



European Commission

NEWSLETTER

Special edition



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Interview with Neelie Kroes, EU Competition Commissioner Solutions for Europe



Neelie Kroes
Commissioner responsible for competition

Everyone has an opinion about State aid in the banking sector in light of the financial crisis – what is yours?

State aid rules play an important role in the current situation and I am 100% certain they are part of the solution. My teams have been working day and night to make sure we are an effective stabilising force in our financial system. In the absence of State aid rules, governments would be tempted to start subsidy races, which would weaken the European economy further. Perfectly healthy companies could be put out of business just because their competitors received unfair state subsidies and that would not be fair.

Are you satisfied with what has been achieved in the 2005-2008 State Aid Action Plan?

Yes. In just three years, virtually all State aid rules have been modernised. That means about 15 new texts! Anyone who has observed State aid over recent decades would acknowledge it is now much better targeted. Compared to the two per cent or more of GDP spent on State aid in the 1980s, today's figure of 0.6 per cent looks healthy. The message is this: we're heading in the right direction and making active efforts to keep it that way.

What is the biggest State aid challenge today?

Our immediate focus is the financial crisis, of course. In the longer term it is hard to overlook

issues like energy and climate change. Member States could be doing much more to take advantage of the environmental aid guidelines, and when they do it helps everyone. Good use of this aid also complements what we are trying to do with liberalisation of Europe's energy markets.

What is it like to deal with the social consequences of your State aid decisions?

I am very aware that the implementation of our recovery decisions sometimes may produce, in the short term, negative consequences from a social point of view. So we don't take these decisions lightly – but we have to apply the same rules to everyone. It's tempting to listen to the loudest people, but if certain State aid is going to waste taxpayer's money or stop other jobs from being created or put healthy competitors at risk, then observers need to consider that as well. Therefore, in the longer term, it is also in the workers' interest to avoid incompatible State aid which artificially keeps inefficient undertakings afloat without requiring restructuring measures.

'Now we need better joint working with Member States and the courts – that's my priority'

What are your priorities for State aid for the rest of this mandate?

I would like if Member States took full advantage of State aid reform to support growth and jobs. We are closing in on the limits of what improvements the Commission can offer on its own in terms of reduced red tape and faster decisions. Indeed, we are in the course of initiating better joint working with Member States and the courts to be able to take faster, more transparent and predictable decisions – that's my priority. We are therefore working on a "Best Practice package" that would combine three elements: first of all, closer cooperation between the Commission and national courts to improve private enforcement at national level (the Enforcement Notice); secondly, a Simplified Procedure to quickly approve straightforward aid measures and, finally, a Best Practice

Code to lay down the joint commitment of the Commission and Member States to more predictable, transparent and speedy standard procedures and set out the procedural improvements necessary for this purpose.

State aid control

Commission meets financial crisis challenge in State aid

Since the beginning of the current financial crisis, Member States have announced unprecedented support measures for the financial sector, ranging from increased (or even unlimited) deposit guarantees, interbank credit guarantees, direct capital injections and partial nationalisation through to individual rescue packages.

Many of these measures fall under our State aid rules, so the Commission has been playing a

key role in making sure that these rules are fully respected. In order to assist Member States in their efforts to design support schemes that are in line with State aid rules, the European Commission has published a Communication on how the State aid rules apply to measures taken in relation to financial institutions in the context of the current global financial crisis. The Commission acknowledges in this Communication the

exceptional circumstances and the systemic risks inherent to a financial crisis and takes them into account when dealing with support schemes. Coordinated action by Member States and the Commission has ensured that support measures could be implemented with minimal spillover effects and distortions of competition. The large number of notifications continues to provide a significant challenge for DG Competition.

Enforcement and reform: why they matter

State aid can be of real help to society. When used effectively it helps to improve our environment, support research and development and boost the skills of workers, thus improving our standard of living. When applied badly, however, State aid often has harmful and unintended effects. For example, support which helps inefficient firms stay on the market, often results in higher prices for consumers, and means that better companies may suffer from the unfair advantage given to the subsidised company. The lack of State aid control can also lead to subsidy races between countries, at the taxpayers' expense.

