



Rural POs connected to satellite broadband Internet in Albania



Algérie Poste establishes a Postal Bank



Tanzanian Post becomes a mobile money agent with Vodacom



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### Algérie Poste is drafting a postal bank

Algérie Poste is in the process of creating its own bank. Besides obtaining an edge in retail financial services, it will also offset the insufficient liquidity of the post offices.



Besides this project, the Algerian Post plans to improve its transport and logistical network, as well as the nationwide range of post offices, told the general director of Algeria Post, Omar Zerarki.

Algeria Post runs the largest national network with 13 million current accounts and 3300 agencies at the national level. It is also an important channel for money transfers. In Nov 2010 alone, it has serviced 14, 4 million transactions of 250 million DZD, or 2, 5 billion Euros.

One of the plans disclosed is to open current accounts for about 600 thousand pensioners, out of approximately 2,5 million on the whole, who regularly withdraw their payments by postal orders (the other 1,9 million are checkbook holders).

The DG of Algerian Post also plans to finalize the project of technical upgrading of post offices, a project which «has recorded a setback since its launch in 2004», he added. Today, only 200 out of 3 500 of active postal outlets have «one stop shops» for all transactions.

*Aram Gareginyan  
January 27, 2011*



## Conference on Development of Postal Financial Services in Africa to be held in Burkina Faso on February 7 – 9, 2011

A Conference on development of postal financial services in Africa will be held in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, on 7 – 9 February. The participants include representatives of post offices of a number of African countries, as well as officials from the Universal Postal Union, Pan African Postal Union (PAPU), representatives of AzerPost, French “La Poste” and Eurogiro. The conference will feature statements of World Bank, African Development Bank, governors of African Central Banks and Regional economic communities.

The thematic set of the conference will include the status of postal financial services from a global and regional perspective, and experience of separate countries. Another panel will be devoted to financial inclusion. Issues addressed will include expanding the reach of financial services to the unbanked population, and examining the role of the financial flows from the African Diaspora in the socio-economic development of Africa. Participants will share their best practices of organizing money transfers. Findings of a study on the Development of postal electronic transfers in Africa will be presented, along with the summary of the E-Post Africa project, whose goal is to equip African post offices with multimedia terminals, enabling the population to access ICT services.

*Aram Gareginyan  
January 27, 2011*

## Tanzania Post operator to act as agent for Vodacom’s mobile money transfer service

Tanzania Posts Corporation will provide its nationwide network for the M-Pesa money transfer service initiated by Vodacom mobile operator. This will be the second partnership after a similar one with Airtel in 2010. “We are ready to cooperate with other mobile phone operators in future. We have seen Zain, now Airtel’s money transfer network agent since March last year. At present we are working to make sure that our new service ‘Posta Cash’ is available to all our post offices at regional levels,” Wilfred Miigo, Public Relations officer of TPC said in Dar es Salaam last week. Network agent services allows TPC to directly access the mobile phone operators network locations and customers, and introduce products and services and optimize commission levels, he said. Four mobile firms have mobile money transfer services in Tanzania. The other two are Tigo with Tigo Pesa and Zantel with Z-Pesa. It has also cut down the time and distances that in the past faced people in remote and rural areas in accessing banking services. TPC has also launched an electronic money transfer service of its own, Posta Cash, to help people in isolated places transfer money through the TPC network.

Both TPC customers and non-customers can transfer money by presenting amount they wish to send and the beneficiary details. The beneficiary is usually contacted by telephone or SMS as soon as the money is ready for collection. The status of the transaction can also be checked online. The transaction is subject to regulatory approval and satisfaction of closing conductions, and is expected to close in the first half of 2011.

“While this milestone is a great achievement that reflects on the ongoing demand posts services, we recognize that a large number of Tanzanians still remain without access to financial services. In particular, there is a real opportunity to empower more by offering money transfer services through diverse classes of trade,” he said.



