



## FRANSABANK wins “Deal of the Year 2008” from the Banker magazine, part of Financial Times Group

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FRANSABANK won the “Deal of the year 2008” in Lebanon, from the internationally renowned “The Banker” magazine, a part of the Financial Times Group, for acquiring 97.52% of BLC Bank’s shares which constituted in its value, its speed of execution and its instrument of implementation, a trademark among other banking deals concluded in Lebanon.

Established in 1926, The Banker magazine is a part of the international Financial Times Group, which provides global financial, business and professional information services. The Banker’s annual Awards program has been running for 9 years and is considered a benchmark for financial institutions featuring high-quality products and services across all areas of commercial and investment banking.

Mr. Nabil Kassar, Deputy General Manager, received the award on behalf of FRANSABANK Group, in a special ceremony organized by The Banker on the 5th of May, in Bahrain. Hundreds of prominent banking and financial representatives attended the ceremony that gathered winners from the Middle East and Asia with the best banking and financial deals. This international commemoration that FRANSABANK was granted, confirms once again the appreciation of the banking society of such initiatives, as well as of the internal expansion strategy that FRANSABANK adopted.

The Banker conveyed a praising letter to FRANSABANK for being granted this significant international award among Lebanese banks. This is to note that the renowned Magazine selected only one bank for each country, thus adding to the exclusivity of the prize. A selected number of considerate Judges chosen by The Banker went through 700 applications which have made this the largest Deals of the Year to date, not to mention the most competitive. Judges used a wide range of criteria in selecting the winning deals with an emphasis on the degree to which client objectives were met as well as the deal complexity, innovation, speed of execution and pricing performance.

It is known that Banque Libanaise pour le Commerce (BLC) is the fifth acquisition by FRANSABANK over the past few years, whereby it has previously acquired the shares of Banque Tohmé SAL, Universal Bank, United Bank of Saudia & Lebanon SA and Banque de la Bekaa SAL. It also had acquired around 37.054% of Bank of Beirut & the Arab countries’ shares.

In this occasion, Mr. Adnan Kassar, Chairman and CEO of FRANSABANK Group, declared: “We are proud to be granted this distinctive international award, which is dedicated to Lebanon

and its banking sector as much as it is for us. This confirms once again, the high level of confidence in our Bank with its big potential to grow and expand internally and externally through efficient and effective methods; and in the Lebanese banking sector that was able to maintain growth and strength despite all the unfortunate and insubstantial circumstances that the country has been witnessing for years.”

Chairman Kassar added: “What we have achieved during the last couple of years fall within our internal and external expansion strategy, which has intensified exactly as we wanted. We have sought to achieve these results by expanding into promising regional and international markets with high economical and investment potentials such as France, Algeria, Syria, Sudan, Libya, Cuba and Belarus which we believe will reveal extensive work opportunities ahead of us as well as lead us towards other potential markets in the region. Our achievements have also evolved through our effective policy of Mergers and Acquisitions, the latest of which was the acquisition of BLC Bank which, from the first moment, we realized its strategic importance for our growth and expansion. And we are proud to have fortunately achieved it successfully and seriously despite all the unfavorable conditions.”