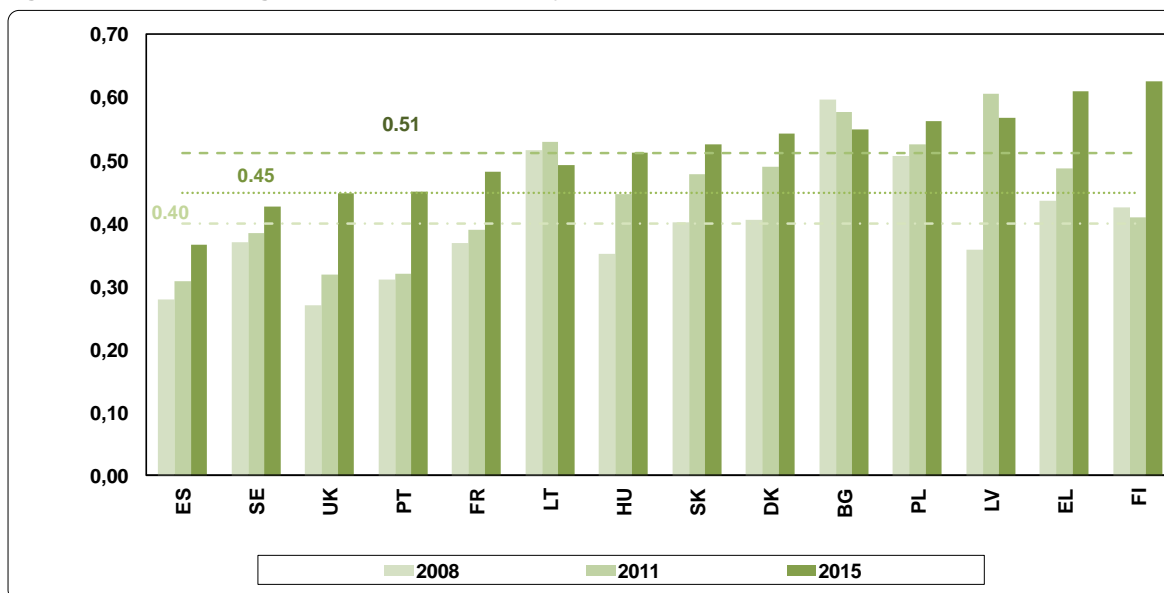
Source: ANACOM

Figure 10 presents the changes in non-priority national mail prices in PPP. From 2008 to 2011, the price of this service increased in twelve of the fourteen Member States under analysis,²³ while it fell in Finland (3.5 per cent) and Bulgaria (8.1 per cent). From 2011 to 2015, the price of the service increased in eleven countries, and decreased in Bulgaria, Latvia and Lithuania. Overall, comparing 2008 with 2015 prices, the price recorded in

²³ This analysis does not include Cyprus, Croatia and Romania, for the reasons given above.

2015 was higher than the price of 2008 in twelve²⁴ countries, and lower in Bulgaria and Lithuania. The biggest increase was 66 per cent in the United Kingdom.

Figure 10 – Price changes, in PPP, of non-priority national mail



Source: ANACOM

Notes: Prices from 2008 to 2011 for October of those years. 2015 prices for April. EU averages include Portugal.

Considering the price changes in PPP (Table 8), the price recorded in Portugal in 2008 was 23.7 per cent lower than the European average, and the 3rd lowest price in the EU. It was also the 3rd lowest price in 2011, 30 per cent below the average, while in 2015 it was 16.4 per cent below the European average,²⁵ and the 4th lowest price.

Table 8 – Changes in the statistical indicators for the prices, in PPP, of non-priority national mail

	2008	2011	2015
EU average incl PT	0.40	0.45	0.51
EU average excl PT Dev	-23.7%	-30.0%	-16.4%
Coefficient of Variation	22.3%	20.6%	13.7%

Source: ANACOM

Notes: Prices from 2008 to 2011 in for. 2015 prices for April.

Croatia is not included in the calculation of the average, since it only joined the EU on 1 July 2013. Cyprus and Romania are not included either, since the universal postal service in these countries only started a service with these characteristics in 2014 and 2009, respectively.

²⁴ Denmark, Slovakia, Spain, Finland, France, Greece, Hungary, Latvia, Poland, Portugal, United Kingdom and Sweden.

²⁵ With Cyprus, Croatia and Romania; in 2015 the price charged in Portugal was 8.5 per cent below the EU average (see Table 7).

6.3. Priority cross-border intra-community mail

In addition to the analysis of the cost of sending national mail set out in earlier sections, the prices for sending priority cross-border mail within the EU were also compared. The criterion for choosing this service was the sending of postal items with a transit time of up to three business days after the acceptance, to most destination Member States. According to the Postal Directive, 85 per cent of postal items sent in the fastest standardised category in each country should be delivered within three business days, while 97 per cent should be delivered up to five business days later. Therefore, the priority cross-border intra-community mail service was deemed to be one that delivers postal items up to three business days after their acceptance.

In Portugal, both the *correio azul* [priority mail] and the *correio normal internacional* [normal international mail] fit this category. As in previous studies conducted by ANACOM, this study looked at the normal international mail category. In fact, according to information provided by CTT, the *correio normal internacional* uses priority routing, and this was the service used to assess the quality of service indicators established by ANACOM, which comply with the Postal Directive provisions.

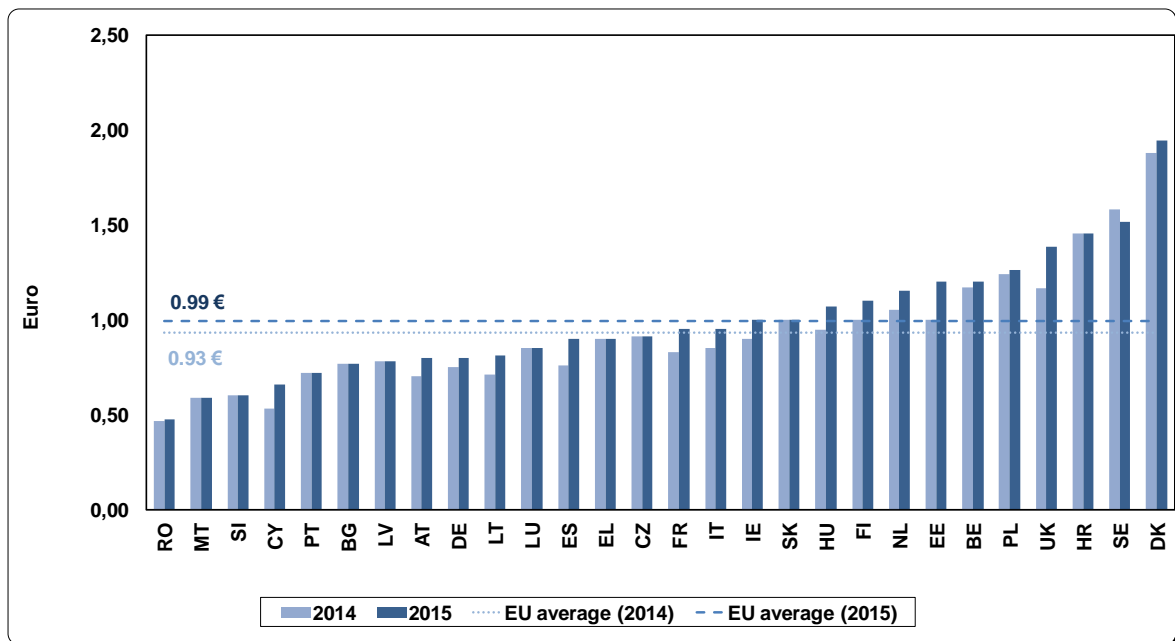
In the case of Spain, the *Carta Internacional Ordinaria* service was used, with a transit time of three working days, which corresponds to the classification of priority cross-border intra-community mail for the purpose of this study, and so it was included in this category. It should be noted that the *Carta ordinaria urgente* service, with a transit time of up to three working days according to the Spanish USP, is not included in the US.