*Aram Gareginyan  
January 25, 2011*



### **300 rural post offices in Albania connected to satellite broadband Internet**

300 rural post offices in Albania are connected to satellite broadband Internet. The project, accomplished in Jan 2011, has been realized by SES ASTRA, the European satellite Internet provider (also operating in the Middle East and Africa), and its local distribution partner, Starsat International.

The package offered to post offices is 4 mbps download and 512 kbps upload, by means of ASTRA2Connect technology, embedded in the Sat3Play satellite terminal.

Today, Internet penetration in Albania is around 30%, with connectivity mostly available in rural areas where ADSL is present. Rural areas can connect through wireless technologies and satellite, with 3G coming soon. Posta Shqiptare has about 525 offices and postal agents, of which urban offices are connected through ADSL by the incumbent telecom operator of Albania, Albtelecom.

“Each post office will have a public corner where it will provide two computers for the public use”, said Dritan Vreshta, general manager of Starsat International. “Also, the wireless router is open and can be accessed by anyone that has a computer. This part is free of charge for anyone who can go to the post office. On the back office side, each post has 1 or 2 computers for postmen that will use the corporate network with VPN (intranet) over Internet for all Posta Shqiptare services”.

The postal project is the next mass Internet access initiative of Starsat after the nationwide school connection program, which involved 2000 schools. This project too was implemented with Astra2Connect in the rural part.

“The satellite solution needs to be addressed in this issue, since in most of rural Albania, Internet access remained difficult and sometimes the one that increases the overall cost”, explains D. Vreshta. The total project cost is only 650 thousand euro, which covers all the elements of the tender proposal: satellite network, supply and configuration of an indoor wireless router, use of satellite equipment for 1 year time, and satellite internet service. Excluding the cost of the wireless router and implementation fee, post offices pay only about 160 euro per month for internet service.

The project, initiated by the manager of Albanian Post, Arquile Gorea, is part of the digitalization of Albanian society, championed by the Prime Minister of the country, Sali Berisha.

Today all public schools in Albania are equipped with Internet, and public procurements have fully transferred to online regime.

*Aram Gareginyan  
January 25, 2011*

## Bank Pocztowy: Best bank for micro-enterprises

No bank offers free accounts to businesses in Poland. The cheapest online account services for micro-enterprises are offered by ING Bank, Volkswagen Bank of Poland, Polish Post Bank and HSBC Bank Poland.

This ranking prepared by the Tax Care for "My Company" shows that the traditional accounts with Internet access already effectively compete with purely online accounts - until recently that are neither equal in terms of pricing.

While ranking the cheapest online accounts, it became clear that Polish Postal Bank is the one to offer unlimited number of free transfers and withdrawals at all ATMs countrywide.

The ranking also showed that a lot of banks create competition while offering Internet-based account service at possible lower prices as they can.

*Journal Legal Newspaper  
25 January, 2011*

## Competition for Polish Senior Citizens lead by Post Bank

It is true that only five banks offer accounts designed for seniors, namely **Post Bank**, Bank BGZ, Polish Cooperative Bank, Bank Zachodni WBK and Deutsche Bank.

These accounts are not intended to raise a competition as being the cheapest ones; however, they remain a lot cheaper than many ordinary offers.

Moreover, the price is not the only benefit of having an account exclusively for seniors.

For example, Bank Zachodni WBK and Deutsche Bank offer insurance and medical assistance which may be helpful in case of sudden illness

Deutsche Bank also adds security assistance, domestic, or professional help in the event of a fault in the place of residence.

Customers who have an account with BZ WBK can also count on the rebate in a chain of pharmacies.

Post Bank, effectively using the network of its parent company (**Polish Post**), offers an interesting solution that allows a free supply of cash to the house by the postman.

In addition, the bank, on the Grandma's and Grandpa's Day, offers a gift to customers in case of opening an account.

Furthermore, as a first step to encourage the existing customers to enjoy the Internet banking, the Post Bank offers a gift provided that the account-holders apply for Internet banking.

