



Deutsche Post discontinues overnight airmail for domestic letters within Germany

- **After 63 years of service, the early hours of March 28 saw the last night flights for transporting letter mail between northern and southern Germany.**
- **Marc Hitschfeld, Chief Operations Officer, Deutsche Post: “In times of climate change, airmail for domestic letters within Germany can no longer be justified.”**
- **The shift to road transport means 80% less CO₂ emissions on affected routes.**

Bonn/Berlin/Hanover/Stuttgart/Munich – March 28, 2024: Marking the end of an era, Deutsche Post has discontinued its overnight airmail network in Germany after 63 years in operation. The early hours of March 28 saw the last overnight flights by Eurowings and Tui Fly transporting letters to and from northern and southern Germany on the routes Stuttgart-Berlin, Hanover-Munich and Hanover-Stuttgart. In the interest of sustainability, letter mail on these routes will be transported exclusively via road in the future. This will allow Deutsche Post to reduce transport-related CO₂ emissions on these routes by more than 80%.

“We conclude the era of overnight letter airmail with mixed feelings,” says Marc Hitschfeld, Chief Operations Officer of DHL Group’s Post & Parcel Germany division. “In times of climate change, airmail for domestic letters within Germany can no longer be justified – also because there is no longer the same urgency associated with letter mail as in decades past. So on the one hand, the end of domestic airmail is good news for the environment. On the other hand, the end of overnight airmail closes a chapter of postal history which many Deutsche Post employees have identified with for decades.”

On August 22, 1961, Germany’s then Federal Minister of Post and Telecommunications Richard Stücklen (CSU) and the chairman of Deutsche Lufthansa AG signed a contract for the transport of letters and postcards by air within the Federal Republic of Germany without airmail surcharge. This marked the start of the overnight airmail network, which officially began operations on September 1, 1961, with the goal of faster letter mail service within Germany. At the time, letters and telegrams were the only medium for quickly transmitting written communication – a function long since assumed by digital media such as email, WhatsApp, etc.



The first partner in the overnight airmail network was Lufthansa, which serviced all routes at the time with the exception of the air corridor to Berlin controlled by the Western Allies (serviced by the American carrier PanAm until 1990). Over the years, additional airlines were added to service the network, with Lufthansa terminating its service in 2008. The Frankfurt (am Main) airport served as the network hub for decades, but lost this role in 2005 due to the ban on night flights at Frankfurt.

As late as 1996, Deutsche Post was still transporting some 430 metric tons of letter mail with 26 partner airline aircraft to 45 destinations every night. In the end, it was only 53 metric tons, with six aircraft servicing the routes Stuttgart-Berlin, Hanover-Munich and Hanover-Stuttgart (each in both directions). This amounted to some 1.5 million letters flown each night or roughly 270,000 items per aircraft on average.

Political and social consensus in Germany today has largely determined that ensuring speedy delivery of most domestic letter mail by the following workday is no longer a core component of universal postal service. Instead, focus is much more on the social-environmental aspects and impacts of the postal service. Accordingly, the reforms to Germany's Postal Act (PostModG) – currently in deliberation in Germany's parliament and expected to take effect soon – stipulate longer transit times for letter mail, which has long been the norm in most EU countries. Nevertheless, Deutsche Post will continue to ensure fast letter mail transport between northern and southern Germany with the deployment of Sprinter vans, among other modes. This is also made possible by reduced letter mail volumes and sorting times.

– End –

You can find the press release for download as well as further information on group.dhl.com/pressreleases

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Post & Parcel Germany is a division of DHL Group with around 187,000 employees. Its core business is the national mail and parcel business - i.e., the transport, sorting and delivery of letters and parcels. The division is a pioneer in its industry in the area of environmental and social sustainability and is represented in Germany with two brands:

Deutsche Post is the largest postal service provider in Europe and the market leader in the German mail market. The Mail Communication, Dialog Marketing and Press Services product segments are essentially bundled under this business area. Deutsche Post's product and service portfolio includes the processing and delivery of physical documents as well as a broad digital portfolio in its product segments.

DHL is the leading global brand in the logistics industry. In the Parcel Logistics Business Division, DHL Paket is the market leader in Germany. The division is the service provider of choice for shipper and recipient customers in online retailing. A wide range of flexible services make it easier for customers to receive and ship parcels. DHL Paket also operates the largest parcel machine network (Pack- and Poststations) in Germany.

Post & Parcel Germany is part of DHL Group. The Group generated revenues of more than 81.8 billion euros in 2023. With investments in green technologies and a commitment to society and the environment, the Group makes a positive contribution to the world. By 2050, DHL Group aims to achieve net-zero emissions logistics.