

21 Sessions – 76 Top Level Speakers

An International Summit about the Greek Economy & Investment Opportunities

Featuring top US and International Investors, Government & Business Leaders, Global Investment Banks & Institutions & the Greek Government

New York, December 12, 2022

"Sustaining Growth & Investment Momentum" is the title of this year's flagship forum of Capital Link, the "Capital Link Invest in Greece Forum". The event in its 24<sup>th</sup> year anniversary was held on Friday, December 9, 2022, as an in-person event, at the Metropolitan Club in New York. The Forum is organized in cooperation with the New York Stock Exchange, the Athens Stock Exchange and major Global Investment Banks and Organizations. The Forum is organized with the support of the General Secretariat for Greeks Abroad and Public Diplomacy – Ministry of Foreign Affairs, under the Auspices of the Consulate General of Greece in New York. JP MORGAN & Tsakos Energy Navigation (TEN) Ltd. are Lead Sponsors of the Forum.

The Forum, which also receives the strong support of the Greek business and financial community, has become an international summit about Greece through the years. With a 24-year track record of success, the Forum has been engaged in a systematic effort to highlight Greece's profile to a global business and investment audience. The event gathered top level executives from the business world, bringing together a number of international investors, entrepreneurs, banking executives, technocrats and Government officials from Greece, Europe and The United States. The Forum's agenda featured top level speakers who addressed a global audience discussing topics of major importance.

Photos: https://forums.capitallink.com/greece/2022/photos\_event.html

Agenda: https://forums.capitallink.com/greece/2022/agenda.html



# PANEL DISCUSSION: GREEK BANKING SECTOR - GROWTH & DEVELOPMENT OUTLOOK

**Moderator: Mr. Georgios Papadimitriou,** Partner, Accounts & Markets Leader, Central, Eastern and Southeastern Europe & Central Asia - **EY** 

## **Panelists:**

- Mr. Lazaros A. Papagaryfallou, General Manager/CFO Alpha Bank
- Mr. Jean-Sebastien Dietsch, Global Head of FIC Corporate Finance BNP Paribas
- Ms. Elizabeth McCaul, Member of the Supervisory Board European Central Bank
- Mr. George Zanias, Chairman of the Board of Directors Eurobank S.A.
- Mr. Gikas Hardouvelis, Chairman National Bank of Greece
- Mr. Euan Robertson, Partner Oliver Wyman



**Mr. Georgios Papadimitriou,** Partner, Accounts & Markets Leader, Central, Eastern and Southeastern Europe & Central Asia – **EY,** stated: During the last decade, the Greek banking sector, has demonstrated that it is both resilient and agile. Today, with solid capital adequacy, and strengthened by the lessons of the past, it is preparing to face the new challenges created by the uncertain global environment and to effectively support the transformation of the Greek economy.

Mr. Lazaros A. Papagaryfallou, General Manager/CFO - Alpha Bank, stated: "Mr. Lazaros Papagaryfallou, Alpha Bank Group CFO, describing in his address how the Bank is being transformed into a purposeful organization that enables progress, stressed: "In Alpha Bank, we consider Transformation to be a top to bottom change in mentality and way of doing business. So far, our transformation journey has been truly all-encompassing, as numerous changes already being implemented touch upon each and every aspect of the Bank's operation, performance and governance, stimulating the pillars of our Customer-Centric Growth, Operational Model Improvement and Strengthening of Organizational Effectiveness. Our success stories such as those in the front of NPEs clean-up, the reinforcement of the Bank's capital base, our new and universally acclaimed strategy, the new IT operating model we introduced, together with a series of initiatives for the development, up-skilling and re-skilling of our People are now bearing fruits, breathing new life to our Bank which is now well-positioned to face with confidence the ever-changing customer needs and continue being the leading provider of finance to business in Greece.

For us in Alpha Bank, Transformation is much more than just delivering on projects or tasks, it is about having the mindset to challenge ourselves and remain in a state of constant change while the biggest benefit of embarking on a transformation journey to date is the fact we have actually understood what it takes to do this. And this makes the next steps easier to conceptualise, design and execute. And it also makes ownership part of the business development process. The journey, in this sense, is as important as the destination."

