

The Depository Trust Company

IMPORTANT

B#: 3144

DATE: March 20, 2002

TO: All participants

CATEGORY: Dividends

FROM: Lucy DiPaolo, Supervisor, Dividend Department

ATTENTION: Operations, Reorg & Dividend Managers, Partners & Cashiers

SUBJECT: TaxRelief - Country: SWITZERLAND
Europe 2001+HOLDERS CUSIP: 29875G105
Paid on Novartis AG, a component of the HOLDR
R/D: 3/25/2002 P/D:TBA EDS CUT-OFF: 03/26/2002

*****WARNING TIME CRITICAL*****

DTC has been notified by The Bank of New York, the depository bank for the Europe 2001+ HOLDERS, that a dividend has been declared for Novartis AG (NVS) a component of the Europe 2001+ HOLDERS. Novartis AG (NVS), dividends are covered under the Tax Convention between the United States and Switzerland, that qualifying U.S. beneficial owners are entitled to a reduced tax treaty rate of 15% or 0%, rather than the statutory withholding tax rate of 35%.

Participants can use DTC's Elective Dividend System (EDS) function over the Participant Terminal System (PTS) to certify all or a portion of their position entitled to the applicable withholding tax rate. Participants are urged to consult the PTS function TAXI (TAXINFO) before certifying their elections over EDS.

NOTE: THE DEADLINE FOR CERTIFYING OVER EDS IS MARCH 26, 2002.

Please be aware that March 26, 2002 will be the only day available to certify for tax elections via EDS.

PLEASE REFER TO DTC'S IMPORTANT NOTICE B# 3121 FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION REGARDING THE UNDERLYING ISSUE, NOVARTIS AG (NVS) CUSIP # 66987V109.

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IF PARTICIPANTS DO NOT CERTIFY THROUGH EDS FOR THE FAVORABLE RATE, THEY WILL RECEIVE THE DIVIDEND WITH 35% WITHHELD.

Important: Prior to certifying over EDS, participants are reminded to read, understand and comply with the information in the Legal Conditions category of TAXINFO-Switzerland under the PTS function TAXI.

Participants who fail to meet the EDS deadline or have other beneficial holders that are not eligible for the EDS process for whom they wish to file a reclaim may use DTC's **TaxReclaimsm** form preparation service, available by using the Tax Reclaim System (TAXR) function over PTS. **TaxReclaimsm** is DTC's proprietary withholding tax form preparation service that calculates reclaim entitlements and prepares the standard tax reclamation form for filing with the foreign taxing authorities or other designated agent. To enroll in **TaxReclaimsm**, please contact your Relationship Manager.

Questions regarding this Important Notice should be directed to Msr. Frederick Ceraso or myself of DTC's Dividend Department at (212) 855-4784 or 4531 respectively.