



Banco Popolare di Verona e Novara Merger and Industrial Plan Approved

Novara/Verona, 26 January 2002

The Boards of Directors of Banca Popolare di Novara ("BPN") and Banca Popolare di Verona – Banco S. Geminiano e S. Prospero ("BPVR") have unanimously approved the plan to merge the two banks and create the Banco Popolare di Verona e Novara. The Boards have also approved the new Group's industrial plan.

Merger plan

The Boards of Directors of Banca Popolare di Novara and Banca Popolare di Verona have unanimously approved the planned merger which is expected to result in a perfect merging of the two banks through the creation of a new company, the Banco Popolare di Verona e Novara S.c.r.l. (hereafter referred to as "Banco Popolare"), which will undertake banking operations and, as parent company of the Banco Popolare di Verona e Novara Group (hereafter referred to as the "Group"), manage and coordinate subsidiary companies.

The merger plan provides for the foundation of a new limited company banking institution which shall be known as "Banca Popolare di Novara S.p.A." (hereafter referred to as "Nuova BPN"). At the time of the merger a line of business will be spun off to this company from the existing BPN banking institution, consisting essentially -- when complete -- of the network of branches located principally in its traditional historical area. As a result of information technology compatibility issues, this divestment will initially regard the entire network of BPN branches in addition to related ancillary operations; at a later date, expected to be before 1 January 2003, the merger plan will reach completion following the hiving off to the Banco Popolare parent company of the block of branches outside the historical local area. At full operational capacity, Nuova BPN should have a network of around 400 branches. One of the distinguishing features of this project is that right from the start decisions have been made regarding the Information System and the vast majority of senior managers who will be leading the Group.

In order to achieve the strategic objectives (explained in greater detailed below) a number of Group functions will be concentrated, including Group planning, control and coordination, credit policies, strategic marketing, internal auditing, communication, information technology, back

office, finance, asset management, human resources management and subsidiary management.

Banco Popolare's registered and administrative office will be in Verona. Nuova BPN will be based in Novara, which will also be the location for the Group's technological hub. Subject to issue of the requisite authorisations, Banco Popolare shares will be quoted on the Milan stock exchange, where the security is likely to feature in the MIB 30 index.

The merger of these two banks will lead to the creation of Italy's largest Popular Banking Group and the country's sixth largest banking Group in terms of capitalisation, net profit and principal operating dimensions (total assets, deposits/investments, number of branches), with a prominent position in many business areas. Highlight figures are:

- 1,128 branches overall, of which 87% concentrated in Northern Italy, making it Italy's sixth largest group by distribution network size;
- approximately 3 million customers, predominantly families and SMEs, distributed principally in Northern Italy;
- approximately €32 billion in direct customer deposits and €51 billion in indirect deposits and total investments corresponding to approximately €32 billion;
- approximately €3.5 million in funds in Private Banking;
- approximately €26 billion total assets under management (number eight asset manager).

This operation has, from the start, garnered stock market approval. Since the initial announcement on 13 November 2001 aggregate capitalisation has risen 37.8%, while the Mibtel index rose by 3.14% and the banking industry average registered a 7.77% increase.

In order to maintain the greatest possible focus on the creation of value and on management integration as part of a team approach, a stock option plan is envisaged for top Group managers.

Industrial Plan Guidelines

Economic and financial projections for the New Group forecast continuing improvement of profitability, with ROE not including extraordinary items up from 9.2% in 2001 to 19.5% in 2005 (corresponding respectively to adjusted ROE rising from 12.2% in 2001 to a forecast 21.7% in 2005). These results are associated with overall improved profitability, up from an estimated aggregate pro forma net profit of €298 million in 2001 to €747 million forecast in 2005, generated by significant growth in commercial productivity (total revenues from banking per employee up from €165,000 to €254,000), and owing to rigid containment of cost structures (cost/income down from 63.1% to 45.1%) plus an improved capital structure (Tier 1 up from €2,773 to €3,521 million). The merger will result in overall synergies, in 2005, worth around €168 million, of which 68% deriving from cost synergies (for a total corresponding to around 8% of the new company's operating costs) and the remaining 32% from revenue synergies.

