

**PRESS RELEASE**

**INTESA SANPAOLO: MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING  
SIGNED WITH THE HAMRIYAH FREE ZONE**

**Intesa Sanpaolo is the first European bank to sign an agreement with the Hamriyah Free Zone to expedite investments in the area's enterprises**

*Milan, 3 December 2012* – **Intesa Sanpaolo** has recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the **Hamriyah Free Zone** in the emirate of Sharjah.

Thanks to this agreement, the Intesa Sanpaolo Group's Italian and international corporate customers will enjoy access to an **expedited procedure for obtaining the authorisations required for investments in the Zone** and **support** in the form of the services offered by the **Dubai Hub Branch**.

**Intesa Sanpaolo is the first European bank to reach an agreement with the Hamriyah Free Zone**, formed in the emirate of Sharjah in 1995 and the second-largest of the free zones in the Emirates in terms of both number of companies regulated and overall turnover. At present, approximately 5,000 manufacturing companies are registered, including 15 Italian companies.

The Memorandum of Understanding follows the agreement signed with the business park in Zhangjiagang, China, and is part of the Bank's boarder strategy of supporting SMEs that goes hand-in-hand with the financial support typical of a full platform of channels, information and services aimed at facilitating the internationalisation processes of Italian enterprises.

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**Sharjah** is the only one of the seven Emirates with ports on the western and eastern coasts of the Persian Gulf, with direct access to the Indian Ocean, as well as an international airport with connections to 230 cities. It represents one of the foremost industrial bases of the United Arab Emirates thanks to its strategic position between three continents, serving a market of 1.5 billion people. The **Hamriyah Free Zone**, located in the emirate of Sharjah, thus enjoys an advantageous geographical position and time zone, supported by a safe, fully convertible currency, in addition to multiple avenues of access to the rest of the world by land, sea and air.