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**Turnover for Postal Activities under Universal Service Obligation
In Hungary**

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The views expressed in this paper are those of the author alone and do not necessarily represent the position of HCSO or any other organization with whom the author may be affiliated.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The main purpose of the producing turnover statistics is to provide indicators of the economic cycle, from which several indicators are derived. Annual data are important for economic benchmarks, while short term data generally refer to flows during the quarter, as well as to beginning and end of quarter for stocks.

The postal industry is one of the core infrastructure areas of the economy. Due to the liberalization of this sector, a special attention must be paid to handle new regulations, to ensure appropriate macroeconomic data for users.

Postal activities under universal service obligation incorporate the activities of postal services operating under an „universal service obligation” (USO) by one or more designated universal service providers. The activities include use of the universal service infrastructure, including retail locations, sorting and processing facilities, and carrier routes to pickup and deliver the mail. Also included are other activities necessary to support the universal service obligation. Services are provided for business clients as well as for households.

The main objective of this paper is to give a short overview of the industry, describe turnover statistics and provide some practical examples related to the data collection in this area. One of the main challenges seems to be the valuation of the turnover structure, in particular issues on how to identify domestic and non-domestic market.

The observation of turnover regarding Postal activities under universal service obligation industry in Hungarian Central Statistical Office (HCSO) is carried out by the experts of the *the Services and Foreign Trade Statistics Department* and *Business Statistics Department* staff. The related turnover indicators are published at the division level – as parts of the total turnover of the Postal and courier activities.

Description of the industry (53.1 ISIC 4 / 53.1 NACE 2)

The different services of postal activities under universal service obligation could be summarised as operations related to printed papers (newspaper, periodicals, advertising items, etc.), the collection of documents, letters, small packets and delivery to the required destination, the counter services and other postal services (e.g. mailbox rental services). The time between collection and delivery is one of the most important differences in quality among the variety of services.

This industry is typically dominated by postal services and the rest has been invoiced by courier services other than national post activities. However, the core definition of postal services and courier services are quite the same, except the fact that postal services are rendered under a “universal service obligation” and traditionally provided by state-owned, vertically integrated and public regulated operator. The universal service obligation is determined by the European Commission as the obligation for postal operators to ensure to every citizen at least one delivery and collection of mail five days a week, at affordable prices throughout the territory. To ensure that these rules for postal operators (USO) are met and to ensure that the sharing of activities are properly respected, in member states regulation authorities have been established.

The postal market is for historic reasons usually dominated by a single producer. However, as a result of liberalization, as well as the growth of the quality and speed of electronic communication, the competition can be observed. The new entrants into this industry typically focus on the profitable low-cost markets. As the most competitive

areas seems to be activities of the express carriers like fast delivery of documents and small packages or international mail. Despite legislation to allow competition and liberalise the market, full competition on all postal services is unlikely because of the nature of the activity.

In the European postal market approximately 95% of letter mail was fully opened to competition in 2011 following the guidelines of the Third Postal Directive. This process continues in 2013, with a significant number of countries including Hungary also liberalising their respective postal markets since a later deadline for the postal market opening was granted to these countries¹.

Because of the monopoly of postal incumbents, most of national statistics institutes, as well as Hungary, have confidentiality regulations concerning publishing data and methodological details at the class level.

Both the businesses and households are National Post companies' clients, although enterprises (including government) are the largest clients (more than quarter to in value). Similarly, courier and local messenger firms also focus their activity on companies. However, there is some observable difference between the services they offer. On the one hand, national post services have very specific characteristics determined by regulation. On the other hand, couriers can offer 'tailor-made' services according to the market conditions, signing contracts with their clients. Companies are offering logistic, storage and freight transport services to their customers. In addition, freight transport by road firms are competing directly with couriers, because they offer courier services as well. This issue may imply classification problems.

It should be noted, that National Post companies beside the main activity may offer also secondary activities, first off all courier services and services related to financial and insurance activities.

Among others, globalisation is also affecting enterprises operated in this industry. Companies are establishing alliances with companies abroad, in order to improve the international delivery of the mail and to maximize the profit at the world-level.

2. DEFINICION OF THE SERVICE

According to the European classifications (NACE Rev.2, CPA 2008), activities related to the Postal services (USO) are concentrated in section "H" Transportation and storage services² under division "53", which includes two classes.