Specifically:

• cost synergies corresponding to €114 million before tax in 2005, obtained by unifying structures and rationalising operating costs and investments;

- revenue synergies growing over the four-year period to reach €54 million pre-tax in 2005, net of incremental costs to be sustained during implementation, corresponding to €14 million. This increase will come about principally through Retail business revenue growth, worth around €54 million, achieved by: enhancement of the product range, improved exploitation of the customer base, and the realignment of commercial productivity to the highest in-house Group levels. At the same time extra Corporate business revenues of around €14 million are forecast, associated principally with greater penetration of Corporate Finance and Capital Market services among the Group customer portfolio, allied to the leveraging of the best in-house financial skill sets;
- costs associated with the merger process, sustained during the first four years, will amount approximately to a total of between €135 and €165 million, arising predominantly from charges incurred through human resources turnover, investments for integrating IT systems, and the extraordinary assistance required for undertaking these organisational modifications (training, communication and advertising, advisory, etc.).

The New Group will be managed in accordance with prudent capitalisation criteria and in compliance with the requisites of supervision. Group Total Solvency Ratio (TSR) in 2002 shall be 9%, with Tier 1 of 7.0%; in 2003, 10% with Tier 1 of 7.3%. In 2005 the TSR will reach a level of 10% but Tier 1 will reach as high as 7.9%. The level of capitalisation deemed appropriate shall be achieved through coordinated capital management operations which may include:

- the issue of subordinated loans on terms to be defined on the basis of funding needs and market conditions;
- optimisation of the pay-out ratio in accordance with Plan objectives, while maintaining the growth trend in per-share dividends;
- disinvestment from non-strategic interests;
- rationalisation of the New Group's territorial reach;
- new "tranches" of real estate sales

In 2005 Banco Popolare will achieve an efficiency ratio (45.1% cost/income) which very few competitors in Italy or internationally can match today.

Rationalisation of the two banks' structures will be undertaken through Group centralisation of management and the optimisation of distribution network territorial outlets.

Significant economies will be achieved from service and support operations through:

- unification of IT systems;
- management structure rationalisation;
- attainment of critical mass cost synergies (for instance by setting up a Group provisioning centre);
- concentration of leasing and asset management production units;
- sharing Group management best practice, improving the productive efficiency of internal resources and the managerial efficiency of external contractors.

Planned efficiency gains will make it possible to free up resources, of which a significant portion will be refocused on commercial operations in support of the Group's ambitious planned growth.

Banco Popolare Governance

The Banco Popolare Board will consist of 20 Directors. The Board of Auditors will consist of 5 auditors (Appendix A).

Banco Popolare Senior Management

Managers have been appointed for many of the principal roles in the new Group (Appendix B).

Financial Terms

The results of accounting due diligence conducted by the auditors Reconta Ernst & Young on BPVR and Arthur Andersen on BPN, and of legal due diligence performed by Grimaldi Clifford Chance on BPVR and by Pedersoli Lombardi & Associati and and Mercanti-Caffi on BPN, do not require any review of the operation's financial terms and conditions.

In addition, as decided in the protocol of agreement, there has been a revision of the exchange ratios and of the overall extraordinary distribution of reserves by BPN in exchange for the partial exercise of "Banca Popolare 2001 Warrants". The Boards of Directors have subsequently approved the following financial terms for implementation of the merger: i) the prior distribution by BPN of the share-premium reserves to the current BPN shareholders at the rate of €1.72 per BPN share up to a total maximum of €494 million; ii) share swap ratios set at 1 Banco Popolare di Verona e Novara share per BPVR share and 0.48 Banco Popolare shares per BPN share.

Merger timetable

These are the key dates in the merger plan:

9 March 2002: Ordinary shareholders' meeting to approve distribution of share-

premium reserves; BPVR and BPN extraordinary shareholders' meeting

to approve merger and Banco Popolare constituting act;

by end of May 2002: Distribution of BPN share-premium reserves; merger execution;

June 2002: Banco Popolare shares start trading.

The merger is subject to authorisation by the Bank of Italy and by other regulatory bodies.

Financial advisors for the merger: Mediobanca (BPN) and Morgan Stanley (BPVR). Industrial advisors for preparation of the Industrial Plan and synergies estimate: McKinsey.

Appendices: BPN and BPVR third quarter 2001 balance sheet and income statement highlights.

