Highlights

New open consultation on the revised draft "general block exemption of the Commission in the State aid area"
Deadline for comments: 28 March 2008
To read more on the public consultation, see section I. Draft legislation and public consultations of this Newsletter

New open consultation on the second draft "Commission Notice on the application of Articles 87 and 88 of the EC Treaty to State aid in the form of guarantees"
Deadline for comments: 28 March 2008
To read more on the open consultation, see section I. Draft legislation and public consultations of this Newsletter

Commission puts forward proposals to the European Council on sovereign wealth funds and financial stability
The European Commission has adopted communications on sovereign wealth funds and on adapting European and global financial systems to better promote financial stability. These communications are the Commission contribution to EU leaders' discussions on these subjects at the Spring European Council on March 13-14. On sovereign wealth funds (SWFs), the Commission is proposing that EU leaders endorse a common EU approach to increasing the transparency, predictability and accountability of SWFs. This common approach will strengthen Europe's voice in international discussions aiming to establish a code of conduct including standards in areas of transparency and governance. On financial stability, the Commission wants the European Council to confirm the principles which will guide the EU’s efforts to improve financial market transparency and reinforce prudential control and risk management, and to set out the broad lines of the action to be taken.
Read more
Commission Communication on Financial Stability – Frequently Asked Questions
Sovereign Wealth Funds – Frequently Asked Questions

New instructions for annual reporting of State aid online
Reporting of State aid expenditure for 2007 – Instructions

I. Draft legislation and public consultations

NEW The revised draft general block exemption of the Commission in the State aid area
bg cs da de et el en es fr it lv hu mt nl pl pt ro sk sl fi sv
Text of the 3rd version of the general block exemption in English indicating - in track changes - the differences with the second draft published by the Commission in September 2007.

**Deadline for comments: 28 March 2008**
Interested parties may submit their replies, indicating the consultation reference "HT.364", to the following address:
European Commission
Directorate-General for Competition
Rue de la Loi 200
B-1049 Brussels
E-mail: stateaidgreffe@ec.europa.eu

The Commission plans to make accessible the replies to this questionnaire on its website. Therefore, to the extent that respondents do not wish their identity or parts of the response to be divulged, this should be clearly indicated and a non-confidential version should be submitted at the same time. In the absence of any indication of confidential parts, the Commission will assume that the response contains no confidential elements and can be divulged in its entirety.

This draft will be discussed with Member States experts in an Advisory Committee scheduled in April 2008.

Second draft revised Commission Notice on the application of Articles 87 and 88 of the EC Treaty to State aid in the form of guarantees

**Deadline for comments: 28 March 2008**
Interested parties may submit their replies, indicating the consultation reference "HT.920", to the following address:
European Commission
Directorate-General for Competition
Rue de la Loi 200
B-1049 Brussels
E-mail: stateaidgreffe@ec.europa.eu

The Commission may publish the comments received on its website. Therefore, to the extent that respondents do not wish their identity or parts of the response to be divulged, this should be clearly indicated and a non-confidential version should be submitted at the same time. In the absence of any indication of confidential parts, the Commission will assume that the response contains no confidential elements and can be divulged in its entirety.

Review of the Framework on State aid to Shipbuilding – consultation paper

**Deadline for comments: 26 March 2008**
Interested parties may submit their replies, indicating the consultation reference "HT.617", to the following address:
European Commission
Directorate-General for Competition
Rue de la Loi 200
B-1049 Brussels
E-mail: stateaidgreffe@ec.europa.eu

The Commission plans to make accessible the replies to this questionnaire on its website. Therefore, to the extent that respondents do not wish their identity or parts of the response to be divulged, this should be clearly indicated and a non-confidential version should be submitted at the same time. In the absence of any indication of confidential parts, the Commission will assume that the response contains no confidential elements and can be divulged in its entirety.
Revision of the Communication from the Commission on the application of State aid rules to public service broadcasting - Questionnaire for public consultation

Deadline for comments: 10 March 2008

Interested parties may submit their replies to the questionnaire to the following address:
European Commission
Directorate-General for Competition
State aid Registry
HT 963
B-1049 Brussels
Fax (32-2) 296 12 42
E-mail: stateaidgreffe@ec.europa.eu

Please note that all comments/submissions will be made public on the Commission website. If therefore you consider that your submission contains confidential information please indicate so clearly in your submission. In the absence of any indication to the contrary the Commission will consider that submissions can be published as such.

