

MINUTES

Meeting of the Advisory Board of InvestEU Programme 29 April 2021, online through Webex

1. Welcome by the Chair and the Vice-Chair

This was the first meeting of the Advisory Board of InvestEU under Regulation No 2021/523¹.

The Chair, *Mr Giorgio Chiarion Casoni* (European Commission) and the Vice-Chair, *Ms Teresa Czerwińska* (European Investment Bank Group, EIBG) welcomed the participants. The Chair explained the nature of the meeting and updated the Advisory Board members on the progress of the implementation of the InvestEU. The Vice-Chair described the main features of the EIBG's role, provided an overview of investments needs in Europe based on recent EIB's expertise and surveys and the EIBG's commitment to the InvestEU Programme.

2. Adoption of the agenda

The draft agenda was adopted without changes.

3. Presentation of the operating rules and procedures

A representative of the Advisory Board Secretariat ("AB Secretariat") presented the Operating Rules and Procedures of the Advisory Board established by the European Commission ("Operating Rules")².

A representative of PMV asked about the involvement of alternate members in the Advisory Board meetings. The AB Secretariat clarified that an invitation to the first meeting of the Advisory Board was extended to alternate members. This practice will continue.

A representative of France expressed the importance of providing documents for the Advisory Board meetings sufficiently in advance as 10 days before the meetings may be too short for complex documents. He also suggested to differentiate documents for advice from documents for discussion. He also enquired about the format of reporting from the Advisory Board to the Steering Board.

A representative of European Economic and Social Committee asked about the location and likelihood of the physical meetings.

¹ Regulation (EU) 2021/523 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 March 2021 establishing the InvestEU Programme and amending Regulation (EU) 2015/1017 (OJ L 107, 26.3.2021, p. 30)

² Commission Decision of 14.4.2021 on the appointment of members of the InvestEU Advisory Board and establishment of its operating rules and procedures, C(2021) 2646.

A representative of Italy inquired about the admission of third parties to the Advisory Board meeting, as per Art. 7 of the Operating Rules. She also asked about the role and responsibilities of the third parties and whether those are expected to attend the whole AB meeting or only be called for specific items of the agenda.

The AB Secretariat and the Chair highlighted that the AB Secretariat will respect the minimum 10-days rule for dispatching the documents and the agenda for next meeting will clearly indicate whether a document is for discussion or whether a formal recommendation is sought. As regards the format of advice to be provided by the Advisory Board, it is up to the members to decide the format of advice, as currently there is no rule or set format for it. Where needed, the AB Secretariat will provide the Advisory Board with background documents on a subject and a formal document with the advice to be agreed by consensus of the Advisory Board. The Chair or the Vice-Chair may request to have certain topics discussed. On the question about the third parties involvement in the meetings, third parties may be invited to the meetings to contribute to the discussion when, for example, technical expertise is required and their participation will be limited to the discussion. The Chair finished by referring to the current travel restrictions and explained that physical meetings will be organized once the pandemic allows. The next Advisory Board meeting (in the autumn of 2021) will be likely in a remote setting. The physical meetings will take place in either Luxembourg or Brussels.

A representative of Garantiqa Creditguarantee Co. Ltd. asked about the definition of ‘potential implementing partners’. The AB Secretariat explained that it covers all entities that have passed the eligibility check of the pillar assessment, or have applied for an update of their pillar assessment, and that have expressed their interest to become implementing partners under InvestEU.

A representative of Belgium enquired on how the three business days will be counted for Advisory Board members to request items to put on the agenda. He also asked for information about the frequency of meetings and when the first meeting of the Member State composition would take place. The AB Secretariat explained that the Operating Rules are not explicit and the three-day rule will be interpreted in a flexible way.

A representative of UAB „Investicijų ir verslo garantijos” suggested indicating a minimum period for the Advisory Board's reaction in urgent cases under Art. 8 of the Operating Rules, for instance, 5 days. The AB Secretariat took note and will revert [AP 1].

A representative of Committee of Regions enquired about the expected level of pro-activeness of the Advisory Board members. She also asked how it is ensured that the Advisory Board members have the most relevant and up to date information. The Chair explained that it would be up to the Advisory Board to shape its own role, and to opt for a more passive or active stance. He however supported the active role of the Advisory Board members. The Vice-Chair concurred that the Advisory Board should play an active role by both shaping its own agenda as well as contributing to discussions. She highlighted the importance of Advisory Board members’ role in creating the worktable of the Advisory Board.

A representative of Slovenska izvozna in razvojna banka, d.d., enquired about the Chair’s right to reject proposed agenda items. The AB Secretariat replied that this is only expected to happen in

exceptional situations as the InvestEU Regulation supports open and collaborative environment. The Chair confirmed such understanding. There will be an agreement between the Chair and the Vice-Chair if a specific agenda item would be rejected.

