

Δελτίο Τύπου

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Shaping the new era and the transformation challenges for the banking industry, the main discussion topics of the conference organised by the Hellenic Banking Association and ICAEW.

For the 4th consecutive year, the conference was facilitated by PwC Greece.

Banking transformation and the challenges of the new era have been the main discussion topics of the conference organised by the Hellenic Banking Association and the ICAEW, facilitated by PwC Greece. The conference took place on Wednesday, 6 November 2019, in Athens.

The recovery and the strengthening of the banks, following NPLs (Non-Performing Loans) management which is still in progress (4 systemic banks forecast to sell more than 19 billion euro of NPLs), and the effective transition to the new era as this is shaped by world trends, the evolution of technology and the emerging demands of the client network, were extensively discussed between C-suites and executives of Greek and international banks. The event was concluded with a speech by George Zavvos, Deputy Minister of Finance responsible for the Financial System.

Experts from both the banking sector and PwC Network agreed that banking transformation is vital for the future of banking.

Costas Michailides, Deputy Chairman, Hellenic Bank Association and Chairman of National Bank of Greece on his speech noted: “ The last years have certainly been transformative for the banking sector. We moved from banks that ten years ago were too big to fail, to banks that today may be too small to win. Yet the biggest threats come from our business model and from our traditional interpretation of banks’ reason for existing. I believe, we need to “re-invent and re-imagine” both. Banks should take on a pioneering role in the change that is indispensable in the banking sector. For this to happen, cultural change is fundamental and can only be led by



shared values that resonate with the new expectations set by our people, our clients and society as a whole”.

Richard Groeneveld, Managing Director, N26 Bank Group stated: “Fundamentally, customer needs have changed dramatically in recent years, and on a global scale. With the rise of accessibility and personalisation brought about by platforms like Spotify and Netflix, customers require the same digital experience from their bank to match their lifestyle. Customers are increasingly frustrated by the lack of cost transparency, digital innovation, personalised service and offerings at existing banks. Digital banks like N26 are transforming the banking experience from end-to-end. The banking challenges we see relating to expensive products and poor usability translate across borders, which makes a fully digital, universal bank experience increasingly relevant.”

Christos Megalou, Chief Executive Officer of Piraeus Bank, mentioned among others: “The transformation of Greek banking has been intense and ongoing during the past years. The current macroeconomic recovery is helping the effort. Beyond the billions of NPEs and the consequences of the multiyear crisis, Greek banks are currently engaged into a reset of their action plans and business models, with the ultimate target of revitalizing the Greek economy. While we need to take care of legacy cases, we prepare for the future, using lessons learnt from past experience and benchmarking with the paradigm of other emerging economies. Our recovery can be much faster than anticipated, supporting the country’s relaunch process”.

Konstantinos Vasileiou, Deputy CEO, Eurobank mentioned: “Greek Banks should focus on enhancing the top line growth, financing the key contributing sectors of the Greek economy, capturing the opportunities while dealing with the threats of open banking and accelerating their digital transformation. The effective NPE management, which is advancing in collaboration with the Greek government greatly helps towards this direction. Greek banks should reinstate their role as a catalyst of economic development, contributing to their clients’ prosperity and embracing a new corporate culture of strong governance and sustainable growth”.

Lazaros Papagaryfallou, General Manager - CFO, Alpha Bank also commented: “Alpha Bank stands ready to address new challenges deriving from international competition in the banking market, giving emphasis on customer satisfaction and on the delivery of tailored and digitally enabled service. We target to develop value added products that meet our customers’ changing expectations, while we redesign our operations to increase efficiency and response times. We are already implementing a Digital Transformation program which promotes the role of digital channels in sales of products and transactions effected by our Customers”.

Ernestos Panayiotou, Chief Transformation Officer & Head of Business Strategy at National Bank of Greece (NBG) commented: “As the deleveraging of non-performing exposures accelerates and the domestic economy recovers, Greek banks are refocusing on revenue generation. To capture the upside, at NBG we are leveraging our core strengths – most



importantly our trust-based relationships with our broad customer base – and addressing challenges through an ambitious and comprehensive Transformation Program that already generates substantial impact. A more proactive commercial approach and a more agile and competitive operating model are key parts of our strategy, powered by technology and analytics, and supported by our people”.

Andrew Ratcliffe, Past President, ICAEW stated: “I think that a retail bank’s purpose should be to enable individuals and small business to transact, manage and plan their financial affairs in an efficient secure and responsible way in order that they all have the opportunity to live fulfilling lives. Strategic questions that need to be addressed include how Banks choose to use their customers data, how to improve compliance as regulations develop, how to rapidly innovate, experiment, discard and improve their technology while maintaining minute by minute operational resilience and also finding how we can combine the strengths of human intelligence with artificial intelligence to find solutions to meet customers’ financial needs”.

Nikos Kalogiannis, Partner, Financial Services Advisory Leader, PwC Greece, commented: “The Banking Institutions in Greece are already in a transformational mode, in an effort to replace non performing exposures with assets and products that will enable the improvement of their results and valuations. This happens in a period where the global banking redefines the structural elements of the sector and the target models, in line with the emerging customer expectations and needs. The competition may take different forms, come from different starting points and places and with a different offering, therefore it is imperative that the Banking Institutions in Greece reveal their unique competitive advantage, promote trust, offer value propositions and reimagine customer experience. The banking workforce need to adjust their capabilities to the needs of the new era, where technology and use of data evolves exponentially.”

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