

Press release – COVID-19 vaccines: MEPs call for more clarity and transparency



On Tuesday, members of the Committee on Environment, Public Health and Food Safety quizzed Sandra Gallina, the EU's lead negotiator on COVID-19 vaccine contracts, on the latest developments regarding contracts, transparency, authorisations, availability and deployment of COVID-19 vaccines.

MEPs underlined the need for more clarity and transparency regarding vaccine contracts, as well as the decision-making process at EU level. They welcomed the European Commission's openness to share available information whilst also acknowledging that some questions can be better answered by member states and pharmaceutical companies.

Many questions concerned possible additional national or bilateral contracts. The Commission confirmed that it is not aware of any such alleged contracts. Through the Joint Procurement Agreement, the EU has priority to deliver vaccines, which will then be distributed to member states on a pro-rata basis.

Following requests from MEPs, the Commission provided information regarding a number of other specific issues:

- A reading room is open for MEPs wishing to review vaccine contracts – one contract is currently available (CureVac), with others released pending the agreement of pharmaceutical companies;
- The European Medicines Agency received the application for the AstraZeneca vaccine today – the conditional market authorisation is expected at the end of January;

– The largest quantities of vaccines are expected during the second quarter of 2021, as already agreed in the existing contracts – specific strategies for deployment, including priority groups for vaccination, are set up by each member state;

– As of next week, a dedicated platform will be available where member states can report, twice a week, the number of vaccines received and used.

[Watch the recording of the debate](#)

Background

In June 2020, the Commission proposed an [EU vaccines strategy for COVID-19](#) in which it listed [key steps for effective vaccination strategies and vaccine deployment](#). Any vaccine must be [authorised by the European Medicines Agency](#) (EMA) in accordance with safety and efficacy standards.

On 22 September 2020, Parliament held a [public hearing](#) on “How to secure access to COVID-19 vaccines for EU citizens: clinical trials, production and distribution challenges”.

At the Plenary session in December 2020, Parliament expressed [support for the speedy authorisation of safe vaccines](#). The Commission has since given conditional marketing authorisation for two COVID-19 vaccines, one developed by [BioNTech and Pfizer](#) and one by [Moderna Biotech Spain, S.L.](#), after the European Medicines Agency (EMA) concluded its assessments of these vaccines.

[New Decision on technical requirements for annexes submitted on data carriers](#)

January 12, 2021 [About the EUIPO](#)

New Decision on technical requirements for annexes submitted on data carriers



The new Decision of the Executive Director on the technical requirements for annexes submitted on data carriers [No EX-20-10](#), repeals previous [Decision EX-17-6](#). This new decision was signed on 22nd December 2020 however it has a later date of entry into force, namely **1st March 2021**.

The new ED decision will bring in the following main changes:

- **Removal of CDs and DVDs:** CDs and DVDs will no longer be considered as an acceptable 'format' of data carrier, however USB flash drives, pen drives or similar USB type memory units will continue to be allowed.
- **Reducing the size of individual files:** the acceptable file size of an individual annex as submitted on a data carrier will be reduced to 20MB, to be aligned with the sizes of files accepted in all online eActions (through the UserArea)

By implementing the above changes, the annexes submitted on data carriers will be able to be incorporated automatically into the content of the electronic file of the IP right or proceeding in question, and therefore also available for free online inspection of files to all parties. This change is also aimed at preventing loss or corruption of data saved on disks as they are more susceptible to damage over time.

The [decision](#) also includes information on file(s) format, structure and name, as well as the processing of illegible annexes.

[Hungary: EIB lends €200 million to](#)

Hungary`s Eximbank for the faster recovery of companies from COVID-19



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- The EU bank lends €200 million to unlock fresh financing for the Hungarian economy's faster recovery from COVID-19.
- Loans will be available to companies for short-term financing, working capital and investment needs.
- With the EIB loan, Eximbank will step up its lending activities without jeopardising its long-term stability or the stability of the Hungarian financial sector.

The European Investment Bank, the lending arm of the European Union, will lend €200 million to Eximbank, Hungary, creating a new credit line to support the faster recovery of Hungarian companies from the negative economic effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. The financing will be available for companies looking to solve working capital issues and make investments.

The EIB loan provides a new source of flexible financing for Hungarian companies to help them overcome issues including low liquidity reserves, limited financing alternatives and a lack of funds for investments. All these problems have been significantly amplified during the COVID-19 pandemic and are threatening the speed of the economic recovery.

The loan from the EU bank will strengthen the Hungarian economy, help protect jobs and shore up the country's financial sector by increasing its ability to invest and fuel the economic recovery from the pandemic.

Teresa Czerwinska, the EIB vice president who is responsible for operations in Hungary, said: "The EIB is working to ensure that every EU member country gets the support it needs to recover from COVID-19 as quickly as possible. The pandemic has hit Hungarian SMEs and midcaps particularly hard. As they are the major employer and backbone of economy, the EIB will support their survival so that they can continue to provide jobs and drive the economy forward. Operations like this are crucial for the long-term sustainable economic development of both Hungary and the European Union. As such, they are a priority for the EIB and the Bank has invested over €5.3 billion in Hungarian companies to date."

