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Press release

ERGP launches public consultation on the postal universal service

Brussels, 18 September 2014

The European Regulators Group for Postal Services (ERGP) has published a *Discussion paper on the implementation of Universal Service in the postal sector and the effects of recent changes in some countries regarding the scope of the USO* and invites the European stakeholders to dialogue on this theme.

The universal postal service was established by the regulatory framework (launched in the European Commission's 1992 Green Paper) to respond to the needs of postal users and the broader communication environment of the nineteen nineties. Both have changed since then.

At the beginning of the 1990s the average annual mail volume trend for the then EU 12 was plus 6.1% - today the annual volumes are declining at a fairly similar pace. While the pace of decline varies considerably between Member States, the most appropriate changes in response to the volume decline and the changing nature of communication behavior need to be considered. Changes have already taken place in countries outside the EU as New Zealand, Canada, USA and Australia have worked on re-shaping the scope of the universal service obligation.

Against that background, the ERGP has embarked on a reflection process. This process is dedicated to determining what steps need to be taken by Member States in order to adapt their services obligations. The ERGP is also considering the long term sustainability of the existing requirements of the Postal Service Directive, including possible amendments to the current requirements that could increase their overall effectiveness as a solution to social inclusion issues throughout Europe. As part of this reflection process, the present document, which is taking stock of the current situation of the USO accounting for the recent market and regulatory developments, has been prepared as background information for a public consultation and discussion in a forthcoming workshop with a wide range of stakeholders.

The public consultation will run from today until the 14 November and the ensuing workshop with stakeholders is to be held on 19 November 2014 in Bucharest, prior to the ERGP Plenary. All European postal stakeholders (postal services providers, including universal service providers; consumer associations; postal industry associations; labour associations; e-retailers) are invited to Bucharest, on 19 November 2014, to express their views on the implementation of the Universal Service in the postal sector and the effects of the market and other developments on the scope and long-term sustainability of the USO. Opinions can also be sent in writing, in English, until 14 November 2014 to the ERGP Secretariat at MARKT-ERGP@ec.europa.eu or by mail to ERGP Secretariat, J-59 08/36, EC, Rue de la Loi 200, B-1049 Brussels. All comments will be published with the final ERGP Report on this topic.

Registration for the workshop in Bucharest can be made online at: http://www.ancom.org.ro/en/ergp-2014-registration_5287, can be sent to the ERGP Chair's Office at ergp@ancom.org.ro or by mail to ANCOM, Strada Delea Nouă, nr.2, Sector 3, 030925, București, România.

About ERGP

ERGP is composed of the 28 national regulatory authorities (NRAs) of the EU, as well as national regulatory authorities from countries of the European Economic Area and countries with candidate status to join the European Union.

ERGP's tasks are to advise and assist the Commission in consolidating the internal market for postal services and any other matter related to postal services within its competence including the consistent application of the EU postal acquis in all Member States of the regulatory framework for postal services. Contact details: markt-ergp@ec.europa.eu.

Website: http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/ergp/index_en.htm