

## [Press briefing ahead of Eurogroup video conference of 15 February 2021](#)



The (virtual) press briefing ahead of the videoconference of Eurogroup will take place on **10 February 2021 at 15.00**.

The briefing will be “off the record” and will be given by Tuomas Saarenheimo, President of the Eurogroup Working Group.

EU accredited journalists will be able to participate and ask questions remotely. If you hadn't registered for one of the previous virtual Eurogroup press events, please use [this link](#) to do so and have the possibility to ask questions.

- **Deadline: Wednesday, 10 February 2021, 13.00**

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

[Visit the meeting page](#)

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## [Press release – Press briefing on plenary session at 15.30](#)



The main topics that MEPs will discuss and vote on during the 8-11 February plenary session include:

- the EU's vaccination strategy with Ursula von der Leyen
- the crackdown on the political opposition in Russia
- scrutiny of social media/fundamental rights
- curbing the effects of the pandemic
- EU consumption and recycling rules
- fighting in-work poverty/Minimum wage
- the debate with Christine Lagarde.

Interpretation will be available at the press conference in English, French and German.

Journalists wishing to actively participate and ask questions, please connect via Interactio by using the link

<https://broadcaster.interactio.eu/join/66e2-hy1p-1w4u>.

You can also follow it live from 15.30 via Parliament's [webstreaming](#) and [EbS+](#).

### **Information for the media – Use Interactio to ask questions**

Interactio is only supported on iPad (with the Safari browser) and Mac/Windows (with the Google Chrome browser).

When [connecting](#), enter your name and the media you are representing in the first name / last name fields.

For better sound quality, use headphones and a microphone. Interpretation is only possible for interventions with video.

Journalists who have never used Interactio before are asked to connect 30 minutes before the start of the press conference to perform a connection test. IT assistance can be provided if necessary.

For more details, check the [connection guidelines](#) and [recommendations for remote speakers](#).

## **EIB Group provides €443 million to Bulgarian economy in 2020**



- **Support for SMEs and mid-caps, urban development and advisory services**
- **Operations benefited 4 000 businesses and supported some 81 000 jobs**
- **Ten-year record for EIF, unlocking €1.8 billion for SMEs in Bulgaria**

The European Investment Bank Group (EIB Group), which consists of the European Investment Bank (EIB) and the European Investment Fund (EIF), provided loans, guarantees and equity commitments worth €443 million for

projects in Bulgaria in 2020. This represents a 23% increase in total financing activities compared to 2019.

In 2020, EIB lending in Bulgaria amounted to €115 million. The EIF committed some €328 million in new operations for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), which is expected to unlock €1.8 billion for SMEs in Bulgaria, most of which will support those that are struggling under the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

**EIB Vice-President Lilyana Pavlova** said: “2020 has been a very challenging year for all of us. The COVID-19 pandemic has triggered an unprecedented global crisis. In this context, I am proud that the EIB Group has increased its financing, in particular for SMEs. Our financial support is helping to improve people’s lives and has an important role in boosting the economic development of Bulgaria during the pandemic. I want to thank all our partners and assure you that we stand ready to support SMEs, regional cohesion, climate action and urban development to create employment and prosperity across Bulgaria.”

**Deputy-Minister of Finance of Bulgaria Marinela Petrova** said: “We highly appreciate the active role of the Bank in the fulfilment of the climate-related strategic objectives and priorities of the European Commission and the Member States, as well as its willingness to support Member States in the implementation of the transition towards climate neutrality. In order to successfully use the financial opportunities provided by the European Commission and the EIB, it is essential to identify the specific investment needs and to prepare quality projects. With its experience and expertise in financing investments in the area of infrastructure, innovation, climate and environment, the Bank can significantly support this process and contribute to the successful transition of Bulgaria to carbon neutrality.”