For these reasons the Commission is determined to monitor planned State aid spending strictly, and has been given the power to block harmful State aids by the Member States. The Commission looks at hundreds of applications for State aids each year, and has worked hard to eliminate harmful State aid, and to encourage the right kinds of aid – aid that genuinely helps society. As part of this drive, the Commission adopted the General Block Exemption Regulation earlier this year which fully exempts 26 categories of beneficial aid from Commission notification and investigation requirements.

The General Block Exemption Regulation (GBER)

A simpler and wider framework

The GBER is a new framework that allows Member States to grant State aid targeted at creating jobs, boosting competitiveness and improving the environment, without having to notify the aid to the Commission.

The new rules will not only cut red tape by slashing five existing Regulations down to one but also allows the Commission to focus its attention on other, more distortive types of aid.

This change makes it quicker and easier for Member States to give the right kind of State aid, that benefit the European economy and society as a whole in a sustainable way, and not just

one company or sector. In this respect, the GBER delivers a core part of the State Aid Action Plan: to implement a simple, user-friendly system.

26 types of aid do not need to be notified. Some of the most important new categories of aid covered by this reform are:

- Innovation aid for SMEs, research and innovation
- Research and development aid for large businesses
- Risk capital
- Environmental protection aid
- Regional development aid

• Aid measures promoting entrepreneurship, including for young innovative businesses; and to address market failures that lead to low levels of entrepreneurial activity among certain groups, such as female entrepreneurs.

To underline the importance of SMEs for the development of the European Economy, the new rules particularly facilitate access for small and medium-sized companies to all 26 types of aid that are covered by the Regulation. In nearly all instances SMEs have access to bonuses and are eligible regardless of whether they operate in assisted or non-assisted areas.

Continued on page 2

SMEs can be granted

- Up to €7.5 million of investment aid for a given project
- €7.5 million of investment aid for an environmental project
- Up to €2 million for participation in trade fairs.
- Assistance to female entrepreneurs can be up to €1 million per company. Commissioner Kroes made it clear that the innovative capacities of young female entrepreneurs should not be underestimated, which explains this particular Article.

Access to risk capital will be easiest for small businesses – including seed capital, start-up capital and/or expansion capital. Medium-sized businesses will be eligible for seed and start-up capital only.

The Polish efforts to encourage the development of a market for venture capital invest-

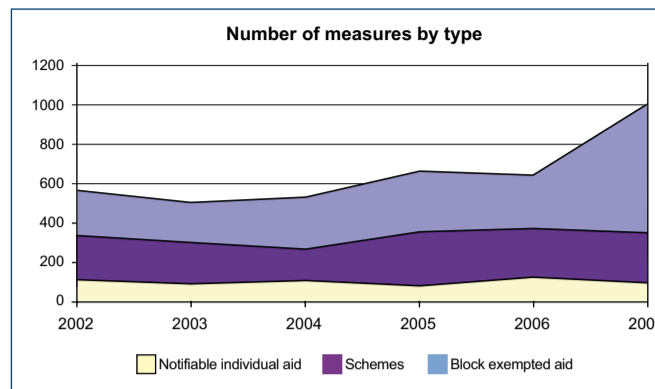
ments in micro-businesses and SMEs would have been a good candidate for the application of the GBER. We are keen to support the proper development of risk capital markets across all Member States.

All companies can receive up to €20 million per year to assist in the employment of disabled workers. This is not only a social measure, but is based on the experience that in the long run and with regard to the demographic development, this part of the population should be integrated into the labour market as much as possible.

The Commission is determined to ease the burden of shifting to a low-carbon economy, and that is why environmental protection aid can qualify for exemption. The opportunities presented today show that we can meet the challenge of climate change without wrecking competition in the process.

It is our belief that the GBER will enable Member States to release funds sooner to well-targeted projects and give companies better possibilities to grow and make full use of employees' potential, while cutting paperwork for all sides.

In the longer term this initiative is going to mean more jobs for Europe and greater competitiveness for European companies. The GBER sends the message that State aid is not a shield against competition – it is a tool for self-improvement.



Total number of State aid measures by type 2002-2007. The graph shows the increasing importance of block exemptions following the State Aid Action Plan. SMEs are the most prominent target group of BERs, as many measures are specifically exempted from the notification requirement when the beneficiary is an SME.



