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EUR 70m for SMEs in Kosovo, Serbia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia under the Western Balkans Enterprise Development and Innovation Facility

The European Investment Fund (EIF) and three ProCredit group subsidiaries have signed guarantee agreements to support Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in Serbia, Kosovo and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. This was made possible via the Western Balkans Guarantee Facility, funded by the European Union under the Western Balkans Enterprise Development and Innovation Facility.

The Western Balkans Guarantee Facility agreements aim to facilitate access to finance for SMEs in Serbia, Kosovo and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia by providing credit coverage on a total of EUR 70 million of loans over the next two years. SMEs will be able to access EUR 35 million from ProCredit Bank Kosovo, EUR 25 million from ProCredit Bank Serbia and EUR 10 million from ProCredit Bank Macedonia.

Commenting on the deal, EIF's Guarantees, Securitisation & Microfinance Director, Alessandro Tappi, said: "We are pleased to be signing these guarantee agreements under the second phase of the Western Balkans Guarantee Facility for SMEs in Serbia, Kosovo and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia with ProCredit, a long-standing EIF partner in the region. Via the local ProCredit banks, the guarantee will enhance access to finance for SMEs which can bring jobs and growth to the three countries' economies."

Borislav Kostadinov, member of the Management Board of ProCredit Holding, added: "We in the ProCredit group are very proud to be signing these guarantee agreements for the three countries. As the leading 'Hausbank' for SMEs in this region, we will always strive to offer better solutions for small and medium-sized enterprises in our countries of operation."

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 (MSMEs) by helping them to access finance. The EIF designs and develops venture and growth capital, guarantees and microfinance instruments that specifically target this market segment. In this role, the EIF fosters EU objectives in support of innovation, research and development, entrepreneurship, growth, and employment.

About WB EDIF

The Western Balkan Enterprise Development and Innovation Facility (WB EDIF) is an EU-funded initiative which aims to increase the financial resources made available to SMEs based in the Western Balkans, as well as to support private sector development, socio-economic development and the EU-accession process across the region. The EUR 145 million of capital made available under this facility by the EU, international financial institutions (IFIs), beneficiaries and bilateral donors will effectively translate into over EUR 300 million of direct financing for SMEs in the region. The Guarantee Facility forms one pillar of WB EDIF and targets SMEs with growth potential and which are in need of lending to cover their financing needs for investments and working capital.

The facility is coordinated by the European Investment Fund and is being implemented in close cooperation with governments in the Western Balkans, the European Commission, the European Investment Bank (EIB) and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD). IFIs, international organisations and bilateral donors active in the region, such as the World Bank, DEG, OECD and others are participating in order to streamline their efforts to develop the private sector in the Western Balkans.

About the ProCredit group

ProCredit Holding AG & Co. KGaA, headquartered in Frankfurt am Main, Germany, is the parent company of the international ProCredit group, comprising banks with a focus on South Eastern and Eastern Europe that have specialised in serving SMEs. The group also operates in South America and in Germany. The core shareholders of ProCredit Holding AG & Co. KGaA are the strategic investors Zeitinger Invest and ProCredit Staff Invest (comprising investment vehicles for ProCredit staff members), the Dutch DOEN Participaties B.V., KfW and the IFC (World Bank Group). ProCredit Holding AG & Co. KGaA is supervised, on a consolidated basis, as the superordinated company of the ProCredit Group pursuant to the German Banking Act by the German Federal Financial Supervisory Authority (Bundesanstalt für Finanzdienstleistungsaufsicht, BaFin) as well as by the Deutsche Bundesbank. For additional information, visit: www.procredit-holding.com.

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