In the case of Slovenia, the service used is also the one used to assess the quality indicators provided for in the Postal Directive for sending mail within the EU, which there corresponds to the non-priority service. In Slovenia, the intra-community mail service considered as priority is not included in the US. Looking at ANACOM's previous studies, and regarding Slovenia, the price of this service is compared with the one classified in the previous studies as having a non-priority transit time. It should be noted that, as with the priority national mail, the lower of two prices was considered, corresponding to a postal item whose address on the envelope can be read automatically.

Analysis of prices in euros and in local currency

As shown in Figure 11, the price in Portugal (0.72 euros) was the 5th lowest price in 2015, while in 2014 it was 7th. From 2014 to 2015, taking the price in local currency (Annex III), the price increased in fifteen²⁶ Member States, and decreased in none. The highest increase in terms of percentage was in Cyprus, where there was a rise of 25 per cent. This can be partly explained by a modification in the provision of the US there, where there was no distinction between priority and non-priority services until 1 August 2014.

Figure 11 – Comparison of prices, in euros, of priority intra-community mail



Source: ANACOM
 Note: EU averages include Portugal.

At European level, the average price went from 0.93 euros in 2014 to 0.99 euros in 2015, which is an increase of 6.3 per cent (Table 9). In this last year, the price in force in sixteen²⁷ countries, including Portugal, was below the European average. In Portugal, the price was 23.4 per cent below the average in 2014 and 28 per cent below it in 2015. It should also be noted that although Cyprus saw the most significant increase, the price there is still below the European average. In terms of price dispersion in relation to the average, the coefficient of variation was 31.7 per cent in 2015, 1.7 percentage points below the 2014 value.

²⁶ Germany, Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Denmark, Spain, Estonia, Finland, France, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Netherland, and United Kingdom.

²⁷ Austria, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Germany, Greece, Spain, France, Italy, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Latvia, Malta, Portugal, Romania, and Slovenia.

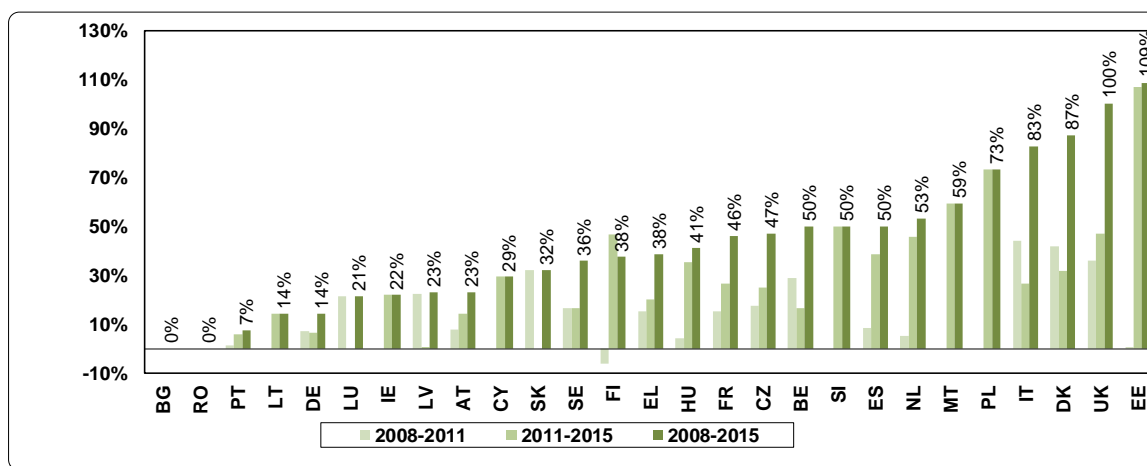
Table 9 – Statistical indicators for the prices, in euros, of priority intra-community mail

	2014	2015
EU average incl PT	€0.93	€0.99
EU average excl PT Dev	-23.4%	-28.0%
Coefficient of Variation	33.4%	31.7%

Source: ANACOM

In twenty-five of the twenty-seven countries considered here²⁸ the price in local currency (Figure 12) was higher in 2015 than in 2008. The exceptions were Bulgaria and Romania, where the price of this service was unchanged. The biggest increase was in Estonia, 109 per cent. The smallest increase was in Portugal (7.5 per cent). Comparing 2011 with 2008, the price of this service increased in eighteen Member States, with the 44 per cent increase in Italy standing out, while there was a decrease in Finland (6.3%). The price did not change in the eight²⁹ other countries. The increase in Portugal was 1.5 per cent. There were no reductions in price from 2011 to 2015, and the price was unchanged in four³⁰ Member States and rose in the other twenty-three countries. In Portugal the price increased 5.9 per cent.

Figure 12 – Price changes, in local currency, of priority intra-community mail (2008-2015)



Source: ANACOM

Note: Prices from 2008 to 2011 for October of those years. 2015 prices for April.

Figures 12 and 13 clearly show that the price of priority intra-community mail has grown less in Portugal than in most EU Member States. In fact, while the price charged in

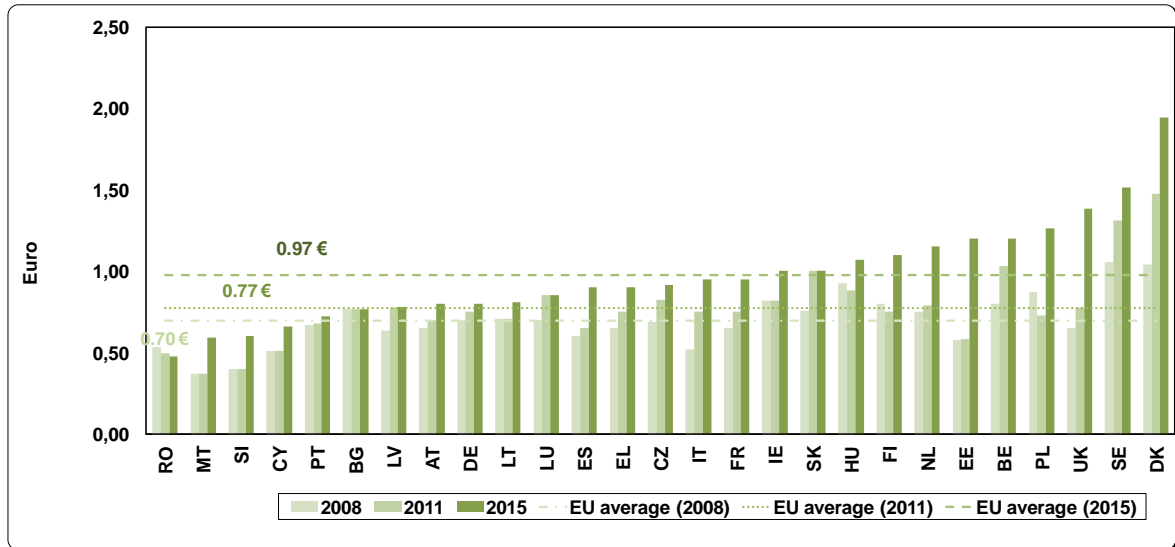
²⁸ Croatia is not included in this analysis, for the reasons given above.

²⁹ Bulgaria, Cyprus, Slovenia, Ireland, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, and Romania.

³⁰ Bulgaria, Slovakia, Luxembourg, and Romania.

Portugal in 2008 was 3.9 per cent below the European average in the comparison in euros, being the 13th lowest price that year, in 2011 it was the 7th lowest price, and in 2015 Portugal's price was the 5th lowest in the EU for this service, at 26.8 per cent below the EU average (Table 10).³¹

Figure 13 – Price changes, in euros, of priority intra-community mail



Source: ANACOM

Notes: Prices from 2008 to 2011 for October of those years. 2015 prices for April. EU averages include Portugal.

