



State aid: Commission approves €55 million German scheme to support roll-out of infrastructure for mobile communication services in German Land of Brandenburg

Brussels, 16 December 2020

The European Commission has approved, under EU State aid rules, a €55 million German aid scheme to support the deployment of high-performance mobile networks in underserved areas of the German Federal State (Land) of Brandenburg.

Executive Vice-President Margrethe **Vestager**, in charge of competition policy, said: *"Today, we realise more than ever of the importance of reducing inequalities, bridging the digital divide and ensuring seamless mobile communication at all times. This €55 million scheme will support access to mobile services in remote, underserved areas of the Land of Brandenburg. We have worked closely with German authorities to enable public money being channelled into areas that are most in need of better connectivity, in line with the EU's ambition to achieve performant mobile voice and data connectivity everywhere in Europe."*

The scheme notified by Germany will support the construction of the physical infrastructure required for the deployment of high-performance mobile networks in the Land of Brandenburg. The public support will cover the deployment of passive infrastructure (masts, dark fibre, ducts, electricity connections) for mobile communication services (voice and mobile data).

The scheme aims to support the provision of at least 4G mobile capabilities in areas where no mobile communication services are currently available or where only 2G mobile capabilities are in place, and where no private company is expected to invest within the next three years.

Under the scheme, mobile networks operators ("MNOs") as well as specialised construction companies will receive funds in the form of direct grants to build and/or operate the mobile infrastructure. The aid will be awarded based on open, transparent and non-discriminatory tenders.

The use of the supported infrastructure will be open to all interested MNOs on equal and non-discriminatory terms. Furthermore, the MNOs must commit to use the aid only in areas outside their current coverage obligations, which ensures the added value of the measure. As the measure will ensure that at least 4G mobile capabilities will be offered in areas where no more than 2G mobile connections are currently available, the scheme will also bring about a significant improvement in connectivity.

On this basis, the Commission concluded that the scheme is in line with EU State aid rules, in particular [Article 107\(2\)\(c\)](#) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), and contributes to the EU strategic objectives set out in the Communication "[Towards a European Gigabit Society](#)".

Background

The Land of Brandenburg scheme is in line with the strategic objectives of the [Gigabit Communication](#) that identifies the general objective of promoting connectivity and providing access to mobile services throughout the EU territory, in all places where people live and work, including in remote areas. At the same time, the scheme will help reduce important inequalities and the digital divide in the State of Brandenburg.

The non-confidential version of the decision will be made available under the case number SA.54684 in the [State Aid Register](#) on the [DG Competition](#) website once any confidentiality issues have been resolved. New publications of state aid decisions on the internet and in the Official Journal are listed in the [State Aid Weekly e-News](#).

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