

## PRESS RELEASE

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### **EIB backs EUR 355m scheme to protect Greek cities from floods and climate change**

- Priority investment to protect 500,000 people from extreme weather and changing climate
- 10 schemes to improve flood protection in Athens, Thessaloniki and Peloponnese
- Largest ever EIB support for flood protection in Greece

The European Investment Bank (EIB) today agreed its largest ever support for new investment to protect homes and businesses across Greece from flooding. The new EUR 150 million twenty-five year EIB loan will support a EUR 355 million scheme to transform flood protection for 500,000 people in Athens, Thessaloniki and the Peloponnese.

The record loan agreement was signed in Athens earlier today by Finance Minister and Governor of the EIB Christos Staikouras, Minister of Infrastructure and Transport Konstantinos Karamanlis and European Investment Bank Vice President, Andrew McDowell.

“New investment is essential to save lives and property from flooding in vulnerable communities across Greece. Sustainable development is a high priority in the agenda of the Greek Government, to ensure environmental protection and act decisively towards addressing the impact of climate change. The European Investment Bank has unique technical and financial experience of supporting climate action around the world and I welcome today’s new support for flood protection in Greece. New flood protection investment based on detailed technical analysis is supported by the Greek government, EIB and European Commission and will improve both protection and create jobs,” said Christos Staikouras, Finance Minister and Greek Governor of the EIB.

“Climate change threatens infrastructure and economic activity across Greece and protecting lives, homes and business from extreme weather is a priority for the Government of Greece. I welcome the European Investment Bank’s support for new investment to reduce the risks of flooding in Greece. Similar schemes have been tried and tested elsewhere in Europe successfully.” said Kostas Karamanlis, Minister of Infrastructure and Transport.

“The European Investment Bank is committed to accelerating climate related investment that both improves protection against extreme weather events and reduces carbon emissions. Across Greece thousands of homes and businesses are at risk from flooding and the EIB is pleased to support this impressive new initiative to strengthen flood defences and protection measures across the country through the EUR 150 million loan confirmed today. This new investment in Greece to protect against a changing climate demonstrates the close partnership between the Greek government and local authorities, the EIB and European Commission to support climate action and reduce the risk of future flood damage.” said Andrew McDowell, European Investment Bank Vice President.

#### **Strengthening flood protection across Greece**

Ten flood protection projects will be supported by the new scheme over the next four years, including seven in Attica, two in Thessaloniki and one in the Peloponnese.

Under the climate adaptation initiative, river embankments will be heightened, river channels deepened, storm water drainage improved and floodwater retention increased to reduce the risk of future flooding in Greek cities most vulnerable to flooding. The scheme is a national priority given the expected future increase in the frequency of flash floods and prolonged rainfall and tragic loss of life and economic damage from flooding in recent years.

Since 2000 more than 16,000 people have been directly impacted and more than EUR 1 billion of economic activity damaged by flooding in Greece.

#### **Combined national and European support**

Implementation of the flood investment programme will be managed by the Hellenic Ministry of Infrastructure and Transport. Alongside government support financing will also be provided by

European Commission cohesion funds, the Council of Europe Development Bank and the European Investment Bank.

Vice President McDowell currently in Greece for a three day official visit to meet government, banking and business leaders and announce new public and private sector investment in the country by the world's largest international public bank.

**Background information:**

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.

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