

DOCUMENTS



EU and Türkiye deepen cooperation on green and digital transition

Brussels, 25 April 2024

Today, Iliana **Ivanova**, Commissioner for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth, and Mehmet Fatih Kacır, Minister of Industry and Technology of the Republic of Türkiye, held the second EU-Türkiye High-Level Dialogue on science, research, technology and innovation in Istanbul. This marks a significant milestone in EU-Türkiye research and innovation cooperation.

The two sides have announced that three innovation programmes from Türkiye are now certified to take part in the European Innovation Council (EIC) Plug-in scheme, which will enable them to submit projects from their portfolio directly to the full application stage of the EIC Accelerator. In addition, the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT) will set up a Community Hub in Türkiye by the end of the year. Moreover, the Commission's Joint Research Centre has supported the launch of Türkiye's initial roadmap to support the design of regional Smart Specialisation Strategies.

Commissioner **Ivanova** and Minister Kacır exchanged views on EU's and Türkiye's science, technology, and innovation policies, putting an emphasis on the critical role of a skilled workforce in enabling innovation and technology transfer. They reaffirmed their commitment to intensifying cooperation in the aforementioned areas, aiming for closer and deeper integration of Türkiye in the European Research Area, including EU Missions and Partnerships under Horizon Europe, the EU research and innovation programme.

The meeting was an important moment to assess ongoing co-operation in critical sectors and to discuss future opportunities for collaboration between

academia and business. The EU and Türkiye agreed that a stronger integration of research and innovation capacities and technology transfer activities, coupled with human capital development, are key to succeeding in the ongoing green and digital transitions.

The significant achievement of Turkish scientist Rana Sanyal, winner of the 2023-2024 European Prize for Women Innovators, was highlighted as a successful result of the EU-Türkiye innovation cooperation.

This afternoon, Commissioner **Ivanova** and Minister Kacır will also open the Boğaziçi University Life Science Centre. This centre has been upgraded thanks to nearly €8 million support from EU programmes. The Centre will perform cutting-edge research on protein sequencing and cancer therapy.

Background

Türkiye has participated in EU research and innovation programmes since 2003, with a total of €743 million in EU support to Turkish researchers and innovators. Their participation in Horizon Europe, the current programme, has been particularly successful. EU contribution to Turkish entities reached €91 million in 2022, supporting participation in EU Missions and Partnerships, Science, Technology and Innovation Networks such as Cooperation in Science and Technology (COST) and EUREKA, as well as in Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions, supporting the training, skills development and mobility of researchers and international doctoral programmes. Additionally, the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) has provided more than €700 million in support to the competitiveness and innovation of the Turkish economy, funding projects boosting productivity, technology development and innovation as well as promoting green and digital transformation.

The first EU-Türkiye High-Level Dialogue on science, research, technology, and innovation took place in Brussels on 15 November 2022, focusing on aspects of the European Green Deal in boosting human capital development, innovation and technology transfer.

On 1 September 2023, the two sides signed an agreement associating Türkiye to the Digital Europe Programme. This enables Turkish businesses, governmental bodies and other eligible entities to take part in projects

implementing digital technologies. The agreement will also enable the establishment of Digital Innovation Hubs in Türkiye.

Source: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/api/files/document/print/en/ip_24_2305/IP_24_2305_EN.pdf.



Commission decides to register European Citizens' Initiative on taxation of greenhouse gas emissions

Brussels, 13 May 2024

Today, the European Commission decided to register a European Citizens' Initiative (ECI) entitled 'Save the Planet by shifting taxation from labour to greenhouse gas emissions'.

The organisers of the initiative call on the Commission to strengthen the Fit for 55 Package and the EU carbon pricing system by setting a faster phase-out of free allowances and allowing an uncapped carbon price to achieve emission reduction goals. They also call for the redistribution of a substantial part of carbon pricing revenues to low-income households, strengthening the EU's Social Climate Fund and promoting the establishment of a 'Climate Club' where participant countries adopt robust carbon pricing, with due consideration to redistributing carbon pricing revenues to low-income households.

