



Office of the Director of
**Telecommunications
Regulation**

MEDIA RELEASE

For Immediate Release
15th February 2001

ODTR Regulation of An Post

Etain Doyle, the Director of Telecommunications Regulation, who has been designated as the Independent Regulator for the postal sector, today (15th February 2001), published an Information Paper about her new role and the procedures she will put in place to secure the views of interested parties about postal issues.

Under the Regulations signed late last year by the Minister for Public Enterprise, implementing the European Communities' framework for postal regulation, a new framework is in place providing for harmonised development of the postal market. In this framework, An Post's monopoly, or "reserved area" is restricted to correspondence weighing less than 350 grammes and charged less than £1.50. The Postal Directive also establishes a process under which there will be further opening of the postal market to competition.

According to the Director " There are differences between the postal and telecommunications markets and regulatory structures, but our key focus on providing for users remains the same for postal regulation as for telecommunications. Critical to this will be securing improvements in the quality of service, and ensuring that all citizens have a high quality postal service, with daily deliveries. Responsibility for setting quality of service targets, monitoring performance against those targets, and publishing the results has transferred to the ODTR under the Regulations. Arrangements for this are being developed and a consultation paper will issue shortly.

She continued "a priority will be to ensure that consumers are protected from potential difficulties of reserving services by securing a level of service comparable to that available in a fully competitive market, especially in terms of price and quality."

One of the Director's first projects will be to look at An Post's Cost Accounting Procedures to ensure that they are robust enough to verify that prices are "geared to cost" and that costs are effectively controlled. She also has a responsibility to ensure that all charges by An Post conform to the principles set out in the Postal Directive. The main purpose of these principles is to ensure that An Post does not engage in unfair competition by subsidising services open to competition with excess charges on services within the reserved area, and that any discounts are given in a non-discriminatory way and can be justified by cost savings.

Listening to the views of interested parties will play an important part in the Director's approach to the new role, and the main purposes of the Information Paper published today is to set out the procedures she has put in place to secure those views.

The paper is available on the ODTR website www.odtr.ie

01/09 "Regulation of Postal Services – Procedures for seeking the views of interested parties"

ENDS

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Note to the Editors

Relevant legislation

The European Communities (Postal services) Regulation – Statutory Instrument 310 of 2000

Directive 97/67 EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 December 1997 on common rules for the development of the internal market of Community postal services and the improvement of quality of service. OJ L 15 21.1.1998 pg 14 n

The Regulations have designated An Post as a Universal Service Provider and the Minister for Public Enterprise may designate one or more additional postal service providers as a Universal Service Provider having an obligation to provide all or part of the Universal Service.