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Answer given by Executive Vice-President Vestager
on behalf of the European Commission
(11.2.2020)

Since the entry into force of the 2013 Banking Communication, the Commission has taken 107 decisions concerning individual banks. Under the 2008 Banking Communication, the Commission took 266 such decisions. The amount of aid approved by the Commission and disbursed by the Member States has decreased since 2013. For instance, between 2013 and 2018 the Commission approved EUR 135 000 million in capital-like aid while in the period 2008-2012 more than EUR 1 330 000 million was approved. Of the amount approved between 2013 and 2018, only EUR 65 000 million was actually disbursed. Of the amount approved between 2008 and 2012, EUR 604 000 million was actually disbursed.¹ More detailed figures (including on liquidity aid) are available on the Commission website².

The Commission continuously monitors, based on sector developments and experience gained in State aid cases, whether it needs to evaluate or update the relevant State aid rules. This serves to make sure that the way it applies State aid rules to banks remains relevant in a changing context. The Commission considers that it is still appropriate to use Article 107(3) b of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union as the basis for the assessment of State aid to the financial sector. In particular, the Commission notes that legacy problems such as bad loans and bad bank governance continue to persist in some areas. In addition, banks are still building up buffers of liabilities to facilitate bail-in and the Banking Union has not yet been completed. Furthermore, there is an ongoing reflection process on how to improve the crisis management of smaller and mid-size banks in the Banking Union, including the need for additional tools.

In this context, to take stock and inform the future reflections on the rules, the Commission will conduct a mapping exercise and produce a report of the State aid decisions taken under the current rules.

¹ State aid approved means the maximum amounts of aid that Member States were allowed to grant. The amounts of aid actually disbursed are reported as State aid used. The difference can be explained because some Member States put in place measures, sometimes covering the entire banking sector, as a precaution that were not or only partially used in practice

² https://ec.europa.eu/competition/state_aid/scoreboard/index_en.html