Industry Classification

53 Postal and courier activities

53.10 Postal activities under universal service obligation;

53.20 Other postal and courier activities.

¹ A later deadline for the postal market opening was granted to the Czech Republic, Cyprus, Greece, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Hungary, Malta, Poland, and Romania. Source: IPC Regulatory Database

² H TRANSPORTATION AND STORAGE, NACE Rev.2

49 Land transport and transport via pipelines

50 Water transport

51 Air transport

52 Warehousing and support activities for transportation

53 Postal and courier activities

Comparison of Industry Classifications

	ANZSIC	ISIC 4.0	NACE Rev2	NAICS 2007
general	711: Postal and Courier services	Division: 53 Postal and Courier activities	Division 53: Postal and Courier activities	492 Couriers and Messengers
detail:	7111 Postal services 7112 Courier services	Class: 5310 Postal activities Class: 5320 Courier activities	Class: 53.10 Postal activities under universal service obligation Class: 53.20 Other postal and courier activities	492110 Couriers and Express Delivery Services 492210 Local Messengers and Local Delivery

Concerning the structure of the population of postal enterprises (USO), in Hungary one company dominates the market. However, this company also dominates the total output of postal and courier services.

Product Classification

The central product classification CPC (Rev. 2) is the main product classification system applicable to this industry.

The CPA 2008 (Statistical Classification of Products by Activity in the European Economic Community) includes 5 subcategories with a direct link to the NACE industry classification (the coding rules for the first four digit are the same as those for the NACE Rev. 2).

- 53.10.11 Postal services under universal service obligation related to newspapers and periodicals
- 53.10.12 Postal services under universal service obligation related to letters
- 53.10.13 Postal services under universal service obligation related to parcels
- 53.10.14 Post office counter services
- 53.10.19 Other postal services under universal service obligation

Most of European countries, like Hungary, apply harmonized national versions of NACE Rev. 2 industrial classification and CPA 2008 product classification systems.

Comparison of Product Classifications

	ANZSPC	CPC ver 2	CPA 2008
general		Division: 68 Postal and courier services	Division: 53 Postal and courier services
detail:	6801 Postal services 6802 Courier services This item does not include: - messenger delivery services	6811 Postal services 6812 Courier services 6813 Local delivery services	53.10 Postal services under universal service obligation 53.10.11-53.10.14, 53.10.19 53.20. Other postal and courier activities

Due to the liberalization of this industry and improvement of technologies used, the structure and content of services provided may rapidly change accommodating to the partners needs. Beside primary activity secondary activities are common, or bundled services are also provided for clients. For this reason it may difficult to divide specific activities into classes to determine the primary activity. On the other hand companies classified to the other industries offer postal services, focusing on cost-efficient courier services especially on services called “express delivery industry” (more information see in the revised sector paper, 2010, <http://www.voorburggroup.org/Documents/2010%20Vienna/Papers/2010%20-%2017.pdf>).

To monitor the classification of companies and services they really offer, in most countries turnover survey contains a question about the main activity of the company. Otherwise when data collectors are not sure if the classification “Courier activities” is correct, it is proposed to call the company and ask contributors about their activities.

In Hungary the primary and secondary activities are derived from administrative sources and some surveys. The classification of economic units depends on the value added, turnover and labour data. From 2000 the top-down approach on the basis of the estimation of value added data has begun and the old primary activity is kept for 2 years (stability rule). Local units are classified independently from the enterprise.

It should be noted, that Hungarian National Post company beside USO services also offers secondary activities, first off all courier services and services related to financial and insurance activities.

According to the annual structural business statistics (SBS), concerning number of population, in Hungary this industry is dominated by micro-level companies (with less than 5 employees), which share nearly to 90%, however the turnover share of companies with more than 20 employees is close to 90% at the division-level.

Turnover is defined as the total net sales value. Value added tax is not included, price supplements are accounted for.

