Highlights

Commission invites comments on draft provisions to simplify implementation of unproblematic state support for ports and airports

07.03.2016 - The European Commission is inviting the public and stakeholders to comment on draft provisions exempting certain investment aid for ports and airports from prior Commission scrutiny under EU state aid rules. This first public consultation on draft provisions to extend the 2014 General Block Exemption Regulation (GBER) is open until 30 May 2016. The Commission will take into account views and comments by stakeholders and prepare an updated draft, which will be subject to a second public consultation, currently planned for autumn this year, before deciding on the final Regulation

Read more

Judgment of the Court of Justice in Case C-431/14 P: Greece v Commission

The Court confirms the obligation on the Greek State to recover from Greek farmers unlawful State aid of €425 million paid as a result of adverse weather conditions

Read more (es de el en fr it pt)

Commission authorises support for Metsä Fibre bio-product pulp mill in Finland

10.03.2016 - The Commission has concluded that Finnish investment aid for the Metsä Fibre bio-product pulp mill in Äänekoski, Finland is compatible with EU state aid rules. The mill will manufacture softwood pulp for the paper industry, and also use by-products, largely left over from the pulping process, to generate and sell renewable electricity.

Read more

In this issue:

Public consultations on draft legislation >>
Commission Decisions >>
Block exemptions >>
Court of Justice of the European Union >>
European Economic Area >>
Additional points of interest >>

Public consultations on draft legislation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Consultation on the Notice on a Simplified Procedure for the Treatment of Certain Types of Aid</th>
<th>Deadline for comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The European Commission is consulting stakeholders on whether to repeal or revise the Simplified Procedure Notice. The Commission intends to carry out a review to reflect, on the one hand, the amendments brought to the State aid framework (in particular with regard to the General Block Exemption Regulation No 800/2008 and the Procedural Regulation No 1589/2015) and, on the other hand, to take account of the experience gained with the implementation of the Notice. The objective is to ensure coherence and consistency in the application of the various instruments of the State Aid framework and to draw conclusions on the implementation and effectiveness of the Notice (read more)</td>
<td>From 06.01.2016 until 06.04.2016</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Targeted review of the General Block Exemption Regulation (State aid): extension to ports and airports

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Targeted review of the General Block Exemption Regulation (State aid): extension to ports and airports</th>
<th>Deadline for comments</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In recital 1 of the GBER (Regulation 651/2014), it is announced that the Commission envisages including ports and airports in the GBER, which have so far not been included, as soon as sufficient case experience has been collected. This initiative aims to simplify the application of State aid rules, thus reducing administrative burden and costs and speeding up the implementation of projects. By including aid measures for ports and airports into the GBER, Member States will no longer have to</td>
<td>From 07.03.2016 until 30.05.2016</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
notify the measures to the Commission and wait for the approval of the Commission before they can start implementation. (read more)

All public consultations: DG Competition / DG Agriculture / DG Maritime Affairs and Fisheries

## Commission Decisions

List of Commission Decisions taken during the reporting period, regardless of their publication in the Official Journal. The list of Commission Decisions recently published in the Official Journal is available here.

### Decision not to raise objections

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Case Number</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Decision date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DG Competition</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>SA.42382</td>
<td>Individual aid, Metsä Fibre Oy</td>
<td>Environmental protection</td>
<td>10/03/2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DG Agriculture</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>SA.42886</td>
<td>Guidelines of the Land Niederösterreich for support of projects relating to nature protection under the Austrian rural development programme 2014-2020</td>
<td>Aid for basic services and village renewal in rural areas</td>
<td>08/03/2016</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### GBER – approval of the evaluation plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Case Number</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Decision date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DG Competition</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>SA.43142</td>
<td>Evaluation plan for &quot;Regional investment aid scheme for the competitiveness of SMEs under the regional programme 2014-2020&quot;</td>
<td>10/03/2016</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Links to the some cases are not yet available. Please refer to the Register webpage and make a manual search in the days immediately after the publication date of this issue to access the information on the specific cases. The editorial team apologises for any inconvenient this might cause.

