



Press Release

The FFPI welcomes the European Commission's initiative to set ten key priorities for Stockholm and urges Member States to restate their commitment in favour of a speedy liberalisation of the postal sector

Brussels, 8 February 2001 - The Free and Fair Post Initiative welcomes the Commission's initiative to set key priorities for the Stockholm European Council meeting, including a swift reform of the postal services. EU leaders had unanimously agreed in Lisbon to speed up liberalisation in the postal sector, as part of the necessary modernisation of the European economy. While some Member States have put that commitment into action, others have promptly broken their promise and retrenched behind national interest with the support of anti-liberalisation groups.

« It is time that Member States put forward wider European goals. Governments need to speed up the liberalisation of postal services and agree on a final date for full liberalisation to create the dynamic and competitive single market they were calling for in Lisbon », said Philippe Bodson, President of the FFPI. « Users and consumers already benefit from the positive effect in terms of quality of service and price, that deregulation has had in other sectors such as electricity and telecommunications. They do not understand why postal services should remain the fiefdom of monopolistic postal companies ».

The FFPI supports the Commission's views that liberalisation of the postal services should be accompanied by a more efficient and effective competition policy. *"The Commission needs to be given the financial and personal means to perform this important task but it also needs to find the courage and strength to oppose limited national interests in order to put consumers first", stressed Bodson. "We are calling for a level playing field to be upheld. Swift actions on complaints are needed as well as guidelines on what is and what is not allowed to do and, when needed, sanctions and remedies have to be imposed to deter further violation of EC rules".*

The FFPI considers that the postal sector needs to adapt rapidly to meet consumer demands and technological changes. The improvement of postal services' efficiency and cost effectiveness will be crucial to allow the postal sector to compete with new communications, deliver growth and create jobs. *« FFPI members but also some public postal operators believe that postal monopolies cannot stay isolated in their ivory towers. The prospect of competition will force them to adapt in order to have a chance to prosper to the benefit of all. This is why EU leaders need to re-affirm in Stockholm their commitment to open up the postal market to competition », 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 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.

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