

**PRESS RELEASE**

**Abruzzo: ABI, the suspension of mortgage payments is extended to June 2010**

*Measure approved by the Executive Committee of the Italian Banking Association*

An extension of the suspension of mortgage payments and loans existing as at 6 April 2009 to 30 June 2010 has been approved for the population resident in the municipalities of Abruzzo hit by the earthquake. The decision was taken yesterday by ABI's Executive Committee.

The provision established by the Banking Association is linked to the difficult situation of customers in this area, where the majority of economic activities, mainly commercial businesses and cottage industries are still at a standstill.

In line with the situation to date, each bank may subscribe on a voluntary basis to the suspension provision, and has full autonomy to decide the conditions for its application, the payment of interest relating to the suspension period, to identify and propose repayment plans as well as to establish the manner in which customers are notified. Customers may obviously request to resume normal payments at any time.

Beyond this, ABI drew attention to numerous initiatives in which the banking industry is already participating to relaunch the territory hit by the earthquakes, also in partnership with the institutions:

- the agreement between ABI and Cassa depositi e prestiti for the payment of subsidies to those that have suffered damages as a consequence of the earthquake (16 banks are working on this provision, which represent 71% of the branches in the area);
- the microcredit programme to support micro-businesses, recently promoted jointly with the Abruzzo Regional Authority;
- donations to the Civil defence service by the banking world for the earthquake emergency fund, corresponding to € 25 million.

Roma, Palazzo Altieri, 17 December 2009