Appendix A – Company organs

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The Banco Popolare Board of Directors will consist of the following 20 members:

- Alberto Bauli
- Gian Carlo Bellentani
- Marco Boroli
- Pietro Buzzi
- Maurizio Comoli
- Ugo Della Bella
- Giuseppe Fedrigoni
- Carlo Fratta Pasini
- Federico Guasti
- Fabio Innocenzi
- Siro Lombardini
- Sergio Loropiana
- Aldo Marchi
- Maurizio Marino
- Giuseppe Nicolò
- Francesco Pasti
- Claudio Rangoni Machiavelli
- Luigi Righetti
- Gian Carlo Vezzalini
- Franco Zanetta

Pursuant to statutory legislation with regard to the appointment of company officers and the attribution of associated powers, until the cessation of his role as a Director, Carlo Fratta Pasini takes on the position of Chairman of the Board of Directors, Siro Lombardini that of Vicarious Vice President and Fabio Innocenzi that of CEO.

Piero Montani is appointed General Manager.

BOARD OF AUDITORS

The first Board of Auditors shall be composed of the following 5 standing auditors and 2 substitute auditors:

Giuliano Buffelli	(standing auditor)
Maurizio Calderini	(standing auditor)
Flavio Dezzani	(standing auditor)
Carlo Gaiani	(standing auditor)
Giovanni Tantini	(standing auditor)
Bruno Anti	(substitute auditor)
Emilio Rossi	(substitute auditor)
	Giuliano Buffelli Maurizio Calderini Flavio Dezzani Carlo Gaiani Giovanni Tantini Bruno Anti Emilio Rossi

Flavio Dezzani shall for the first three years take on the role of Chairman of the Board of Auditors.

BOARD OF ARBITRATORS

The Board of Arbitrators is composed of the following three standing members and two substitutes chosen from among the shareholders:

	Marco Cicogna	(standing member)
•	Luciano Codini	(standing member)
•	Sergio Mancini	(standing member)
	Aldo Bulgarelli	(substitute member)
•	Vittorio Cocito	(substitute member)

Appointments to the Board of Arbitrators last three years.

External auditors: Auditors Arthur Andersen S.p.A., registered in Bologna, P.zza Malpighi 4/2, have been hired for auditing of the accounts for the financial years 2002-2003-2004 regarding certification of the annual accounts of Banco Popolare and its consolidated companies, in addition to limited auditing of the accounts in the first-half report and verification of the conduction of regular bookkeeping practices.

APPENDIX B

GROUP MANAGEMENT POSITIONS

Faenza (BPN) Head of Corporate Division

Simeoni (BPV) Banco Popolare Corporate

Iori (BPV) Group Leasing
Modonesi (BPV) Group Merchant

Carrus (BPV) Head of Retail Division

Retail Products, Operational Marketing and Direct

Giuliani (BPN) Bank

Riccadonna (BPV) Banco Popolare Retail

Faroni (BPV) Head of Private Banking and Finance Division

Caniato (BPN) Finance

Tosti (BPV) Asset Management Zancanaro (BPV) Private Banking

Malerbi (BPN) Head of Administrative Division

Cambriani (BPN) Credit

Gobetti (BPN) Participating Interests and General Secretary

Rossi (BPV) Legal and Litigation

Val (BPV) Administration and Fiscal Affairs

Rigodanza (BPV) Head of Operations Division

Papa (BPN) CEO SGS (IT and Group Services)

Papili (BPV) General Manager SGS Gardella (BPN) Group Acquisitions Togni (BPV) Group Organization

