

Press release

Eastleigh / Gloucester, 26 July 2006

Fortis UK acquires “Insurance-through-SMS” technology

Fortis UK (Fortis Insurance Limited) has acquired a majority shareholding in the British company “Text2Insure”. This company is a pioneer in selling insurance via SMS text technology, providing fast and easy access to quotations and purchasing of insurance in the UK. Fortis will offer this mobile service under the Text2Insure brand.

Barry Smith, CEO of Fortis UK: “In the UK over 100 million text messages are sent each day and the mobile phone has become an indispensable part of many of our lives. Our acquisition of Text2Insure complements our existing range of propositions to the affinity market and enables us to proactively respond to the demands of the mobile generation. With Text2Insure, we have the opportunity to further develop our relationships with affinities and offer additional areas for differentiation to their customer offerings, enhancing both customer experience and revenue opportunities. In particular, we are keen to understand how we can penetrate affinity sectors that have a strong alignment with mobile phone users.”

Commenting on the deal, Nicholas Thurlow, Director of Text2Insure, reiterates Smith’s enthusiasm for the new relationship: “We are absolutely delighted with Fortis UK’s decision to work with the Text2Insure management team. We believe the mobile channel will continue to take an increasingly important role in the distribution of insurance products and our involvement with Fortis, with its strong presence in the UK and internationally, is a vindication of this growing trend.”

The acquisition will have no material impact on Fortis’s solvency or net earnings per share.

Fortis in the UK

Fortis UK’s subsidiary, **Fortis Insurance Limited**, provides a full range of personal and small package commercial insurance products and is rated A+ by Standard and Poor’s. The insurer has a proven and award-winning track record for providing outstanding customer service and claims handling and is totally committed to the intermediated market. Fortis Insurance employs over 1,000 people with offices in both Eastleigh and Gloucester and has been awarded the Investors in People standard. Fortis Insurance Limited is authorised and regulated by the Financial Services Authority (FSA number: 202039).

Fortis UK also owns **RIAS plc**, an insurance intermediary dedicated to providing Personal Lines products to the Over 50s market, which has delivered amongst the fastest growth rates (revenues and profits) in the UK Personal Lines intermediary market in recent years, and **Outright UK Limited**, which is an insurance intermediary specialising in delivering insurance solutions to the Personal Lines affinity and broker markets as well as retailing insurance products under the AutoDirect and CoverDirect brands.

Affinity Solutions, also part of Fortis UK, is a consultancy that specialises in working with (1) a range of financial services providers in researching, targeting and creating affinity opportunities and (2) affinity groups in the research, development and sourcing of an array of added-value products and services. The affinity groups include retailers, utility groups, charities and trade unions. Ex-Managing Director of Age Concern Enterprise, Bob Hand, established the company in 1995.

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Fortis Bank, as part of an established network of 3,000 Business Centres and Branches across Europe, provides specialist finance solutions to large corporate, institutional and mid-sized companies such as trade finance, treasury services, diverse asset finance, global cash and liquidity management, acquisition and mezzanine finance, syndications and structured finance.

The bank offers expert services in commodity trade and shipping finance, renewable energy finance derivatives and derivatives clearing and securities lending. Fortis Bank Global Clearing NV is an important independent clearer of futures, options and related equities on most major exchanges.

Fortis Bank SA/NV is authorised by the Banking, Finance and Insurance Commission in Belgium and the Financial Services Authority, regulated by the Financial Services Authority for the conduct of UK investment business. The Fortis Bank UK head office is based in the City of London and the bank's expanding UK network includes offices in Birmingham, Bristol, Colchester, Crawley, Leeds, London, Manchester, Nottingham, Reading and Southampton.

Text2Insure

Text2Insure was launched in 2005 to provide a fast and easy-to-access quotation and purchase facility for travel insurance, using mobile phone (SMS text) technology. It has been designed to offer 'last minute' travel insurance to those travellers who have not arranged cover before they travel.

Using information provided by affinities or as a result of response to marketing activity, Text2Insure contacts customers via SMS text message, generating insurance quotations through SMS exchanges. If the customer wishes to buy the insurance, either they are called back by telephone so the transaction can be completed, or Text2Insure can offer the customer, using a secure payment process, an opportunity to complete the complete purchase via their mobile.

Fortis

Fortis is an international financial services provider engaged in banking and insurance. We offer our personal, business and institutional customers a comprehensive package of products and services through our own channels, in collaboration with intermediaries and through other distribution partners.

With a market capitalisation of EUR 34.7 billion (30/06/2006), Fortis ranks among the twenty largest financial institutions in Europe. Our sound solvency position, our presence in 50 countries and our dedicated, professional workforce of 58,000 enable us to combine global strength with local flexibility and provide our clients with optimum support. More information is available on www.fortis.com

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