Ms. Elizabeth McCaul, Member of the Supervisory Board - European Central Bank, stated: "Ms Elizabeth McCaul, member of the Supervisory Board of the European Central Bank (ECB), noted that the Greek banking system has made significant progress over the last years and that Greek banks have made a remarkable and commendable effort in reducing their NPL ratio from 49 % in June 2017 to 10% in June 2022. Ms McCaul stressed that this massive balance sheet

clean-up, which, despite the challenges, has materially accelerated since 2021 was possible mostly thanks to the NPE securitisations executed with the support of the Hercules Asset Protection Scheme. "As a result", she added, "all securitised loans are outside of the banking system under the management of servicers in charge of implementing the business plan embedded in the NPE securitisations, and since the loans remain in the economy it is necessary to be vigilant that NPL exposures do not reappear through any indirect means back on bank balance sheets". Ms McCaul also highlighted that the ECB continues to remain focused on strengthening the resilience of the banking sector to the current uncertain macro-economic environment and geopolitical risks as well as encouraging banks to address existing structural vulnerabilities. Finally, she explained that the supervisory focus on credit risk for Greek banks will be among others on the impact of the inflationary scenario and higher interest rates, the performance of the credit portfolios given the amount of government support measures still in place, the monitoring of the NPE reduction strategies and the assessment of the institutions' credit underwriting standards of new loans."

Mr. George Zanias, Chairman of the Board of Directors - Eurobank S.A., stated: "Having solved the problem of nonperforming loans, the Greek banks are financing the new growth phase of the Greek economy. Net credit expansion in 2022 approaches a double-digit percentage increase, which is due mainly to business sector credit expansion as the household sector still faces unresolved legacy issues. A recent study by Eurobank identifies: the energy sector, telecommunications and digitalization, infrastructure, tourism and real estate development, industry as the five sectors of the economy where about 38 billion investments will take place during the next few years, contributing to bridging part of the investment gap that currently exists. Eurobank finances a significant part of these investments providing 2.5-3 billion of net financing only in 2022. Credit expansion, however, still has considerable way to cover to reach loan levels in similar countries in the Eurozone, as today the volume of performing loans in Greece is about 105 billion, which corresponds to only about 55% of GDP. Gradually, the household sector will pick up and contribute to credit expansion. Servicers estimate that about ten more billion loans they possess will be cured and return to the banking sector during the next 2-3 years but a longer time may be required to complete the adjustment of the remaining non-performing loans. Regarding asset quality going forward, in the current uncertain-high inflation-high interest rates environment, a relatively small increase in non-performing loans is expected, for which the Greek banks are building some more provisions. Bigger problems are expected to be avoided as: the Greek banks have built significant expertise to deal with such situations, balance sheets were cleared from many marginal borrower cases during the debt crisis, current profitability replenishes capital consumption, while there is also economic growth, reduction in unemployment and fiscal support."

**Mr. Gikas Hardouvelis**, Chairman - **National Bank of Greece**, stated: "In his opening session remarks, Mr. Hardouvelis emphasized that geopolitical uncertainty and energy security are driving macro developments over the next two-three years and that the key macro variable to watch is inflation. Monetary policy is now restrictive, bringing interest rates back to average normal historical levels, while fiscal policy at Euro Area level does not have much room to maneuver due to elevated debt levels that the pandemic left behind.

Low or negative growth is expected in 2023 in most countries. Yet, Greece is resilient, expected to have the 3rd or 4th largest growth rate in the euro area, 1.8%; its economy maintains a strong momentum and high liquidity buffers in both the private and public sectors, while the Recovery and Resilience Fund offers a growth safety cushion. Economic growth in Greece is broad based, encompassing a wide spectrum of healthy companies that survived the previous multi-year domestic crisis.

Hardouvelis cited the 14-year-old NBG semi-annual survey of Greek companies, which shows there is a strong investment drive even among SMEs, with 86% of them planning investments for the next five years, partly driven by RRF opportunities. The survey shows a clear reversal of attitudes compared to five years ago.

