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State aid: Commission authorises Portuguese scheme for aid of up to €500 000

The European Commission has, under the state aid rules of the EC Treaty, authorised the first in a series of aid measures for businesses planned by Portugal to deal with the current economic crisis. This measure will enable aid of up to €500 000 to be granted in 2009 and 2010 to businesses in difficulty as a consequence of the current economy crisis or facing funding problems because of the credit crunch. The scheme meets the conditions imposed by the Commission's temporary framework giving Member States additional possibilities for providing businesses with improved access to financing during the economic and financial crisis (see [IP/08/1993](#)). It is therefore compatible with Article 87(3)(b) of the EC Treaty, which permits aid intended to remedy a serious disturbance in the economy of a Member State.

Competition Commissioner Neelie Kroes said: "This measure will help alleviate the difficulties faced by Portuguese businesses affected by the current situation without giving rise to any undue distortions of competition. Thanks to the excellent cooperation of the Portuguese authorities, it was possible to approve the measure very quickly."

The scheme is based on the provisions of the temporary framework that deal with compatible aid of a limited amount. In particular, the maximum amount of aid does not exceed €500 000 per company and the scheme applies only to businesses which were not in difficulty on 1 July 2008.

This scheme is the first measure authorised for Portugal under the new temporary framework for state aid adopted in principle by the Commission on 17 December 2008. Portugal is the third country, after Germany (see [IP/08/2063](#)) and France (see [IP/09/72](#)), to avail itself of this new temporary framework.

The decision will be made available under case number N 13/2009 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 [State aid Weekly e-News](#).