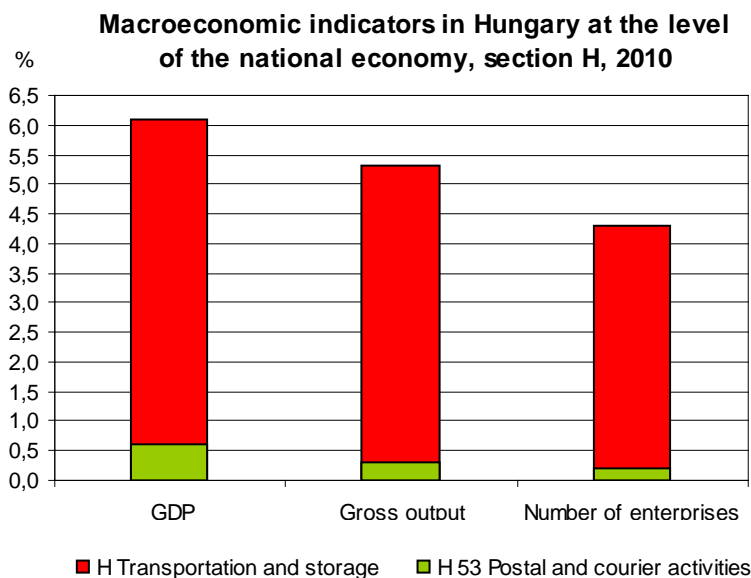
2.1. Size of the industry

In Hungary – at the level of the national economy – Transport and storage industry including post and courier activities accounts for 6,1% of the gross value added and 5,3% of the gross output, while the share of the number of enterprises operating here is only 4,3% in 2010.

Within the whole service sector (G-S) nearly 10% and within the market service sector (G-N, R-S) about 13% of the GDP is covered by the section “H”.

Concerning postal and courier industry, the proportion of GDP is slightly higher than half of one percent, and it is double the gross output of activities related to the whole national economy. The share of number of enterprises engaged in this division does not reach 0,2%, which means the dominance of large firms.

Figure 1

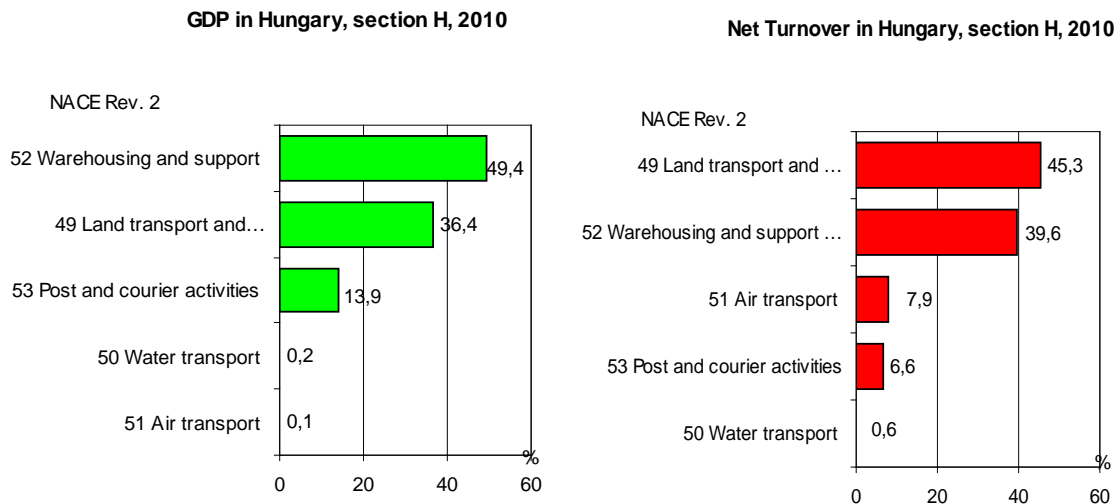


Within the section “H” the share of enterprises operated in post and courier activities is 4% in 2010. The largest proportion is represented by the enterprises classified under division “Land transport and transport via pipelines” (89%), followed by the share of “Warehousing and support activities for transportation” (12%). The field of “Water transport” and “Air transport” activities has the lowest representation with less than half%.

Considering the GDP at basic prices, the largest weight, nearly 50% is represented by the division “Warehousing and support activities for transportation”, while the coverage of net turnover of active enterprises is by 10 percentage-points lower (40%). On the other hand in case of turnover data, “Land transport and transport via pipelines” industry accounted the highest proportion (40%) with the lower share of GDP (36%).

In case of “Postal and courier activities”, the GDP share (almost 14%) is twice higher than the turnover proportion compared to the section „H”.

Figure 2



2.2 Special conditions and restrictions

Scope of the Survey

Postal and courier services in Hungary regarding turnover data as well as other basic macroeconomic data are fully covered. Turnover is defined as the total net sales value. Value added tax is not included, price supplements are accounted for.

