

Netherlands: A first in special care: 's Heeren Loo borrows from EIB



©'s Heeren Loo

- €200 million EIB-loan for new construction and renovation of 's Heeren Loo's care facilities.
- Financing is first EIB-investment in The Netherlands specifically targeting care for people with intellectual disabilities.

's Heeren Loo, market leader in care for people with intellectual disabilities in The Netherlands, will be the first party in its sector to borrow from the European Investment Bank (EIB). In first instance, this will regard a €200 million loan agreement used for s' Heeren Loo's medium-term investment plans. The financing will be used for direct investments in new construction of living quarters and daytime activities locations for its clients. The investments will create better care conditions for its residents and will also reduce CO₂-emissions of s' Heeren Loo's various premises.

With this agreement, 's Heeren Loo is the first institution that takes care of people with intellectual disabilities to sign a European loan. *"That is something we're proud of, and we worked hard for this."*, says CFO **Ernst Klunder**. *"For our organisation this represents a good addition to the financing possibilities we already have with regular Dutch banks. Our Fitch AA-rating, which we obtained earlier this year, allows us to split our financing needs over different financiers. This new collaboration shows that*

there is trust in our organisation with big parties even outside our own country. That is not just a compliment for our organisation, but also for our sector."

*"The investments of the European Investment Bank has, as their ultimate goal, to improve people's lives.", added vice-president **Christian Thomsen** of the EIB. "The EIB has financed quite a number of healthcare institutions in The Netherlands in recent years, but this is the first time a projects focuses specifically on care for people with disabilities. Not only is that something to be proud of, it is also very much in line with European priorities in the social field. 's Heeren Loo is investing heavily in further improving her service and we are glad to be able to support these plans."*

For the 2021-2025 period, 's Heeren Loo has investment ambitions totalling €555 million. The lion share of this, some €380 million, is meant for real estate plans in the regions where it operates. The living facilities of the organisation's clients will be adapted to the newest demands and wishes. For example, clients who currently still share sanitary facilities, will obtain private bathrooms and larger bedrooms. To implement this, a new housing concept has been developed, with the overarching idea of 'renovation where it is possible, new construction where it is necessary'. This last point is specifically relevant for the province of Zeeland, where 's Heeren Loo merged with care institution Arduin in 2019. Apart from living facilities, 's Heeren Loo is also working on the functional improvement of a number of daytime activities locations.

's Heeren Loo is the largest organization when it comes to guiding, caring for and providing housing to people with an intellectual disability. With a working area of □□nearly 300 municipalities and nearly 650 locations, the organisation is active throughout the Netherlands and delivers care to more than 14,000 clients with 17,000 employees. 's Heeren Loo distinguishes itself by offering complex care to a diverse client group. The vast majority of clients fall under the Long-term Care Act (84% of turnover). Many of them live with 's Heeren Loo all their lives. We mainly support clients with complex care needs. In addition, we provide care to clients who fall under the Social Support Act (WMO) and to clients who fall under the Youth Act, a client group experiencing strong growth.

Together with the Advisium knowledge center, 's Heeren Loo invests heavily in scientific research and innovation. This gives employees the knowledge and expertise to continuously improve the quality of treatments. The organization also has partnerships with universities through academic workshops to link theory and practice.

Article – Coming up: EU spearheads efforts for recovery in 2021



Recovery plan and the EU's long-term budget

Late last year, the Parliament [reached a compromise](#) with the Council on the EU's budget for 2021-2027 and secured a deal on the [budget for 2021](#) to support recovery. However, disagreements among member states over the [mechanism devised to protect EU's values](#) slowed down the approval procedure.

MEPs will have to finalise the rules on the functioning of all programmes that are part of the EU's 2021-2027 budget and the recovery plan, which will support people and businesses across the EU.

Sustainable recovery

At the [heart of the EU's Covid-19 recovery plans](#), the Green Deal will lead to the development of many initiatives to promote sustainability this year. [Agriculture](#), the circular economy, [biodiversity](#), [forests](#), energy, emissions and the [Emissions Trading System](#) are among the topics MEPs will be working on.

Climate change

Making the EU's 2050 climate-neutrality goal legally binding remains one of Parliament's priorities, as the EU concludes negotiations on the [Climate law](#).

Parliament is advocating a [60% emission reduction target by 2030](#).

Digital services

2021 will be the year of regulating online platforms. At the end of 2020 the Commission proposed the Digital Services Act to set guidelines for the changing online landscape and ensure a better, safer digital environment for users and companies. Parliament [outlined its priorities for the legislation](#) in October 2020 ahead of the European Commission's proposal.

Artificial intelligence

In early 2021, the Commission will propose new [artificial intelligence](#) legislation aimed at dealing with the technological, ethical, legal and socio-economic aspects of AI and ensuring Europe is at the forefront of developments. Parliament wants to make sure legislation helps boost the economy, while considering the impact on people.

Migration

The European Parliament will examine legislation seeking to create a common EU [asylum and migration](#) policy. The new measures, proposed by the Commission, aim to change and improve current asylum procedures by ensuring shared responsibility and solidarity among member states, while protecting the EU's external borders.

Conference on the Future of Europe

The [Conference on the Future of Europe](#) is a new initiative looking at what changes could be introduced to better prepare the EU for the future, with direct involvement from citizens. The Covid-19 crisis [delayed the initiative's kick-off](#): however, the two-year, ongoing consultation process should begin in earnest in 2021.

Agriculture

The Parliament, Commission and Council are expected to conclude negotiations on reforms to the EU's [Common Agriculture Policy](#) for the period 2022-2027, including alignment with the European [Green Deal](#) and environmental objectives. The new Farm to Fork policy, which seeks to look at food more broadly, will also be scrutinised by MEPs.

