Highlights

Commission adopts new rules for State Aids in Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Areas
The European Commission has today set out revised and updated criteria under which Member States can support agriculture, forestry and rural areas, in line with EU state aid rules. This is part of the Commission's State Aid Modernisation (SAM) initiative, aimed at fostering growth and competitiveness in the EU, and goes hand in hand with the Common Agricultural Policy, more particularly with the new rural development policy of the EU. In more precise terms, the Commission has adopted a new Agricultural Block Exemption Regulation (ABER) and new Guidelines for State aid in the agricultural and forestry sectors and in rural areas 2014 to 2020 (GL). ABER allows the granting of certain categories of State aid to the agricultural and forestry sectors and in rural areas without prior notification to the Commission. The GL aim at setting the general criteria which will be used by the Commission when assessing the compliance of aid with the internal market. These new rules will apply from July 1, 2014. These new ABER and Guidelines were developed following wide consultation with the public and stakeholders (see IP/14/185).
Read more

Commission opens in-depth investigation into compensation to operator of Polish A2 motorway
The European Commission has opened an in-depth investigation to verify whether compensation paid by the Polish state to Autostrada Wielkopolska S.A. (AWSA), the operator of part of the Polish A2 motorway, was in line with EU state aid rules. The measure was intended to compensate AWSA for a change in Polish law exempting heavy goods vehicles from the obligation to pay motorway tolls. At this stage, the Commission has serious concerns that the compensation, or part of it, may have provided AWSA with an undue economic advantage that may distort competition in the Single Market. The opening of the investigation gives interested parties an opportunity to submit their views; it does not prejudge the outcome.
Read more

Commission authorises prolongation of Greek liquidity support measures for credit institutions
The European Commission has found that the extension of public liquidity support measures for Greek credit institutions until 31 December 2014 was in line with EU state aid rules. These measures include a regime of state guarantees on debt instruments issued by banks and a system of lending of government bonds. Both aim to boost banks’ access to liquidity.
Read more

Commission approves €400 million aid to STMicroelectronics for the Nano2017 research programme
The European Commission has decided that aid by France to STMicroelectronics (ST) for the development of new technologies in the nanoelectronics sector is in line with EU rules on state aid. It believes the project will help to achieve EU targets in the field of science and the environment without unduly distorting competition.
Read more

Commission approves aid for information technology projects in Lithuania
The European Commission has found that a Lithuanian scheme aimed at boosting the information technology (ICT) sector in Lithuania is in line with EU state aid rules. In particular, the Commission has concluded that the measure contributes to EU cohesion policy objectives by furthering the development of Lithuania’s less advantaged regions without unduly distorting competition in the Single Market.
Read more

Commission approves regional aid map 2014-2020 for Bulgaria
The European Commission has approved Bulgaria’s map for granting state aid between 2014 and 2020 within the framework of the new regional aid guidelines adopted by the Commission in June 2013 (see IP/13/569). The new guidelines set out the conditions under which Member States can grant state aid to businesses for regional development purposes. They aim to foster growth and greater cohesion in the Single Market.
Read more

In this issue:
- New legislation >>
- Decisions to open formal investigation >>
- Final Commission decisions >>
- Other types of decisions >>
- Block exemptions >>
- Court of Justice of the European Union >>
- European Economic Area >>
- Additional points of interest >>
Commission approves fourth prolongation of Cypriot bank guarantee scheme
The European Commission has found that the prolongation of a Cypriot government guarantee scheme for credit institutions until 31 December 2014 was in line with EU state aid rules. The original scheme was approved in November 2012 (see IP/12/1171). It was prolonged several times, the last time in December 2013 (see MEX/13/1812). The prolonged measure is targeted, proportionate and limited in time and scope.
Midday Express – 25 June 2014

Commission approves Czech support for regional public bus services in Usti
The European Commission has found that certain public service contracts for the delivery of regional bus services in the Czech Republic were in line with EU state aid rules. Following a complaint, submitted by a former competitor who was previously the incumbent operator of those services, against ten regional bus operators in the Czech Republic, operating under three different sets of public service contracts, the Commission had opened an in-depth investigation regarding three measures: i) total compensations for the public service contracts for all operators amounting to around €15 million, ii) two guarantees covering loans of CZK 35 million (€1.4 million) and CZK 5 million (€ 0.2 million) given by the municipality of Usti nad Labem to one of the regional bus operator (DP Usti), and iii) a capital increase of CZK 160 million (€ 6.4 million) granted to DP Usti (see IP/08/585).
Midday Express – 25 June 2014

