

Brussels, 4 December 2018

## **EUR 1bn already allocated to the development of smart and sustainable cities in Belgium thanks to EIB-Belfius partnership**

- **In concrete terms, this constitutes 121 projects benefiting more than 2 million people**
- **“Smart Cities, Climate Action & Circular Economy II” has been launched with an additional EUR 400m to support ever smarter, more sustainable and circular projects helping to combat global warming**
- **The EIB and Belfius are cementing their partnership and are both supporting local authorities in the implementation of their projects and according to their needs**

Since the partnership between the European Investment Bank (EIB) and Belfius to promote the development of “Smart Cities” in Belgium was announced, over EUR 1bn in investment in no less than 121 projects has already been financed on favourable terms by the two institutions. Buoyed by this success, Belfius and the EIB have signed a new agreement to provide an additional EUR 400m with a view to supporting even more projects helping to develop smart cities, the circular economy and the fight against global warming.

This new programme – *Smart Cities, Climate Action & Circular Economy II* – aims to help local authorities, inter-municipal groupings and non-commercial organisations in the social and education sectors in Belgium to implement their smart and sustainable projects by granting finance on favourable terms. The scope of the programme covers not only energy, mobility and urban development, but also water (distribution networks, sewers, drainage, treatment), waste (selective collection, sorting, biological treatment and sludge treatment, energy production) and e-government (particularly open data). In addition to an integrated, innovative and sustainable approach, the circular economy and climate action are key focal points of project appraisal and evaluation.

### **More than 2 million people have already benefited from EUR 1bn**

121 projects representing an investment of more than EUR 1bn have already been financed thanks to the partnership between Belfius and the EIB. These projects, which have an impact on the daily lives of more than two million people across the country, come from local authorities, CPAS (Public Social Action Centres), inter-municipal groupings, provincial institutions, and non-commercial, social and education sector organisations.

Already completed or in progress, they range from the regeneration of city centres and the transformation of the hearts of villages to the renovation of schools and cultural and sports centres, the construction of rest and care homes, and the centralisation of administrative and emergency services in new smart and sustainable buildings. In addition, they include the creation of cycle and pedestrian paths and the construction of a wind farm alongside a motorway, as well as the replacement of an ageing fleet of vehicles by cleaner models. Most of the projects financed combine energy efficiency and renewable energy measures with sustainable mobility and urban development. The circular economy is also a central aspect of many projects.



Smart Cities projects: Hainaut: 13, Liège: 12, Walloon Brabant: 11, Namur: 11, Luxembourg: 7, Antwerp: 12, West Flanders: 22, East Flanders: 16, Limburg: 7, Flemish Brabant: 10

### Climate and the environment targeted by local authorities

Local authorities can play a major role in combating global warming and developing the circular economy by setting an example and thereby encouraging companies, individuals and other organisations to implement environmentally-friendly initiatives of their own. A number of Belgian cities and municipalities have already signed the Covenant of Mayors, undertaking to promote climate protection and voluntarily cut CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in their area. With this new joint programme – **Smart Cities, Climate Action & Circular Economy II** – Belfius and the EIB intend to continue to provide the best support and assistance for these efforts.

**EIB Director General Jean-Christophe Laloux said:** *“By 2050, more than 75% of the global population will be concentrated in cities. This is why transforming urban areas to make them smarter and more sustainable is among the EIB's key objectives. Together with Belfius, our long-standing partner for the Smart Cities programme in Belgium, we are confident that by helping local authorities to implement their projects according to their needs, goals and size, the EU bank will have a quick and direct impact on residents' quality of life, the environment and climate. On the occasion of the COP 24, it is also the very essence of the European project to be at the heart of cities and villages to serve people and local development.”*



**Dirk Gyselinck, member of the management board at Belfius, said:** *“Given the numerous challenges to be overcome and climate change in particular, governments, social sector players and businesses have no choice but to work together to think about and design the world of tomorrow. Our Smart Belgium strategy aims to make Belfius the driving force behind this initiative, providing tangible, local support and applying our financing and expertise to offer a smart and sustainable response to the needs of current and future generations. We are therefore particularly pleased to sign this new agreement – which is fully in line with this strategy – with the EIB today.”*

**For a visual overview of several projects financed under the Belfius-EIB partnership:**  
<https://youtu.be/nTRDb3Asqy4>

**Discover how a small Belgian village transformed its historic centre into a smart city:**  
<http://www.eib.org/en/podcasts/belgium-smart-cities-infrastructure>

### **About the European Investment Bank (EIB)**

The European Investment Bank (EIB) is the long-term lending institution of the European Union and it is owned by the EU Member States. It makes long-term finance available for sound investment in order to contribute towards EU policy goals. Since its creation in 1958, the EIB, which is currently celebrating 60 years of activity, has invested EUR 29bn in more than 250 projects in Belgium – as well as providing support for thousands of SMEs and small municipalities, in order to promote priority sectors such as renewable energy development, energy efficiency, technological innovation, telecommunications, the environment, transport, urban development, education and health. For more information, visit: <http://www.eib.org/en/projects/regions/european-union/belgium>

Operating mainly in the EU, but also in more than 130 countries outside the EU, the European Investment Bank (EIB) is the world’s largest multilateral lender for climate-related investment. In support of the Paris Agreement, it has undertaken to allocate USD 100bn to climate action over the 2016-2020 period. The EIB has committed at least 25% of its investments to climate change mitigation and adaptation, rising to 35% in developing countries by 2020. With EUR 19.4bn dedicated to climate action in 2017, the EIB exceeded its target for the eighth year running.

At COP24 in Katowice, EIB climate experts and senior management will highlight the EIB’s broad support for climate investment in diverse sectors, announcing a number of new policy initiatives and project investments. A regularly updated agenda of EIB events and contacts can be found [here](#).

### **About Belfius Bank & Insurance**

Belfius Bank & Insurance is a well-established bancassurance provider with a local focus. It operates in Belgium in three main areas: retail and commercial banking, financial services for the public and corporate sectors, and insurance. Supported by 150 years of experience in the public sector and 50 years in retail banking, Belfius Bank & Insurance is wholly owned by the Belgian Government via the Federal Holding and Investment Company (SFPI). Its shares are not listed on a stock exchange.

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