Turnover structure

Beside the total turnover the turnover structure according to the various indicators is also important and for special purposes may be necessary.

The structure of the total yearly turnover (B-All³, business to all) could be describe as follows (statistics with limited coverage and quality):

- **Main activity + secondary activities** – based on data of enterprises with more than 19 employees;
- **Domestic + non-domestic/export** (by residency) – based on data of enterprises performing dual accounting;
- **B-B** (business to business: total industrial turnover except households) + **B-C** (business to consumer) – based on data of enterprises with more than 19 employees;
- **data from survey + administrative data** (e.g. for enterprises with less than 5 employees) + **imputation of data** (concerning missing data).

One of the challenges seems to be how to identify domestic and non-domestic market (see more under title: 2.2 Special conditions and restrictions).

Industry based or product-based turnover (output) data

Many data suppliers classified to the division 53 “Postal and courier services” have relevant turnover share regarding secondary activities as well. For example Hungarian Post Office beside primary postal activities (USO) provides courier, logistic,

³ B2All: business to All, B2B : (business to business), B2C (business to consumer)

telecommunication and other monetary intermediation services. On the other hand several companies classified mainly to the freight transport areas or warehousing and support activities for transportation, may have relevant share of the turnover with the secondary courier activity.

For calculation of industry-based output data, the estimation of a good quality turnover structure seems to be necessary, especially for producing of an industry-based index of services production (ISP). It would be also needed for calculation of an industry-based SPPI using as weighting structure to aggregate available product-based SPPIs or other appropriate deflators.

Business services vs. household consumption

According to the European STS Regulation for SPPIs B-B indices were required, however for deflation of the total output, B-All indices are needed. Hungary has developed such type of indices following the mixed approach (calculation a weighted average of B-B and B-C indices recently).

Among others, for producing of B-All SPPIs, it is important to estimate the turnover split according to the business services vs. household consumption. It should be noted that the household share of postal services is fairly small and in most of countries not representative of the overall activity. Nevertheless the business customers dominate the demand for postal services – particularly for courier activities – the demand from households in Hungary is significant (about three-quarters of the total sales). Regarding postal and courier services, B-B also B-C proportion of the total turnover is received directly from the National Post Office and from larger courier operators.

2.3 Record keeping practice

In Hungary, like in most of countries data collection is based on a statistical survey. In principle the supply of data is compulsory. Combination of survey data and administrative data is used as well. Missing data are typically estimated by using administrative (mainly tax) data to reduce response burden. Turnover data are collected annually, quarterly or on a monthly basis. Annually survey is carried out within the frame of structure business statistics (SBS), quarterly or monthly within the frame of short term statistics (STS).

The data collection media is questionnaire by electronic data collection. In Hungarian Statistical Office (HCSO) questionnaires have been developed recently to help the data collection, both statisticians and data suppliers. Turnover survey is sampled usually under standard sampling routines. The main source of information is national Business Register. Reporting units are legal units considered as enterprises. In Hungary enterprises having 50 and more persons employed are observed by a full scope survey, while enterprises with 5-49 persons employed are observed by a sample survey. The selection of the sample from the sample frame occurs through random stratified sampling. The data for enterprises having less than 5 persons employed are estimated from the tax data of the previous two years. The observed sample is revised in each year.

In Hungary both industry based data and product-based data are available for this industry:

Industry-based data:

- **Yearly** data based on structural business statistics (SBS);
- **Quarterly** data based on short term statistics (STS).

Product-based data:

- **Monthly data** based on industry specified statistics, including quantitative data.

Sample design

In Hungary the survey frame on which the source is based is the Business Register. Activities of postal services (USO) are dominated by the Hungarian Post Office (99,9% of the total turnover). Regarding other postal and courier activities typically a few large companies dominate this industry, but the turnover share of smaller companies is also relevant below (20 persons employed it is about 30%).

Beside Hungarian Post Office a separate sample is selected for observation of other postal and courier activities. Firstly enterprises classified to this class are selected, then companies classified elsewhere, when they account relevant share of the turnover with the secondary activity "Other postal and courier activities". Enterprises are asked to provide prices for primary and for relevant secondary activities, which allows computation both industry- and product-based SPPs. For this sector Hungary uses "cut-off" sampling selection method, where a census of units is taken above a size threshold (cut-off line is the turnover size) with random sampling for smaller companies being completed.

