

PRESS RELEASE

INTESA SANPAOLO AND BANQUE INTERNATIONALE ARABE DE TUNISIE HAVE SIGNED AN AGREEMENT TO SUPPORT COMPANIES INTERESTED IN DEVELOPING BUSINESS RELATIONS BETWEEN ITALY AND TUNISIA

Milan, Tunis 7 July 2011 – **Intesa Sanpaolo** and **Banque Internationale Arabe De Tunisie (BIAT)** signed a cooperation agreement in order to help their **corporate customers** deploy their **internationalisation** plans. The agreement sets out supplying a full range of consulting, banking and financial services for businesses seeking to develop trade relations and joint industrial and manufacturing plans in **Tunisia and Italy**.

Intesa Sanpaolo, through its **Corporate and Investment Banking Division**, will work with **BIAT** to make sure that Italian and Tunisian companies receive the experience, the market knowledge and all the services needed to help them become international and to spur the competitiveness of entrepreneurs.

The agreement was signed by **Marcello Sala**, Executive Vice Chairman of Intesa Sanpaolo's Management Board and by **Slaheddine Lajimi**, General Manager of BIAT, before the Italian ambassador in Tunisia Pietro Benassi.

"The signing of this agreement is yet more evidence of Intesa Sanpaolo's leading role in supporting the internationalization efforts of Italian corporations, including the all-important SME segment" said Marcello Sala, Executive Vice Chairman of Intesa Sanpaolo's Management Board. "Intesa Sanpaolo is clearly committed to developing real-economy business with the MENA countries, especially Tunisia, a country with close economic and geographic ties to Italy. The recent events offer new important structural opportunities. We are already seeing Italian companies increasing their market share of exports to Tunisia. Small and medium ones in particular can clearly benefit from this new framework, and this agreement helps them to do so", he added. "Let me also thank Ambassador Benassi for attending this event, which I believe is yet another indication of how deeply Intesa Sanpaolo believes in acting in a coordinated fashion when supporting the internationalization of Italian firms."

The Ambassador of Italy, Pietro Benassi, stressed "the importance of an increased presence of the Italian banking system in Tunisia, an initiative that complements and gives strength to the significant presence of our businesses. The revival of the Tunisian economy, in conjunction with this phase of transition to democracy that followed the extraordinary events of January, will

undoubtedly benefit from a qualified instrument of cooperation available from one of the most important Italian banking groups.”

Banque Internationale Arabe De Tunisie (BIAT) is the largest bank in Tunisia and one of the most important financial institutions in North Africa. Backed by the experience and the expertise of its highly motivated personnel, a state of the art Information Technology infrastructure as well as a strong local presence within the Tunisian market, BIAT offers to its institutional, corporate and individual customers a large and innovating range of products and services for their activities in Tunisia and overseas.

Intesa Sanpaolo has a strategic and selective presence in Central and Eastern Europe, the Middle East and North Africa, with 1,700 **retail** branches in 13 countries and -through its **International Department of Corporate and Investment Banking**- it has a specialized international network, focusing on supporting corporate clients. It is active in 29 countries, especially the Middle East and North Africa and the areas where Italian companies are the most active, such as the USA, Russia, China and India. Through the **Service for the Internationalization of Businesses (SII)**, the Group favours and supports Italian companies seeking to access foreign markets. **SII** is headquartered in Padua and consists of 5 desks, each for a specific geographical area (China, Americas, Asia, EuroMed-Africa, Eastern Europe) and with 5 offices in Italy (Padua, Milan, Turin, Bologna, Naples). Therefore, it is in an ideal position to identify the best solutions to enable clients (both corporate and SMEs) to find the opportunities to grow and/or to consolidate outside of Italy. Offering a range of services that cater to the needs of large segments/groups of clients, the Group is the primary port of call for all Italian companies planning to grow internationally. It achieves this by supplying specific knowledge of geographical areas, resources and competences, in the belief that internationalising Italian companies can really help the Italian economy grow.

INTESA SANPAOLO

Media relations - +39 0287963531 - +39 0287963805 - +39 0115555922

stampa@intesasanpaolo.com