



Press Release

The FFPI welcomes the results of the Postal Sector Studies Full market opening can be achieved by 2009

Brussels, 4 July 2006 - The European Commission yesterday presented the final results of the studies¹ commissioned by DG Internal Market as regards the state of play and future of the EU postal sector. The FFPI welcomed the studies and shared their overall findings, which confirm that the EU postal services market has achieved sufficient maturity to proceed with full market opening within the 2009 deadline.

The FFPI supports the results of the Price Waterhouse Coopers (PWC) study, which stresses the need to consider the consumer perspective when defining the universal service obligation and concludes that full market opening (FMO) can be introduced in 2009 without consequences for the provision of the Universal Service in most EU countries. The report provides a realistic assessment of the preparedness of each EU member State to fully open its postal market (readiness index), suggesting a series of flanking measures which can be applied at national level to guarantee a safe transition to a liberalised system. As often pointed out by the FFPI, the study reports that liberalisation has increased competition and dynamism in the sector in those countries that have already opened up their postal market.

Also the WIK-Consult study recommends the confirmation of 1 January 2009 as the date for completing liberalisation at EU level. The study also suggests a more clear specification of the powers and role of the national regulatory authorities, which will be key in ensuring the creation of a level playing field for all providers of postal services, and an increase of the overall level of transparency of accounts and cost allocation by Universal Service Providers (USPs). This view was fully supported by the FFPI in its submission to the Commission's public consultation on postal services undertaken earlier this year.

Following the publication of the results, the President of the FFPI, Philippe Bodson commented: *"Postal users are delighted to see that the studies undertaken on behalf of the Commission confirm a position that we have defended for many years, the fact that liberalisation is the only way forward for the EU postal sector and that full market opening in 2009 is a realistic goal. The development of competition will not be achieved overnight. We understand that there are some particularities at member State level which will have to be addressed with specific measures, for which the vigilance of national Regulators will be key. We are confident that the Commission will take the conclusions of the studies into the utmost consideration and that it will propose a regulatory framework that reflects also the consumer perspective and the idea of a level-playing field for all market operators, allowing for a smooth liberalisation without delays"*.

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. Through its membership, the FFPI currently represents more than 7,1 million companies. 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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¹ The study on the main developments in the European postal sector (Wik-consult) and the study on the impact on universal service of the full accomplishment of the postal internal market in 2009 (PWC).