A representative of Ireland suggested that an early indicative agenda ahead the autumn meeting would allow the Advisory Board members to spend time on research, preparation and to bring ideas to the table. The Chair concurred that it would be beneficial to provide agenda ideas in advance and proposed that the Advisory Board members come forward with suggested agenda items for next meetings. The Chair also encouraged bilateral and multilateral communication.

A representative of Bulgaria enquired about the communication and reporting streams between the Advisory Board and other governing bodies. The AB Secretariat explained that the minutes of the Advisory Board and Steering Board meetings will be published on the InvestEU website. The Commission will further reflect on the reporting [AP 2].

A representative of the Committee of the Regions enquired how the Commission sees the possibility of interaction between the Advisory Board and the Investment Committee. The Chair said that he supports informal ways of communication and suggested tailor-made presentations.

4. Notification of appointment of representatives to the Steering Board

The Chair informed that the EIBG has nominated its members and alternates to the Steering Board, both for EIB and EIF. The European Parliament is also progressing with nominating its expert.

On behalf of the Advisory Board members, a representative of Caisse des Dépôts et Consignations, *Mr Helmut von Glasenapp*, declared that the national promotional banks and institutions represented in the Advisory Board concluded that the Advisory Board members to be appointed to the Steering Board are: *Ms Daria Ciriaci* (Cassa Depositi e Prestiti S.p.A., Italy) and *Mr Michel Casselman* (Participatiemaatschappij Vlaanderen NV, Belgium). As alternate members: *Mr Alfonso Noriega Gómez* (Instituto de Crédito Oficial, Spain) and *Mr Csaba Harsányi* (MFB Hungarian Development Bank Private Limited Company, Hungary).

No objection were raised with regard to this notification. The Chair congratulated the nominated representatives.

A representative of Caisse des Dépôts et Consignations explained that there will be a rotating system of the Steering Board members in order to have a balanced representation in terms of size and geographical orientation. The first term includes representatives from big and small implementing partners and they will be followed, in the next term, by representatives from small and medium implementing partners.

A representative of Luxembourg enquired about the date of the first Steering Board meeting.

A representative of Bulgaria asked for the full composition of the Steering Board to be circulated to the Advisory Board members. Furthermore, she asked about the state of play of the selection procedure of the Investment Committee members.

The Chair provided the clarifications requested: first meeting of the Steering Board is expected to be held in the end of May 2021. Among its first tasks will be a recommendation to the Commission on candidates to the Investment Committee, and the Rules of Procedures of the Investment Committee Secretariat.

The full composition of the Steering Board will be shared with the Advisory Board members [AP 3].

5. State of play of implementation of InvestEU

A representative of the European Commission presented the state of play on implementation of InvestEU. He referred to the milestones, state of play of the negotiations, and timeline for InvestEU Fund and Advisory.

A representative of the European Investment Fund (EIF) expressed EIF's delight in being part of the Advisory Board and underlined the EIF's long-standing commitment to policy objectives pursued under InvestEU as well as the strong partnership forged with the European Commission and other partners, part of the Advisory Board. He highlighted that, while Europe is coming from a tough period dominated by the COVID-19 pandemic, which has seen EIF directing substantial effort to roll-out specific initiatives, it is equally important to embrace a forward-looking perspective, without losing sight of the current situation. EIF is therefore looking forward to contributing to a fruitful debate about market developments, market conditions and support the Advisory Board in providing recommendations on financial products and other matters. He also indicated that the discussions between the EIF and the Commission are progressing at a fast pace and it is envisaged to make the products available to the market shortly after summer break. The EIF has proposed products under all four InvestEU policy windows, envisaging both continuation of existing guarantee and equity intermediated products but also novel policy interventions focused on most burning challenges. An agile InvestEU architecture is needed to counter the effects of the COVID-19 economic crisis and deliver meaningful support to businesses in Europe in the timeline envisaged under IEU Regulation and NextGenEU.

A representative of Belgium asked about the profile of IFIs having applied for the pillar assessment. A representative of the European Commission replied by referring to the IFIs with European majority shareholders as eligible for operating under InvestEU. He expressed that some of the European IFIs are already discussing InvestEU with the Commission.

A representative of the Council of Europe Development Bank enquired about the expected timing of signing agreements with implementing partners. A representative of the European Commission replied that the first agreements will be signed in the second part of 2021. Not all guarantee agreements are expected to be signed before the end of the year.

