



# Services of General Interest as a tool for public support to plasma collection programmes

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Safe blood for Europe

**I have no conflict of interest to declare.**

## Context and question

Role of national governments in support of plasma collection

However, EU competition rules limit state intervention

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**Can Services of General Economic Interest (SGEIs) be used to ensure financial support for blood establishments in their plasma collection programmes, either by Member States or by the EU?**

## Services of general economic interest (SGEI)

Economic activities that public authorities identify as being of particular importance to citizens

Would not be supplied (or would be supplied under different conditions) if there were no public intervention

EU member countries classify as being of general interest and, therefore, subject to specific public service obligations.

Provided either by the state or by the private sector.

## Plasma collection as SGEI

- **SGEIs can only be designated at national level, never at EU level.**
- **Legal for Member States to designate plasma collection as SGEI**  
if a service is not already fulfilled by undertakings operating under normal market conditions, not entrusted with an SGEI, satisfactorily and under conditions consistent with the public interest.
- **If public funding is provided, a review needs to assess if this funding complies with EU competition law**

## Legal financial support

Financial support to SGEI is consistent with state aid rules when:

- aid remains under €500.000 over 3 years; or
- undertaking is merely compensated in order to discharge its public service obligations

(conditions include a clearly defined public service obligation + compensation parameters defined in advance + compensation must not exceed costs,...)

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**Legal basis but ultimately a national political decision.**



## Take-home messages

- Plasma collection can be declared a Services of General Economic Interest (SGEIs) by national governments
- SGEI status can help ensure that financial support to plasma collection programmes does not infringe state aid rules
- Not suitable for every Member State
- Ultimately it is a political decision of national authorities