State aid control

Three minute guide to State aid

1) What is State aid control?

State aid control aims at preventing distortions of intra-Community competition and trade between firms and Member States through the use of public resources. To protect the internal market and safeguard a level playing field, the EC Treaty obliges Member States to notify to the Commission public support to firms or sectors before putting it in place. The Commission can only approve such measures when the positive effects outweigh the negative ones. For instance, the Commission may approve aid for research and development or for environmental purposes in view of their positive effects exceeding the negative impact on competition.

2) Does the prohibition of some State aid not sometimes deprive consumers of benefits? Why does the Commission sometimes take such a tough stance on measures that would allow companies to stay in business and maintain good jobs for hundreds of workers?

Both the direct and indirect effects of aid, including those immediately apparent and those which are long-term ones, have to be taken into account. Measures that at first sight appear to benefit consumers can sometimes severely harm the EU's industrial competitiveness and negatively impact the creation of new jobs in the long-run.

Aid to a company in difficulties might allow it to stay in business, but often at the expenses of competitors who do not benefit from aid, while the jobs maintained through State aid are often precarious. That is why the Commission will only accept such aid when the long-term viability can be restored. On the other hand, the Commission is very open to aid to help the employees (for example aid for their retraining). Our common goal should be creating stable jobs in prospective industries, rather than saving loss-making activities at the expense of the tax payer (which is sometimes enormous – we have seen cases where maintaining one job would have cost up to half a million euros a year and more).

3) Do State aid rules not exacerbate the current financial crisis? Should we not just suspend the rules until things have calmed down again?

As Commissioner Neelie Kroes has explained, we would be in a jungle if we suspended or abandoned competition policy, and State aid control in particular. State aid rules are vital to ensure a level playing field and coordinated reaction to threats to the viability of individual financial institutions and to the stability of the financial system as a whole. If they were lifted right now, we would risk a disintegration of the European Single Market for financial services, and a wasteful subsidy race between Member States to attract depositors and investors.

'The Commission can only approve aid when the positive effects outweigh the negative ones'

State aid rules have shown in the past weeks that they are able to contribute to such a coordinated response, at the level of both speed of reaction and capacity to take fully into account evolving market circumstances, while always guaranteeing the common European interest.

4) Is it true that State aid control is based on a bilateral procedure between Member States and the Commission? Is there a way I can raise concerns as consumer, employee, environmentalist, entrepreneur or competitor?

The characterisation of State aid procedures as bilateral is legally correct but should not be misunderstood; it does not mean that third parties have no role to play. On the contrary, the involvement of third parties is essential for effective State aid control. First and foremost, you can have your voice heard when the Commission opens a formal investigation procedure. This is necessary when the Commission has doubts whether a certain measure can be approved. A letter will be published in the Official Journal, explaining the difficulties the Commission has in approving the aid and inviting interested parties to provide comments. These letters can also be found on the Competition website. (See page four of this newsletter for web addresses)

Second, you can lodge a complaint with the European Commission if you believe that compe-

tion is distorted through a State aid. A special form and further guidance are available on the website.

In addition, you can take a variety of legal steps before national courts if competitors receive unlawful State aid. For example, you could ask for an interim injunction or even damages if an illegal State aid has caused you harm. The Commission is currently finalising a notice on the cooperation with national courts, which will provide further guidance.

5) In the current financial crisis, many banks have been bailed out and lots of money is going into the financial sector. What is the role of European State aid control in all this?

Indeed, many of the support measures are subject to European State aid control, and the Commission has been playing a key role in ensuring that they fully respect State aid rules so that a level playing field exists. Coordinated action by Member States and the Commission has ensured that large support schemes for the financial sector could be implemented in compliance with EC Treaty State aid rules. In October, the European Commission published a Communication on how it applies State aid rules to measures taken in relation to financial institutions in the context of the current global financial crisis. The Commission acknowledges the exceptional circumstances and the systemic risks inherent to a financial crisis and takes them into account when dealing with support schemes.

