

State aid: Commission adopts Best Practices Code to streamline and speed up State aid control

Commissioner Margrethe **Vestager**, in charge of competition policy, said: *“The new Best Practices Code for State aid control will benefit Member States, businesses and stakeholders by increasing the efficiency and speed of State aid control, in particular by ensuring earlier and better cooperation between Member States and the Commission.”*

Over recent years, the Commission has implemented a major reform package, [State Aid Modernisation](#). The reform allows Member States to quickly implement State aid that fosters investment, economic growth and job creation, leaving the Commission to focus its State aid control on cases most likely to distort competition in the Single Market.

These efforts to focus and modernise EU State aid rules and improve the Commission’s working methods are continuing – in the context of the Multiannual Financial Framework 2021-2027, the Commission has proposed to simplify co-investment involving both EU funding and Member State investment, through a revision of the EU State aid Enabling Regulation. This complements the State aid modernisation reform, which has already made sure that 97% of State aid can be implemented without any involvement of the Commission.

To make the most of these modernised State aid rules, the Best Practices Code for State aid control gives guidance on how the Commission, Member States and other stakeholders work together in State aid procedures. This covers, for example, how to ensure that complex State aid cases are handled most effectively, how complaints about State aid are followed up, and monitoring of how Member States implement State aid measures in practice.

The Best Practices Code explains how State aid procedures are carried out, and sets out the steps the Commission is taking to increase the speed, transparency and predictability of these procedures. In particular, it includes guidance on:

- how the Commission will be in contact Member States authorities and provide guidance before State aid measures are formally notified;
- how Member States authorities can implement measures which are unlikely to distort competition, without formally notifying the Commission;
- how the Commission and the Member States will work together to facilitate the handling of State aid cases by allowing Member States to indicate the cases that are of high priority for them;

- how the Commission maintains a network of country coordinators for day-to-day contacts with each Member State to provide immediate support in dealing with any issues;
- how the Commission works with Member States, including by agreeing how to process novel, complex or urgent cases, such as TEN-T network projects supporting the construction and upgrade of transport infrastructure.
- how the Commission can obtain relevant information directly from relevant public authorities or companies by using market information tools;
- how the Commission works with Member States on evaluation and monitoring of State aid measures;
- how complaints about State aid are handled by the Commission following changes in the State aid Procedural Regulation.

The Code has been discussed extensively with Member States and stakeholders.

The text of the Best Practices Code for State aid control is available on the Commission's [website](#).

[Large prostitution ring dismantled](#)

16 July 2018

On 3 July, a joint action day in France, Bulgaria and Germany resulted in searches of more than 20 locations and the arrest of 10 pimps.

The pimps had been operating since 2015, promising young Bulgarian women legal employment in France. The women were transported first to Germany and then to Strasbourg and Annecy, where they were forced into prostitution. The women were compelled to give their earnings to the pimps, who kept the women under close watch.

Eurojust held two coordination meetings, which led to the signing of a joint investigation team (JIT) agreement between France and Bulgaria. Eurojust also provided funding for the JIT.

The joint action day was carried out by authorities from JIRS Nancy, the Bulgarian Prosecutor General and the Prosecutor's Office of Oryahovo. The

pimps were arrested in France, Bulgaria and Germany, charged with pimping, trafficking in human beings, organised crime and money laundering.

At the time of the arrests, several prostitutes were put in contact with support groups and organisations to help them return safely to their country.

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