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European Regulators Group for Post (ERGP)- strengthened regulatory cooperation for an innovative and competitive postal delivery sector

The European Regulators Group for Post (ERGP) held its first meeting on 1 December 2010 following its establishment on 10 August 2010 by the European Commission. Strengthened cooperation between independent national regulatory authorities is increasingly important with the liberalisation of postal markets across Europe. With the objective of developing best regulatory practice ERGP is becoming an integral part of an internal postal market and a driving force in ensuring that European citizens have real choice stemming from a competitive market, which will also have positive impact on innovation within the rapidly changing postal delivery sector.

ERGP will consider best regulatory practice across Europe and will act as an expert advisor to the European Commission on postal issues. It will also facilitate consultation, coordination and cooperation between the independent national regulatory authorities in the Member States, and between those authorities and the Commission. ERGP is made up of the heads of the 27 national postal regulators and will be assisted by the secretariat, which will be provided by the Commission.

At the inaugural meeting Joëlle Toledano, commissioner at ARCEP, the French postal and telecom regulator, was elected as the Chair of ERGP for 2011, while Tim Brown, Chief Executive at Postcomm, the UK postal regulator, and Göran Marby, Director General of the Swedish regulator PTS, were elected Vice-Chairs for 2011.

Regulators at the inauguration meeting considered and adopted two essential documents which set out how the ERGP will function: (i) Rules of Procedure, and (ii) Work Programme for 2011-2012. In agreeing the multiannual work programme, which will be revised next year, regulators gave a commitment to work on regulatory issues such as allocation of common costs, the net cost calculation of the universal service obligation (USO) with special emphasis on the effects of VAT exemption, end user satisfaction and monitoring of market outcomes, cross-border products and treatment of consolidators.

The incoming chair of ERGP, Joëlle Toledano commented: *"The next few years will be challenging but also crucial for the future of postal sector throughout Europe since business models are being debated. I am convinced that ERGP will play an important, if not essential, role in ensuring that consumers benefit from an efficient universal service with good quality, and that effective competition is possible in the EU postal delivery markets. I'll be fully dedicated to have ERGP building shared expertise among regulators together with the Commission to achieve this goal."*

Tim Brown, incoming vice-chair, furthermore explained: *"The establishment of ERGP and today's commitments to areas of work are a significant development in the evolution of the postal sector throughout the EU. The ERGP will contribute to achieving our common goal, which is an innovative and competitive postal delivery sector for benefits*

of all EU citizens. This can only be achieved if the EU regulatory framework is applied in a sound and coherent manner, following both the letter and spirit of the postal directives."

Background

The European Regulators Group for Post (ERGP) was established by the Commission Decision of 10 August 2010 (available at: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2010:217:0007:0009:EN:PDF>).

ERGP is comprised of Heads of 27 national regulatory authorities (NRAs). The EU Commission, EFTA Surveillance Authority, EEA countries and EU candidate countries participate as observers to the ERGP. The group will be assisted by a secretariat, which will be provided by the Commission, and will provide the necessary administrative support to its work.

ERGP will serve as an expert advisory group. It will facilitate consultation, coordination and cooperation between the independent national regulatory authorities in the Member States, and between those authorities and the Commission in view of ensuring fulfilment of objectives of EU postal reform.

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