State aid control

A safe harbour for public services

Citizens care about public services (services of general economic interest or SGEI) – it is a truth every politician can tell you. So it is no surprise that there is constant debate about what services should be provided, and how those services are best delivered. The Commission has to steer clear of much of that debate. It is not for us to decide how many post offices should be kept in a specific region or if a train connection in a rural area is good value. Our task is only to ensure that there is no manifest abuse as regards the definition of what constitutes SGEI.

State aid control comes into the picture when the services are provided by a company and financed through the public budget, because overly generous compensation can enable the service providers to cross-subsidise their other commercial activities, and thereby distort competition. Under which conditions can the compensation of service providers be critical under State aid rules? The four conditions defined in the Altmark decision of 2003 are our benchmark:

- Is there a clear entrustment?
- Has the service provider been chosen through a public and transparent procedure?
- Does the provider keep separate accounts for the public service compensation and its other commercial activities?

- Has the compensation been calculated so that the level of compensation does not go beyond the costs which a typical undertaking, well run and adequately equipped, would have incurred plus a reasonable margin of profit?

When these conditions are not fulfilled the public service will be examined under State aid rules. The Decision and the framework adopted by the Commission in 2005 specify under which conditions State aid in the form of public service compensation is compatible with the Treaty. This 2005 "SGEI package" allows for increased clarity and easy delivery, especially for local SGEIs. The Decision exempts from the obligation of notification to the Commission compensations of up to €30 million per beneficiary per year, for properly entrusted SGEIs. There is no limitation of amounts for hospitals and social housing.

Of course, the conditions set out in the 2005 Decision, in particular clear entrustment, no over-compensation and transparency of accounts, have to be met. More recently, on 20 November 2007, the Commission also issued a Communication taking into account the Protocol on Services of General Interest now integrated in the Lisbon Treaty. A *Frequently Asked Questions* annex was attached in order

to answer commonly raised questions on State aid and SGEIs.

Following the Communication, an Internet-based interactive assistance has also been set up, allowing for further questions to be asked to the Commission's services on such issues and aiming at fast-delivered answers.

Looking towards the future, reporting by Member States on the application of the Decision was scheduled for and is due by the end of 2008.

Sectoral specificities

Public broadcasting and postal services are currently under the spotlight in many Member States.

In several postal services decisions, the Commission has applied the Altmark criteria and the Treaty principles that State aid rules apply to public and private undertakings without difference.

In the case of the UK Postal Services, the Commission found that the level of compensation went beyond the costs which a typical undertaking, well run and adequately equipped, would have incurred (fourth Altmark criterion: the compensation had thus to be considered as State aid, but after further analysis was declared compatible).

Whereas in the Italian Post case, the European Commission found that the separation of accounts by Poste Italiane was sufficiently



Interview with Philip Lowe, Director General for competition

Ensuring fair play

How has State aid control changed during your time at DG Competition?

I see two key changes. First, we have demonstrated that we can take decisions in a timeframe relevant for businesses and for economic policy decisions in Member States. This has become clear in the context of the current financial crisis too where we managed to take decisions within 24 hours. The second, very obvious change, is that around 80 per cent of State aid now goes to horizontal objectives. If you'd told me that would happen when I joined the Commission in 1973, or even in the 1990s when it stood at 50 per cent, I may not have believed you.

Have internal changes at DG Competition affected State aid control?

The rules of course have not changed, but I think it is clear that we are now more efficient.

DG Competition now works very much as a project-based organisation, and this has greatly helped us to rise to the challenges posed by the financial crisis. We have State aid and merger case teams, policy teams and communications teams, all working to produce a coherent set of measures, in a timeframe relevant to the problems that we are facing. We make greater use of a refined economic approach too.

I hope we can build on these experiences with the Best Practice package and have even more efficient working relationships with Member States in the future.

Tell us about State aid recovery ...

Member States have a track record of being reluctant to recover illegal State aid. Nevertheless, €7 billion of illegal and incompatible aid has been effectively recovered prior to

31 December 2007, together with a further €2.4 billion of interest. That's an important achievement because it underpins our credibility as enforcers – there is no point having rules if one does not face the consequences of breaking them.

Since incompatible aid distorts competition, recovery is there to restore the competitive situation on the market. National courts also have an important role to play in this respect, since they can order immediate recovery of illegal aid. Fostering private enforcement at national level is therefore one purpose of our forthcoming Enforcement Notice.

