

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Brussels, 7.8.2020 C(2020) 5552 final

SENSITIVE^{*}: COMP Operations

Subject:State Aid SA.58018 (2020/N) - CzechiaCOVID-19: Support for Health Spas

Excellency,

1. **PROCEDURE**

- (1) By electronic notification of 24 July 2020, Czechia notified the aid scheme "COVID-spa" to support the spa tourism industry ("the measure") under the Temporary Framework for State aid measures to support the economy in the current COVID-19 outbreak, as amended ("the Temporary Framework")¹.
- (2) Czechia exceptionally agrees to waive its rights deriving from Article 342 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union ("TFEU"), in conjunction with Article 3 of Regulation 1/1958² and to have this Decision adopted and notified in English.

² Regulation No 1 determining the languages to be used by the European Economic Community, OJ 17, 6.10.1958, p. 385.

Tomáš PETŘÍČEK Ministr zahraničních věcí Ministerstvo zahraničních věcí České republiky Loretánské náměstí 5 118 00 Praha 1 Česká Republika

^{*} Handling instructions for SENSITIVE information are given at <u>https://europa.eu/!db43PX</u>

¹ Communication from the Commission - Temporary framework for State aid measures to support the economy in the current COVID-19 outbreak, OJ C 91I, 20.3.2020, p. 1, as amended by Communication from the Commission C(2020) 2215 final of 3 April 2020 on the Amendment of the Temporary Framework for State aid measures to support the economy in the current COVID-19 outbreak, OJ C 112I, 4.4.2020, p. 1,by Communication from the Commission C(2020) 3156 final of 8 May 2020 on the Amendment of the Temporary Framework for State aid measures to support the economy in the current COVID-19 outbreak, OJ C 164, 13.5.2020, p. 3 and by Communication from the Commission C(2020) 4509 final of 29 June 2020 on the Third Amendment of the Temporary Framework for State aid measures to support the economy in the current COVID-19 outbreak, OJ C 164, 13.5.2020, p. 3 and by Communication from the Commission C(2020) 4509 final of 29 June 2020 on the Third Amendment of the Temporary Framework for State aid measures to support the economy in the current COVID-19 outbreak, OJ C 218, 2.7.2020, p. 3.

2. **DESCRIPTION OF THE MEASURE**

- (3) Czechia considers that the COVID-19 outbreak has started to affect the real economy. The measure forms part of an overall package of measures and aims to ensure that sufficient liquidity remains available in the market, to counter the liquidity shortage faced by undertakings because of the outbreak, to ensure that the disruptions caused by the outbreak do not undermine the viability of the undertakings and thereby to preserve the continuity of economic activity during and after the outbreak.
- (4) In particular, the objective of the measure is to support the demand for the services provided by facilities with a special permission to provide spa³ medical procedures and curative rehabilitation treatments. According to the Czech authorities, this will be achieved through State financing of direct "grants" compensating discounts granted to EU/EEA consumers on curative, preventive stays and treatments in such facilities.
- (5) According to the Czech authorities, the COVID-19 outbreak has had a severe impact on the turnover of these facilities. On 12 March 2020, Czechia declared the state of emergency due to the COVID-19 outbreak. As of 16 March 2020, a restriction of free movement was enforced. As of 19 March 2020, the provision of accommodation services⁴ and all spa medical procedures and curative rehabilitation treatments in these facilities were prohibited. Therefore, the number of visitors of these facilities has significantly decreased due to the COVID-19 outbreak. The Czech authorities submit that more than 40% of these facilities' clients are consumers from EU or third countries and approximately 60% of clients are individuals residing in Czechia ⁵. A drop of interest for bookings of these services has also been noted by the Czech authorities and was attributed to objective obstacles (e.g., closed borders, stringent hygienic measures and reduced income of prospective clients).
- (6) The Czech authorities submit that facilities with a special permission to provide spa medical procedures and curative rehabilitation treatments are present in almost every region of Czechia and constitute an important source of employment in the country. The Czech authorities further submit that the current drop in demand for services provided by these facilities is not only having a negative impact on their overall cost of operation but may also lead to dismissals of highly specialised personnel. Loss of employment caused by reduced demand for the services of these facilities due to COVID-19 may lead to intensification of problems in the regions where the facilities are located. In addition, any possible cease of operations or reduction of activity of these facilities will negatively impact local residents as well as foreign visitors also because of the reduced offering of cultural services in these regions.

