



Press Release

## FFPI survey reveals substantial stamp price increases in 2004

Brussels, 13 December 2004 – The Free and Fair Post Initiative (FFPI) today released its fourth survey on stamp prices in the European Union (EU). The study, which covers EU-25, reveals that almost 50% of EU member States have increased stamp prices in the course of 2004 and that price differences are still wide.

The annual comparative analysis of the FFPI points out that prices of stamps for basic domestic letters have augmented, sometimes substantially, in 12 out of 25 member States. In addition, the survey reports that the gap in prices between the old and new EU member States has not been reduced compared to last year. It is in fact important to notice that costs have risen in 7 countries from EU-15, therefore, further enlarging the difference with the average price in the new member States.

Looking at the number of requests for price reviews that have been filed by postal operators and that will be decided upon in 2005, it is not difficult to foresee that next year's results will be as worrying as the current ones. The FFPI has expressed its concern about this trend that has now been confirmed over a three-year period and has called on competent authorities to look into this phenomenon with more attention.

*"It is of great concern and disappointment to the users of postal services that the 2004 survey confirms the problem denounced in the past three years. There are obviously some understandable explanations why stamp prices differ between the EU-25. On the other hand, we can not see why a Danish or a German consumer have to pay more than twice than a Spanish one for the same basic service. Postal Operators are allowed to maintain their quasi-monopolies on the condition that the prices they charge are geared to the cost of the service. Consumers are sometimes being over-charged and that it appears that some postal operators may be abusing their universal service obligation by charging excessive prices. More real competition could cure both distortions. In the short term, the FFPI would like to see further emphasis to be put on this area by national and EU authorities. Postal Regulators should become more active in controlling tariffs by enforcing the 'geared to cost' concept provided for in the Directive, therefore helping to reduce cross subsidisation<sup>1</sup>. Cases like the complaint filed by the German Association for Post and Telecommunications (DVPT) on excessive pricing in the German postal market deserve proper attention from the authorities",* commented FFPI President, Philippe Bodson.

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<sup>1</sup> As indicated in the European Commission's study on "Main Developments in the European Postal Sector" (WIK Consult Report on Main Developments in the European Postal Sector, July 2004), Postal Regulators should "become more active in reviewing the tariffs of the universal services. Only 12 NRAs (National Regulatory Authorities) report conducting any type of formal investigation into the major areas of tariff policy over the last six years. Investigations of special tariffs, terminal dues and cross subsidies are especially rare".

## Stamp prices in the EU-25 for basic domestic letters<sup>2</sup>

13 December 2004

Country	Stamp price in euro	Max letter weight	Comments
Austria	0,55	20 gr	The price for a letter between 20 and 50 gr is 0,75 euro.
<i>Belgium</i>	0,44	50 gr	On 3 May 2004, stamp prices increased from 0,41 to 0,44 euro. Stamp price for first class mail increased from 0,49 to 0,50 euro.
Cyprus	0,35	20 gr	The price for a letter between 20 and 100 gr is 0,43 euro. Likely increase in 2005.
<i>Czech Republic</i>	0,20	20 gr	The price for a letter between 20 and 50 gr is 0,25 euro (increase on 1 January 2004 from 6,40 to 6,50 CZK). Prices to increase by 14% in January 2005.
<i>Denmark</i>	0,58	20 gr	On 1 January 2004 prices were raised by 3 eurocents (basic mail) and 4 eurocents (first-class mail). 0,61 euro for first class mail.
Estonia	0,28	20 gr	The price for a letter between 20 and 50 gr is 0,30 euro.
Finland	0,43	50 gr	Price excluding 22% VAT. 0,51 euro (excluding 22% VAT) for first class mail.
France	0,50	20 gr	The price for a letter between 20 and 50 gr is 0,75 euro. In October 2004 La Poste submitted a request to the French Government to raise the stamp price to 0,55 euro.
Germany	0,55	20 gr	The price for a letter between 20 and 50 gr is 1 euro.
<i>Greece</i>	0,44	20 gr	Price increased from 0,42 to 0,44 euro on 1 January 2004. The price for a letter between 20 and 50 gr is 0,66 euro. First class mail stamp prices are 0,49 euro (>20 gr) and 0,69 euro (>50 gr).