Have we seen the end of the intersection of the credit crunch and State aid?

It's not for me to make those predictions, but obviously there have been a number of urgent banking cases this year. We have ensured the rules are applied fairly, with an eye to the wider issues at stake. I think from cases such as

'There is no point having rules if one does not face the consequences of breaking them'



Philip Lowe
Director General responsible for competition

Bradford and Bingley one can see that we are in the position to act quickly, and we have also shown that we can play a constructive role in this situation, for example in the revision of the Irish guarantee scheme.

Research, development and innovation

For a competitive Europe

Investment in research and development is a crucial factor in strengthening the competitiveness of the EU economy and in ensuring sustainable growth. This is reflected in the overarching goal to increase R&D spending to 3% of GDP by 2010 (up from less than 2% in 2005) and is born out by the stark gap in total factor productivity between the EU and other parts of the industrialised world.

Increased private funding of R&D – currently around two-thirds of all R&D funding – is of particular importance if the EU is to improve its economic performance.

But when markets fail on their own to ensure optimum levels of Research, Development and Innovation (R&D&I), State aid may be needed, as a complementary tool to boost research, development and innovation.

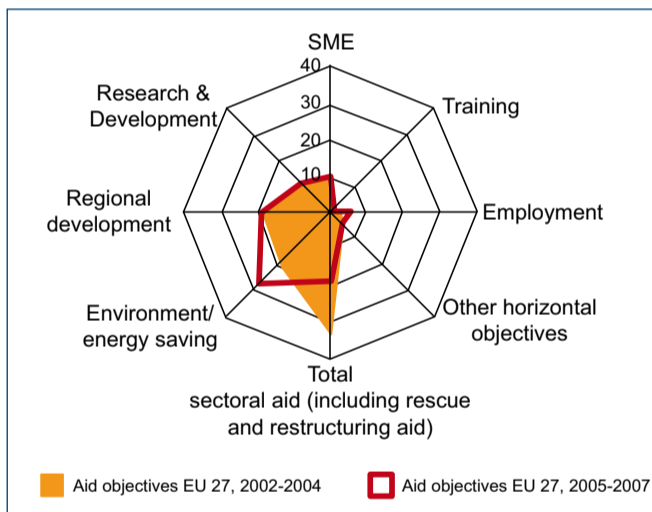
The Commission's new R&D&I framework was conceived as a means to meet our economic goals while also pushing State aid spending toward more horizontal goals and away from projects most likely to cause competition distortions.

This pragmatic approach includes having the new General Block Exemption Regulation (GBER) cover the less distortive cases and the "lighter assessment" foreseen in section V and VI of the framework.

Individual aid above certain thresholds (see table) is subject to a detailed assessment, including the verification of whether the aid has an incentive effect and that the positive effects outweigh the competition distortions.

The first eighteen months of application of the framework have proven a resounding success. Good preparation by Member States and a fruitful co-operation with the Commission have produced decisions within a timeframe very similar to what was observed under the old framework.

The average time for decisions was less than six months after notification. This shows that conducting a detailed assessment does not lead to longer review periods.



Trend in share of primary objectives in total aid between 2002-2004 and 2005-2007 as % of total aid. The graph shows a clear shift from ad hoc and sectoral aid to aid for horizontal objectives, in particular towards aid for environmental protection

| Predominant aim of the project | Threshold for detailed assessment |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Fundamental research | €20 million |
| Industrial research | €10 million |
| Experimental development | €7.5 million |

Risk capital for Europe's SMEs

Commissioner Kroes has made risk capital a personal priority – recognising that innovative undertakings with high-growth potential in their early growth stages often do not have sufficient access to early stage risk capital finance (equity and/or quasi-equity). This is of even greater concern given the credit access issues that have so dramatically emerged in 2008.

Well-targeted public intervention is seen as not only justifiable but highly desirable in this area. Most recently, the Commission addressed this issue in its Communication on "Financing SME Growth - Adding European Value" aimed at encouraging Member States to facilitate access to finance and risk capital.

