

Coface expands its global factoring presence by adding five new countries

Paris – June 19, 2008 – Coface Holding, the trade receivables subsidiary of Natixis, has added five additional countries to its factoring business line: Czech Republic, Slovakia, China, Australia and Israel. Factoring has become a main expansion area for Coface, with double digit growth expected over the next five years.

New roots in Eastern Europe: Coface acquires HP Finance in Czech Republic and Slovakia

With the acquisition of HP Finance, a factoring company based in Czech Republic with a subsidiary in Slovakia, Coface has expanded its Eastern European factoring network after the opening of Coface Poland in 2007. Coface Poland's factoring operation is already the sixth largest market player (out of 15) after only a few months. HP's factored receivables represented 30 million euros at the end of June 2007. HP Finance's clients will gain direct access to the worldwide credit information and debt collection services of Coface as well as protection services through Coface's global expertise in credit insurance. In addition, Coface customers in these two countries will be eligible to receive offers for all four Coface business lines.

China, Australia and Israel: new factoring activities in promising markets

The Coface factoring network in Asia, which already includes Singapore, Japan and Hong Kong, has expanded to two new countries: Australia (the market leader in this region by size) and China (the market leader by growth), where Coface will offer export factoring based on the factoring operation created earlier this year in Hong Kong. This development in China will complete the existing domestic credit insurance offer which the leading private insurer, Ping An, was the first to launch with the support of Coface in 2003. After five years, the Ping An and Coface alliance is still the market leader, having covered more than 100 billion RMB of domestic trade.

In China, the factoring offer will be based on Natixis Bank in Shanghai. In Australia and in Israel, Coface's offer will be based on local subsidiaries, respectively, Coface Finance Australia and Coface Finance Israel. Both markets show a particularly high potential for growth in receivables financing.

“These five new openings bring to 23 the total of Coface entities offering factoring. We are in line with our objective of 30 countries by the end of the year”, says Coface CEO, Jérôme Cazes. “We have now entered the fifth B-to-B global credit crisis, and companies are facing credit restrictions from banks. All across the world we see increased interest in factoring as a safe way to obtain financing. It is important to remind that there is more credit extended by companies to other companies (their customers) through inter-company credit, than credit extended by banks to companies. Factoring reduces lending risk for the factor and secures liquidity for its customer,” explains Mr. Cazes.

About Coface Holding

Coface Holding, Natixis' Trade Receivables line, brings together Coface and Natixis Factor. Coface Holding offers its 120,000 customers four product lines to fully or partly outsource trade relationship management and to finance and protect their receivables: credit insurance, company information and ratings, receivables management and factoring. Abroad, Coface Holding is present through Coface's network of specialized brokers and local partners within the CreditAlliance Network. Thanks to the worldwide local service delivered by 7,000 staff in 65 countries, over 45% of the world's 500 largest corporate groups are already customers of Coface.