

Report on the protection and enforcement of intellectual property rights in third countries

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The European Commission has published its biannual *Report on the protection and enforcement of intellectual property rights in third countries* (Third Country Report).

The Third Country Report identifies countries outside of the European Union in which the state of intellectual property protection and enforcement gives rise to the greatest concern and provides an update of the existing Commission's list of priority countries. It aims to improve intellectual property rights protection and enforcement worldwide, as well as inform rights holders, including SMEs, of the potential risks when conducting business in certain countries. For the first time, the Third Country Report contains a dedicated section on the protection of plant variety rights.

The EUIPO, through the Observatory, has supported the creation of the Third Country Report with a number of its studies, as well as provided technical support.

The complete Third Country Report can be found [here](#)

Italy: Investment Plan for Europe – EIB finances new trains of Naples Circumvesuviana network



- **EUR 68m loan to Ente Autonomo Volturno (wholly owned by the Campania Region) to purchase 40 new electric trains**
- **Significant impact in terms of cutting CO2 emissions and combating climate change**
- **Will relieve traffic congestion for commuters and tourists in one of the most densely populated areas in Europe**

A new fleet of 40 electric trains for the railway network serving Naples and the province of Naples, the so-called Circumvesuviana, to help significantly relieve traffic congestion and considerably reduce pollution in the entire area. That is the aim of the five-year investment plan of Ente Autonomo Volturno (EAV), the Campania Region's railway management authority, supported by the European Investment Bank via a EUR 68m loan. The EIB loan is guaranteed by the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI), one of the pillars of the Investment Plan for Europe, also known as the Juncker Plan.

EAV's total investment of around EUR 220m will be used to replace 40 trains that have reached the end of their useful life. The new trains will be deployed on the six lines of the Circumvesuviana, which serve one of the most densely populated areas in Europe: 47 municipalities with around 2.5 million inhabitants. The busiest line is the Naples-Sorrento line which, besides being a commuter line, also serves a large number of tourist destinations and cultural heritage sites such as Herculaneum and Pompeii.

For EAV, a company wholly owned by the Campania Region, investing in new

mobility programmes aimed at protecting the environment is a priority to preserve the fragile and already congested transport network in the metropolitan area of Naples which, besides the huge numbers of commuters it carries, is impacted by the increase in traffic caused by the growing influx of tourists. The project will enable the EAV fleet to fulfil the latest requirements in terms of safety, operational and energy efficiency.

As regards the aims of the EU bank, the operation will serve to significantly cut CO2 emissions and enable the EIB to subsequently step up its own commitment to meeting climate action targets. In terms of employment, during the construction phase 1 347 jobs will be generated while 46 new permanent jobs will be created in the management phase.

EIB Vice-President Dario Scannapieco stated: "In the metropolitan area of Naples, the Circumvesuviana railway lines are strategically important for commuters and tourists. I am proud therefore that the EIB is supporting this project in view of its social impact and because the move to new electric trains will have a considerable impact on reducing pollution, thus helping to meet the ambitious but achievable goals set by the European Union and the EIB."

"This EUR 68m loan for the purchase of 40 new trains for the Circumvesuviana network will help meet the daily needs of the people of Naples and promote the cultural life and economic development of the Naples region. The European Union supports its regions and through the Juncker Plan continues to deliver tangible benefits for its citizens. We are now working to step up and expand these kinds of operations, which skilfully marry our development goals with climate action", said **European Commissioner for Economy Paolo Gentiloni**.

President of the Campania Region Vincenzo De Luca remarked: "The revival of EAV continues. We are proud that, following its historic financial recovery, our company is the first public transport company in southern Italy to sign an agreement with the EIB under the Juncker Plan. Thanks to regional funds EAV has already started acquiring more rolling stock, and this loan will give it the impetus to continue doing so in order to provide our fellow citizens with an even better, more modern service."

Chairman of EAV Umberto De Gregorio said: "Over the past three years we have managed a 'bad company' within EAV, completing some 800 transactions and paying debts of around EUR 700m. Over the period 2016-18, we generated operating profits of EUR 90m (compared to losses of EUR 330m for the period 2012-15) and net equity increased from EUR 10m to EUR 152m. EAV is now a sound company that is investing and recruiting. This is the start of a new era. The loan granted by the EIB is evidence of that work."