The decision to register is of a legal nature and it does not prejudge the final legal and political conclusions of the Commission on this initiative and the action it would take, if any, in case the initiative obtains the necessary support.

As the European Citizens' Initiative fulfils the formal conditions established in the relevant legislation, the Commission considers that it is legally admissible. The Commission has not analysed the substance of the proposals at this stage.

Next Steps

Following today's registration, the organisers have six months to open the signature collection. If a European Citizens' Initiative receives one million statements of support within one year with minimum numbers reached in at least seven different Member States, the Commission will have to react.

The Commission will have to decide whether or not it will take action in response to the request, and will be required to explain its reasoning.

Background

The European Citizens' Initiative was introduced with the Lisbon Treaty as an agenda-setting tool in the hands of citizens. It was officially launched in April 2012. Once formally registered, a European Citizens' Initiative allows one million citizens from at least seven EU Member States to invite the European Commission to propose legal acts in areas where it has the power to act. The conditions for admissibility are: (1) the proposed action does not manifestly fall outside the framework of the Commission's powers to submit a proposal for a legal act, (2) it is not manifestly abusive, frivolous or vexatious and (3) it is not manifestly contrary to the values of the Union.

Since the beginning of the European Citizens' Initiative, the Commission has registered 112 initiatives.

Source: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/api/files/document/print/en/ip_24_2526/IP_24_2526_EN.pdf



The EU signs €1.4 billion of new guarantee and grant agreements to support Ukraine's recovery and attract private sector investments

Berlin, 11 June 2024

At today's Ukraine Recovery Conference 2024 in Berlin, European Commission President Ursula **von der Leyen** announced the signature of €1.4 billion in new guarantee and grant agreements to support Ukraine's recovery and reconstruction, as part of the Ukraine Facility's Investment Framework. These agreements underscore the EU's steadfast commitment to support Ukraine for as long as it takes.

These are the first agreements signed with international and bilateral public financial institutions under the Ukraine Investment Framework, the investment arm of the EU's up to €50 billion Ukraine Facility to support Ukraine in the face of Russia's ongoing war of aggression and on its path towards EU membership.

These agreements, comprised of €1 billion of loan guarantees and €400 million of blended finance grants, will benefit private companies, including small and medium-sized enterprises, municipalities and Ukrainian state-owned enterprises. They will notably focus on the repair, rehabilitation and development of **energy infrastructure**, which has been heavily targeted by Russia in recent months. Other programmes target the transport and municipal sectors, and access to finance for small and medium-sized enterprises, notably to businesses affected by the war in de-occupied and front-line regions.

The full list of programmes, which aim to unlock €6 billion in investments, includes:

- **Initiatives in Support of Ukraine's Private Sector** – to enhance access to finance for small and medium-sized enterprises, including to war-affected companies. The EU is providing €190 million in guarantees and

€10 million investment grants via the European Investment Bank (EIB) Group;

- **Better Futures Programme, Resilience, Reconstruction, and Regeneration of Ukraine** – to accelerate and scale-up investments in renewable energy such as wind power projects, battery energy storage systems, transport, digital sector, and industrial investments. including steel production, construction materials and processing. The EU will provide €350 million in guarantees and €17.5 million in technical assistance via the International Finance Corporation (IFC).
- **Financial Inclusion Recovery Programme** – to enhance access to finance for small and medium-sized enterprises and invest in their production capacity. The EU is providing €140 million in guarantees, €30 million in investment grants and €7 million in technical assistance via the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD).
- **Hi-Bar Programme** – to mobilise finance to accelerate the net zero transition in the energy sector. The EU is providing €150 million in guarantees and €7.5 million in technical assistance via the EBRD.
- **Municipal, Infrastructure and Industrial Resilience Programme** – focused on emergency support and future reconstruction efforts across sectors, including industry, energy, municipal infrastructure. The EU is providing €150 million in guarantees, €25 million in investment grants, and €7.5 million in technical assistance via the EBRD.
- **Promoting Green Lending via the Green for Growth Fund** – to enhance access to financing for mid-caps and small and medium-sized enterprises, green and circular economy businesses, climate adaptation, energy efficiency and green transition. The EU is providing first loss capital of €45 million, €7 million in investment grants and €3 million in technical assistance via the Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau (KfW), the German Development bank.
- **EU4Business, Lending to Micro and Small Enterprises via the EFSE Fund** – to support the restoration and relocation of war-affected companies, micro and early-stage entrepreneurship, businesses in de-occupied/front-line regions, and the adaption of agricultural business. The EU is providing first loss capital of €45 million, €9 million in investment grants and €1 million in technical assistance via the KfW.
- **Reconstruction and Rehabilitation of Electricity Transmission Infrastructure Programme** – to strengthen the resilience of electricity transmission by investing in sustainable repairs and rehabilitation of electricity infrastructure as well as restoring access to electricity supply