EU4Health

The new year will see the launch of the [EU4Health programme](#), which aims to help EU countries to better cooperate and coordinate in times of crisis. The priorities are protecting people from serious cross-border health threats, improving the availability of medicines and creating stronger health systems. MEPs will vote in early 2021 on a [provisional deal with the Council](#) on the rules for the programme.

EU support for emergencies

Parliament wants to revamp the [EU Civil Protection Mechanism](#) to improve the Union's crisis management and increase preparedness for large-scale emergencies such as Covid-19 and natural disasters. MEPs want to enable the EU to acquire emergency capacities autonomously and advocate more prevention. Parliament will negotiate with the Council on the upgraded system that should become operational in 2021.

Space programme

This year should see the adoption of the EU space programme for 2021-2027, including expanding the scope of the current European GNSS Agency ([GSA](#)), renaming it the European Union Agency for the Space Programme.

EU-UK relations

The first day of the new year marked the official end of the transition period between the UK and EU, ushering in the start of a complex relationship between them. The Parliament will be involved in forging new ties with the UK, including the conclusion of ad hoc agreements in key fields such as aviation.

[Weekly schedule of President Charles Michel](#)



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[Egypt: Team Europe – EIB and Banque Misr work together to support private businesses and speed up the recovery of SMEs from COVID-19](#)



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- €425 million to support Egyptian SMEs and mid-caps, boosting their ability to drive the economic recovery
- Part of Team Europe response to the coronavirus crisis

The **European Investment Bank** is providing [Banque Misr](#) with a €425 million

credit line to support Egyptian private small and medium-sized enterprises that have been impacted by the coronavirus pandemic, and boost their ability to lead the economic recovery in the country. The credit line will finance investment projects, as well as working capital needs, in productive and service sectors, thus sustaining growth and employment while helping to mitigate the economic and social impact of the COVID-19 crisis.

The EIB financing forms part of the EIB contribution to the Team Europe response to the [COVID-19 crisis](#) in the European Union partner countries. It is consistent with the objectives of the External Lending Mandate (2014-2020) and the EU cooperation with Egypt as set out in the EU Single Support Framework for Egypt for the period 2017-2020, as well as the EU-Egypt Partnership Priorities, in that it aims to support private sector development with a focus on SMEs, increased competitiveness, job creation and financial inclusion.

Flavia Palanza, Director for Neighbouring Countries at the European Investment Bank, made the following comment on the signature: “We are reinforcing our partnership with Banque Misr to support the Bank’s strategy to expand in SME financing. Our new credit line comes at a time when SMEs need strong support to overcome the challenges created by the COVID-19 pandemic. SMEs are most vulnerable to the impact of this global crisis. We are proud of our partnership with Banque Misr and the tangible impact that our project will have on people’s lives in Egypt.”

“Small and medium-sized enterprises create job opportunities and add value and innovation while delivering products and services that people need. More than ever during these challenging times, businesses need access to finance and affordable credit from banks. A number of EU programmes where EU grants are pooled with loans provided by European Financial Institutions (EFIs) are supporting businesses by offering them access to direct concessional loans or guarantee schemes with local partner banks,” said **Christian Berger, Ambassador of the EU to Egypt**.

“Last April, the EU together with its Member States and EFIs launched the Team Europe package to help partner countries to cope with the consequences posed by the pandemic, including its socioeconomic impact. Today our partner, the EIB, is signing further important Team Europe funding, which will make a real impact on SMEs and eventually on people’s lives across Egypt,” he added.

Akef El-Maghraby, Vice Chairman of Banque Misr, confirmed that the signing of this agreement seeks to assist national companies – mainly SMEs – in performing various activities, especially in light of the implications of the COVID-19 crisis. Banque Misr is one of the most pioneering financial institutions in supporting and financing SMEs, attaching great importance to the SME sector, as the size of the financing portfolio of this sector amounted to 20% of the total financing portfolio. This comes in line with the directives of Central Bank of Egypt and the state’s efforts to advance the sector in order to improve economic indicators, drive rates of economic development, promote local products and reduce the import bill.

Akef El-Maghraby also highlighted that Banque Misr is also interested in

providing financial support to SME sector via its branch network, reaching more than 700 branches throughout the Arab Republic of Egypt. This is coupled with the Bank's endeavours to provide distinctive financing mechanisms that meet the financing needs of all projects in all sectors of economic and service activities, which reflects in the advancement of the national economy.

Akef El-Maghraby said that Banque Misr launched the "Express" loan for small projects, which is considered the first integrated digital product, which allows Banque Misr's small project customers to submit a financing application online via the website, without the need to visit the branch, on a step-by-step basis with minimum procedures. The small project financing loan is the fastest loan in Egypt and can be obtained within five days of the date of submission, subject to applicable terms and conditions.

Banque Misr is the second largest bank in Egypt with a clear focus on SME lending and a large retail presence across all the governorates. In 2019, Banque Misr served more than 123 000 SMEs across the country, which makes it one of the largest supporters of the SME sector in the country.

Since 2015, the EIB has provided €3.9 billion in support of Egyptian SMEs and mid-caps through 15 operations, accounting for about a third of the Bank's portfolio in Egypt. Over these years, in line with the objectives of External Lending Mandate and national priorities, the EIB has focused on building fruitful relationships with those publicly and privately owned banks that are committed to supporting SMEs and particularly with institutions willing and able to reach out to traditionally underserved segments such as small, rural, youth and female.

[EU-China Leaders' meeting: Delivering results by standing firm on EU interests and values](#)



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