Table 10 – Change in the statistical indicators for the prices, in euros, of priority intra-community mail

	2008	2011	2015
EU average incl PT	€0.70	€0.77	€0.97
EU average excl PT Dev	-3.9%	-12.4%	-26.8%
Coefficient of Variation	23.2%	29.9%	31.5%

Source: ANACOM

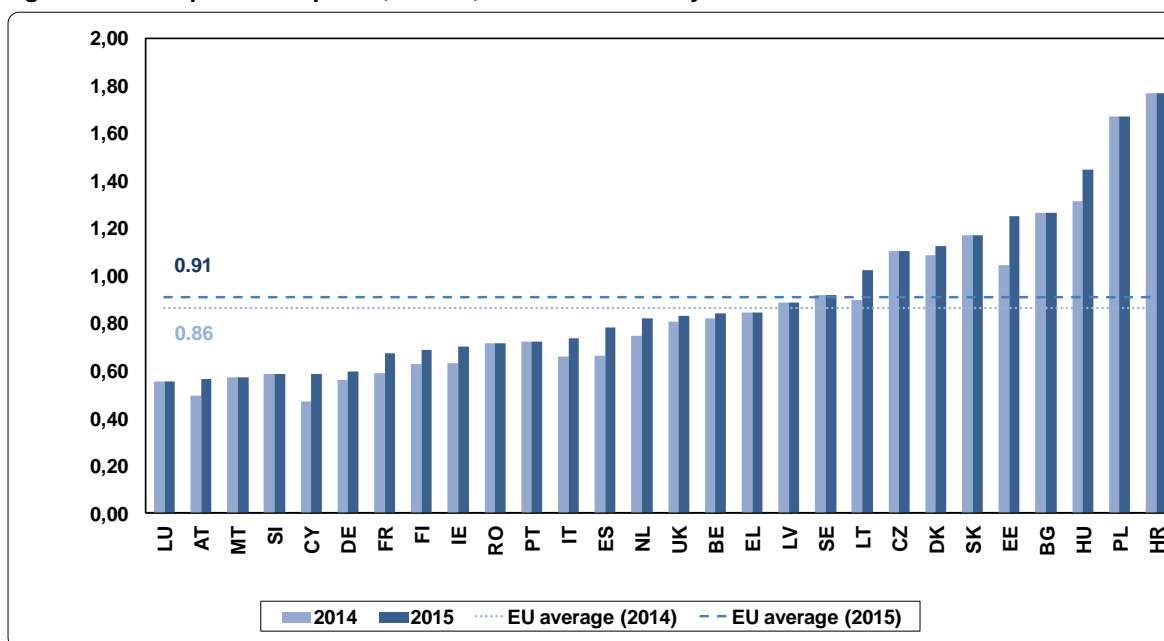
Notes: Prices from 2008 to 2011 for October of those years. 2015 prices for April. Croatia is not included in the calculation of the average, since it only joined the EU on 1 July 2013.

Analysis of prices in PPP

The PPP price comparison is shown in Figure 14. As with the national mail services, Portugal has a PPP price that is higher than in some countries where the price of the service, when using current exchange rates, is higher than in Portugal. The result is that in 2015 Portugal had the 11th lowest PPP price but was in 5th place for euros. In 2014 Portugal had the 13th lowest price for this service, in PPP.

³¹ With Croatia; the price charged in Portugal was 28 per cent lower than the EU average (see Table 9).

Figure 14 – Comparison of prices, in PPP, of intra-community mail



Source: ANACOM

Note: EU averages include Portugal

At the European level, the EU average price changed from 0.86 euros in 2014 to 0.91 euros in 2015, which is a 5.2 per cent increase (Table 11). In 2015, the price charged was below the European average in eighteen³² countries, including Portugal. In terms of the dispersion of prices with regard to the average, the coefficient of variation was 35.9 per cent in 2015, 2.3 per cent lower than in 2014.

Table 11 – Statistical indicators for the prices, in PPP, of priority intra-community mail

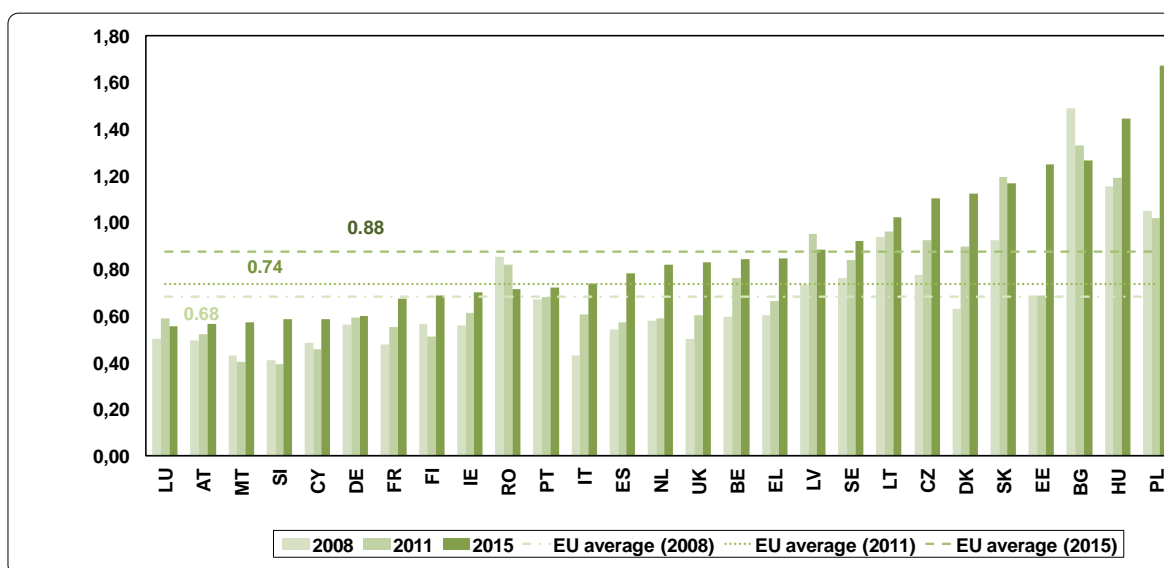
	2014	2015
EU average incl PT	0.86	0.91
EU average excl PT Dev	-21.3%	-17.1%
Coefficient of Variation	38.2%	35.9%

Source: ANACOM

³² Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Germany, Greece, Spain, Finland, France, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Latvia, Malta, Portugal, Romania, United Kingdom, Netherlands, and Slovenia.

Examining the price changes of this service in PPP between 2008 and 2015 (Figure 15),³³ it is possible to conclude that Portugal's ranking improved in terms of the lowest price. In 2015 Portugal was 11th lowest in the EU, 18.4 per cent below the European average (Table 12). In 2008, Portugal had the 17th lowest price, which was 1.6 per cent below the European average.

Figure 15 – Price changes, in PPP, of priority intra-community mail



Source: ANACOM

Notes: Prices from 2008 to 2011 for October of those years. 2015 prices for April. EU averages include Portugal.

Table 12 – Change in the statistical indicators for the prices, in PPP, of priority intra-community mail

	2008	2011	2015
EU average incl PT	0.68	0.74	0.88
EU average excl PT Dev	-1.6%	-8.0%	-18.4%
Coefficient of Variation	36.4%	33.2%	32.6%

Source: ANACOM

Notes: Prices from 2008 to 2011 for October of those years. 2015 prices for April. Croatia is not included in the calculation of the average, since it only joined the EU on 1 July 2013.

Taking into account the purchasing power and its trend between 2008 and 2011 seven³⁴ of the twenty-seven countries in question saw price reductions, with emphasis on a 10.8 per cent reduction in the price charged in Poland. In the other twenty Member States the price increased in this period, with Denmark posting the largest increase, 43 per cent, and Estonia the lowest at 0.8 per cent.

³³ Croatia is not included in this analysis, for the reasons given above.

³⁴ Bulgaria, Cyprus, Slovenia, Finland, Malta, Poland and Romania.

Comparing 2011 with 2015, there were price reductions in five³⁵ Member States and increases in the other twenty-two. The most significant reduction was in Romania (12.5 per cent), while the largest increase (82 per cent) was in Estonia.

Overall, comparing 2008 with 2015, a period when the price in Portugal rose 7.5 per cent, only Bulgaria and Romania had price reductions, notably a 16.3 per cent reduction in Romania. In the other twenty-five countries the PPP price increased, with a particularly sharp rise in Estonia, where it went up by 84 per cent.

