

European long-term investor group sets up social infrastructure taskforce

New initiative chaired by former European Commission chief Prodi

by Vibeka Mair | February 14th, 2017

[PHOTO]

Ex-European Commission President Prodi

Romano Prodi, the former President of the European Commission and Prime Minister of Italy, is chairing a new task force set up by the European Long-term Investors Association (ELTI) to boost investment in European social infrastructure, such as education, health and social housing.

The High-Level Task Force on Social Infrastructure ('HLTF SI') held its first meeting this week and will publish recommendations by the end of the year on promoting the financing of social infrastructure sectors.

It is chaired by Prodi, who headed the European Commission from 1990-2004, and vice-chair Christian Sautter, the former French economics minister.

Other members of the task force include Benjamin Angel, Director of the Treasury and Financial Operation of the European Commission, Laurent Zylberberg, President of ELTI and Director of Cassa Depositi e Prestiti, Italy's national investment bank and Guido Bichisao, Director of the European Investment Bank.

Documents seen by Responsible Investor say **the Task Force will run to June 2017** and explore what policy and financing instruments are needed to drive private institutional investment and retail long-term savings into social infrastructure sectors across Europe.

It will work with a view to support the social dimension of the European Commission's Investment Plan for Europe and have two working groups – one looking at investment needs in social infrastructure, and another looking at the availability and gaps in long-term financing of social infrastructure.

Members of these working groups are a range of civil servants, academics and consultants including Filippo

Addarii, co-managing director of research firm PlusValue, Tjtte Alkema, Manager at Dutch Association of Hospitals and Anton Hemerjck, Professor of Political Science and Sociology.

Observers have noted the working groups have no business or investor participation and includes the 'usual suspects' of politicians, lobbyists and academics. There is also no visible British interest.

Commenting on the Task Force, Laurent Zylberberg, President of ELTI, said: "The involvement of Romano Prodi, Christian Sautter, the National Promotion Banks and Institutions, the European

Commission, the European Investment Bank and of the most relevant stakeholders in this Task Force are both a guarantee for success and a sign of the relevance of this initiative.”

ELTI’s members include a range of European development banks, **including Germany’s KfW** and the National Bank of Greece. It works in close cooperation with the Long-Term Investors Club (LTIC). LTIC was set up in 2009 by a group of European institutions comprising France’s Caisse des Dépôts, Italy’s Cassa Depositi e Prestiti, the EIB and KfW to encourage long-term investment thinking. It has a range of global members including the China Development Bank and Russian development bank Vnesheconombank.

Last year RI reported that Dutch pension investor APG, Abu Dhabi’s state-owned Mubadala Development Co. and US giant TIAA were among investors that had withdrawn from the LTIC. ELTI is a partner with the European Parliament’s Long Term Investment and Reindustrialisation Intergroup, which was formed in 2015.