

Kosovo*: EIB invests €11 million for wastewater treatment in Gjilan/Gnjilane

- The project provides improved and affordable access to water and wastewater services to more than 90 000 people in the Gjilan/Gnjilane municipality in Kosovo.
- This is the first EIB investment in wastewater and environmental protection in Kosovo.
- The improved sanitation infrastructure will increase economic and social resilience to natural disasters such as COVID-19.

The European Investment Bank (EIB) will invest €11 million to improve wastewater management and provide affordable access to water and wastewater services for more than 90 000 people in the municipality of Gjilan/Gnjilane in Kosovo. Investment from the EU bank will enable construction of a wastewater treatment plant and related sewerage network, and the revitalisation of key infrastructure in the environmental protection sector.

The investment will reduce the pollution of local water, including the risk of trans-border water contamination. New sanitary infrastructure will also improve the quality and efficiency of public health and increase municipal resilience to natural disasters such as COVID-19. The investment comes under the EIB's **Economic Resilience Initiative**, which aims to improve vital infrastructure in the Western Balkans and foster social and economic progress in the region. Supporting critical environmental infrastructure is a key part of the EU and EIB strategy for the Western Balkans.

EIB Vice-President Dario Scannapieco said: "We are glad to support this project that will improve living standards for thousands of people in Gjilan/Gnjilane by providing a modern and affordable wastewater management system. On a larger-scale, it will contribute to socio-economic progress and regional connections, and improve preparedness for pandemic and emergency situations. Finally, we hope this financing will bring Kosovo closer to EU environmental requirements and support the transition of the Western Balkan countries towards the Sustainable Development Goals."

Besnik Beslimi, Minister of Finance and Transfer in the Republic of Kosovo, added: "The Kosovo Government intends to finance in the medium term the transformation of the wastewater sector in order to improve the quality of life of its citizens and protect the environment for the future generations. We are keen on financing the wastewater projects with European Investment Bank as a partner that has a long track record and reputation for financing water projects. The Gjilan/Gnjilane project signed today and the project of Mitrovica that is going to be signed later this year are in accordance with our Water Strategy."

"Kosovo's lack of facilities for treating sewage, urbanization and

development often result in contaminated rivers and groundwater due to discharge of sewage without treatment and disposal of solid waste into them,” said **Nataliya Apostolova, Head of the EU Office in Kosovo/EU Special Representative**. “For this reason, the EU has decided to help Kosovo meet the cost of installing wastewater treatment plants and ensuring their efficient operation. One such intervention is our grant support through the Western Balkans Investment Framework for construction of the Wastewater Treatment Plant in Gjilan/Gnjilane, which we believe will significantly improve the water quality for the people in the region.”

The project is co-financed by EBRD (€10 million). In addition, the project will benefit from a €3.1 million EU grant from the Western Balkans Investment Framework (WBIF) to support project preparation and implementation.

Background information

About the EIB in the Balkans

The EIB is a leading international financier in the Western Balkans. Since 2007, the Bank has financed projects totalling almost €8 billion in the region. Besides continuing its support for the reconstruction and upgrading of public infrastructure, since 2010 the EIB has expanded into many new areas, such as healthcare, research and development, education and SMEs.

[Detailed information on EIB activities in the Western Balkans](#)

[More information regarding the EIB's projects in Kosovo](#)

[Economic Resilience Initiative](#)

The Economic Resilience Initiative (ERI) was created in 2016 in response to a call from the European Council. The objective of the initiative is to help shift patterns of migration in the medium to long term and provide support to forcibly displaced populations by increasing the resilience of economies to future shocks. The ERI is doing this by mobilising finance to support growth, job creation, vital infrastructure projects and social cohesion in the EU's neighbouring regions.

Western Balkans Investment Framework

The Western Balkans Investment Framework (WBIF) is a regional blending facility supporting EU enlargement and socio-economic development in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia. The WBIF was established in 2009 as a joint initiative of the European Commission, the Council of Europe Development Bank, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the European Investment Bank, and several bilateral donors.

About Team Europe and the COVID-19 response in the Western Balkans

As part of the #TeamEurope strategy, the EU's global response to COVID-19, the EIB Group has rapidly mobilised €5.2 billion outside the EU, accelerating financing and targeted technical assistance. For the Western Balkan countries

specifically, the EIB has prepared an [immediate support package of €1.7 billion primarily for the SME and healthcare sectors](#). The total EU financial support package for the Western Balkans amounts to more than €3.3 billion.

**This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.*