



INVESTMENT PLAN FOR EUROPE: EIF AND BIL SIGN FIRST FINANCING AGREEMENT IN LUXEMBOURG TO SUPPORT INNOVATIVE COMPANIES

Luxembourg, July 3, 2015: The European Investment Fund (EIF) and Banque Internationale à Luxembourg SA (BIL) today announced that they have signed an agreement to increase lending to innovative small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) as well as small mid-caps in Luxembourg. This is the first transaction in Luxembourg to benefit from the support of the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI) through which the Investment Plan for Europe will be deployed by the European Commission and the EIB Group.

The new agreement allows BIL to provide EUR 60 million of finance to innovative companies in Luxembourg over the next two years. The loans will be backed by a guarantee of the EIF, enabled by the InnovFin initiative with financial backing from the Commission's Horizon 2020 programme. The agreement signed today in Luxembourg will make it possible for BIL to offer innovative companies additional financing at favourable conditions.

Commenting on the agreement, **EIF Chief Executive, Pier Luigi Gilibert** said: "I am pleased to be signing the first EFSI SME guarantee agreement in Luxembourg with BIL. EFSI will allow us to increase our support for innovative companies in Luxembourg to ensure that entrepreneurs can benefit from this financing over the next two years".

Speaking at the high-level signing event in Luxembourg, **European Commission Vice-President Jyrki Katainen**, responsible for Jobs, Growth, Investment and Competitiveness, said: "Today is a very important day for innovative companies in Luxembourg. This deal will allow start-ups to turn their ideas into reality, to provide more jobs and to help create growth in Europe. I wish the Banque Internationale à Luxembourg every success and thank the European Investment Fund for the role they are playing in implementing the Investment Plan for Europe".

Marcel Leyers, Member of the BIL Management Board and Chief of Corporate and Institutional Banking said: "BIL has always viewed itself as a bank that embodies innovation in all areas of finance. This agreement will provide an effective tool to help us boost innovative thinking while offering the support that new companies need in order to achieve success. It is a 'win-win' opportunity for all of us: EIF, BIL and the companies who will now be able to grow solid financial roots in Luxembourg, and contribute to the bright future of the country. Also, the agreement is a perfect example of how our five-year strategy - BIL2020 - is already delivering positive initiatives."

The aim of the InnovFin SME Guarantee is to encourage banks or other financial institutions to lend to SMEs and small mid-caps (firms with fewer than 500 employees) in need of investment and/or operating capital to finance research, development and innovation activities, with EU financial support. Financial institutions are being selected by the EIF following expressions of interest from financial institutions across Europe.

This is one of the first transactions approved by EIF which will benefit from an EU guarantee under EFSI. This deal has been signed before EFSI is formally established, reflecting the EIB Group's commitment to respond swiftly to calls from Member States, the European Commission and the European Parliament for a rapid launch of concrete initiatives under EFSI, accelerating lending and guaranteeing transactions capable of boosting jobs and growth in the EU.

About EIF

The European Investment Fund's (EIF) central mission is to support Europe's micro, small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) by helping them to access finance. EIF designs and develops venture and growth capital, guarantees and microfinance instruments which specifically target this market segment. In this role, EIF fosters EU objectives in support of innovation, research and development, entrepreneurship, growth, and employment. EIF's total net commitments to private equity funds amounted to over EUR 8.8bn at end 2014. With investments in over 500 funds, EIF is a leading player in European venture due to the scale and the scope of its investments, especially in high-tech and early-stage segments. EIF's guarantees loan portfolio totalled over EUR 5.6bn in over 350 operations at end 2014, positioning it as a major European SME guarantees actor and a leading micro-finance guarantor.

About BIL

Founded in 1856, BIL is the oldest private bank in the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg. Recognised as a cornerstone of the Luxembourg financial centre, BIL has always played an active role in developing the main phases of the Luxembourg economy. Its five-year strategy - BIL2020 - is designed to further strengthen BIL's position within the country through innovative initiatives and creative, efficient products and services for its clients.

Active in retail (with a network of 40 branches), private and corporate banking as well as in financial markets, BIL is among the country's top three banks. With over 2,000 employees, the bank maintains a presence in financial centres in Luxembourg, Switzerland, Denmark and in the Middle East.

About the Investment Plan for Europe

[Investment Plan for Europe](#)

About InnovFin

[InnovFin](#)

About Horizon2020

<http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/horizon2020/en>

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