



## PRESS RELEASE

### Postal challenges addressed by the FFPI President at a key gathering of the postal sector in London

Brussels, 23 September 2002 – Philippe Bodson, the President of the Free and Fair Post Initiative, FFPI, today opened the two-day Conference “Competitive Strategies in a Deregulated Postal Industry” in London.

In welcoming a large number of stakeholders of the postal sector to the Conference, the FFPI President took the opportunity to highlight the main challenges faced by the European and international postal markets. *“I am glad to see that all groups of postal stakeholders have gathered to debate issues related to the liberalisation of postal markets here in London where courageous decisions have been taken by the national postal regulator in respect of opening the UK market.”*, said Philippe Bodson in his opening speech.

The FFPI President reiterated his support to the initiative of PostComm of fully liberalising the UK market in April 2007, that is ahead of the timeline set at EU level.

Bodson also addressed the FFPI’s key concern that the EU is not adequately equipped to seize the challenges of the postal sector. As one remedy, Bodson proposed the creation of an advisory body composed of stakeholders including the private and public postal operators, trade unions, EU institutions, users. This body would act as an effective instrument to debate common concerns, confront challenges, propose solutions and, more generally, overview the functioning of the postal sector in Europe. *“A Postal Forum could be a good vehicle to convey the messages of all postal stakeholders and, in particular, to express their positions during the elaboration of the Commission surveys. Only through the full involvement of all interested parties a realistic report on the state of the EU postal sector can be produced and good proposals for the future made”*, added Bodson.

The FFPI President concluded his opening speech indicating that, given relevant current developments at international level, more attention needs to be paid to the global aspects of the postal sector and, in particular, to the ongoing discussions on trade agreements on postal services within the World Trade Organisation (WTO). *“The outcome of the discussions at WTO level will certainly have an impact on postal users and on the industry in Europe. Market access, trade facilitation and the introduction of pro-competitive principles in non-EU countries are the core issues for discussions among WTO members. The end result of these negotiations should be to ensure that all users will benefit from facilitated trade”*, 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.

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