Gergely Jákli, CEO and Chairman of the Board of Eximbank Hungary, said: "Our mission is to support domestic businesses by acting as a financial engine that helps drive the international success of Hungarian export companies, and to provide them, through appropriate financial solutions, with a "passport" for doing business abroad. The EIB loan will play a key role in ensuring that EXIM can meet the higher expectations and greater demand for credit in the new economic environment caused by the coronavirus pandemic, and it is in line with the maturity structure of Eximbank resources. It contributes to our goal of assisting our clients with a product portfolio that corresponds to

market requirements to a large extent.”

This is the fourth operation between the EIB and Eximbank that creates fresh sources of financing for Hungarian companies.

EIB supports Hungarian economy’s faster recovery from COVID-19

The EIB’s loan to Eximbank Hungary forms part of the COVID-19 emergency measures the Bank is rolling out to support EU member countries during the pandemic. This loan to Eximbank marks the first EIB operation in Hungary as part of these special support measures.

On top of its support for speeding up the recovery of the Hungarian economy, the EU bank is helping the country’s healthcare sector strengthen its response to the pandemic, having signed a €162.5 million loan with the Hungarian government in December 2020.

The EIB in Hungary

The EIB’s lending commitments in Hungary since the launch of its operations in the country are currently close to €21.6 billion. Between 2008 and 2018 alone, the EIB provided support totalling €13.2 billion. EIB operations cover important sectors of the Hungarian economy, including transport, the environment, energy infrastructure, manufacturing and services.

Another key component of the Bank’s activity in Hungary is the promotion of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) by increasing their access to long-term financing through local financial institutions. Since 2001, the EU bank has supported 5 172 Hungarian SMEs, sustaining 263 767 jobs in the process.

[Portugal: EIB and BPI provide EDP Renováveis with €112 million to construct and operate two wind farms with a total capacity of 125 MW](#)



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- **The wind farms are located in the districts of Coimbra and Guarda, in the west and north of the country.**
- **560 jobs expected to be created during the implementation phase.**
- **The EIB financing is backed by the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI).**

The European Investment Bank (EIB) will provide €65 million and BPI an additional €47 million to EDP Renováveis S.A. (EDPR), one of the main producer of wind energy in the world, to finance the construction and operation of two onshore wind farms with a total nominal capacity of 125 MW in the districts of Coimbra and Guarda, Portugal. The project is co-financed by Banco BPI and the EIB financing is backed by the [European Fund for Strategic Investments](#) (EFSI), the main pillar of the Investment Plan for Europe.

With the support of the EIB, EDPR will design, construct and operate two medium-scale wind farms: Tocha II, with a capacity of 33 MW, and Sincelo, with a capacity of 92 MW. Tocha II wind farm will be located in the west, close to the Atlantic coast, in the municipality of Cantanhede, district of Coimbra, whereas the Sincelo wind farm will be located along the municipalities of Pinhel and Guarda, district of Guarda, in the northeast of Portugal. This project will also have a direct positive effect on employment, since it is expected to create approximately 560 temporary positions during

its construction phase.

Once operational, the two wind farms will contribute to Portugal meeting its Energy and Climate Plan targets, which foresee 47% of renewable sources in gross final energy consumption by 2030, as well as the European Commission's binding target of having at least 32% of final energy consumption coming from renewable sources by 2030.

With this co-financed project, the EIB and the BPI are reinforcing their commitment to sustainable financing and supporting initiatives that are respectful of the environment and that contribute to preventing and mitigating climate change and the transition to a low-carbon economy.

The EU bank is assisting this operation via a green energy loan, the features of which are fully in line with the requirements set out in its [Climate Awareness Bonds](#) programme. As a result, this operation is likely to be allocated to its portfolio of loan operations financed via the issuance of such bonds.

EIB Vice-President [Ricardo Mourinho Félix](#), responsible for the Bank's operations in [Portugal](#), said: *"This flagship project strengthens our partnership with EDP Renováveis and reinforces the Bank's commitment to promoting climate action, economic development and cohesion. Supporting Portugal's decarbonisation targets, while boosting growth and job creation, is one of the EIB's main priorities. If we want the post-COVID economic recovery to be green and inclusive, it is key to foster the supply of renewable energy and its broad based utilisation by productive sector and by our citizens."*

Commissioner for the Economy, Paolo Gentiloni, said: *"This agreement between the EIB and EDP Renováveis, supported by the Investment Plan for Europe, is a winner for both the climate and the economy. The financing, backed by the European Fund for Strategic Investments, will fund new onshore wind farms in the west and north of Portugal, helping the country to reach its ambitious energy and climate plan targets and creating new jobs in the process."*

EDP Renováveis interim CEO Rui Teixeira said: *"At EDP Renováveis we are pleased to count with the support of the European Investment Bank (EIB) and Banco BPI to the development of new projects that will contribute to Portugal's achievement of its Energy and Climate Plan targets, the European Commission's targets and also to the creation of more than half a thousand jobs. This project reinforces our commitment with the Portuguese renewables sector and with the improvement of the quality of life of current and future generations. It also enhances our key role as a world leader in the renewable energy sector."*

Banco BPI Board Member Pedro Barreto said: *"BPI has been a partner of EDP Group for many years and this operation of EDP Renováveis reinforces, once again, this partnership. The adoption of ESG-Environmental, Social and Governance criteria, when launching investment operations, is part of a new trend that will have an increasing relevance and importance in the near future. The participation in this operation together with the EIB – which we*

are very proud of – places Banco BPI as a reference entity in financing portuguese companies based on sustainability principles.”

