

Postal services: further opening to competition

2000/0139(COD) - 06/12/2001 - Council position

The common position was adopted with a qualified majority with the Netherlands delegation voting against the Finnish delegation abstaining. The Council has made a number of adjustments to the proposed timetable for liberalisation in order to ensure a more gradual and controlled market opening process, taking into account the need to maintain the universal services and the specificity of Member States. The adjustments made by the Council move a long way towards the Parliament's position (e.g. higher weight and price limits for the reservable area in 2003, delaying the 50g weight step from 2003 to 2006 and the further subsequent step from 2007 to 2009). The Council adopted the European Parliament's view that outgoing cross-border mail may continue to be reserved to the extent necessary to ensure provision of the universal service. The common position provides for a decisive step towards the full accomplishment of the internal market for postal services in 2009, ensuring both the right of initiative of the Commission, and the full co-decision powers of the European Parliament and Council. Given the over-riding importance of the sub-50g category, in terms of percentage volume of the market, the Council considered that any decision to liberalise within this market segment must be taken by way of a further co-decision procedure. The Council adopted the European Parliament's view on special services by removing any definition for these services from the text.