

## **State aid: Commission welcomes Council adoption of revised state aid rules on block exemptions and procedures**

The EU's Council of Ministers has formally adopted two European Commission proposals for revised regulations on state aid exemptions (Enabling Regulation) and procedures (Procedural Regulation). The new rules will contribute to the Commission's State Aid Modernisation (SAM) initiative.

The main new elements are:

### **Enabling Regulation**

The regulation introduces new categories of aid that the Commission may decide to exempt from the obligation of prior notification ("block exemptions"). This will reduce red tape and allow the Commission to focus on the most important cases. New categories include aid for **innovation, culture, natural disasters, sport**, certain **broadband** infrastructure, other **infrastructure**, social aid for **transport** to remote regions and aid for certain **agriculture, forestry and fisheries** issues.

### **Procedural Regulation**

The reform improves the handling of complaints, leading to a swifter, more predictable and more transparent investigation of complaints. It ensures that the Commission is provided from the start with all the information necessary to investigate complaints, and clarifies the requirements to lodge them. New tools for gathering information directly from market participants and for conducting sector inquiries will allow the Commission to obtain all necessary information to adopt well-reasoned decisions. This is expected to significantly reduce the duration of the investigation in complex cases. The codification of the cooperation with national courts will ensure a coherent application of state aid rules across Member States. Together, these elements will improve the efficiency and effectiveness of state aid control.