³ A spa is defined as an area or part of an area of a municipality or several municipalities where natural mineral springs are located, pursuant to the Czech law on the spa industry.

⁴ The prohibition did not apply to the provision of accommodation services to individuals who were (i) in quarantine based on orders by public health authorities, (ii) at risk of domestic violence, (iii) residing in the facilities for business purposes, (iv) foreigners awaiting departure from Czechia, (v) foreigners with special permits enabling them to work in Czechia.

⁵ 30% of them are covered by the Czech public health insurance scheme and 30% of them are not.

- (7) The Czech authorities confirmed that the aid under the measure is not conditioned on the relocation of a production activity or of another activity of the beneficiary from another country within the EEA to the territory of the Member State granting the aid. This is irrespective of the number of job losses actually occurred in the initial establishment of the beneficiary in the EEA.
- (8) The compatibility assessment of the measure is based on Article 107(3)(b) TFEU, in light of sections 2 and 3.1 of the Temporary Framework.

2.1. The nature and form of aid

- (9) The measure directly compensates the beneficiaries for discounts made available to EU/EEA consumers on curative, preventive stays and treatments in facilities with a special permission to provide spa medical procedures and curative rehabilitation treatments in Czechia. The Czech authorities submit that the grants are not meant for investment purposes and their only purpose is to compensate the above-mentioned discounts.
- (10) All consumers of at least 18 years old spending minimum six nights in the spa and undergoing at least five spa medical rehabilitation treatments during their stay in the spa may benefit from a discount of CZK 4000 (approx. EUR 149)⁶. The discounts are available to all consumers from the EU/EEA. The stays may take place until 31 December 2020.

2.2. Legal basis

- (11) The legal bases for the measure are the following acts:
 - (a) Act No. 218/2000 Coll. on budgetary rules;
 - (b) Act No. 164/2001 Coll. on natural curative resources, sources of naturally occurring mineral water, natural curative spas and spa facilities and change to some related acts (the Spa Act);
 - (c) Act No. 372/2011 Coll, on medical services;
 - (d) Government Resolution No. 631/2020 of 8 June 2020, on the crisis action plan for tourism in Czechia 2020–2021;
 - (e) Government Resolution No. 703/2020 of 29 June 2020, on the support of the spa tourism industry (COVID-Spa Act).⁷

2.3. Administration of the measure

(12) The granting authority is the Ministry of Regional Development ("MoRD"). The State Investment Support Fund of Czechia ("SISF"), a legal entity within the

⁶ <u>https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/how-eu-funding-works/information-contractors-and-beneficiaries/exchange-rate-inforeuro_fr.</u>

⁷ All the above-mentioned laws are available at the website of the Ministry of the Interior of Czechia at: <u>https://aplikace.mvcr.cz/sbirka-zakonu/start.aspx</u>.

competence of the Ministry of Regional Development⁸ is responsible for the assessment of grant applications under the measure. The SISF is also responsible to perform public administration inspections of the beneficiaries, pertaining to the use of the grants.⁹

2.4. Budget and duration of the measure

- (13) The estimated budget of the measure is CZK 1 000 million, i.e. approx. EUR 37,5 million¹⁰. The measure is financed by the State budget of Czechia.
- (14) Aid may be granted under the measure as from its approval until no later than 31 December 2020 (recital (10)).

2.5. Beneficiaries

- (15) The final beneficiaries of the measure are small, medium-sized and large enterprises. More specifically, eligible beneficiaries are facilities with a special permission to provide spa medical procedures and curative rehabilitation treatments.¹¹ Financial institutions are therefore excluded as eligible final beneficiaries.
- (16) Aid may not be granted under the measure to medium¹² and large enterprises that were already in difficulty within the meaning of the General Block Exemption Regulation ("GBER")¹³ on 31 December 2019. Aid may be granted to micro and small enterprises that were in difficulty within the meaning of the GBER on 31 December 2019, if those enterprises, at the moment of granting the aid, are not

- ¹² As defined in Annex I to Commission Regulation (EU) No 651/2014 of 17 June 2014 declaring certain categories of aid compatible with the internal market in application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty, OJ L 187, 26.6.2014, p. 1.
- ¹³ As defined in Article 2(18) of Commission Regulation (EU) No 651/2014 of 17 June 2014 declaring certain categories of aid compatible with the internal market in application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty, OJ L 187, 26.6.2014, p. 1.

