

THE KOSOVO BANKER

Is digital banking safe?

Why is digital currency important?

Is digital currency same as cryptocurrency?

From Digital Banking to Digital Currencies and Beyond





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THE KOSOVO BANKER

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SHQATA E BANKAVE TË KOSOVËS
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The Kosovo Banking Association (KBA) is the voice of the banking industry in Kosovo. KBA is a representative of Kosovo's commercial banks, KBA member, in regard to the banking sector issues and cooperates with all authorities including the Assembly of the Republic of Kosovo, the Government, the Central Bank, the International Financial Institutions, and the Media in order to support the stability and development of the banking sector in Kosovo

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

EDITORIAL

- 06 **PETRIT BALIJA** -
Chief Executive of Kosovo Banking Association

INTERVIEW CORNER

- 07 **Digital advancements in banking services**
SUAT BAKKAL - Chief Executive Officer,
Banka Kombëtare Tregtare Kosovë



- 11 **Digital transformation of banking services**
ADONIS BLLACAKU
Head of Retail & Marketing Department,
Banka për Biznes



INSTITUTIONS CORNER

- 13 **ARIJETA NEZIRAJ ELSHANI**
Managing Director,
Deposit Insurance Fund of Kosovo

FINANCIAL SECTOR

- 17 **The evolution of money – from a state perspective -**
PARTIN PRUTHI - Head of Legal, Head Office, TEB
Bank Sh. A.



- 19 **Managing Digital Currency developments from the perspective of the GRC -**
MUSA BAJRAKTARI - Senior Compliance Officer,
NLB Banka Sh. A. Pristina
VISAR MALOKU - Visar Maloku - Head of Compliance and Integrity, NLB Banka Sh. A. Pristina



EXPERTS CORNER

- 21 **Using payment cards during the era of digital finance -** **ENEIDA THOMAJ**, Managing Director,
Paylink Sh. A
- 25 **The digitalization of financial services- navigating the legal and regulatory framework**
MENTOR HAJDARAJ - Partner, RPHS Law
FISNIK SALIHU - Fisnik Salihu,
Managing Partner, RPHS Law

BANKING SECTOR IN NUMBERS

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EDITORIAL



PETRIT BALIJA

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER OF KOSOVO BANKING ASSOCIATION

Technological developments are moving at a rapid pace. Especially with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, where the acceleration of technological developments in all economic sectors has been noted.

The pandemic has boosted previous trends by advancing to a rate we could never have predicted. In 2021, our economy could not have a recovery development without the influence of the necessary technological factors.

Companies in all economic sectors are digitizing services and products at a rate many times faster than planned and thought.

The digitalization of works, services, and products, otherwise known as Industrialization 4.0, is dedicated to the use of digital technology in the production of goods and services in the economy. This new technology will enable not only the increase of speed and accuracy of services but is expected to radically change the markets in the economy, especially the human resources market.

The ease and innovation of open finance will bridge the gap between the digital space and the traditional financial world in terms of product digitalization. As digital payments grow, they will quickly become more important to industries that provide goods and services. The need and demand of the population for the advancement of products and services will create a unique integration that fosters growth and innovation.

Recently, serious discussions have been opened at the European Central Bank regarding the launch of digital currency, which is expected to have a major impact on the financial sector and in particular on the payment system. The opportunities and risks are still unclear and the debate on this topic is quite controversial.

In this edition of "The Kosovo Banker," we invite you to follow the latest views from digital banking to digital currencies and beyond. We are grateful to the authors and sponsors who supported us in the accomplishment of this edition.





SUAT BAKKAL
Chief Executive Officer,
Banka Kombëtare Tregtare Kosovë

Digital advancements in banking services

We are continually enhancing our digital services to provide our customers a personalized experience across their entire relationship with us.

Digitalization has become paramount as commercial banks strive to adapt to the new normal and implement more effective methods of service to stay competitive and deliver maximum value to customers.

