

Media advisory – Press briefing on Agriculture and Fisheries Council of 19 and 20 October 2020



The **press briefing** ahead of the Agriculture and Fisheries Council will take place on **Thursday, 15 October at 10.30**. This briefing will be “off the record”.

Please note that this press briefing will take place remotely.

In order to participate and ask questions, EU accredited journalists should register using [this link](#).

Those who already registered for the previous press events in the field of agriculture and fisheries do not need to do it again.

- **Deadline for the registration: Thursday, 15 October at 09.30**

Further instructions will be sent to all registered participants shortly after the deadline.

[Visit the meeting page](#)

Article – Tax committee chair: “Citizens demand action and this committee will be their voice”



What will Parliament's new committee on taxation – FISC – be focusing on?

We're at a critical stage. Governments are now – rightly – spending billions to save lives and livelihoods. But the debts incurred will have to be repaid. After the last crisis, we made the double mistake of austerity and increased taxes on the middle class. Only the richest remained out of shot. This time will have to be different. By looking at ways to tax those that are not paying their fair share – the richest and the big corporations – we can get out of this crisis in a fair way and maintain the trust of our citizens. Corporates alone avoid between €50 billion and €190 billion in tax each year. FISC will work to fight this injustice at the heart of our economic system. We will also work to make our tax system a force for sustainability. By using taxes to make polluters pay, we can stimulate innovation and clean up our environment.

Previously, tax committees in the Parliament have been inquiry committees, set up to look into topical scandals such as Lux Leaks and the Panama Papers. Why is it necessary to have a permanent committee?

Since I started in the European Parliament five years ago, we've had tax committees almost permanently. However, after they published their report, they were dissolved only to be re-established after yet another tax scandal. With this permanent committee, we can continue the valuable work of the previous committees in terms of fact-finding and raising public awareness, but we can also look at the long-term. We can, for example, engage in lasting relationships with national parliaments and other international organisations. In this way, the FISC committee will truly become the European

hub for debate on tax issues.

The EU doesn't have many competences in the area of taxation. What difference can your committee make?

As the previous taxation committees showed, much of what is going on can't stand the light of day. By simply pushing for transparency, laying facts in the open for everyone to see, we will further push the momentum for change. Citizens demand action, and this committee will be their voice in the European arena.

In recent years, there have been many revelations and leaks on global tax evasion, tax avoidance and money laundering. How do you think the EU has responded?

There has inevitably been a gap between the EU's approach to its members and to non-member states. The list of non-EU tax havens has been useful in putting pressure on well-known tax havens. It is far from perfect, as the recent de-listing of the Cayman Islands shows. It is, however, a start. For EU countries, on the other hand, pressure had to come primarily from the European Parliament. In March 2019, we labelled seven EU countries, including my home country of the Netherlands, as tax havens. This naming and shaming greatly helped shift the conversation in the Netherlands, with more and more of my compatriots accepting that tough reforms are needed. These seven EU tax havens cost the governments of other EU member states over €40 billion each year. We cannot let this continue and I trust that, in the context of the Recovery and Resilience Facility, pressure on these governments will grow. The Commission should be very clear: EU tax havens should reform their tax system, or their recovery and resilience plans will not be approved.

[The EU Bank supports European regions and cities in their response to the Covid-19 crisis and for a green recovery](#)



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- **Amid the Covid-19 pandemic, the European Investment Bank (EIB) makes lending more flexible and faster for cities and regions in order to meet urgent financing needs**
- **New financing support to regions and cities announced for health sector, infrastructure, urban regeneration, SMEs and climate action and more to come**

In response to the coronavirus pandemic, the EIB quickly deployed a support plan to support the European economy and help meet the most urgent financing needs of regions and municipalities. Recognizing the key role of cities and regions in mitigating the pandemic's effects, the EIB approved exceptional measures to enable a faster approval and disbursement of new loans and allow more flexibility for the use and increase of ongoing loans.

To date, the EIB has approved nearly €25 billion in new financing for COVID-19-related investment to improve public health, strengthen public services and support affected companies. A number of these loans have been or will be directly signed with regional and municipal authorities.

