

**LETTERS TO THE EDITOR:
Gats talks are being used to delay postal liberalisation**

**By Philippe Bodson
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From Mr Philippe Bodson.

Sir, The current debate on the General Agreement on Trade in Services negotiations has been marked by the reluctance of some parties to open up markets by arguing that liberalisation would jeopardise the provision of public services to European Union citizens.

In this context, I am glad that Pascal Lamy, the European commissioner for trade, in his comments on the European parliament's resolution on Gats of March 12, has clarified some crucial points of this important debate.

I fully agree with Mr Lamy that the World Trade Organisation is not about the liberalisation of services but about opening up trade in services. It is essential that all the stakeholders involved are aware that the principle of reciprocity does not apply to Gats and that no WTO member can be obliged to open its services market to competition. Services of general economic interest, in particular, are not to be defined within the WTO context and their provision is not threatened by Gats negotiations.

As regards the postal sector in particular, I am concerned that the anti-liberalisation camp is using the Gats negotiations as an excuse to delay the planned further liberalisation of the EU postal sector and to protect monopolies.

This, I fear, would go against the interests of European users of postal services who benefit from increased competition on the market. It would also go against the ambitious Lisbon goal of making the EU the most competitive market by 2010.

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