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press release

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CMS Hasche Sigle named Mid-Market Legal Advisor of the Year in the FT Mergermarket European M&A Awards 2009

Berlin – CMS is "European Mid-Market Advisor of the Year 2009". The Financial Times and intelligence service mergermarket recognised the leading position of the international law firm organisation in their European M&A Awards for M&A transactions up to a volume of USD 500 million (currently equivalent to around EUR 340 million). At the awards ceremony on 9 December in London, the organisers stressed the high number of successful, innovative cross-border transaction matters worked on by CMS's Corporate practice group.

Cornelius Brandi, managing partner of CMS Hasche Sigle and chair of the CMS organisation, commented: "This is a superb achievement. We're proud of our Corporate practice group and look forward to the new year with confidence and optimism. Our clients are highly satisfied with our performance, and our high-calibre teams are also outstanding in the international market. This is reflected in rankings and league tables, resulting in prestigious international awards. We are delighted with this recognition."

One of the many M&A matters handled by the CMS organisation in 2009 was a transaction requiring German-Dutch cross-border expertise. Holtzbrinck Networks GmbH and Verlagsgruppe Weltbild GmbH each sold their 50% stake in bol.com to a

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CMS offices and associated offices: Amsterdam, Berlin, Brussels, London, Madrid, Paris, Rome, Vienna, Zurich, Aberdeen, Algiers, Antwerp, Arnhem, Beijing, Belgrade, Bratislava, Bristol, Bucharest, Budapest, Buenos Aires, Casablanca, Cologne, Dresden, Duesseldorf, Edinburgh, Frankfurt/Main, Hamburg, Kyiv, Leipzig, Ljubljana, Lyon, Marbella, Milan, Montevideo, Moscow, Munich, Prague, Sao Paulo, Sarajevo, Seville, Shanghai, Sofia, Strasbourg, Stuttgart, Utrecht, Warsaw and Zagreb.

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subsidiary of private equity firm Cyrt Investments. bol.com is the leading online retailer for media and entertainment in the Netherlands, generating sales of some EUR 225 million in 2008. The transaction volume in this fiercely contested bidding process was more than EUR 200 million. The fact that the purchaser was a private equity company made the transaction a rarity when the contract was signed in the spring of crisis-hit 2009. A cross-border team led by partners Dr Thomas Meyding, Dr Barbara Wössner (both CMS Hasche Sigle) and Roman Tarlavski (CMS Derks Star Busmann) advised Holtzbrinck Networks GmbH and Verlagsgruppe Weltbild GmbH on all aspects of the transaction.

Headed by Dr Thomas Meyding, the CMS organisation's Corporate practice group has long been the leading M&A legal advisor in Europe. Its unique cross-border market position gives the group insight into hundreds of transactions each year across national jurisdictions. This knowledge has also fed into exclusive CMS studies of the market at German and European level (CMS European M&A Survey). "This year we have again demonstrated that our international reach, combined with local roots and business knowledge, represents a crucial competitive advantage. This is important both in mid-cap transactions and for high-end deals," explained Meyding.

CMS Hasche Sigle has one of the largest advisory teams for Corporate and M&A of any German law firm. The company is an established leader in the mid-cap segment up to a transaction volume of USD 500 million. More than 90% of all transactions in Germany fall into this category.

CMS Hasche Sigle's leading position in M&A is regularly confirmed by highly-regarded industry experts. In the legal advisor league tables compiled by intelligence service mergermarket, CMS Hasche Sigle recently took top spot by deal volume in the first half of 2009. Bloomberg ranked CMS among the top three in Germany in the

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same period. In Bloomberg's German M&A Mid Market Ranking 2008, CMS Hasche Sigle was placed first in three categories – in deals up to USD 50, to 250 and up to 500 million. With regard to deals up to USD 50 and 250 million, CMS Hasche Sigle was not only ranked first by number of transactions, but also in terms of transaction volume.

At the start of November 2009, the British publication *The Lawyer* recognised CMS Hasche Sigle with its new "European Award Law Firm of the Year – Germany" title. CMS Hasche Sigle was described as a successful firm "in full flight and going places". The jury also highlighted the firm's work with Chinese clients and the appointment of its managing partner Cornelius Brandi to the chair of the CMS organisation.

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