De Angelis (BPN) General Manager Nuova Banca Popolare di Novara

di Novara

Santi (BPN) Resp. for integration, planning, mgm. contr., risk

mgm. and investor rel. Novara

Franceschini (BPV) Resp. for integration, planning, mgm. contr., risk

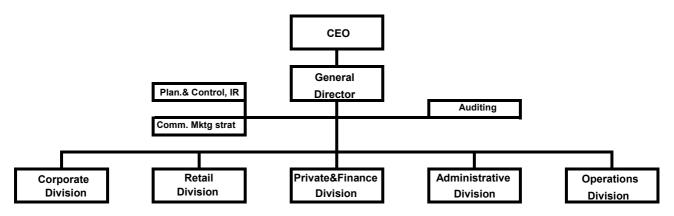
mgm. and investor rel. Verona

Ranieri (BPN) Head of Group Auditing

Ferro (BPV) Head of Group Communication and Strategic

Marketing

New Group Structure



BANCA POPOLARE DI NOVARA

Balance Sheet in euros

ets		
	30/09/200	01 31/12/20
10. Cash and funds with central banks		
And post offices	127,725,134	123,741,152
20. Treasury bills and other bills eligible		
for refinancing with central banks	1,074,381,894	1,176,001,985
30. Due from banks	3,292,963,617	3,667,845,53
a) Sight	770,334,899	573,520,189
b) Other	2,522,628,718	3,094,325,34
40. Due from customers	12,385,524,729	12,318,970,5
of which:		
• third party securities under administration	4,769,391	5,388,264
50. Bonds and other debt securities:	1,896,064,488	1,763,454,36
a) government securities	197,530,271	234,935,911
b) Banks	1,073,335,454	923,129,909
of which:		
• own securities	9,863,865	57,963,120
c) financial institutions	112,017,291	175,574,434
d) other issuers	513,181,472	429,814,108
60. Shares, units and other equity securities	1,253,215	3,536,889
70. Equity investments	175,023,582	164,325,924
a) valued at shareholders' equity	63,456,853	53,414,824
b) other	111,566,729	110,911,100
80. Equity investments in Group companies	206,996,341	206,398,900
a) valued at shareholders' equity	11,860,320	11,860,320
b) other	195,136,021	194,538,580
90.Intangible fixed assets	66,073,192	72,947,522
of which:		
• goodwill	20,288,157	24,970,040
100. Tangible fixed assets	182,734,916	190,443,594

120. Own shares	216,124	-
(par value ITL. 177,500,000 at 30 Sep. 2001)		
(par value ITL. 0 at 30 Sep. 2000)		
130.Other assets	692,509,715	812,293,443
140. Accrued income and prepaid expenses:	270,025,059	232,667,869
a) accrued income	258,932,322	223,434,036
b) prepaid expenses	11,092,737	9,233,833
of which		
securities issue premium	61,023	142,288
tal assets	20,371,492,006	20,732,627,718

BANCA POPOLARE DI NOVARA

ilities		
	30/09/2001	31/12/20
10. Due to banks	2,843,180,906	4,453,219,2
a) Sight	624,894,008	377,509,3
b) forward or with notice	2,218,286,898	4,075,709,8
20. Due to customers	9,375,427,575	8,104,815,8
a) Sight	7,471,728,140	6,374,317,0
b) forward or with notice	1,903,699,435	1,730,498,7
30.Debt instruments	5,290,719,917	5,349,200,3
a) Bonds	3,969,659,879	3,934,974,1
b) certificates of deposit	1,250,933,423	1,273,184,4
c) Other	70,126,615	141,041,6
40. Third party assets under administration	5,143,809	5,642,5
50.Other liabilities	507,779,579	584,112,9
60. Deferred income and accrued expenses:	322,795,262	240,595,5
a) deferred income	298,020,180	223,532,4
b) accrued expenses	24,775,082	17,063,0
70. Severance pay indemnity	200,219,192	201,142,5
80. Provisions for risks and charges: allocation to retirement fund and similar	165,729,848	174,291,3
a) obligations	-	
b) tax provisions	77,418,880	91,630,7
c) other provisions	88,310,968	82,660,5
90.Loan-loss reserves	-	
100.Allowance for general banking risks	5,164,569	5,164,5
110.Subordinated debt	148,669,705	304,426,2
120.Share capital	679,936,076	618,392,1
130.Share premium	574,479,391	512,229,4
140. Reserves	177,816,136	169,671,7
a) legal reserve	87,533,550	86,667,1

73,370,907	8,664,267
1,059,134	1,059,134
4 0 7 0 4 2 4	1 050 124
25,228,135	25,228,135
64,838,327	57,776,468
216,124	-
	,

Guarantees and commitments in euros		
	30/09/2001	31/12/2000
10.Guarantees given	779,171,655	776,829,342
of which:		
 acceptances 	22,896,568	21,343,878
other guarantees	756,275,087	755,485,464
20.Commitments	2,263,190,997	2,226,147,315

