

Sweden: European loan for upgrade of wastewater plant in Stockholm archipelago



- EIB signs SEK 1 billion (€97 million) loan for the Käppala Wastewater Treatment Plant in the municipality of Lidingö, near Stockholm.
- The upgrade will allow the facility to deal with wastewater from up to 900 000 people.
- Together with the biogas produced during the digestion process, the project is expected to have a positive impact on the environment and water quality in the Baltic Sea.

The European Investment Bank (EIB) has signed a SEK 1 billion (€97 million) loan agreement with the Käppalaförbundet, an intermunicipality partnership in the Stockholm archipelago, for an upgrade and capacity increase of their wastewater treatment plant. The centralised wastewater treatment at Käppala will be upgraded to deal with the wastewater of around 900 000 people.

EIB Vice-President **Thomas Östros** noted: *“Stockholm’s famous “skärgård” is of high importance for both the environment and the local economy. As the EU’s climate bank, we are happy to support the extension of the Käppala plant, helping to maintain the area in a sustainable way for the population.”*

“This upgrade will secure the water treatment services for our 11 member municipalities for many decades to come and at the same time greatly improve the water quality of our beautiful archipelago”, said **Andreas Thunberg**, CEO of Käppalaförbundet.

The original plant was put into operation in 1969, and was already extended once with support from an EIB [loan of 6 million ECU](#) in 1997. By minimising pollution of the receiving waters, the project will have a positive impact on the immediate environment and the Baltic Sea, and is expected to improve living conditions for the inhabitants of the Stockholm area.

Background information:

The project will allow the promoter to fully meet the requirements of the Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive (91/271/EC), the Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC) and Helsinki Commission (HELCOM) recommendations for WWTP’s effluent (recommendation 28E/5, HELCOM).

Käppalaförbundet treats wastewater from 11 municipalities located north and east of Stockholm. Its treatment plant, the Käppala Wastewater Treatment Plant, is Sweden’s third-largest, and employs a very effective treatment process. It also exploits the nutrients and energy contained in the wastewater, and produces sludge, biogas and heat that are recycled for the community.

[ESMA reminds firms of the MiFID II rules on reverse solicitation](#)

The European Securities and Markets Authority (ESMA), the EU's securities markets regulator, is issuing a [Public Statement](#) to remind firms of the MiFID II requirements on the provision of investments services to retail or professional clients by firms not established or situated in the European Union (EU).

With the end of the UK transition period on 31 December 2020, some questionable practices by firms around reverse solicitation, where the product or service is marketed at the client's own exclusive initiative, have emerged. For example, some firms appear to be trying to circumvent MiFID II requirements by including general clauses in their Terms of Business or through the use of online pop-up "I agree" boxes whereby clients state that any transaction is executed on the exclusive initiative of the client.

ESMA reminds firms that "where a third-country firm solicits clients or potential clients in the Union or promotes or advertises investment services or activities together with ancillary services in the Union, it should not be deemed as a service provided at the own exclusive initiative of the client". This is true "regardless of any contractual clause or disclaimer purporting to state, for example, that the third country firm will be deemed to respond to the exclusive initiative of the client".

ESMA would also like to highlight that:

- the provision of investment services in the EU without proper authorisation in accordance with the EU and the national law applicable in Member States exposes service providers to the risk of administrative or criminal proceedings, for the application of relevant sanctions; and
- when using the services of investment service providers which are not properly authorised in accordance with EU and Member States' law, investors may lose protections granted to them under EU relevant rules, including coverage under the investor compensation schemes in accordance with Directive 97/9/EC.

[Returning foreign fighter arrested in](#)

Spain



The suspect was part of the so-called Islamic State in the Iraqi-Syrian conflict zone.

Europol supported an operation of the Spanish National Police (Policía Nacional) leading to the arrest of a member of the so-called Islamic State. The suspect had recently returned from the conflict zone on the border of Iraq and Syria. Two other individuals associated with the suspect were also arrested during the operation in Barcelona.

On 24 December law enforcement officers detected a potentially dangerous individual that had recently arrived in Spain. The investigation determined that this individual was hiding out in a run-down property in Barcelona. Officers later discovered that the suspect was not living there alone. The fact that the suspect was so determined to cover their tracks and the risk of their location meant officers were swift to act and arrest the individuals.

The individual, a jihadist returning from the Iraqi-Syrian conflict zone, would have been active as a member of the so-called Islamic State for a considerable amount of time. On his way back from the conflict zone, the suspect travelled through Iraq, Turkey and Senegal where he continued his terrorist activity. Before entering Spain, the suspect was based in Algeria, where he was in touch with a branch of the so-called Islamic State in North Africa. This arm of the so-called Islamic State has been subject to significant law enforcement operations in recent weeks.

Europol facilitated the information exchange and supported the case with operational analysis. On the action day, Europol provided support by deploying two experts to Spain to cross-check operational information against Europol's databases and provide links to investigators in the field. Europol also provided technical support for the analysis of the seized electronic devices.

