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Commission approves €70 million public support scheme for electric buses and charging infrastructure in Germany

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The European Commission has found German plans to support the purchase of electric buses and related recharging infrastructure by public transport operators to be in line with EU state aid rules. The measure contributes to reducing CO2 emissions while limiting distortions of competition.

Commissioner Margrethe Vestager, in charge of competition policy, said: “This scheme is another positive example of how to fight global warming. In line with the EU environmental goals, it will give public transport operators an incentive to invest in low or zero emissions vehicles with the clear objective of reducing CO2 emissions and improving air quality”.

The scheme set up by Germany with a budget of €70 million will support public transport operators until the end of 2021, covering the additional costs for:

-the acquisition of **electric and plug-in-hybrid buses** rather than conventional diesel buses; and

-the construction of the **related electric charging infrastructure** required for the operation of these buses.

The Commission considers that this public scheme incentivises bus operators to invest in this type of vehicle and in the necessary charging infrastructure. The measure is expected to increase the number of such buses in Germany and thereby reduce CO₂ and air pollutant emissions, in particular in cities. Furthermore, to qualify for the support, public transport operators must ensure that their electric and plug-in hybrid buses are operated with electricity from renewable sources.

The measure is also in line with the European Strategy for low-emission mobility, and its support for the move towards zero-emission vehicles in cities and for creating a market for such vehicles. Energy efficiency is key to Europe's clean energy transition and a central element for achieving the Paris Agreement pledge to cut emissions in the EU by at least 40% by 2030.

On this basis, the Commission concluded that the contribution to EU environmental goals of the scheme outweighs any potential distortion of competition brought about by the public financing and has approved it under the EU State aid rules. In this respect, Member States have many options on alternative technologies to reduce exhaust emissions such as retrofitting of diesel buses.

The non-confidential version of the decision will be made available under the case number SA.48190 in the state aid register on the Commission's competition website once any confidentiality issues have been resolved. The State Aid Weekly e-News lists new publications of state aid decisions on the internet and in the Official Journal.