Before 2020, the pace of digitalization of banking services was not the same in every country. The pandemic has greatly accelerated the digitalization of banking products and services that were already underway, says Mr. Suat Bakkal, CEO and Board Member of BKT Kosova. There is also a significant focus on digital currencies, where the trajectory is less clear as market participants evaluate their possibility as a store of value. Until cryptocurrencies are properly regulated, it is difficult for the industry to engage with them, as their regulatory treatment is currently unclear and companies may risk violating regulatory rules. This in itself can hinder innovation. Proper adjustment can be another reasonable step in another phase, says Mr. Suat Bakkal.

Banka Kombëtare Tregtare Kosove works on updating its digital banking services and is focused on providing people with peace of mind, convenience, secure and real-time banking. Its commitment toward digitalization is internationally recognized being rewarded the prestigious prize **“Best Digital Bank Kosovo 2021”** from Global Banking & Finance, among numerous other awards that the bank received this year.

“BKT Kosova has been heavily focused on digitalization services throughout the past two years, the bank moved forward in introducing new digital service channels which have made banking possible to everyone and wherever they are, and as a consequence, customers can now bank at the



BKT KOSOVA HAS BEEN HEAVILY FOCUSED ON DIGITALIZATION SERVICES THROUGHOUT THE PAST TWO YEARS, THE BANK MOVED FORWARD IN INTRODUCING NEW DIGITAL SERVICE CHANNELS WHICH HAVE MADE BANKING POSSIBLE TO EVERYONE AND WHEREVER THEY ARE, AND AS A CONSEQUENCE, CUSTOMERS CAN NOW BANK AT THE CONVENIENCE OF THEIR HOME OR OFFICE

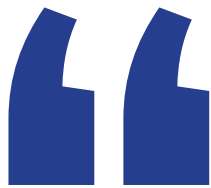
convenience of their home or office”, says Suat Bakkal, CEO and Board Member of BKT Kosova.

Mr. Bakkal states: “We have launched our Digital Loan, which is our newest product and by far the first in Kosovo’s market. It is intended for all BKT clients who can apply 24/7 via mobile banking application for a personal loan of up to 5,000 euros, in a process that finishes within 4 steps and in 5 minutes, getting the response of approval or rejection instantly. But BKT does not intend to stop only with this innovative product, but it is soon expected to bring new digital products, such as Digital Credit Card and Digital Overdraft.”

“Starting from the second week of May 2020, our bank launched the newest service in our digital channels and customer service, the IVR system combined with Telephone Banking. IVR System or Interactive Voice Response technology is designed for all individual clients of BKT who want to take information regarding their accounts and credit cards from BKT, instantly and 24/7 via a phone call,

without the necessity to talk to an agent. On the other hand, Telephone Banking as the newest service of this kind in the Kosovo banking market is designated to all individual clients of BKT who cannot or do not prefer to visit a branch or temporarily have no access to the internet banking channels but need to perform banking transactions. In this context Telephone Banking allows customers to transfer money, pay bills, pay cards, and many other services which are similarly offered in mobile banking”, explains Mr. Bakkal.

Another outcome of the bank’s digital drive was the launch of its “Smart Invest” platform in December 2019. The bank considers itself privileged to pioneer the launching of the first and the only local investment platform, which opened doors for citizens of Kosovo to access international financial markets. “Smart Invest” gives clients direct access to diverse products such as FX, commodities, and stocks, not only in top-tier markets like U.S., Germany, Japan, or the UK but also in South Africa, Peru, and many other markets, where they can trade with international investors.



Before 2020, the pace of digitalization of banking services was not the same in every country.

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BKT Kosovo has undertaken the project “Kondor” to increase automation in Treasury processes. This platform where all Treasury products are booked is used by international banks as well. The platform allows straight-through processing “STP” for transactions done on international platforms. Following limits are defined in the

Since the beginning of 2019 and especially during 2020, BKT Kosovo has been undertaking measures and investments in implementing many projects aimed at service transformation and digitization. While transforming existing products and services, BKT has been developing new products which constitute important milestones in digitization, not only for the bank itself but for the entire banking sector in the country.



