



## Press Release

Luxembourg, 27 March 2019

# Auditors examine EU oversight of state aid to banks

The European Court of Auditors is conducting an audit of EU monitoring of public support granted to the financial sector over recent years. In particular, the auditors will examine how the European Commission ensures that aid remains exceptional and limited to what is strictly necessary. They will also assess the appropriateness and effectiveness of the procedures in place for state aid control.

Because it could distort competition in the internal market, state aid (i.e. public financial support) is generally prohibited under EU law. But government intervention might be necessary and authorised in some particular circumstances, such as the 2008 financial crisis. Between 2008 and 2017, the EU approved aid to the financial sector for an overall amount of €1 459 billion of capital-like aid and additional €3 659 billion of liquidity aid. The Commission has sole responsibility for controlling such state aid.

The auditors have today published an Audit Preview on EU control of state aid to banks. Audit Previews provide information on an ongoing audit task. They are designed as a source of information for those interested in the policy or programmes being audited.

*“From the 2008 crisis until today even, the financial services sector has received far more state aid than any other sector of the economy”, said Mihails Kozlovs, the Member of the European Court of Auditors responsible for the audit. “Appropriate and thorough control of this state aid is crucial to safeguard competition in the internal market as well as to protect EU taxpayers against the burden of bank rescues.”*

*The purpose of this press release is to convey the main messages of the European Court of Auditors’ audit preview. The full preview is available at [eca.europa.eu](http://eca.europa.eu) in English.*

## ECA Press

Mark Rogerson – Spokesperson T: (+352) 4398 47063  
Damijan Fišer – Press Officer T: (+352) 4398 45410  
12, rue Alcide De Gasperi - L-1615 Luxembourg  
E: [press@eca.europa.eu](mailto:press@eca.europa.eu) @EUAuditors [eca.europa.eu](http://eca.europa.eu)

M: (+352) 691 55 30 63  
M: (+352) 621 55 22 24

The audit will cover state aid control activities after the financial crisis, starting with the adoption of the new Banking Communication in 2013. As the Commission both makes and enforces the rules on state aid, the audit will assess both the design and the execution of its control.

In particular, the auditors will examine whether:

- o the Commission has appropriate tools and resources to control state aid, including robust internal controls;
- o current state aid rules and procedures are fit for identifying and controlling state aid to banks, and effective in keeping distortions of competition to the minimum necessary;
- o the Commission verifies that it is actually achieving the intended results.

#### **Note to Editors**

The audit report is expected to be published at the end of 2019.