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E-002871/2026

Answer given by Executive Vice-President Ribera
on behalf of the European Commission
(2.9.2026)

The draft Air Transport guidelines¹, as recently published for public consultation from 11 May 2026 – 11 June 2026, specifically address the constraints faced by remote regions, including outermost regions. For example, they provide for a bonus for investment aid projects and when it comes to the designation of outermost regions airports as Services of General Economic Interest. In the parallel, as part of the revision of the General Block Exemption Regulation² the Commission proposes to raise the notification threshold for operating and investment aid to airports from 200,000 to 500,000 passengers per year, which will considerably simplify the granting of aid to many airports, including in the outermost regions.

The Commission is currently assessing the feedback to the public consultation. This will feed into the revision, and the Commission will ensure that both the special situation of outermost regions and all relevant EU objectives such as territorial and social cohesion, regional development and decarbonisation are duly considered.

When it comes to safeguarding essential air services at affordable terms, the existing State aid framework allows Member States to impose public service obligations pursuant to Regulation (EC) No 1008/2008 (intra-EU routes) or rely on social aid (in principle also for routes connecting an EU airport to a non-EU airport). These possibilities remain unaffected by the ongoing revision.

¹ https://competition-policy.ec.europa.eu/public-consultations/2026-air-transport-guidelines_en.

² https://competition-policy.ec.europa.eu/public-consultations/2026-gber_en.