Background information

The EU climate bank

The European Investment Bank (EIB) is the world’s largest multilateral provider of finance to fight climate change. The Bank has recently approved its Climate Bank Roadmap to deliver on its ambitious programme that aims to mobilise €1 trillion of investments in climate action and environmental sustainability during the critical decade ending in 2030. To this end, the Bank will gradually increase the financing it allocates to these objectives to 50% by 2025 and, from 2021 onwards, all the new EIB Group financing will be aligned with the goals of the Paris Agreement.

The EIB is the world’s largest issuer of green bonds and was the first organisation to make an issue on this market in 2007 Background information.

About EDP Renewables (EDPR)

EDP Renewables (Euronext: EDPR), is a global leader in the renewable energy sector and the world’s third-largest wind energy producer. With a sound development pipeline, first class assets and market-leading operating capacity, EDPR has undergone exceptional development in recent years and is currently present in 14 international markets (Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Colombia, France, Greece, Italy, Mexico, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Spain, the UK and the US). EDPR is committed to furthering social advances in terms of sustainability and integration. This is reflected by the inclusion of the company in the Bloomberg Gender Equality index and the fact that it has been certified as a Top Employer 2020 in Europe (Spain, Italy, France, Romania, Portugal and the United Kingdom), both of which recognise its employee-driven policies.

Energias de Portugal, S.A. (“EDP”), the principal shareholder of EDPR, is a global energy company and a leader in value creation, innovation and sustainability. EDP has featured on the Dow Jones Sustainability Index for 13 consecutive years.

About BPI

Banco BPI focuses on the commercial banking business in Portugal, offering a broad range of services and financial products to corporate, institutional and individual Customers. BPI is part of the CaixaBank Group, which since the end of 2018 holds the entire share capital of BPI. BPI is the fifth largest financial institution operating in Portugal in terms of assets (EUR 37 billion), with market shares of 10,5% in loans and Customer deposits.

Kris Peeters appointed as new Vice-President of the European Investment Bank



- **Kris Peeters joins as Vice-President on the EIB's Management Committee, representing the Benelux countries.**
- **Mr. Peeters will exert oversight on files such as mobility, security and defence, as well as operations in the ASEAN countries.**

Kris Peeters has been appointed Vice-President and Member of the Management Committee of the European Investment Bank (EIB). He takes up his duties today, assuming the Benelux seat on the EIB's Management Committee.

The EIB's Board of Governors appointed Mr Peeters, a Belgian national, on a proposal from the Government of the Kingdom of Belgium and with the agreement of the EIB-shareholder constituency the country shares with the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg and the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

Upon joining the EIB, **Kris Peeters** remarked: *"I am very honoured to join the European Investment Bank, the EU's Bank, especially at a moment when the Bank accelerates the deployment of its efforts in climate change mitigation. Clearly, this engagement is there to stay and I am looking forward to making a difference with the team at the helm of the EU's Climate Bank. In doing so I will pay special attention to mobility, a field in which significant and innovative changes are ahead of us, while also closely following security and defence, as well as operations in the ASEAN countries. I am also delighted that I can contribute to the recovery efforts of the Bank in tackling the economic fallout of the COVID-19 pandemic across Europe."*

Until his nomination as Vice-President, Mr Peeters served as Member of the European Parliament since 2019. Mr Peeters has a long-standing political career, starting in 2004, when he became Flemish Minister for Public Works, Energy, the Environment and Nature. Subsequently he was Minister-President of Flanders from 2007 until 2014, and was Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Economy and Employment in the Belgian federal government of Prime Minister Charles Michel (2014-2019). Prior to his political career, Mr Peeters held leading roles at UNIZO, the Union of Self-employed Entrepreneurs and SMEs (1991-2004). Mr Peeters studied philosophy and law at Antwerp University and obtained a degree in taxation and accounting at the Vlerick Business School Ghent.

The Management Committee is the EIB's permanent collegiate executive body, consisting of a President and eight Vice-Presidents. The members of the Management Committee are appointed by the Board of Governors – the economy and finance ministers of the 27 EU Member States.

Under the authority of Werner Hoyer, President of the EIB, the Management Committee collectively oversees the day-to-day running of the EIB as well as preparing and ensuring the implementation of the Board of Directors' decisions, notably regarding borrowing and lending operations.