

ESMA advises Commission on fees for trade repositories

ESMA, in order to ensure a level playing field across EMIR and SFTR, is also proposing some changes to the way ESMA's fees for TRs are calculated under the European Market Infrastructure Regulation (EMIR).

TRs have to pay fees on specific administrative actions such as registration, extension of registration or recognition, and an annual fee for on-going supervision which is proportionate to the level of turnover of the TRs. ESMA also advises to simplify the way of determining the turnover of TRs for the purposes of calculating the annual supervisory fees by including revenues only and excluding activity figures.

ESMA also proposes lower fees in the case of extension of registration under SFTR, or in the case of concurrent application under both regimes. ESMA has also proposed the calculation of fees for recognition of third country TRs and the reimbursement of the cost to NCAs in the case of delegation of tasks.

Statement on the ban of the activities of Jehovah's Witnesses in Russia

Yesterday's decision of the Supreme Court of the Russian Federation to ban the activities of the Administrative Centre of Jehovah's Witnesses in Russia on grounds of "extremism" could make it possible to launch criminal prosecutions against Jehovah's Witnesses for mere acts of worship.

Jehovah's Witnesses, like all other religious groups, must be able to peacefully enjoy freedom of assembly without interference, as guaranteed by the Constitution of the Russian Federation as well as by Russia's international commitments and international human rights standards.

The European Union continues to promote freedom of religion or belief as a right to be exercised by everyone everywhere, based on the principles of equality, non-discrimination and universality.

Investment Plan for Europe: EUR 150 million to finance green shipping

The European Investment Bank and Dutch bank ABN Amro will sign an agreement today to support investments for greening the European shipping fleet. This framework is the first with a financial institution in the Netherlands and is supported by the "Connecting Europe Facility" and was made possible by the "EFSI" (European Fund for Strategic Investments), central pillar of the Juncker Commission's Investment Plan for Europe.

The framework guarantee agreement will ensure that promoters of sustainable projects in the maritime transport sector can benefit from favourable financial terms as a result of the EIB's AAA rating. The facility is open for both retrofitting of existing shipping as well as for projects that envisage the construction of new vessels with a green innovation aspect, it applies to both inland shipping and seagoing operators.

"The Bank received a clear signal from the market that there was a financing gap for the greening of shipping fleets." said EIB vice-president Pim van Ballekom. "By allowing the EIB to take more risk, the Investment Plan for Europe enabled us to create a new instrument to support shipping companies in complying with the European sustainability standards. This is the second agreement under a EUR 750 million EFSI Green Shipping Guarantee Programme, which was set up after numerous discussions with Dutch counterparts from the public and private sector. We are really looking to ship owners to make use of it so that we can implement it in other countries as well."

Daphne de Kluis, CEO Commercial Clients ABN AMRO added: "We are very happy we can support the Juncker plan through this initiative. The EIB facility is an extra stimulus for ABN AMRO to stimulate our shipping clients to look for sustainable solutions. It fits perfectly with our other efforts to promote sustainable solutions in this important sector."

EU Commissioner for Transport Violeta Bulc said: "Financing the transition to more sustainable transport systems and networks requires a commitment to invest. Today's agreement demonstrates that the Investment Plan can play an important role in mobilising private finance to support this transition."

This sector risk bearing programme is meant for projects that will improve the environmental performance of transport vessels in terms of diminishing the emission of pollutants as well as increasing fuel efficiency. Projects should be proposed to the ABN Amro Bank and will be subject to their eligibility and risk acceptance criteria.

[Register for the open AHAW meeting](#)

Registration is open for observers to attend the [10-11 May plenary meeting](#) of EFSA's Scientific Panel on Animal Health and Welfare, in Parma, Italy. If you are unable to attend the meeting in person but would like to follow the open sessions, you can watch via our dedicated web stream. Registration closes on 1 May for people who wish to attend the meeting in person and on 4 May for those who would like to follow proceedings online.

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