

Spain: Support for the European automotive industry – EIB finances ZANINI Auto Group's innovation strategy with €25 million loan



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- The EU bank funds will enable ZANINI to advance driver assistance technologies to develop self-driving vehicles and new safety systems.
- The agreement is supported by the Investment Plan for Europe.

The European Investment Bank (EIB) will provide €25 million to finance the research, development and innovation (RDI) investments of Spanish group ZANINI, which specialises in the development of components for the automotive sector. The EU bank is providing these funds under the [Investment Plan for Europe](#), with a view to supporting innovation within the European automotive industry and thereby driving the economic recovery following the COVID-19 crisis.

The investments will be implemented over four years – by 2023 – at the multinational's facilities in Barcelona. The project will make it possible to improve its production plants and expand its capacity by building a new plant in Parets del Vallès. The aim of this innovation strategy is to strengthen its new business line focusing on new technologies for radar integration,

which is key to self-driving vehicle development (ZANINI's specialist area). Environmental and safety improvements will also be made in the facilities and the company's ICT technologies will be modernised.

ZANINI's EIB-financed RDI strategy will also enable the company to develop new Advanced Driver-Assistance Systems (ADAS) technologies. These will improve vehicle safety by providing new automatic emergency braking and speed control systems. The development of these new technologies will contribute to the design of lighter and therefore more energy-efficient and less polluting vehicles.

The loan is backed by the [Investment Plan for Europe](#), which enables the EIB to finance projects that present particular value added owing to their structure or nature. The project will help to safeguard and create highly skilled jobs. ZANINI has production centres in 10 countries and currently has almost 1 400 employees. The implementation of this innovation project will enable it to expand its headcount, including in its RDI division.

"We are delighted to sign an agreement that will help drive innovation in the European automotive industry, a sector employing 14 million people and that, like many others, is having a particularly difficult time due to the economic crisis caused by the pandemic," said **EIB Vice-President Emma Navarro**, responsible for the Bank's activities in Spain. *"This financing will enable ZANINI to implement cutting-edge technologies in Spain to drive the development of self-driving vehicles and improve car safety and energy efficiency. Supporting innovation and the development of clean technologies is a key priority for the EIB to foster a sustainable economic recovery."*

Paolo Gentiloni, European Commissioner for the Economy, said: *"With European Investment Bank support under InvestEU, ZANINI will be able to expand its capacity – including with the construction of a new manufacturing plant near Barcelona – and will invest in innovation and the development of safer and less polluting vehicles. Supporting new technologies in Europe – such as the development of self-driving vehicles – will be key to the recovery of our economies."*

ZANINI Chairman Joan Miquel Torras added: *"With this long-term loan from the EIB, ZANINI is safeguarding innovation financing for the coming years and will be able to develop its Expansion Plan linked to the new line of electromagnetic transparency and backlighting (ETB) products for electric and self-driving cars."*

Financing RDI and climate action

Innovation and skills development are essential ingredients in bringing about sustainable growth and the creation of highly skilled jobs. Both play a key role in achieving long-term competitiveness. This is why financing innovation is one of the EIB's top priorities. In 2019, the EU bank provided €14.44 billion to finance different RDI projects. In Spain alone, last year the EIB made available over €1.32 billion in support of the innovation projects of Spanish companies.

The EIB is the world's largest multilateral provider of climate finance. Its goal is to be a leader in mobilising the finance needed to limit the average global temperature increase to 1.5°C compared to preindustrial levels in order to meet the Paris Agreement objectives. On 14 November 2019, the EIB Board of Directors approved its new climate objectives and the new energy lending policy. The Bank will gradually increase its financing for climate and environmental objectives up to 50% of its activities by 2025, with the goal of ensuring that the EIB Group mobilises at least €1 trillion in the critical decade between 2021 and 2030 to promote investments helping to meet these objectives. It also announced its commitment to aligning all of its activities with the Paris Agreement. To this end, the EIB will cease financing fossil fuel-based projects from late 2021.