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**ADONIS BLLACAKU**

Head of Retail & Marketing Department,
Banka për Biznes

Digital transformation of banking services

WHAT IS THE REASON THAT BANKS ARE INVESTING IN THE DIGITALIZATION OF SERVICES CONTINUOUSLY?

Every financial institution is looking for the right way of digital transformation to meet the growing demands and expectations of customers for speed and convenience.

On the other hand, banks always have constant needs to reduce the cost of operations and face competition including from fintech companies that provide financial services. Recent data show that a large number of banks spend more than 10% of their annual income on technology investments. A significant investment but necessary and unavoidable.

The pandemic revealed how financial institutions that considered themselves advanced in digitalization are still dependent on traditional and analogous processes in providing services to customers. For many institutions, this has served as a turning point where everyone has realized that the way of service is changing. In the past, many banks thought that if they have a website and application for banking services or m-banking, then it is enough. But now we are all convinced that this is not the case. Most banks have internet portals and mobile applications, but we still need signatures and physical documents of clients including field visits before we can offer access to finance. Considering that this has not been possible over the past year, we as a bank have now accelerated the pace of redesigning and remodeling the process of financial and non-financial services and products.

In this regard, we as a bank have also seen the lack of knowledge on a deeper scale of our customers' behavior, always knowing that digital footprint today is the most important value in determining the offer of each industry. Therefore, digital processes will help us make the right decisions by increasing the flexibility for customers which expresses the need for constant change.

What do you consider a digital bank and how much progress has your bank made in this regard?

It is implied that a Digital Bank is a financial institution that can provide banking services and products through alternative channels. E-banking is "the automated provision of new and traditional banking products and services directly to customers through electronic channels, always aiming at the most interactive communication."



A digital bank should be able to provide all the banking functions that have traditionally been performed at branch offices and through bank cards at ATMs.

As a result, BPB has taken all possible steps to be ready to adapt to trends and customer requirements. The implementation of the set of different APIs as well as the operationalization of the service and products of BPB, prepare the bank that at the moment when the digital signature is enabled to be used by the regulator, the bank will be able to offer all products through digital branches. Although to a large extent we have now enabled our clients to perform most of the services by avoiding the physical presence in the branch in addition to those services which require a physical signature as a regulatory requirement to banks.

HOW MUCH ARE BANKS BEING CHALLENGED BY NEW COMPETITORS OFFERING DIGITAL PAYMENT SERVICES?

Banks still hold an advantage over other fintech players but this boundary between banks and FinTech's continues to narrow with a tendency to disappear in the future, so banks should continue to seek new sources of value in their customer relationships as well other financial service providers.

This shift has brought new challenges in the short term, Banks are good at determining how processes should be, but the hierarchy of banks limits the ability to execute new developments and to be open enough to carry out collaborative projects with other partners.

Fintech, on the other hand, has the flexibility to enable them to work more efficiently, implement and innovate any necessary changes which make these companies more maneuverable in the market and gives you the ability to change faster. Payments are an area in which banks lost some of their market positions but have now recovered most. A few years ago, such companies began to take shape and this meant that these service providers began to receive support for payment processing through various channels and platforms. Therefore, in the international markets, better models of cooperation have been developed, especially in the part of payment processing. Take Apple Pay, a great example of collaboration around e-wallets. PayPal is also an intervener and affiliate and is now one of the most accepted payment methods worldwide.

Undoubtedly, the new technologies brought by fintech continue to challenge the status quo of the banking industry. Banks can follow and adapt to new technologies available, always being customer-centric.

IS THE LEGISLATIVE AND BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT IN KOSOVO SUITABLE FOR DIGITAL SERVICES?

I think we need a series of reforms to get as close as possible to international and European standards. The use of information technology in recent years shows the high utility of the client and banks in the support they provide to increase the quality and effectiveness in performing banking services and transactions. Electronic registration and processing systems should also be implemented at state levels so that the entire ecosystem is in harmony, including the financial system. The legislation at the moment is not in favor of banks although we as service providers are open and interested in pushing similar projects forward. The legislation needed by the financial system would significantly increase the access, convenience, transparency in obtaining these services by individual clients and businesses. The massive use of information technology with the relevant legislation is based on the model of setting up integrated networks with all the features of security of storage and processing of information according to the legal provisions for the protection of personal data and confidential information. In the framework of these developments, the adoption of relevant legislation by competent bodies would help us as a bank.



