



Media Release- 29 June 2008

ComReg publishes its response to the Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources' consultation on the liberalisation of the postal sector

The Commission for Communications Regulation (ComReg) today published its response to the Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources' consultation on the liberalisation of the postal sector. This document sets out ComReg's assessment of the key issues to be addressed in transposing the new Postal Directive

In addition to responding to the specific questions set out in the consultation document ComReg has also highlighted a number of key issues in the area of Universal Service, Pricing and Quality.

ComReg believes that defining the scope of Universal Service is the most important decision to be made in transposing the Directive. A broad definition of the scope of universal service, combined with 'market provision' may offer the best prospect of ensuring a vibrant postal market in Ireland.

A carefully designed type of price control, on an ex ante basis, is probably the only way of ensuring that An Post meets with the tariff principles of affordability, cost orientation, transparency and non-discrimination going forward.

There has been no change to the requirements with regard to Quality in the new Postal Directive. ComReg welcomes the new powers recently given to ComReg to issue Directions to An Post to improve its performance relative to the 94% target for next day delivery. ComReg believes that it is appropriate, when transposing the Directive, to ensure that the link between price and quality is clearly recognised.

Commenting on the Strategy Statement, ComReg Chairperson John Doherty said "The Minister is to be commended for giving all interested stakeholders the opportunity to make suggestions about the content of the legislation. ComReg believes that a competitive postal market will stimulate innovation and benefit all postal consumers. The development of e-government, e-commerce, and developments in the ICT sector generally, are having significant impacts on postal services and the challenge now for all postal operators is to grasp the great opportunities that such developments bring."

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Editor's Note

The Third Postal Directive (Directive 2008/6/EC) published on 27 February 2008 must be transposed into Irish Law ***no later than*** 31 December 2010. The transposition process will necessitate the repeal of legislation going back one hundred years or more and the introduction of new legislation which will establish the regulatory framework for the provision of postal services in Ireland for many decades to come.

ComReg's statutory objective is "to promote the development of the postal sector and in particular the availability of a universal postal service within, to and from the State at an affordable price for the benefit of all users". The Postal Strategy Statement (2008-2010) sets out its strategy in relation to the transposition of the new Postal Directive as to "act as an advocate for the consumer and all those interested in providing customer focused and efficient postal services".