



PRESS RELEASE

36% of EU Member States raised stamp prices in 2006 Postal users are alarmed about confirmed trend for increased tariffs

Brussels, 8 February 2007 - The Free and Fair Post Initiative has released its sixth survey on stamp prices in the European Union (EU). The study shows worrying results. More than one third of EU countries have increased stamp prices for domestic letters in the course of 2006. Users of postal services are concerned that Postal Operators are often over charging for their basic service and are convinced that full liberalisation is the only way to stop this tendency.

The annual comparative survey points out that prices of stamps for domestic letters have increased in 9 EU Member States (Belgium, Finland, France, Italy, Latvia, Malta, Slovakia, Spain, UK) during the year. This shows a worsening of the situation compared to 2005, when prices seemed to have stabilised (20% of EU Member States raised their prices in 2005).

An element of great concern to the FFPI is the recent and progressive introduction of a fast service and the consequent abolition of the basic (second class) mail service. This in fact allows Postal Operators, by offering only first class mail, to increase their prices while delivering the same service and quality that should be guaranteed by the universal service and the existing quality of service standards. This is the case of Italy, where its first class service has replaced the basic mail stamp, generating a price raise of 0,15 euro.

Article 12 of the proposal for a third Postal Directive presented by Commissioner McCreevy on 18 October outlines that "prices must be cost-oriented and stimulate efficiency gains". This provision is of extreme importance for safeguarding postal users and preventing abuses. For this reason, the FFPI considers that it is fundamental that national Regulators ensure the maintenance of the universal service and adequate tariff setting.

"In line with the target date set out in the current Directive, the new Commission proposal confirms the final step in this long reform process, and recommends the removal of the remaining reserved area in all Member States by 2009. Full market opening is the only way to bring choice, quality and fair prices for consumers. Therefore, it is fundamental that Member States in the next months work in a constructive manner to adopt this important economic and social reform, vital for the development of the postal sector and European economy", commented FFPI President Philippe Bodson.

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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Stamp prices in the EU for basic domestic letters¹

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Country	Stamp price in euro	Max letter weight	Comments
Austria	0,55	20 gr	The price for a letter between 20 gr and 50 gr is 0,75 euro. The price for a letter between 50 gr and 100 gr is 1 euro
Belgium	0,46	50 gr	First class mail stamp price is 0,52 euro. On 29 December La Poste is going to raise prices for <i>envoyé non normalisé</i>
Cyprus	0,35	20 gr	The price for a letter between 20 gr and 100 gr is 0,43 euro
Czech Republic	0,27	20 gr	The price for a letter between 20 gr and 50 gr is 0,32 euro
Denmark	0,60	50 gr	The price for first class mail is 0,64 euro
Estonia	0,28	20 gr	The price for a letter between 20 gr and 50 gr is 0,30 euro
Finland	0,47	50 gr	Prices excluding 22% VAT The price for first-class mail is 0,56 euro Finland increased prices 1 July 2006
France	0,48	20 gr	The price of priority mail (<i>service rapide</i>), most commonly used by consumers, is 0,54 EUR and was increased of 0,1 euro in 2006
Germany	0,55	20 gr	The price for a letter between 20 gr and 50 gr is 0,86 euro
Greece	0,44	20 gr	The price for a letter between 20 gr and 50 gr is 0,0,66 euro. The price for a letter between 50 gr and 100 gr is 0,88euro. First class stamp prices are 0,49 euro up to 20 gr and 0,69 between 20 gr and 50 gr
Hungary	0,20	30 gr	The price for a letter between 30 grand 50 gr is 0,29 euro First class stamp prices are 0,35 euro and 0,47euro (>50g)
Ireland	0,48	50 gr	The price for a letter between 50 gr and 100 gr is 0.55 euro

¹ Data gathered through contacts with national Postal Operators and Regulatory Authorities.



Italy	0,60	20 gr	Italy has replaced its service of “posta celere” to the basic service, generating a price raise of 0,15 euro. The price for a first class mail letter between 20 gr and 50 gr is 1,40 euro. These prices refer to first class mail (posta prioritaria). Italy increased the prices on 2006 and they expect to review prices not before 2009
Latvia	0,32	20 gr	The price for a letter between 20 gr and 50 gr is 0,40 euro; the price for a letter between 50 gr and 100 gr is 0,67 euro.
Lithuania	0,29	20 gr	The price for a letter between 20 gr and 100 gr is 0,40 euro.
Luxembourg	0,50	20 gr	The price for a letter between 20 gr and 50 gr is 0,70 euro.
Malta	0,19	50g	The price for a letter between 50 gr and 100 gr is 0,26 euro
Netherlands	0,39	20 gr	The price for a letter between 20 gr and 50 gr is 0,78 euro. The Dutch Ministry of Economic Affairs decided to raise the price of a letter under 20 g to 0,44 from 2007.
Poland	0,34	50 gr	The price for letter between 50 gr and 100 gr 0,39 First-class mail stamp prices are 0,52 euro (50 gr) and 0,58 euro (100 gr).
Portugal	0,30	20 gr	The price for a letter between 20 gr and 50 gr is 0,60 euro. The price for a letter between 50 gr and 100 gr is 0,65 euro. The price for first class mail below 20 gr is 0,45 euro
Slovakia	0,28	50 gr	The price for a letter between 50 gr and 100 gr is 0,40 euro The price for first class mail (below 50gr) is 0,45 euro
Slovenia	0,20	20 gr	The price for a letter between 20 gr and 50 gr is 0,40 euro. The price for a letter between 50 gr and 100 gr is 0,49 euro
Spain	0,29	20 gr	The price for a letter between 20 gr and 50 gr is 0,41 euro. First-class mail stamp price is 2,39 euro (20 gr)
Sweden	0,44	20 gr	Prices excluding 25% VAT. First class price is 0,49 euro.



United Kingdom	0,34	100 gr	First class price is 0,47 euro. A new pricing system was <u>approved by Postcomm</u> in 2004, and came into effect on 21st August 2006. In general, the new system means you will pay the same or less to send small items of post, and more to send larger, bulkier items. Royal Mail will announce its plans for the next prices control year at the end of December 2006.
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Countries that increased stamp prices in 2006.

Exchange rates calculated on 8 December 2006 at 9:51:58 GMT

Source: <http://finance.yahoo.com/currency/convert> Universal Currency Converter



EU-Stamp Price Chart - Prices in Euro Cents