The macro environment of 2023 may temporarily slow down the growth in the demand for credit and increase the risk banks face. Nevertheless, Greek banks are now quite robust both in regulatory capital and liquidity, continuing to provide abundant fresh credit at reasonable rates, thus helping the economy become more productive. Their strength is supported by multiple factors, including: 1) the shrinking of the legacy stock of non-performing loans to single digits for the first time since 2009, 2) strong recurring profitability, 3) a low ratio of loans to deposits ratio (<60%), 4) large investments in IT systems, a digitalization of their services, and strategic partnerships with fintechs, 5) best practices in corporate governance, and 6) a customer centric long-term strategy."

**Mr. Euan Robertson**, Partner - **Oliver Wyman**, stated: "that the Greek banks, taken together, have undergone a remarkable transformation relative to their starting point over the past few years. In particular, the balance sheets have been cleaned up, taking advantage of favourable monetary conditions as well as state assistance, leaving banks that are able to concentrate upon their role of financing the real economy. Similarly, a lot has been achieved on cost control, putting Greek banks into a favourable place relative to European peers. For those working with the banks on granular

issues it is also clear that more responsive and focused organisations have also been created, with sophisticated decisions made about the operating models used to achieve their aims and improved measurement and reporting of financial value creation. Alongside all of this we should also place the elements in which Greek banks are advantaged relative to their European peers- in particular, that market rates have held up relatively well. Nevertheless, there are priorities going forwards which should include further digitization, being pioneers of mutualization given the structure of the market and increased use of analytics particularly in the retail bank.

There will be challenges going forwards which include the lack of complete recovery on the retail side of demand, the huge volume of work required for bank IT departments given the challenge of digitization and the danger that deteriorating macro-economic conditions are critical for those borrowers, particularly households, that are vulnerable after many bad years."



PANEL DISCUSSION: WHY GREECE - THE INTERNATIONAL INVESTOR PERSPECTIVE

**Moderator: Mr. Panos Katsambas,** Global Co- Lead Financial Industry Group, Partner - **Reed Smith LLP** 

#### **Panelists:**

- Mr. Dimitrios Athanasopoulos, Group Managing Director AXIA Ventures Group Ltd
- Mr. Alex Fotakidis, Partner & Head of CVC Greece CVC
- Mr. Stelios Theodosiou, Managing Director H.I.G. Capital
- Mr. Panos T. Xenokostas, Founder & CEO ONEX Shipyards & Technologies Group
- Mr. Costas Papamantellos, Chairman & CEO RWE Renewables Hellas / Managing Director & Head of RWE Energy Transition Investments



Mr. Panos Katsambas, Global Co- Lead Financial Industry Group, Partner - Reed Smith

LLP, stated: "We are very excited to welcome such a distinguished panel to discuss the international investor perspective relating to Greece – a country that has recovered tremendously and seen foreign direct investment grow year after year across several sectors. Indeed, Greece is no longer a destination for non-performing loans or distressed investments, but in In the last few years we have seen investment in energy (including renewables), infrastructure, real estate, hospitality, pharma & health, technology, fintech, logistics and financial services. More importantly, Greece is attracting international investors with different profiles – private equity, corporate powerhouses (like Amazon and Microsoft), sovereign wealth funds, family offices, and entrepreneurs, across several sectors, asset classes and strategies. The panel examined the scope and breadth of what made Greece so attractive in recent years, specific transactions and investments, examples of successful investor exits, where future opportunities are, and the overall outlook for Greece given recent current events. While the global macro environment has changed dramatically from the previous Capital Link event, Greece appears to be in a position to navigate the challenges ahead and maintain the positive momentum."

Mr. Dimitrios Athanasopoulos, Group Managing Director - AXIA Ventures Group Ltd, stated: ""The trajectory the country has had despite the pandemic and the adversities that the current global situation has caused is unique. There is a clear plan to put Greece back on its feet with roots stronger than ever, and this is evident in every aspect of the Greek economy. The reforms and the revamp of the business environment that the government has achieved has enabled investments that would have never been possible in the past. We are just in the beginning of what it is to come. In the 2023 budget that was submitted to the parliament a couple weeks ago, GDP growth estimates were revised upwards from 5.3% y-o-y to 5.6% for 2022 while OECD expects 6.7%, well above EU average. At the same time the prospects for 2023 are certainly pointing to a slowdown due to inflation and energy prices but nonetheless we remain on positive territory when the majority of Europe is heading to GDP contraction.

