

Vivendi sells Activision stake for \$8.2 billion

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(AP)—Vivendi SA is selling most of its majority stake in video game maker Activision Blizzard Inc. for \$8.2 billion as the French conglomerate tries to strengthen its balance sheet.

In a statement Friday, Vivendi said that 429 million of its shares will be sold to Activision itself, which makes such games as "World of Warcraft." Another 172 million shares will be sold to a consortium of key investors including Activision's CEO Bobby Kotick and Co-chairman Brian Kelly.

With the sale, at \$13.60 per share, Vivendi will reduce its holdings from 61.1 percent of Activision's common shares to 12 percent. The French company will continue to hold 83 million Activision shares after the sale, expected to close in September.

Vivendi has held a majority stake in Santa Monica, California-based Activision since 2008.

Vivendi, whose shares were up 1.35 percent to 16.20 euros in trading in Paris after the announcement, said in the statement that the sale "provides the group with greater financial flexibility and creates value for our shareholders."

Part of the cash will be used to strengthen the balance sheet and maintain its credit rating. Vivendi has been trying to restructure and sell off some businesses in its diverse conglomerate, and announced earlier this week that it's in talks to sell its stake in Maroc Telecom.

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