Headquartered in The Hague, the Netherlands, we support the 27 EU Member States in their fight against terrorism, cybercrime and other serious and organised forms of crime. We also work with many non-EU partner states and

international organisations. From its various threat assessments to its intelligence-gathering and operational activities, Europol has the tools and resources it needs to do its part in making Europe safer.

[Watch the video](#)

DarkMarket: world's largest illegal dark web marketplace taken down



DarkMarket, the world's largest illegal marketplace on the dark web, has been taken offline in an international operation involving Germany, Australia, Denmark, Moldova, Ukraine, the United Kingdom (the National Crime Agency), and the USA (DEA, FBI, and IRS). Europol supported the takedown with specialist operational analysis and coordinated the cross-border collaborative effort of the countries involved.

DarkMarket in figures:

- almost **500 000 users**;
- more than **2 400 sellers**;
- over **320 000 transactions**;
- more than **4 650 bitcoin** and **12 800 monero** transferred.

At the current rate, this corresponds to a sum of more than **€140 million**. The vendors on the marketplace mainly traded all kinds of drugs and sold counterfeit money, stolen or counterfeit credit card details, anonymous SIM cards and malware.

Germany takes the lead

The Central Criminal Investigation Department in the German city of Oldenburg arrested an Australian citizen who is the alleged operator of DarkMarket near the German-Danish border over the weekend. The investigation, which was led by the cybercrime unit of the Koblenz Public Prosecutor's Office, allowed officers to locate and close the marketplace, switch off the servers and seize the criminal infrastructure – more than 20 servers in Moldova and Ukraine supported by the German Federal Criminal Police office (BKA). The stored data will give investigators new leads to further investigate moderators, sellers, and buyers.

Europol's involvement

- Facilitated international information exchange.
- Provided specialist operational support.
- Provided advanced analytics that assisted the German authorities in identifying and tracking down the alleged administrator.
- Supported Germany in coordinating the cross-border collaborative effort involving international partners.

Europol's Dark Web Team

One of Europol's initiatives is to create a coordinated law enforcement approach to tackle crime on the dark web. This involves law enforcement agencies from across and outside the EU and other relevant partners and organisations, such as Eurojust.

To achieve this goal, Europol's [European Cybercrime Centre \(EC3\)](#) has established a dedicated Dark Web Team to work together with EU partners and law enforcement across the globe to reduce the size of this underground illegal economy.

It will deliver a complete, coordinated approach:

- sharing information;
- providing operational support and expertise in different crime areas;
- developing tools, tactics and techniques to conduct dark web investigations;
- identifying threats and targets.

The team also aims to enhance joint technical and investigative actions, organise training and capacity-building initiatives, together with prevention and awareness-raising campaigns – a 360° strategy against criminality on the dark web.

A shared commitment across the law enforcement community worldwide and a coordinated approach by law enforcement agencies have once again proved their effectiveness. The scale of the operation at Europol demonstrates the global commitment to tackling the use of the dark web as a means to commit crime.

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[Press release – COVID-19 vaccines: MEPs call for more clarity and transparency](#)



On Tuesday, members of the Committee on Environment, Public Health and Food Safety quizzed Sandra Gallina, the EU's lead negotiator on COVID-19 vaccine contracts, on the latest developments regarding contracts, transparency, authorisations, availability and deployment of COVID-19 vaccines.

MEPs underlined the need for more clarity and transparency regarding vaccine contracts, as well as the decision-making process at EU level. They welcomed the European Commission's openness to share available information whilst also acknowledging that some questions can be better answered by member states and pharmaceutical companies.

Many questions concerned possible additional national or bilateral contracts. The Commission confirmed that it is not aware of any such alleged contracts. Through the Joint Procurement Agreement, the EU has priority to deliver vaccines, which will then be distributed to member states on a pro-rata

basis.

Following requests from MEPs, the Commission provided information regarding a number of other specific issues:

- A reading room is open for MEPs wishing to review vaccine contracts – one contract is currently available (CureVac), with others released pending the agreement of pharmaceutical companies;
- The European Medicines Agency received the application for the AstraZeneca vaccine today – the conditional market authorisation is expected at the end of January;
- The largest quantities of vaccines are expected during the second quarter of 2021, as already agreed in the existing contracts – specific strategies for deployment, including priority groups for vaccination, are set up by each member state;
- As of next week, a dedicated platform will be available where member states can report, twice a week, the number of vaccines received and used.

[Watch the recording of the debate](#)

Background

In June 2020, the Commission proposed an [EU vaccines strategy for COVID-19](#) in which it listed [key steps for effective vaccination strategies and vaccine deployment](#). Any vaccine must be [authorised by the European Medicines Agency](#) (EMA) in accordance with safety and efficacy standards.

On 22 September 2020, Parliament held a [public hearing](#) on “How to secure access to COVID-19 vaccines for EU citizens: clinical trials, production and distribution challenges”.

At the Plenary session in December 2020, Parliament expressed [support for the speedy authorisation of safe vaccines](#). The Commission has since given conditional marketing authorisation for two COVID-19 vaccines, one developed by [BioNTech and Pfizer](#) and one by [Moderna Biotech Spain, S.L.](#), after the European Medicines Agency (EMA) concluded its assessments of these vaccines.