Spain: Climate action – EIB provides financing to Grupo Ruiz to renew its fleet with more modern and less polluting buses



- The EU bank will provide EUR 27.5m to put 32 electric and 141 compressed natural gas buses on the road
- The agreement will help improve public transport quality and cut polluting emissions in Madrid, Majorca, Badajoz, Toledo, Salamanca and Murcia
- The project is supported by the Investment Plan for Europe

The European Investment Bank (EIB) is set to finance the modernisation of Grupo Ruiz's bus fleet by facilitating EUR 27.5 million for the introduction of 173 safer, less polluting and more modern vehicles. EIB Vice-President Emma Navarro and Grupo Ruiz CEO Gregorio Ruiz signed the agreement today in Madrid. This project is supported by the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI), the main pillar of the Investment Plan for Europe.

The EIB support will enable Grupo Ruiz to replace more polluting diesel buses with 32 electric and 141 compressed natural gas alternatives. The new vehicles will provide public transport services in Madrid, Majorca, Badajoz, Toledo, Salamanca and Murcia, covering both urban and intercity lines. They will enter service over the next two years and will help to improve air quality in these cities. Grupo Ruiz's EIB-financed investments include the construction of three new electric charging stations in Badajoz, Alcudia and Palma de Mallorca.

Since 2016, the EU bank and the European Commission have been implementing a joint initiative dedicated to financing cleaner transport (the Cleaner Transport Facility). It has been helping many Spanish cities to swap their older, more polluting diesel vehicles for new hybrid, electric or latest generation compressed natural gas replacements. The agreement signed today is the fifth to be financed by the EIB in Spain under this initiative, for which it has provided almost EUR 230m.

The project is being supported by the Investment Plan for Europe, whose guarantee makes it possible for the EIB to provide financing on favourable terms to support investments whose structure or nature means that they contribute to boosting economic growth and employment. In this case, the EIB-financed investments will facilitate the creation of 360 jobs during the project's implementation phase.

During the signing ceremony in Madrid, **EIB Vice-President Emma Navarro, who is responsible for the Bank's climate action and operations in Spain**, said: "Supporting sustainable public transport that cuts polluting emissions is among the EIB's key priorities. As the EU climate bank, we are determined to dedicate more resources to supporting investments promoting climate action while also generating economic growth and jobs. This project is a good example of this, and also shows the positive impact of EIB financing on people's lives, helping to improve air quality in our cities."

European Commissioner for the Economy, Paolo Gentiloni, said: "Making the European transport sector more sustainable is a key component of the European Green Deal. By supporting Grupo Ruiz's efforts to cut its bus fleet's emissions, the Investment Plan for Europe continues to show its environmental credentials. I hope we will see an increasing number of companies replacing their polluting vehicles for cleaner alternatives in the near future, taking advantage of EU financial support."

Grupo Ruiz CEO Gregorio Ruiz said the following at the signing ceremony: "We are very aware of our responsibility in one of the big challenges of this century: working together to protect the environment. Mobility sector players have a key role in this, which is why we are committed to continuing to promote far more sustainable transport; a journey that we already began over 25 years ago with our first natural gas-powered buses. The agreement between the EIB and Grupo Ruiz shows how important it is to join forces to achieve this goal."

The EIB and climate action

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 under 2°C and to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C in order 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, with the goal of ensuring that the EIB Group mobilises at least EUR 1tn 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 2016, the European Commission and the EIB presented the new initiative for financing cleaner transport systems and cutting emissions (Cleaner Transport Facility – CTF). This mechanism supports the rollout of alternative fuel-powered vehicles, particularly fleets operated by private organisations (e.g. fleets of taxis or other service providers), as well as vehicle charging infrastructure in the European strategic transport network. The CTF uses existing mechanisms and instruments including the European Fund for Strategic Investments and the Connecting Europe Facility.

Remarks by President Charles Michel after his meeting with Prime Minister of Slovakia Peter Pellegrini

It's a great pleasure for me to be in your country, to be here. It is my first visit this year. It is important for me to have again the occasion to discuss with you, to listen actively to you, to your country, because it's very important, in my opinion, to guarantee the European unity and to take into consideration the different concerns of the different countries and to be aware of the different challenges you face, and you will face in the future. And indeed, together at the European level, we face many difficult, sensitive challenges.

First of all, we will have in the next two weeks, in the next months, to find an agreement regarding the next European budget. It will be a very important political moment at European level because this budget is not only a technical discussion. It is a political discussion. And we need to find ways for a good compromise. And I understand very well, we discussed it this evening, and we will continue the discussion that for your country is very important, to guarantee the possibility to support all the positive efforts in order to make progress. I know that you made progress. I know, for example, that the region of Bratislava is very high at the level of the growth if we compare with the average European level.

