

EIB Group increases investment in Slovenia to €254 million despite COVID-19 crisis



- The European Investment Bank, a part of the EIB Group, increases investment in the Slovenian economy by 20% to €221 million; total EIB investments in the country reach €7.21 billion
- The European Investment Fund's €33 million is the second-highest investment volume in Slovenia in the last five years
- Increase of EIB Advisory Services' activities; to date, JASPERS alone has attracted €3.4 billion into Slovenia's economy
- EFSI is expected to mobilise close to a billion euros in investment in the Slovenian economy.

The European Investment Bank Group provided €254 million in Slovenia during 2020 in loans, equity and guarantees in Slovenia, an increase at the Group level of €4 million compared to the previous year. The two parts of the EIB Group, the European Investment Bank (EIB) and the European Investment Fund (EIF), invested €221 million and €33 million respectively.

The EIB Advisory Services continued to help public and private promoters in Slovenia develop projects in a wide range of areas such as sustainable urban mobility, agriculture and agrifood, climate action, and energy efficiency. EIB also provided financial advisory support to innovative companies in Slovenia to find the best funding options for their R&D programmes and tangible investments.

EIB Vice-President Lilyana Pavlova, who is in charge of operations in Slovenia, said: "In 2020, EIB Group investments in Slovenia focused mostly on the economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as reinforcing long-term economic sustainability of Slovenia. Our investments helped make Slovenia more resilient and improved the quality of life and doing business in the country. We are also proud to have contributed to further modernisation of key infrastructure in the country. In 2021, the Bank will focus on COVID-19 recovery, climate action and sustainable, circular economy. I look forward to working with our Slovenian partners to unlock multi-billion investment opportunities stemming from these initiatives."

Andrej Sircelj, Minister of Finance in the Government of the Republic of Slovenia, said: "Due to the adopted anti-corona measures, we ensured a relatively small decline in employment and maintained the existence of many companies in the market. With this, we established a good basis for our exit strategy to achieve a rapid restart of the economy. In addition to the recovery, the exit strategy will provide an additional impetus for the economy to reach a higher level of competitiveness. This will reflect in higher growth, development and, consequently, also the well-being of our people."

EIB increases investment in Slovenia by 20%, the highest investment volume in five years

EIB lending in Slovenia grew for the third year in a row and reached the highest investment volume in five years. The EU bank recorded a 20% increase of its activities volume in Slovenia year-on-year, supporting projects in telecommunications, energy and transport.

Lending to (i) *Telekom Slovenije's* high-speed internet network expansion (€100 million), (ii) DARS's Karavanke tunnel upgrade (€90 million), and (iii) Elektro Maribor's energy distribution (€31 million) increased total EIB investments in the country to €7.21 billion (since 1977).

Over the past ten years alone, the EIB has invested €3.73 billion in Slovenia – 32% of the total investment volume between 2010 and 2020 went to credit lines for local small and medium-sized companies, 25% to the Slovenian energy sector, and 13% to the transport and composite infrastructure sectors, respectively.

Other sectors of the Slovenian economy have also benefited from EIB investments, including urban development (4%), telecommunications and water and sewerage (3% each), and industry, education and services (2% each).

EIF's second-highest investment volume in five years for innovation and competitiveness of local SMEs

The European Investment Fund contributed to the local economy to the tune of €33 million. The Fund invested €3 million through equity operations and €30 million in guarantees, making 2020 the second most successful year for the EIF in Slovenia in the last five years.

Since 2016, the EIF has invested close to €100 million in equity (€53 million), guarantees (€40.1 million) and inclusive finance (EUR 6.5million). EIF activities in 2020 reinforced and supported innovation and competitiveness of Slovenian small- and medium-enterprises.

European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI) attracts close to a billion euros into the Slovenian economy

Over the past six years, the EFSI (a joint initiative of the European Commission and the EIB launched to overcome investment gaps in the EU) made a meaningful impact in Slovenia. The EFSI has supported more than 2 500 SMEs in Slovenia, sustaining approximately 36 000 jobs and mobilising €996 million in investments in the Slovenian economy, according to the EIB methodology.

EIB Advisory Services help Slovenia attract more than €3.4 billion in investment, €1.14 billion in EU grants

The Advisory Services of the European Investment Bank continued to support Slovenia's project development and attract EU funding and grants. Since 2006, Joint Assistance to Support Projects in European Regions (JASPERS) Advisory Service alone supported preparation of investment projects worth €3.4 billion of which €1.14 billion was paid out in EU grants.

In 2020, EIB Advisory Services engaged with the country in **social outcomes contracting**, an innovative form of procuring social services based on outcomes rather than outputs. Support was provided for the assessment of **financing gaps for the agriculture and agrifood sectors** in Slovenia. This activity will strengthen the Slovenian EAFRD managing authority's planning and programming and increase the use of financial instruments in the EU's Common Agriculture Policy Strategic Plan for the 2021-2027 period.

The EIB also provided a technical assistance grant of up to **€2.4 million** for the preparation of investments to **improve urban transport** in Slovenia through **sustainable urban mobility schemes**.

Investing in preparedness, planning and increased resilience of Slovenia

EIB Advisory Services also committed to helping Slovenia mitigate the negative effects of climate change, including via preparation of a project pipeline for flood risk management and drafting of a national strategy and guidance for climate proofing.

Support for the recovery of Slovenia's economy from COVID-19

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic and its effects on the economy, the EIB Group is working with local banks on repurposing and extending existing SME and mid-cap loans to support companies hardest hit during the pandemic.

In partnership with Slovenian financial institutions, new operations are being considered to unlock new sources of financing for SMEs and mid-caps operating in the agriculture, manufacturing and services sectors. Loans for Slovenian local authorities in the fields of infrastructure, energy efficiency and the knowledge economy are also part of the negotiations.