



## Press Release

### **The Free and Fair Post Initiative: The European Parliament approves insufficient measures to liberalise postal services.**

Brussels, 13 March 2002 - The FFPI considers today's European Parliament decision to modify its position on liberalisation of postal services as an improvement, compared to the Parliament's initial position. However, the proposal for a new postal directive is clearly insufficient to reach the Lisbon goal of creating real competition in the postal sector. It is important to be aware of the limitations of the pending proposal and that the crucial decisions to open the EU postal market still remain to be taken by the EC.

*"It would amount to self-delusion if EU leaders now would tell themselves and EU citizens that postal liberalisation will be accomplished if this proposal is finally voted. The current proposal only provides for 23% of the market to be open to competition in 2006. Without a final date there will be no incentives to invest in the sector and postal users will continue to suffer from lack of choice, poor quality of service and high prices."* said Philippe Bodson, President of the FFPI.

The European Parliament's vote coincided with the Commission's decision concerning illegal state aid to the Italian postal operator, Poste Italiane. The Commission has found that the 9 billion euro injected by the Italian tax payers into Poste Italiane did not distort competition, since the money partially was a compensation for Poste Italiane's historically low efficiency. Although the Parliament's vote and the decision are two separate issues, there is a clear link between them.

*"The Commission's decision regarding Poste Italiane puts a figure on how much Italian postal users and tax payers have had to pay for the absence of real competition in the postal sector in Italy. The best way of fixing the problems is the introduction of competition."* said Philippe Bodson.

The European Parliament in its second reading emphasised the need for regular monitoring and impact assessments of the application of the directive to be used as tools to determine further liberalisation after 2006. The FFPI stresses the need to involve representatives of consumers and users at an early stage for consultations in the up-coming studies. Users and consumers should be the focus of future regulation – not the interests of the postal monopolies.

*"The FFPI will be closely monitoring the Commission's work in assessing the postal directive. It is crucial that the positive effects of liberalisation are brought into the analysis. That is how we will be able to achieve a viable and dynamic European postal industry,"* concluded Philippe 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 key objectives are to secure a final date for full liberalisation of postal services that should be in 2007 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 Web site [www.freefairpost.com](http://www.freefairpost.com) or contact Axel Rindborg.  
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