

Germany: Investment Plan for Europe – EIB grants financing to Viking Heat Engines

The European Investment Bank (EIB) will provide financing of up to EUR 30m to Viking Heat Engines (VHEs), a Norwegian green tech company with main operations in Germany. VHEs develops and commercialises technologies that make it possible for industries to turn their waste heat into usable energy. The transaction with Viking Heat Engines was made possible by the support of the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI). EFSI is the central pillar of the [Investment Plan for Europe](#), under which the EIB Group and the European Commission aim to act as strategic partners to boost the competitiveness of the European economy.

Ambroise Fayolle, Vice-President of the EIB responsible for Germany, commented: “Today, more than 50 per cent of the world’s energy generated is wasted as heat*, making this an extremely attractive renewable energy source. The development and dissemination of VHEs’ technology contributes significantly to energy efficiency and the circular economy – two areas, which are of utmost importance for the EU bank.”

“Supporting VHEs is also a perfect demonstration of the real benefits that the EU bank, with the support of the Juncker Plan, can provide to start-ups. Innovative small companies like VHEs are the basis for future growth and jobs in Europe. We, at the EIB, are therefore very keen to accompany these start-ups on their way into industrialization,” he added.

Maroš Šefčovič, European Commission Vice-President for the Energy Union, said: “EFSI has already mobilised hundreds of billions of euros, investing in innovative projects and concrete solutions. Viking Heat Engines is a perfect example of a project which is smart, sustainable, profitable, and above all, disruptive: instead of energy going to waste, it turns waste into energy.”

Helge Valeur, COO and CFO at Viking Heat Engines, underlined: “The EU is leaning forward and taking a stance in supporting what may be extremely important technologies for reducing CO2 emissions in the future. The fact that EIB is supporting us is a fantastic proof of how far we have come and that we have a promising future ahead.”

*Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory and the US Department of Energy

EU Syria Trust Fund: new assistance package worth €150 million adopted to support Syrian refugees and host communities

Projects will support the most affected municipalities in the region, agricultural livelihoods and food security, school construction, the upgrading of waste-water systems in areas with high refugee concentration, as well as refugee protection, research and advocacy. The newly adopted assistance package brings the overall amount of projects committed under the Trust Fund to €1.2 billion.

EU Commissioner for European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations Johannes **Hahn** commented: *“The actions adopted today by the EU Trust Fund will substantially boost local service delivery and economic development for refugees and host communities in the region. With €223 million mobilised by the Trust Fund for Lebanon and Jordan this year alone, the European Union continues to demonstrate its resolve to respond to the needs arising from the Syria conflict, and stand side by side with the refugees and the countries hosting them under difficult conditions”.*

The assistance package was adopted today at the EU Trust Fund Board meeting. The board brought together the European Commission, members of the European Parliament, EU Member States and representatives of Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey and the World Bank to support Syrian refugees and host communities in the region.

The new €150 million aid package includes the following actions:

- **€53 million** to support the construction of 10 primary and secondary schools in Jordan and the extension of wastewater networks in areas most affected by the refugee influx;
- **€40 million** to strengthen municipalities in Lebanon and governorates in Iraq to improve service delivery, facilitate local economic development and access to municipal investments;
- **€25 million** to strengthen agricultural livelihoods and food security among vulnerable refugees and rural communities in Lebanon and Jordan.
- **€20 million** for the EU Regional Development and Protection Programme II (RDPP II) to enable better protection, research and advocacy towards finding innovative aid solutions to the protracted displacement in Iraq, Jordan and Lebanon;
- **€12 million** to assist Serbia in providing food security and protection needs of migrants and refugees in reception centres.

Background

Since its establishment in December 2014, an increasing share of the EU's

support to help Syrian refugees and support Syria's neighbouring countries cope with the refugee crisis is provided through the [EU Regional Trust Fund in Response to the Syrian crisis](#). The Trust Fund reinforces the integrated EU aid response to the crisis and primarily addresses longer term resilience and early recovery needs of Syrian refugees and host communities and their administrations in neighbouring countries such as Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey.

The Trust Fund is a key instrument to deliver the EU's pledges for the crisis made at the London conference on Syria in 2016 and the Brussels conference in April 2017, and also underpins the special EU Compacts agreed with Jordan and Lebanon to assist them in the protracted refugee crisis. With the new package adopted now, the Fund has delivered in 2017 a total of €132 million for Lebanon and €91 million for Jordan, more than initially foreseen.

Overall, €1.3 billion have been mobilised and pledged from the EU budget and contributions of 22 EU Member States and Turkey. Of the total volume of funds, €1.2 billion have now been committed (86%) and €544 million have been contracted by the Trust Fund with implementing partners for 29 projects on the ground.

