



PRESS RELEASE

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KBC enhances focus on sustainability investments by Belgian SMEs with new EIB facility.

- **The European Investment Bank and Belgian bank KBC team up to make available a €600 million facility of new financing for small and medium-sized Belgian companies.**
- **Local SMEs will be able to get lower interest rates thanks to the EIB backing, the focus of the newly available lending is on sustainability investments.**
- **Apart from climate relevant investments, one fifth of the facility is earmarked for companies in Belgian cohesion regions.**

KBC and the European Investment Bank continue their longstanding partnership with a new loan facility aimed at improving access to finance and supporting sustainability investments by small and medium-sized Belgian businesses. Through a €300 million EIB loan, which KBC will match with its own funds, €600 million in additional lending will become available for Belgian SMEs seeking to make their activities more environmentally sustainable. The €600 million facility comes on top of KBC's regular business for Belgian companies and the final decision on loans awarded under this facility rests with KBC.

"Partnerships like this one with KBC are essential for advancing the EIB's goal of supporting SMEs." said EIB Vice-President **Robert de Groot**. *"This collaboration ensures that Belgian SMEs are better able to seize new opportunities. By providing accessible and affordable financing, we empower them to grow and innovate, while also contributing to a greener and more resilient economy."*

Through KBC's network, the new financing will be available to all small and medium-sized companies in Belgium to finance sustainability investments such as water extraction and recycling, renewable energy, energy efficiency, transport or other climate-related projects. Some 20% of the facility is earmarked for lending in so-called "[cohesion](#)"¹ regions.

Wim Eraly, Senior General Manager Commercial Banking KBC Belgium Division: *"The impact of climate change represents one of the biggest challenges for our society. Large and small companies will have to adapt in the relatively short term to reduce their ecological footprint. They can do this by investing in sustainable solutions and resources. Take water, for example, a particularly valuable but scarce resource. In Belgium, we depend on rain and cannot rely on large watercourses like in our neighbouring countries. Companies looking to invest in sustainable solutions can turn to KBC for advice. As a bank, insurer and asset manager, we can help support companies in their transition to a greener economy. After all, this is embedded in our business strategy. The joint programme of KBC and the EIB makes financing sustainable investments much more attractive for Belgian companies and thus contributes directly to a more sustainable society."*

The relationship between the EIB Group (meaning the EIB and its subsidiary the European Investment Fund) and KBC dates back to the 1990's, the EIB alone has so far provided [over €2,3 billion](#) in attractive lending to KBC.

¹ This refers to regions with a GDP per capita under 75% of the EU average.

Background information

The [European Investment Bank](#) is the long-term lending institution of the European Union, owned by its Member States. It finances investments that contribute to EU [policy objectives](#). EIB projects bolster competitiveness, drive innovation, promote sustainable development, enhance social and territorial cohesion, contribute to peace and security, and support a just and swift transition to climate neutrality. The Group's AAA rating allows it to borrow at favourable conditions on the global markets, benefiting its clients within the European Union and beyond. The Group has the highest ESG standards and a tier one capital ratio of 32%.

KBC Group is one of the leading financial groups in Europe. It is a multi-channel bank-insurance group with a geographic focus on Europe, catering mainly to retail clients, SMEs and local midcaps. The group occupies significant, and in many cases leading positions in its core markets of Belgium, Czech Republic, Bulgaria, Hungary and Slovakia. The KBC group has also selectively established a presence in a number of other countries and regions around the world. KBC Group employs around 41000 staff and caters for about 13 million clients in its core markets. KBC Group NV is listed on Euronext Brussels (ticker symbol 'KBC'). KBC has an impressive track record when it comes to sustainability. Details of this track record can be found in KBC's Sustainability report and on [kbc.com](#).

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