Each Member State is obliged to transmit time-series on postal and courier activities, relating to SBS and STS indicators to Eurostat, using a specified format. A large majority of the indicators are published in the Eurostat's online database (under the heading Industry, trade and services) beside European aggregates (e.g. EU-27 and euro area data).

3. MARKET CONDITIONS AND CONSTRAINTS

Statistics according to the annual structural indicators class are shown in the Table 1.

Table 1

**Annual structural indicators by NACE Rev. 2
Enterprises classified in national economic division H 53**

(2010. year)

NACE REV. 2	Number of employees		Turnover		Value-added at factor cost	
	capita	%	(Million HUF)	%	(Million HUF)	%
H Transportation and storage	219 821	100,0	3 640 121	100	998 240	100
53== Postal and courier activities	39 254	17,9	240 968	6,6	139 153	13,9
531= Postal activities (USO)	34 909	15,9	191 932	5,3	126 210	12,6
532= Other postal and courier activities	4 345	2,0	49 036	1,3	12 943	1,3

Source: website of the HCSO

Table 2

**Annual structural indicators by size class
Turnover of enterprises classified in national economic division H 53**

(2010. year)

Size class	53== Postal and courier activities		531= Postal activities under (USO)		532= Other postal and courier activities	
	Size in million	%	Size in million	%	Size in million	%
Total Size class	240 968	100,0	191 932	100	49 036	100
1-9 employees	11 714	4,9	485	0,3	11 228	22,9
10 to 19 employees	3 505	1,5	60	0,0	3 445	7,0
20 to 49 employees	3 640	1,5	221	0,1	3 419	7,0
50 to 249 employees	20 752	8,6	-	0,0	20 752	42,3
250 and more employees		~89,9		~99,9		~50,7

Source: website of the HCSO

As previously mentioned – according to all three presented macroeconomic indicators – this industry is dominated by the large enterprises with 250 and more employees, accounted about 90% net turnover. Concerning the couriers, they sales represent half of the sales of the total size class.

4. STANDARD CLASSIFICATION STRUCTURE AND DETAILS

Hungary, as a member of the European Union (EU), for producer price observation system concerning industrial products and services, applies harmonized national versions of the following main economic classification systems:

- **NACE Rev 2 / TEÁOR'08** (the statistical classification of economic activities in the European Communities / in Hungary).
- **CPA'08 / TESZOR'08** (the European/ Hungarian Classification of Products by Activity).

The structure of the above mentioned classifications is the following:

CPA 2008 is fully harmonized with NACE Rev.2. Namely, from the 6 digits (XXXXYY) the first four are the same as those for the NACE Rev. 2.

Within the short-term statistics, the hierarchical structure of the CPA is appropriate to coordinate the computation steps of the higher level indicators. This coordination ensures to create details more homogenous from the lowest level of CPA.

5. EVALUATION OF STANDARD VS. DEFINITION AND MARKET CONDITIONS

Hungarian national versions of the classification systems NACE Rev 2 and CPA 2008 are fully harmonized with the European classification systems.

6. QUALITY ADJUSTMENT AND METHODOLOGY

In Hungary usually the recommendations of international organizations and methodological guidelines are followed. Concerning the missing data, administrative data sources are applied, however, in most of cases they are not available or the quality is limited. The other methods are using data from other statistics and imputation of averages of similar or higher level categories.

During the validation process, it is essential to check the completeness of quantity and value data as well as consistency between related statistics. However – because of the dominance of the National Post Office – the confidentiality rules concerning publication of postal (USO) data make it difficult.

To maintain the quality of the data it is proposed to contact companies regarding any significant data changes.

7. EVALUATION OF COMPARABILITY REGARDING VALUE MEASURES

In general, according to the definitions and available META information of the relevant European statistical indicators – concerning the total industrial coverage – as well as the necessary comparability and consistency of data – require further development at international level.

Currently inconsistency can be observed concerning the compilation of volume indicators and the definition on domestic vs. non-domestic market.

