

Spain: EIB and Banca March provide €400 million to finance Spanish SMEs and mid-caps



- **The project will support investments in innovation and companies in areas with high unemployment**

The European Investment Bank (EIB) and Banca March are once again joining forces to provide financing with favourable conditions in terms of both maturities and interest rates to Spanish small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and mid-caps. For this purpose, the EU bank has provided a €200 million loan to Banca March, which will add a further €200 million. As a result, the total funding made available to Spanish companies to fund their working capital and investment projects will be €400 million. The agreement was signed today by EIB Vice-President Emma Navarro and Banca March CEO José Luis Acea.

The funds will help finance SMEs and mid-caps from all sectors to guarantee their competitiveness and contribute to job creation. Part of this financing will go towards promoting investment in innovation to enable Spanish companies to implement their research, development and innovation strategies. Another of the agreement's key objectives is to support businesses operating in areas with high unemployment.

To be eligible for the new EIB and Banca March credit line, investment

project costs must be under €12.5 million for small businesses and up to €25 million for mid-caps.

During the signing ceremony in Madrid, **EIB Vice-President Emma Navarro, who is responsible for the Bank's operations in the country**, said: *"We are delighted to deepen our partnership with Banca March and strengthen our commitment to Spanish SMEs and mid-caps. Supporting them continues to be one of the EIB Group's main priorities for contributing to economic growth and job creation. The financing being provided via this agreement will help bolster their competitiveness and will be of particular benefit to SMEs operating in regions with high unemployment."*

Banca March CEO José Luis Acea added: *"The connection between Banca March – the only Spanish bank to be wholly family owned since its creation – and entrepreneurs and family companies is a key tenet of our business model. The financing agreements with the EIB will enable us to strengthen our commitment to a vital business segment for us, supporting these companies in their growth and development trajectory by offering them the best financing options as a specialised bank."*

This agreement is the fourth to be signed by the EIB and Banca March in support of SMEs. The most recent, signed in April 2019, made it possible to finance almost 400 companies with loans for an average of €240 000.

About Banca March

Banca March heads a financial group that is among the biggest in Spain – and is also the only one to be completely family-owned. It was Europe's most solvent bank in the two stress tests performed by the European Banking Authority (EBA) in 2010 and 2011, and currently has the lowest non-performing asset ratio in the Spanish banking sector and one of the highest levels of solvency in Europe. The strength of Banca March's business model has also been recognised by credit rating agency Moody's, which increased its long-term debt rating to A3, the highest level in the Spanish financial system. Banca March is one of the main shareholders of Corporación Financiera Alba, with major stakes in Naturgy (indirect), Acerinox, Indra, Ebro Foods, BME, Viscofan, Euskaltel and Parques Reunidos, among others.