FORTIS BANK

Press release

Brussels, 7 March 2009

Fortis Bank welcomes new deal with BNP Paribas

Fortis Bank acknowledges the efforts made by BNP Paribas, the Belgian government and Fortis holding to come to a new deal, confirming[1] BNP Paribas as the future majority owner of Fortis Bank, alongside the Belgian state[2], and the Luxembourg State in our affiliate BGL.

'*We welcome the new deal with BNP Paribas*,' comments Fortis Bank CEO Filip Dierckx. *'Going forward with BNP Paribas will allow us, the bank and its highly motivated staff, to build a future within a truly European financial company for the benefit of our customers. Since October last year, the Board of Directors – taking responsibility for its millions of customers, its 38,000 employees and its shareholders – has been preparing for this decision. Once this deal will become finally approved, the bank will be ready to roll out integration initiatives, while guaranteeing seamless service for our customers.'*

Through this transaction, BNP Paribas will strengthen its position as an integrated bank in Europe, with new, high-quality franchises and two new domestic markets. In retail banking, the financial group will become the leading bank in the euro-zone in terms of deposits. BNP Paribas also joins the top five in asset management, and becomes the euro-zone's leading private bank.

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Fortis Bank provides a total package of banking services to personal, business and institutional customers through its own channels and via other partners. The bank has built up a strong presence in the European retail banking market, operating through a variety of distribution channels. It offers financial services to companies, institutional clients and high net worth individuals and provides integrated solutions to enterprise and entrepreneur. Fortis Bank employs 38,000 people.

[1] Awaiting final approval and closing of the contracts.
[2] 0.07% in the hands of individual shareholders