Inconsistency between turnover and price data could be expressed as follows:

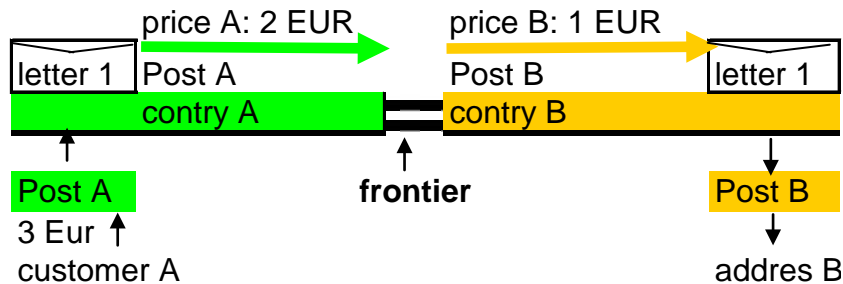
- Different **deadlines** for dissemination of results (Turnover, SPPI, GDP and future ISP)
- Limited quality of the **structure of the total turnover/output** (by products: main activity, secondary activities; employment size: sample, other data sources; type of client: B-B,B-All; by residency: domestic, non-domestic client);

Inconsistency in the valuation of the domestic vs. non-domestic market

Regarding export (non-domestic) and international services, it would be necessary to clearly identify what means international services and export regarding this industry. Hungarian statisticians follow the residency. However for the data suppliers it is not easy to distinguish between the residency of the customer or the territorial principle. For them it is important to answer the question: when part of the courier lies across the county border, which part of the turnover could be considered as export? Because of the international agreements between National Post Offices (USO), the adjective solution of this question is one of the main challenges regarding this industry.

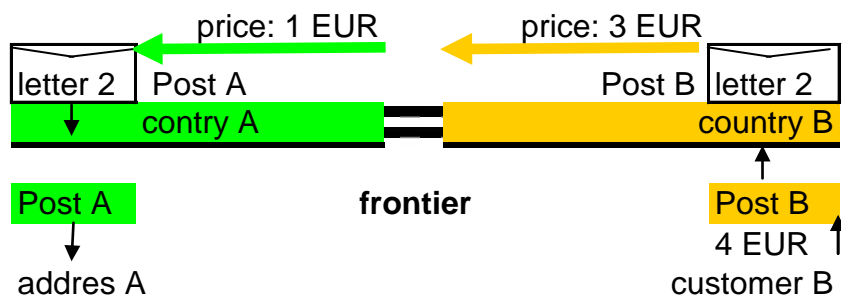
Assuming, that for national accounts purposes export means “products or services sold to the non resident customers” and according to the international rules, postal offices deliver letters (parcels) coming from abroad for an agreed sum – the next simplified example illustrates export/import transactions as follows

I. delivery letters (parcels) from country A to the country B



From the point of view of country “A” it is a domestic service (sold to the domestic customer). The value of the domestic turnover is 3 EUR, which includes import service (provided by the Post “B” located in the country “B” for the agreed sum) for 1 EUR.

II. delivery letters (parcels) from country B to the country A



Again from the point of view of country “A”, it is an export service (sold to the Post “B” (located in the country “B”). The value of the export turnover is 1 EUR:

8. SUMMARY

As other areas of the economy, postal and courier industry is also affected by globalization. To produce comparable macro-economic indicators at world level, the development of techniques in order to handle the increasing role of multinational companies and effects of globalization is essential. It is necessary to establish close cooperation between statisticians and data suppliers, as well as good contacts between experts to exchange practices.

The main characteristics of the Hungarian postal and courier industry could be summarised as follows:

- High level of **concentration**
- **Dominance of the National Post;**
- Industry is **highly regulated;**
- **In the European postal market** approximately 95% of **letter mail was fully opened to competition in 2011.**
- **In 2013 Hungary also liberalising their respective postal markets** since a later deadline for the postal market opening was granted to several countries including Hungary.

The main issues concerning the development of the turnover data – to ensure the consistency between related statistical indicators – could be expressed as follows:

- **Consistency between turnover and price data** (different deadlines for dissemination of results and limited quality of the structure of the total turnover/output);
- **Consistency in the valuation of the domestic vs. non-domestic market** (export vs. international service), however NSI follows the residency approach.

