



Press Release

“Future Ithacans”: Alpha Bank as a pole for the repatriation of Greeks abroad

Massive turnout of Greeks living and working in the UK at the networking event organized by the Bank in London

The prospects of the Greek economy and of the country’s financial sector as well as the expectations of many Greeks working abroad to return home and pursue a career in Alpha Bank were at the spotlight of the “Future Ithacans” networking event organized on Thursday, November 17, in London by the Bank, in cooperation with the Hellenic Bankers Association (HBA) – UK.

In line with the statement made by the CEO of the Group, Mr. Vassilios Psaltis, in which he stressed that **“we wish to graft the wealth of knowledge and experiences of the Greeks who work abroad on the Bank’s human capital”**, members of Alpha Bank’s Top Management visited the British capital to present the Bank’s transformation, which makes it an employer of choice for Greek talent, but also to talk in person with Greeks who pursue a career abroad.

Led by the **Chair of the Board of Directors, Mr. Vasileios Rapanos**, the members of the Bank’s Top Management who participated in the event with speeches or in panel discussions, in addition to the Group CEO, were the Chair of the Corporate Governance, Sustainability and Nominations Committee and Member of the Bank’s Board of Directors, **Elanor Hardwick**, the General Manager – Growth and Innovation, **Spyros Filaretos**, the General Manager of Wholesale Banking, **Ioannis Emiris**, the COO, **Stefanos Mytilinaios**, the General Manager – Chief of Corporate Center, **Nicholas Chryssanthopoulos**, the Chief Human Resources Officer, **Fragiski Melissa**, the General Manager – Wealth Management and Treasury, **Georgios Michalopoulos**, the Executive General Manager – Head of the Internal Audit Unit and Group Internal Auditor, **Maria Rontogianni**, the Chief Economist, **Panagiotis Kapopoulos**, and the Manager of the Asset Liability Management Division, **Konstantinos Sarafopoulos**. The event was moderated by **George Katsikas, Chairman of the Hellenic Bankers’ Association UK**.

“Future Ithacans” was attended in person by over 200 Greeks working in London and other cities of the UK as well as online by a large number of interested participants, thus giving a vote of confidence to the prospects of the Bank as well as of the Greek economy. A **representative of the Greek Embassy in London** was also present at the event, as the repatriation of Greek talent is a national priority, in line with which the State has introduced tax incentives for Greeks wishing to repatriate.

V. Rapanos: “Ithaca is the destination but not the end. It is the beginning of a new life back home.”

Opening the event, **Vasileios Rapanos** welcomed the participants, inviting them **to make use of their most important element, human capital**, by showing confidence in Alpha Bank and, generally, in Greece, *“a country that is changing and is looking for a new place on the map of economic and political developments in Europe and globally.”* Taking as an example the Alpha Ithacans, Greeks who have already found their professional “Ithaca” in the Group, he said that **“Ithaca is the destination but not the end. It is the beginning of a new life back home, in Greece, which often wounds and embitters us, yet we love her and she loves us. Her prosperity is our prosperity.”**

For his part, **Panagiotis Kapopoulos**, analyzing the current macroeconomic environment in Greece, referred to the recent crises the country has been through, an experience which shows that *“what doesn’t kill you, makes you stronger.”* He added that **Greece is resilient to the energy crisis** and currently shows a **strong growth potential** thanks to tourism and investments, while foreign direct investment and



public investment, combined with the funds of the Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF), are expected to play a crucial role in the future.

V. Psaltis: *“We enable our people to unfold their talent, rewarding their efforts”*

The Group CEO referred, among other things, to the importance of attracting talented Greeks from abroad and to the prospects opening up to those who choose to return to Greece. Mr. Psaltis shared with the audience his own story as an Ithacan, as he also left London to work in the Greek banking sector and in Alpha Bank, taking over its reins after a few years. **“The idea of contacting talented Greeks working abroad is not a new one. It was one of my first ideas since I took over as CEO,”** he noted. He also referred to the important reforms implemented by the Bank over the last few years, which, coupled with the strong boost given by the Greek economy, have led Alpha Bank to become **“a very different Bank in economic, business and cultural terms.”** *“Alpha Bank is not just another Greek bank,”* he stressed, as **“its history goes back over 150 years and has shaped its DNA with a very humane approach to its Staff, having imbued all its people with a profound sense of collegiality.”**

“We are changing our operating model; we have started to work in flexible ways and we make every effort to identify and develop our talents. The only way to strengthen our capabilities is to enable our people to unlock their full potential, to acknowledge the impact of their efforts and to reward them accordingly,” stressed the CEO of the Alpha Bank Group.

