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PRESS RELEASE

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**Banks, Mr. Faissola to Mr. Berlusconi: we are willing to collaborate with the Government**

*The Chairman of ABI accepts the invitation for a “common effort”. “Independence and competitiveness of such a crucial sector continue to be values to protect, without introducing penalizing measures”.*

The Chairman of ABI, Mr. Corrado Faissola, upon accepting the invitation to make a “common effort” coming from the President of the Council of Ministers, Mr. Silvio Berlusconi, said, “A banking system as solid and efficient as the Italian one is, intends without doubt to continue in its leading role with regard to recovery and development of the economy, looking with particular attention to the corporate world, to savers, and to young people, in addition to an increasingly better quality in the relationships with clients. In order to meet these goals, which are of general interest, Italian banks are completely open to discussion and collaboration with the Government and the institutions”.

Mr. Faissola added, “We are still not informed of the actual projects that the Government intends to carry out, but Italian banks will undoubtedly be ready to do their part in the general interest, and with the common objective of enhancing competitiveness and recovery of our economy, also in order to overcome the consequences of the current mediocre phase that the domestic and international economic situation is experiencing. At the same time, independence and competitiveness of a crucial sector such as the banking one, continue to be values to protect; they cannot be jeopardized by the introduction of penalizing measures, keeping in mind that the financial market is already overwhelmed by a fiscal burden that is among the highest in Europe”.

Rome, Palazzo Altieri, 13 May 2008