⁸ Art. 1 of Act No. 211/2000 Coll., on the State Investment Support Fund regulates the management, income, bodies and operation of the SISF. The purpose of the SISF and its public mission is to promote the sustainable development of municipalities, cities and regions, housing and tourism in accordance with the public interest, programmes and other measures approved by the Government of Czechia.

⁹ Pursuant to S. 39 of Act No. 218/2000 Coll. on the budgetary rules and to S. 8(2) of Act No. 320/2001 Coll., on Financial Control in Public Administration and on the Amendment to Related Acts (the "Financial Control Act"), as amended. The inspections shall be governed by Act No. 255/2012 Coll., on inspections (the "Inspection Code").

¹⁰ <u>https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/how-eu-funding-works/information-contractors-and-beneficiaries/exchange-rate-inforeuro_fr.</u>

¹¹ These entities, defined by Act No. 164/2001 Coll. ("the Spa Act"), must hold valid certification issued by the appropriate regional authority and be listed in the National Registry of Providers of Health Care Services pursuant to the Czech law on health care services and to Act No. 372/2011 Coll., on medical services.

subject to collective insolvency procedure under national law and they have not received rescue aid¹⁴ or restructuring aid¹⁵.

2.6. Sectoral and regional scope of the measure

(17) The measure is open to the healthcare sector and, more specifically, to facilities with a special permission to provide spa medical procedures and curative rehabilitation treatments. It applies to all the regions of Czechia falling under the Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics (NUTS) 2.¹⁶

2.7. Basic elements of the measure

- (18) Under the scheme, eligible beneficiaries may benefit from "grants" to compensate the costs incurred through the allocation of discounts to consumers on curative, preventive stays and spa medical rehabilitation treatments provided at their facilities. In order to benefit from the scheme, spa facilities must be registered with their respective regional authority as facilities authorised to provide spa medical rehabilitation care services.¹⁷ A list of accredited spa facilities is available on the website of the Ministry of Health.¹⁸ All spa accredited facilities are offered the opportunity to participate in the program on a voluntary basis.
- (19) The stay must include at least six consecutive nights and at least five spa medical rehabilitation treatments (the list of treatments ensues from the catalogue of the Ministry of Health). Discounts can be provided only on selected spa tourism services (accommodation, meals, medical rehabilitation treatment services) by the spa facility operator during stays of consumers at the given spa facility.
- (20) All consumers of at least 18 years old spending minimum six nights in the spa facility and undergoing at least five spa medical rehabilitation treatments during their stay may benefit from a discount of CZK 4000 (approx. EUR 149). Discounts are available to all EU/EEA consumers. The information on the possibility of obtaining a discount for a stay in the beneficiaries' spa facilities will be available in English on the MoRD's official website and on the website of CzechTourism (national tourism authority).
- (21) The grant compensating a discount under the measure can only be provided if no other similar discount from public budgets has been used for the same stay (e.g. a discount on stays or procedures provided by the region or town or another ministry). Only one discount voucher can be used for the above defined purpose, for one person over 18 years of age for each stay taking place during the reference

¹⁴ Alternatively, if they have received rescue aid, they have reimbursed the loan or terminated the guarantee at the moment of granting of the aid under the notified measure.

¹⁵ Alternatively, if they have received restructuring aid, they are no longer subject to a restructuring plan at the moment of granting of the aid under the notified measure.

¹⁶ In particular, the NUTS2 Regions are the following: Central Bohemia, Southwest, Northwest, Northeast, Southeast and Central Moravia, Moravia-Silesia and NUTS2 Prague.

¹⁷ Pursuant to Act. 164/2001 Coll. and Act No. 372/2011 Coll., regulating the provision of medical services, including spa medical rehabilitation care services.

¹⁸ http://www.mzcr.cz/Odbornik/obsah/seznam-poskytovatelu-llrp 4151 3.html.

period (recital (10)). The "grant" can compensate discounts applicable to multiple stays of an individual person who has generated a new voucher for each new stay.