for critical infrastructures. The EU will provide €100 million investment grants via the KfW.

- **Support for Ukrainian MSMEs Programme** – to enhance access to finance for micro, small and medium-sized enterprises focusing on war-affected companies to help them to restore their business, including in de-occupied and front-line regions. The EU is providing €20 million in guarantees via Bank Gospodarstwa Krajowego (BGK).
- **Municipal Infrastructure Development Programme** to support water and sanitation investments, rehabilitation of water supply and sewage infrastructure in the City of Chernivtsi. The EU is providing €17.75 million in investment grants and €2 million in technical assistance via the KfW.
- **Immediate Ukraine Extension of JASPERS (Joint Assistance to Support Projects in European Regions)** – to provide capacity-building to prepare and implement large-scale infrastructure projects and advisory services for the Ukraine's reconstruction. The EU is providing €10 million in technical assistance via the EIB.

Ukraine Recovery and Reconstruction Guarantee Facility - to provide war insurance for movable assets, such as in-land cargo transport. The EU is providing €50 million in guarantees via the EBRD to cover the risk of a fund which will in turn extend insurance coverage. Other donors will provide an additional €60 million in guarantee commitments.

Additional support

In light of the massive destruction of Ukraine's energy infrastructure by Russia's targeted attacks, the EU is deploying over 1,000 additional power generators from its rescEU strategic reserves. While also preparing for the upcoming winter, further rescEU stockpiles are being mobilised to send shelter equipment and medical supplies to Ukraine. The EU Civil Protection Mechanism has also helped to mobilise more than 15,000 solar panels to support Ukraine's energy sector. With regard also to the energy sector, at the request of the European Commission, the Energy Community has established the Ukraine Energy Support Fund which has so far mobilised donations of around €500 million.

The EU has also announced at the conference increased support via its rapid response instruments for the Integrated Response Hub with an additional €18 million, bringing the total EU contribution to €36 million. The Hub provides equipment to respond to the needs in Ukraine ranging from critical

infrastructure to electricity supplies, demining equipment and support to civilian security actors, to ensure access to justice in de-occupied areas and to collect evidence of war crimes.

To further support Ukraine's reform efforts on its path to the EU, during the conference, the Commission also signed **new Technical Assistance programmes** worth over €100 million to help advance Ukraine's reforms in areas such as decentralisation, education and skills, health, integrated border management and crisis response.

The EU also agreed to **suspend Ukraine's financial obligations** related to its participation in Union programmes. To date, Ukraine is associated to fourteen EU programmes: Horizon Europe, EURATOM Research and Training Programme, Digital Europe, Fiscalis, Customs, Creative Europe, EU4Health, LIFE, Single Market Programme, Union Civil Protection Mechanism, Connecting Europe Facility, Union Anti-Fraud Programme, Justice programme, Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values programme.

Enhanced Donor Coordination

In the margins of the conference, Commission Executive Vice-President Valdis Dombrovskis chaired the first ministerial meeting of the Multi-agency Donor Coordination Platform. Participants reaffirmed their unwavering commitment to continue supporting Ukraine's recovery and reconstruction efforts. Ukraine's needs in the energy sector and its reforms progress were highlighted in the meeting.