Closed public consultations:  
- DG Competition
- DG Agriculture
- DG Transport and Energy
- DG Fisheries

II. New legislation

-none-

III. Decisions to open formal investigation

1. Decisions taken by the Commission

-none-

2. Decisions pending OJ publication

Click here to see the full list

3. Decisions published in the OJ from 06.02.2007 to 06.03.2008 – Formal comments period running

* Where the last day of the public comments period falls on a public holiday in a Member State, the deadline for comments of parties residing in that Member State ends on the following working day.

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<tr>
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<td>Public service contract between Deutsche Bahn Regio and the Länder of Berlin and Brandenburg</td>
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IV. Final Commission decisions

1. Decisions taken by the Commission

1.1. No objection decisions

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<th>Country</th>
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<td>France</td>
<td>Prolongation du régime cadre existant d’aides aux entreprises en faveur de la protection de l’environnement</td>
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<td>Environmental aid</td>
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<td>R&amp;D aid</td>
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<td>Damages on agricultural fields due to natural disasters (Niederösterreich)</td>
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<td>Hungary</td>
<td>Modernisation and development of agricultural holdings through preferential loans and leasing fee subsidy</td>
<td>N 129/2007</td>
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1.2. Decisions to close formal investigation

- none -

2. Public versions of decisions made available

2.1. No objection decisions
## DG Competition cases

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<td>Spain</td>
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<td>N 563/2007</td>
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<td>Spain</td>
<td>Regional investment scheme for the Asturias</td>
<td>N 337/2007</td>
<td>Regional development aid</td>
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<td>Restructuring aid to Vanyera3</td>
<td>N 323/2007</td>
<td>Restructuring aid</td>
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<td>Spain</td>
<td>R&amp;D Aid scheme for enterprises in Galicia</td>
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## DG Fisheries cases

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<td>Germany</td>
<td>CH-EG-Wettbewersbedingungen in der Landwirtschaft</td>
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## 2.2. Decisions to close formal investigation

-**none**-

## 3. Decisions published in the OJ

### 3.1. No objection decisions

* Decisions not to raise objections are frequently grouped together in one single document for publication in the Official Journal. Since the link can only be made to the top of the first page of the document, you may have to scroll down in the document to find a particular case.

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<tr>
<th>Country</th>
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Spain  Vanyera3 OJ C 59 of 04.03.2008, p. 3  bg es cs da de et el en fr it lv lt hu mt nl pl pt ro sk sl fi sv

Sweden  Scheme for reduced social security contributions in certain service sectors OJ C 59 of 04.03.2008, p. 3  bg es cs da de et el en fr it lv lt hu mt nl pl pt ro sk sl fi sv

DG Fisheries cases

Germany  Verlängerung der staatlichen Beihilfe N 539/2003 - Zuwendungen aus den Mitteln der Fischereiabgabe zur Förderung der Fischbestände, der Gewässer und der Fischerei OJ C 59 of 04.03.2008, p. 4  bg es cs da de et el en fr it lv lt hu mt nl pl pt ro sk sl fi sv

3.2. Decisions to close formal investigation

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V. Other types of decisions

-none-
VI. Block exemptions

Information sheets published in the OJ
* Block exemption information sheets are frequently grouped together in one single document for publication in the Official Journal. Since the link can only be made to the top of the first page of the document, you may have to scroll down in the document to find a particular case.

VII. European Court of Justice
* In order to consult the available languages of documents uploaded in the Curia website, please click on the earth symbol on the left side toolbar.

1. Court of First Instance

2. Court of Justice

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<td>Deutchland GmbH</td>
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VIII. European Economic Area
Based on the Agreement on the European Economic Area (EEA), the EFTA States participating in the EEA have entrusted the EFTA Surveillance Authority and the EFTA Court with similar decision making powers to that of the Commission and the European Court of Justice, respectively, in the field of state aid for the EFTA States.

