European Commission - Press release

State aid: Commission approves 2022-2027 regional aid map for Greece

Brussels, 6 January 2022

The European Commission has approved under EU State aid rules Greece's map for granting regional aid from 1 January 2022 to 31 December 2027 within the framework of the revised Regional aid Guidelines (‘RAG').

The revised RAG, adopted by the Commission on 19 April 2021 and entering into force on 1 January 2022, enable Member States to support the least favoured European regions in catching up and to reduce disparities in terms of economic well-being, income and unemployment – cohesion objectives that are at the heart of the Union. They also provide increased possibilities for Member States to support regions facing transition or structural challenges such as depopulation, to contribute fully to the green and digital transitions.

At the same time, the revised RAG maintain strong safeguards to prevent Member States from using public money to trigger the relocation of jobs from one EU Member State to another, which is essential for fair competition in the Single Market.

Greece's regional map defines the Greek regions eligible for regional investment aid. The map also establishes the maximum aid intensities in the eligible regions. The aid intensity is the maximum amount of State aid that can be granted per beneficiary, expressed as a percentage of eligible investment costs.

Under the revised RAG, regions covering 82.34% of the population of Greece will be eligible for regional investment aid:

- Twelve regions (Βόρειο Αιγαίο / Voreio Aigaio, Νότιο Αιγαίο / Notio Aigaio, Κρήτη / Kriti, Ανατολική Μακεδονία, Θράκη / Anatoliki Makedonia, Thraki, Κεντρική Μακεδονία / Kentriki Makedonia, Δυτική Μακεδονία / Dytiki Makedonia, Ήπειρος / Ipeiros, Θεσσαλία / Thessalia, Ιόνια Νησιά / Ionia Nisia, Δυτική Ελλάδα / Dytiki Elláda, Στερεά Ελλάδα / Sterea Elláda and Πελοπόννησος / Peloponnisos) are among the most disadvantaged regions in the EU, with a GDP per capita below 75% of EU average. These regions are eligible for aid under Article 107(3)(a) TFEU (so-called ‘a' areas), with maximum aid intensities for large enterprises between 30% and 50%, depending on the GDP per capita of the respective ‘a' area. The region Ευρυτανία / Evrytania, which is part of Στερεά Ελλάδα / Sterea Elláda, also qualifies as a sparsely populated area having fewer than 12,5 inhabitants per km². In sparsely populated areas, Member States can use operating aid schemes to prevent or reduce depopulation.
- In order to address regional disparities, Greece has designated as so-called non-predefined ‘c' areas the regions of Δυτικός Τομέας Αθηνών / Dytikos Tomeas Athinon, Ανατολική Αττική / Anatoliki Attiki, Δυτική Αττική / Dytiki Attiki and Πειραιάς, Νήσοι / Peiraias, Nisoi. The maximum aid intensities for large enterprises in Δυτικός Τομέας Αθηνών / Dytikos Tomeas Athinon is 15%. The other ‘c' areas mentioned above border with ‘a' areas. For this reason, the aid intensity in these regions has been increased to 25%, so that the difference in aid intensity with the bordering ‘a' areas is limited to 15 percentage points.
- Greece has the possibility to designate further so-called non-predefined ‘c' areas (up to a maximum of 1.16% of the national population). The specific designation of these areas can take place in the future and would result in one or more amendments to the regional aid map approved today.

In all the above areas, the maximum aid intensities can be increased by 10 percentage points for investments made by medium-sized enterprises and by 20 percentage points for investments made by small enterprises, for their initial investments with eligible costs up to €50 million.

Once a future territorial Just Transition plan in the context of the Just Transition Fund Regulation will be in place, Greece has the possibility to notify the Commission an amendment to the regional aid map approved today, in order to apply a potential increase of the maximum aid intensity in the future Just Transition areas, as specified in the revised RAG for ‘a' areas.

Background

Europe has always been characterised by significant regional disparities in terms of economic well-being, income and unemployment. Regional aid aims to support economic development in disadvantaged areas of Europe, while ensuring a level playing field between Member States.

In the RAG, the Commission sets out the conditions under which regional aid may be considered to be compatible with the internal market and establishes the criteria for identifying the areas that fulfil the conditions of Article 107(3)(a) and (c) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union ('a' and 'c' areas respectively). Annexes to the Guidelines identify the most disadvantaged regions, so-called 'a' areas, which include the outermost regions and regions whose GDP per capita is below or equal to 75% of the EU average, and the pre-defined 'c' areas, representing former 'a' areas and sparsely populated areas.

Member States can designate the so-called non-predefined 'c' areas, up to a maximum pre-defined 'c' coverage (for which figures are also available in Annexes I and II to the Guidelines) and in line with certain criteria. Member States need to notify their proposal for regional aid maps to the Commission for approval.

The non-confidential version of today's decision will be made available under the case number SA.100372 (in the State Aid Register) on the DG Competition website. New publications of state aid decisions on the internet and in the Official Journal are listed in the Competition Weekly e-News.

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