BANCA POPOLARE DI NOVARA

come statement in euros		
	30/09/2001	31/12/200
10. Interest income and similar revenues	875,386,536	1,119,786,86
of which:		
• due from customers	602,727,144	715,763,46
 debt instruments 	112,307,933	173,088,082
20.Interest expense and similar charges of which:	494,098,644	689,940,82
• due to customers	162,144,178	169,281,96
 debt instruments 	167,472,410	219,828,765
30.Dividends and other revenues:	12,882,226	15,687,27
a) on shares, units and other equity securities	66,986	6,175
b) on equity investments	3,944,360	2,537,317
c)on equity investments in Group companies	8,870,880	13,143,787
40. Commission income	193,097,701	279,637,895
50. Commission expense	13,994,937	23,451,62
60. Profits/Losses from financial transactions	12,336,733	12,327,51
70.Other operating income	56,110,970	66,330,337
80.Administrative expenses:	402,014,661	577,038,197
a) personnel costs of which:	265,847,085	386,380,174
• salaries and wages	189,783,341	278,040,696
 social security charges 	60,316,158	84,873,179
 severance pay indemnity 	14,946,865	22,360,650
 retirement fund and similar 	800,721	1,105,649
b) other administrative costs	136,167,576	190,658,02
90.Depreciation and amortisation on tangible		
and intangible assets	33,871,035	53,941,36
100. Provisions for risks and charges	4,838,565	26,346,61
110.Other operating expenses	3,033,869	3,617,94

120.Write-downs on loans and provisions		
for guarantees and commitments	90,803,685	311,067,622
130. Write-backs on loans and provisions		
for guarantees and commitments	26,834,884	20,507,168
140. Provisions for risks and charges	_	-
150.Write-downs on financial fixed assets	1,619,313	11,781,839
160. Revaluations of financial fixed assets	260,561	2,002,265
170.Profit/Loss on ordinary operations	132,634,902	-180,906,709
180.Extraordinary income	9,302,961	251,260,799
190.Extraordinary expenses	4,546,725	49,055,899
200.Net extraordinary result	4,756,236	202,204,900
210. Change to general banking risks reserve	0	C
220.Income tax	64,020,231	12,633,924
230.Net income for period	73,370,907	8,664,267

BANCA POPOLARE DI VERONA – Parent Bank

	BALANCE SHEET - ASSETS	Turont Bunk
	(in EURO)	30-09-01
10	CASH AND FUNDS WITH CENTRAL BANKS AND POST OFFICES	70,152,639
20	TREASURY BILLS AND OTHER BILLS ELIGIBLE FOR REFINANCING WITH CENTRAL BANKS	1,269,073,779
30	DUE FROM BANKS: a) sight b) other	4,389,075,361 227,892,990 4,161,182,371
40	DUE FROM CUSTOMERS of which: - third party securities under	13,024,933,289
	administration	2,819,249
50	BONDS AND OTHER DEBT SECURITIES: a) government securities b) bank securities of which:	509,258,898 131,032,032 254,163,559
	own securitiesc) from financial institutionsd) other securities	41,139,729 52,347,262 71,716,045
60	SHARES, UNITS AND OTHER EQUITY SECURITIES	13,486,769
70	EQUITY INVESTMENTS	121,127,652
80	EQUITY INVESTMENTS IN GROUP COMPANIES	1,211,559,964
90	INTANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS of which:	135,554,980

	TOTAL ASSETS	21,802,577,350
140	ACCRUED INCOME AND PREPAID EXPENSES: a) accrued income b) pre-paid expenses	284,712,058 279,436,450 5,275,608
130	OTHER ASSETS	528,303,053
120	OWN SHARES (par value: €318,137.45)	7,508,283
100	TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS	237,830,626
	leasehold property and improvementsgoodwill	8,298,920 116,459,661

	BALANCE SHEET - LIABILITIES (in EURO)	30-09-01
10	DUE TO BANKS: a) sight b) forward or with notice	5,660,716,885 1,136,323,199 4,524,393,686
20	DUE TO CUSTOMERS: a) sight b) forward or with notice	7,533,384,941 5,206,456,992 2,326,927,949
30	DEBT INSTRUMENTS: a) bonds b) certificates of deposit c) other	5,025,981,118 3,733,375,661 1,232,418,567 60,186,890
40	THIRD PARTY ASSETS UNDER ADMINISTRATION	3,871,465
50	OTHER LIABILITIES	467,988,878

