
EU Commission: simplification of State aid rules adopted

“An extension of the scope of the General Block Exemption Regulation (GBER)” enters into force today. The measure, adopted by the European Commission, will “allow Member States to implement certain aid measures without prior Commission scrutiny”, a statement from Brussels reads. In other words, both aid granted by national authorities for projects funded via certain EU centrally managed programmes under the new Multiannual Financial Framework and certain State aid measures, that support the green and digital transition and are relevant for the economic recovery of States, will be exempted from the so-called “prior notification”. According to the Commission, this is “a major simplification, which facilitates a quick implementation of such measures by Member States, where conditions limiting the distortion of competition in the Single Market are met”. It will therefore be “easier for Member States to quickly provide much needed funding in support of a sustainable and resilient recovery from the economic effects of the coronavirus pandemic”, said Commissioner Margrethe Vestager, in charge of competition policy. State aid may therefore be granted to finance projects or financial products which fall under the scope of certain programmes such as InvestEU; Horizon 2020 or Horizon Europe; and Interreg. In particular, this applies to aid for energy efficiency projects in buildings; aid for recharging and refuelling infrastructure for low emission road vehicles; and aid for fixed broadband networks, 4G and 5G mobile networks, or for trans-European digital connectivity infrastructure projects.

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