

## Press release

Paris, 17 January 2007

### **Société Générale acquires 51% of Banque Internationale d'Investissement in Mauritania**

Société Générale announces the acquisition of 51% of the capital of **Banque Internationale d'Investissement (BII)**. This operation has been approved by the Central Bank of Mauritania.

Société Générale, alongside European investors with significant experience in the Mauritanian market - the French group Ballouhey SA (36.75%) and the European Investment Bank (12.25%) - has confirmed its commitment to turning BII into a benchmark for the Mauritanian banking sector. Recently founded in Nouakchott, BII provides an offer dedicated to corporate clients with services in international trade, e-banking and savings. Backed by the financial solidity of a large international group with expertise in universal banking, BII aims to play an active role in the development of a country with favourable growth prospects due to natural mining and oil resources.

*"This move will strengthen Société Générale's positions in North and West Africa, where the Group is a leading player. We shall provide BII with our expertise in a wide range of products and financial services for individual and business customers,"* said Gérald Lacaze, Head of Africa, Mediterranean and Overseas areas within the international retail banking division. Société Générale currently employs 6,450 employees in North Africa, where the Group has 395 branches and one million customers across its retail banking network in Algeria, Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia. In West Africa, Société Générale's retail banking activity covers six countries (Benin, Burkina Faso, Ivory Coast, Ghana, Guinea and Senegal) with 2,470 employees, 130 branches and 565,000 customers.

*"We are delighted that Société Générale has chosen BII to set up operations in Mauritania, as this confirms our successful entry into the Mauritanian banking sector. Thanks to the experience and the regional and international networks of our new majority shareholder, BII will soon be in a position to offer all the services available of a modern universal bank to corporates, investors and individual customers,"* said Bastien Ballouhey, CEO of BII.

*"The European Investment Bank, present in Mauritania for many years, is delighted to see the Mauritanian banking system take on a new dimension with the arrival of a large international group such as Société Générale. This significant development will help the local financial sector provide best solutions to economic players in Mauritania,"* said Martin Curwen, Director for operations in Africa, Caribbean and Pacific areas for the European Investment Bank.

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**Société Générale**

Société Générale is one of the largest financial services groups in the euro-zone. The Group employs more than 103,000 people worldwide in three key businesses:

- Retail Banking & Financial Services: Société Générale serves more than 21 million individual customers worldwide.
- Global Investment Management & Services: Société Générale is one of the largest banks in the euro-zone in terms of assets under custody (EUR 2 155 billion, September 2006) and under management (EUR 411 billion, September 2006).
- Corporate & Investment Banking: Société Générale ranks among the leading banks worldwide in euro capital markets, derivatives and structured finance.

Société Générale is included in the five major socially-responsible investment indexes.

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**European Investment Bank**

The EIB, established in 1958 by the Treaty of Rome, finances capital investment projects that further the European Union (EU) policy objectives. It also participates in the implementation of the EU's co-operation policy towards third countries that have co-operation or association agreements with the Union.

Financing in Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific (ACP) is carried out under the provisions of the Investment Facility, set up by the ACP-EU Partnership Agreement, signed in Cotonou in June 2000. Under the Cotonou agreement the total financial aid available amounts to EUR 15.2 billion for 2002-2006, of which EUR 11.3 billion is grant aid from the EU member states, EUR 2.2 billion is managed by the EIB under the Investment Facility and up to EUR 1.7 billion is in the form of loans from the EIB's own resources. The Investment Facility is a revolving facility (loan amortizations will be invested in new operations), aiming at supporting technically, environmentally, financially and economically sound projects in the private or the commercially run public sector.

For further information about the EIB's activities, please contact the Bank's Information and Communications Department (Bram Schim van der Loeff, tel. +352-4379-3134 [schimvan@eib.org](mailto:schimvan@eib.org)) or visit its web site <http://www.eib.org/acp>