



## PRESS RELEASE

### **Luxembourg chosen for Rakuten Inc.'s new Central Coordination Entity**

*Tokyo-Luxembourg, February 7, 2008 - Rakuten Inc. has announced the establishment of its Central Coordination Entity Rakuten Europe S.à r.l. in Luxembourg by the end of March 2008. The Luxembourg entity will support the future development of its online shopping mall platform "Rakuten Ichiba" in Europe.*

Last year, Rakuten Inc. celebrated the tenth anniversary of its establishment. In November, it announced the introduction of the "Ichiba" shopping mall concept and platform in Taiwan. Today, Rakuten Inc. plans to expand globally to other regions in the world, notably Asia, Americas and Europe.

In Europe, Rakuten Inc., plans to offer "Ichiba" platform services to retailers in major European markets. According to Hiroshi Mikitani, Chairman and CEO of Rakuten Inc., "*Rakuten Ichiba will especially enable European small and medium size enterprises (SMEs) to enhance their growth potential*". He added that "*European SMEs will benefit from Rakuten's easy-to-use tool to open and manage their Internet shops, supported by their strong commerce skills and rich variety of high-quality, historically-valued products deriving from a diverse and mature culture.*"

Rakuten Inc. will support its European operations through Rakuten Europe S.à r.l that will be based in Luxembourg. Rakuten Europe will, among others, be responsible for the core corporate functions such as strategic coordination and human resources. It is foreseen that in a later stage, the Luxembourg entity will also serve as a central platform for logistics and R&D activities. Hiroshi Mikitani said that "*As part of our globalization strategy, we are honored to announce the establishment of Rakuten Europe in Luxembourg. At Rakuten, empowering people has been a key principle. We hope to offer services and systems to further allow European SMEs to grow to their potential, as we've done successfully in Japan.*"

"*We are pleased and honored to welcome Japan's largest e-commerce company in Luxembourg*" said Jean-Claude Juncker, Prime Minister of Luxembourg.

"*I am impressed with Rakuten's business model that we had the opportunity to discover through our discussions over the last months. Mr. Mikitani and his team have developed a unique tool to broaden SMEs market presence on the internet*" said Jeannot Krecké, Minister of the Economy and Foreign Trade, adding that "*Rakuten's*

*decision to establish its Central Coordination Entity in Luxembourg confirms our country's unique assets for e-commerce in Europe".*

## **About Rakuten**

Founded in 1997, the Rakuten Group has served its customers through the creation and expansion of innovative internet services. Its wide range of services is centered on e-commerce: "Rakuten Ichiba" is the largest online shopping mall in Japan. It has expanded its business into online travel reservation, consumer finance, online security brokerage, portal site as well as professional sports business, mainly in Japan. The Group's unique and key business assets are the largest membership database of its kind in Japan, and a well-established relationship with its business partners.

"Rakuten Ichiba" today provides electronic platform services to more than 21 thousand merchant customers, selling their products and services to customers through this platform. (B2B2C)

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## **About Luxembourg**

Luxembourg provides global companies with many strategic advantages for conducting successful business in the financial and other industries in Europe. With its state-of-the-art infrastructure and telecommunications networks as well as a culture of trust and security supported by an appropriate legal framework, Luxembourg offers a unique series of assets for companies that are active in ICT and e-commerce and need a central European base.

Within a few years, Luxembourg has become the preferred European location of IT and e-commerce key players: Amazon, eBay, PayPal, Digital River and Skype have recently elected Luxembourg as their platform for the European business development.

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