

Spain: COP 25 – Climate change – The EIB finances one of the largest solar plants



- Talayuela solar plant in Extremadura to produce renewable energy for around 150,000 households yearly
- CO₂ emissions will be reduced by more than 171 kt CO₂-e/year
- 400 workers to be employed during the construction phase
- The project sponsors are Encavis AG and Solarcentury
- The investment is supported by the Juncker Plan

During the UN Climate Change conference in Madrid, COP 25, the European Investment Bank (EIB) has announced that it has invested EUR 76.5 million in one of the largest solar projects in Spain, demonstrating its strong commitment in regards to the promotion of clean energy production in the country. The project is sponsored by Encavis AG, a leading independent producer of renewable energy, and Solarcentury, a global integrated solar power company, and comprises the construction and operation of a 300 MWp photovoltaic solar plant in the cohesion region of Extremadura, more specifically in the municipality of Talayuela. The transaction is supported by the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI), the main pillar of the Investment Plan for Europe, also known as the Juncker Plan.

At 300MWp, the Talayuela Solar plant will be one of the most powerful solar projects in Europe, capable of producing enough energy to power around 150,000 households per year at a very competitive price. Moreover, the project will contribute to reducing CO₂ emission by more than 171 kt CO₂-e/year and approximately 400 people will be employed during the construction

phase.

EIB Vice-President Emma Navarro, who is responsible for climate action at the Bank and for operations in Spain, said: *“As shown throughout COP 25, the EIB is highly committed to delivering on the fight against global warming. As the EU Climate Bank, we are ready to step up to the challenge. For this reason, we are pleased to support Spain’s huge renewable energy potential and help the country to meet its decarbonisation targets. Promoting solar energy leads to increasing energy independence and, more significantly, it means reducing the consequences of global warming.”*

European Commission Executive Vice-President Valdis Dombrovskis, responsible for An Economy that Works for People, said: *“For the second time this week we are announcing European Investment Bank financing for solar energy in Spain. With the support of the Investment Plan for Europe, a 300 megawatt solar energy plant will be built in Talayuela, Extremadura, which will produce enough clean energy to power 150,000 homes annually. Investing in renewable energies such as solar is crucial for achieving the Paris Climate Agreement goals and reaching climate neutrality by 2050”.*

Dr. Dierk Paskert, CEO of Encavis AG stated: *‘This project marks a milestone both for Encavis and for the Spanish’s renewable energy market, as it highlights the EU support to our growth strategy and it is the first long-term power purchase agreement (PPA) signed for a solar park without any support from feed-in tariffs. The conclusion of this PPA and the launch of the Talayuela solar park next year will take Encavis to a new level and will stimulate the market for comparable contracts in many countries.’*

Jose Miguel Ferrer, General Manager of Solarcentury in Iberia, commented: *“The financial close of Talayuela Solar is a major achievement for Solarcentury and Encavis AG, as well as a landmark deal that demonstrates the financial viability of Spain’s subsidy-free solar market. By demonstrating the long-term bankability of this large-scale project through the signing of our ground-breaking Power Purchase Agreement in September, we have secured the backing of two of Europe’s largest lenders, the European Investment Bank and Deutsche Bank, that share our vision for the project. With everything now in place, we look forward to beginning the construction of the project over the coming weeks.”*

The EUR 228m project has secured a project financing from the EIB and Deutsche Bank for an aggregate amount of c. EUR 165m, which reached financial close at the end of November. The Talayuela Solar Plant is one of the first *greenfield* renewable energy projects to be financed in Spain without any form of government/public support. The Project entered into a 10-year financial Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) in September 2019, which hedges the off-take price for approximately 75% of the volume of the production. Following these developments, Encavis AG has provided Solarcentury with a notice to begin construction of the plant, which is expected to be operational in the second half of 2020.

The Talayuela plant is going to have a significant impact on the Spanish renewable energy market, helping the Iberian country to meet its renewable

target of 20% of primary energy consumption to be generated by renewable sources by 2020. Moreover, the project contributes to the achievement of the Bank's Climate Action objectives as well as to meeting the European Commission's binding renewable energy target of at least [32%](#) of final energy consumption by 2030.

The EIB and climate crisis

The EIB is among the world's largest multilateral providers of climate finance. The Bank's goal is to be a leader in mobilising the finance needed to keep global warming to under 2 °C and limit temperature rises to 1.5 °C to meet the Paris Agreement objectives. On 14 November, the EIB Board of Directors approved its new climate objectives and the new energy lending policy. The Bank will gradually increase its financing for climate and environmental objectives up to 50% by 2025, to ensure that the EIB Group mobilises at least EUR 1 trillion by 2030 to promote investments helping to meet these objectives. It also announced its intention to align all EIB Group activities with the Paris Agreement. To this end, the EIB will cease financing fossil fuel-based projects from late 2021.

