



## **Faster, Cheaper European Payments to Benefit Irish Consumers and Businesses** **19th June 2006**

AIB Group, through its Capital Markets division, recently became the first Irish bank to have direct membership of Europe's only Pan-European Automated Clearing House (PEACH) – the Euro Banking Association's (EBA) STEP 2 clearing system, which enables Irish consumers and businesses to send and receive payments (amounts up to €50,000) faster within Europe\*.

Commenting on the development, Mr. Charlie McCreevy, European Commissioner for the Internal Market and Services, said "The Single Euro Payments Area (SEPA) is a high political priority for the Commission, because of its great benefits to society." Commissioner McCreevy continued, "Whilst there will be choice for banks to route and process their payments in SEPA in order to have effective competition also in processing of payments, it is a good thing that Ireland is now connected to the STEP 2 system as it will allow fully automated processing of cross border credit transfers. This should of course ultimately be beneficial to all customers".

This new initiative will make payments throughout Europe\* as fast and convenient as domestic payments.

Elizabeth Yeates, Senior Manager, AIB Global Treasury Services and a Board Member of the EBA Clearing Company\*\*, said: "The SEPA goal is only achievable if banks join STEP 2 or another PEACH system, in order to ensure that all bank accounts within Europe\* are accessible. AIB customers should benefit from shorter execution times on credit transfers to and from Europe\*. Furthermore, AIB's role of 'receiver capable' bank can facilitate all Irish bank customers in receiving euro credit transfers to a value of €50,000 from any bank account in Europe\*, where their own banks are not connected to a PEACH. They simply need to provide the sender of the payment with the IBAN (International Bank Account Number) of their bank account and the BIC (SWIFT Bank Identifier Code) of their bank. These details are available on their bank account statements," Ms. Yeates concluded.

**ENDS**

\* EU Countries / EEA Countries & Switzerland

\*\*About EBA CLEARING

EBA CLEARING was established in June 1998 by 52 major European and international banks. Today, EBA CLEARING counts 70 shareholder banks and offers both high-value and low-value clearing and settlement services to a wide community of banks in the European Union.

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