The European Commission adopted the Guidelines on State aid to support risk capital investments in SMEs (the Guidelines) in 2006, so that

Member States can better target their risk capital measures to the relevant market failures. They also define, under certain conditions, a "safe harbour" of €1.5 million investment per SME over 12 months, below which the necessity of aid, as well as its incentive effect and proportionality can be presumed.

Above the safe harbour thresholds, because of less obvious market failure and the higher potential to distort competition, the Guidelines set out a refined economic assessment approach, developed in the SAAP, for the assessment of the compatibility of risk capital measures with the EC Treaty to ensure that State aid genuinely contributes to objectives of common interest (to ensure competitiveness by improving SME access to finance) and targets well-identified market failures.

'Well-targeted public intervention is seen as not only justifiable but highly desirable in this area'

In our assessment we ask: is the instrument appropriate?; is there an incentive effect achieved by leveraging private investments?; is the aid proportional? We check whether state involvement would crowd out private investors and whether inefficient businesses are being funded.

To reduce the administrative burden for Member States, risk capital investments under the GBER no longer need to be notified to the Commission, provided that the public and private investors co-finance a profit-driven and commercially managed risk capital fund which makes investments in SMEs fall under the safe harbour threshold criteria set out in the Guidelines.

Overall the Commission believes that the application of the Guidelines and GBER will better address SME financing needs and boost this crucial sector of the European economy.

Fighting climate change

In January 2008 the Commission launched its 20/20/20 package to tackle climate change: a 20% reduction in CO₂ emissions by 2020, an increase in the share of energy from renewable sources of 20% by 2020 and a 20% increase in energy efficiency by 2020.

The new State aid environmental guidelines are an important part of the comprehensive effort to achieve these goals, in combination with the recently adopted General Block Exemption Regulation.

Both instruments provide numerous possibilities for granting State aid, allowing subsidies of up to 100% under certain conditions to cover extra costs and reduce administrative burdens, making a real, positive impact on the environment.



Member States can support the production of energy from renewable sources, combined heat and power generation (CHP) and energy saving through operating aid. As regards energy from renewable sources, for instance, the State can give aid to cover the difference (up to 100% of extra costs) between the production costs and the market price for the energy, and thus ensure that investments in renewable energy sources become profitable.

The Environmental Aid Guidelines also reflect the Commission's generally positive attitude towards State aid for the construction of industrial-scale demonstration plants for carbon capture and storage. If successful, this could significantly reduce the environmental impact of coal use, and is a key element in the so-called "clean coal" debate. The Guidelines recognise the strategic importance of carbon capture and storage technologies for the EU, but given the novelty and rapidly developing nature of the technology, do not set out the criteria for assessing the compatibility of such projects.

Guidelines for regional aid

Promoting regions

The Commission's guidelines for national regional aid (RAG) 2007-2013, together with the regional aid maps adopted for each Member State, define the types of expenditure eligible for regional investment aid, the areas eligible for assistance and the maximum aid intensities allowed (as a percentage of eligible expenditures). The guidelines also define the very limited circumstances under which operating aid may be granted in the poorest and least densely populated regions of the EU. They also create a new category of aid to support business start-ups in the assisted areas. In order to prepare RAG 2007, the Commission undertook a comprehensive review of the earlier guidelines, based on three principles:

- Concentration of regional aid on the areas most in need, with a reduction in the number

of eligible areas of over 10% of the EU population, and a reduction in aid intensities in all but the very poorest regions;

- Continuity through appropriate long-term transitional arrangements;
- Competitiveness of all regions through the implementation of the reforms in the State Aid Action Plan.

In addition the new rules required the phasing out of all previous national regional aid schemes by 31 December 2006.

In order to reduce administrative formalities, the Block Exemption Regulation on regional aid exempts transparent regional aid schemes, which comply with the guidelines and the regional aid map, from notification. Since

it came into force, about 320 measures have benefited from this exemption, which is now incorporated into the GBER.

The RAG 2007 also now cover regional aid for large investment projects. Projects that receive large amounts of aid have to be individually notified and where the aid beneficiary has significant market power, or the project would result in a major increase in capacity, an in-depth assessment will be required.