7. National Parcels

The Postal Directive provides for the US to include a parcels service up to 10 kilograms. This service is included in the US of the twenty-eight Member States. However, the conditions for provision of the service vary for each Member State, particularly in terms of transit times³⁶ of the items. For example, in Germany and in Belgium the parcels service included in the US envisages that these parcels will be delivered on the business day after collection (D+1), but in Italy³⁷ and Lithuania the quality criteria provide for delivery within four working days (D+4).

In addition, as in the case of mail posting, weight steps are not the same for all Member States.³⁸ All other things being equal, a higher price is to be expected for a 2 kg parcel when the relevant weight step also includes items up to 10 kg, than where the relevant weight step is up to 2 kg, and therefore this factor must be taken into consideration. The price can also vary geographically, depending on the origin and destination of the item.³⁹ The service may also include other particular features that differ between countries, such as the consumer being able (or not) to monitor the status of the postal parcel via the Internet.

³⁵ Bulgaria, Latvia, Luxembourg, Romania, and Slovakia.

³⁶ Annex V contains information on national parcel transit times in 2014 and 2015.

³⁷ In Italy, the definition of the parcels service changed from 2014 to 2015. The transit time indicator of D+4 was implemented in 2015, whereas in 2014 it was D+3. In addition, the price in force in 2014 applied to parcels up to 20 kg, while a higher price was introduced in 2015 for parcels weighing over 10 kg. These two factors might explain why there was a reduction in the price of parcels up to 2 kg, in Italy.

³⁸ For instance, the weight step for Bulgaria covers parcels weighing between 1 and 3 kg. In Cyprus it applies to parcels up to 5 kg, while in Romania the price considered applies to parcels up to 10 kg.

³⁹ In Portugal, there are several possible prices for national parcels, depending on whether they are sent within the same area of mainland Portugal, between different areas, or whether the Autonomous Regions are involved. In this last case several prices can also be applied, depending on the origin and destination, and whether the parcel is sent by air or surface mail.

As for the criterion of delivery to the destination there is also some diversity among Member States. In some cases, the delivery is made by default to the address of the recipient, while in others, such as Portugal, delivery can be to the home upon the payment of an additional fee that can vary according to the weight of the postal item. In Bulgaria, the extra fee depends both on the weight of the item and on the distance between the postal distribution centre and the recipient's home.

Thus, the price comparison that follows should be regarded with caution.

The criterion used for this comparison was the price paid by a residential consumer to send a 2 kg parcel via the universal postal service, within the national territory, for delivery to the post office in the recipient's area of distribution.

In Portugal this is the *Encomenda Nacional* [national parcel] service, provided by CTT. The price that provides for the delivery of a postal parcel sent from any point in mainland Portugal to the most distant point of Portugal is the *Zona T2* [T2 zone] price, using surface mail, weighing up to 2kg, without declared value. Home delivery is possible with this service upon the payment of an extra fee, which was 2.10 euros in 2015.

For the United Kingdom the option was to choose the non-priority service, with a transit time of two or more working days, since there is also a priority parcels service in the UK, with delivery on the business day after collection. The pricing of the parcels service also depends on the size of the item, and either the fee applicable to small parcels or the one for medium parcels can be used.⁴⁰ For the purpose of this study, including comparison with the pricing details collected in previous ANACOM studies, which assumed a product similar to the medium parcel in the non-priority category, and given that the small parcel service only handles smaller-sized parcels, it was decided to use the price of the non-priority service's medium parcel category in this study.

There were changes in Slovakia on 1 January 2015 regarding the provision of postal parcels within the scope of the US. In 2014 there were two services: one with a transit time of up to two working days after collection, costing 3.50 euros, and the other with a

⁴⁰ The distinction has to do with the sizes and weights of the items. There is a weight limit of 2 kg for small parcel items with a maximum size of 45 x 35 x 16 cm. In April 2015, the cost was £5.45 for priority items and £2.80 for non-priority items. The medium parcel category included in this study provides for the sending of items up to 20 kilograms, with a maximum size of 61 x 46 x 46 cm. The cost in April 2015 was £8.90 for priority items, and £4.89 for non-priority items. This last price was used in this study.

transit time of three working days, costing 2.80 euros. The weight step applicable to both services for the purpose of this study covers items up to 2 kg. The services merged in 2015 to become a single service, with a price in April of 2.80 euros, a transit time of up to two days, and a weight step up to 5 kg. For 2014, and for the purpose of comparison with the previous studies, this study considers the service has a transit time of three working days and costs 2.80 euros, and uses it for 2015 as it was the only service available that year.

Analysis of the prices in euros and in local currency

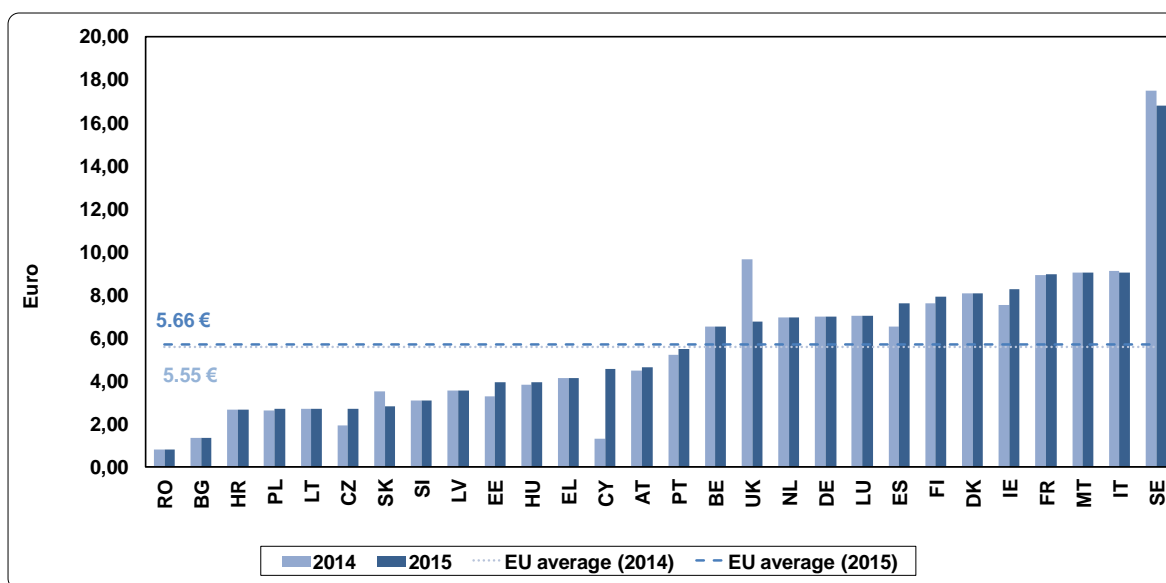
Between 2014 and 2015, for prices in local currency (Annex IV), there were increases in nine⁴¹ countries, and price reductions in Slovakia, Italy, and the United Kingdom, while the price was unchanged in the other countries. Concerning the price increases, the 248 per cent increase in the price of this service in Cyprus stands out; it rose from 1.30 euros to 4.52 euros, which is still below the European average in 2015.

Figure 16 shows the price comparison for the national parcels service, for sending 2 kg items. In the latest year studied, the price charged was below the EU average in a total of fifteen⁴² Member States. The price in Portugal in 2015 was 5.45 euros, which was 3.8 per cent below the European average of 5.66 euros. The price in Portugal was the 15th lowest in the EU, both in 2014 and 2015. Nonetheless, Table 13 shows that the price in Portugal increased more sharply in 2015 than the European average and drew closer to it.

⁴¹ Austria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Ireland, Portugal, and Spain.

⁴² Austria, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Greece, Croatia, Hungary, Lithuania, Latvia, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, and Slovakia

Figure 16 – Comparison of prices, in euros, of national parcels⁴³



Source: ANACOM
 Note: EU averages include Portugal

Coefficients of variation were higher in magnitude every year than in the mail service, which reflects the greater diversity in the provision of this service in the different Member States. This is also reflected in the greater variability of the prices charged. In fact, the lowest price in 2015 was 0.81 euros in Romania, twenty-one times smaller than the price in Sweden, which charges the highest price for this service (16.77 euros). Even the second highest price of 9.00 euros charged in Italy and Malta is eleven times higher than the lowest price. As mentioned above, the price difference is partly explained by the different features of the universal service’s postal parcels service in these two countries. While the service standard for national parcels in Romania is delivery within two working days (D+2), in Malta and Sweden delivery should be the next business day after collection of the item. It should also be noted that the price charged in Sweden includes 25% VAT, while the prices of the other Member States are exempt from VAT. In addition, while in Romania the postal parcels’ tariff scheme is proportional to the weight, in Malta, a parcel weighing 2 kg costs the same as one that weighs 20 kg.