A representative of Poland asked about the publication of the Sustainability Proofing Guidelines. A representative of the European Commission referred to the InvestEU website: https://europa.eu/investeu/investeu-fund/about-investeu-fund_en

A representative of the Caisse des Dépôts et Consignations enquired if it will possible for the EIBG to develop equity platforms under InvestEU (as under the EFSI 2). A representative of EIF replied

that the EIBG are open to discussing such platforms, and have already built a cooperation platform together with the Commission that offers different models of cooperation between EIF and NPIs. The EIF is willing to examine how the platform can foster its activities and cooperate to reach the objectives of the InvestEU.

A representative of EIB highlighted that the EIB, together with EIF, will implement 75% of the InvestEU Programme, and that the EIB has made good progress on advisory and guarantee agreements. The EIB puts substantive efforts to start the implementation around the summertime. He noted that it is important to recognize that InvestEU is built on EFSI's successes as well as other initiatives developed together with the Commission, and further highlighted EIB's role as the EU's climate bank and its commitment to the green economy. The EIB plans to propose financial products under all policy windows except the SME window, which falls under EIF's focus area. There is a time pressure due to the Next Generation EU budget, however a lot of work still needs to be done. He noted that in the meanwhile, EIB is working on warehousing potential transactions that can be put under the guarantee as soon as the guarantee agreement is signed and the Investment Committee is established. EIB is willing to support the Member States (through use of MS compartment) and the Commission. The EIB is committed to the InvestEU and looks forward to an open access program that will be easy to implement and which limits overlaps of products and projects.

A representative of the Committee of Regions expressed his understanding that the EIBG are in advanced stages of concluding financial instruments with the Commission. He suggested that the Advisory Board should be informed about those arrangements as a start for future advice on complementary improvements. A representative of the EIF replied that EIF aims at communicating transparently on the products under InvestEU as soon as the discussions crystallise which is expected before the next meeting of the Advisory Board. It should be a good basis for discussing complementary products and improvements.

The Chair provided further clarifications. The InvestEU Regulation includes the possibility of warehousing, and it should be encouraged. On the question of the Member State compartment, the Chair was pleased to hear about the EIBG's cooperation with Member States. The Chair encouraged the institutions represented in the Advisory Board to make proposals in reply to the Calls for expression of interest to select implementing partners under the InvestEU Fund (EU compartment) and to select advisory partners under the InvestEU Advisory Hub.

A representative of Belgium asked about the profile of IFIs that have expressed their interest to become an implementing partner. Furthermore, she asked how the Advisory Board could support efforts under InvestEU, Next Generation EU and ESG strategy, for instance, through a workshop.

The Chair proposed to discuss the complementarity between the products offered by the EIBG and other implementing partners in the next meeting. Furthermore, the Commission is in discussion with the EBRD on pillar assessment and with the Council of Europe Bank (CEB) and Nordic Investment Bank (NIB) on advisory partnership.

A representative of Ireland supported the idea of discussing the complementarity between the products by EIBG and other implementing partners at the next meeting. The representatives of Committee of Regions, of the EIBG and of Bulgaria endorsed this proposal.

A representative of EBRD asked when implementing partners other than the EIBG could expect to receive a first draft of the guarantee and advisory agreements. The Chair confirmed the Commission currently focuses on negotiations with the EIBG but relevant templates should be shared with the interested implementing partners during the summer.

The EBRD representative acknowledged the challenge to steer the Advisory Board through the path to a successful delivery of the program. He encouraged relying on as much as possible on skills and experience of the individual members and giving them guidance while letting them be agile. He requested to provide early visibility on the tools and instruments such as the guarantee agreement template and pricing on the guarantee. He concluded by expressing that the Advisory Board can be helpful in providing guidance on steering through the challenges and making successful delivery of the InvestEU.

A representative of Caisse des Dépôts et Consignations asked about the timing of the first call of expression on interest and availability of important framework documents in June.

The Chair reassured that the Commission is doing its best to accelerate the implementation process in view of the late approval of the legal framework. Such elements as the approval process and pricing system are still work in progress. The Call of expression on interest for potential implementing partners had to be published early given the deadlines for implementation of NGEU part of the EU guarantee. The Scoreboard is being finalised and the implementing partners will be consulted in the coming weeks. The EIBG is being consulted in order to establish a logical pricing framework. The Commission will ensure good visibility of its efforts to implementing partners.

A representative of Committee of Regions was concerned that smaller Member States risk having a very small share of InvestEU unless they opt for use of the Member State Compartment. He suggested for a future discussion how to make it attractive for smaller Member States to participate through "common" platforms. The representatives of Bulgaria and of Luxembourg supported the proposal.

The Chair agreed that Member State Compartment and platforms are good ideas for the agenda items of next Advisory Board meeting.

