

PEEL HUNT



Joint press release



Brussels, London – 29 November 2010

Peel Hunt completes buyout from KBC Group

Following its announcement on 29 July 2010, KBC Group today announces that it has completed the divestment of its subsidiary, Peel Hunt, to a consortium of Peel Hunt staff and a group of external investors. The final consideration for the transaction was £74 million.

KBC Group will focus on its strategy of providing bancassurance services to retail, SME and midcap customers in its core markets of Belgium and Central & Eastern Europe.

Commenting on the completion of the buyout, Luc Popelier, Chief Executive of KBC Group's Market Activities said:

"The closing of this transaction marks another step in the implementation of KBC's strategy which focuses on its core markets and customers and on a reduced risk profile for the Group."

"We are convinced that Peel Hunt's new owners will create a new and stable environment for the business which will be beneficial to all its stakeholders. KBC will continue to act as a major player in the securities markets in Belgium and Central and Eastern Europe, with a complete set of capabilities to give domestic corporate customers access to capital markets and capital market products."

Simon Hayes, Chief Executive of Peel Hunt, said:

"Today marks the rebirth of a 21 year old company. We aim to become the UK's leading adviser and broker for mid and small cap companies. This will be achieved by building lasting relationships with clients based on the quality of our advice, research and first class execution."

Steven Fine, Managing Director of Peel Hunt, said:

"We believe that our new independent status is the best context in which to most effectively serve clients. We are very excited about the opportunities ahead and look forward to building on an already strong franchise."

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Notes for Editors

Peel Hunt (www.peelhunt.com)

Peel Hunt was founded in 1989 by Charles Peel and Christopher Holdsworth-Hunt, and floated on AIM in February 2000. In 2001, it was acquired by KBC Bank and Insurance Holding Company NV, and became KBC Peel Hunt.

Key divisions include corporate advisory, research, institutional sales and market making. Peel Hunt's corporate clients range from FTSE250s to AIM. It has one of the largest trading desks in the UK and makes markets in over 2000 securities. The Firm's analysts provide valuations, forecasts and written research on over 240 companies and are specialised by sector.

KBC Group NV (www.kbc.com)

KBC is a bancassurer that focuses on its home markets in Belgium and Central & Eastern Europe. KBC's headquarters are located in Brussels (Belgium), the heart of Europe. The KBC group employs around 54 000 staff and caters for 12 million customers. KBC Group NV is listed on NYSE Euronext Brussels (ticker symbol 'KBC').

KBC's press releases are available at www.kbc.com . Follow KBC on Twitter at www.twitter.com/kbc_group