E-banking is “the automated provision of new and traditional banking products and services directly to customers through electronic channels, always aiming at the most interactive communication.



ARIJETA NEZIRAJ ELSHANI
MANAGING DIRECTOR,
DEPOSIT INSURANCE FUND OF KOSOVO

10 years of protecting depositors in the Republic of Kosovo

The 10th anniversary of its founding finds DIFK and not only, faced with an unprecedented situation. As part of the financial safety net, COVID-19 has also affected the Kosovo Deposit Insurance Fund (DIFK) as such situations highlight the role and importance of these institutions in ensuring financial stability. Therefore, DIFK as the only public entity in Kosovo that provides deposit insurance, during the pandemic year took the necessary actions to ensure the continuity of work and increased communication and exchange of information with the financial network to ensure timely exchange of appropriate information regarding the stability of the banking sector.

As a result of the situation, on this anniversary, we are addressing you remotely to inform you about the achievements of DIFK during this decade.

We cannot but start from the very beginning of the establishment of DIFK and thank the contributors who provided the initial capital to the fund: the Ministry of Finance, Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau (KfW), and the World Bank. KfW, in the framework of its additional support, over the years has provided assistance to DIFK in laying the first cornerstones for the creation of the regulatory, operational and functional framework.



DIFK activities have a common goal, which is to further strengthen its mandate in line with its mission, vision, and values. Therefore, DIFK is proactively committed to improving and advancing the deposit insurance system to help ensure financial stability and confidence in the banking sector.

Being part of the financial safety net, since its establishment in 2011, DIFK has managed the Deposit Insurance System in Kosovo with the main mandate of insuring depositors and guaranteeing compensation in case of license revocation and bank closure by the Central Bank of the Republic of Kosovo (CBK). In achieving the main objective of protecting small depositors and ensuring efficient compensation of insured depositors, DIFK from the very beginning has started building the necessary basis around the compensation function and has

adopted several internal regulations. In particular, DIFK has drafted detailed regulations for the compensation of insured deposits covering all areas of the compensation process.

DIFK with the financial support of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development has built the operational and technical framework for the compensation of depositors in case of closure of a bank (Deposit Compensation System), has regulated the workflow process, has set deadlines, and detailed activities from the preparatory phase to the completion of the compensation process. Also, has drafted the rule of selecting the agent bank for payment which will pay the compensated amount on behalf of DIFK. In line with these developments, in 2017 DIFK has conducted simulations of insured events, based on the scenario prepared under the EBA Guideline, as well as tests on the operational readiness of the working groups and the Paying Agent Bank. Additionally, during the period 2018-2020, DIFK has conducted tests with member banks, to test their readiness to submit quality data within a certain deadline, for the swift and accurate determination of insured deposits.

To ensure financial stability according to the recommended parameters and



10 VITE

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FONDI I SIGURIMIT TË DEPOZITAVE NË KOSOVË
DEPOSIT INSURANCE FUND OF KOSOVO
FOND OSIGURANJA DEPOZITA NA KOSOVU

create easier access to liquidity in case of closure of a bank, under the support and guarantee of the Ministry of Finance, DIFK has signed two (2) International Financial Agreements for credit lines in the amount of EUR 34 million with the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD). Thanks to funding and capital contributions, DIFK has managed to increase the coverage limit during this period (from 3,000 to 4,000 Euro, and currently to 5,000 Euro)

and today covers more than 990 million Euro of deposits, which is three times the amount of coverage provided in 2011 when DIFK started operating. On the other hand, over 99% of depositors are covered by the Deposit Insurance Fund in Kosovo up to the insured limit.

On the international level, since 2013, respectively 2017, DIFK is a member of the International Association of Deposit Insurers (IADI) and the European Deposit Insurance Forum (EDFI).

