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EFTA SURVEILLANCE  
AUTHORITY

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### **State aid: Formal investigation in maritime transport - Hurtigruten in Norway**

**Today, the EFTA Surveillance Authority opened a formal investigation procedure with regard to the compensation from the Norwegian state to Hurtigruten for transport services from Bergen to Kirkenes. The Authority will assess whether an increase in the compensation agreed in 2008 is compatible with the state aid rules.**

In 2004 the Norwegian authorities entrusted the company Hurtigruten ASA with transport services along the Norwegian coastline for a period of eight years; expiring 31 December 2012. The contract was entered into following a tendering procedure.

In October 2008, the Norwegian authorities increased the compensation to Hurtigruten ASA by way of different measures for the remaining contract period:

- reimbursement of NOx payment – NOK 91 million compensation for 2007-2010
- general compensation due to increased costs – NOK 66 million paid out for 2008
- decreased number of ships providing the services – equivalent to NOK 12 million per annum.

The decision adopted today concerns these additional contributions. The Authority has doubts as to whether these payments are limited to what is strictly necessary to provide the public service in question.

*“EEA law does not prohibit member states to pay for this kind of services, but is it not allowed to overcompensate”, says Mr Per Sanderud, president of the EFTA Surveillance Authority.*

The Norwegian authorities and third parties will be called on to submit their comments before a final decision is taken. A non-confidential version of the Decision will be published in the [register](#) of state aid decisions on the Authority's website, normally within a month from the date of the Decision.

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