*Polish Postbank  
21 January, 2011*

### Podstawowe parametry oferty dla seniorów

Nazwa Banku	Nazwa konta	Liczba bezprowizyjnych bankomatów	Oplata za skorzystanie z obcego bankomatu	Liczba placówek
Bank Pocztowy	Pocztowe Konto Nestor	ok. 16 600 dla dwóch wypłat 3 500 lub dostęp do wszystkich bankomatów w kraju za 2 zł/mies.	2 wypłaty: 0, kolejne: 4	76 placówek i Urzędy Pocztove
BGŻ	Plan Senior		2,5% (min. 5 zł)	362
BPS	POL-Konto Senior	4 282	4	70
BZ WBK	Konto Aktywni 50+	ok. 16 600	0	629
Deutsche Bank PBC	db Koneser	ok. 16 600	0	169

Zródło: Open Finance



### **Polish Post Bank will have this year more than 1 million customers**

Postal Bank's net profit last year rose to 14.2 million PLN versus to 9.4 million PLN of the last year.

In 2010, the Postal Bank acquired 165 thousand new customers on top of the 650 thousand ones already existent.

“In 2010, we have developed four times faster than the market and we want to maintain this trend. This year we want to attach 220 thousand new customers. So, at the end of the year, the total number of our customers will reach to 1 million, and we hope that this number will increase to 1.5 million by 2013”, says "Rom Midera Simon, vice president of the Bank.

He adds that this rapid increase in the number of retail customers is a result of restructuring the bank, Last year the customers opened 122 thousand new personal accounts and they expect to obtain another 150 this year.

Last year, the Post bank provided mortgage loans for the amount of 458 million PLN, and we intend to raise this amount to about 0.9 billion PLN this year. The Bank has achieved sustainable results throughout 2010 and we want to maintain this level in 2011 as well, - announces Midera.

*Monika Krześniak, Simon Laszewski  
18 January, 2011*

### **Czech Postal Savings Bank rated the second friendliest bank in the country**

Czech Postal Savings Bank (Postovní Sporitelna) became the second friendliest bank in the country, according to the survey, as part of the OVB's Friendly Bank project.

The score of each bank in the survey is a total of three pillars. Products and services of the banks are measured by a board of independent financial experts.

With a rating of 64, 1%, Postovní Sporitelna eventually came out second to GE Money Bank, who scored 65, 5%. The third was Raiffeisenbank, with 63, 3%.

*Aram Gareginyan,  
30 January, 2011*

### **Osek has a new post, first in its kind in North Bohemia**

The new post office, opened in Osek, is particularly useful for seniors, as it offers more space and much more comfort for the customers and employees as well.



The newly opened Post office of Osek is the first of its kind in northern Bohemia. It provides a modern model of a post office with a new, unified type of furniture, letter mail boxes, safe-deposit boxes and easy and closer communication between for customers and employees.

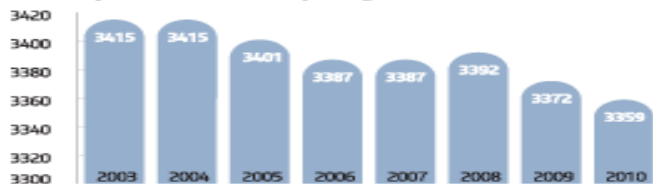
Czech Post plans to optimize its network in 2017. The optimization project of the postal network is envisaged to 1500 branches of Czech Post.

Czech Post wants to make its branches operate as franchises After 150 years of its existence; the Czech Post is going to break its branch network. The changes will affect hundreds of rural post offices in particular.