⁴³ As mentioned, for the United Kingdom, it was decided to include the service with the higher price of the two available services. Had we included the service with the lower size limits on the items, that price, £3.87 in 2015, would have been the ninth lowest in the European Union that year, as opposed to the 17th place in the ranking of the price of the service actually selected.

Table 13 – Statistical indicators for the prices, in euros, of national parcels

	2014	2015
EU average incl PT	€5.55	€5.66
EU average excl PT Dev	-6.6%	-3.8%
Coefficient of Variation	62.7%	57.2%

Source: ANACOM

The prices for 2008, 2011, and 2015 were obtained for all Member States except Croatia, which was not part of the EU in 2008.

As shown in Figure 17, there were price increases in eighteen Member States⁴⁴ between 2008 and 2011. The biggest increase, 73 per cent, was in Bulgaria, and the lowest one, 3.4 per cent, in Sweden. The prices fell in five countries⁴⁵, with the largest reduction occurring in Romania, where the price decreased 25.2 per cent. In the other countries, the price charged in 2011 was the same as in 2008.

In the second period under consideration, between 2011 and 2015, twenty countries⁴⁶ recorded price changes. The stand-out increase was the 408 per cent price hike in Malta, from 1.77 to 9.00 euros. In Denmark the price fell 25 per cent during this period while it remained the same in the other six Member States.⁴⁷

Considering the whole period under analysis, the price in 2015 was higher than the price in 2008 in twenty-one Member States, and lower in six countries. No country maintained the same price.

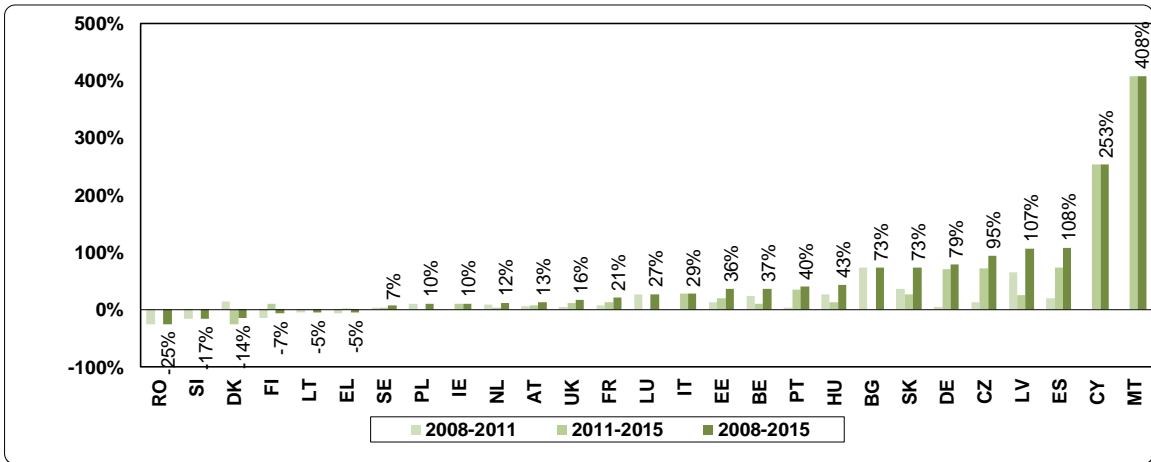
⁴⁴ Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, France, Germany, Hungary, Latvia, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, and the United Kingdom.

⁴⁵ Finland, Greece, Romania, Lithuania, and Slovenia.

⁴⁶ Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Czech Republic,, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Malta, Netherlands, Portugal, Slovakia, Sweden, Spain and the United Kingdom.

⁴⁷ Bulgaria, Slovenia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Poland and Romania.

Figure 17 – Changes in prices, in local currency, of national parcels (2008-2015)



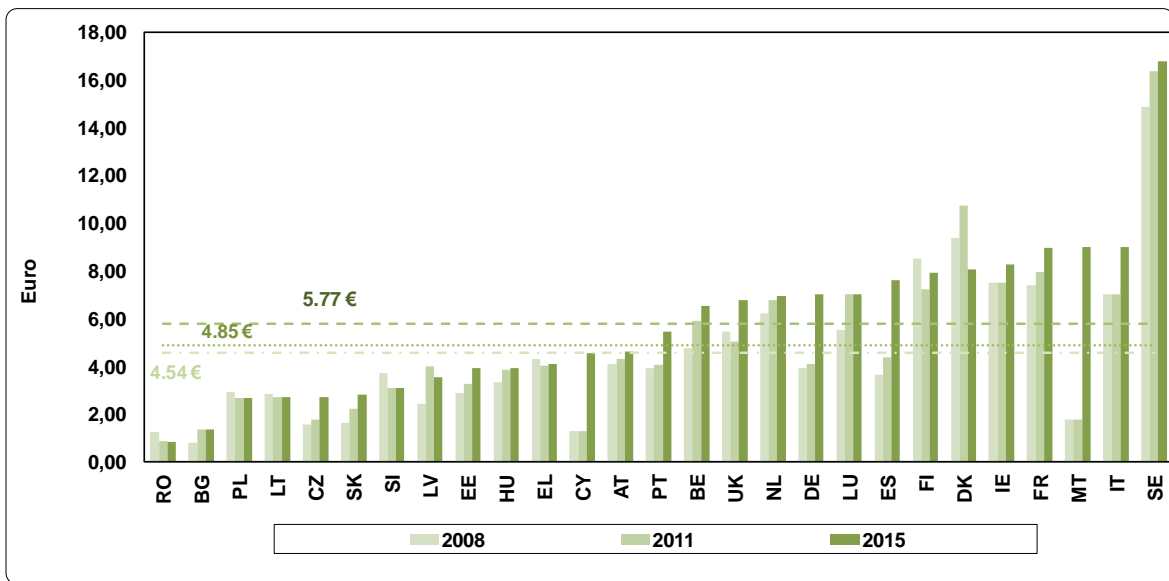
Source: ANACOM

Note: Prices from 2008 to 2011 for October of those years. 2015 prices for April.

Figure 18 shows that, as mentioned for years 2014 and 2015, in 2008 and 2011, too, the price of the parcels showed great variability between countries. In 2008, the highest price was 14.85 euros, charged in Sweden; it was about nineteen times higher than the lowest price, charged in Bulgaria, while the price in Sweden in 2011 was nineteen times higher than the lowest price, charged in Romania.

Note that Portugal's ranking did not vary during these years: Portugal has the 14th lowest price in 2015, in 2011 and in 2008

Figure 18 – Price changes, in euros, of national parcels



Source: ANACOM

Notes: Prices from 2008 to 2011 for October of those years. 2015 prices for April.

EU averages include Portugal.