In a virtual press conference, Marinela Petrova, Bulgarian Deputy Minister of Finance and member of the EIB Board of Directors, and EIB Vice-President Lilyana Pavlova presented the impact of the EIB Group’s financing in Bulgaria and discussed the strategic outlook for the EU bank in the year ahead. In addition, Vice-President Pavlova gave an overview of the main EIB Group activities in 2020, including the [response](#) to the COVID-19 pandemic and the key role it plays in fighting the [climate crisis](#).

The press conference was followed by a virtual conference, organised by the EIB Economics Department, to present the annual EIB Investment Survey results for Bulgaria. The survey gathers unique insights on the corporate investment landscape in the European Union.

The [survey](#) found that in Bulgaria, COVID-19 has substantially affected firms’ investment strategies. It prompted nearly half of firms to invest less than planned (46%) and only very few to invest more than planned (7%). Bulgarian firms’ reaction to the pandemic is in line with the EU average (45%). A quarter of firms cited the increased use of digital technologies (25%) compared to half of firms in the European Union (50%). A quarter of firms expect a permanent reduction in employment (25%) as a long-term impact of COVID-19, similar to the EU average (21%). In addition, almost two-thirds

(63%) of firms in Bulgaria have no investment plans to tackle climate change impact, well above the EU average (35%).

[EIB Group in Bulgaria 2020](#)

[EIB Activity Report 2020](#)

[EIF Brochure 2020](#)

[EIB at a glance](#)

[EIB Investment Survey](#)

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## [Joint EUIPO/EPO IP Contribution Report](#)

February 08, 2021 [About the EUIPO](#)

Joint EUIPO/EPO IP Contribution Report



By effectively protecting their intellectual property, innovative companies can secure financing, grow, collaborate and create value. But how does owning intellectual property rights (IPRs) impact their performance?

This [joint report](#) by the EUIPO and the European Patent Office (EPO) delves deeper into the role of IPRs by analysing a representative sample of over 127 000 European firms from all 28 EU member states as of 1 January 2020. According to this analysis, firms that own IPRs generate 20% higher revenues per employee than their counterparts without an IP portfolio. Firms that own IPRs also pay on average 19% higher wages than firms that do not.

The report also includes an econometric analysis which makes it possible to

isolate the effect of IPR ownership from other factors such as the size of a firm or the countries and sectors in which it operates. The results confirm the positive association between IPR ownership and economic performance, with revenue per employee 55% higher for IPR owners than for non-owners.

A more detailed analysis of the overall picture reveals significant potential, especially when it comes to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). Although fewer than 9% of European SMEs rely on IPRs, this subset of companies appears to generate 68% higher revenues per employee than SMEs without IPR portfolios.

All Observatory studies and reports can be found on the Observatory Webpage [here](#)

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## [Join us for the 19th edition of the European Week of Regions and Cities](#)



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**Join us for the 19th edition of the European Week of Regions and Cities!**

Preparations for the **European Week of Regions and Cities, 11 to 14 October 2021** have already started! The two co-organisers, the European Committee of the Regions and the European Commission's Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy, launched their call for partners during the Kick-Off meeting on 28 January 2021 which gathered almost 600 potential partners participating online.

The organisers presented the main features and novelties of the 2021 edition, key milestones, how to apply and replied to questions from the audience. Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the event will take place virtually with a possibility of limited physical presence, to be confirmed according to the evolution of the sanitary measures.

Under the slogan **"Together for recovery"**, the #EURegionsWeek 2021 will be centred on four topics:

- Green Transition: for a sustainable and green recovery
- Cohesion: from emergency to resilience
- Digital Transition for people
- Citizens' engagement: for an inclusive, participative and fair recovery

To get a sound grasp of rules and highlights of the new edition, please visit the ["Partners" section](#) of the event website, read the [Partners Guide](#)

[2021](#) and **apply no later than 26 March 2021!**

The recording and all information presented at the Kick-Off meeting are available on the [event website](#).

If you would like to learn more and keep up-to-date via the **event website**, follow #EURegionsWeek on **Twitter** or [Facebook](#), or get in touch with the organisers.

We are looking forward to your applications! ☐