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Awareness campaign launched as introduction of New Global Note approaches

Brussels, London, Luxembourg — 18 January 2006 — Euroclear Bank and Clearstream Banking Luxembourg, in association with the International Capital Market Association (ICMA) and the International Capital Market Services Association (ICMSA), have today launched an information and awareness campaign to prepare issuers and their agents for the introduction in June of a new legal and holding structure for international debt securities.

The New Global Note (NGN) structure has been developed by the two international central securities depositories (ICSDs), in close co-operation with market participants, following a recommendation by the Eurosystem, the central banking system of the euro area. The new structure provides for the processing and safekeeping of international bearer debt securities issued as of 30 June 2006, and will be mandatory for all new issues wishing to be recognised as eligible as collateral for Eurosystem monetary-policy and intra-day credit operations.

A dedicated Market Advisory Group (MAG) has been established to advise, inform and consult with all parties likely to be affected by the change. The MAG comprises members and observers from a broad cross-section of entities active in Europe's capital markets, including issuers, lead managers and paying agents, as well as ICMA and the two ICSDs. Representatives of the European Central Bank (ECB) and the central banks of Belgium and Luxembourg, as well as the European Investment Bank (EIB), also participate as observers.

To facilitate the transition, the MAG has devised a strategy to raise awareness of the forthcoming changes among all relevant market intermediaries, with a special focus on the appropriate legal documentation that will be required from 30 June onwards. Among the measures to be taken include the dissemination of marketing brochures, a compendium of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs), regular information updates on the partners' websites and a series of legal roundtables.

Commenting today at the launch of the campaign, George Faux, Managing Director, Citigroup, and MAG chairman, said: "The New Global Note structure is poised to become a market standard for the future. For issuers and their agents, however, the time to prepare for its introduction is now, not on 30 June. I commend the many market participants that have expended considerable time, effort and resources to date to ensure that the NGN will be a viable and flexible option for issuers and investors, and I look forward to the smooth and seamless launch of the new structure on 30 June."

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The key features of the New Global Note structure are as follows:

- From 30 June 2006, new international debt securities in global bearer form may be issued using a new form of global certificate, the New Global Note (NGN);
- Under the terms of the NGN, the issue outstanding amount is determined based on the ICSDs' records;
- Issuers provide a signed issuer-ICSD agreement requesting acceptance of the securities with the ICSDs;
- NGN securities will be serviced by two new types of service provider: the Common Service Provider (CSP) and the Common Safekeeper (CSK), both appointed by the ICSDs; and
- NGN securities that are potentially eligible as collateral for Eurosystem monetary-policy or intra-day credit operations must be deposited and kept in the custody of an ICSD, acting as Common Safekeeper.

Issuers wishing to benefit from the new structure and ensure the potential eligibility of their new issue will be required to update their legal documentation to allow for this new form of issuance. Some operational processes linked to the issuance of new securities and reconciliation flows, as carried out by lead managers and issuing and paying agents, will also need to be adapted.

The current Classical Global Note (CGN) structure will continue to be available to issuers and their agents. International debt securities issued in CGN form prior to 30 June 2006 will therefore continue to be potentially eligible as collateral for Eurosystem monetary policy and intra-day credit operations during their lifetime. However, international debt securities issued in CGN form after this date will no longer be considered eligible.

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Note to editors:

Clearstream Banking Luxembourg is a subsidiary of Clearstream International, a leading provider of comprehensive settlement and custody services for equities and bonds both domestic and cross-border and investment funds, to a global customer base. By the end of 2005, the value of assets held in custody on behalf of customers was valued at EUR 8.75 trillion. Clearstream International forms part of Deutsche Börse Group, the world's largest exchange organisation when measured by revenues. www.clearstream.com

Euroclear Bank, part of the Euroclear group of national and international central securities depositories (CSDs), is the Brussels-based ICSD providing cross-border settlement, custody and related services to more than 1500 clients in over 80 countries worldwide. The total value of securities transactions settled by Euroclear is in excess of EUR 300 trillion per annum, while assets held for clients are valued at more than EUR 13 trillion. Euroclear Bank is rated AA+ by Standard & Poor's and Fitch. www.euroclear.com

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Joint media release

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The **International Capital Market Association (ICMA)** is the self-regulatory organisation and trade association representing the investment banks and securities firms issuing and trading in the international capital market worldwide. ICMA's member firms are located in 48 countries across the globe, including the world's main financial centres, and currently number over 400 in total. ICMA performs a crucial central role in the market by providing and enforcing a self-regulatory code of industry-driven rules and recommendations which regulate issuance, trading and settlement in international fixed income and related instruments. ICMA liaises closely with regulatory and governmental authorities, both at the national and supranational level, to ensure that financial regulation promotes the efficiency and cost effectiveness of the capital market. www.icma-group.org

The **International Capital Market Services Association (ICMSA)** is a trade association for all organisations providing capital market services. Membership is open to all companies engaged in capital market services, and current members include banks, law firms, ICSDs, registrars and stock exchanges. The ICMSA focuses on the evolving capital markets and provides a formal platform for all service organisations to ensure the market remains operationally efficient. www.capmktstserv.com

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