

## JOINT PRESS RELEASE

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### **CATTOLICA ASSICURAZIONI AND BANCA POPOLARE DI CIVIDALE INITIATE A BANCASSURANCE AGREEMENT**

Brescia, March 6th 2002 - **Cattolica Assicurazioni** and **Banca Popolare di Cividale** have signed an exclusive bancassurance agreement for the sale of insurance products via the retail branches of **Banca di Cividale**, a banking company controlled by Banca Popolare di Cividale.

By virtue of this agreement the **Cattolica Group** - which as up to September 30th 2001 had achieved consolidated premiums of € 2,320 mn, of which € 1,434 mn via the bancassurance channel – strengthens its presence in the channel and in an area characterised by constant development and rapid market change. Cattolica will provide the customers of the Friuli-based bank with a range of products able to meet their growing insurance and financial needs.

The operation will help **Banca Popolare di Cividale** consolidate its presence as a key banking institution in the Friuli-Venezia-Giulia region where it has 41 bank branches that, as at 2001 year-end, registered total deposits and collections of € 1,713 mn and customer loans of over € 641 mn.

The agreement also envisages acquisition by Cattolica of a **10%** stake in the share capital of Banca di Cividale for € 19.625 mn and representation of the Verona-based insurer on the bank's Board.

The deal is subject to receipt of the necessary official authorisations.