- (22) Following the approval of the measure by the Commission, a call for the submission of "grants" applications will be launched. The forms to be completed by eligible applicants (grant application and a payment request), including a list of annexes to be provided, will be published in advance at a dedicated website.¹⁹ In order to benefit from a grant, each applicant will fill in monthly an electronic application (including a grant application and a payment request), using an online form and submit it to the SISF.
- (23) The evaluation of the applications is carried out by the SISF. Once the request for payment is approved, the "grant" will be transferred to the beneficiary's bank account by the MoRD.
- (24) The Czech authorities confirmed that the maximum overall aid amount per beneficiary will not exceed EUR 800 000 (all figures will be gross, that is, before any deduction of tax or other charge). This overall maximum of aid will also include all other State aid granted on the basis of section 3.1 of the Temporary Framework.

2.8. Cumulation

- (25) The Czech authorities confirm that aid granted under the measure may be cumulated with aid under de minimis Regulations²⁰ or the GBER provided the provisions and cumulation rules of those Regulations are respected.
- (26) The Czech authorities confirm that aid granted under the measure may be cumulated with aid granted under other measures approved by the Commission under the Temporary Framework provided the provisions laid down in the Temporary Framework are respected.

2.9. Monitoring and reporting

(27) The Czech authorities confirm that they will respect the monitoring and reporting obligations laid down in section 4 of the Temporary Framework (including the obligation to publish relevant information on each individual aid above EUR 100 000 granted under the measure on the comprehensive national State aid website or Commission's IT tool within 12 months from the moment of granting).²¹

¹⁹ The dedicated website is the following: <u>www.mmr.cz</u>

²⁰ Commission Regulation (EU) No 1407/2013 of 18 December 2013 on the application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union to de minimis aid (OJ L 352, 24.12.2013, p. 1) and Commission Regulation (EU) No 360/2012 of 25 April 2012 on the application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union to de minimis aid granted to undertakings providing services of general economic interest (OJ L 114, 26.4.2012, p. 8).

²¹ Referring to information required in Annex III to Commission Regulation (EU) No 651/2014 of 17 June 2014 declaring certain categories of aid compatible with the internal market in application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty, OJ L 187 of 26.6.2014, p. 1.

3. Assessment

3.1. Lawfulness of the measure

(28) By notifying the measure before putting it into effect, the Czech authorities have respected their obligations under Article 108(3) TFEU.

3.2. Existence of State aid

- (29) For a measure to be categorised as aid within the meaning of Article 107(1) TFEU, all the conditions set out in that provision must be fulfilled. First, the measure must be imputable to the State and financed through State resources. Second, it must confer an advantage on its recipients. Third, that advantage must be selective in nature. Fourth, the measure must distort or threaten to distort competition and affect trade between Member States.
- (30) The measure is imputable to the State, since it is administered by the MoRD and the SISF of Czechia and it is based on the national laws listed in recital (11). It is financed through State resources, since it is financed by public funds (recital (13)).
- (31) The measure confers an advantage on its beneficiaries by compensating discounts granted to EU/EEA end-consumers on curative, preventive stays and treatments in the spa facilities (recital (9)), as it supports demand and increases the attractiveness of their services, which could result in higher sales for the beneficiaries.
- (32) The advantage granted by the measure is selective, since it is awarded only to certain undertakings (recitals (15) and (16)), in particular undertakings active in the healthcare sector with a special permission to provide facilities with a special permission to provide spa medical procedures and curative rehabilitation treatments i.e. spa facilities (recital (17)).
- (33) The measure is liable to distort competition, since it strengthens the competitive position of its beneficiaries. It also affects trade between Member States, since those beneficiaries are active in sectors in which intra-Union trade exists.
- (34) In view of the above, the Commission concludes that the measure constitutes State aid within the meaning of Article 107(1) TFEU. The Czech authorities do not contest that conclusion.

3.3. Compatibility

- (35) Since the measure involves State aid within the meaning of Article 107(1) TFEU, it is necessary to consider whether that the measure is compatible with the internal market.
- (36) Pursuant to Article 107(3)(b) TFEU the Commission may declare compatible with the internal market aid "to remedy a serious disturbance in the economy of a *Member State*".