	TOTAL LIABILITIES	21,802,577,350
200	PROFIT FOR THE PERIOD	132,277,905
180	REVALUATION RESERVES	84,090,647
	capital shares c) statutory reserves d) other reserves	51,645,690 373,890,468 369,967,085
170	RESERVES: a) legal reserve b) reserve for own shares or	938,532,888 143,029,645
160	SHARE PREMIUM	8,662,551
150	SHARE CAPITAL	604,484,754
110	SUBORDINATED DEBT	765,849,141
100	ALLOWANCE FOR GENERAL BANKING RISKS	52,066,582
90	LOAN-LOSS RESERVES	100,191,164
	c) other provisions	48,710,545
	b) tax provisions	94,698,441
80	PROVISIONS FOR RISKS AND CHARGES: a) retirement fund and similar obligations	156,086,114 12,677,128
70	SEVERANCE PAY INDEMNITY	93,795,525
60	DEFERRED INCOME AND ACCRUED EXPENSES: a) deferred income b) accrued expenses	174,596,793 161,291,695 13,305,098

BANCA POPOLARE DI VERONA – Parent Bank

	BALANCE SHEET – GUARANTEES AND (in EURO)	COMMITMENTS 30-09-01
10	GUARANTEES GIVEN of which: - acceptances	1,961,779,711 43,093,818
	- other guarantees	1,918,685,893
20	COMMITMENTS	438,372,231

	INCOME STATEMENT (in EURO)	30-09-01
10	INTEREST INCOME AND SIMILAR REVENUES of which: - due from customers - debt instruments	849,343,502 604,575,877 75,774,003
20	INTEREST EXPENSE AND SIMILAR CHARGES of which: - due to customers - debt instruments	-505,994,061 -135,438,699 -166,218,319
30	DIVIDENDS AND OTHER REVENUES: a) on shares, units and other equity securities b) on equity investments c) on equity investments in Group companies	53,795,933 310,378 5,409,227 48,076,328
40	COMMISSION INCOME	235,387,276
50	COMMISSION EXPENSE	-14,101,293
60	PROFITS FROM FINANCIAL TRANSACTIONS	12,974,291
70	OTHER OPERATING INCOME	49,965,595
80	ADMINISTRATIVE	-350,802,210

1	EXPENSES:	1
	a) personnel costs	-185,594,320
	of which:	
	- wages and salaries	-122,161,271
	- Social Security charges	-35,635,929
	- severance pay indemnity	-11,920,857
	- retirement fund and	9 220 446
	similar	-8,220,446 -165,207,890
	b) other administrative costs	-165,207,690
	DEPRECIATION AND	
	AMORTISATION OF	
90	INTANGIBLE	
	AND INTANGIBLE ASSETS	-43,440,512
		, ,
	PROVISIONS FOR RISKS	
100	AND CHARGES	-2,957,841
	071177 0777 17110	
	OTHER OPERATING	4 474 470
110	EXPENSES	-1,174,458
	WRITE-DOWNS ON LOANS	
120	AND PROVISIONS	
120	FOR GUARANTEES AND	
	COMMITMENTS	-26,453,106
	OOMMIT MENTO	23,433,133
	WRITE-BACKS ON LOANS	
130	AND PROVISIONS	
	FOR GUARANTEES AND	
	COMMITMENTS	5,773,682
	APPROPRIAT. TO PROV.	
140	FOR RISKS AND CHARGES	-34,679,341
450	WRITE DOWNS ON	
150	WRITE-DOWNS ON INVESTMENT SECURITIES	
	INVESTIMENT SECORITIES	
170	INCOME FROM ORDINARY	227,637,459
	OPERATIONS	221,001,400
400	EVTDAODDINADV INCOME	7 200 400
180	EXTRAORDINARY INCOME	7,390,429
	EXTRAORDINARY	
190	EXPENSES	-3,919,773
130	LAI LITOLO	-0,010,110
1		

200	NET EXTRAORDINARY RESULT	3,470,656
220	INCOME TAXES	-98,830,211
230	NET INCOME FOR THE PERIOD	132,277,905