

Amcham Newsletter dated 23rd April 2020

Dear Amcham Members and Friends, in this newsletter we will be bringing to you an exclusive interview we had with Cliff Konsbruck, Director of POST Telecom and a round up of the latest news from the Luxembourg Government.

Please help us achieve the broadest distribution of our AMCHAM Newsletter by re-sending it to your work colleagues and personal friends and please don't hesitate in sending in any articles you think could be of interest to our members!

1) First big news to arrive last Friday 17th April, 2020 from Xavier Bettel

"Prime Minister Xavier Bettel has just announced to the Chamber of Deputies a new direct non-reimbursable aid for companies with 0 to 20 salaries. The condition is that a business must continue to be closed or that the company has a substantial loss in income. Small businesses up to 9 salaries will once again receive 5,000 euros. Companies with 10 to 20 employees receive aid of 12,500 euros. Even the situation of the self-employed will continue to be kept in mind and adapted accordingly to the current aid of 2,500 euros. " Source [Lex Delles](#)

2) POST ICT services protect vital interests of population and country

In the state of crisis to fight COVID-19, postal and telecommunication services and payment systems were recognized as essential activities for the maintenance of the vital interests of the population and the country. At present, all POST services continue to run for business and private customers.

Cliff Konsbruck, Director of POST Telecom, gives an insight into how POST Luxembourg is affected by the Corona crisis and how the company is helping other economic actors and government entities to face this exceptional situation.



Mr Konsbruck, has POST's fixed and mobile network been impacted by the lockdown and the increase in remote working?

“Following the closure of schools, the restriction of travel and the consequent massive use of teleworking, we noted a sharp increase in traffic for all services during the first two weeks of the crisis. By mid-March, both on the fixed and mobile networks, the number of calls has increased by more than 80% while SMS traffic has increased by 20%. Internet traffic has also increased but in a more moderate way, about 30% due to the large number of people teleworking and the increased use of social networks and streaming services. This upward trend was interrupted in the two weeks that followed, with a more moderate increase in April.”

Is the POST network sufficiently positioned to absorb these large increases?

“Our national network and our international connections have the capacity to absorb this increase in traffic. However, our teams are constantly monitoring the networks and platforms adapting the capacity to the actual very dynamic situation to maintain a safety margin and to ensure optimal customer experience. For instance, during live transmission of government interventions, traffic on our fixed and mobile networks increased abruptly by up to 70%, without ever reaching capacity limits.”

Do the confinement measures accelerate the digitalization of our economy?

“Indeed, the crisis concerning COVID-19 has pushed economic players to massively rely on teleworking and securing this new way of working. In parallel, most major IT projects and digitalization efforts have been frozen. The most frequent telecom and ICT requests received by POST now concern upgrades of capacity and mobile packages, orders for ICT equipment and cybersecurity in particular to ensure healthcare and governmental sector increase demands and teleworking. The requests for capacity upgrades mainly concern bandwidth rates for Internet and

Voice access as well as corporate network capacities. Faced with the urgency, POST has mobilised all its technical teams, including at weekends, to speed up installations and upgrades. At the beginning of March 2020, POST also responded urgently to orders for IT equipment needed for teleworking, such as laptops, printers and other multimedia equipment. In terms of IT security, the majority of the requests are for firewall solutions, VPN solutions for remote access and continuous network monitoring services. To meet the needs of communication and collaboration in today's environment, there is also demand for video conferencing solutions and collaboration tools, as well as cloud services for secure file and document sharing. For example, we deployed video conferencing systems dedicated to crisis management in the health sector and integrated new functionalities in the healthcare ecosystem (called Healthnet) allowing remote access to all medical staff for teleworking like “telemedicine”.

Crisis situations are often a playground for people with bad intentions. Does POST report an increase in cyber attacks?

“DDOS and other cyber-attacks are on the rise. Our cyber security specialists are mobilized to monitor networks and intervene if necessary. POST recommends increased vigilance to all our private clients and we offer support to professional clients through our CyberForce service.”

