



PRESS RELEASE

COFIDE: MERRILL LYNCH INVESTS IN EUVIS (FORMERLY SOCIETA' FINANZA ATTIVA)

Further to the agreement reached with **COFIDE-Compagnia Finanziaria De Benedetti SpA**, **Merrill Lynch** has invested in **Società Finanza Attiva SpA**, the company specializing in the development of financial solutions for families and individuals aged 65 and over, that at the closing of the deal has changed its name to **Euvis**.

After the closing, **COFIDE** owns 55% of the company, **Merrill Lynch** owns approximately 39% of the company and the management owns the remaining 6%. **Merrill Lynch** has invested 8 million euro through a capital increase of **Euvis** and will also finance the assets of the company.

Euvis was founded in 2004 by **COFIDE** and its chief executive, Paolo Buzzonetti, to introduce lifetime mortgages for those aged 65 and over into the Italian market. This product has been in existence for over ten years in the United Kingdom. The goal of the company is to build up an extensive network of authorized agents throughout Italy from its offices in Milan and Rome to satisfy the growing demand for this form of financing in Italy.

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Notes to editors:

MERRILL LYNCH

Merrill Lynch is one of the world's leading wealth management, capital markets and advisory companies with offices in 37 countries and territories and total client assets of approximately \$1.6 trillion. As an investment bank, it is a leading global trader and underwriter of securities and derivatives across a broad range of asset classes and serves as a strategic advisor to corporations, governments, institutions, and individuals worldwide. Merrill Lynch owns approximately half of BlackRock, one of the world's largest publicly traded investment management companies with more than \$ 1 trillion in assets under management.

For more information on Merrill Lynch, please visit www.ml.com.

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