
Press Release – For Immediate Release

IRISH STOCK EXCHANGE SHOWS RECORD GROWTH IN 2006

- **Ten new companies admitted to market, including nine IEX entrants**
- **Equity turnover up 19% to over €129 billion**
- **ISEQ Indices rise to record highs**
- **Three more international trading members**
- **€3.7 billion raised by companies traded on the ISE**
- **ISE consolidates status as international leader for listing of investment funds and debt securities**

The Irish equity market performed exceptionally well in comparison with global markets, and the 28% increase in 2006 in the ISEQ® Overall index outperformed indices such as the Eurostoxx 50, FTSE, NASDAQ and the Dow Jones Industrial Average. The index reached a lifetime high of 9453 on 28th December.

The ISEQ sub-indices also reached their lifetime highs in December with the ISEQ® Financial, General, Small Cap, ITEQ and ISEQ® 20 indices gaining 25%, 30%, 34%, 44%, 28% respectively this year.

The market capitalisation of companies on the ISE grew to €19.3 billion in 2006, an increase of 26% on the prior year total of €14.7 billion. The ISE saw equity turnover grow to €129.2 billion in 2006, a 19% increase on the 2005 total of €108.8 billion and average daily turnover for 2006 was €511 million. The fourth quarter saw a 29% increase in average daily turnover to €555 million when compared to the 2005 daily average of €430 million.

The number of equity transactions being undertaken on the ISE also grew strongly. 900,900 deals were done in 2006 representing growth of 14% compared to 792,120 in 2005. Quarter four saw an increase of 17% in the daily average number of transactions to 3,652 from 3,131 in 2005.

These figures emphasise the continued strength of both institutional and private client interest in Irish equities. In addition trading membership of the Exchange continues to grow with Danske Bank, Interactive Brokers and Credit Agricole Cheuvreux joining the ISE in 2006.

The ISE admitted the first Exchange Traded Fund over Irish equities in 2005. The ISEQ® 20 Exchange Traded Fund provides investors with the opportunity to invest easily, at low cost and via a single security in a portfolio of twenty of the most liquid and largest Irish equities. It performed well in 2006: assets under management in the ISEQ® 20 ETF increased 72% from €29.4 million to €50.6 million and the trading price increased 28% from €14.68 to €18.74 over the year. In 2006 18.1 million shares were traded with an aggregate value of €285 million.

“This is another outstanding performance by the Irish market and the figures show clearly that the Irish Stock Exchange is an attractive location for investors who wish to trade in Irish equities. Our Irish Enterprise Exchange market has been very well received and we expect a further eight new entrants in 2007. We also expect at least one new entrant to the Official List this year. The past year has seen the Exchange further strengthen its market, product and service offerings, as well as consolidating its position as the global leader for the listing of investment funds and the leader in Europe for debt securities. We look forward to further growth in 2007 in all sectors of our business.” ISE Chief Executive Tom Healy stated.

Ten new companies joined the Exchange in 2006, raising a total of €3.7 billion. Aer Lingus Plc had a successful entry to the Official List market on 27th September 2006, raising €1.17 billion.

Nine new companies¹ joined the Irish Enterprise Exchange ('IEX') raising a total of €41 million bringing the number of companies on IEX at year end to twenty three. The market capitalisation of IEX grew by 190% in 2006, rising from €47 million at the start of the year to €2.46 billion at year end. Turnover on IEX has increased 116% in 2006 from €84 million to €1.26 billion.

2006 saw the ISE consolidate its position as the world leader for the listing of investment funds. Following another year of growth, total funds and sub-funds listed at 31st December 2006 stood at over 4,300 while the total number of classes listed exceeded 9,600. The final quarter of 2006 saw a strong finish to the year with the listing of 205 new funds and sub-funds. Notable new listings included offerings by iShares, Mercer, Marshall Wace, Goldman Sachs and HSBC.

Debt securities experienced very good growth on the ISE in 2006, with a significant increase in listings compared to 2005. The Irish Stock Exchange is now widely recognised as the pre-eminent stock exchange for the listing of asset backed securities in Europe. At 31st December 2006, there were 2,883 Debt entities listed. There were 988 new Debt entities listed in 2006, representing a 45% increase compared to the number of new listings in 2005.

In 2006 there has been considerable growth in the number of corporate debt listings with notable listings including Wal-Mart, Banco Industrial Do Brasil S.A., Bristol-Myers Squibb Company, EBS Building Society, Fiat, Manpower Inc and Porsche. The Exchange has also seen a considerable increase in the number of Latin American and Russian deals. New medium term note programme listings have come from Anglo Irish Bank Corporation plc, Banca CR Firenze S.p.A., BNP Paribas, Morgan Stanley, Depfa Bank plc, Lehman Brothers and SunTrustbank.

The Exchange expects further growth in its specialist listings businesses (both Debt and Funds) in 2007, consolidating its leading position in both markets.