The valuations of the Greek corporates remain very attractive vs EU peers and that's why we see more and more institutional capital and strategic investors positioning in the country before the next big catalyst which will be the Investment Grade. Greece for the first time has an influx of interest from lower cost of capital providers that include, Sovereign Funds, Pension funds, Private Equity and Strategic capital. The size of inflows are much larger than Greece has seen in decades and enough to create a long term effect on the growth trajectory of the economy. Apart from the sizable

strategic assets that we see all the global champions lining up for, there are also significant opportunities of medium or smaller size both in the private and public space sectors, you just need to know where to look."

**Mr. Alex Fotakidis,** Partner & Head of CVC Greece – **CVC**, stated: "Greece has demonstrated resilience on its journey of economic recovery and sustainable growth amid a volatile global macroeconomic backdrop, as evidenced by the country's overall performance in 2022:

"While it is impossible to predict the full effect on the European economy of the war in Ukraine / current period of turbulence, we are of the view that Greece, structurally, is on a journey of economic recovery and sustainable growth. The country has de-risked significantly, with "investment grade" status now within reach, while certain outward-facing areas of the economy are seeing unprecedented levels of investor interest / demand – e.g. tourism, energy transition, real estate. Importantly, thanks to the reform agenda pursued by the government, the foundations are now in place – from the European Union level to the local SME level – to support this journey in the longer term.

CVC has been actively supporting this journey, having invested more than €1.5bn of equity since 2017 across various sectors and companies in Greece. We are pleased to say that our experience to date has been positive, and we are of the view that long-term institutional investors have an increasingly important role to play in the country's growth during the coming years. CVC remains committed to the country in the long term, to support founders, entrepreneurs, management teams and corporates to deliver their business plans, grow sustainably and have a positive ESG impact."

As a reminder, CVC is one of the most active institutional investors in Greece, having invested more than €1.5bn of equity since 2017 across various sectors and companies in Greece, including: Hellenic Healthcare Group, Skroutz, Vivartia / Dodoni, D-Marin, Ethniki Insurance and PPC. Furthermore, Greece is one of 25 countries where CVC has a local office and dedicated team."

Mr. Stelios Theodosiou, Managing Director - H.I.G. Capital, stated: "Greece is showing prospects for strong GDP growth in 2022 (~6.5%) and 2023 (~1.8%) reflecting almost double and triple the EU average respectively. And that is despite the various market head wings, caused mainly by the war in Ukraine, the resulting energy crisis and the recent monetary tightening in combat of rising inflation. In this volatile environment, the Greek economy is expected to deliver sustainable growth supported by a stable sovereign debt structure with a weighted average maturity of ca. 28 years, significant access to the NGEU program (highest beneficiary as a percentage of GDP across the EU), the radical reduction of NPEs and the ensuing capital adequacy of the local financial institutions, a healthy level of private sector debt, the digital transformation of the public administration and the broader reforms as well as the balanced energy mix of the country with the aim to fully transition to green energy through renewables by 2030. It therefore stands as no surprise that Fitch Rating recently revised Greece's economic outlook from stable to positive with the research community broadly expecting the country to return to investment grade status within 2023.

Standing at the crossroad of three continents with a favorable climate and a supporting geographical construct, Greece is uniquely positioned to further advance its standing in the global hospitality and logistics map.

Greece is widely considered one of the premier resort destinations in Europe with a tourist season that spans as many as 200+ days per annum. Tourism constitutes one of the backbones of the Greek economy, reaching 34 million visitors per year and directly accounting for ~10% of the country's GDP. The sector is showing its resilience in this post-covid period, with air traffic to resort destinations and hospitality revenues for this season above 2019 levels further supported by the country's recent peripheral airport upgrade. Despite the recent upsurge, the sector has a long way to go in terms of required renovation of the existing hotel stock and upgrade of services. Testimonial to the strong institutional investor interest and strong belief in the future prospect of the sector is the fact that the largest hospitality M&A deal closed this year took place in Greece.