Table 14 – Changes in the statistical indicators for the prices, in euros, of national parcels

	2008	2011	2015
EU average incl PT	€4.54	€4.85	€5.77
EU average excl PT Dev	-14.6%	-17.0%	-5.8%
Coefficient of Variation	67.1%	67.5%	56.1%

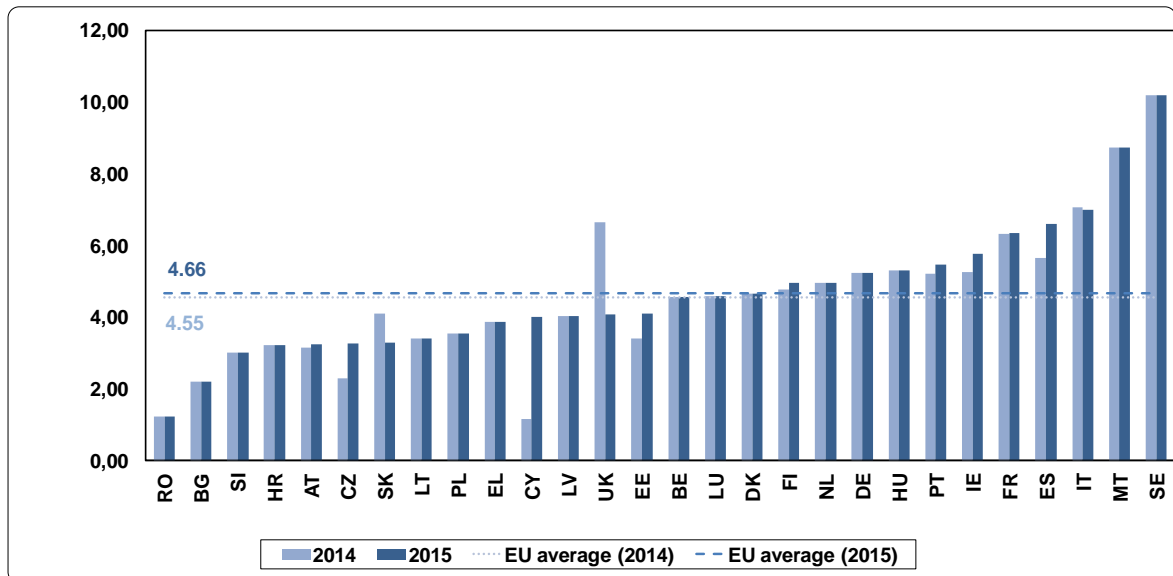
Source: ANACOM

Notes: Prices from 2008 to 2011 in the month of October of those years. 2015 prices in April. Croatia is not included in the calculation of the average, since it only joined the EU on 1 July 2013.

Analysis of prices in PPP

Analysing the price of national parcels in PPP (Figure 19), Portugal drops seven places in the ranking relative to the comparison in nominal exchange rates. In 2015 Portugal had the 22nd lowest price in the EU, while in 2014 it had the 19th, having thus dropped 3 places in 2015. The analysis in PPP also reveals (by considering that the purchasing power in countries where the price is lower can mean that it is not necessarily more affordable to consumers) a smaller difference between the highest and the lowest prices charged. Nonetheless, prices range from 1.23 euros in Romania to 10.18 euros in Sweden, which is about eight times higher.

Figure 19 – Comparison of prices, in PPP, of the national parcels service⁴⁸



⁴⁸ As mentioned, for the United Kingdom it was decided to use the cost of sending a medium size parcel. Had we chosen the small parcels service, its price in PPP of 2.32 euros in 2015 would be the third lowest in the European Union for that year, as opposed to the 13th place held by the chosen category.

Source: ANACOM
Note: EU averages include Portugal

As

Table 15 shows, the average PPP price in the EU saw a 2.4 per cent increase, similar to the value in euros. While the price in Portugal for the comparison in euros is below the European average, in the analysis in PPP it is higher both in 2014 and in 2015, by 14.8 per cent and 17.6 per cent, respectively. Thus, contrary to what occurs in the comparison for the mail services, where the price in 2014 and 2015 (both in euros and in PPP) was always below the corresponding European averages, in the case of the parcels service the price in Portugal is only below the European average in the comparison based on nominal exchange rates.

Table 15 – Statistical indicator for the prices, in PPP, of national parcels

	2014	2015
EU average incl PT	4.55	4.66
EU average excl PT Dev	14.8%	17.6%
Coefficient of Variation	43.6%	39.6%

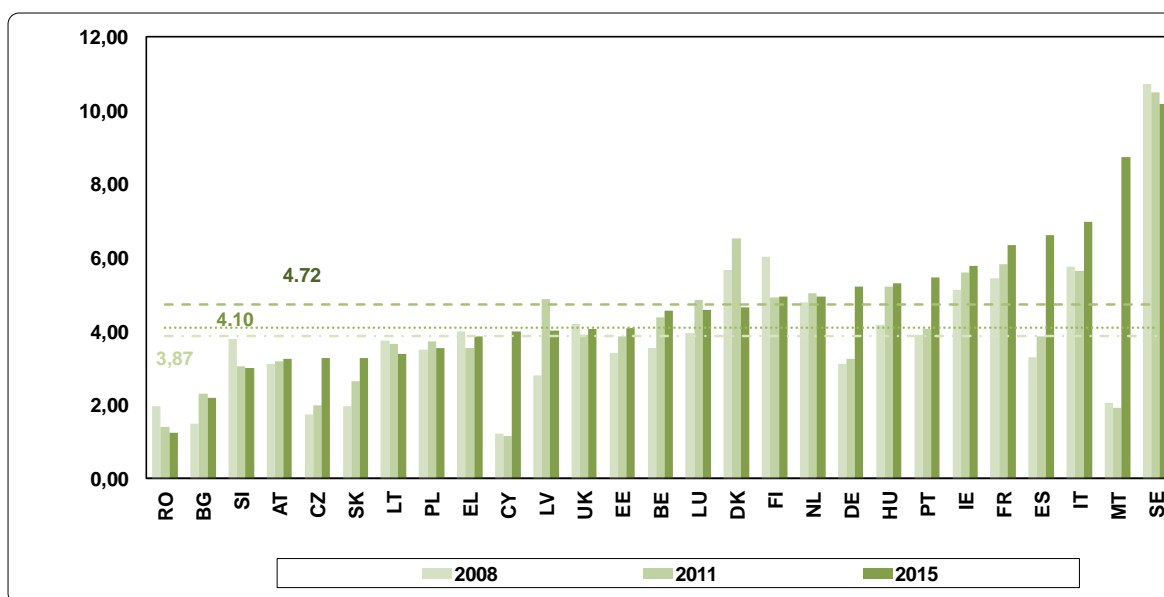
Source: ANACOM

Regarding the price changes in PPP (Figure 20), in nineteen⁴⁹ of the twenty-seven Member States considered the price was higher in 2015 than in 2008, while it fell in the other eight countries⁵⁰. Price changes range from -3 per cent in the United Kingdom to 326 per cent in Malta.

⁴⁹ Germany, Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Estonia, France, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, and Czech Republic.

⁵⁰ Denmark, Finland, Greece, Slovenia, Lithuania, United Kingdom, Romania, and Sweden.

Figure 20 – Price changes, in PPP, of national parcels



Source: ANACOM

Notes: Prices from 2008 to 2011 for October of those years. 2015 prices for April.
EU averages include Portugal.

Comparing the price charged in Portugal with the other Member States, we find that the price in PPP increased more in Portugal between 2011 and 2015 than in several countries that had a higher price in 2011. Therefore, whereas from 2008 to 2011 Portugal kept its place in the ranking with the 16th lowest price, between 2011 and 2015 Portugal fell 5 places in the lowest price ranking with a price 16.3 per cent higher than the European average (Table 16).⁵¹

Table 16 – Changes in the statistical indicator for prices, in PPP, of national parcels

	2008	2011	2015
EU average incl PT	3.87	4.10	4.72
EU average excl PT Dev	0.9%	-1.3%	16.3%
Coefficient of Variation	48.4%	45.1%	39.4%

Source: ANACOM

Notes: Prices from 2008 to 2011 for October of those years. 2015 prices for April.
Croatia is not considered in the calculation of this average since it only joined the EU on 1 July 2013.

⁵¹ Or 17.6 per cent above the average if Croatia is also considered (see Table 15).

8. Conclusions

Comparing the prices charged in Portugal in 2014 and 2015 with the European average, we find that they stand below the average for the four services analysed in this study.

The price for sending a 20 g priority national item of mail is 15 per cent below the EU average (excluding Portugal); while in 2014 it was 16.5 per cent below. Although the price increased more than the European average in 2015, Portugal moved from 10th position in 2014, in terms of lowest prices, to 9th, in 2015, together with Estonia. In comparison with the prices charged in 2018 and 2011, the price in Portugal rose at a slower pace than the average price of the other EU countries.