I also understand very well that the regional disparities in your country, they are very sensitive and an important concern for you personally, for your Country's development. It's important that the European budget take into consideration this reality.

I know that this discussion will be difficult, will be complex, because we face a Brexit gap. It is a consequence of the British decision. And you have to find the right balance between the classical policies, agriculture provision on the one hand, and the new challenges we have to face like

migration, innovation or climate change. For example, the European budget – an important topic, important discussion and is very important for me to listen actively to you and understand different positions at the European level in order to be able, in the next two weeks together make progress at European level, point one.

Point two – climate change. Climate change is a very important topic. It's a very important challenge for the world, for the European Union also. And I would like to thank you, Peter, you personally, because you and your country played an important role at the European level in order to make this agreement possible.

In December, a few weeks ago, we took a very important decision. We gave a very strong signal, a very strong message to the rest of European Union, but also to the world. And we consider, indeed, that this difficult challenge can be an opportunity for more innovation, for more growth, for more technical development. It's very important for us to take into consideration the different starting points of different countries. To respect also the sovereignty of different member states regarding their energy mix. But at the same time, it's very important to try to make progress together and to be able to guarantee the competitiveness at the European level, to guarantee the growth, to guarantee more jobs. But at the same time, to win the battle against this climate change topic.

Another important topic you have to discuss in the next week, and we'll continue the discussion we started a few months ago – the enlargement process. I share this opinion, it's very important to give a clear message, a clear position – we need more security, more stability in the world in general, but also in our neighbourhood. And it's why we need to discuss between the leaders the possibility to modernize the enlargement process on the one hand. And how is it possible, to give with unanimity, a clear signal to different countries like Albania, or like Northern Macedonia, and we will try in the next weeks to continue discussions in order to be able to express a common European position. It's very important for our future.

Another important topic, of course, is the possibility and necessity, in my opinion, for the European Union to play a stronger role at the international level. We have many tools. We are 500 million citizens. We are a strong economic power. Strong democracies. We have values that we have to promote, that we have to defend. We have interests, that we have to promote and that we have to defend. And that's why with all my colleagues at the Council, I consider we have to try to be more coherent at the international level and especially in these current circumstances. The situation in the Middle East, for example, Iran, Libya is very important, to be very clear. To call for de-escalation; and to consider that we have to play a positive, constructive role. Based on this strong conviction, I will be present Saturday in Turkey in order to meet President Erdoğan. I will be also present in Egypt on Saturday evening in order to meet with President al-Sissi because I think that the European Union has something to say, something to promote. It's very important for the stability, for the predictability. Also, it's not my opinion to consider that the European Union will be out of the game. We have to be in the game and to promote and defend our interests.

I would like again to thank you personally, Peter, because we had many occasions in the European Council to work closely together. Thank you for this strong, positive and constructive cooperation. Thank you for the important role you play in the European Council. Thank you also for the personal relationship and friendship. And I know that we can count in the future on strong cooperation between your country, you personally and the European Council.

The European Union will step up efforts towards a peaceful and political solution in Libya

Today the President of the European Council, Charles Michel, together with High Representative Josep Borrell, have met with Fayez al-Sarraj, Chairman of the Presidency Council of the Government of National Accord of the State of Libya, upon his arrival in Brussels.

President Michel expressed concerns about the worrying military escalations in Libya. He underlined that there is no military solution to the Libyan crisis, only a political process can bring peace and stability closer. Libyans should be at the heart of defining their own future. The European Union will step up efforts towards a peaceful and political solution. The European Union fully supports the Berlin process and all UN initiatives aimed at finding a comprehensive political solution to the crisis in Libya. High Representative Borrell reiterated the importance of creating the right conditions ahead of future steps as discussed during the ministerial meeting that took place yesterday.

President Michel raised the recent Turkey-Libya Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on the delimitation of maritime jurisdictions in the Mediterranean Sea and expressed the European Union's position that the MOU infringes upon the sovereign rights of third States and does not comply with the Law of the Sea and cannot produce any legal consequences for third States.

President of the European Council Charles Michel also clearly condemned the recent attacks in Libya, in particular the strike against the military school in Tripoli and the attack on the Sirte airport. He also reiterated that the European Union has always and consistently supported the Government of National Accord as the legitimate government of Libya and that the EU stands ready to provide all possible support to the political process.