



AICES

Association of International Courier and Express Services

Matthew Ward,
Postcomm,
Hercules House,
6 Hercules Road,
London SE1 7DB

17 December 2004

Dear Mr Ward,

A Revised Market Opening Timetable: AICES Submission

The Association of International Couriers and Express Services (AICES) is pleased to make a response to this consultation. AICES is the trade organisation in the United Kingdom for companies handling international express documents and package shipments. Our membership – which includes household names such as DHL, FedEx, TNT and UPS – employs over 29,000 people directly, supports a further 68,000 jobs indirectly, and is responsible for over 95% of the international courier and express shipments moved through the UK every day.

The express industry plays a key role in facilitating the competitiveness of British business – and making the UK an attractive location for inward investment. Express services are used by UK business to achieve the next day delivery of goods and documents to customers throughout Europe and North America.

AICES sees the introduction of competition into the postal market as a positive step, one that will benefit UK consumers and businesses. We believe that in general it will facilitate the creation of new services, introduce price competition and ensure improved service levels. In the light of this, we welcome these proposals and support Postcomm's efforts in this area. We believe that the earlier than originally planned date for full liberalization should not cause any difficulties.

We would emphasise that there remains, even after these changes, a need for an active Postcomm. The continuing efforts of the regulator will be required to ensure effective competition in the postal market. For the benefits of competition to be realised, a level playing field between Royal Mail and other market operators must be created. For example, issues such as the inclusion of Royal Mail's express services in the Universal Service Obligation and Royal Mail's continued right to provide services exempt from VAT, remain to be resolved.

In summary however, AICES sees the Revised Market Opening Timetable as a positive development and we are happy to support it.

Yours sincerely,

Anne de Courcy
Secretary General