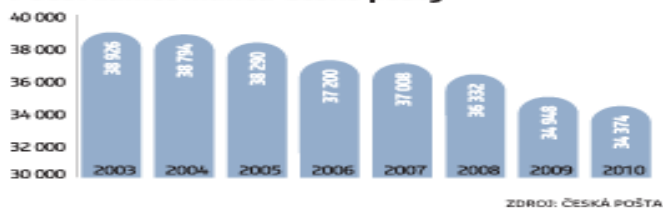
The new model should be operational no later than 2017, whereupon the smallest branches would remain just a so-called distribution point. When the postman in the car does not reach the addressee will be able to leave the consignment for a client to the distribution point.

The services to be restricted by the Czech Post include; service of packages, payment of pensions, sale of stamps, sending money orders.

**Počet poboček České pošty**



**Počet zaměstnanců České pošty**



*Czech Post*  
20 January, 2011



### Banco Postal starts with Payment of taxes through 900 post offices

January is usually a month that taxpayers need to settle a series of taxes such as Property Tax, Vehicle Tax, land Tax. To facilitate the payment of these and other taxes, over 900 post offices active as agent of Banco Postal are available to customers with extended hours of service, since most of them work from 08:30 to 18.00.

Banco Postal also carries out payment of water, electricity and phone bills due to agreements signed with Bradesco.

Unlike some other correspondent banks, Banco Postal offers a range of solutions to its users, such as opening of current and savings accounts.

*Banco Postal*  
January 6, 2011



### Sixty percent of Indonesians settle tax payments through post offices

Sixty percent of taxpayers in Indonesia choose to pay at post offices rather than to go to banks," said Adam Anthony Mars, Senior Manager of Financial and Retail Services Division PT Pos Indonesia.

As a place of choice for taxpayers, PT Pos Indonesia has enjoyed an award from the Tax Office. Among the high number of taxpayers are also small and medium enterprises (SMEs).

*AFP, Ariel Priyono*  
13 January, 2011

### Greenhouse Seeks Bosnian Postbank for Regional Growth

Greenhouse Investment Limited, a U.K.-based emerging markets private-equity group said it wants to buy a controlling stake in Bosnia's Postbank as part of a plan to become "a regional merchant bank."

"Greenhouse is in the process of becoming a regional merchant bank with a focused fixed-income offering to enable certain southeast European issuers and investors access to international debt capital markets," Greenhouse wants to buy 57.2 percent of Postbank's capital from Slovenia's Poteza Adriatic Fund BV, a transaction that would cost 7 million Euros (\$9.6 million) to 10 million Euros, said the company spokesman.

Postbank's shares last traded on the Sarajevo Stock Exchange on Jan. 11, down 5.6 percent on the day to close at 17 BAM (\$11.79) per share, just off a 52-week low of 16.9 BAM.

Minority shareholders control 40.2 percent of Postbank, while Bosnia's Finance Ministry holds the remaining 2.6 percent.

*Gordana Filipovic*  
24 January, 2011



## Partners for Russian Post-Bank

There exist a few concepts for establishing a Post Bank in Russia. In accordance with the first scheme the Post Bank would provide all banking and financial services, including postal money transfers.

However, the second scheme envisages that the Post should continue to provide services of postal money transfers, while the bank would offer banking services. As stated by Vladimir Dmitriev, Head of VEB, the Post of Russia is currently actively cooperating with the Post of Italy to work out a reasonable option and a favorable model for creation of Post Bank.

The Minister of Communications, Shchegolev said that the establishment of Post Bank will be postponed indefinitely. According to him, there exist many obstacles that hinder the establishment of the Post Bank and may put the project in jeopardy.

“One of the major unresolved issues remains the status of the Russian Post, now there is a legal restriction on the sale of shares of the company. We propose to review and amend the law on postal services”, said Alexander Kiselyov, General Director of Post of Russia.

The maximum amount of investment in the Post Bank is estimated at 300 billion RUR [USD 10,000 million]. One of the requirements for a banking partner appears to be its readiness to invest equity in the capital of the Post Bank (including repurchasing of additional shares and maintaining its share of equity capital) in an amount not less than 25% but not more than 50%.

