

Close Brothers Group plc acquires Seydler Wertpapierhandelsbank AG

Today (21st of March,2005) Close Brothers Group plc agreed to the purchase of Seydler AG. The UK-company has a market capitalisation of £ 1.2 bn and in 2004 achieved a profit of £ 118.9 mln before goodwill amortisation and tax.

The activities of Close Brothers Group plc range from Corporate Finance (they have had a subsidiary in Germany since 1998 (Freyberg Close Brothers), Asset Management, Market Making (the company is no.1 in the UK in the Small and Mid Cap Equity Market), to the Banking area, where they are active in a range of asset financing products.

Seydler AG is one of the leading security and financial trading banks in Germany and achieved a turnover in 2004 of €21 m.

The company registered in Frankfurt am Main and Düsseldorf, is a leading specialist at the stock exchange for unregulated equities and fixed income securities, especially in corporate bonds.

In the area of market making it is active in more than 200 shares, currently the no. 1 in the US-Stars-segment of the Deutsche Börse AG.

In Designated Sponsoring the company has more than 70 mandates, leading the market in Small and Mid Cap segment.

The two Board Members, Mrs. Hannelore Eberz and Mr. Hans Joachim Goetz, will have a share ownership in the new company.

Frankfurt am Main, 21st of March, 2005