

Finance in Common Summit: responsAbility, supported by FM0 and EIB, Commits to Gender Equality: Climate fund qualifies for the 2X Challenge



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During the [Finance in Common Summit](#), responsAbility Investments, a leading Swiss sustainable asset manager, commits to apply a gender lens to its investments through its climate fund. With this commitment, the [climate fund](#), a private debt fund addressing lack of access to clean power primarily in Sub-Saharan Africa and South and South-East Asia, qualifies for the [2X Challenge](#). **The 2X Challenge** is a leading initiative deploying and mobilizing capital to empower women and enhance their economic participation in emerging markets.

The fund qualified for the 2X Challenge by meeting the Employment Criteria with at least 50% of its portfolio companies actively improving and providing quality employment for women. The energy sector is one of the least gender diverse sectors with only 32% of the workforce being women (IRENA 2019). Applying a gender lens will help the climate fund ensure that female talent is attracted and retained, and that they can contribute to this growing

industry.

responsAbility is supported by FMO, the Dutch entrepreneurial development bank, and the European Investment Bank (EIB). FMO is a member of the [2X Challenge](#) and the EIB has adopted the 2X Challenge Criteria, which aims to advance opportunities for women through enterprise support, leadership, and career progression, quality employment, and products/services that enhance women's economic participation. The 2X Challenge aims to identify eligible companies directly or through financial intermediaries that are committed to one or more of these areas. It exceeded its target of \$3bn in commitments in June 2020.

"We applaud and support responsAbility's commitment to apply a gender-smart investment lens to its climate fund and to joining the 2X Challenge," said **Jorim Schraven, Director Impact and ESG at FMO, the Dutch development bank.** "We see responsAbility's climate fund setting an example by supporting women's economic empowerment in the energy sector, and we are looking forward to partnering together to deliver towards the climate action and gender equality SDGs."

[Thomas ÖSTROS](#), Vice-President of the European Investment Bank (EIB) said: "Supporting gender smart investment is smart economics. It is vital to enhance business productivity and to catalyse economic growth, social cohesion and social justice. As the EU bank, together with our partners, we are committed to ensure that our investment benefit all parts of our communities equally. I am very proud to be supporting responsAbility's climate fund with FMO, which qualified today for the 2X Challenge."

Antoine Prédour, Head of Climate Finance at responsAbility commented that, "Success always includes a holistic outlook and I am proud to be part of this initiative. It's about time that gender equality is being considered a must, no matter the type of investment."

responsAbility is piloting a gender smart investing framework for its fund to promote the advancement of gender equity and other social and environmental outcomes for the benefit of its businesses. To do so, it receives technical assistance from Power Africa, and advisory services from leading impact and gender advisors Sagana and Catalyst at Large.

Blog: [Moving the Gender Equality Needle: A personal Story from the Energy Sector](#)

[FRA and eu-LISA strengthen cooperation](#)

The plan focuses on joint activities across a range of areas from 2020 through to 2022. These include: the exchange of information, expertise and best practices; policy coordination; training Member States on the use of

border management IT systems; data protection; and communication and events.

The plan builds on a [cooperation agreement](#) signed between both agencies on 6 July 2016.

[Press release – EP Today](#)



EU4Health Programme

To fill gaps exposed by COVID-19 and ensure health systems can cope with threats to public health, MEPs are expected to reiterate their support for a strengthened EU health programme. During talks on the next EU long-term budget, Parliament's negotiating team succeeded in securing an additional €3.4 billion for the programme (€5.1 billion in total for 2021-2027). The vote will take place on Friday.

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Investing in the Green Deal

MEPs will debate Parliament's contribution to the Sustainable European Investment Plan that would allow a smooth transition to a carbon-neutral EU in 2050. MEPs will emphasise the need for investments to reduce economic and ecological disparities between member states and boost competitiveness, creating sustainable and high quality jobs. The vote takes place on Friday.

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COVID-19 vaccinations

In the morning, MEPs will debate with Commissioner Stella Kyriakides the criteria and conditions for the EU purchase of COVID-19 vaccinations. They are also due to receive answers on how to ensure equal access to safe, effective, and affordable vaccines everywhere, for anyone who needs them.