<sup>2</sup> Data gathered on the websites of national Postal Operators and through direct contacts with Postal Operators and Regulatory Authorities.

<i>Hungary</i>	0,20	30 gr	In May 2004, the price increased from 0,17 to 0,20 euro and first class mail and new weight limits were introduced. Stamp prices (>50gr) are 0,27 euro and 0,33 euro for (>100gr). First class stamp prices are 0,37 euro (> 30gr) and 0,49 euro (>50gr).
Ireland	0,48	100 gr	In August 2004, An Post asked for an increase in stamp price (0,55 euro) but the request was refused by the Regulator.
<i>Italy</i>	0,45	20 gr	Price increased on 1 January 2004 from 0,41 to 0,45 euro. The price for a letter between 20 and 50 gr is 0,85 euro. First class mail stamp prices are 0,60 euro (>20 gr) and 1,40 euro (>50 gr).
Latvia	0,22	20 gr	Weight limits structure changed on 14 December 2003. The price for a letter between 20 and 100 gr is 0,73 euro. Prices are likely to be increased in 2005.
Lithuania	0,29	20 gr	The price for a letter between 20 and 100 gr is 0,40 euro.
Luxembourg	0,50	20 gr	The price for a letter between 20 and 50 gr is 0,70 euro.
Malta	0,16	50 gr	Stamp price is 0,25 for letters between 50 and 100 gr.
Netherlands	0,39	20 gr	The price for a letter between 20 and 50 gr is 0,78 euro. The Dutch Ministry of Economic Affairs decided to cap prices until 1 January 2005 and TPG decided not to increase before 2007.
<i>Poland</i>	0,30	20 gr	In January 2004, stamp prices increased from 0,26 to 0,30 for second class mail only. The price for a letter between 20 and 50 gr is 0,32 euro. First class mail stamp prices are 0,38 euro (>20 gr) and 0,41 euro (>50 gr).
Portugal	0,30	20 gr	First class mail (blue mail) stamp prices decreased from 0,46 to 0,45 euro (>20 gr). The price for a letter between 20 and 50 gr decreased from 0,46 to 0,45 euro.

<i>Slovakia</i>	0,20	20 gr	On 1 January 2004 the stamp price for a basic letter raised by 2 eurocents. First class mail stamp prices were raised by 5 eurocents. The price for a letter between 20 and 50 gr is 0,23 euro. First class mail stamp prices increased from 0,32 to 0,36 euro (20 gr) and from 0,32 to 0,38 euro (20-50 gr).
<i>Slovenia</i>	0,17	20 gr	Stamp prices were raised in August 2004 from 0,16 to 0,19 euro. The price for a letter between 20 and 100 gr is 0,38 euro. Stamp price is planned to increase in February 2005 by 1 eurocent (>20gr) and by 3 eurocents (20 >100gr)
<i>Spain</i>	0,27	20 gr	Price increase of 1 eurocent for second class mail and by 5 eurocents for first class mail on 1 January 2004. The price for a letter between 20 and 50 gr is 0,40 euro. First class mail stamp prices are 1,90 euro (>20 gr) and 2,05 euro (>50 gr).
<i>Sweden</i>	0,45	20 gr	Price excluding 25% VAT. Stamp prices increased in April 2004 from 0,42 to 0,45 euro. The price for a letter up to 100 gr is 0,89 euro. First class mail stamp prices are 0,49 euro (>20 gr) and 0,98 euro (>100 gr).
<i>United Kingdom</i>	0,30	60 gr	Stamp prices were raised by 1p in April 2004. First class stamp price is 0,42 euro. Likely rise by 1p in April 2005.

*Countries that increased stamp prices in 2004.*

Exchange rates calculated on 3 of December 2004 at 9:51:58 GMT

Source: [www.xe.com](http://www.xe.com) Universal Currency Converter

**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.

For more information, visit the FFPI website [www.freefairpost.com](http://www.freefairpost.com) or contact Valeria Fagone.

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## 2004 EU Stamp Price Chart – Prices in Euro Cents