Including the new decisions, the Fund's budget has been allocated to programmes supporting basic education and child protection, training and higher education, better access to healthcare, improved water and waste-water infrastructure, as well as support to resilience, women empowerment and fighting gender based violence, economic opportunities and social inclusion. The scope of the Fund also includes support to internally displaced persons in Iraq fleeing from the interlinked Syria/Iraq/Da'esh crisis, and to provide support in the Western Balkans to non-EU countries affected by the refugee crisis.

For More Information

[EU Regional Trust Fund in Response to the Syrian Crisis](#)

[Factsheet: EU Regional Trust Fund in Response to the Syrian Crisis](#)

[Fighting terrorism online: Remarks by Commissioners Avramopoulos and King at the Internet Forum](#)

Opening remarks by Commissioner Avramopoulos

Dear Ministers,

Representatives of the internet companies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to welcome you all to this third Ministerial EU Internet Forum. We are gathered here again today to reinforce further our work against terrorism on the internet. Because it is the internet that is the real battlefield against 21st century terrorism.

Da'esh may have lost its territorial centre of gravity, Raqqa – but on the internet it is still present. It is a presence which is clandestine and infectious, spreading from bogus social media accounts, from one platform to another, with a message of hate, a nihilist interpretation of Islam and detailed instructions on how to kill innocent citizens.

Most of the recent attacks in Europe and the US were hatched and executed from the inside: the attackers never travelled to Syria or Iraq. But most of them had been influenced, groomed and recruited to terrorism on the internet.

Da'esh was quick to capitalise on the advantages offered by the internet. Now, with the dramatic losses, it is suffering on the ground, its recruitment strategies are focussing almost exclusively on the virtual world.

We see more and more aggressive videos and messages on social media, targeting vulnerable groups and individuals in the West.

Since last year, we witnessed a rise in the volume of content being uploaded by Da'esh supporters based here, in Europe. So, while some of the recent attacks seem to have been carried out by "lone wolves", the viral spread of Da'esh's propaganda online proves that these attackers were anything but alone.

Against this backdrop, I am pleased that our joint political investment in this area since 2015 has now gone global.

Not surprisingly, over the last year, terrorism on the internet has been on the political agenda across Europe and the world: at the European Council, the G7 and the United Nations General Assembly.

This year, we also saw the establishment of the Global Internet Forum on Counter Terrorism, an initiative from industry, with support from the UN, whose first attendance here at the EU Internet Forum I warmly welcome.

What for me is the most satisfying is that the trustful cooperation we established here, is not about talking. It is about acting.

In Year 1, 2015, we established an efficient referral mechanism through Europol. 42,000 pieces of content were referred, and most of it removed.

In Year 2, 2016, the industry announced here its database of hashes, to make removals permanent and irreversible. 40,000 hashes now populate the database. Its impact can grow exponentially as more companies join it.

In Year 3, today, we concretely show in this Forum that we can harness Artificial Intelligence in the fight against terrorism. Facebook reports that it is now at 99% automated removals. Google/YouTube at 98%. Twitter at 95%.

For all this effort, I am thankful to the platforms that are here today, and have joined their forces with ours. This is our preferred way: to work together, with trust, and to continue working in this way to take our cooperation further.

There is a lot of room for improvement, for this cooperation to produce even better results, starting with the reporting from the companies, which must become more regular and more transparent.

The figures you give us are needed to assess and monitor our progress. And it is on the basis of those figures that we will make policy.

Then on the issue of the smaller companies – terrorist groups will always follow the path of least resistance. If the big three platforms are armed to the teeth, but all the smaller players cannot follow the arms race, we have lost the game.

Facebook, Twitter, YouTube: I urge you to work with smaller companies and help them set up their own Artificial Intelligence tools to detect terrorist content automatically.

We are always as strong as our weakest links.

I also urge you all, to share key information with Europol and law enforcement. We should not work in silos. Law enforcement is your ally in your efforts against terrorism on your platforms.

I also believe that alongside automation, we can all do better on referrals. Companies need to react faster to referrals from our Member States and Europol. It is feasible to reduce the time it takes to remove content to a few hours.

All these points are essential for further progress. This progress needs to be shown with actions and concrete facts and figures.

You know already very well that the progress we achieve here will feed into the wider debate on tackling illegal content online in the Digital Single Market. I repeat that my preferred approach is: trust, voluntary cooperation, concrete results.

But the Commission will make a decision at the latest by May next year on whether additional measures – including legislation – are required in order to better address the problem of illegal content on the internet.

I am confident that our shared commitment to this cooperation will make that unnecessary.

Ladies and Gentleman, I hope that we can have a frank and fruitful discussion today. I genuinely believe that by working together and by coordinating our

actions efficiently, we can make a difference and deliver the necessary impact against terrorism online.

