

# Postal services: further opening to competition

2000/0139(COD) - 14/12/2000 - Text adopted by Parliament, 1st reading/single reading

In relation to the text drafted by Mr Markus FERBER (EPP/ED, D), the majority of MEPs were unimpressed by Commissioner Frits BOLKESTEIN's argument that a large number of Parliament's amendments went "against the grain" of the Commission's proposal and would hinder the modernisation needed to benefit customers and employees of postal services. The European Parliament is of the opinion that the opening up of the postal market should be much more gradual and controlled than the Commission was proposing. Parliament rejected the proposal for a general reduction to 50 in weight limit reserved to universal service providers and demanded that the limit be 150 grams or four times the basic tariff. A reduction to 50 grams or two and a half times the basic tariff, combined with total liberalisation of outgoing cross-border mail and express mail, was too drastic a measure, according to the European Parliament. Moreover, the House demanded absolute guarantees that universal services (the permanent provision of a postal service throughout the EU at affordable prices for all users, even in remote areas) be preserved. The Commission's wish for outgoing cross-border mail, new mail and express mail to be opened up to competition was also rejected, as was its definition of special services. The House also opposed allowing the current Directive 97/67 to lapse at the end of 2006, voting instead for an expiry date of the end of 2008. Lastly, Parliament called for a high level of employment and a high degree of social protection to be included among the goals of the postal services industry.