



## Press Release

### Vassilios Psaltis: “Our goal is equal access to arts and culture for all”

*Alpha Bank establishes an Accessibility Award to further raise public awareness of inclusion and accessibility to Culture*

This morning, the **Alpha Bank Group CEO, Vassilios Psaltis, visited the Thessaloniki International Film Festival** as part of his tour of Thessaloniki and Central Macedonia, which includes a series of contacts with representatives of the business community and of Northern Greece’s productive and social organizations as well as meetings with Executives from the regional Alpha Bank Branches and Divisions.

Mr. Psaltis was welcomed at “Olympion”, the city’s historic cinema and listed Cultural Heritage monument, by **Elise Jalladeau, General Director of the Thessaloniki International Film Festival, and Orestis Andreadakis, the Festival’s Artistic Director**. After a brief tour of the premises, they watched together an excerpt from the iconic film “*It’s a Long Road*” (“*Ola einai dromos*”), by Greek director Pantelis Voulgaris, screened in universal accessibility format. The discussion that followed highlighted **the two organizations’ converging viewpoints and their shared vision of unhindered access to the arts, focusing on the establishment of the new Alpha Bank Accessibility Award, which will be presented for the first time this year** in the framework of the 63rd Thessaloniki International Film Festival.

During the meeting, the **Alpha Bank Group CEO, Vassilios Psaltis**, made the following statement:

*“Our cooperation with the Thessaloniki International Film Festival, the country’s leading film institution, is another link in the chain of our Bank’s responsibility for supporting the equal access of all citizens to Health, Education and, of course, Culture. Over the past five years, the ‘Cinema for All’ Accessibility Program has enabled more than 85,000 of our fellow citizens to overcome any obstacles they might face and come into contact with cinematic creation. The strengthening of our partnership with the Thessaloniki International Film Festival, with the establishment of the special Accessibility Award sponsored by Alpha Bank, serves to confirm our commitment to supporting universal access to Culture and to the promotion of the values of diversity, inclusion and, ultimately, the reduction of inequalities.”*

For his part, the **Artistic Director of the Thessaloniki International Film Festival, Orestis Andreadakis**, noted:

*“Universal access, both to the built environment and to the content of cinematic art, is a priority for the Thessaloniki International Film Festival and becomes a reality with the substantial assistance of Alpha Bank. The trust put in us by the people with disabilities and impairments, whose presence in our universally accessible screenings keeps growing, mobilizes us to intensify our efforts to make cinema truly accessible to all. We were delighted to welcome to the 63rd Thessaloniki International Film Festival the CEO of Alpha Bank, Vassilios Psaltis, with whom we toured the Festival’s accessible areas and discussed the accessibility actions implemented in its 63rd edition.”*

### Alpha Bank Accessibility Award

In the context of strengthening their cooperation, the Bank, together with the Thessaloniki International Film Festival, establish as of this year the **Alpha Bank Accessibility Award**, which will



be accompanied by a cash prize of Euro 3,000 and will be awarded to a personality or a film that promotes the issue of unhindered access to culture. **The new award seeks to promote further public awareness of the issues that people with disabilities are facing**, in order to further cultivate in Greek society the concept of inclusion and an attitude of social integration.

## “Cinema for all” by Alpha Bank and the Thessaloniki International Film Festival

With its actions, Alpha Bank **is placing high on its Corporate Responsibility agenda a series of initiatives that support the respect for diversity and enhance equal access to society, the economy and culture**. In line with the above, the Bank, with the program “Cinema for All”, supports the accessibility of the Thessaloniki International Film Festival, by funding actions aimed at helping people with disabilities to partake in the cinematic culture.

To this end, the Bank **contributes to the organization of universally accessible film screenings, by funding the installation of special equipment that allows access to the Festival for people with mobility impairments as well as the provision of audiovisual media**, such as Audio Description (AD) for blind and visually impaired people and Greek Subtitles for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (SDH). This year, two milestones of the Greek cinema, *“The Reconstruction” (“I Anaparastasi”)* by Theo Angelopoulos and *“It’s a Long Road” (“Ola einai dromos”)* by Pantelis Voulgaris, are made accessible for the first time.

It is reminded that from November 2019 to March 2022, a total of **114 films** have been screened under the program “Cinema for All” – **66 in screening venues and 48 online – and were watched by 51,200 people**. Overall, over 85,000 individuals with impairments (people with disabilities, but also people with temporary mobility problems, pregnant women, et al.) have benefited from the Festival’s activities and from the improved accessibility to its venues, made possible with the support of Alpha Bank.

Finally, it should be noted that **these actions have multiple benefits**, as the edited subtitles and the audio descriptions are offered to the films’ producers so that the films can be distributed in their accessible format, both in cinemas and in domestic distribution, to be enjoyed by all.