



Press Release

FEPORT welcomes 2023 amendment of the General Block Exemption Regulation and reiterates the need for AFIR to be consistent.

Brussels, March 17th, 2023

On the 9th of March 2023, the European Commission endorsed a targeted amendment to the General Block Exemption Regulation (GBER) to further facilitate, simplify and speed up support for the EU's green and digital transitions, in line with the Green Deal Industrial Plan.

FEPORT strongly supports the adoption of this targeted amendment, as it continues to cover public investments of up to €150 million in seaports.

Investments for the construction, replacement or upgrade of port infrastructures are included meaning that, as long as the mentioned threshold is not surpassed, aid can be granted without the need for prior notification.¹

The new definition of "port infrastructure"² as introduced in the 2023 amendment explicitly includes green refuelling and recharging infrastructure in ports supplying all transport modes *and* mobile terminal equipment.

Governmental support for the rollout of green refuelling and recharging infrastructure in ports is crucial in order to ensure that the ambitious targets for the provision of onshore power supply at berth as laid down in the upcoming Alternative Fuels Infrastructure Regulation are met. Creating a supportive environment for ships and hinterland transport modes to decarbonise is also important in view of the need to reduce air pollution in ports.

In addition, it is very positive to note that the amended GBER now explicitly exempts aid for refuelling and recharging infrastructure supplying mobile terminal equipment. Aid for such infrastructure is key in speeding up the decarbonization of cargo handling operations and will contribute to the competitive position of terminal operators in the EU.

¹ See article 4(1)(ee) of Regulation (EU) No 651/2014 declaring certain categories of aid compatible with the internal market in application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty (consolidated version)

² In added point 157 of the 2023 amendment to the GBER, "port infrastructure" is defined as "*infrastructure and facilities for the provision of transport related port services, for example berths used for the mooring of ships, quay walls, jetties and floating pontoon ramps in tidal areas, internal basins, backfills and land reclamation, infrastructure for the collection of ship-generated waste and cargo residues and recharging and refuelling infrastructure in ports supplying vehicles, mobile terminal equipment and mobile ground handling equipment with electricity, hydrogen, ammonia and methanol*".

FEPORТ also welcomes the 2023 amendment including the clear definition of refuelling and recharging infrastructure which reiterates that it forms part of “port infrastructure”, meaning that the “managing body of the port” as defined in article 2(5) of the Port Services Regulation remains the party responsible for the management and administration of this infrastructure.

FEPORТ underlines the need for negotiators, in the framework of the ongoing triologue negotiations on the Alternative Fuels Infrastructure Regulation (AFIR), to take into account the definitions as provided in the Port Services Regulation and reiterated in the 2023 amendment to the GBER.

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