



Press Release

Lazaros Papagaryfallou: “Our duty as banks is to pass on the positive results of the Greek economy to the consumers and businesses.”

Alpha Bank’s strategic initiatives to strengthen growth, innovation and extroversion by the Group’s Deputy CEO

Alpha Bank’s initiatives for **promoting a new production model in the Greek economy** were detailed by the **Deputy CEO of Alpha Bank Group, Lazaros Papagaryfallou**, in an interview with journalist Mariana Pirgioti during the “Greece 2025-2030” summit.

Asked about the outlook for the Greek economy, Mr. Papagaryfallou referred to the **reforms that have enhanced transparency, fiscal stability and the resilience of the Greek economy**. *“The Greek economy has improved in leaps and bounds. The primary surplus stands at 4.8% of GDP, at a time when the Eurozone is posting deficits, while Greece’s **debt-to-GDP ratio has recorded the highest decline globally over the last five years**. We no longer base our growth on consumption, but on investments and exports, while we see a steady path towards the convergence of the Greek GDP per capita with the European average.”*

Referring to the challenges for Greek businesses, he pointed out the **need to strengthen investments in innovation and extroversion**, as well as to **exploit strategic partnerships and acquisitions**. *“We need mergers, partnerships, and better corporate governance, coupled with stepping up the reforms and changing the production model,”* he said. *“For our part, as the businesses’ banking partner, we are taking initiatives not only to finance those investment projects, but also –in our role as provider of advisory services and expertise– to unlock opportunities for their access to international markets and tools that enhance their competitiveness.”*

Moreover, he said that the domestic momentum for growth and investment opportunities has also benefited banking institutions, which improved their fundamentals and profitability. *“Our duty as banks is to pass on the positive results of the Greek economy to the consumers and businesses”*.

Growth advisor for SMEs

The Deputy CEO of Alpha Bank also referred to the needs of SMEs, which, he stressed, *“contribute two thirds of the value added to the economy and employ 85% of the workforce, yet receive only 50% of bank financing.”*

The problem, as he explained, is twofold: on the one hand, many businesses do not meet the credit rating criteria, while on the other hand, a percentage of them –almost 20% according to the ECB– is discouraged from applying for a loan for fear of being rejected. *“Our commitment is therefore to transform SMEs from ‘discouraged borrowers’ to active partners, employing to this end specialized informative workshops, simplified procedures and innovative tools that unlock growth for SMEs and enhance their competitiveness in the economy,”* said Mr. Papagaryfallou.

Alpha Bank, he recalled, was the first Greek bank to leverage the **Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF)** for financing small businesses, is working with the Hellenic Development Bank and the European Investment Fund (EIF) regarding Euro 6.4 billion of funds in total, while it has already financed over 18,000 businesses. *“At the same time, we are constantly upgrading the liquidity tools that we offer. **Through factoring and leasing, we facilitate SMEs’ access to***



working capital and fixed assets financing. *In this area, the recently completed acquisition of Flexfin has significantly enhanced our capability to tailor our liquidity solutions based on the individual needs of SMEs, offering to them **unique flexibility, with fast disbursements and technologically advanced management tools,***” said Mr. Papagaryfallou.

The new growth model of Alpha Bank

Regarding the extroversion of Greek banks, the Deputy CEO of Alpha Bank said that the banking system has changed radically during the last few years. *“The growth model of 2000, oriented towards the Balkans and Eastern Europe, no longer meets the capabilities of the Greek banks; most importantly, however, it no longer meets the ambitions and requirements of the Greek businesses themselves. Alpha Bank follows a new growth model which focuses on Greece and Cyprus. **It is leveraging its strategic partnership with UniCredit,** while at the same time it is also developing an innovative ecosystem of **partnerships and acquisitions,** to maximize the value it creates for its Customers and Shareholders,”* he said.

Mr. Papagaryfallou went on to explain that **today, the ambitions of businesses are not limited to neighboring countries but focus on the whole of Europe.** *“Our strategic relationship with UniCredit allows us to give them the tools, access and support to enable them to make business moves in the same way that European champions do,”* he said, adding that *“this is the essence of our strategic partnership with UniCredit. We have created for Greek businesses a corridor for interconnection with and direct access to 13 European markets, offering transaction and financing services, as well as a uniform service and advisory experience.”*

“In Cyprus, with the acquisition of AstroBank, we are creating the 3rd largest systemic bank in the country, aiming to double our market share and establish a modern banking value proposition. We are also investing strategically in the UK to support the Greek and Cypriot diaspora communities, while in Luxembourg we are creating a new private banking unit, building on our strong position in the offshore wealth sector. Yet the most crucial thing is how we support the extroversion of Greek businesses — because their needs today concern more their expansion into Europe than in the past,” he stressed.

A new cooperative banking model with ELTA

Mr. Papagaryfallou also referred to the Bank’s strategic partnership with ELTA, which will create a ‘one-stop shop’ with a strong social footprint for thousands of citizens and businesses, especially in the Greek periphery. *“With the ELTA network, we are bringing back the banking presence in every corner of the country. From the second half of 2025 onwards, citizens, professionals and SMEs will be able to open accounts, make transfers, apply for loans and buy insurance and investment products from Post Offices, with full security and banking quality,”* he said. *“We are not working with the ELTA of the past, but with the ELTA of the future”,* he characteristically said.