

## Electronic mailboxes mandatory in the Czech Republic

As part of the ongoing e-government reform, the electronic mailbox system was introduced in the Czech Republic during the second half of 2009. The main idea of this project was the simplification and cost decrease for communication between the state and private entities. In principle, the electronic mailbox operates just like an email, but the delivery of messages is guaranteed and it is the equivalent of sending a registered letter.

Starting from 1 November 2009, all corporate entities registered in the Commercial Register were assigned electronic mailboxes and are obliged to accept official correspondence through them, i.e. it should be the preferred method for delivery of official correspondence to them. In contrast, individuals (except legal professionals) may freely decide whether to apply for an electronic mailbox.

A message sent to an electronic mailbox is considered delivered after either (i) successful login into the electronic mailbox interface or (ii) lapse of 10 days after the message was deposited in the electronic mailbox, whichever is the earlier. The messages are deleted from the electronic mailbox after 90 days from their delivery.

The login information for access the electronic mailbox interface is sent by registered mail to each of the directors of the company and has to be claimed by the Director personally. The letters are sent based on the addresses registered in the Czech Commercial Register. Each Director may authorise other individuals to access or administer the electronic mailbox.

Unfortunately for foreign investors and Directors, the entire electronic mailbox system was designed in Czech only and therefore the mailbox interface, support hotline and even the letters with login information are not available in other languages.

To complement the electronic mailboxes, the Czech law newly regulates certified conversion between electronic and paper form of documents. However, there are currently some unresolved issues on evidencing the validity of official documents in electronic form after some time has lapsed. Therefore, we recommend (at least for now) converting all such documents received into the electronic mailbox to the paper form in order to avoid potential inconveniences in the future.

While the new electronic mailbox system shows great potential to reform communication between public and private entities, some outstanding issues still exist. For all foreign investors and directors in the Czech Republic it should be stressed that (i) they should make sure that they have received and kept private their login information; (ii) the electronic mailbox must be accessed at least once in every 10 days; (iii) their company has sufficiently arranged for archiving of correspondence received through the electronic mailbox.

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