Internal market of postal services

2006/0196(COD) - 31/01/2008 - Text adopted by Parliament, 2nd reading

The European Parliament adopted a resolution based on the report drafted by Markus **FERBER** (EPP-ED, DE), approving without amendment the Council's common position regarding the adoption of a directive amending Directive 97/67/EC with regard to the full accomplishment of the internal market of Community postal services. The Council incorporated in its common position all the main aspects of the Parliament's position in first reading. To recapitulate, the key points of the European Parliament's first reading were as follows:

Dates for market opening: the deadline for market opening should be set for 31 December 2010. In this way, operators and regulators in countries that are lagging behind in the liberalisation process will have more time to adjust. The 12 Member States that acceded in 2004 or later, as well as Member States with a particularly difficult topography, would have an additional two years to open the market (31 December 2012).

Reciprocity: in order to avoid market distortion and unfair competition, those Member States having opened their markets should be able to refuse authorisation to operators still being protected by a national monopoly (reserved area) in another Member State .

Guaranteed universal service: the universal service must continue to be provided to the full extent, i.e. comprising at least one delivery and collection five days a week for every EU citizen. Moreover, it is important to maintain well-functioning postal networks with a sufficient number of access points in rural, remote or sparsely populated regions in order to satisfy the universal service obligation.

Social considerations should, in general, be taken into account in the process of market opening. In particular, Member States should be able to reflect working conditions in their authorisation procedures. Member States must also have the right to impose conditions on the supply of postal services for non-economic reasons, such as compliance with employment conditions and social security schemes laid down by law and/or by collective agreement negotiated between national social partners.

Financing: where a Member State determines that the universal service obligations entail a net cost, it should draw up a financing plan and notify the Commission. The Commission should provide guidance on the calculation of net costs.