

Brussels, 21 MAR 2016  
Ares(2016)1189825

Dear Honourable Member,

Thank you for your letter of 24<sup>th</sup> February 2016 concerning fiscal aid granted to companies licensed to operate in the Free Trade Zone of Madeira.

DG Competition looked into the fiscal aid scheme "Free Trade Zone of Madeira" in 2015 as part of its regular monitoring exercise of block exempted and approved schemes.

In the context of this monitoring exercise, DG Competition has asked the list of beneficiaries of the scheme as well as information on the amounts of aid received, the characteristics of the beneficiaries and the number of jobs created. My services are currently awaiting the reply of Portugal to these questions in order to complete their examination. This exercise focuses on corporate income tax reductions granted under the Free Trade Zone scheme.

With respect to individual tax rulings, the Commission has been looking into tax planning practices systematically via its dedicated Task Force since 2013. At an initial stage, relevant information was requested from certain Member States where allegations of preferential treatment through tax rulings had been drawn to the Commission's attention. In December 2014, the Commission extended its state aid enquiry to include all Member States. The enquiry is aimed at clarifying allegations that tax rulings may constitute State aid and allowing the Commission to take an informed view of the practices of all Member States. In this context, the Portuguese authorities provided a number of individual tax authorities and cooperated well with my services. Requesting these tax rulings does not however prejudice whether this will lead to individual State aid investigations. The assessment of information submitted is still ongoing.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Ana Gomes', written in a cursive style.

**Mrs Ana Gomes**  
**Member of the European Parliament**  
**European Parliament**  
**ASP 14G 240**  
**Rue Wiertz 60**  
**1047 Brussels**