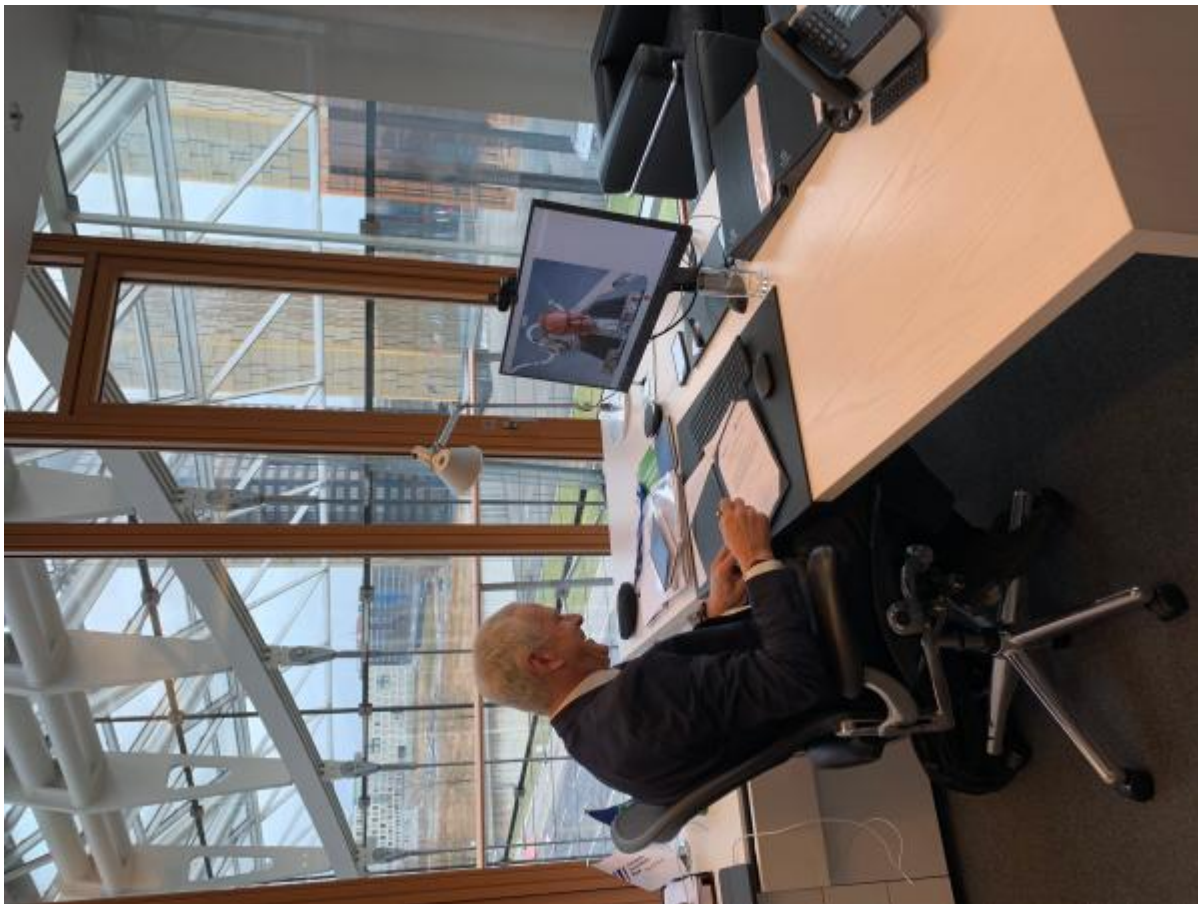


Belgium: EIB supports rollout of smart meters in Flanders by Fluvius



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- €200 million EIB loan to Fluvius, to support rollout of smart meters in Flanders.
- Signature is first tranche of an available facility of up to € 425 million.
- Goal is to have smart meters installed at 80% of Fluvius' clients by end of 2024.

The European Investment Bank (EIB) has announced that it will make available a lending facility to Belgian network operator Fluvius for the rollout of smart metering systems in Flanders. A first tranche of €200 million has now been signed. Fluvius will use the facility to rollout smart meters for Flemish families and companies in 300 cities and municipalities, as well as for connecting new users to the network.

EIB Vice-President **Kris Peeters** said: *"Europe's green and sustainable recovery from the corona crisis will pass through projects like this one. Our houses are one of the main emitters of CO₂, partially because of inefficient electricity use. Smart meters like the ones that Fluvius is installing, will play an important role in increasing energy efficiency and preventing waste."*

The new meters allow for remote readings, and make it possible to provide near real-time consumption information to consumers. This will increase

consumer awareness of their energy consumption and thus spur energy efficiency. The smart meters also make the grid more flexible, which is essential considering the increasing decentralised production of renewable energy.

Frank Vanbrabant, CEO of Fluvius, added: *"Digital energy meters are crucial in making the energy transition a success. Only with digital meters will families and SMEs be able to actively manage their energy usage. The new meters can help families with solar panels to immediately use their home-generated electricity as much as possible. They also enable dynamic energy prices. As a result, a family can consume more, cheaper electricity by smartly controlling appliances, or storing energy locally, for example in an electric car. In any case, the digital meter is an important gateway to the energy landscape of the future."*

Fluvius, a cooperative company owned by 11 inter-municipal companies, is responsible for the construction, management and maintenance of electricity, natural gas, sewerage, cable distribution, and district heating networks in Flanders. Fluvius also maintains the municipal public lighting. In total, the company manages 230.000 km of utility network with 7 million connections. Fluvius operates in all 300 Flemish cities and municipalities.