APPENDIX

Methodology:

- Methodology of short-term business statistics interpretation and guidelines, European Communities, 2006
- Handbook on price and volume measures in national accounts, European Communities, 2001
- Methodological Guide for Developing Producer Price Indices For Services, OECD-Eurostat, 2005

Voorburg papers

- Revised Sector Paper on Courier activities Ildikó Holocsy and Denis Gac, Vienna, 2010;
<http://www.voorburggroup.org/Documents/2010%20Vienna/Papers/2010%20-%2017.pdf>

National studies

- Hungarian Central Statistical Office, 2013, Szolgáltatások, 2008-2012 (Services, 2008-2012), available at (Hungarian only):
http://www.ksh.hu/docs/hun/xftp/idoszaki/pdf/szolgalatasok_2008_2012.pdf
- Hungarian Central Statistical Office, 2012, A szolgáltatási kibocsátási árak alakulása 2011-ben. (The development of Service Producer Prices, 2011.), available at (Hungarian only): <http://www.ksh.hu/docs/hun/xftp/idoszaki/pdf/szolgekiboar11.pdf>

International studies

- Ulrich Eidman, 2010. A comparison of methods used to compile PEEIs in short-term business statistics, Statistics in Focus 52/2010, Eurostat;
- Isabelle Rémond-Tiedrez, 2008. Service producer price indices (SPPIs): a new European economic Indicator, Statistics in Focus 103/2008, Eurostat;

NACE Rev. 2 - Structure and explanatory notes

H TRANSPORTATION AND STORAGE [Detail](#)

- + 49 Land transport and transport via pipelines [Detail](#)
- + 50 Water transport [Detail](#)
- + 51 Air transport [Detail](#)
- + 52 Warehousing and support activities for transportation [Detail](#)
- + 53 Postal and courier activities [Detail](#)

H TRANSPORTATION AND STORAGE [Detail](#)

- 53 Postal and courier activities [Detail](#)
 - + 53.1 Postal activities under universal service obligation [Detail](#)
 - + 53.2 Other postal and courier activities [Detail](#)

Code: 53.10

Description: Postal activities under universal service obligation

Reference to ISIC Rev. 4: 5310

This item includes: This class includes the activities of postal services operating under a universal service obligation by one or more designated universal service providers. The activities include use of the universal service infrastructure, including retail locations, sorting and processing facilities, and carrier routes to pickup and deliver the mail. The delivery can include letter-post, i.e. letters, postcards, printed papers (newspaper, periodicals, advertising items, etc.), small packets, goods or documents. Also included are other services necessary to support the universal service obligation.

This class includes:

- pickup, sorting, transport and delivery (domestic or international) of letter-post and (mail-type) parcels and packages by postal services operating under a universal service obligation. One or more modes of transport may be involved and the activity may be carried out with either self-owned (private) transport or via public transport.
- collection of letter-mail and parcels from public letter-boxes or from post offices

This class excludes:

- postal giro, postal savings activities and money order activities, see 64.19

Code: 53.20

Description: Other postal and courier activities

Reference to ISIC Rev. 4: 5320

This class includes:

- pickup, sorting, transport and delivery (domestic or international) of letter-post and (mail-type) parcels and packages by firms operating outside the scope of a universal service obligation. One or more modes of transport may be involved and the activity may be carried out with either self-owned (private) transport or via public transport.

This class also includes:

- home delivery services

This class excludes:

- transport of freight, see (according to mode of transport) 49.20, 49.41, 50.20, 50.40, 51.21, 51.22

CPA 2008 - Structure and explanatory notes

H TRANSPORTATION AND STORAGE SERVICES

- 53 Postal and courier services

- 53.1 Postal services under universal service obligation

- 53.10 Postal services under universal service obligation

- 53.10.1 Postal services under universal service obligation [Detail](#)

53.10.11 Postal services under universal service obligation related to newspapers and periodicals [Detail](#)

53.10.12 Postal services under universal service obligation related to letters [Detail](#)

53.10.13 Postal services under universal service obligation related to parcels [Detail](#)

53.10.14 Post office counter services [Detail](#)

53.10.19 Other postal services under universal service obligation

Code: 53.10.1

Description: Postal services under universal service obligation

This item excludes: This category excludes:

- services provided by private courier services, see 53.20.1

- financial intermediation services provided by post office saving banks and postal giro, see 64.19

53.2 Other postal and courier services

- 53.20 Other postal and courier services

- 53.20.1 Other postal and courier services

53.20.11 Multi-modal courier services [Detail](#)

53.20.12 Food home delivery services

53.20.19 Other postal and courier services n.e.c. [Detail](#)