



Financing the universal postal service: an initiative by 9 European postal operators ⁽¹⁾ to contribute to European Parliament debates

On two occasions, in July and October 2006 before the adoption of the draft directive, a group of public postal operators highlighted the need for serious reflection by the European Commission on the question of financing the universal postal service in an open environment.

In order to tackle this issue it was necessary to provide all the relevant information on the finance methods of the universal service to all the parties concerned including the European Parliament, who are preparing to debate the new draft postal directive. To do this the public postal operators commissioned a specialist independent economics consultancy (OXERA) to conduct a study.

The consultancy, which has international acclaim, analysed all the mechanisms in place in the postal sector as well as in other activity sectors. The study revealed the considerable difficulty of implementing a mechanism that provides a durable universal service and at the same time meets the requirements of economic efficiency and fair competition.

The study did not dismiss the option of maintaining the reserved sector if it includes a more effective universal service financing tool.

Due to the high level of complexity of this subject, given the nature of the postal sector and the differences in national circumstances and in line with the recommendations of the 2002 directive, the public postal operators called on the Commission to conduct its own studies or adapt the results of the OXERA study. The Commission will also be in a position to make the European Parliament appreciate the scale of risks that could affect the sector if universal sector financing is not guaranteed, and to propose appropriate, secured and pragmatic methods of finance.

It is on this condition that the opening up of the sector will be attainable and will be able to fulfil its promises.

The entire study is available in English at:

<http://www.oxera.com/cmsDocuments/Funding%20universal%20services%20obligations%20in%20the%20postal%20sector.pdf>

A French summary is available at: http://www.laposte.fr/IMG/doc/resume_etude_OXERA.doc

⁽¹⁾ Belgian, Cypriot, French, Greek, Italian, Hungarian, Luxembourgish, Polish and Spanish postal operators.

LA POSTE GROUP PRESS CONTACTS

Written press:

Vincent PARRA

Tel: 01 55 44 22 38

vincent.parra@laposte.fr