

PRESS RELEASE

Bank of Italy authorises merger by incorporation of Banca Meridiana into bancApulia and BancApulia's entry into the Veneto Banca Group.

The Bank of Italy has authorised the incorporation of bancApulia spa into the Veneto Banca Group.

The operation will be carried out through the merger by incorporation of Banca Meridiana – a subsidiary of Veneto Banca Holding, Parent Company of the Veneto Banca Group - into bancApulia based on an exchange ratio of 5 new shares of bancApulia for every 4 shares of Banca Meridiana to be cancelled. The report on the congruence of the share exchange ratio, which was drawn up pursuant to art. 2501-*sexies* of the Italian Civil Code, by an expert appointed by the President of the Court of Foggia on joint request of the parties, confirmed the above exchange ratio.

With the completion of the merger, Veneto Banca Holding will hold approximately 50.6% of the bancApulia's share capital, thus acquiring control. Finanziaria Capitanata, the current majority shareholder of bancApulia, will maintain its current investment in the bank's share capital. This result will also be achieved through an increase in share capital of Banca Meridiana, prior to the merger, for a total of € 93 million.

As a result of the incorporation of Banca Meridiana, bancApulia will have a network of 103 branches, 16 points of sale Apulia Puntofinanziario - network of financial advisors, 19 points of sale Apulia Prontomutuo – network of credit brokers, over 400 ATMs, over € 11 billion in assets in administration, and approximately 1,000 employees. The new size and increased equity will ensure that the bank confirms its position as a leader in the geographical area where it operates.

The plan for merger will shortly be filed at the headquarters of the companies involved and registered at the competent offices of the register of companies. The Shareholders' Meetings of the two banks will be called to resolve on the merger in December 2009.

*The **bancApulia Banking Group**, headed by Vincenzo Chirò and managed by Giulio Simonelli, with 550 employees, operates in Italy through a network of 92 points of sale, comprising 53 bank branches, 16 points of sale Apulia Puntofinanziario – network of*

financial advisors, 19 points of sale Apulia Prontomutuo – network of credit brokers, 2 points of sale Apulia Prontoprestito, 1 point of sale Apulia Previdenza and 1 point of sale Apulia Assicurazioni and 1 Representative Office, as well as 340 ATMs.

Veneto Banca Holding, headed by Flavio Trinca and governed by Vincenzo Consoli, is the head of the Veneto Banca Group, which operates in Italy through Veneto Banca spa, Banca Popolare di Intra and Banca Meridiana, and in Eastern Europe through Banca Italo Romena (Romania), Veneto Banka (Croatia), Eximbank (Republic of Moldova), and BIS - Banca Italiana di Sviluppo (Albania).
With 336 branches in Italy and 56 abroad, the Group has more than 4,500 employees.

Banca Meridiana was established in 2002 following Veneto Banca's acquisition of Banca Popolare del Levante and 29 branches of Nuova Banca Mediterranea.
The bank has 52 branches and 402 employees, and operates in the Puglia and Basilicata regions.

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