In order to ensure long-term continuity, which is a key to regional development, the guidelines will remain in force for the whole of the 2007-2013 programming period, although a limited mid-term review may take place in 2010.

'The guidelines now cover regional aid for large investment projects'



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Training aid

Boosting skills

funding. In line with the Commission's efforts to implement a more refined economic approach, a more in-depth assessment of the necessity of the aid now takes place.

In particular we stress that "aid is limited to the minimum necessary to obtain the Community objective which market forces alone would not make possible". Aid is necessary when it induces undertakings to do something that otherwise they would not do. Without such a positive effect an aid application cannot be considered to be in the common interest.

Recent cases

In the Ford Genk and General Motors Antwerp cases, the Commission made an in-depth assessment of the necessity of aid. It found that car producers have to regularly introduce new models, modernise the production lines, and run training accordingly. This is what the Ford and General Motors competitors do without receiving aid. Therefore, since

such aid did not increase the amount of training compared to what would have already been done on the basis of market forces alone, and did not increase the pool of skilled workers, the aid was found incompatible with EU rules.

Similarly, in the DHL case the Commission found that legal requirements constitute sufficient incentives for the beneficiary to provide training. In order to operate its new hub, the beneficiary was compelled to provide its workers with training relating to safety and security as required by national and European legislation. The aid therefore did not incite the beneficiary to do more training but simply relieved him from a normal cost that he should have borne in the framework of its activities.

Further, the Commission established that the relocation of a firm was not a sufficient reason for training aid. Unlike regional investment aid, the objective of training aid is not to influence the

choice of the location, but to increase the pool of skilled workers and to remedy the underinvestment in training in the Community. It cannot therefore be granted to attract a firm. Also, the Commission underlined that regional disadvantages, such as the lower skills level of the local workforce, are part of the regional handicap and have to be compensated by regional investment aid and not by training aid.

Conclusion

The Commission does not hide the fact that we now apply stricter verification of the necessity of training aid, and of its contribution to the objective of common interest. This approach allows us to target State aid where it is needed most and to continue the trend of reducing the level of overall State aid as a percentage of GDP.

'The objective is to increase the pool of skilled workers'



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Effective training aid is at the heart of economic development and efforts to boost European competitiveness – it is a proven form of long-term investment. The potential for training to increase skills and employability also makes it crucial to the success of the Lisbon Strategy for boosting growth and jobs, and thus a key part of the Commission's medium-term policies.

Refined economic approach

Analysis of past training aid has shown that some of the money simply funded training activities that would have occurred with or without the

Where can I get more information?

State Aid Weekly e-News

E-News features information on new legislative texts and proposals, decisions of the European Commission and the Courts of the European Union and other State aid-related documents and events. You can subscribe on http://ec.europa.eu/competition/state_aid/newsletter/index.html

State aid Scoreboard

The scoreboard provides detailed information on State aid policy developments, facts and figures. It is published twice a year in spring and autumn. The spring editions focus on topical issues in State aid policy: http://ec.europa.eu/competition/state_aid/studies_reports/studies_reports.cfm

Legislation

EU State aid legislation is available at one click on http://ec.europa.eu/competition/state_aid/legislation/legislation.html
All aspects of the reform of State aid rules are available on http://ec.europa.eu/competition/state_aid/reform/reform.cfm

Vademecum of Community rules on State aid

Contains summaries of State aid legislation applicable to areas that are considered most relevant for Structural Fund operations
http://ec.europa.eu/competition/state_aid/studies_reports/studies_reports.cfm

State aid Register

The recently upgraded State aid Register allows users to search for and get access to every State aid decision taken since 1 January 2000. It also contains information on all block exempted measures. http://ec.europa.eu/comm/competition/state_aid/register/

Regional aid maps

http://ec.europa.eu/competition/state_aid/regional_aid/regional_aid.cfm

Other publications

The Directorate-General for Competition also publishes other publications, such as the Annual report on competition policy, the competition policy newsletter, studies, information brochures, press releases and speeches <http://ec.europa.eu/competition/publications/index.html>

Contact us

For general information queries: infocomp@ec.europa.eu
For other purposes (case-related information, complaints on alleged unlawful State aid, ...) see http://ec.europa.eu/competition/contacts/index_en.html