





REPORT


Commission Expert Group on Enhanced Coordination of External Financial Tools

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1. Purpose of the meeting

The meeting of the Commission Expert Group focused on improving the coordination of the EU's external financial tools. The overall objective is to better support European exporters and investors in partner countries, while strengthening the EU's external competitiveness and the implementation of Global Gateway. The Commission underlined that coordination between EU institutions, Member States, export credit agencies, public development banks, cooperation agencies and the private sector has become a central priority.

2. International trade context

A first point concerned the international trade context. The Commission noted that progress on WTO reform remains limited, although a stable and predictable multilateral trading system is still considered essential. At the same time, the EU continues to advance its bilateral trade agenda, including with Mercosur, India, Indonesia and Mexico.

3. Role of European export credit agencies

The meeting then emphasized the growing role of European export credit agencies. These agencies are now seen as important actors in the implementation of Global Gateway, alongside development finance institutions, public banks and national agencies. They are also being considered in discussions on the next EU Multiannual Financial Framework.

In this context, a study presented the possibility of creating a new European guarantee instrument to support export credit agencies in riskier countries and sectors. The study focused on medium- and long-term political risk, critical raw materials and sectors linked to Global Gateway. According to the estimates presented, export credit agencies already cover around €25 billion of operations within the scope studied, while a new EU risk-sharing instrument could unlock around €7.7 billion in additional volume.

4. Sustainable Investment Facilitation Agreements

A significant part of the discussion focused on Sustainable Investment Facilitation Agreements, also referred to as CIFA/SIFA. These agreements aim to improve the investment climate in partner countries by addressing several obstacles faced by investors, including unpredictable rules, heavy administrative procedures, contradictory requirements between ministries, lack of transparency and unclear contact points. They also include a sustainability dimension, requiring partner countries not to lower environmental or labour standards in order to attract investment.

5. Clean Trade and Investment Partnerships

The Commission also presented Clean Trade and Investment Partnerships, or CETIP. The first agreement of this kind was concluded with South Africa in 2025. It was presented as a more flexible and faster instrument than traditional trade agreements, focused on sectors linked to the energy transition, including renewable energy, transmission infrastructure, clean fuels, critical raw materials and climate technologies.

South Africa was presented as a priority partner, especially because the EU is a major investor there, with around 1,500 European companies present and close to €50 billion in trade. The CETIP is also linked to a €12 billion Team Europe support package for South Africa. Issues raised included visas, local content requirements, permits, grid access, electricity sector reforms and regulatory predictability. The Commission indicated that it would like to receive more concrete feedback from companies to feed into the dialogue with South African authorities.

6. Global Gateway Investment Hub

The Global Gateway Investment Hub was presented as a central entry point for investment project proposals submitted by European companies. Projects then enter a facilitation phase, which aims to bring together the relevant actors around the project, including the Commission, EU delegations, financial institutions, national agencies, public banks and other Team Europe actors. The Commission also stressed the role of “Team Nationals”, meaning national coordination structures between public actors within each Member State.

7. Belgian approach: Enabel and Team Belgium

Belgium presented its approach through Enabel. The Belgian agency explained that the link between development cooperation and economic interests is becoming increasingly important in the European framework. Enabel highlighted its role as a facilitator, thanks to its local presence, dialogue with partner governments, support to local ecosystems, market knowledge and training activities. The Belgian presentation also referred to the “Team Belgium” approach, which brings together Enabel, Credendo, BIO, Finexpo and trade promotion agencies.

8. Private sector perspective

The private sector, represented in particular by Société Générale, stressed that European financing tools exist but remain difficult to mobilise because of complex procedures and different requirements between institutions. The bank called for a clearer definition of EU additionality and better harmonisation of eligibility criteria, reporting and due diligence requirements. Several participants acknowledged that the multiplication of procedures can slow down projects, especially in some African countries where administrative and reporting capacities are more limited.

9. Regulatory compliance working group

In response, the Commission presented a regulatory compliance working group. This group will analyse practices related to anti-money laundering, counter-terrorism financing, sanctions, anti-corruption and fraud prevention. The aim is to identify bottlenecks, duplications and possible opportunities for simplification or mutual recognition between institutions.

10. European database of financial instruments

The Commission also presented a project for a European database of public financial instruments available to exporters, investors and project promoters. This database could be integrated into the Access2Markets portal and provide information on the type of support available, eligible sectors



and countries, eligible beneficiaries, exclusions, application procedures, common reasons for rejection and useful contact points.

11. Team Spain

Finally, Spain presented the organisation of Team Spain. It is based on a broad institutional structure involving the Presidency of the Government, relevant ministries, public banks, trade promotion agencies, the Spanish export credit agency, the Spanish DFI and embassies. The objective is to better coordinate European positions, national strategies and dialogue with the private sector.

Conclusion

Overall, the meeting showed a clear willingness from the EU and Member States to make external financial tools more coordinated, more visible and more effective. The main topics discussed were the integration of export credit agencies into Global Gateway, the possible creation of a new European guarantee instrument, CIFA/SIFA and CETIP, the Global Gateway Investment Hub, Team Nationals, the simplification of due diligence and compliance procedures, and the creation of a European database of financial instruments. The main thread of the discussion was the need to better structure the European offer in order to facilitate projects by European companies in external markets.