

4.7.2007

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Ref Your email 1.7.2007

Title Placing of mail boxes in sparsely populated areas in Finland

Dear Mr. Wahlgren,

Thank you very much for your message concerning the placing of mail boxes in sparsely populated areas in Finland. As a reply to your question, I would like to state the following:

The Postal Services Act, which regulates the provision of postal services and the universal service of a postal undertaking in Finland, states (section 12) "*Items of correspondence shall be distributed in one-family houses to an installation or structure which, taking into account the local circumstances, is located within a reasonable distance from the address location of the addressee of the postal item*". More detailed directions about the placing of mail boxes are outlined in the "National Guidelines Concerning the Organisation of Postal Delivery" given by the Finnish Communications Regulatory Authority, which you also refer to in your message.

Concerning the placing of mail boxes in sparsely populated areas, these guidelines stipulate that items of correspondence are normally delivered to mail boxes, which should in principle be situated no further than 300 – 500 meters from the address location of the addressee of the postal item. At least 70 per cent of households in sparsely populated areas should fall under this rule of principle. However, in exceptional cases the distance between the mail box and the address location of the addressee of the postal item may be at the most one kilometre. These exceptional cases have been outlined in the guidelines very specifically, and it should be emphasised that this one kilometre rule is a true exception to the main principle concerning the placing of mail boxes.

As to your question whether these guidelines have caused any unwanted side-effects, or perhaps even encouraged the postal operators to test the limits of these guidelines, I must say that the guidelines are very clear, and the exceptions to the main rule concerning the placing of mail boxes in sparsely populated areas have been defined very precisely, which leaves very little room for differing interpretations. Obviously, there have been some cases, where customers have been unsatisfied with the way they have been asked to place their mail boxes, but the number of such cases has been marginal. If you wish to receive information about the quantity of such complaints and

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their nature, I would kindly ask you to get in touch with the Finnish Communications Regulatory Authority ([www.ficora.fi](http://www.ficora.fi)), as they are responsible for dealing with such cases.

Finally, I would like to refer to a Postal Services Survey, which studies how consumers and decision-makers in private companies and public administration in Finland approach postal services, i.e. what their attitudes are concerning the functionality and quality of the services. The first survey was commissioned by the Finnish Ministry of Transport and Communications in 1996, and since then it has been updated biannually. The latest survey was published at the end of 2006. According to this latest study, both companies and citizens held in general postal services, distribution, letter and package deliveries good.

I hope this reply manages to provide you with some further information in relation to your initial question.

Yours sincerely,



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