



Press Release

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Belfius



Belfius and SeGEC join forces, with support from the European Union, to equip Catholic free schools in Wallonia and Brussels with solar panels within four years

Belfius Bank and the “Secrétariat Général de l'Enseignement Catholique” (General Secretariat of Catholic Education, SeGEC) have just finalised a major investment programme to equip most Catholic free schools in Brussels and Wallonia with solar panels over the next four years. This programme was set up thanks to European subsidies from the ELENA mechanism, managed by the European Investment Bank (EIB), to support projects which improve energy efficiency and promote the use of renewable energy in buildings. In total, more than 1,000 schools providing for 475,000 pupils from kindergarten to higher education (non-university) will benefit from this programme.

The aim of this ambitious four-year programme is to make our school buildings more sustainable and thus contribute to reducing CO₂ emissions, while at the same time reducing the energy bill for the 800 or so organisational bodies of Catholic education in the French and German-speaking Communities.

Thanks to ELENA (European Local ENergy Assistance) grants, SeGEC and Belfius Bank have entrusted expert consultancy offices with the task of drafting specifications for the launch of a framework contract for the whole of Wallonia and Brussels, as well as the development of a digital platform on which schools will be able not only to simulate the ideal size of their installation and the financial impact of their investment, but also to place an order directly with the supplier, who will be awarded the contract.

All Catholic schools have been duly informed, from the smallest rural school to the High Schools. The awarding of the contract is expected to take place soon, which will give the effective start of this unprecedented wave of installation of thousands of solar panels on the roofs of those schools, the final cost of which is expected to be around EUR 23,000,000.

SeGEC will ensure the smooth running of the installations and will then take over the complete management of the operation. Belfius Bank will continue to support the project as a financial partner.

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Dirk Gyselincx, Executive Director Wealth, Enterprises & Public of Belfius Bank: *"This commitment by Belfius to SeGEC, to equip about a thousand schools with solar panels, fits perfectly with our ESG objectives as a bank-insurer, in particular our ambition to contribute to a significant reduction of CO₂ emissions in our country, in the interests of people, the environment and society. We are therefore particularly pleased to provide concrete support to these schools in their energy transition and thus help Belgian society as a whole to move forward."*

Etienne Michel, Secretary General of SeGEC: *"This large-scale project carried out alongside Belfius is in line with our desire to work towards a more sustainable society and to pass on these values to future generations. SeGEC wants to support and accompany the schools it federates in reducing their energy and ecological footprint. The energy crisis and soaring prices of recent months have also had a severe impact on schools. For these reasons, the transition to green energy production was and is urgent. We are pleased to have been able to make this project a reality, which will benefit more than a thousand schools in the French and German-speaking Communities."*

About Belfius

Belfius Bank & Insurance is an integrated bank-insurer owned by the Belgian federal government, which is anchored in all segments of the Belgian economy and society: a partner of 3.7 million private individuals, the self-employed and SMEs, a major player in the large corporate market and a reference bank in the public and non-profit sectors. It is also a strong brand in life and non-life insurance.

Our strategic focus on customer satisfaction is the basis for our excellent results. Meaningful & Inspiring for the Belgian Society. Together.

About SeGEC

Catholic education provides one in two pupils with compulsory education and one in two students with non-university higher education in the Wallonia-Brussels Federation.

The General Secretariat of Catholic Education (SeGEC) federates the basic and secondary schools, High Schools and Colleges of Art, the Catholic social promotion establishments and the free Psycho-Medical-Social Centres.

About ELENA

The ELENA technical assistance facility is a joint initiative of the European Investment Bank (EIB) and the European Commission. It provides non-repayable grants for technical assistance to help the public and private sectors prepare sustainable projects. This supports investments in energy efficiency and renewable energy for buildings and urban transport. ELENA's activities are currently covered by the InvestEU programme.

For more information, see www.eib.org/en/products/advising/elena

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