The strength of the Irish Exchequer and the further consolidation of the now relatively modest national debt continued to impact the Irish Government bond market. Turnover in Government bonds for 2006 totalled €37.5 billion, a 27% decrease on 2005.

¹ AGI Therapeutics Plc, Amarin Corporation Plc, Blackrock Corporation Plc, Calyx Group Plc, Finance Ireland Plc, Norkom Group Plc, Petroceltic International Plc, Petroneft Resources Plc and Siteserv Plc

Issued for the Irish Stock Exchange by MRPA Consultants

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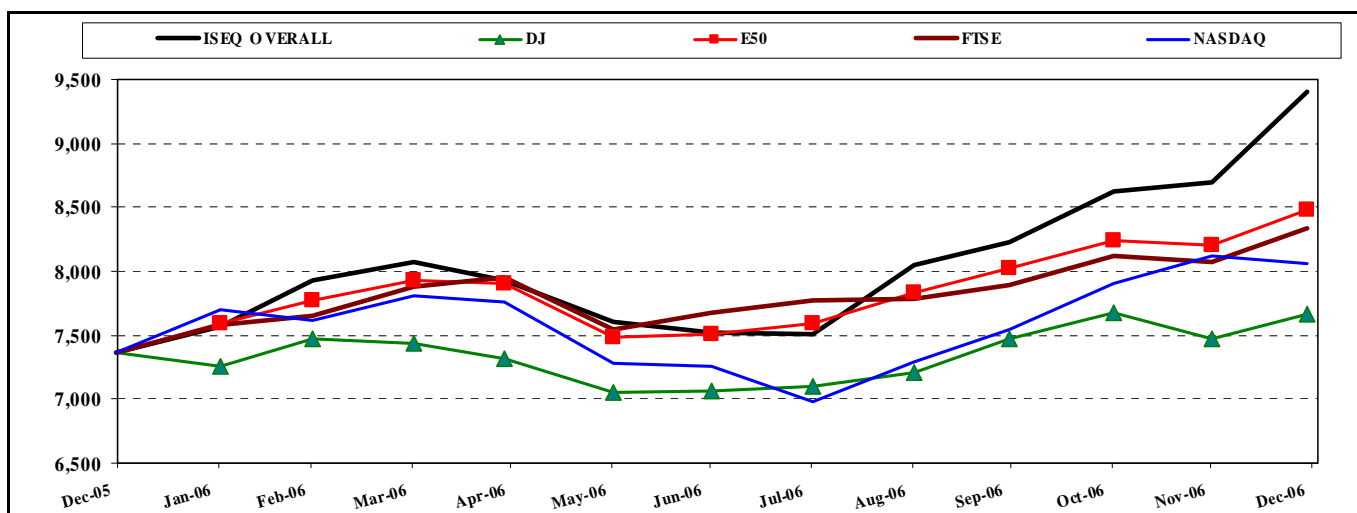
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Editors' Note: Tables detailing the key data for 2006, the fourth quarter and a graph comparing the performance of the ISEQ against other stock market indices are on the attachment to this press release.



KEY STATISTICS– 2006	Equities			Government Bonds		
	Q4 2006	2006	2005	Q4 2006	2006	2005
Turnover Total €m	34,949	129,246	108,831	10,554	37,457	51,297
Turnover Daily Average €m	555	511	430	168	148	203
Transactions Total	230,052	900,900	792,120			
Transactions Daily Average	3,652	3,561	3,131			
Market Capitalisation €m		119,284	94,734		32,413	33,062
Market Capitalisation (Change %)	14%	26%		-2%	-2%	
Money Raised €m	2,141	3,700	1,567	0	0	1,440
Number of Instruments		77	74		11	13



ISEQ	Overall	Financial	General	Small Cap	ITEQ	ISEQ20	
30-Dec-2005	7364	13442	5039	3141	325	1163	
30-Sept-2006	8224	15110	5599	3477	430	1305	
29-Dec-2006	9408	16864	6545	4202	467	1486	
Change %	2006	28%	25%	30%	34%	44%	28%
	Q4	14%	12%	17%	21%	9%	14%

INVESTMENT FUNDS		Funds	Sub-Funds	Fund-Classes
Number of Investment Funds	29-Dec-2006	1897	2436	9630
Newly Listed Investment Funds	2006	256	373	3481
	Q4	84	121	913

SPECIALIST DEBT SECURITIES *		Programmes	Non-Programmes	Tranches
Number of Specialist Debt Securities	29-Dec-2006	479	2,404	16,385
Newly Listed Specialist Debt Securities	2006	125	863	7,883
	Q4	31	268	2,155

*The figure for Programmes and non Programmes represent the number of individual issuers during a period. Any such issuer may have issued a number of securities during the relevant period which are counted within the figure for tranches.