



Press release

July 24, 2007

**De Agostini agrees to acquire Marathon alongised with the management
to build up a leading TV producer in Europe**

De Agostini has agreed to acquire the equity stakes held by Bridgepoint and management in Marathon Group, the French producer and distributor of TV programmes. The amount of the transaction remains undisclosed. The agreement with De Agostini foresees significant reinvestment by Marathon Group's top managers. Marathon Group will be chaired by Pascal Breton, aided by Vincent Chalvon-Demersay, Chairman of Marathon Media, and Denis Mermet, Chairman of ALP. Nicolas Coppermann (drama), Franck Firmin Guion (entertainment), David Michel (Animation) and Laurent Boissel (Finance) will also lead Marathon Group. Paolo Ceretti (General Manager of De Agostini S.p.A.) will be the chairman of the Supervisory Board.

Bridgepoint worked with Marathon Group's management in a buoyant business environment to create a strong TV production and distribution group with a leading position on the French market. "Our successive acquisitions of Télé Images in 1998, GTV in 2000 and ALP in 2004, and the 2006 merger with Marathon, testify to Bridgepoint's ability to craft a long-term strategy and pursue an effective acquisition and integration policy" said Bridgepoint partner Benoit Bassi.

De Agostini, a major European conglomerate active in publishing, gaming, finance, media and communications and Marathon Group, France's number-two audiovisual group, will join forces to create a European leader in audiovisual co-production, with a presence in drama, animation and entertainment. For De Agostini, the acquisition of Marathon Group is part of an ongoing European strategy geared towards diversifying and moving into the audiovisual segment, illustrated by the recent acquisition of Magnolia in Italy. The holding of the new group will be based in Paris.

Marathon will consolidate its international positioning with its new partner, which is firmly anchored in more than 30 countries and is determined to expand internationally, according to a policy which respects the unique qualities of its partners and enhances the group's cultural diversity. Marathon Group companies will stand by the editorial policy and corporate culture that have underpinned their success.

Aforge Finance (Damien Bachelot, Jean-Baptiste Marchand, Nicolas Segretain) acted as advisor to the management over the course of the process. **It is a new demonstration of the expertise of Aforge Finance team in the media industry.**

***About Aforge Finance:** Aforge Finance is a consulting firm providing both Corporate Finance services and Private Banking and Family Office services. With around 100 transactions completed over the past three years, it is one of the leading independent M&A advisors in France and a leader in the mid market segment. Its positioning and its international alliance with Macquarie in the US and Sal Oppenheim in Europe provide comprehensive coverage of the U.S. and European markets and a significant local presence to optimize relations with family-owned companies, industrial groups, private equity players and capital providers.*

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