In the non-priority national mail, the price for sending a 20 g item in Portugal was 16.4 per cent below the EU average (excluding Portugal), with the 9th lowest price among the seventeen countries that offer this service. Given the prices in force in 2008 and 2011, the price in Portugal increased more quickly than the European average.

The cost of sending a 20 g cross-border mail item to a destination in another Member State is 28 per cent below the EU average (excluding Portugal), and Portugal moved from 7th place in the lowest price ranking to third place in 2015. As with the priority *Nacional* mail, this price has increased at a slower pace than the EU average, when comparing the prices in force in 2008 with those of 2011.

Regarding national parcels, the cost of sending a 2 kg item in Portugal was 3.8 per cent lower than the EU average (excluding Portugal) in 2015, which was the 15th lowest price in the group of Member States. In 2014, the price was 6.6 per cent lower than the EU average, also the 15th lowest price. Regarding 2008 and 2011, the price of this service increased at a faster pace than the EU average.

Looking at PPP, this, too, shows that in 2014 and 2015 the prices in Portugal were below the EU average, except for the price of national parcels, which was higher than the European average.

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Annexes

Annex I – Prices of priority national mail

Country	Currency	Price in local currency				Price in euros			
		2008	2011	2014	2015	2008	2011	2014	2015
Germany	EUR	0.55	0.55	0.60	0.62	0.55	0.55	0.60	0.62
Austria	EUR	0.55	0.62	0.62	0.68	0.55	0.62	0.62	0.68
Belgium	EUR	0.54	0.71	0.77	0.77	0.54	0.71	0.77	0.77
Bulgaria	BGN	0.90	0.85	0.85	0.85	0.46	0.43	0.43	0.43
Cyprus	EUR	0.34	0.34	0.36	0.43	0.34	0.34	0.36	0.43
Croatia	HRK	-	-	4.60	6.50	-	-	0.61	0.86
Denmark	DKK	5.50	8.00	9.00	10.00	0.74	1.07	1.21	1.34
Slovakia	EUR (a)	16.00	0.60	0.65	0.65	0.53	0.60	0.65	0.65
Slovenia	EUR	0.23	0.27	0.29	0.34	0.23	0.27	0.29	0.34
Estonia	EUR (b)	5.50	0.35	0.45	0.55	0.35	0.35	0.45	0.55
Finland	EUR	0.70	0.75	1.00	1.10	0.70	0.75	1.00	1.10
France	EUR	0.55	0.58	0.66	0.76	0.55	0.58	0.66	0.76
Greece	EUR	0.52	0.60	0.72	0.72	0.52	0.60	0.72	0.72
Netherlands	EUR	0.44	0.46	0.64	0.69	0.44	0.46	0.64	0.69
Hungary	HUF	100	115	145	145	0.40	0.42	0.47	0.48
Ireland	EUR	0.55	0.55	0.60	0.68	0.55	0.55	0.60	0.68
Italy	EUR	0.60	0.60	0.70	0.80	0.60	0.60	0.70	0.80
Latvia	EUR (c)	0.31	0.40	0.57	0.57	0.44	0.56	0.57	0.57
Lithuania	EUR (d)	1.55	1.55	1.55	0.45	0.45	0.45	0.45	0.45
Luxembourg	EUR	0.50	0.60	0.60	0.60	0.50	0.60	0.60	0.60
Malta	EUR	0.19	0.19	0.26	0.26	0.19	0.19	0.26	0.26
Poland	PLN	2.10	1.95	2.35	2.35	0.61	0.47	0.56	0.57
Portugal	EUR	0.47	0.47	0.50	0.55	0.47	0.47	0.50	0.55
United Kingdom	GBP	0.36	0.46	0.62	0.63	0.47	0.52	0.75	0.87
Czech Republic	CZK	10.00	10.00	13.00	13.00	0.41	0.41	0.47	0.47
Romania	RON	1.00	1.60	1.60	1.60	0.25	0.38	0.36	0.36
Sweden	SEK	5.50	6.00	7.00	7.00	0.56	0.65	0.79	0.76

Source: ANACOM

Notes: (a) – from 2009, previously SKK;

(b) – from 2011, previously EEK;

(c) – from 2014, previously LVL;

(d) – from 2015, previously LTL.

Annex II – Prices of non-priority national mail

Country	Currency	Price in local currency				Price in euros			
		2008	2011	2014	2015	2008	2011	2014	2015
Bulgaria	BGN	0.60	0.65	0.65	0.65	0.31	0.33	0.33	0.33
Cyprus	EUR	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	0.36	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	0.36
Croatia	HRK	-	-	3.10	3.10	-	-	0.41	0.41
Denmark	DKK	5.00	6.00	6.50	7.00	0.67	0.81	0.87	0.94
Slovakia	EUR (a)	10.00	0.40	0.45	0.45	0.33	0.40	0.45	0.45
Spain	EUR	0.31	0.35	0.38	0.42	0.31	0.35	0.38	0.42
Greece	EUR	0.47	0.55	0.65	0.65	0.47	0.55	0.65	0.65
Finland	EUR	0.60	0.60	0.90	1.00	0.60	0.60	0.90	1.00
France	EUR	0.50	0.53	0.61	0.68	0.50	0.53	0.61	0.68
Hungary	HUF	70	90	115	115	0.28	0.33	0.37	0.38
Latvia	EUR (b)	0.22	0.35	0.50	0.50	0.31	0.49	0.50	0.50
Lithuania	EUR (c)	1.35	1.35	1.35	0.39	0.39	0.39	0.39	0.39
Poland	PLN	1.45	1.55	1.75	1.75	0.42	0.38	0.42	0.42
Portugal	EUR	0.31	0.32	0.42	0.45	0.31	0.32	0.42	0.45
United Kingdom	GBP	0.27	0.36	0.53	0.54	0.35	0.41	0.64	0.75
Romania	RON	n.a.	1.00	1.00	1.00	n.a.	0.24	0.22	0.23
Sweden	SEK	5.00	5.50	6.50	6.50	0.51	0.60	0.73	0.70

Source: ANACOM

Notes: (a) – from 2009, previously SKK;

(b) – from 2014, previously LVL;

(c) – from 2015, previously LTL.

n.a. – not applicable

Annex III – Prices of priority international mail sent to an EU destination

Country	Currency	Price in local currency				Price in euros			
		2008	2011	2014	2015	2008	2011	2014	2015
Germany	EUR	0.70	0.75	0.75	0.80	0.70	0.75	0.75	0.80
Austria	EUR	0.65	0.70	0.70	0.80	0.65	0.70	0.70	0.80
Belgium	EUR	0.80	1.03	1.17	1.20	0.80	1.03	1.17	1.20
Bulgaria	BGN	1.50	1.50	1.50	1.50	0.77	0.77	0.77	0.77
Cyprus	EUR	0.51	0.51	0.53	0.66	0.51	0.51	0.53	0.66
Croatia	HRK	-	-	11.00	11.00	-	-	1.45	1.45
Denmark	DKK	7.75	11.00	14.00	14.50	1.04	1.48	1.88	1.94
Slovakia	EUR (a)	23.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	0.76	1.00	1.00	1.00
Slovenia	EUR	0.40	0.40	0.60	0.60	0.40	0.40	0.60	0.60
Spain	EUR	0.60	0.65	0.76	0.90	0.60	0.65	0.76	0.90
Estonia	EUR (b)	9.00	0.58	1.00	1.20	0.58	0.58	1.00	1.20
Finland	EUR	0.80	0.75	1.00	1.10	0.80	0.75	1.00	1.10
France	EUR	0.65	0.75	0.83	0.95	0.65	0.75	0.83	0.95
Greece	EUR	0.65	0.75	0.90	0.90	0.65	0.75	0.90	0.90
Netherlands	EUR	0.75	0.79	1.05	1.15	0.75	0.79	1.05	1.15
Hungary	HUF	230	240	295	325	0.92	0.88	0.95	1.07
Ireland	EUR	0.82	0.82	0.90	1.00	0.82	0.82	0.90	1.00
Italy	EUR	0.52	0.75	0.85	0.95	0.52	0.75	0.85	0.95
Latvia	EUR (c)	0.45	0.55	0.78	0.78	0.63	0.78	0.78	0.78
Lithuania	EUR (d)	2.45	2.45	2.45	0.81	0.71	0.71	0.71	0.81
Luxembourg	EUR	0.70	0.85	0.85	0.85	0.70	0.85	0.85	0.85
Malta	EUR	0.37	0.37	0.59	0.59	0.37	0.37	0.59	0.59
Poland	PLN	3.00	3.00	5.20	5.20	0.87	0.73	1.24	1.26
Portugal	EUR	0.67	0.68	0.72	0.72	0.67	0.68	0.72	0.72
United Kingdom	GBP	0.50	0.68	0.97	1.00	0.65	0.78	1.17	1.38
Czech Republic	CZK	17.00	20.00	25.00	25.00	0.69	0.82	0.91	0.91
Romania	RON	2.10	2.10	2.10	2.10	0.53	0.49	0.47	0.47
Sweden	SEK	10.30	12.00	14.00	14.00	1.05	1.31	1.58	1.51

Source: ANACOM

Notes: (a) – from 2009, previously SKK;

(b) – from 2011, previously E EK;

(c) – from 2014, previously LVL;

(d) – from 2015, previously LTL.