1. Decisions of the EFTA Surveillance Authority

2. EFTA Court

3. State Aid New Legislation
EFTA Surveillance Authority Decision amending for the 54th time the procedural and substantive rules in the field of State Aid including proposal for appropriate measures (Introduction of a new
Chapter 30A, financing of airports and start up aid to airlines departing from regional airports in the State Aid Guidelines).
Decision 329/05/COL of 20.12.2005
OJ L 62 of 06.03.2008, p. 30

4. Other EEA points of interest

- none -

IX. Additional points of interest

Lisbon: a Strategy for all Seasons
José Manuel Durão Barroso, President of the European Commission
Lisbon Council Growth and Jobs Summit
Brussels, 4th March 2008
To read the full speech, click here

Events

Workshop: State Aid Procedures and Enforcement
The workshop aims to meet the needs of middle managers and senior officials from all levels of government and local authorities, officials from public enterprises, representatives of business and trade associations and lawyers and economists involved in state aid procedures. The seminar aims to give participants a comprehensive understanding of EC state aid procedures, as well as to familiarise them with respective national policies.
Maastricht, 10-11 April 2008 (Introductory Workshop on 09 April 2008)
For further information, click here

Studies and reports

February 2008: Business Climate Indicator for the euro area declines further in February
The Business Climate Indicator (BCI) for the euro area continued to decline in February. The indicator is still at a fairly high level, which suggests steady economic activity in the industry sector in the first months of this year, despite the deceleration in industrial production growth registered at the end of 2007.
Read more

February 2008: Economic sentiment weakens further in both the EU and the euro area
In February, the Economic Sentiment Indicator (ESI) decreased further in both the EU and the euro area. It fell by 3.1 points in the EU and by 1.6 points in the euro area, to 100.2 and 100.1 respectively. The indicator, which has been on a downward path since mid-2007, now stands at its long-term average in both areas.
Read more

January 2008: Euro area annual inflation up to 3.2%, EU up to 3.4%
Euro area annual inflation was 3.2% in January 2008, up from 3.1% in December 2007. A year earlier the rate was 1.8%. Monthly inflation was -0.4% in January 2008. EU annual inflation was 3.4% in January 2008, up from 3.2% in December 2007. A year earlier the rate was 2.1%. Monthly inflation was -0.2% in January 2008.
Read more
January 2008: Euro area unemployment stable at 7.1%, U27 unchanged at 6.8%

The euro area (EA15) seasonally-adjusted unemployment rate stood at 7.1% in January 2008, unchanged compared with December 2007\(^3\). It was 7.7% in January 2007. The EU27 unemployment rate was 6.8% in January 2008, the same as in December 2007\(^2\). It was 7.5% in January 2007. In January 2008, the lowest rates were registered in the Netherlands (2.9%) and Denmark (3.1% in December 2007), and the highest in Slovakia (10.4%).

Read more

First estimates for the fourth quarter of 2007: Euro area GDP up by 0.4% and EU27 up by 0.5%

Euro area (EA13) GDP grew by 0.4% and EU27 GDP by 0.5% in the fourth quarter of 2007, compared with the previous quarter, according to first estimates released by Eurostat, the Statistical Office of the European Communities. In the third quarter of 2007, growth rates were +0.7% in the euro area and +0.8% in the EU27. Compared with the fourth quarter of 2006, seasonally adjusted GDP rose by 2.2% in the euro area and by 2.6% in the EU27, after +2.6% and +2.9% respectively for the previous quarter.

Read more

Flash estimate – February 2008: Euro area inflation estimated at 3.2%

Euro area annual inflation is expected to be 3.2% in February 2008 according to a flash estimate issued by Eurostat, the Statistical Office of the European Communities. It was 3.2% in January.

Read more

Next publication date: Friday 14.03.2008

Previous issues

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About e-News:
This e-News is issued every week to present the latest developments in the area of State aid. It 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. A great deal of additional information on State aid matters is available on the Internet. It can be accessed through the Europa server: http://ec.europa.eu/competition/index_en.html
Other documents related to the cases, can be found under the link to the State aid Register: http://ec.europa.eu/competition/state_aid/register/

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