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© 2005 Investoraccess Ltd  
Second Floor  
Sycamore House  
Sycamore Street  
London  
EC1Y 0SG  
T: +44 20 756 5444

Mid Europa raises €650m for Central Europe

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*The firm formerly known as EMP Europe has closed the largest private equity fund aimed at Central and Eastern Europe to date.*

Having returned to the market in May 2005 with a €500 million fundraising target, Mid Europa Partners has closed its second private equity fund aimed at Central and Eastern Europe on €650 million.

The firm, which last year changed its name from EMP Europe, attracted commitments from an international group of institutional investors including Alpinvest, ABN AMRO, GIC, AIG Global Investment, AXA, MetLife, MNServices and Citigroup. Public sector institutions The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the European Investment Bank and the International Finance Corporation invested also.

MVision, the London-headquartered placement agent, advised on the formation of the fund.

Mid Europa has offices in London, Budapest and Warsaw. The firm, run by Thierry Baudon, Craig Butcher and Colin Hewett, is seeking to invest up to €100 million in equity per transaction in industries with "high barriers to entry".

Baudon, the firm's managing partner, said in a statement that the size of the fund reflected "the recognition that significant opportunities exist in Central Europe, which is set to enter a new growth phase as integration with Western Europe deepens."

Mid Europa has been investing in CEE since 1999, initially as part of Emerging Markets Partnership. The group became independent in 2005.