



How can State Aid Best Support Inclusive Employment & Social Impact?

Joint EASPD-SSE Webinar

7 November 2023, 10:00-12:00

LINK: https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_1_AvtqBmQm60sS1-IMM00w

DRAFT Concept Note

Ongoing revision of EU state aid framework

In 2022 the European Commission (EC) launched some **consultation procedures** to start the **review of the general de minimis Regulation and the SGEI de minimis Regulation**. It has organised a number of public consultations. It has engaged in negotiations with the EU MS which are expected to be finalised soon.

These consultations have created considerable interest regarding the **potential of the EU State Aid Framework to pursue goals in social, employment, health and (social) housing policies**, in particular among (not-for-profit) providers of social services and social economy organisations, including social enterprises. It has also led to discussions on the **persistent challenges and practical issues in the application of state aid rules in the EU MS**, by governments and public authorities at national, regional and local level. These processes have been framed by initiatives announced in the context of the **Social Economy Action Plan (SE AP)**.

The EC has prolonged the **General Block Exemption Regulation (GBER)** until 2026. Before its expiry on 31 December 2026 it will be revised. To support this task, DG EMPL has recently launched a **“Study on State Aid for access to finance for social enterprises and for the recruitment of disadvantaged workers in the form of wage subsidies”**, which has been conferred to Deloitte Czech Republic.

EASPD Study “Impact of State aid on the Development of the Social Economy and Service providers for Persons with Disabilities”

EASPD in May 2023 commissioned from LinkinEurope the elaboration of a study on the impact of state aid rules on social economy organisations and social enterprises, asking to focus in particular on service providers for persons with disabilities (PwD). This study will be finalised and delivered in October. Some highlights from the study will be presented by the researchers at the webinar on 7 November.

The **study** gives an overview of the state aid rules applicable to social economy enterprises and social service providers, highlighting recent developments regarding the revision of the EU state aid legislation (chapter 1). It then assesses the opportunities that the legal framework in force – basically consisting of the general de minimis Regulation, the SGEI de minimis Regulation, the General Block Exemption Regulation (GBER) and the SGEI Decision – offers to social economy enterprises and social service providers, in particular to service providers for persons with disabilities, and the most recurrent challenges encountered by them in its implementation (chapter 2). The study presents some promising

practices in the application of state aid rules, basically indicating the potential of making full and correct use of the “state set tool set” (chapter 3). It proposes recommendations on a more effective use of the EU-level state aid rules to improve the labour market and social inclusion of disadvantaged workers and vulnerable persons, keeping a strong focus on the needs and rights of PwD and of the service providers supporting them (chapter 4). The recommendations are addressed to EU-level and national decision makers, the providers of social services and social economy actors.

Objectives of the joint webinar

The joint EASPD-SSE Webinar intends to bring together social service providers, policymakers from EU MS and the EU-level, social enterprises active in the field of labour market and social inclusion, and researchers. It pursues **three objectives**:

- 1) **Discuss about the main insights from the study** “Impact of State aid on the Development of the Social Economy and Service providers for Persons with Disabilities”
- 2) Jointly **assess prospects and concerns linked to the ongoing revision of the general de minimis Regulation and the SGEI de minimis Regulation**. The new rules, which still need to be finally agreed upon between the EC and the EU, will come into force as of 1 January 2024.
- 3) Exchange on the future **revision of the General Block Exemption Regulation (GBER)** by identifying the needs, expectations and proposals of social service providers and social enterprises.

Relevant documents

The event will build on the following “reference documents”:

- the EASPD Report “Impact of State aid on the Development of the Social Economy and Service providers for Persons with Disabilities” (which will be published shortly before the webinar, i.e., at the end of October/in early November)¹,
- a number of documents elaborated by Social Services Europe (SSE) since 2022 in relation to the ongoing revision of the EU-level state aid legislation² and
- the [EESC Opinion “Public subsidies/health and social services of general economic interest” \(INT/1016\) \(27 April 2023\)](#)
- documents produced in the context of three mutual learning workshops on “State aid support for the social economy” uploaded to the Social Economy Gateway³.

¹ <https://www.easpd.eu/events-detail/joint-easpd-sse-webinar-how-can-state-aid-best-support-inclusive-employment-and-social-impact/>

² [SSE Contribution to the Call for Evidence on the revision of the SGEI de minimis Regulation](#) (1 June 2023); [SSE Contribution to the EC Consultation on exemptions for small amounts of state aid \(de minimis aid\)](#) (20 July 2022); [SSE Reaction on the Council Recommendation on developing social economy framework conditions](#) (10 October 2023); [SSE Statement on the EC proposal for a Council Recommendation on developing social economy framework conditions](#) (6 July 2023); [SSE Proposals for the Social Economy Action Plan: From ambition to implementation](#) (28 April 2022)

³ EC Social Economy Gateway – Section “[State Aid](#)”. You can watch videos, read thematic background papers, have a look into the reports of the three mutual learning events, etc.



DRAFT Agenda (as of 31 October 2023)

10:00-10:10: Welcome and Introduction: Why do EASPD and SSE organise the webinar? Why did EASPD commission the study? What has been recently done by EASPD and SSE on the topic of state aid? What do we expect from the webinar?

Thomas Bignal, Head of Policy, EASPD

10:10-10:40: Presentation of key results of the EASPD Study “Impact of State aid on the Development of the Social Economy and Service providers for Persons with Disabilities”

Valentina Caimi, LinkinEurope, and Mathias Maucher

Q&A

10:40-11:10: Spotlight on the experiences on the ground, including by PwD and DPO – Exchange with participants: Exchange on the opportunities and challenges of the current EU-level State Aid Framework – Exchange on the experiences with the application of the EU-level State Aid Framework within EU MS

Haydn Hammersley, Social Policy Coordinator, EDF

Stef de Cock, Senior Advisor, Maatwerk, Belgium

Moderation: Thomas Bignal, Head of Policy, EASPD

11:10-11:30: General Block Exemption Regulation (GBER): Why did DG EMPL commission the “Study on State Aid for access to finance for social enterprises and for the recruitment of disadvantaged workers in the form of wage subsidies” and how will the results be used? What is the timeline for the revision of the GBER? Which issues will (likely) have priority for the EC?

Julien de Beys, Policy Officer, Unit G3, DG EMPL, European Commission

11:30-11:55: Revision of general de minimis Regulation and of the SGEI de minimis Regulation: What were the main proposals and requests of the EESC and SSE? Where do we stand in the process of revision?

Giuseppe Guerini, EESC, Group II, Rapporteur on [EESC Opinion “Public subsidies/health and social services of general economic interest”](#) (INT/1016) (27 April 2023)

Margarida Ortigão Delgado, EU Legal Advocacy Officer, Red Cross EU Office

11:55-12:00: Concluding words & outlook

Thomas Bignal, Head of Policy, EASPD