In 2018, the EIB provided almost EUR 1.3bn to support climate action in Spain by financing projects involving the development of cleaner means of transport and implementation of new, less polluting and more environmentally friendly production processes.

Background information

Solarcentury's mission is to make solar power mainstream. From homes and commercial rooftops to utility-scale, Solarcentury is making a meaningful difference in the fight against climate change by increasing the accessibility and production of solar power across the world. Over the past 20 years, Solarcentury's solar projects have generated over 3.5 billion kWh of clean electricity and saved over 1.5 million tonnes of CO₂ emissions from entering the atmosphere. In 2006, Solarcentury helped establish SolarAid, a charity which aims to combat climate change and poverty in the developing world by providing access to solar lights, while helping to eradicate the use of kerosene lamps in Kenya, Malawi, Uganda and Zambia. Solarcentury donates 5% of its net profits to SolarAid, which to date has enabled more than 10 million people across Africa to access safe, clean and sustainable solar light power.

Encavis AG (Prime Standard; ISIN: DE0006095003 / WKN: 609500) is a producer of electricity from renewable sources listed on the SDAX of Deutsche Börse. As one of the leading independent power generators (IPPs), Encavis acquires and operates solar parks and (onshore) wind farms in ten European countries. The plants for sustainable energy generation generate stable yields through guaranteed feed-in tariffs (FIT) or long-term power purchase agreements (PPA). Within the Encavis Group, Encavis Asset Management AG specializes in the area of institutional investors.

Migrant smuggling ring dismantled in France and Italy



11 December 2019

A criminal organisation smuggling approximately 1 000 migrants from Pakistan and India into various EU-countries was dismantled by the French and Italian authorities in good cooperation, with the support of Eurojust and Europol. One arrest was carried out in France and ten arrests in Italy, with two persons arrested on the basis of European Arrest Warrants. Eight premises were searched and ten phones and various documents were seized in Italy.

Eurojust held three coordination meetings to support the investigations in France and Italy and to arrange for the arrests. Eurojust financed and facilitated the setting up of a joint investigation team between the French Investigative Judge of the Specialised Jurisdiction of the Tribunal of Grand Instance of Lyon and the Prosecution Office of Torino.

The operation was concluded with the support of the OCRIEST and BMR 73 and 74 Services of the French National Border Police and the Polizia di Stato – Squadra Mobile of the Questura of Turin. Eurojust also helped to resolve outstanding jurisdictional issues. Europol provided additional support during the operation.

Authorities estimate that between 2018 and 2019, the organised criminal group earned a profit of EUR 1 million. In two places in Italy, safehouses were found, in which 34 irregular migrants from Pakistan were hiding. They have been brought to safety and a procedure for their identification has been started.

Criminal detention: Are rights respected?

“International and EU prison rules are clear that prisoners should be treated with dignity,” says FRA Director [Michael O’Flaherty](#). “Prisoners often suffer degrading conditions during their imprisonment. EU Member States need to ensure respectful detention conditions to improve the chances of prisoners’ rehabilitation.”

The '[Criminal detention conditions in the European Union: rules and reality](#)' report outlines selected minimum standards at international and European levels, and how they translate into national laws. It also shows how these rules apply in practice focusing on:

- **Cell size:** Overcrowding often leads to prisoners having less than 3m² per prisoner, violating the recommended minimum of 4m².
- **Time outside:** Member States do not always regulate how long prisoners can spend outside their cell. Sometimes prisoners spend one hour per day outside their cell, which especially is insufficient in overcrowded prisons.
- **Sanitation:** Dirty prisons with limited access to bathrooms breach international and national laws, even though conditions are slowly improving.
- **Healthcare:** Although prisoners should benefit from the same level of healthcare as the public, staff shortages often lead to delays. They also lack privacy during their examinations.
- **Violence:** Fights, sexual violence and bullying among prisoners is common in many Member States, despite the States' obligation to protect inmates under their custody.

The findings will guide judges and other legal practitioners to assess whether prisoners are at risk of inhuman and degrading treatment, in violation of their fundamental rights.

This is especially useful when deciding on cross-border cases, such as when Member States issue a [European Arrest Warrant](#).

FRA's new [online criminal detention database](#) complements the report. It contains national standards, laws and monitoring reports on detention conditions from across the EU.

FRA used reports from national monitoring bodies and [interviews from previous research](#) to illustrate how detention conditions vary across the Member States.

The European Commission asked FRA to compile information on prison conditions and monitoring across all EU Member States to assist judicial authorities when deciding on transferring detainees to another EU Member State

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[**Invitation letter by President Charles Michel to the members of the European**](#)

Council ahead of their meetings on 12 and 13 December 2019

I look forward to welcoming you to the December European Council – my first European Council meeting as President.

