

PRESS RELEASE

**Banks: ABI, Agreement on social security advances from the Extraordinary Unemployment Benefits Fund at branches extended**

*Agreement signed along with the Province of Milan and social entities. Agreement valid through December 2010.  
In 2009, advances in the region involved 1,300 positions for more than Euro 6 million*

The agreement regarding social security advances to be paid by Cassa Integrazione Guadagni Straordinaria (Extraordinary Unemployment Benefits Fund) has been extended in derogation. This involves the procedure by which the banks adhering to the agreement will pay in advance extraordinary unemployment benefits to employees whose work has been reduced to zero hours, against direct payment from INPS (National Institute of Social Insurance). This was the agreement signed today by the Italian Banking Association (ABI), the ABI Lombardy Regional Commission, the Province of Milan and various trade unions and business associations including CGIL, CISL, UIL, Assolombarda, APA Confartigianato Imprese, CONFAPI Milano, Confartigianato Alto Milanese, Confindustria Alto Milanese, Unione Artigiani and Unione Commercio.

The agreement extends for the remainder of the year the opportunities offered by the agreement signed in February 2009. The objective is to provide a definitive social response to workers and their families affected by employment difficulties resulting from the difficult economic scenario.

Comparable to the original agreement, the extension provides that the banks involved pay in advance an indemnity not greater than Euro 900 monthly, for a maximum of seven months.

For **ABI**, "the initiative has proven to be effective and demonstrates the banking sector's ability to work with the primary institutional and social entities in the region. The agreement, implemented as soon as the difficulties from the economic crisis became apparent, has produced excellent results in terms of efficiency and timeliness, also for the favourable conditions applied in line with the objectives and social values of the agreement."

ABI notes that in the year following the agreement taking effect, with more than 75% of the bank branches in the Milan market providing this type of advance, there were 1,300 disbursements of more than Euro 6 million.

"2010 will be another difficult year from an employment perspective," notes **Paola Del Nero, Councillor for Economic, Training and Employment Activities for the Province of Milan**. "For this reason, the commitment and collaboration of institutions, social entities and economic agents is imperative. The Province of Milan supports both workers with employment difficulties who are seeking work and professional training, as well as businesses in procedures for recognising social support systems. In addition, it is heavily involved in identifying the tools and measures available to meet the problems resulting from this particular economic period that can be shown to be repeatable best practices for other locations."

"Subscription to the agreement extension, one year after its stipulation, is a sign that the crisis persists in the area, as shown by the data on unemployment benefits, both extraordinary and ordinary, which surpassed all of the previous reference parameters and for which the 2010 forecasts do not show any improvement," note the **Milan Secretaries General of CGIL, CISL and UIL**. Advance payments have helped 1,300 works and their families to cope with the loss of their salaries, guaranteeing an additional protection during this particularly difficult time."

"The agreement extended today for the remainder of 2010, which is expected to be the most difficult year of the crisis in terms of employment, is further proof that social entities and institutions can be the most effective instrument in searching for the best solutions for the needs of Milan businesses in general and, more specifically, for their workers" states **Antonio Colombo, Assolombarda General Manager**. "Hence, this initiative has proven to be effective, and for this reason it has been used as a guideline at the national level."

Milan, 18 March 2010