On the logistics side, Greece is strategically located as the main arterial shipping route between Asia and Europe. The country has 18% of the global merchandising container sheep fleet, underlying its key role in the global trade network. The port of Piraeus, in Athens, is the 5th largest in Europe and the most important node in the route connecting the Far East with Europe, via the Suez Canal. Between 2015 and 2019, its throughput increased at 13% CAGR, far above its European peers. The Port is now on pace to become the #3 in Europe in throughput by 2025. Despite its importance in the trade route, Greece still lacks the logistic infrastructure to capitalize on the increasing trade flow. The existing logistics product lacks the size (< 15% of the facilities have less than 45k sqm) and integrated capabilities in scale to deliver an end-to-end solution. The supporting fundamentals of this asset class should continue to attract investor interest who would be looking to consolidate the fragmented sector and increase the competitive position of the country in the logistics sector especially when it reflects amongst the highest yield premiums over sovereign debt compared to its European peers."

**Mr. Panos T. Xenokostas,** Founder & CEO - **ONEX Shipyards & Technologies Group**, stated: "The shipbuilding sector in Greece has entered a new dynamic phase, attracting the interest of international investors. This new course offers significant investment opportunities while giving further boost to Greek American business relations.

A few weeks ago, we completed the Revitalization Agreement of the Elefsis Shipyards, where the U.S. International Development Finance Corporation (DFC), in the initial phase, participates with €102 million financing in ONEX Elefsis Shipyards. The DFC decision is considered as a vote of confidence in our investment plan, but also in the prospects of the shipbuilding sector in our country. Together with a total investment program of half billion euros, Elefsis Shipyards will be transformed into a top player in the Mediterranean region. Our goal is to elevate Elefsis into a state of the art industrial and technological ecosystem that will offer integrated solutions for maritime sector, as well as for National Security, bringing ONEX Group at the forefront of revitalizing the shipbuilding industry in Greece.

We started this mission with the Neorio Shipyards. In Syros, we proved that Greece can be re-industrialized in terms of shipbuilding and offer high quality services to the shipping sector. We proved that we could meet the expectations of Greek people, creating an industrial hub in a crucial area for our national interests in the Southeast Mediterranean. The plan for the revitalization of the Elefsis Shipyards is a historic opportunity for Greece, as the country aims to attract significant foreign investments in the coming years and to improve its strategic competition position in the international arena. Additionally, this opportunity will boost the reorientation of the Greek economy towards high value-added economic activities, creating more wealth for society in a time where social inequalities have worsened because of recent crises (high energy prices, high inflation, pandemic, etc.).

ONEX Shipyards & Technologies Group is present to this course, investing in Greece's brand name, and bringing the two economies closer."

## Mr. Costas Papamantellos, Chairman & CEO - RWE Renewables Hellas / Managing Director &

Head of **RWE Energy Transition Investments**, stated: "We see Greece as a promising market for further renewables, and since 2021 we have a local subsidiary and an office in Athens. As one of the world's leading renewable energy companies, and through our strong partnerships with PPC Renewables for solar pv and HELLENiQ for offshore wind, and as well as with our experience and knowledge, we are committed to keep playing an important role in the Greek Energy Transition. With PPC Renewables we formed, end of last year, a joint venture company through which we will realise up to 2,000 MW of solar pv projects. It's a collaboration on equal terms, where complementary strengths become a factor for success. PPC Renewables has contributed solar projects of 940 MW which are located within the boundaries of the former Amynteo open pit lignite mine in Western Macedonia. A few months ago, RWE contributed to the joint venture solar pv projects in Greece of similar size. The projects of the joint venture are in various stages of development and for the advanced projects we expect to commence construction within the next weeks.