Ahead of and during the [18th European Week of Regions and Cities](#), the EU Bank announced new support for regional and urban projects across Europe including:

- [€50 million loan](#) to the Autonomous Community of Navarre (Spain) to strengthen its response to the health crisis caused by Covid-19 and adapt health infrastructure
- [CZK 1.3 billion loan](#) (€48 million) with the region of Central Bohemia

(Czech Republic) to improve healthcare and other key infrastructures in the transport, education and cultural sectors

- [New scheme](#) with Bank Gospodarstwa Krajowego in Poland to support sustainable projects in cities with a population below 100,000 inhabitants.
- [€25 million loan](#) with Fund FLAG to promote urban regeneration and rehabilitation in cities across Bulgaria
- [€300 million loan](#) to the Lazio region (Italy) for infrastructure, environment and post COVID-19 recovery.
- [€100 million loan](#) to Croatian Bank for Reconstruction and Development (HBOR) to support faster recovery of Croatian SMEs and mid-caps from COVID-19

EIB Vice-President Lilyana Pavlova said: *“In the wake of the coronavirus pandemic, municipalities and regional governments are the first in line, as the public entities closest to the population, providing information, healthcare and social services. In the long-term, their public investments are also crucial to sustain employment and the local economy. Recognizing their crucial role, the EIB has quickly adapted its processes to meet the financing needs of cities and regions and is fully committed to support the investments that will help them recover and prosper.”*

During the European Week of Regions and Cities, EIB President Werner Hoyer will address regional and local leaders on 14 October 2020 at the [140th plenary session](#) of the European Committee of the Regions. The EIB will also participate in a number of [sessions](#) to present its toolkit of advisory and financial services for municipalities and regional governments.

The President of the Committee of the Regions and Governor of Central Macedonian Region (Greece), Apostolos Tzitzikostas, said: *“Every day regional and local authorities work to protect our people, save jobs and support local economies. The European Investment Bank proves to be a strong ally in their endeavours, making its lending capacities and expertise available across Europe. We must intensify our cooperation and ensure that the EU financial instruments benefit all local communities and reach every corner of our Union. Together, we can help regional and local authorities make full use of EIB funds to address our people concrete concerns and pave the way to a resilient, sustainable and fair recovery.”*

[EIB approves € 5.1 billion for COVID-19 resilience, clean energy, rail transport and urban development](#)



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- **EIB Group launches European Guarantee Fund COVID-19 business financing: € 2.6 billion EIB and EIF funding to mobilise € 11.3 billion investment**
- **€ 1.9 billion for COVID-19 health, medical and economic resilience**
- **€ 2.1 billion for private sector investment with global financing partners**
- **€ 1.3 billion for clean energy, energy efficiency and water investment**

The European Investment Bank (EIB) today approved € 5.1 billion of new financing to support investment by companies most impacted by COVID-19, alongside backing clean energy, water, sustainable transport and urban development. This includes up to € 1 billion COVID-19 support backed by the new European Guarantee Fund that has now started its operational activity.

The EIB also backed an additional EUR 994 million for medical research, new hospitals and public health, private sector COVID-19 economic resilience lending schemes and financing to accelerate regional economic recovery following the pandemic.

Since the outbreak of COVID-19, the EIB has approved € 24.9 billion to enable public and private partners around the world to better tackle health, social and economic challenges.

“The winter has not even started, and we already face what looks like a second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic across Europe. Health systems are again under stress and we must fear that the situation will worsen in the coming months. In this situation, I am glad that the EIB Board has today agreed the first operation under the EIB Group’s new European Guarantee Fund, designed to help small and medium-sized companies to withstand this crisis. It follows the Board of our subsidiary, the European Investment Fund, who has approved first EGF financing on Monday. Launching the European Guarantee Fund is a key step in the EIB’s rapid response to COVID-19 – a response which saw the EIB Group so far approving nearly EUR 25 billion of high impact investment

essential to fight the pandemic and foster a rapid recovery in the months and years ahead”, said Werner Hoyer, President of the European Investment Bank.

Meeting by video conference, the EIB Board also agreed projects to improve access to clean energy, water, affordable housing and telecommunications across Europe, Africa and Asia.

European Guarantee Fund started its operational activity: EUR 2.6 billion of approvals for EUR 11.3 billion of mobilised investment

Financing agreed today includes the first programme loan under the new European Guarantee Fund (EGF), the EIB Group’s targeted support for companies and health investment in EU member states most impacted by COVID-19.

