

## Netherlands: EIB finances OMO association's sustainable buildings

Today in Tilburg, the European Investment Bank (EIB) signed a financing agreement with the Ons Middelbaar Onderwijs (OMO) association. The EUR 60 million financing will enable OMO to undertake the sustainable refurbishment or new construction of a number of schools in the province of North Brabant.

In the coming years various new construction sites will be launched. In addition, individual school buildings will have to be refurbished and/or enlarged in the short term. In both the new construction and refurbishment works OMO will pay great attention to nearly zero-neutral public building requirements, such as energy efficiency and the creation of a healthy indoor environment.

"This is the first time that we support secondary education in the Netherlands" said EIB Vice-President **Pim van Ballekom**. "Having modern and adequate buildings stands in direct relation to students' learning performance and the Bank is very happy to be able to contribute to the creation of good facilities in which students can prepare for their future. For the EIB, energy efficiency is an important part of the fight against climate change and the buildings' expected performance was therefore one of the decisive factors in granting the loan."

OMO's CEO **Eugène Bernard** added: "Providing good education for our students – that is what drives us. And for that we need good facilities. In all our school buildings, we strive to ensure sustainability. Refurbishment and new construction projects like these require very substantial investment, so this loan is vital."

Because the EIB is a not-for-profit European institution it is frequently able to offer lower interest rates and longer maturities than those found in traditional financing. In OMO's case the loan has a maturity of 15 years.

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## Parking surface improvement – Riverside Drive #dundeewestend



PARKING  
IMPROVEMENTS

Earlier this year, [I advised](#) that a positive by-product of the flooding

defence works now nearing completion along Riverside Drive was that my request to have the long unmade parking area to the west of the above area would be properly surfaced for the first time, greatly increasing the amount of parking with a quality surface.

The council's Head of Design & Property and City Engineer has now updated me :

**"Half of the area has been surfaced with bituminous material and formally marked out as a car park providing 65 spaces within that area. This is in addition to the 26 spaces at the Bridgeview Café area.**

**In the other half to the west, which is yet to be opened as a further overflow car park of a similar capacity, the surface is to be sub-base material as per the Yeaman Shore car park. If required in the future, the area to the west can be formally surfaced and marked out.**

**The contractor is currently using the sub-base area to the west for storage and still has some finishing work to the sub-base to complete."**

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## **Parliamentary votes on the EU Withdrawal Bill**

The government has won all but one of the votes on the Bill. The most important vote, the one to approve Clause 1 which repeals the 1972 European Communities Act, passed by 318 to 68, as Labour accepted they needed to allow the repeal to permit Brexit.

On Wednesday Amendment 7 passed against the government's wishes. The argument was one of detail, not of principle. Both government and its critics accepted that Parliament is back in charge over Brexit. Both accepted that any UK/EU Agreement which might be reached should be voted on in Parliament. If Parliament is content with such an Agreement it will then need primary legislation to bring it into effect.

So why was there a disagreement at all? The opposition did not accept Ministerial assurances, and wanted to write their own text into the Bill to reflect the common understanding. The government offered to produce a compromise at Report stage, but Parliament wanted to get on with it.

Underlying this fairly technical debate was a series of other agendas. The Liberal Democrats openly seek to delay and disrupt Brexit as they wish to reverse the public decision. Many Remain supporting Labour MPs want to slow down and water down Brexit because they do not really accept the judgement of the people. Practically every Labour MP would like to defeat the government, as that is a usual wish of Oppositions. Conservative MPs who voted similarly can best make their own case as to why they did so.

There is now discussion of the government amendment to place the date of exit in the Bill. I hope the government do continue with this amendment, and work to ensure its passage. I recommend it for a reason which ought to appeal to most MPs, whether Remain or Leave voters. We need the date in the Bill to ensure legal continuity. Parliament passed legislation to notify the EU of our withdrawal under Article 50. That Article makes clear we will leave automatically on 29 March 2019, two years from the letter. It is therefore vital that we have in place a proper legal framework for that event.

Labour MPs now say that we might instead request the permission of the other 27 to stay in the EU for longer, to assist the negotiations. It is difficult to see why we would be able to negotiate a good deal on April 1st 2019 that we had not negotiated in the 2 years since we sent the letter. It is important not to hold out the idea of delay to slow down the talks. Nor should we assume that the other 27 would all individually consent to the UK staying in on current terms for a further period to try to get a better deal.

This would be a more difficult vote for Labour MPs to oppose, given that it is central to ensuring legal certainty and confirming EU employment law for example in UK law. Given also the enthusiasm of the government's critics for Parliamentary democracy, surely our leaving date is worthy of primary legislation.

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## **Vice-President of India, Shri M. Venkaiah Naidu launches the New Delhi Edition of Marathi daily 'Lokmat'**

The Vice-President of India, Shri M. Venkaiah Naidu launched the New Delhi Edition of Marathi daily 'Lokmat' at a function here today. Speaking on the occasion the Vice President said the media has great power to influence the people and the Fourth Estate should use this freedom of expression to spread harmony and contribute to the nation's development

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## **Government holds All Party Meet ahead**

# of Winter Session of Parliament beginning tomorrow

Addressing floor leaders of parties in the Rajya Sabha and Lok Sabha here today, ahead of Winter Session of Parliament beginning tomorrow,

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