



Press Release

London, 21 January 2003

SG strengthens Financial Sponsor Coverage in Europe

SG, the Corporate and Investment Banking arm of the Société Générale Group, is pleased to announce the appointment of Florus Plantenga to its newly created Financial Sponsor Coverage position in Paris. Florus has been actively involved in the UK and French corporate finance and private equity markets since the early 90's.

Florus Plantenga, 35, joins SG as a Vice President, Financial Sponsor Coverage, France to further develop SG's ability to support private equity firms operating in France with a full array of corporate and investment banking services. Financial Sponsor Coverage is managed jointly by SG's Global Investment Banking and Debt Finance divisions. As such, Florus will report to both Jacques Bitton, Managing Director and Head of Mergers & Acquisitions France, and Patrick Sandray, Managing Director and Head of Leveraged Finance, France. Florus will work closely with SG's M&A advisory, equity capital market and debt finance professionals, as well as with its financial sponsor coverage team in London headed by Scott Phillips, to offer a value-generating platform to private equity clients investing in France.

Before joining SG, Florus Plantenga was Vice President, Financial Sponsor Group, at Merrill Lynch in London. After earning his MBA at INSEAD, Florus worked in the M&A, Telecommunications and Healthcare Industry groups of JP Morgan. His career started in corporate finance with Dresdner Kleinwort Wasserstein. A Dutch national, Florus brings to SG an extensive advisory and coverage skill base gained in pursuing investment opportunities for sponsors active in the London and Paris markets.

SG is a leader in the French leveraged finance market, as demonstrated by arranging mandates awarded in 2002 for the Retif, Moliflor and SigmaKalon buyouts performed by ABN Amro Capital, Legal and General Ventures and Bain Capital Partners. With a dozen Paris-based professionals led by 5 experienced directors, SG offers a reliable skill set to structure senior and mezzanine finance for leveraged buyouts in France.

SG is also a leader in advisory work for financial sponsors, as demonstrated by the advice given successfully to Bain Capital for the acquisition of SigmaKalon and to Barclay's Private Equity for the disposal of Photonis.

The opening of SG's financial sponsor coverage unit in Paris demonstrates the Bank's commitment to position itself as a partner of choice for leading private equity firms across Europe.

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Note to editors:

Société Générale Group

The Société Générale Group is one of the largest banks in the eurozone. The Group employs 80,000 people worldwide in three key businesses:

- Retail Banking : Société Générale serves 13,4 million retail customers worldwide.
- Asset Management & Private Banking : Société Générale ranks third in the eurozone in terms of assets under management (EUR 298 billion in 2001).
- Corporate & Investment Banking : SG is the third largest bank in the eurozone based on net banking income.

Société Générale is included in the four major socially responsible investment indexes. www.socgen.com

SG

SG is the corporate and investment banking arm of the Société Générale Group. Present in over 50 countries and with expertise in capital markets, advisory and origination services, structured finance and commercial banking, SG builds innovative, integrated financial solutions for its corporate, institutional and public sector clients. www.sg-ib.com

Debt Finance

SG's Debt Finance division provides both issuers and investors with a global, solution-driven approach to their debt finance or investment needs based on an integrated debt and treasury product offer including syndicated loans, bonds, securitisations, structured credits, specialised finance (e.g. project and export finance, acquisition finance), together with interest rate and currency hedging and treasury operations. More than 3,200 people work in Debt Finance worldwide with an established presence in all the major financial centres around the world.

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