Annex IV – Prices of national parcels service

Country	Currency	Price in local currency				Price in euros			
		2008	2011	2014	2015	2008	2011	2014	2015
Germany	EUR	3.90	4.10	6.99	6.99	3.90	4.10	6.99	6.99
Austria	EUR	4.08	4.30	4.47	4.60	4.08	4.30	4.47	4.60
Belgium	EUR	4.75	5.90	6.50	6.50	4.75	5.90	6.50	6.50
Bulgaria	BGN	1.50	2.60	2.60	2.60	0.77	1.33	1.33	1.33
Cyprus	EUR	1.28	1.28	1.30	4.52	1.28	1.28	1.30	4.52
Croatia	HRK	-	-	20.00	20.00	-	-	2.38	2.64
Denmark	DKK	70.00	80.00	60.00	60.00	9.38	10.74	8.04	8.04
Slovakia	EUR (a)	49.00	2.20	3.50	2.80	1.61	2.20	3.50	2.80
Slovenia	EUR	3.71	3.09	3.09	3.09	3.71	3.09	3.09	3.09
Spain	EUR	3.65	4.37	6.50	7.59	3.65	4.37	6.50	7.59
Estonia	EUR (b)	45.00	3.26	3.26	3.92	2.88	3.26	3.26	3.92
Finland	EUR	8.50	7.20	7.60	7.90	8.50	7.20	7.60	7.90
France	EUR	7.40	7.94	8.90	8.95	7.40	7.94	8.90	8.95
Greece	EUR	4.30	4.00	4.10	4.10	4.30	4.00	4.10	4.10
Netherlands	EUR	6.20	6.75	6.95	6.95	6.20	6.75	6.95	6.95
Hungary	HUF	830	1050	1190.00	1190.00	3.33	3.86	3.82	3.92
Ireland	EUR	7.50	7.50	7.50	8.25	7.50	7.50	7.50	8.25
Italy	EUR	7.00	7.00	9.10	9.00	7.00	7.00	9.10	9.00
Latvia	EUR (c)	1.71	2.82	3.54	3.54	2.41	3.98	3.54	3.54
Lithuania	EUR (d)	9.79	9.30	9.30	2.68	2.84	2.69	2.69	2.68
Luxembourg	EUR	5.50	7.00	7.00	7.00	5.50	7.00	7.00	7.00
Malta	EUR	1.77	1.77	9.00	9.00	1.77	1.77	9.00	9.00
Poland	PLN	10.00	11.00	11.00	11.00	2.90	2.67	2.62	2.67
Portugal	EUR	3.90	4.05	5.20	5.45	3.90	4.05	5.20	5.45
United Kingdom	GBP	4.20	4.41	8.00	4.89	5.43	5.03	9.62	6.76
Czech Republic	CZK	38.00	43.00	52.00	74.00	1.54	1.77	1.90	2.70
Romania	RON	4.82	3.60	3.60	3.60	1.22	0.85	0.80	0.81
Sweden	SEK	145.00	150.00	155.00	155.00	14.85	16.37	17.48	16.77

Source: ANACOM

Notes: (a) – from 2009, previously SKK;

(b) – from 2011, previously EEK;

(c) – from 2014, previously LVL;

(d) – from 2015, previously LTL.

Annex V – Transit time of national parcels⁵²

Transit time of national parcels in 2014 and 2015	
Austria	D+2
Belgium	D+1
Bulgaria	D+1
Croatia	D+3
Cyprus	n.a.
Czech Republic	
Denmark	D+1
Estonia	D+1
Finland	D+1
France	D+2
Germany	D+1
Greece	D+3
Hungria	D+2
Ireland	D+1
Italy	D+4 in 2015 D+3 in 2014
Latvia	D+4
Lithuania	D+4
Luxembourg	n.a.
Malta	D+1
Netherlands	D+1
Poland	D+3
Portugal	D+3
Romania	D+2
Slovakia	D+2
Slovenia	D+2
Spain	D+3
Sweden	D+1
United Kingdom	D+2

Source: ANACOM

n.a.: not applicable

⁵² D+n means that the item sent is delivered to the destination n days after the day of its collection.

Annex VI – Exchange rates

Country	Currency	2008	2011	2014	2015
Bulgaria	BGN	1.9558	1.9558	1.9558	1.9558
Croatia	HRK	-	-	7.5751	7.5751
Denmark	DKK	7.4506	7.4342	7.4638	7.4593
Slovakia	SKK	30.126	-	-	-
Estonia	EEK	15.6466	-	-	-
Hungary	HUF	251.51	279.37	311.49	303.45
Latvia	LVL	0.7027	0.7063	-	-
Lithuania	LTL	3.4528	3.4528	3.4528	-
Poland	PLN	3.5121	4.1206	4.1987	4.1259
United Kingdom	GBP	0.9525	0.8353	0.8317	0.7236
Czech Republic	CZK	26.875	25.787	27.395	27.379
Romania	RON	4.0225	4.3233	4.4933	4.4339
Sweden	SEK	9.6152	9.0298	8.8666	9.2449

Source: Bank of Portugal

Notes: Annual average exchange rates from 2008 to 2014. Monthly average exchange rate for March 2015. These rates represent the price of one euro in local currency.

Annex VII – Purchasing power parity indexes

Country	2008	2011	2014
Germany	104	104	104
Austria	109.13	110.72	110.52
Belgium	111.81	110.99	110.99
Bulgaria	83.62	92.59	92.22
Cyprus	87.70	92.02	87.90
Croatia	490	501	484
Denmark	1026	1007	1004
Slovakia	68.18	68.72	66.63
Slovenia	81.20	83.54	79.93
Spain	92.18	93.30	89.45
Estonia	70.25	69.47	74.67
Finland	117.46	120.30	124.36
France	112.93	111.90	109.78
Greece	89.73	92.79	82.91
Netherlands	107.82	110.04	109.24
Hungary	16568	16543	17477
Ireland	121.80	110.28	111.30
Italy	100.98	101.89	100.38
Latvia	71.92	66.97	68.58
Lithuania	62.93	60.70	61.60
Luxembourg	116.00	118.55	119.21
Malta	71.72	75.61	80.16
Poland	237.65	242.21	242.09
Portugal	83.10	82.11	77.79
United Kingdom	83.31	92.73	93.76
Czech Republic	1826	1776	1765
Romania	204.40	210.91	228.49
Sweden	1123.04	1173.33	1184.93

Source: Eurostat

Annex VIII – Country codes

Country	Código
Germany	DE
Austria	AT
Belgium	BE
Bulgaria	BG
Cyprus	CY
Croatia	HR
Denmark	DK
Slovakia	SK
Slovenia	SI
Spain	ES
Estonia	EE
Finland	FI
France	FR
Greece	EL
Netherlands	NL
Hungary	HU
Ireland	IE
Italy	IT
Latvia	LV
Lithuania	LT
Luxembourg	LU
Malta	MT
Poland	PL
Portugal	PT
United Kingdom	UK
Czech Republic	CZ
Romania	RO
Sweden	SE