- (37) The Commission has acknowledged²² that "the COVID-19 outbreak affects all Member States and that the containment measures taken by Member States impact undertakings". The Commission concluded that "State aid is justified and can be declared compatible with the internal market on the basis of Article 107(3)(b) TFEU, for a limited period, to remedy the liquidity shortage faced by undertakings and ensure that the disruptions caused by the COVID-19 outbreak do not undermine their viability, especially of SMEs".
- (38) The Temporary Framework contains a Section 3.1 in which the Commission explains how it will assess aid in the form of limited amounts of aid to undertakings that find themselves facing a sudden shortage or even unavailability of liquidity during the current circumstances. Point 22(a) to (e), sets out the compatibility criteria which the Commission uses to assess limited amounts of aid.
- (39) The measure has been notified under the Temporary Framework (recital (1)). However, in light of the particular nature of the measure (as aid to the price charged to the end-consumers) and its potential effects on the internal market which may be different from those of the measures envisaged in section 3.1 of the Temporary Framework, the Commission will assess the measure based on the general criteria for compatibility under Article 107(3)(b) TFEU. The Temporary Framework can provide guidance and its principles can be applied by analogy as far as appropriate.
- (40) As for any derogation from the prohibition on State aid enshrined in Article 107(1) TFEU, the compatibility exception pursuant to Article 107(3)(b) TFEU must be interpreted and applied restrictively. Such a strict application requires taking into account, in particular, the nature and the objective seriousness of the disturbance of the economy of the Member State concerned (recitals (5) and (6)), on the one hand, and the appropriateness, necessity and proportionality of the aid to address it, on the other.

Appropriateness

- (41) In order to be appropriate, the aid has to be well targeted to its objective, i.e., in this case to remedy a serious disturbance in the economy. This would not be the case if the disturbance would also disappear in the absence of the measure or if the measure is not appropriate to remedy the disturbance.
- (42) The measure aims at supporting demand for the services offered by the spa facilities of the beneficiaries operating in almost all regions of Czechia at a time when the COVID-19 outbreak has severely impacted the turnover of these facilities and is anticipated to lead to increased unemployment in the sector. The regulatory measures enforced in Czechia (recitals (5) and (6)), namely, the declaration of the state of emergency (12 March 2020), the restriction of free movement (16 March 2020) and the prohibition to provide accommodation services and all spa medical procedures and curative rehabilitation treatments in the beneficiaries' facilities (19 March 2020), not only decreased the turnover of these facilities but also affected the wider economy of Czechia.

²² Temporary Framework, Section 2.

- (43) In this regard, the Commission notes that due to the above-mentioned regulatory measures, the number of visitors of the beneficiaries' facilities, both from Czechia as well as from abroad, has significantly decreased given the objective obstacles of closed borders and the application of stringent measures to contain the spread of COVID-19. The Commission also notes that the beneficiaries' facilities constitute an important source of employment in Czechia (recital (6)).
- (44) The measure is one of a series of measures conceived at national level by the Czech authorities to remedy a serious disturbance in their economy. The measure is important for preserving employment and economic continuity and is of a scale which can be reasonably anticipated to produce effects across the affected regions of Czechia who have a high concentration of spa facilities (almost all regions of Czechia, see recitals (6) and (17)).
- (45) The Commission therefore considers that the measure is appropriate to remedy a serious disturbance in the economy of Czechia.

Necessity and proportionality

- (46) In order to meet the compatibility criterion of necessity, the aid measure must, in its amount and form, be necessary to achieve the objective. That implies that it must be of the minimum amount necessary to reach this objective. So as to be proportionate, the measure should not entail excessive distortions of competition and excessive effects on the proper functioning of the internal market.
- (47) The Czech authorities have chosen to implement a scheme which supports demand for the services offered by the beneficiaries through the compensation of discounts offered to EU/EEA consumers on curative, preventive stays and treatments in the beneficiaries' facilities (recital (4)). The identity of the final beneficiaries of the measure and the amount of aid they will receive will thus be determined by the EU/EEA consumers.
- (48) Each consumer may benefit from a discount of CZK 4000 (approx. EUR 149). The Commission notes that it's necessary for the consumer to spend minimum six nights in the spa and to undergo at least five spa medical rehabilitation treatments during their stay in the spa, so as to benefit from the discount. Furthermore the "grant" compensating a discount under the measure can only be provided if no other similar discount from the State budget has been used for the same stay (recital (20)).
- (49) The amounts of aid are limited, both in absolute and relative terms, and the aid is only granted for a short period of time.
- (50) In addition, it's important to note that the discounts are made available to all EU/EEA consumers. To that effect, the information on the possibility of obtaining a discount for a stay in the beneficiaries' spa facilities will be available in English on the MoRD's official website and on the website of CzechTourism (national tourism authority). The only link of the measure with the territory of Czechia lies therefore in the fact that the spa facilities which can benefit from it are located in this country.
- (51) As underlined by the Czech authorities (recital 6) facilities with a special permission to provide spa medical procedures and curative rehabilitation

