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PRESS RELEASE

The combination of BNP Paribas and Fortis Bank is widely approved by Fortis Holding's shareholders

BNP Paribas wishes to thank the Fortis shareholders who voted for the BNP Paribas plan at their General Meetings of April 28 and 29, 2009. BNP Paribas also wishes to extend thanks to its partners:

- The governments of Belgium and Luxembourg, for their steadfast resolve to bring this project to fruition, in the interests of customers, employees and shareholders.
- Fortis Holding, with which the BNP Paribas Group is now associated through a long-term partnership agreement in the area of insurance.

Implementation of the integration plan, which is still subject to approval by the regulatory authorities, will enable Fortis Bank and BNP Paribas to build a new industry-leading group in Europe, whose primary objective is to support the real economy by offering loans to individuals and companies, managing customers' savings, financing major projects and supporting exporters.

The consolidated group formed by BNP Paribas and Fortis Bank will be the number 1 bank in the euro zone in terms of deposits, with 540 billion euros, and the only European financial services group with four domestic markets: Belgium, France, Italy and Luxembourg. A major force in retail banking, the new group will also be one of the top-ranked players in corporate and investment banking, private banking and asset management. Beyond its domestic markets, the new group will have strong positions in many other retail banking markets such as the United States, countries surrounding the Mediterranean (Turkey and North African countries, in particular), Poland and Ukraine.

For Fortis Bank customers, the deal is good news. They will benefit from the solidity of BNP Paribas as well as from its global service platforms, while continuing to be served locally by their usual branch and banking adviser.

BNP Paribas reaffirms its commitment to the economies of Belgium and Luxembourg. As a part of BNP Paribas, Fortis Bank will remain a fully operative bank. All decision-making, affecting customers in Belgium and Luxembourg, will remain local. Similarly, deposits collected by the retail banking networks will be fully recycled as loans within the respective national economy in the country where these deposits are collected.



The Chairman of the Board of Directors of Fortis Bank will be a Belgian national. BNP Paribas reaffirms its commitment to have several centres of European or international expertise based in Belgium and Luxembourg. Employment issues relating to the integration will be limited due to the fact that BNP Paribas does not have a branch network in Belgium and Luxembourg. If increased productivity becomes necessary, BNP Paribas has undertaken to deal with it by favouring natural attrition or internal mobility within the Group.

In recent months the exchanges between the Fortis and BNP Paribas teams have enabled the employees of both organisations to confirm their continued commitment and highlighted the similarities in each's corporate culture. This will facilitate the integration process. BNP Paribas takes this opportunity to thank the employees of Fortis Bank for the professionalism they have shown throughout these past months through their continued dedication to their customers and their projects.

Today the new group has more than 200,000 employees in more than 85 countries. Over the coming weeks, the members of the new Fortis Bank Board of Directors, Management Committee and Executive Committee will be appointed. At the same time, 61 working groups will begin the task of bringing the two organisations together.

For their part, the BNP Paribas Board of Directors will welcome two new directors, who will be designated by the Belgian government.

BNP Paribas will give further details of the next stages of the integration process at the May 6th press conference when the first quarter results will be presented.

Baudouin Prot, Chief Executive Officer of BNP Paribas stated: "This longer than expected wait gave us the opportunity to strengthen dialogue with the Fortis teams and to deepen our appreciation and understanding of Belgium, its richness and diversity. In accordance with BNP Paribas' mission, we are determined to serve the economies where Fortis Bank operates. This is an essential condition for the success of our European project."

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