Commission closes investigation of Polish steel maker Buczek
The European Commission has closed today an investigation into state aid granted by Poland to Buczek Automotive sp. z o.o. because it has become without object after the company was declared bankrupt in 2012.
Midday Express – 26 June 2014

New legislation

Communication from the Commission - Framework for State aid for research and development and innovation
OJ C 198 of 27.06.2014, p. 1

Communication from the Commission amending the Communications from the Commission on EU Guidelines for the application of State aid rules in relation to the rapid deployment of broadband networks, on Guidelines on regional State aid for 2014-2020, on State aid for films and other audiovisual works, on Guidelines on State aid to promote risk finance investments and on Guidelines on State aid to airports and airlines
OJ C 198 of 27.06.2014, p. 30

Commission Regulation (EU) No 651/2014 of 17 June 2014 declaring certain categories of aid compatible with the internal market in application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty
OJ L 187 of 26.06.2014, p. 1

Commission adopts new rules for State Aids in Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Areas
The European Commission has today set out revised and updated criteria under which Member States can support agriculture, forestry and rural areas, in line with EU state aid rules. This is part of the Commission’s State Aid Modernisation (SAM) initiative, aimed at fostering growth and competitiveness in the EU, and goes hand in hand with the Common Agricultural Policy, more particularly with the new rural development policy of the EU. These new rules will apply from 1 July 2014.
Press release
Agricultural Block Exemption Regulation (ABER) and its annex Guidelines for State aid in the agricultural and forestry sectors and in rural areas 2014 to 2020 (GL)
The document above is published for information purposes only and without any prejudice to the official text as will be published in the Official Journal

Decisions to open formal investigation

1. Decisions taken by the Commission

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<td>Shadow toll compensation to Autostrada Wielkopolska (AW S.A.) - A2 motorway.</td>
<td>SA.35356</td>
<td>Sectoral development aid</td>
<td>25.06.2014</td>
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Press release

2. Decisions pending OJ publication
Click here to see the full list

3. Decisions published in the OJ from 26.05.2014 to 26.06.2014 – 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.
### Final Commission decisions

#### 1. Decisions taken by the Commission

##### 1.1. Decisions to close formal investigation

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<td>Czech Republic</td>
<td>Complaint against the domestic road transport public services in the Usti Region</td>
<td>C 17/2008 (ex NN 1/2006)</td>
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<td>Croatia</td>
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<td>Cyprus</td>
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<td>Finland</td>
<td>Prolongation of innovation aid scheme for the Finnish shipbuilding industry</td>
<td>SA.38798</td>
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<td>Germany</td>
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<td>Greece</td>
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<td>SA.38048</td>
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<td>Greece</td>
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<td>SA.36871</td>
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<td>SA.38425</td>
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<td>Dutch innovation aid scheme for shipbuilding</td>
<td>SA.38742</td>
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<td>Slovenia</td>
<td>Rescue aid for Poizela d.d.</td>
<td>SA.38631</td>
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<td>Spain</td>
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<td>Sweden</td>
<td>The Swedish Energy taxation regarding biofuels for blending – prolongation</td>
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<td>Sweden</td>
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<td>SA.38420</td>
<td>Environmental aid</td>
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</table>
### United Kingdom
- **Modifications to the National Employment Savings Trust - NEST - UK**
- **Case number**: [SA.36410](#)
- **Objective**: Services of general economic interest
- **Decision date**: 25.06.2014

### DG Agriculture cases
- **Denmark**
  - Production and pro mille levy funds in agriculture
  - **Case number**: [SA.38773](#)
  - **Objective**: Animal diseases
  - **Decision date**: 25.06.2014

- **Netherlands**
  - Flexible depreciation of environmental investments (VAMIL) / sustainable stables and sustainable greenhouses
  - **Case number**: [SA.38672](#)
  - **Objective**: Environmental aid
  - **Decision date**: 23.06.2014

- **Netherlands**
  - Reduced energy tax rates on natural gas for greenhouse horticulture in 2015 – 2024
  - **Case number**: [SA.37628](#)
  - **Objective**: Environmental aid
  - **Decision date**: 25.06.2014

