

**TO  
THE FINANCIAL SUPERVISION COMMISSION  
THE PUBLIC**

**PRESS RELEASE**

by

**Bulgarian-American Credit Bank**

*REF: Disclosure of information*

On 25 February 2008 The Bulgarian-American Credit Bank (BACB) has been informed that Standard & Poor's Ratings Services placed its 'BB/B' long and short-term counterparty credit ratings on CreditWatch with positive implications.

The rating action follows the announcement that Allied Irish Banks PLC (AIB; A+/Positive/A-1) has agreed to acquire a 49.99% shareholding in BACB. The acquisition is subject to regulatory approvals.

The CreditWatch placement on BACB reflects the potential for an improvement in the bank's creditworthiness, resulting from AIB becoming the single largest shareholder in BACB. In Standard & Poor's view, there is a good opportunity for BACB to benefit from future product, operational, managerial, and financial support from AIB. In turn, this could boost BACB's market franchise and financial strength in the highly competitive and fast-growing Bulgarian banking sector. If the transaction is successful, the ratings on BACB could initially be raised by one or two notches. Standard & Poor's will assess BACB's strategic importance to AIB; its operational and financial commitment and support; the strategy that will be implemented; and the impact of these factors on the stand-alone and final ratings on BACB.

Standard & Poor's expects to resolve the CreditWatch placement on completion of the acquisition, including regulatory approval and after further discussions on strategy, funding, and managerial and financial support with AIB.

Sofia

February 26, 2008