The ministerial meeting also launched the Platform's Business Advisory Council, bringing together business leaders, to provide advice on how the business environment in Ukraine can be bolstered to help the country attract private investment and achieve its vision of a modern, and greener economy integrated with Europe.

Background

Overall, since the start of the war, the support to Ukraine and Ukrainians amounts to almost **€100 billion**. This includes financial, humanitarian, emergency budget and military support to Ukraine from the EU, Member States and the European financial institutions, as well as resources made available to help Member States cater for needs of Ukrainians fleeing the war.

The **Ukraine Facility** will provide up to €50 billion in grants and loans for the period 2024-2027 to support Ukraine's efforts to sustain macro-financial stability, promote short-term recovery as well as rebuild and modernise the country whilst implementing key reforms on its EU accession track. It will support the transition towards green, digital and inclusive economy that is progressively aligned with EU rules and standards. Out of this, €6 billion has already been disbursed in exceptional bridge financing and an additional €1.9 billion in pre-financing under the Facility is expected to be disbursed later in June.

At the heart of the Ukraine Facility is the **Ukraine Plan**, developed by the Government of Ukraine and positively assessed by the Council on 14 May. The document sets out reforms and investments that can boost sustainable economic growth and attract investments, amplifying the country's growth potential in the medium-to-long term.

As part of the Ukraine Facility, a **Ukraine Investment Framework** to attract public and private investments with €7.8 billion in loan guarantees and €1.51 billion for blended finance grants has been established. The Ukraine Investment Framework is expected to mobilise up to €40 billion in public and private investments over the next years.

Source: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/api/files/document/print/en/ip_24_3182/IP_24_3182_EN.pdf



EU signs agreement with Serbia to strengthen migration and border management cooperation

Belgrade, 25 June 2024

Today, the European Union and Serbia signed an agreement on operational cooperation in border management with the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex). The signature finalises the negotiations that started in May 2023 and allows to update the current framework in application since May 2021.

Frontex currently deploys over 480 officers in the Western Balkans, through joint operations at the Union's external borders with Albania, North Macedonia, and Montenegro; this includes 111 officers already deployed in Serbia in an ongoing joint operation, conducted under the previous status agreement with Serbia, at the borders with Hungary and Bulgaria.

The strengthened operational cooperation provided by the agreement will contribute to addressing irregular migration and further enhance security in the region. Details of individual operations conducted on the basis of this status agreement will be agreed upon directly between Frontex and the national authorities of Serbia in an operational plan.

Next steps

The entry into force of this agreement is subject to the consent of the European Parliament and the Council and the conclusion of the national ratification procedure in Serbia. Once the agreement enters into force, at the request of Serbia, Frontex Standing Corps can be deployed across Serbia, including at the non-EU borders.

Background

Today's new status agreement is the fifth agreement based on the reinforced mandate of Frontex. The first was signed with Moldova in March 2022, the second was signed with North Macedonia in October 2022,

then Montenegro in May 2023, and Albania in September 2023. Negotiations with Bosnia and Herzegovina are ongoing.

Support, training, deployment of border officials and equipment has been delivered to the Western Balkan partners via the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA) in coordination with Member States' bilateral actions and based on the needs identified by the Western Balkans authorities.

In December 2022, the Commission presented an EU Action Plan on the Western Balkans. The implementation of the EU Action Plan Western Balkans is continuing, in close cooperation with partner countries and with positive results, contributing to the decrease of migratory pressure and secondary movements on the Western Balkans route. For instance, a Regional Operational Partnership on anti-smuggling with the Western Balkans was launched in November 2022 and was followed up by a EUR 36 million regional anti-smuggling programme in June 2023. By focusing on supporting law enforcement and judicial cooperation against criminal networks and drawing on EU funding and the know-how of EU agencies to increase border management capacity, the programme has already led to increased investigations, arrests and prosecutions.

Source: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/api/files/document/print/en/ip_24_3422/IP_24_3422_EN.pdf