

Nicole Robins

Partner

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Languages: English



Expertise

- Finance and Valuation
- Infrastructure
- State Aid
- Sustainability and Climate Change

Sectors

- Energy
- Financial Services
- Pharmaceuticals and Life Sciences
- Postal and Logistics
- Telecoms, Media and Technology
- Transport

Profile

Nicole heads Oxera's State Aid practice. She leads Oxera's advice to clients on economic and financial issues associated with a diverse range of state aid matters across sectors including energy, financial services, health, post and telecoms, transport and sports infrastructure. Her advice covers a broad range of economic and financial issues in state aid cases relating to assessments of the market economy operator principle (MEOP), the application of state aid rules for services of general economic interest (SGEI), and the compatibility of aid. She provides advice on state aid compliance, and advises beneficiaries, complainants and member states during investigations by the European Commission and in state aid litigation cases in front of the European courts. She has given expert economic evidence on state aid matters in front of the General Court on several occasions.

Nicole teaches the state aid module on the postgraduate diploma in Economics for Competition Law at King's College London, and provides training for EU Judges on the economics of state aid. Nicole has a wide breadth of experience in the field of state aid, and regularly speaks at, and chairs, state aid events. She publishes on state aid matters in the leading competition journals.

Selected professional experience

- Leading Oxera's advice to clients in the aviation sector on the estimation of state aid compensation for damages caused by COVID-19 (2020)
- Leading Oxera's advice on economic and financial matters associated with the notification of restructuring aid for clients in the aviation sector (2020)
- Leading Oxera's advice to EU member state governments on the pricing of proposed debt and equity transactions to ensure compliance with the MEOP (2020)
- Advising a client in the energy sector on economic and financial issues as part of a state aid complaint to the European Commission (2020)
- Expert evidence on behalf of a client in the transport sector in front of the Court in an EU member state on a commercial dispute (2019–20)
- Advising an energy company in Germany on economic and financial analysis in relation to the compatibility of aid (2019)
- Advising a multinational on state aid matters in relation to a tax ruling in an EU member state (2018–)
- Expert advice to a defendant in an €80m+ state aid damages claim (2018)
- Led Oxera's expert advice to Valencia football club in relation to an appeal of a state aid decision in front of the General Court (2016–20)
- Led the Oxera team advising a company in the telecoms sector on broadband state aid matters (2017–19)
- Expert evidence in front of the General Court on state aid matters (2017–20)
- Led the Oxera team advising a state-owned entity on state aid matters relating to a proposed equity injection (2018)
- Study for the European Commission on assessing the impact of aid on competition, as part of ex post evaluations of aid measures (2016–17)
- Submitted an expert opinion on the application of the MEOP for a large international client in front of the European courts (2016–17)
- Led the Oxera team advising a member state in relation to state aid matters relating to a research and development project (2017–)
- Led the Oxera team advising an investment agency on state aid compliance of loan arrangements for a European airport (2017)
- Led Oxera's state aid advice to a large sea port in the Netherlands (2016–17)
- Led the Oxera team advising a leading pharmaceutical company on fiscal incentives (2017)
- Led Oxera's state aid advice to an international investor in a motorsport facility, focusing on the MEOP assessment of a state guarantee on a loan (2016–17)
- Advised a client in the transport sector on the notification of rescue and restructuring aid (2016)
- Led Oxera's advice to airports in Italy in relation to the compatibility of investment aid and MEOP assessments of agreements with airlines (2016–18)
- Leading Oxera's state aid advice to Ryanair, including on cases in France, Germany and Spain (2011–20)
- Led the Oxera team advising a large airport on MEOP assessments of loan arrangements (2016)
- Prepared an expert report in relation to a state aid litigation case in Germany (2015–16)
- Led the Oxera team advising RWE and Drax in relation to the compatibility of aid for the conversion of coal power plants to biomass (2015–16)

- Advised an EU member state in Southern Europe on state aid issues in relation to the notification of long-term contracts for a new power plant (2015–16)
- Led Oxera's advice to the Health Insurance Authority on state aid matters under the SGEI framework (2012–17)
- Advised the European Commission on counterfactual scenarios to restructuring state aid (2009–10)

Selected publications

- Robins, N., Puglisi, L. and Yang, L. (2020), 'State Aid Tools to Tackle the Impact of COVID-19: What Is the Role of Economic and Financial Analysis?', *European State Aid Law Quarterly Journal*, 19:2, pp. 137–149.
- Robins, N. (2019), 'Tax rulings: An overview of EU state aid cases', *Concurrences' e-Competitions Special Issue Tax rulings*, 12 June.
- Robins, N. and Geldof, H. (2018), 'Ex Post Assessment of the Impact of State Aid on Competition', *European State Aid Law Quarterly Journal*, 17:4, pp. 494–508.
- Robins, N. (2017), 'Assessing state aid in the beautiful game', *Global Sports Law & Taxation Reports*, 8:2, 2017/17, June, pp. 26–30.
- Shamsi, S., Solomon, P. and Robins, N. (2017), 'Compensatory measures in the banking sector', chapter 6, in F.-C. Laprévotte, J. Gray and F. de Cecco (eds), *Research Handbook on State Aid in the Banking Sector*, Edward Elgar Publishing.
- Robins, N. and Geldof, H. (2017), 'The Ryanair Charleroi judgment: What Is Its Legacy?', in C. Buts and J.L. Buendía Sierra (eds), *Milestones in State Aid Case Law*, Ilexion.
- Robins, N. and Kavanagh, J. (2017), 'Introduction to State Aid Law and Policy', in K. Bacon (ed.), *European Union Law Of State Aid*, Oxford University Press.
- Robins, N. and Chakma, T. (2016), 'State Aid in Energy under the Spotlight: The Implications of the Hinkley Point Decision', *European State Aid Law Quarterly*, 15:2, pp. 247–57.

Qualifications

- MSc Economics and Finance, Warwick Business School, UK
- BSc Business Economics with Computing, University of Surrey, UK