



## Investment Plan for Europe: EIF and Alba Leasing S.p.A. sign agreement to benefit innovative Italian SMEs

The European Investment Fund (EIF) and Alba Leasing S.p.A. (Alba) have signed an InnovFin agreement for SMEs benefiting from the support of the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI), the heart of the Investment Plan for Europe.

The InnovFin agreement will allow Alba to provide leases to innovative companies in Italy over the next 2 years with the support of a guarantee provided by the EIF and backed under Horizon 2020, the EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation. The EU support for innovative Italian companies is expected to generate a portfolio of EUR 80m of leases.

EIF's Chief Executive, **Pier Luigi Gilbert** said: "I am pleased to be announcing an additional InnovFin SME Guarantee agreement for innovative companies in Italy. The new deal will be instrumental in helping companies to access additional EU-backed finance in order to innovate and grow".

**Carlos Moedas**, European Commissioner for Research, Science and Innovation, said: "The EFSI-backed agreement being signed today by the EIF and Alba Leasing is very good news for innovative SMEs in Italy. We expect it to generate €80 million of bank leases. The Investment Plan and the InnovFin programme continue to make a real difference to small businesses across the EU and nowhere more so than in Italy."

Commenting on the operation, Alba Leasing's President, **Luigi Roth**, said: "The agreement signed with the EIF – with the support of European Commission - will further enhance our activities in support of the SMEs, one of the driving forces of our country. This agreement represents a concrete help and a strong action aimed at invigorating the relationship between Alba Leasing and its customers, especially small and medium-sized enterprises in line with the objectives of our Company".

This transaction implemented thanks to EFSI in Italy, reflects the EIB Group's commitment to respond swiftly to calls from Member States, the European Commission and the European Parliament for a rapid launch of concrete initiatives under EFSI, accelerating lending and guaranteeing transactions capable of boosting jobs and growth in the EU.

### More information

#### About the EIF

The European Investment Fund (EIF) is part of the European Investment Bank group. Its central mission is to support Europe's micro, small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) by helping them to access finance. EIF designs and develops venture and growth capital, guarantees and microfinance instruments which specifically target this market segment. In this role, EIF fosters EU objectives in support of innovation, research and development,

entrepreneurship, growth, and employment. More information on the EIF's work under the EFSI is available [here](#).

### **About Alba Leasing S.p.A.**

Alba Leasing is a specialist provider of lease financing, owned by Banca Popolare dell'Emilia Romagna S.c. (33.50%), Banco Popolare S.c. (30.15%), Banca Popolare di Sondrio S.c.p.a. (19.26%), Banca Popolare di Milano S.c. (9.04%) and Credito Valtellinese S.c. (8.05%). Alba Leasing offers a wide range of products – mostly for capital goods and real estate financing – through a distribution network of approximately 5,700 branches, including almost 3,600 member banks and over 2,100 partner banks. In 2015 Alba Leasing recorded a total production of 1.2 billion euro, up 16.8% from a year earlier, thanks to 11,557 leasing operations.

### **About the Investment Plan for Europe**

The Investment Plan focuses on removing obstacles to investment, providing visibility and technical assistance to investment projects and making smarter use of new and existing financial resources. The Investment Plan is already showing results. The European Investment Bank (EIB) estimates that by April 2016, the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI) triggered more than €80bn of investment in Europe.

Find out the latest EFSI figures including a break-down by sector and by country [here](#). For more information see the [FAQs](#).

### **About InnovFin**

The [InnovFin SME Guarantee Facility](#) provides guarantees and counter-guarantees on debt financing of between €25,000 and €7.5m in order to improve access to loan finance for innovative small and medium-sized enterprises and small midcaps (up to 499 employees). The facility is managed by the EIF, and is rolled out through financial intermediaries – banks and other financial institutions – in EU Member States and Associated Countries. Under this facility, financial intermediaries are guaranteed by the EIF against a proportion of their losses incurred on the debt financing covered under the facility.

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