

PRESS RELEASE

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EIB continues to support smaller projects in Croatia

The European Investment Bank (EIB) is providing a loan of EUR 150 million to the Croatian Bank for Reconstruction and Development (HBOR - Hrvatska banka za obnovu i razvitak) to finance projects of small and medium-sized companies (SMEs), mid-cap companies and municipalities in Croatia.

EIB Vice-President Anton Rop, responsible for EIB operations in Croatia, commented: *"It is one of the EIB's priorities to improve the access to long-term financing by SMEs and mid-cap companies. They represent an important part of the Croatian economy in terms of employment, GDP, the introduction of modern production technologies, and they frequently suffer from a shortage of funding opportunities, particularly during a period of crisis."*

Anton Kovačev, President of HBOR's Managing Board, said: *"The Contract we signed today is an additional confirmation of HBOR's outstanding reputation among international financial institutions and a continuation of excellent long-term co-operation with EIB. This loan is of great significance for the development of the overall Croatian economy, for which HBOR will, as it always has, endeavour to ensure the best terms and conditions of finance in order to contribute to the strengthening of its competitiveness in the world market."*

With this project, EIB loan will co-finance projects implemented by SMEs and medium-sized companies in the areas of industry and services, including tourism, and also support small and medium-scale infrastructure schemes promoted by local authorities, projects in knowledge- and technology-intensive sectors as well as additional priorities such as energy, environmental protection, health and education. A minimum of 70% of the loan amount will be allocated to SME and mid-cap projects.

This loan represents a continuation of the very successful cooperation between EIB and HBOR. EIB has previously provided six credit lines to HBOR totalling EUR 644 million. The previous loan for SMEs and mid-caps of April 2010 for an amount of EUR 250 million is being implemented successfully.

About European Investment Bank

The European Investment Bank (EIB) is the long-term lending institution of the European Union owned by its Member States. It makes long-term finance available for sound investment in order to contribute towards EU policy goals.

Since 2001 the EIB has provided loans in Croatia worth some EUR 3 billion, including the current loan. The EIB's lending portfolio in Croatia is very well balanced and covers all of the country's economic sectors, ranging from basic infrastructure to manufacturing and services, including support for small and medium-sized companies through local financial institutions.

About Hrvatska banka za obnovu i razvitak

Hrvatska banka za obnovu i razvitak is the development and export bank of the Republic of Croatia whose primary task is to promote the development of the Croatian economy. By extending loans, insuring export transactions against political and commercial risks, issuing guarantees and providing business advice, HBOR builds bridges between entrepreneurial ideas and their accomplishment with the objective of enhancing the competitiveness of the Croatian economy. From 1992 until the end of 2011, HBOR approved 29,340 loans totalling HRK 63.3 billion to the Croatian business sector.

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