



First micro-loan and leasing deal in Portugal under Progress Microfinance as EIF and Millennium bcp sign loan agreement

The European Investment Fund (EIF) and Millennium bcp (Banco Comercial Português, S.A.) have signed a loan agreement aimed at supporting over 800 micro-enterprises in Portugal.

This agreement will allow Millennium bcp to provide enhanced access to finance to entrepreneurs in Portugal, especially those who face difficulties in accessing credit from traditional banking sources. In addition, Millennium bcp will launch a micro-leasing product complementing its existing microloan offer, which is the first of its kind in Portugal/Europe.

Progress Microfinance is funded by the European Commission and managed by the European Investment Fund.

Commenting on the agreement, Head of the Microfinance team at the EIF, Per-Erik Eriksson said: "We are pleased to be signing a loan agreement with Millennium bcp enabling the bank to launch the first micro-leasing product, under Progress Microfinance in Portugal. We are happy to co-operate with Millennium bcp in this field and are thus convinced that this finance will help to benefit micro-enterprises, in Portugal".

The transaction will allow Millennium bcp, to continue further developing its current lending activity to small and micro-enterprises in Portugal.

Nuno Amado, CEO of Millennium bcp said: "Millennium bcp has already invested close to twenty million euros in small businesses in Portugal through microfinance, which has resulted in the creation of more than four thousand new jobs. So we believe this is a business segment with a strong social component that helps not only those who need but also those who deserve it."

Micro-enterprises wishing to apply for a micro-loan under Progress Microfinance can directly contact Millennium bcp's branches.

About the European Progress Microfinance Facility

The European Progress Microfinance Facility (Progress Microfinance) provides guarantees and funded instruments to microfinance intermediaries. The initiative is established with EUR 205 million of funding from the European Commission and the European Investment Bank. Progress

Microfinance aims to increase access to finance for micro-entrepreneurs, including the self-employed. It has a particular focus on, but is not restricted to, groups with limited access to the conventional credit market. Examples include female entrepreneurs, young entrepreneurs, entrepreneurs belonging to a minority group, entrepreneurs with a disability, sole traders, etc. Loans less than EUR 25,000 are made available through selected intermediaries participating in the facility. Progress Microfinance does not provide direct financing to micro-entrepreneurs or individuals.

Millennium bcp marks the 64th transaction signed under Progress Microfinance since its inception in 2010. To date, commitments of over EUR 130 million under Progress Microfinance have been signed to benefit EU micro-borrowers. Countries where agreements have been signed to date include Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Denmark, France, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, The Netherlands and the UK.

For further information about this initiative please visit: www.ec.europa.eu/epmf

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 7.9bn at end 2013. With investments in over 435 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 300 operations at end 2013, positioning it as a major European SME guarantees actor and a leading micro-finance guarantor.

More information about EIF is available on www.eif.org.

About Millennium bcp

Millennium bcp is a leading private financial group in Portugal, with a strong presence in the market, fuelled by permanent innovation. The bank also has a significant international presence, with operations in Angola, Mozambique, Poland and Macao.

Millennium bcp's activity is primarily focused in retail banking, but the bank also offers a range of additional financial services, including investment banking, corporate and commercial banking, private banking and asset management.

In 2005, Millennium bcp launched its Autonomous Network of Microcredit. This unique and innovative initiative stems from the bank's perception of social responsibility, based on the principle of sustainability. The independent Microcredit network is a tool for social inclusion, creating opportunities for those who traditionally have no access to credit.

Millennium bcp's Microcredit network has already financed 3,065 new businesses, which have created more than 4,682 new jobs.

Press information

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