*Gazette Vedomosti  
03 January, 2011*

## New Year “gift”: Armenian senior citizens dismayed at slow pension delivery in January



Santa has delivered a big surprise in January for tens of thousands of Armenian pensioners who had to literally elbow their way to cash desks at post offices to get their retirement payments or else wait in long queues for what is due to them – sometimes futilely.

Late last year it was decided to put Haypost Company in charge of paying pensions in Yerevan through its 90 city offices – a function that before had been performed by the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs.

Despite assurances by Prime Minister Tigran Sargsyan that pensions would be delivered to their recipients on time, there are still senior citizens who haven't received their monthly pensions as of today.

Haypost public relations officer Gevorg Abrahamyan told ArmeniaNow that the company has already learned from this experience and will organize the work properly next month to avoid commotion.

*Karine Ionesyan*

11 January, 2011



## South African POSTBANK is preparing to wade into the muddy waters of banking competition

The state-owned bank will come up against the big four and smaller banks that are engaged in a turf war for customers, particularly at the lower end of the market segment. The government wants it to increase financial inclusion, particularly for South Africans who still have no access to banking facilities.

According to the latest Finscope survey 76, 5% of South African adults were financially included last year that is, using some financial product or service from either the formal or informal sectors, compared to 73, 9% in 2009 and 76, 4% in 2008.

Analysts say the big banks could struggle to find a viable formula to penetrate the unbanked market, given the pressure on them to maximize earnings and deliver shareholder value on a low cost base.

Postbank chief operating officer John Wentzel says he relishes the prospect of entering the retail banking sector despite the tough, competitive environment. This is because Postbank already has its own strengths over rivals, among them a customer base of more than 6, 2-million. This ranks it among the top six banks, though its product menu excludes such offerings as lending and merchant banking.

The latest financial figures show it has a deposit base of about R6, 4bn and customer liabilities of R4, 5bn. "So we are on a sound financial footing," Mr. Wentzel says.

Its transactional fees for such services as savings and investment accounts are also some of the lowest in the market, Mr. Wentzel says. "We also have got over 40% market shares in Mzansi accounts and we have shown that we can grab market share even on an unequal footing.

"So this is not a little company and we can safely say we have got enough customers to compete with the big four banks."

Postbank will use the Post Office infrastructure of more than 2400 branches to reach and grow its customer base. More than half these branches target the underserved and rural markets.

Mr. Wentzel says the coast is clear now that Parliament has approved the South African Postbank Limited Bill, which paves the way for the corporatization of Postbank. At present operating as a division of the South African Post Office, Postbank will convert into a fully-fledged retail bank with its own board, executive management and governance structure.

It will trade as South African Postbank Limited and be registered under the Banks and Companies Acts.

He says it should start operating as a retail bank by next year once a banking license has been issued, and that this new journey will not be without its own challenges, key among them governance and risk management issues, in addition to ensuring a strong capital base.

"We have to first go through the formal process of applying for a banking license from the Reserve Bank and, before that happens, there are a number of processes that have to be completed," he says.

"I am hoping that by the end of the year, we will be able to submit our application for a banking license to the central bank for their consideration.

"Our hope is that by early 2012 we will be able to start operating as a retail bank."

Postbank will have to introduce risk management and customer deposit protection systems that satisfy the central bank's requirements, he says. It will also have to demonstrate it has appointed "office bearers who are fit and proper" to manage its affairs and operations.

Mr. Wentzel says Postbank's banking infrastructure, including IT systems, will be a key to ensuring a robust and uninterrupted customer service. He estimates that R750m could be invested in IT infrastructure in the next 12 to 24 months. More experienced staff will be recruited, while employees are being reoriented and trained to equip them with the technical and soft skills needed to run an efficient retail bank, he says.

But the battle for customers in the lower end of the market segment is intensifying as evidenced by recent market activity by banks such as Capitec Bank and African Bank. The big four banks admit they have not grown as fast as they would like in this area but are also keen to grow market share.

