



## • 5 Questions to Maria Kleis-Walravens Lawyer - Head of Energy, ClientEarth, Brussels

### **Lexxion - What is the most important change to State aid in the energy sector in the past 5 years?**

Maria Kleis-Walravens: I don't think that there is one main change, but I would say that certain topics shifted more into the focus of DG Competition than others. One of them is the increasing use Member States want to make of capacity mechanism to address their apparent resource adequacy issues.

### **L - How can we use State aid law to our advantage in tackling environmental issues coming from energy production in the EU?**

MKW: One the one hand by ensuring that the state aids to unlawful and environmental damaging projects are notified to DG Competition. By increasing knowledge about the benefits of the state aid rules among people who are driving the sustainable energy market transition – including new market operators - and to ensure that they know how to use the state aid framework to their advantage. By constantly monitoring Member State's state aid projects, DG Competition's state aid decisions and by providing input to both the Member States and DG Competition to ensure that state aid decisions are increasingly in line with the climate and energy targets.

### **L - Why is it important to incorporate State aid knowledge in projects related to energy and the environment?**

MKW: If we want to address today's climate threats, we need to act fast. For energy markets this means that they have to decarbonise and to transition at a fast pace to markets that can continue to provide energy security in a potential 100% renewables scenario. This will be only possible with public funding.

### **L - In which direction would you like to see State aid laws and policies moving in the near future? What needs to be changed to better tackle our current challenges?**

MKW: First of all, the current EEAG need to become a true tool for the implementation of the EU's climate and energy goals. They have to be in line with the soon to enter into force Clean Energy Package; incorporate the efficiency first principle; ensure that capacity mechanisms are a last resource and are designed in such a way that priority has to be given to environmental friendly solutions; ensure that the necessary support to renewable energy can be granted; that exemptions from environmental taxes and renewables charges are not allowed; and that new concepts, like energy communities, that are necessary to speed-up the energy transition are recognised as a distinct tool also in the EEAG. Second, the state aid process needs to become more transparent, and provide more instances for stakeholders to contribute. State aids are a policy tool. A decision from DG Competition does not only have an impact on competition but also on the implementation of the policies that are driving the energy transition.

### **L - What can we expect from the training taking place on 27-28 June in Brussels?**

MKW: The training will bring together state aid experts and energy market experts. It is a forum were participants can learn, but, more importantly, exchange experiences from a sector that is currently undergoing significant changes that are also driven by large amounts of state aid.

Please check our website for the training's [programme](#) and [register online](#).

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