

STATE AID — UNITED KINGDOM**(Articles 87 to 89 of the Treaty establishing the European Community)****Commission notice pursuant to Article 88(2) of the EC Treaty to other Member States and interested parties****State aid C 7/2002 (ex N 577/2001) — Ford Bridgend**

(2002/C 324/05)

(Text with EEA relevance)

By the letter reproduced below, dated 10 October 2002, the Commission informed the United Kingdom that it had decided to terminate the proceedings initiated under Article 88(2) of the EC Treaty.

By letter dated 26 July 2001 the British authorities notified the Commission of the aid referred to above. The Commission requested further information on 18 September 2001, and carried out an on site visit to the Bridgend premises on 26 October 2001. The British authorities replied to the request of information by letter dated 4 December 2001.

On 13 February 2002 the Commission decided to initiate the procedure laid down in Article 88(2) of the EC Treaty in respect of the aid.

The Commission decision to initiate the procedure was published in the *Official Journal of the European Communities* ⁽¹⁾. The Commission called on interested parties to submit their comments.

The Commission received comments from interested parties on 29 April 2002. It forwarded them to the United Kingdom, which was given the opportunity to react; its comments were received by letter dated 26 June 2002.

By letter of 19 August 2002 the United Kingdom withdrew the notification of the aid.

The Commission notes that according to Article 8 of the Council Regulation (EC) No 659/1999 ⁽²⁾, the Member State concerned may withdraw the notification in due time before the Commission has taken a decision on the aid. In cases where the Commission has initiated the formal investigation procedure, the Commission shall close that procedure.

Consequently, the Commission decided to close the formal investigation procedure under Article 88(2) of the EC Treaty in respect of the relevant aid, recording that the United Kingdom has withdrawn its notification.

If the British authorities intend to grant any aid in connection with the Ford Bridgend project before 31 December 2002, prior notification to the Commission will be required. As from 1 January 2003, the new Multisectoral Framework on regional aid for large investment projects approved by the Commission on 13 February 2002 will be applicable. According to the Framework, the maximum aid intensity for regional investment aid in the motor vehicle sector (as defined in Annex C to the Framework), granted under an approved scheme in favour of projects that involve either eligible expenditure above EUR 50 million or an aid amount above EUR 5 million expressed in gross grant equivalent, will be equal to 30 % of the corresponding regional aid ceiling. These rules will be in force until the date of applicability of the List of sectors to which point 31 of the Framework refers. In order to ensure transparency and effective monitoring Member States will be requested to provide the Commission with summary information in the form laid down in Annex A to the Framework.'

⁽¹⁾ OJ C 217, 29.7.2000.

⁽²⁾ Council Regulation (EC) No 659/1999 of 22 March 1999 laying down detailed rules for application of Article 93 of the Treaty (OJ L 83, 27.3.1999, p. 1).