Closing remarks by Commissioner King

It is important to remember why we are here today. The 38 jihadist attacks that struck the EU since August 2015 were not all due to online terror content. But internet propaganda has been the main push factor, inciting people to commit attacks, and instructing them how to do so.

Some Europeans, influenced by what they saw online, were persuaded to join Da'esh in Syria and Iraq; some of whom then returned to commit atrocities here, such as in Paris and Brussels.

Others did not even need to go so far: they got tips on how to build a bomb – and encouragement to do so – from the comfort of their own homes.

Faced with this, Member States governments feel under considerable pressure to act. Indeed, some have already begun work on legislation. For the Commission's part, as Commissioner Avramopoulos has said, we are not rushing into questions of legislation: we remain fully committed to the voluntary approach enshrined in this Forum. But, to recall what President Juncker said in his letter of intent to the Presidents of the European Parliament and of the Council, "we will monitor progress and assess whether additional measures are needed to ensure the swift and proactive detection and removal of illegal content on line, including possible legislative measures to complement the existing regulatory framework."

Today we have heard that things are moving in the right direction. Major companies are using automatic detection tools more. The database of hashes is up and running, and starting to be populated. Many pieces of content are on there – though we still need to understand their scale and importance. Member States are also investing in the capacity to refer content for takedown.

But we are not there yet. We are two years down the road of this journey: to reach our final destination we now need to speed up our work.

The first issue is how quickly content is removed. The longer illegal content stays undetected and online, the greater its reach, the more it can spread and grow.

The G7, European Council Conclusions and EU leaders have all pointed to removals within the "golden hour" as the collective goal.

The second issue is to improve how we monitor this work in a way to ensure consistency and transparency. The July action plan was a significant first step but the Forum needs consistent monitoring criteria to be able to assess progress. As it stands we do not have – for example – consistent figures on the speed of removal, so we do not know to what extent the "golden hour" objective is met. The Commission and Europol are ready to work with you, the industry, on this issue.

Third, detecting and removing illegal content is one thing; but all content

removed should be shared with law enforcement.

Finally, we need to extend the reach of this forum. Europol refers content to around 80 platforms. Mostly they are here today; certainly the most significant of them. I am delighted we have new members today, like WordPress. But not all of them are here. Small and medium-sized platforms can be exploited by terrorist propaganda too. All internet companies need to be part of this joint effort.

I hope we can return to these issues and more in a senior officials' meeting in February.

So I thank you all again for coming. This is corporate social responsibility for the digital age. I hope we can see your engagement and cooperation continue and develop over the months to come.

Filippo Spiezia elected Vice-President of Eurojust

□Yesterday, the College of Eurojust elected Mr Filippo Spiezia, National Member for Italy, as its new Vice-President for a three-year term. According to Article 28(2) of the Council Decision on Eurojust and Article 3(1) of the Rules of Procedure of Eurojust, the result of the election will be submitted to the Council for its approval. Mr Spiezia replaces former Eurojust Vice-President Ladislav Hamran, who was elected President in October.

Mr Spiezia, a public prosecutor for 28 years, started his professional career as a magistrate in 1990, and served as an anti-mafia public prosecutor since 2003. He has been responsible for investigations of organised crime, money laundering, THB, corruption, drug trafficking, fraud and cybercrime, first in Italy, and then as Deputy National Member for Italy at Eurojust between 2008 and 2012, at which time he became Deputy National Prosecutor at the National Anti-mafia and Anti-terrorism Directorate in Rome, dealing with international judicial cooperation and coordinating investigations of organised crime and terrorism. He returned to Eurojust as National Member in January 2016.

The author of many publications on legal issues, Mr Spiezia also trained judges, lectured and chaired working groups and teams dealing with analysis of criminal, legislative and strategic matters with the Council of Europe, the European Commission and the UNODC. In 2003, he was awarded the Falcone and Borsellino prize for his book, *The trafficking and exploitation of human beings*.

After his election, Mr Spiezia said: *'I am deeply honoured by this vote of confidence from my colleagues at Eurojust. I am inspired by the sense of honest and open collaboration shown by the new President, the College of*

Eurojust and the Administrative Director. I fully believe that a spirit of collegiality, coupled with experience, skill and enthusiasm, are the keys for Eurojust to fulfil its mission to support judicial authorities in their fight against serious organised crime and terrorism.'

Photo: © Eurojust. High-resolution photo available from Eurojust.

For interviews and further information, please contact:

EUROJUST

Corporate Communications Office

E-mail: media@eurojust.europa.eu

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Corporate Communications Office

E-mail: media@eurojust.europa.eu

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