treatments are present in almost every region of Czechia and constitute an important source of employment in the country. The Czech authorities further submit that the current drop in demand for services provided by these facilities is not only having a negative impact on their overall cost of operation but may also lead to dismissals of highly specialised personnel. Loss of employment caused by reduced demand for the services of these facilities due to COVID-19 may lead to intensification of problems in the regions where the facilities are located. In addition, any possible cease of operations or reduction of activity of these facilities will negatively impact local residents as well as foreign visitors also because of the reduced offering of cultural services in these regions.

- (52) *Mutatis mutandis*, the following conditions of section 3.1 of the Temporary Framework are fulfilled :
 - The overall nominal value of the aid shall not exceed EUR 800 000 per undertaking; all figures used must be gross, that is, before any deduction of tax or other charges (recital (24)). This overall maximum of aid will also include all other State aid granted on the basis of section 3.1 of the Temporary Framework. The measure therefore complies with the rules set out by point 22(a) of the Temporary Framework about the amounts of aid.
 - Aid is granted under the measure on the basis of a scheme with an estimated budget as indicated in recital (13). The measure therefore complies with point 22(b) of the Temporary Framework.
 - Aid may not be granted under the measure to medium²³ and large enterprises that were already in difficulty on 31 December 2019 (recital (16)). The measure therefore complies with point 22(c) of the Temporary Framework. Aid may be granted to micro and small enterprises that were in difficulty on 31 December 2019, if those enterprises, at the moment of granting the aid, are not subject to collective insolvency procedure under national law and they have not received rescue aid²⁴ or restructuring aid²⁵ (recital (16)). The measure therefore complies with point 22(c)bis of the Temporary Framework;
 - Aid will be granted under the measure no later than 31 December 2020. The measure is therefore temporary in nature and complies with point 22(d) of the Temporary Framework.
 - Although the measure is assessed directly under Article 107(3)(b) TFEU, Czechia has confirmed that it will respect the applicable monitoring and reporting obligations laid down in Section 4 of the Temporary Framework (recital (27)). The Czech authorities further confirm that the aid under the

²³ As defined in Annex I to Commission Regulation (EU) No 651/2014 of 17 June 2014 declaring certain categories of aid compatible with the internal market in application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty, OJ L 187, 26.6.2014, p. 1.

²⁴ Alternatively, if they have received rescue aid, they have reimbursed the loan or terminated the guarantee at the moment of granting of the aid under the notified measure.

²⁵ Alternatively, if they have received restructuring aid, they are no longer subject to a restructuring plan at the moment of granting of the aid under the notified measure.

measure may only be cumulated with other aid, provided the specific provisions in the sections of the Temporary Framework are respected and the cumulation rules of the relevant Regulations are respected (recitals (25) and (26)).

- (53) Based on the above, the Commission concludes that the measure is limited to the amount and form necessary to achieve the objective pursued to ensure aid to fundamentally sound enterprises, which should help to mitigate the serious disturbance that the COVID-19 outbreak has on the Czech economy. The Commission therefore concludes that the measure is necessary to the objective of mitigating a serious disturbance of the Czech economy.
- (54) The Commission therefore concludes that the features described above ensure that the measure is proportionate to the objective pursued. It does not create excessive negative effects on the proper functioning of the internal market, taking into account its utility as to the objective of mitigating a serious disturbance of the Czech economy.

Conclusion on compatibility

(55) The Commission therefore considers that the measure is appropriate, necessary and proportionate to remedy a serious disturbance in the economy of a Member State pursuant to Article 107(3)(b) TFEU including the conditions set out in the Temporary Framework.

4. CONCLUSION

The Commission has accordingly decided not to raise objections to the aid on the grounds that it is compatible with the internal market pursuant to Article 107(3)(b) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union.

The decision is based on non-confidential information and is therefore published in full on the Internet site: <u>http://ec.europa.eu/competition/elojade/isef/index.cfm</u>.

Yours faithfully,

For the Commission

Margrethe VESTAGER Executive Vice-President

