



Investment Plan for Europe: EUR 900 million for businesses in Portugal following EIF and BCP agreements

- **First COSME Loan Guarantee Facility signature in Portugal and an increase of the existing InnovFin guarantee facility**

The European Investment Fund (EIF) and Banco Comercial Português (Millennium bcp) have signed two agreements in Portugal under the European Commission's COSME and InnovFin programmes. The agreements benefit from the support of the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI), the heart of the [Investment Plan for Europe](#).

Through the first COSME transaction under the Loan Guarantee Facility in the country, EIF is providing a direct guarantee that will enable Millennium bcp to provide up to EUR 500 million of loans to over 1,150 small businesses in Portugal. Thanks to the financial backing of the European Commission, Millennium bcp will be able to launch new riskier SME debt financing products with improved features (longer maturities and reduced collateral requirements) to previously underserved client groups.

EIF also signed an InnovFin extension agreement, delivering up to EUR 400 million of additional budget to support another 750 innovative SMEs and mid-caps in Portugal. Under the InnovFin extension agreement, Millennium bcp will continue to provide loans at favourable terms to innovative SMEs and small mid-caps for the next two years. EIF's guarantee is provided under the initiative "EU InnovFin finance for Innovators" with the financial backing under Horizon 2020, the EU research and innovation programme.

Carlos Moedas, Commissioner for Research, Science and Innovation, said: *"With these two agreements supported by the Juncker Plan, 1,900 businesses should get access to the funding they need to grow, innovate and create jobs in Portugal. They are on top of the 12,000 Portuguese businesses already benefitting from the Juncker Plan: we can all be proud of this success."*

Commissioner **Elżbieta Bieńkowska**, responsible for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs, said: *"COSME loan guarantees already provide over EUR 20.3 billion of financing to more than 380,000 European SMEs in 27 countries. Thanks to today's COSME agreement backed by the Juncker Plan Portuguese businesses will benefit from better access to finance to turn their ideas into concrete projects, create jobs and innovate."*

Commenting on the signature, EIF Chief Executive, **Pier Luigi Gilibert**, said: *"I am delighted to see EIF continuing its fruitful cooperation with Banco Comercial Português, one of our long-standing partners. The two agreements will allow Portuguese SMEs currently excluded from access to finance to benefit from loans on advantageous terms, such as reduced collateral requirements."*

Miguel Maya, CEO of Millennium bcp, said: *“the agreements signed with the European Investment Fund reflect the strong commitment of Millennium bcp to finance the economy and support investment by Portuguese companies. Businesspeople and managers know that they can count on Millennium bcp in good times and in challenging times, because the Portuguese market is our main market, which means the success of our bank is intrinsically connected to the success of our customers. These financing lines, the result of our excellent collaboration with the EIF, increase our capacity to offer our customers the best financing solutions for investment and developing their businesses, from which everyone benefits.”*

These transactions in Portugal reflect the European Commission’s strong commitment to deliver on one of its top political priorities: boosting jobs, growth and investment across Europe.

Ends

About EIF

The European Investment Fund (EIF) is part of the European Investment Bank Group. Its 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. More information on EIF's work under EFSI is available [here](#).

About Millennium bcp

Founded in 1985, Millennium bcp is Portugal’s largest listed bank, and is active in Poland, Mozambique, Angola, Switzerland and Macau. Millennium bcp currently serves more than 5 million customers worldwide. For further information please see: www.millenniumbcp.pt

About the Investment Plan for Europe

The [Investment Plan for Europe](#), known as the “Juncker Plan”, is one of the European Commission’s top priorities. It focuses on boosting investment to generate jobs and growth by making smarter use of new and existing financial resources, removing obstacles to investment, and providing visibility and technical assistance to investment projects.

The European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI) is the main pillar of the Juncker Plan and provides first loss guarantees, enabling the EIB to invest in more projects that often come with greater risks. EFSI has already yielded tangible results. The [projects and agreements](#) approved for financing under EFSI are expected to mobilise almost EUR 380 billion in investments, including EUR 8.8 billion in Portugal, and support 842 000 SMEs in the 28 Member States.

More information on the results of the Investment Plan for Europe is available [here](#).

About COSME

COSME is the EU programme for the Competitiveness of Enterprises and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) running from 2014 to 2020 with a total budget of EUR 2.3 billion. At least 60% of the programme will be devoted to easing access to finance for SMEs in Europe, with two financial instruments. The COSME Loan Guarantee Facility supports guarantees and counter-guarantees to financial institutions to help them provide more loans and lease finance to SMEs.

This facility also includes securitisation of SME debt finance portfolios. The COSME programme also invests through the COSME Equity Facility for Growth in equity funds that provide risk capital to SMEs mainly in the expansion and growth stages. The COSME programme builds on the success of the Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme (CIP) (2007-2013) which helped to mobilise almost EUR 21 billion of loans and more than EUR 3 billion of venture capital to over 384 000 SMEs in Europe.

Businesses can contact selected financial institutions in their country to access EU financing: <http://www.access2finance.eu/>.

About InnovFin

The [InnovFin SME Guarantee Facility](#) provides guarantees and counter-guarantees on debt financing of between EUR 25,000 and EUR 7.5 million in order to improve access to loan finance for innovative small and medium-sized enterprises and small mid-caps (up to 499 employees). The facility is managed by EIF, and is rolled out through financial intermediaries – banks and other financial institutions – in EU Member States and Associated Countries. Under this facility, financial intermediaries are guaranteed by EIF against a proportion of their losses incurred on the debt financing covered under the facility.

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