My intention is to build on the impressive work of my two predecessors and create a strong relationship with you, based on trust, confidence and transparency.

Together, we will provide the strategic guidance that Europe needs to tackle the many challenges identified in the Strategic Agenda adopted in June 2019.

Concerning this week's European Council, the meeting will start at 15:00 on 12 December with an exchange of views with the President of the European Parliament David Sassoli. This will be followed by our first working session, in which we will begin by adopting our conclusions on the Conference on the Future of Europe.

We will then move to the vital challenge of Climate Change. I want us to agree on the commitment for the EU to become climate-neutral by 2050. This would be a major signal from the European Council that the EU will take a global leadership role on this crucial issue. It is my conviction that the transition to climate neutrality will create new opportunities for economic growth and development.

However, we must also recognise that it will require efforts from all Member States. We will put in place a framework and the necessary resources to chart a fair and balanced path towards our objective. This means taking into account the different national realities and starting points.

Over dinner, we will discuss the Multiannual Financial Framework. This is another key area for the future of our Union. We must enter into a new stage of our work and engage seriously. There is no point repeating known positions and maximalist requests; concessions will be needed from all sides. We will work to identify the key elements of a final agreement.

The first day will conclude with a debrief on the implementation of the Minsk Agreement along with short conclusions on WTO, Africa and Turkey.

On Friday, our meeting will begin at 10:00 in the presence of European Central Bank President Christine Lagarde and Eurogroup President Mario Centeno. After an exchange of views on the economic situation, we will take stock of the progress made by the Eurogroup on strengthening the Economic and Monetary Union and give some indications on future work. A statement will be adopted to that end.

The proceedings will conclude in the Article 50 configuration. We are ready for the next steps and reaffirm our desire for as close a relationship as possible with the United Kingdom. We will adopt short conclusions on Brexit.

I look forward to working closely with all of you on these issues, and many others, to make Europe bolder, more prosperous, and more self-confident.

[Visit the meeting page](#)

Eleventh meeting of the Accession Conference with Serbia at Ministerial level, Brussels, 10 December 2019

The eleventh meeting of the Accession Conference with Serbia at Ministerial level was held today in Brussels to open negotiations on Chapter 4 – Free movement of capital.

The European Union delegation was led by Ms Tytti TUPPURAINEN, Minister for European Affairs, on behalf of the Finnish Presidency of the Council of the European Union. The European Commission was represented by Mr Olivér VÁRHELYI, Commissioner for Neighbourhood and Enlargement. The Serbian delegation was led by Ms Jadranka JOKSIMOVIĆ, Minister of European integration.

With today's Conference, 18 negotiation chapters have now been opened for negotiations out of a total of 35, of which 2 chapters have already been provisionally closed. Further Accession Conferences will be planned, as appropriate, in order to take the process forward in 2020. The accession negotiations were launched in January 2014.

Chapter opened

Regarding the opening of negotiations on Chapter 4 – Free movement of capital, the Union has closely examined Serbia's present state of preparations. On the understanding that Serbia has to continue to make progress in the alignment with and implementation of the *acquis* covered by this chapter, the EU noted that there are benchmarks that need to be met for its provisional closure.

In addition, the EU underlined that it would devote particular attention to monitoring all specific issues mentioned in its common position. Monitoring of progress in the alignment with and implementation of the *acquis* will continue throughout the negotiations. The Conference will have to return to this chapter at an appropriate moment.

As regards the benchmarks, the opened chapter may only be provisionally closed once it is agreed by the EU that the following benchmarks have been met:

- With respect to *capital movements and payments*, Serbia completes its legislative alignment with the *acquis* and demonstrates it will be able to fully implement it by accession, ensuring that all remaining restrictions are removed;
- On *payment systems*, Serbia demonstrates it will be able to fully implement Directive (EU) 2015/2366 by accession, including the relevant “level two” acts mentioned in section 2, and that it will be able to effectively apply Regulation (EC) No 924/2009 and Regulation (EU) No 260/2012;
- In the area of *anti-money laundering and counter-financing of terrorism*, Serbia completes the necessary legislative alignment with the *acquis*, international standards (as defined by the Financial Action Task Force) and demonstrates, through a track record, an improved administrative capacity to properly implement and enforce the relevant legislation in all areas of anti-money laundering, including recommendations made by the Committee of Experts on the Evaluation of Anti-Money Laundering Measures and the Financing of Terrorism of the Council of Europe, MONEYVAL, resulting in an increasing effectiveness of monitoring, supervision, financial intelligence, investigation, prosecution and conviction.

[Visit the meeting page](#)