



Press Release

Users welcome Council agreement on Postal Services Liberalisation

Brussels, 1 October 2007 – Today the Free and Fair Post Initiative (FFPI), which represents users of postal services and mail market players in Europe, welcomed the political agreement that was reached by Member States representatives in the Transport, Telecommunications and Energy Council.

The FFPI considers this decision which establishes an unconditional date for postal liberalisation as a key step for the completion of the Internal Market for services. After almost 20 years of discussions, Member States finally agreed to fully open their market at latest on 31st December 2010, with a two-year exemption for some countries. The FFPI is delighted that Member States at last decided to go over protectionist attitudes by breaking national monopolies and to respond to the needs and wishes of users and market players. Postal users are convinced that a final date for liberalisation will provide the necessary legal certainty to ensure free and fair competition, which will improve choice and quality in postal services and will encourage innovation and dynamism in this economic sector.

Moreover, Member States have had a long period to adapt to liberalisation and that the vast majority of them are fully ready today to open up in 2009 as proposed by the European Commission. Therefore, the FFPI encourages them to anticipate the proposed deadlines and to follow the example of countries like Sweden and the UK that have already fully opened their postal market successfully as well as Germany and the Netherlands, which will soon follow. These countries' experience demonstrates that competition in the mail sector has brought a number of advantages in terms of choice and quality of service, and has guaranteed the maintenance of the universal service.

The President of the FFPI, Philippe Bodson, commented: *"The political agreement reached today in the Council puts an end to a very lengthy and cumbersome process. EU Ministers have demonstrated they understand that competition is on the side of postal users and that the social arguments used against it are old arguments that no longer hold true. The myth of the incompatibility between open markets and the guarantee of a universal service has finally been refuted and a positive future for the European postal sector can now be envisaged"*.

Note to the editor:

The Free and Fair Post Initiative (FFPI) is a unique European initiative that brings together users and competitors of the public postal operators who strongly believe in the benefit of a liberalised and more competitive postal market. The FFPI key objectives are to secure full liberalisation of postal services that should be in 2009 at the latest and a fair playing field in the postal sector to prevent public postal monopolies to turn into private ones.

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