Under the Chairmanship of the EIB Vice President Dario Scannapieco, the EGF committee of contributor member states gave its green light to global authorisations for € 1 billion EIB lending (EIB Linked Risk Sharing product) and € 1.6625 billion EIF lending and equity products, of which 1.5 billion of global authorisations (800m Uncapped Guarantee, 140m Senior Private Credit Funds and 560m Target Fund Size Facility /Selective Loan Funds Facility).

The EGF Committee also approved a 162.5 million uncapped Guarantee to Banca Valsabbina, ensuring that small and medium-sized businesses, as well as larger corporations and the health sector, can access finance through local financial partners across Europe. The total EUR 2.6 billion EGF approvals aim to mobilise EUR 11.33 billion of total financing.

The EGF was established in April following a Eurogroup recommendation earlier that same month. 65% of EGF Investment will go to SMEs, whilst a maximum of 23% will go to companies with 250 or more employees. Up to 5% of the financing can go to public sector companies and entities active in the area of health or health-research or providing essential services related to the health crisis, next to another 7% of EGF-supported financing which can be allocated to venture and growth capital and venture debt in support of SMEs and midcaps.

€ 2.1 billion to support businesses facing COVID-19 challenges

As part of its regular business, the EIB approved more than EUR 2.1 billion for new, targeted financing programs to support entrepreneurs and companies. Access to financing will be enhanced by new schemes, to be managed by local financial partners and banking intermediaries, in Germany, Italy, Poland and Spain.

Outside Europe new cooperation with global partners approved today will support private sector investment in India, Morocco, Ghana and Zimbabwe and strengthen activity by microfinance institutions across Africa.

New support for small business in Zimbabwe in cooperation with local financial intermediaries represents the first EIB engagement to support private sector investment in the country since 1994.

€ 1.3 billion to transform access to clean energy and water in Europe and

Africa

Today's board meeting agreed to support new investment to increase access to clean energy, cut carbon emissions through improved energy efficiency and strengthen water infrastructure in regions faced with a changing climate.

This includes upgrading electricity distribution networks across Greek islands and mainland Greece to support the energy transition.

The EIB also approved financing to accelerate investment in small-scale water projects across Spain, including water stressed regions and to supply safe drinking water for the first time to 110,000 people in Malawi, a country highly vulnerable to the impacts of a changing climate

€ 381 million to improve sustainable transport in Poland and Ukraine

Regional and urban transport in Poland will be transformed through new EIB support for the Tri-City Fast Urban Railway connecting Gdańsk, Gdynia and Sopot and urban investment in Bielsko-Biała.

The EIB also agreed to support new investment to improve sustainable transport in towns across Ukraine. This will include new trolleybuses, trams, metro coaches and electric buses as well as upgrading existing infrastructure.

€ 764 million for education, health, social housing and urban development

School children, hospital patients and families will benefit from new schools, hospitals and social housing investment agreed by the EIB.

26 schools will be built or renovated in Malmö, the largest city in southern Sweden. Healthcare around the Dutch city of Hilversum will benefit from construction of the new Tergooi regional hospital.

New long-term EIB financing for social housing partners in Austria, Germany and the Netherlands will improve access to affordable energy efficient homes.

The EIB also agreed to support climate focused urban investment in Milan and regional development across Poland.

[Overview of projects approved by the EIB Board](#)

[Details on the European Guarantee Fund](#)

[Weekly schedule of President Charles](#)

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Monday 12 October 2020

11.00 Video conference with Prime Minister of Hungary Viktor Orbán
12.00 Phone call with Prime Minister of Greece Kyriakos Mitsotakis
12.30 Meeting with European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen
16.00 Phone call with President of Turkey Recep Tayyip Erdoğan
19.00 Meeting with former European Council President Donald Tusk

Tuesday 13 October 2020

10.00 Video conference with Prime Minister of Poland Prime Minister of Poland Mateusz Morawiecki
10.45 Video conference with Prime Minister of Sweden Stefan Löfven
16.15 Video conference with President of Romania Klaus Iohannis
17.30 Video conference with Chancellor of Austria Sebastian Kurz
18.45 Video conference with Prime Minister of Czechia Andrej Babiš

Wednesday 14 October 2020

12.00 Tripartite Social Summit video conference

Thursday 15 October 2020

European Council

Friday 16 October 2020

European Council