

PRESS RELEASE

**Finance: Sovereign wealth funds at the International Banking Federation (IBFed)
Meeting at ABI in Rome**

The Italian Banking Association organized and hosted IBFed's spring meeting; IBFed is the Federation representing banks from Europe, USA, Australia, Canada, and Japan. Financial turbulence on the international scenario also on the agenda. China and India involved for the first time as associates.

Four key principles on sovereign wealth funds: 1. Maintain a market approach, open to direct foreign investments. 2. Avoid the introduction of specific restrictive measures. 3. Increase market transparency in order to face any potential effects in the best possible way. 4. Enhance economic policy instruments to confront potential consequences of foreign States adopting a controlling stance. This, in short, is the position of the European Banking Federation, which was illustrated and sustained at the spring meeting of the IBFed, the Federation that represents banking associations from Europe, United States, Australia, Canada, and Japan.

The two-day meeting took place yesterday and today in Rome. The Italian Banking Association organized and hosted the event. Mr. Giuseppe Zadra, General Manager of ABI, opened the gathering, in his position as European representative, since he is also the Chairman of the Executive Committee of the European Banking Federation, and thus a member of the IBFed's Board.

The focus was on sovereign wealth funds – investment funds created and controlled by sovereign states, financed with their fiscal surplus or foreign currency reserves, that invest in financial and real assets – on which attention has risen in the last months. As a matter of fact, these operators' investment choices are also playing an important role in ownership reorganization of financial companies, in connection with the financial turbulence in subprime home loans. Sovereign wealth funds can be viewed as a threat to specific sectors, such as energy and defence, of highly advanced economies, with the level of transparency with which they operate being a cause for concern. The opposite viewpoint emphasises the hazard of a going back to protectionism.

The financial turbulence on the international scenario was also on the IBFed agenda. For the first time, representatives from China and India took part as associates.

During the two-day IBFed event, a very busy meetings programme was organized as well, in which, among others, the following representatives took part: Mr. Giovanni Carosio, Assistant Manager of Bank of Italy; Mr. Carlo Comporti, Secretary General of the Committee of European Securities Regulators (CESR); Mr. Vittorio Conti, CONSOB Commissioner; Mr. Andrea Enria, Secretary General of the Committee of European Banking Supervisors (CEBS); Mr. Giuseppe Maresca, General Director of the Ministry of Economy; and Mr. Giovanni Sabatini, General Director of the Ministry of Economy.

Rome, Palazzo Altieri, 14 March 2008