



Media Release- 1 October 2003

Letter and Parcel Companies, including Couriers, to be authorised next year when Cross-Border Mail posted in Ireland will be fully open to competition.

Letter and Parcel Companies, including Couriers, will have to be authorised by Commission for Communications Regulation (ComReg) from 1 January next. From the same date An Post will no longer have any monopoly over Cross-Border Mail posted in Ireland. This includes mail to Northern Ireland, Britain, Europe and the rest of the world.

ComReg has today published its proposals for the procedures that will have to be followed by all postal service providers with a turnover in excess of €500,000 to obtain a “Postal Service Authorisation”. The proposals involve a very simple authorisation procedure designed to ensure that there is a record available of those operating in the market place, and to ensure that the services reserved to An Post are respected.

Once the authorisations are granted ComReg must ensure that the operators provide a proper complaints and redress system and that they comply with their obligations in respect of the essential requirements (e.g. the confidentiality of correspondence, security of the postal network and treatment of undelivered mail).

Unlike some other countries where it is necessary to secure a licence to provide services in direct competition with the designated universal service provider, it will still be possible to establish services competing with An Post, provided they are outside of An Post’s “reserved” area,

In 1999 the first steps were taken to open up postal markets to competition. Initially items of correspondence weighing less than 350g and priced at less than €1.90 remained within An Post's "reserved area" or "monopoly". Since then the range of services that are "reserved" to An Post have been further reduced – currently only the carriage of items of correspondence weighing less than 100g and priced by An Post at less than €1.44 are "reserved" to An Post. From January 1st next all outgoing cross-border mail will be fully open to competition.

The full document dealing with these issues ComReg 03/117 is available on the ComReg website www.comreg.ie

ENDS

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