In what ways can companies protect themselves against these attacks?

“In order to defend against cybersecurity attacks, two aspects are apparent: being proactive to avoid security incidents as much as possible, but also being ready for the case that these preventive measures are not sufficient. Since the COVID-19 outbreak, we see the number of cases increasing, where cybercriminals are using the current disruption and uncertainty to perform attacks. Hence, it is key to keep up with these activities and to understand how they are performed. In order to prevent security incidents and limit their impact as far as possible, our POST CyberForce has the appropriate capabilities to inform companies about relevant activities and to provide all relevant information and potential implications about these threats.”

3) The Food Supply Chain and COVID-19: Why Prices are Fluctuating

<https://chronicle.lu/category/shopping-1/32434-the-food-supply-chain-and-covid-19-why-prices-are-fluctuating>

4) Results of the Business Survey done by the Luxembourg Chamber of Commerce:

<https://www.cc.lu/en/news/detail/la-chambre-de-commerce-plaide-pour-un-prolongement-du-soutien-aux-entreprises-et-un-ajustement-des-a/>

**5) Below is a letter from Ambassador J Randolph Evans,
American Ambassador to Luxembourg**



AMBASSADOR J. RANDOLPH EVANS
EMBASSY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
LUXEMBOURG

April 20, 2020

Dear AMCHAM members,

Our community of U.S. companies, citizens, and government agencies are pulling together in remarkable ways to respond to this current crisis. Your United States Embassy in Luxembourg has been working hard every day to support American citizens and to find ways the United States may be able to support Luxembourg's response, so that we can all pull through this together.

The Embassy is providing weekly messages to the American community through email and daily messages through social media. In order to receive these messages and any urgent alerts, please register at <https://step.state.gov/step/>. Please also visit our website <https://lu.usembassy.gov/covid-19-information/> often, where we continually update information on conditions in Luxembourg and COVID-related news from the United States.

Keeping true to our commitment as a partner and ally of Luxembourg, the United States has also provided support to the Luxembourg government response. The U.S. Air Force, for example, provided power generators and refrigeration units to the Luxembourg Army to support Luxembourg temporary hospitals in its ongoing fight against the COVID-19 outbreak.

Additionally, the U.S. Air Force supported the effort of its local contractor to allow 36 employees from its warehouse in Sanem to assist CargoLux with freight handling at the Luxembourg Airport. Finally, the U.S. government helped facilitate the urgent sale of a U.S. manufactured medicine necessary for Luxembourg's COVID response.

These trying times makes us proud to be Americas and witnesses to the close ties binding the United States and Luxembourg.

All the Best,



J. Randolph Evans



- 6) And finally in honour of her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II's Birthday her chef's famous cup cake recipe!

To make them at home you'll need the following ingredients (a food scale can be used for measurements):

For the sponges-

15g vinegar

300ml milk

50ml vegetable oil

60g butter (melted and cool)

2 eggs

5ml of vanilla extract

250g of flour

75 of cocoa powder

300g powdered sugar

10g baking soda

100g white chocolate chips

cupcake cases

For the buttercream-

90g dark chocolate

100g butter

125g powdered sugar

Food coloring (optional)

Cake sponge method:

-Combine the flour, sugar, cocoa powder, and baking soda into a mixing bowl

-Whisk the eggs in a separate bowl with the vanilla extract, melted butter, oil, milk, and vinegar

-Slowly add the wet mixture into the dry mixture, little by little

-Ensure the batter is smooth with no lumps

-Finally, add the chocolate chips (alternatives could be nuts or dried fruit)

-Place the cupcake cases onto a tray

-Use a metal spoon to equally divide the mixture into the cases

-Bake for around 15-18 minutes, take out of the oven when golden

-Leave to cool

Buttercream icing method:

-Mix the sugar and butter together, until light and creamy

-Add in the warm melted chocolate

– Gently use a teaspoon or small spatula for the icing to decorate the top of the cupcakes

To all of our Members and friends whether working from home or going into the office, stay safe!

The Amcham Team