

GM/139/2024
25 April 2024

General Meeting

*Statement by the Chair
of the Board of Directors*

*Gelsomina Vigliotti,
Vice-President
European Investment Bank*

Introduction

Dear Chair, Shareholders, and colleagues from the Board of Directors and the Audit Board,

It is my pleasure to address the Annual General Meeting, on behalf of the Board of Directors.

I will take this opportunity to share some thoughts to **accompany the EIF's Annual Report and financial accounts**, which have been submitted by the Board, for approval today.

In this year where we celebrate **the EIF's 30th anniversary**, we can certainly take satisfaction and pride in the year which has led up to this landmark in the Fund's history.

2023 achievements and challenges

As President Calviño rightly said, the **EIB Group** has demonstrated remarkable resilience over time, and this rang true, once again, in 2023, which was a year of **considerable change** for the **EIF**.

As you will recall, important change came **at the very start of 2023**, with the EIF's new Chief Executive, **Marjut Falkstedt**. Under Marjut's leadership, the Board has supported the development of the **EIF's longer-term strategic orientations as part of the EIB Group**.

At the same time, Marjut began to implement her vision for a comprehensive strengthening and rationalisation of the **EIF's organisational structure**.

Consequently, as a Board of Directors, we witnessed the Fund's ability to maintain its direction, strengthen its internal governance, improve efficiency, and increase its business delivery all at the same time.

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I would suggest that, both **in spite of** these strategic and organisational changes, and also **thanks to them**, the Board saw the remarkable commitment of **the EIF's staff** to deliver on the Fund's ambitions.

In that respect, the **activity results** presented in the Annual Report speak for themselves. Almost **EUR 15bn in operational commitments** last year, translating into over **EUR 67bn** of financing to hundreds of thousands of **small and medium-sized companies**.

EIF raised approximately EUR 11bn in mandates last year. This included the launch of the European Tech Champions Initiative which, at EUR 3.85bn, was certainly the star of the year, expanding the EIF's product catalogue. This is an initiative which is highly relevant for the European venture capital markets to address the scaling-up problem of our innovative enterprises, which will need a variety of solutions, including of a regulatory nature.

In 2023, the **Board approved over 200 operations**, many of which came under the **European Commission's InvestEU flagship** mandate. Demand across the numerous InvestEU instruments has remained extremely strong and this mandate underpinned over one third of the EIF's activity last year.

The key policy objectives which are championed through InvestEU are representative of the range of **Public Policy Goals** which have been increasingly supported through the EIF's delivery in 2023. To quote just one highlight: in line with the EIB Group Climate Bank Roadmap and the EU's Green Deal, the EIF's **green** activity grew significantly, with sustainability and the green transformation representing **39% of 2023 commitments**, compared to just over 27% in 2022.

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Turning to the 2023 **financial results**, the EIF reached a **record-breaking net operating income** of EUR 229m. In line with the Board's policy for the distribution of net income to shareholders – which was reviewed and re-endorsed by the Board last year – the proposal put forward by the Board, for approval today, would result in a **dividend of EUR 3,112 per share**.

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In the second half of 2023, the **Board of Directors itself was subject to change**. Several members left, due to professional moves, and we were joined by three new members, two of whom were nominated by the EIB (Filipe Cartaxo and Ludivine Halbrech) and one by the European Commission representing the EU (Giorgio Chiarion Casoni).

Further change was to follow at the start of this year when **President Calviño** was welcomed to the Board.

Now, as we collectively reach the **end of the two-year Board term** across the members and alternates, you will have seen that a largely **revised Board composition** is proposed for the General Meeting's decision.

On the basis of those appointments, I believe that the Board will continue to be **well-equipped to steer** the EIF in achieving real impact. This includes the oversight of **executive management** as they seek to drive the Fund's growth in areas of strategic relevance and policy-related importance, as well as within the broader context of the **EIB Group's strategic priorities**, as outlined by President Calviño.

Looking ahead

As far as 2024 is concerned, the Board is retaining a **close focus on the EIF's strategic orientations as part of the overall EIB Group's strategy** as well as its **capacity and resources** to deliver on its ambitions.

In order to address market needs and demands across sectors, geographies and demographics within the EIF's remit, **sufficient firepower** in the form of mandates is critical, not least in view of a reduced availability of EU budgetary resources under the second part of the Multi-annual Financial Framework.

Moreover, as the move forward into **digitalisation** becomes ever more prominent, the Board will be looking both "outwards" and "inwards", on the one hand to **support financing** for intermediaries and final beneficiaries as part of the **EU's digital transition** and, on the other hand, to closely follow the internal initiatives to achieve the **EIF's and the EIB's digital transformation objectives**.

The EIF is a strong operational and strategic **partner within the EIB Group** and it shall continue to capitalise on its **recognised expertise** accumulated over the last **30 years**.

It goes without saying that the Board is very much aware and **appreciative** of the **support** of the EIF's **shareholders**. You have **multi-faceted** roles as key business and strategic counterparts, mandators and financial intermediaries. You are also insightful participants at our different shareholder events throughout the year...and have nominated valuable members and alternates to the Board of Directors.

I shall conclude with thanks to my colleagues on the Board of Directors, and with a reiteration of the Board's recognition of the achievements and dedication of EIF management and staff in 2023.

Thank you.