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In brief

New first Vice-President. Roberta Metsola (EPP) from Malta has been put forward as candidate for first Vice-President, replacing Mairead McGuinness who took up the post of European Commissioner. Since no other candidate was nominated, she will be elected by acclamation.

COVID-19 measures and European values. From 08:30, MEPs will quiz the Commission on the impact that national measures taken to tackle the COVID-19 pandemic have had on EU values. A resolution will be put to the vote on Friday.

Votes

The **first voting session** lasts from 09:30 to 10:45, results will be announced at 13:00.

MEPs will elect a new first Vice-President and vote on amendments on the EU Budget 2021.

The **second voting session** lasts from 14:30 to 15:45, with results announced at 18.15.

MEPs will cast their **final vote** on the 2021 budget and will vote **amendments** on:

- the EU4Health programme
- the Sustainable Europe Investment Plan.

[Press release – MEPs update role of](#)

European Network of Public Employment Services



On Wednesday, Parliament approved the informal agreement on the enhanced cooperation between Public Employment Services (PES) across the EU with 627 votes in favour, 28 against and 31 abstentions.

This vote extends the Network's mandate until 31 December 2027, while also compelling the Commission to submit an evaluation report by the end of September 2026 to assess the Network's achievements.

MEPs call for a more resilient Network, capable of modernising and strengthening national PES by making them use public funds more effectively and more efficiently. Network members need to develop joint initiatives, which would also facilitate the exchange of information and best practices, MEPs stress.

Although European Union financial support for the Network should continue in accordance with the [2021-2027 Multiannual Financial Framework](#), Parliament suggests funding PES at national level as well. Member states are now encouraged to provide PES with the necessary financial and human resources to address challenges such as the digitalisation of the economy and changing work patterns.

MEPs emphasise that the Network's approach must be all-inclusive, linking its objectives with the implementation of the [European Pillar of Social Rights](#), a socially-just transition to a green economy, and meeting the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

Background

PES are the main agencies that execute employment policies supporting jobseekers to integrate into the labour market. They help match supply with

demand in the labour market through information, placement, and active support services at local, national, and European levels.

EU-wide collaboration between PES started in 1997 and, in 2014, the [European Network of Public Employment Services](#) (“the Network”) was formally established, with a mandate running until 31 December 2020. The Network is now part of the [EU’s employment policy framework](#).

[Press release – Parliament backs the renewed fisheries partnership with Senegal](#)



The text was approved with 524 votes in favour, 47 against and 115 abstentions.

Negotiations for a new five-year protocol began on 19 July 2019, and the [agreed Sustainable Fisheries Partnership](#) has applied provisionally since it was signed on 18 November 2019.

The protocol provides tuna [fishing opportunities](#) for up to 28 freezer tuna seiners, ten pole-and-line vessels and five longliners from Spain, Portugal and France (10.000 tonnes per year), as well as black hake fishing opportunities for two Spanish trawlers (1.750 tonnes per year).

The annual EU financial contribution is €1.7 million, of which €800.000 represents a payment to access Senegal’s waters. The remaining €900.000 will provide sectoral support to implement Senegal’s fisheries policy. This will go towards improving fisheries control, developing fisheries research and

data collection, and providing health certification for fisheries products.

MEPs also adopted an accompanying resolution (583 votes in favour, 43 against and 60 abstentions), which recommends several priorities for sectoral support. These priorities include modernising fisheries control by updating satellite tracking of fishing vessels and using electronic logbooks, supporting Senegal's fight against illegal fishing by monitoring vessels in the port of Dakar more rigorously, and developing scientific capacity and data collection.

Background

The first ever EU bilateral fisheries agreements was signed with [Senegal](#), in 1979. It was a mixed agreement, implemented until 2006 using a series of protocols that gave EU vessels access to a wide range of fisheries resources. In 2014, it was reshaped into a tuna agreement with a demersal component (black hake), concluded for five years.