Concluding his message, Mr. Psaltis emphasized that **“our goal is to find people with knowledge, with ideas on how we can become even better and even more efficient, with the drive for hard work and with team spirit, who want their ideas to be of use and wish to see their impact on large parts of the economy.”** The Bank’s goal, he added, is to be an **“employer of choice for Greek talent and the bank of choice for the social strata whose aim is our country’s progress.”**

Ms. Elanor Hardwick, as a Member of the Board of Directors of Alpha Bank who comes from the UK, drew on her long career in top financial groups abroad to argue that the Bank is a **“genuinely flexible organization that does not hesitate to make difficult decisions and implement them effectively,”** adding that the progress that has been made in its corporate governance has reached the point **“where the voices of all of us can be heard.”**

“The choice to return from my studies in the UK to work at Alpha Bank was one that I took fully consciously and have not regretted,” **Nicholas Chryssanthopoulos** confided, stressing that since 2019 the Bank has adopted a new strategy, which, alongside the achievements in the Bank’s fundamentals, accelerates the **“transition to a transparent and merit-based culture throughout the Organization.”**

For her part, **Ms. Maria Rontogianni** referred to how she made the decision to return to Greece from abroad, where she had spent much of her life. As she pointed out, **“the experience, the leadership, the vision and the mission of Mr. Psaltis for the Bank were the things that inspired me. I could picture myself as part of a winning team that would transform the Bank, while preserving its rich heritage.”**

People are at the heart of Alpha Bank’s Transformation

In his brief address, **Ioannis Emiris** also referred to the change in Alpha Bank’s operating model, stressing that in recent years **“we have made a change in our customer service model, from providing a basic level of loan servicing to assuming a comprehensive and holistic advisory role.”** In this direction, he underlined, **“we are looking for hard-working people, who want to broaden their knowledge and abilities and to evolve within a healthy and competitive banking environment.”**

Messrs. Michalopoulos and **Sarafopoulos** spoke from the point of view of the Wealth Management and Treasury Division and the Asset Liability Management Division, respectively. **“This is the ideal moment and point of entry in Wealth Management, a business with growth potential and strong emphasis on transformation, by serving as the basis for an exponentially upward learning curve, along with developing and serving business Customers and high-profile individuals,”** said Mr. Michalopoulos, while Mr. Sarafopoulos pointed out that **“given that in 2022 Greece and its banking sector left behind the difficult conditions of the last decade, we are now in a position to develop and transform the Asset**



Liability Management sector into a format and a set of skills similar to those of the major representatives of our industry worldwide.”

Spyros Filaretos referred to Alpha Bank’s strong focus on **innovation and the digital experience of the Customers**, underlining that the Bank **“took the first major digital step in the provision of its services in the period from 2018 to 2021, and is currently implementing its second leap, carrying out its Digital Roadmap plan for the next 3 to 5 years”**, and adding that the current service model provides basic, exclusively digital services to the Group’s clientele, while at the same time placing its products and services in wider ecosystems, as part of the customer process.

For his part, **Stefanos Mytilinaios** described his personal experience as a Greek who lived and worked abroad and spoke about the **high level of qualifications and the good cooperation** he encountered when he took over as COO of Alpha Bank. **He urged those present at the event to overcome any prejudices about returning to Greece** and wished them a great career and every success in the decisions they are called upon to make.

Fragiski Melissa: “The new corporate culture keeps the most important elements of the past and brings a wind of change to the way in which we think and work”

For her part, **Ms. Fragiski Melissa** described the steps taken by the Management of Alpha Bank in **redesigning the Bank’s culture and values as well as its corporate purpose**, *“through initiatives that are based on the principles of innovation, transparency and meritocracy, while also taking into account the specificities of our different employee groups.”* She also underlined that **the aim of the new corporate culture that is emerging is to keep “the most important elements of the past, but at the same time to bring a new wind of change in the way all Employees think and work.”**

She made special reference to the **new employee advancement and development programs**, which were redesigned in order to be linked to a competitive system of remuneration and benefits, since, as the Group CHRO stressed, **“what matters is not only bringing new talent on board, but also retaining it.”** She added that **“we are introducing new models for rewards and benefits, which take into account both the importance of specific roles for the Bank’s transformation and, of course, the performance of our Employees. At the same time, we take steps to gradually ensure that we remain among those companies that pay competitively, but also to respond to the changing market conditions and to the new way in which teams work, which require flexible forms of employment.”**

In concluding her message, **Ms. Melissa** stressed that at Alpha Bank **“we remain committed to our vision of becoming one of the country’s top 3 employers** and we are shaping a new culture of respect for **Diversity, Equility and Inclusion**, through our new strategy that provides for special programs which promote **female empowerment** and advancement, placing emphasis on the inclusion of different ages and even on what is called ‘cultural diversity’.”

Those present at the event showed great interest in the **testimonies of Alpha Ithacans**, who, in videos screened during the event, spoke of their experience as Employees of the Bank after they decided to leave their work in countries and large business groups abroad, while the participants and the Alpha Bank Executives engaged in lively discussions in all the Q&A rounds held during the conference and the networking session.