

Belgium: European funding for better care in Antwerp



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- **Loan of €200 million for the modernisation and optimisation of Antwerp hospital sites.**
- **ZNA is replacing two old hospitals with the Cadix hospital (under construction) and renovating three departments in ZNA Middelheim.**
- **Partly thanks to the EIB financing, ZNA will be able to provide better and more efficient care and a greater focus on the ageing population in the region.**

The European Investment Bank (EIB) has signed a loan of €200 million with Hospital Network Antwerp. ZNA will use the funding for modernisation and improvement works, as the foundation for even better care. The signing of the agreement is an important step in ZNA's strategic care plan. It consolidates the activities of ZNA by modernising and integrating healthcare activities, meaning that the needless duplication of clinical services will no longer be necessary.

ZNA is also reducing the number of hospital sites. The Cadix hospital that is now being built will replace two older existing buildings. In the group's largest hospital (ZNA Middelheim), the intensive care, kidney dialysis and child psychiatry departments are being renovated. In this way, doctors and nurses can provide more personalised care in a better working environment.

EIB Vice-President **Thomas Östros** explained: *“Investments in healthcare have been high on the EIB’s list of priorities, together with the climate. In the current situation, the Bank can make an even clearer difference with its inexpensive financing, in order to ease some of the financial pressure on healthcare institutions. The EIB is firmly behind the healthcare workers and institutions that are being severely tested by the ongoing coronavirus outbreak.”*

Wouter De Ploey, CEO of ZNA, added: *“It is fantastic that we can work with a renowned institution such as the European Investment Bank for our projects. The financing of the EIB is an important milestone in achieving our healthcare strategy plans. Thus, the EIB also shows a long-term commitment to the health sector. This is also very good news financially: the EIB is providing us with excellent credit terms; this cooperation confirms our creditworthiness. As a result, other financiers have also stepped in to finance our plans. Thanks to this contract, the Antwerp patients will reap the benefits of a state-of-the art hospital environment.”*

Hospital Network Antwerp (ZNA) is the largest healthcare organisation in Belgium. With ten sites, the group includes three general hospitals, seven day centres, six specialised hospitals, a psychiatric nursing home and a residential care centre. ZNA’s area of coverage extends over 32 municipalities. This means that ZNA can potentially reach over a million inhabitants. In the city of Antwerp, ZNA has a 44% patient share. ZNA employs about 6 300 people, including 600 doctors. In 2019, ZNA had approximately 2 500 beds and 51 000 people were hospitalised. In addition, 71 000 patients were treated in the day clinic. There were also nearly 600 000 outpatients.