

The EU's [European Investment Bank \(EIB\)](#) via its non-EU investment arm, EIB Global has signed a 70-million-euro investment grant with the North Macedonian government to build a wastewater treatment plant in Skopje, the EIB announced on Wednesday (22 March).

Signed on World Water Day, the project is the largest EU investment grant allocated to the country under the **Western Balkans Investment Framework (WBIF)**.

The wastewater treatment plant is expected to improve living conditions for around half a million people and is part of the **European Commission's Economic and Investment Plan** and of the [Green Agenda](#) for the Western Balkans.

The project is being financed by EIB Global's 68-million-euro worth loan, complemented with funds from the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), the government of North Macedonia and EU grants channelled through the WBIF.

"We are extremely proud to be able to deliver this kind of support for North Macedonia in times of prolonged crisis and profound challenges.

Signing this grant is a strong demonstration of the Team Europe approach and EU commitment to the country on its path to EU and regional integration, as well as better living standards for all.

This project is expected to generate substantial environmental improvements and health benefits while bringing the country closer to its environmental protection and climate targets," said Lilyana Pavlova, EIB Vice-President.

In its preparatory phase, the project has benefitted from various technical assistance grants from the EIB, EBRD, WBIF and the French government. The water sector is also among the key priorities for EIB Global in the country, the EU bank said.

This is the second investment in this sector in less than five months, following a 50-million-euro loan signed in November 2022 for the construction and rehabilitation of water supply, wastewater collection and treatment infrastructure, as well as emergency flood protection measures for the 80 municipalities across North Macedonia.

"The agreement we are signing today brings the Republic of North Macedonia a step closer to achieving its goal of joining the European family.

The Republic of North Macedonia has commenced negotiations with the European Union and is increasing activities that further this objective.

In parallel, reforms aimed at bringing Europe home and implementing European standards for everyday life are picking up speed," said Fatmir Besimi, North Macedonia's Minister of Finance.

"In addition to harmonisation with the EU acquis, a key part of this process, we are also pursuing major infrastructure projects that will contribute to the overall development and

North Macedonia, EU provides 70 million euros for largest environmental protection project

growth of the economy.

Defined strategic projects are being recognised by the European Union and, so far, North Macedonia has been granted funds amounting to 462 million euros to implement 29 such projects. Their assessed investment value totals 2.6 billion euros,” he added.

In the Western Balkans, the EIB has provided close to 750 million euros for water and sewage infrastructure. Going forward, the bank said that it is looking for possibilities to expand its investments in this sector in line with the EU’s *Global Gateway* initiative, aiming to mobilise up to 300 billion euros for sustainable infrastructure projects worldwide, CEE Green Energy News writes.