With the partnership we announced with HELLENiQ Energy in July 2022, we are expanding our solar footprint to offshore wind. Together with HELLENiQ Energy we aim to collaborate on the development, construction and operation of wind farms off the Greek coast. Our partner adds its extensive experience within the Greek energy sector and its commitment to expand its renewable portfolio. We as RWE contributes our extensive technical and commercial expertise from a track record of more than 20 years in offshore wind. This partnership gains additional significance in light of Greece's current target of 2 GW of offshore wind capacity in operation by 2030 for both fixed-bottom and floating projects."

## **FORUM OVERVIEW**

## "Sustaining Growth & Investment Momentum"

The agenda, topics and structure of this forum through 21 Sessions and 76 Top Level Speakers have been designed to conform with investor interests and requirements. It combines the Greek and US government perspective, with that of private sector executives, international financiers and international investors. Greece has made a notable rebound in the eyes of both the global capital markets and the international investment community in recent years. The impressive number of incoming American investments in the country proves that the government's efforts to improve the business and investment climate have been more than effective. The significant transformation of the country's investment and economic climate has resulted in a flurry of new and exciting investment activity in the country, signaling a new path forward for Greece, one of modernization, stability, and trust. This new era of economic growth is due in part to ambitious reforms, immense brainpower and entrepreneurship, and hope for the future in Greece, making the country an appealing destination for foreign investors.

**H.E. Christos Staikouras, Minister of Finance,** Keynote Speaker of the Conference, presented Greek Government's economic strategy, and his speech was titled **"Government Economic Policy & Objectives".** 

**H.E. Adonis Georgiadis**, **Minister of Development and Investments**, and **Mr. Nikos Stathopoulos**, Chairman of Europe - **BC Partners** were the Keynote Speakers at the formal Luncheon.

Introductory Speeches were made by: Mr. John Tuttle, Vice Chairman – NYSE; President NYSE Institute, Mr. Yianos Kontopoulos, CEO - ATHEX Group, Dr. Nikolas P. Tsakos, Founder, President & CEO - TEN Ltd., and Mr. Takis Georgakopoulos, Global Head of Payments, Managing Director - JP Morgan.

#### **One-On-One Meetings**

The Conference provided foreign investors with the opportunity to network through a variety of "one-to-one meetings" with Institutional Investors representing large foreign funds with investment interest in Greece, with listed and non-listed companies, as well as with members of the delegation of the Greek Government. In cooperation with the investment banks that support the Forum, group sessions were organized for: H.E. Christos Staikouras, Minister of Finance, accompanied by Mr. Michael Arghyrou, Chairman of Council of Economic Advisors • H.E. Adonis Georgiadis, Minister of Development and Investments • H.E. Theodore Skylakakis - Alternate Minister of Finance • H.E. Konstantinos Skrekas - Minister of Environment & Energy.

#### **Greek American and International Media**

The representatives of the government and of the participating companies met with the Greek American Media that covered the Forum as well as with representatives of International Media. H.E. Christos Staikouras, Minister of Finance gave interview to Bloomberg. H.E. Konstantinos Skrekas - Minister of Environment & Energy, gave interview to Wall Street Journal – WSJ.

# OFFICIAL DINNER – AWARD CEREMONY: «2022 HELLENIC CAPITAL LINK LEADERSHIP AWARD»

The Forum concluded with an official dinner with Opening – Welcome Remarks by Mr. Edward Mermelstein - New York City's Commissioner for International Affairs, on behalf of Eric Adams, Mayor of New York City, who welcomed the dinner's attendees. Mr. John Kalafatis, CEO - NU Boyana Hellenic Film Studios delivered Introductory Remarks.

H.E. Alexandra Papadopoulou, Ambassador of Greece to the United States, and Mr. Yianos Kontopoulos, CEO – ATHEX Group delivered Keynote Remarks. During the dinner Mr. Panos Papazoglou, Managing Partner - EY Greece, was honored with the "2022 Capital Link Hellenic Leadership Award", for his outstanding contribution to Greece.

Mr. Lazaros Papagaryfallou, General Manager/CFO – Alpha Bank, introduced the Honoree Mr. Panos Papazoglou, Managing Partner - EY Greece, who delivered Keynote Remarks.

## THE FORUM WAS ORGANIZED:

IN COOPERATION WITH: New York Stock Exchange & Athex Group

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