Mr. Wentzel says the lower end of the market is not easy to penetrate and the challenge is to develop products that are simple and easy to understand.

*Sure Kamhunga  
12 January, 2011*



### **India Post teams up with three banks to issue debit cards for low-income population**

India Post has selected three banks to work with on the project of operating pre-paid cards. Proposals, collected in March – April 2010, have been accepted from Industrial Development bank of India (IDBI), HSBC bank and ICICI bank.

According to the request for proposals by India Post, the cards will be reloadable within the amounts of 1000 to 50 000 rupee (approx. 22 to 1100 USD). The card can be operated at post offices, as well as ATMs and sales points which accept Master cards. Along with the primary card, up to 4 additional cards will be allowed per each customer. The cards will be distributed through the network of India Post and will be usable in India only.

The banks will be responsible for procurement of cards and training the personnel of Post in operational practices. The banks will share with the Post a percentage of revenues generated from the cards.

The goal of the project is to activate cashless transactions in retail payments and to earn additional revenue through value added services.

ICICI Bank is India's second largest bank with total assets of INR 3,634 billion (\$81 billion) as of March 31, 2010. Assets of IDBI (6th largest) for the same date totaled 2,335 billion INR (\$51, 9 billion), of HSBC India - 904, 2 billion INR (\$20, 1 billion). HSBC India is the second largest among foreign banks in India.

*Aram Gareginyan  
18 January, 2011*



## Bulgarian Postbank CEO, HR manager recognized best in the country

Emil Georgiev, HR manager of Bulgarian Postbank, received “Manager of Human resources 2010” award by the “Human resources in Bulgaria and the Eurointegration” foundation. The awarding ceremony was held under the auspices of the Minister of Labor and Social Policy of Bulgaria Totyu Mladenov. The HR manager of Postbank has been distinguished for his integrated activities for improving the management of human capital and conducting programs for career advancement. “Working as a specialist of human resource development is a very responsible task, particularly in a large company like Postbank with its over 3 000 employees.

In these challenging times, we’ve managed to sustain our achievements mainly through the sense of responsibility and professional skills of our staff”, said E. Mladenov. In 2010, 58% of Postbank employees have participated in at least one of 350 corporate educational programs. In 2009, the Eurobank EFG Start program of the bank was awarded by the Bulgarian association of Human Resource Management and Development in the category “Education and development”.

Earlier, on December 9, the CEO of Postbank, A Yagodin, was awarded “Banker of the year 2010” by Banker magazine in Bulgaria. „18 years of my work in the banking sector have been devoted solely to Bulgarian Postbank. I sincerely thank our team of more than 3 000 colleagues. The year 2010 has been a hard, but a successful one for the banking sector, which sustained the shocks of the crisis, remained robust and secure”, said A. Yagodin.

Bulgarian Postbank (Eurobank EFG Bulgaria AD) is part of the Eurobank EFG Group. The group has a total 86, 9 billion euro of assets and 23 000 employees. It is present in Greece, Bulgaria, Romania, Serbia, Poland, Turkey, Ukraine, Luxembourg, the UK and Cyprus. Eurobank EFG Group is part of the globally operating EFG group.

*Aram Gareginyan  
28 January, 2011*

## Upcoming Postal and Financial Events, 2011

- ✚ RCC, Seminar on Development and Enhancement of Postal Payment Services – 1-2 February, Tashkent, Uzbekistan
- ✚ PAPU, Conference on Development of Postal Financial Services - 7-9 February 2011, Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso
- ✚ WB, IFC Financial Infrastructure Week – 14-17 March, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
- ✚ WSBI, Regional Postal Savings Banks’ Meeting - 16-17 March, Libreville, Gabon, Africa
- ✚ Eurogiro General Community Meeting – 10-12 May, Warsaw, Poland
- ✚ Pochtovaya Troyka 2011 - 21-23 June, Saint Petersburg, Russia

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