

EUROPEAN COMMISSION SUPPORTS 4iG GROUP'S DIGITAL INFRASTRUCTURE AND SUBSEA CABLE INITIATIVES IN THE WESTERN BALKANS

Joint declaration signed today in Tirana at the EU-Western Balkans Investment Forum

- At the EU–Western Balkans Investment Forum held in Tirana, 4iG Group signed a Joint Declaration with the European Commission and GÉANT, the pan-European non-profit organisation that operates and interconnects Europe's research and education networks.
- In the Declaration, the EU partners expressed their support for 4iG Group's regional digital infrastructure development initiatives in the Western Balkans, with particular emphasis on the EAGLE (Egypt–Albania Gateway Link to Europe) subsea data cable project linking Albania and Egypt, as well as on the development of a complementary regional terrestrial digital backbone.
- The investment will deliver a 2,000-kilometre subsea system with landing points in Albania, Egypt, and Italy, which, when connected to 4iG Group's regional terrestrial network, will establish a low-latency, scalable, and secure digital corridor linking the Western Balkans with major European and intercontinental data hubs.
- This cooperation marks a major milestone in the implementation of one of Europe's most significant regional digital infrastructure projects. With the support of the European Commission and GÉANT, the EAGLE initiative has gained strategic recognition within the EU, reinforcing its importance and sending a clear signal of confidence to industry stakeholders.
- 4iG Group's investments contribute to the implementation of the EU's Digital Decade 2030 and Global Gateway strategies.

At the EU-Western Balkans Investment Forum held in Tirana, the **European Commission, GÉANT, and 4iG Group** signed a joint declaration confirming their shared commitment to advancing secure, high-capacity digital infrastructure and strengthening EU connectivity across the Western Balkans region. In the declaration, the EU partners expressed their continued support for the EAGLE (Egypt-Albania Gateway Link to Europe) submarine data cable investment connecting Albania and Egypt, along with the development of the associated and newly announced regional terrestrial digital backbone. Taken together, these two investments will establish a new digital corridor linking the Western Balkans with Europe's main data hubs, ensuring secure, high-capacity, and low-latency connectivity.

„When we arrived in Albania three years ago, we adopted a motto that still holds true today: we build bridges.” – said Péter Fekete, CEO of 4iG Group. „EAGLE is one of the most significant of these initiatives, bringing international data capacity closer to local markets and interconnecting data centres, cloud services, and the broader digital ecosystem across Africa, the Middle East, the Western Balkans, and the European Union. The support of the European Commission and GÉANT is a clear indication that these projects represent strategic investments for the European Union, while also strengthening the Western Balkans' role in shaping the continent's digital future.”

The European Commission's Directorate-General for Enlargement and Eastern Neighbourhood (DG ENEST) welcomed the EAGLE initiative as a flagship project, aligned with the objectives of the EU's Digital Decade 2030, the Global Gateway Strategy, and the EU Western Balkans Growth Plan. The



planned terrestrial backbone network will enhance connectivity quality, reduce costs, strengthen research and education networks, and provide the foundation for innovation, the deployment of artificial intelligence applications, and growth of the startup ecosystem across the region. Implementation of the project will be fully consistent with the EU 5G Cybersecurity Toolbox, ensuring the security and resilience of digital networks in the Western Balkans.

EAGLE is a pioneering subsea and terrestrial connectivity system that will establish a new digital gateway linking Europe, Asia, the Middle East, and the African continent. Representing a strategic milestone in regional and intercontinental digital integration, the project is being jointly developed by 4iG Group and Telecom Egypt. The system will provide a high-capacity, low-latency data route across the Mediterranean Sea, entering Europe through Albania and Italy, and continuing via a new terrestrial optical backbone across the Western Balkans to reach major European data hubs, including Sofia, Vienna, and Frankfurt. The Western Balkans remains one of the least connected regions in Europe, with limited cross-border infrastructure. Through the EAGLE project, 4iG Group aims to unlock new opportunities for businesses, academia, and the public sector, supporting the EU's objectives for digital inclusion and economic resilience.

The 2,000-kilometre subsea system is expected to become operational by 2028, providing route diversity and network redundancy to enhance resilience and reinforce Europe's digital sovereignty.

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About 4iG Group

4iG Plc, headquartered in Budapest and majority-owned by Hungarian interests, is a leading provider of integrated telecommunications and IT system integration services in Hungary and the Western Balkans, as well as a growing player in the space and technology industries. Listed on the Budapest Stock Exchange (Premium category), 4iG operates across four countries with 28 subsidiaries and employs approximately 11,000 professionals. The Group drives digital transformation and telecom development for both residential and enterprise sectors across the region. As the owner of ONE Crna Gora in Montenegro and ONE Albania in Albania, 4iG Group is one of the leading telecommunications and ICT service providers in the Western Balkans: It provides mobile market services in Montenegro, is present in both fixed and mobile telecommunications in Albania and is preparing to enter the telecommunications market in North Macedonia.

About the 'EAGLE' project

The EAGLE (Egypt–Albania Gateway Link to Europe) project aims to create a new intercontinental subsea data connection between Egypt and Albania, providing a high-capacity digital corridor that channels data traffic from Africa, the Middle East, the Western Balkans toward Europe's main data hubs, including Frankfurt and Vienna. The initiative represents a new route for Europe's digital infrastructure, reducing latency and diversifying existing Mediterranean data pathways. In February 2024, 4iG Group and Telecom Egypt signed a Memorandum of Understanding in Budapest to establish the commercial and technical framework of the project. Also in February 2024, 4iG concluded a preliminary agreement with the Albanian government in Tirana, under which the government confirmed its support for the development. The project is currently in its preparatory phase, during which detailed technical, regulatory, and environmental studies are underway. A joint project company will be formed to implement and operate the system on an open-access model, ensuring fair and non-discriminatory access to capacity for all market participants. The planned subsea cable will primarily connect Egypt, Albania and Italy, with optional branches toward Libya and Greece, enhancing regional interconnectivity and route diversity. Through its Albanian landing point, the EAGLE system will offer a shorter, more resilient route to major European data centres in Frankfurt, Vienna, Budapest, and Sofia. Complementary investments, including regional data centres and terrestrial fibre backbones, are also under consideration to fully leverage the system's potential.