6. Presentation on the communication coordination network on InvestEU

[This agenda item was discussed after agenda item 7]

Representatives of the European Commission presented the state of play of the InvestEU communication. They introduced the planned InvestEU communication network, its purpose, membership and timing. Advisory Board members (potential implementing and advisory partners) were invited to appoint a member from their communication or press unit as contact point for communication purposes and as member of the communication network. The names are to be sent to EC-INVESTEU-COMMUNICATION-NETWORK@ec.europa.eu or to EC-INVESTEU-AB-SECRETARIAT@ec.europa.eu.

7. Advisory Board meetings in 2021: tentative scheduling and work plan

The Vice-Chair opened the discussion on the work plan for the next Advisory Board meeting. Next meeting will take place in the autumn, October or November 2021. The agenda of the meeting is being prepared [AP5]. The Vice-Chair suggested that topics of interest could be InvestEU Member State Compartment, the Recovery and Resilience Facility. The Chair and Vice-Chair welcome feedback on the topics for the upcoming meetings.

A representative of Netherlands underlined the importance of the Advisory Board in fostering the digital transition. He then highlighted the following topics: (1) focus on equity instruments and their availability to the SMEs, likely under InvestEU SMEs window; (2) facilitating access to finance, with a focus on initiatives where this access is difficult, and (3) InvestEU support to initiatives that focus on diversity and gender balance. He finished by inquiring how the results of InvestEU are monitored.

The Chair encouraged the Advisory Board members to work with the Commission and the EIBG. The Chair proposed having sub-groups of the Advisory Board members.

The representatives of Netherlands, of Netherlands Enterprise Agency, of Committee of Regions, of Export-Import Bank of the Slovak Republic and of Cassa Depositi e Prestiti S.p.A., supported the proposal of the Chair to have smaller working groups.

A representative of Belgium supported the proposal to organize thematic groups and suggests inviting OECD to discuss about digital, AI and ESG, and to have EFSI, InvestEU, RRF or ESG perspective to address performance products in line with the Green Deal. A representative of Netherlands expressed their interest to contribute, prepare reports and share insights.

A representative of Ireland supported the above proposal on small sub-groups and expressed that it would help to understand the respective expertise of the Advisory Board members to identify areas of common interest.

The Vice-Chair shared her opinion toward working outside the meetings. She notes that there are many topics to be discussed. Therefore, the Advisory Board could group topics to subgroups and prepare materials for the exchanges of views, advice and recommendations of the Advisory Board [AP4]. At the same time, overlaps should be avoided.

A representative of Belgium asked for a clarification on the role of the Member State composition of the Advisory Board and its first meeting.

The Chair confirmed that the first meeting of the Member States composition is foreseen for the autumn. The AB Secretariat requested feedback to identify some topics of interest for the Member States and will liaise with the Member States accordingly.

A representative of Romania asked for the composition of the Advisory Board to be circulated, in order to understand the background and experience of Advisory Board members. The AB Secretariat replied that the full composition and contact details of the Advisory Board will be circulated. A request for consent to sharing contact details will be sent within the next weeks.

8. AOB

The Chair encouraged the Advisory Board members to propose agenda items for the next meeting and to have bilateral and group meetings prior to the next meeting.

The draft minutes will be circulated to Advisory Board members for comments at the latest on 25th May 2021 (i.e. within 15 business days after the meeting as per the Operating Rules).

The Chair and Vice-Chair thanked the participants for attending the first meeting of the Advisory Board.

I. Recommendations/opinions of the Advisory Board

N/A

II. Action Points

For the Advisory Board Secretariat under the instructions of the Chair / Vice-Chair:

AP 1: To provide a guidance on the minimum period for the Advisory Board's reaction in urgent cases (Article 8 of the Operating Rules);

AP 2: To reflect on the reporting mechanism from the Commission to the Advisory Board, as well as interactions between the InvestEU governance bodies;

AP 3: To circulate to the Advisory Board members, the composition of the InvestEU Steering Board and of the Advisory Board;

AP 4: To reflect on the work of Advisory Board members in subgroups for thematic topics;

AP 5: To prepare agenda of the next Advisory Board meeting taking into account the suggestions made during this meeting, namely:

- InvestEU Member State Compartment,
- Investment platforms,
- Equity instruments and their availability to the SMEs,
- Facilitating access to finance, with a focus on initiatives where this access is difficult,
- InvestEU support to initiatives that focus on diversity and gender balance,
- InvestEU support to initiatives that focus on digital access and artificial intelligence,
- Complementarities between the InvestEU, EU next generation, Green Deal and other initiatives.

III. Next meeting

Autumn 2021, exact date to be confirmed.

Annex

- **Attendance list of participants to the First meeting of the InvestEU Advisory Board**