



**Leading Italian independent NCTM announces merger
with specialist Brussels based boutique O'Connor and Company**

Milan, June 3, 2009 – Leading Italian independent law firm NCTM and O'Connor and Company, the specialist Brussels based boutique, are delighted to announce their merger with immediate effect. The move, the latest in a string of such initiatives, sees the number of NCTM professionals grow to 310, distributed across the firm's five offices in Milan, Rome, Verona, Brussels and London. Thereby creating one of the largest full service independent law firms in Italy.

Through this merger NCTM will become one of the few Italian firms in a position to be able to assist its Italian clients in EU and WTO law and in litigation before the European Courts in Luxembourg. In turn, O'Connor will build on its strong track record by gaining the support of a major Italian law firm. The move highlights NCTM's strategy of sustained growth by integrating its offices with the best available competences. With O'Connor's added expertise NCTM will be able to offer a more complete service to its domestic clients seeking legal expertise in EU matters.

The main activities of the Brussels office are: market defence measures; the regulation of markets and in particular food and agriculture; administrative law and procurement; EU competition law and state aids; litigation and dispute settlement, international trade and WTO law. Head of the Brussels office Bernard O'Connor adds, "the firm particularly excels in working with clients with cross border trading problems, and by joining up with NCTM's strong antitrust practice we only further enforce our mutual market value. We have chosen to team up with NCTM because of its transparent and democratic management structure and its comprehensive range of clients and legal skills". A sentiment shared by NCTM: "the opening of our London office in 2008 was the first step in our strategy of strengthening our position in key foreign business hubs in order to better support our Italian clients" adds Paolo Montironi, Senior Partner of NCTM. "Brussels is our second step, and the synergy with Bernard O'Connor and his team make our newly formed group unique in the Italian market".

O'Connor boasts an impressive client list including: Dole Foods, Roll International, the Tea Board of India, Micron Technologies, Trafigura, the European Commission, the Council of the EU, the European Parliament, various non EU governments, trade associations and United Nations organisations.

NCTM is one of the top independent law firms in Italy. With offices in Milan, Rome, Verona, Brussels and London and 310 professionals, including 43 equity partners, NCTM, as one of the largest law firms in Italy, has both the resources and expertise to handle the most important and complex deals in Italy and internationally. The firm offers full legal services across all corporate sectors to both international and domestic clients through its network of offices in all of Italy's major commercial hubs, Brussels and London.

The firm's clients include multinationals, funds, banks, insurance companies, financial institutions as well as trading, industrial and service companies.

More information is available at: www.nctm.it

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