

Postal services: common rules for the development of the services and improvement of quality of service

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The Council held a policy debate on the proposal for a directive, concentrating on two central issues: the definition of a universal postal service and the delimitation of the reserved sector. It also discussed the draft communication. At the close of its discussions the Council adopted the following conclusions: 'The Council reiterates that in its Resolution of 7 February 1994 it invited the Commission to propose, before 1 July 1994, the measures necessary for the realisation of the objectives identified, with a view to implementing without delay a Community policy on postal services, and in particular measures relating to universal service, services that can be reserved, and standardisation. It notes that on 26 July 1995 the Commission accordingly adopted an overall approach consisting of the abovementioned draft communication and a proposal for a directive based on Article 100a, providing for a harmonised framework for the postal sector. The Council hopes to arrive at an agreed common position under the auspices of the Italian Presidency. It observes that the communication envisaged by the Commission is not in itself binding but is a document in which it announces the guidelines it intends to follow in applying the Treaty's competition rules to the postal sector. It therefore requests the Commission to take the utmost account of the Council's comments, especially on the need to ensure, for the sake of transparency and legal certainty, that: - the definitions and concepts used in the communication, in the proposal for a directive or in other relevant Community provisions are consistent with one another; - the notice is published in the Official Journal at the same time as the Directive and in any case before the end of 1996. It emphasises that these conclusions are without prejudice to the positions of the Member States on the form and content of the Commission communication'.