



Press Release

## **The FFPI welcomes the new Commission's commitment to liberalisation and to fair competition in the postal sector**

Brussels, 17 September 2004 – The Free and Fair Post Initiative (FFPI) today welcomed the statements on State aid policy and liberalisation of the EU postal sector made respectively by Commissioners designate Neelie Kroes and Charlie McCreevy in their replies to the Members of the European Parliament's (MEPs) specific questions for their upcoming hearings.

In her reply to the European Parliament, Designate Commissioner for Competition Kroes indicated that State aid rules "simply prevent over-compensation for the undertakings, particularly if aid is used to cross-subsidise activities in competitive markets". The FFPI is indeed convinced that State aid control should concentrate on ensuring that over-compensation to companies is not allowed and that competition distortions are prevented. The FFPI fears that sometimes unjustified high stamp prices in the postal sector constitute a form of over-compensation and continues to have serious concerns about possible unlawful cross-subsidisation. *"We are encouraged by Commissioner Kroes' statements as regards the implementation of competition rules and we would call on the Commission to take swift action on pending antitrust and State aid cases against Postal Operators"*, commented FFPI President Philippe Bodson.

The FFPI also notes that designate Commissioner McCreevy rightfully puts the debate on liberalisation of postal services in the broader context of the Lisbon Agenda (which provides for the EU to boost growth, jobs and competitiveness) and acknowledges the benefits brought by the initial steps made by the EU towards market opening. Full and effective liberalisation of the postal sector will result in wider choice and more efficient services for consumer. If combined with effective enforcement of competition rules, the liberalisation process will also allow new operators to enter the postal market, contributing the development of employment and Europe's competitiveness. *"I am glad that the new Internal Market Commissioner shares our belief that the timeline for market opening set in the Postal Directive should be respected. Fixing a final date for full liberalisation at the latest in 2009 will provide the necessary dynamics for innovation and competition as foreseen in Lisbon"*, concluded Mr Bodson.

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.

For more information, visit the FFPI Web site [www.freefairpost.com](http://www.freefairpost.com) or contact Valeria Fagone. Tel: 32-2-777.05.35. Fax: 32-2-777.05.36. E-mail: [info@freefairpost.com](mailto:info@freefairpost.com).

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