- **Italy**
  - Methodology of ISMEA to calculate the aid element of guarantees
  - **Case number**: [SA.38793](#)
  - **Objective**: Investment in agricultural holdings
  - **Decision date**: 20.06.2014

- **Italy**
  - Scheme of industry wide and district contracts
  - **Case number**: [SA.38790](#)
  - **Objective**: Sectoral development aid
  - **Decision date**: 20.06.2014

- **Italy**
  - ISA Spa aid scheme
  - **Case number**: [SA.38789](#)
  - **Objective**: Investment in processing and marketing
  - **Decision date**: 20.06.2014

### 2. Public versions of decisions to close formal investigation*

*Since the OJ publication of no objection/no aid decisions follows very shortly their publication on the website, this section of the e-News focuses only on decisions to close formal investigations. For the latest texts of no objection/no aid decisions please look section 3 “Decisions published in the OJ”.

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<td>Belgium</td>
<td>Financing of the Radio-Télévision belge de la Communauté française (RTBF) <a href="#">Press release</a></td>
<td><a href="#">SA.32635</a></td>
<td>Services of general economic interest</td>
<td>07.05.2014</td>
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### 3. Decisions published in the OJ

#### 3.1. Decisions to close formal investigation

- **none** -

#### 3.2. 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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<td>Austria</td>
<td>Prolongation of the approved scheme Financial aid for start-ups (N59c/2007) <a href="#">OJ C 190 of 20.06.2014, p. 5</a></td>
<td><a href="#">SA.38118</a></td>
<td>Regional development aid</td>
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<td>Germany</td>
<td>Exemption from property transfer tax for re-organisation of public bodies <a href="#">OJ C 190 of 20.06.2014, p. 5</a></td>
<td><a href="#">SA.38405</a></td>
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<td>Poland</td>
<td>Technologie Buczek &lt;br&gt;Closure decision (the investigation has become devoid of purpose) &lt;br&gt;Midday Express – 26 June 2014</td>
<td>SA.20949 &lt;br&gt;(ex C 23/2006, NN 35/2006)</td>
<td>Restructuring aid</td>
<td>25.06.2014</td>
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Block exemptions

Block exemption Information sheets published in the OJ and/or in the State Aid register between 20.06.2014 and 26.06.2014

Court of Justice of the European Union

* 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 Justice

- none -

2. General Court

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<td>France</td>
<td>Action</td>
<td>03.08.2009</td>
<td>N 561/2008 - Financement propre des organisations interprofessionnelles</td>
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<td>OJ C 194 of 24.06.2014, p. 24</td>
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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

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<td>Norway</td>
<td>Potential aid to the Nasjonal digital lærlingsarena (NDLA) &lt;br&gt;Decision 244/14/COL &lt;br&gt;Press release</td>
<td>73132</td>
<td>No aid</td>
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Public versions of decisions made available
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<td><a href="#">OJ C 196 of 26.06.2014, p. 5</a></td>
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2. **EFTA Court**

- none -

3. **Block exemptions**

- none -

4. **State Aid New Legislation**

- none -

5. **Other EEA points of interest**

- none -

### Additional points of interest

**Events**

- State Aid Seminar for Regional and Local Authorities
  - EIPA
  - Maastricht, 30 June - 1 July 2014
  - [For further information, click here](#)

- Advanced State Aid Seminar
  - EIPA
  - Maastricht, 29 - 30 September 2014
  - [For further information, click here](#)

- European Conference: State Aid Control, Procedures State Aid Modernisation, ESI Funds in Compliance with State Aid
  - Lexxion
  - End of September 2014, Sofia, Bulgaria
  - [For further information, click here](#)

**Studies and reports**

- none -

**Invitations to tender**

- Call for proposals 2014: Training of national judges in EU Competition Law and judicial co-operation
  - The deadline for submission of applications is: 29/08/2014
  - [Read more](#)

**Council of the European Union**

- Council closes excessive deficit procedures for Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Netherlands, Austria and Slovakia
  - The Council today closed excessive deficit procedures for Belgium, the Czech Republic, Denmark, the Netherlands, Austria and Slovakia, confirming that these countries have reduced their deficits below 3% of GDP, the EU’s reference value for government deficits.
  - [Read more](#)
Eurozone countries in favour of Lithuania euro accession

The euro area member states today adopted a recommendation approving Lithuania's adoption of the euro, which would make it the 19th member of the currency union on 1 January 2015.

Read more