



PRESS RELEASE

The FFPI presents the view of users on the future of postal services at the 45th FEPE Congress in Budapest

Brussels, 12 September 2002 – The Free and Fair Post Initiative, FFPI, today presented the view of the European users of postal services in the aftermath of the new EU postal Directive on occasion of the 45th Congress of the European Envelope Manufacturers Association (FEPE) in Budapest.

At the FEPE Congress, Philippe Bodson, President of the FFPI, highlighted the dramatic changes taking place in the postal sector, such as technological improvements and the process of consolidation of postal operators. He also pointed out to the problems encountered by the users and the risks linked to a still too limited liberalisation of the sector. *“Unfortunately for the users of postal services, the new Postal Directive provides only for 23% of market opening. I am afraid that this limited liberalisation will not create enough incentives for the European postal operators to improve the quality of their services and focus on their mission to provide an efficient and reliable universal service”*, said Mr Bodson.

The FFPI is concerned that, without a clear final date for liberalisation, markets will be characterised by an unlevelled-playing field and distortions will increase. The FFPI President insisted on the importance of a full and correct implementation of existing rules by all postal operators, in particular those on setting up independent regulators and transparency of accounts.

In Budapest, the FFPI also pointed out that it is crucial that the voice of postal users is taken into consideration by the EU Institutions when reviewing the current EU system. *“We will be watching closely the work of the Commission in drafting its first report in 2004. Only through a wide consultation of all stakeholders a real picture of the situation in the market can be drawn and suggestions for the future made”*, said Bodson at the congress. In order to guarantee the involvement of all players, FFPI suggested the creation of a EU Postal Forum. *“Setting up a platform composed of the various interested parties could represent an effective instrument to debate common concerns, confront challenges, propose solutions and monitor the functioning of the markets”*, added Bodson.

Furthermore, the FFPI stated its interest for the international aspects of the postal sector. Crucial current developments at global level impose to look at the international postal scene and, in particular, at the ongoing discussions within the World Trade Organisation (WTO) as regards the renegotiation of trade agreements on postal and express services. *“The outcome of the discussions at WTO level will certainly have an impact on postal users and on the industry in Europe. Issues such as market access, trade facilitation and the introduction of pro-competitive principles in non-EU countries will be at the core of the upcoming discussions among WTO members. The FFPI will closely look at these discussions and will seek to ensure that the voice of postal users is heard within the WTO”*, concluded 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's key objectives are to secure a final date for full liberalisation of postal services and a fair playing field in the postal sector to prevent public postal monopolies to turn into private ones.

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