## Block exemptions

Block Exemptions information sheets published in the State Aid register during the reporting period.

## Court of Justice of the European Union

List of cases discussed during the reporting period, as published in the judicial calendar of the Court. The respective case documents are normally published on the Court website within a short interval.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Court Case</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Type of act</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>C-431/14 P</td>
<td>Greece v Commission</td>
<td>Judgement</td>
<td>08/03/2016</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

List of cases planned for the week following the reporting period, as published in the judicial calendar of the Court.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Court Case</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Type of act</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Slovak Republic</td>
<td>T-103/14</td>
<td>Frucona Košice v Commission</td>
<td>Judgement</td>
<td>16/03/2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>C-493/14</td>
<td>Dilly’s Wellnesshotel</td>
<td>Opinion</td>
<td>17/03/2016</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
European Economic Area

Based on the Agreement of 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.

Block exemptions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Title/link to documents</th>
<th>Case number</th>
<th>Objective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>Aid scheme for Innovation Clusters in Østfold (Art. 27)</td>
<td>78794</td>
<td>R&amp;D&amp;I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>Recycling scheme for Norwegian registered short sea vessels (Art. 36)</td>
<td>78798</td>
<td>Environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>Activity Tourism Scheme for the County of Buskerud (Arts. 18, 19, 25, 27, 29, 36, 53 &amp; 55)</td>
<td>78818</td>
<td>MULTI</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Addtional points of interest

Events

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Place</th>
<th>Organiser</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| State Aid for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry  
Read more | 14-15 March | Brussels | Lexxion |
| EU Funding and State Aid for Energy  
Read more | 17-18 March | Berlin | Lexxion |
| ESTAL Seminar 2016: State Aid and Services of General Economic Interest (SGEI)  
Read more | 31 March – 2 April | Milan | Lexxion |
| State Aid & SGEI in Health care, Social services and Infrastructures  
Read more | 21-22 April | Berlin | European Academy for Taxes, Economics & Law |
| State Aid Proceedings and Litigation  
Read more | 19-20 May | Brussels | ERA |
| State Aid in the Transport Sector (advanced)  
Read more | 30-31 May | Barcelona | EIPA |
| State Aid Procedures and Enforcement  
Read more | 2 June | Luxembourg | EIPA |
| 6th European Summer Academy State Aid 2016  
Read more | June | Berlin | European Academy for Taxes, Economics & Law |

Invitations to tender - prior information notice

State aid assessment of impaired assets: valuation and resolution mechanisms (Prior information notice)

Several Member States supported some banks by providing relief for impaired assets. The Commission released in 2009 a communication paper on the "Treatment of impaired assets in the Community banking sector". It assumes that the design of asset relief measures is primarily the responsibility of the Member State concerned, but their assessment under the State aid rules is the Commission's responsibility. For the assessment of valuation methods put forward by Member States for asset relief measures and their implementation in individual cases, the Commission could consult panels of valuation experts.

The Commission may also consult experts on the way to resolve problematic assets and associated liabilities envisaged by a Member State. Experts may be consulted on specific or general issues related to the compliance of the envisaged...
resolution mechanism with the conditions for finding aid compatible. These assessments will be done in the new SRM and BRDD’s legislative context.

Contracts - Ex-ante publicity

Analysis of the impact of State aid on competition in selected State aid cases

The purpose of the analysis is to evaluate the impact on the market of a selected number of State Aid cases where the Commission authorized the granting of aid to individual companies, focusing exclusively on the aid’s impact on competition in the affected markets. The contractor will have to select 4 State aid cases in markets with which he is familiar for having advised clients in a merger or antitrust case, and to apply the standard antitrust economic analysis to these State aid cases in order to assess the impact of the aid on competition. The contractor will be required to prove extensive knowledge and experience in competition cases. Knowledge of State aid is a plus, but not a must.

Third adjustment of base rates in 2016 to apply as from the first of April 2016

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. Other documents related to the cases, can be found under the link to the State aid Register.

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