Membership in these two institutions during these years has helped DIFK for continuous capacity building and adaptation of European standards in the field of deposit insurance. Further, to approximate the Deposit Insurance System in Kosovo with international standards, during 2015 DIFK has conducted a compliance assessment with the Basic Principles of IADI. The results and recommendations of this evaluation have helped DIFK in

setting objectives and setting strategic direction for the period 2018-2022 and undertaking activities to meet the recommendations arising from this assessment. On the other hand, the cooperation and support of donors over the years such as KfW, the World Bank (FinSAC), and the EBRD in the implementation of specific projects following best international practices is marked as a special contribution to the construction of DIFK so far.

Cooperation with the financial safety net, the Ministry of Finance, and the CBK is marked by signing of memoranda of understanding and their implementation where DIFK has become part of the Financial Stability Committee, which contributes to the coordination of efforts to maintain financial stability, especially in terms of crisis management and preparedness.

Also, the cooperation with the CBK in terms of information exchange and examination of member banks marked the strengthening of the mandate of DIFK.

In the medium term, DIFK activities are focused on increasing cooperation with member banks, mainly in terms of implementing the guidelines issued by the European Banking Authority (EBA) for risk-based premiums, automation of the premium reporting process, and increase of the quality of depositor data submitted to DIFK so that depositors' compensation and calculation of premiums are in line with DIFK requirements.

DIFK activities have a common goal, which is to further strengthen its mandate in line with its mission, vision, and values. Therefore, DIFK is proactively committed to improving

and advancing the deposit insurance system to help ensure financial stability and confidence in the banking sector. In this regard, during this year we are reviewing the DIFK law which will further advance the deposit insurance system towards the best European and international standards.

In the end, all these achievements and the mandate of DIFK would not have been possible without the initiative of the Government of Kosovo, the Central Bank of the Republic of Kosovo, KfW, and international financial partners for the establishment of the Deposit Insurance System in Kosovo. Therefore, we are grateful for the continuous support you have provided and continue to provide in strengthening the mandate of depositor insurance in the Republic of Kosovo.

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A e keni provuar
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përdorimi i **NLB PAY**?





Soft Skills are essential to the future of work

Whether you are hiring employees, independent contractors or a blended workforce, we all know that the world is changing rapidly and how work gets done is evolving. As a result, how we screen and hire employees and freelancers has changed too. Soft skills — such as empathy, emotional intelligence, kindness, mindfulness, adaptability, integrity, optimism, self-motivation, grit and resilience — have become crucial success factors.

Why Soft Skills Have Become More Important

As more and more job activities become automated, soft skills, which cannot yet be replicated by machines, have become more important. In 2017, Deloitte also reported that “soft skill-intensive occupations will account for two-thirds of all jobs by 2030” and that hiring employees with more soft skills could increase revenue by more than \$90,000.

Empathy And Emotional Intelligence

The importance of empathy and social-emotional skills cannot be overstated. Emotionally intelligent teams have a competitive advantage, and I have found that empathy is one of the most important skills to hire for. Caring

about how your teammates and customers feel and sensing their unspoken feelings is a true skill that I believe increases productivity and revenue. Empathy and emotional intelligence require self-awareness and enable better listening, leading to improved communication.

When screening potential employees and freelancers, I like to ask if there are charities or causes they care about. This gives me insight into whether they care enough about others to take action. I also like to ask this question: “Can you think of a time when you worked with someone difficult to get along with — how did you handle interactions with that person?” This shows me whether their empathy and emotional intelligence enabled them to not only defuse a challenging situation but turn it into a win.

Integrity And Ethical Responsibility

Billionaire Warren Buffett is famously credited with calling integrity the most important trait to look for when hiring. I agree that this character trait is critical to long-term success. I’ve found that my most successful employees and contractors are those who are ethical,

take responsibility for their successes and mistakes, have humility, respect other people’s time, give others credit and take full ownership of their work — especially for losses. When someone tells me, they’ve made a mistake and how they intend to fix it, I know I can trust them. In today’s fast-paced world, integrity is even more critical. It’s easy to take shortcuts and show short-term gains, but it’s harder to do things right to set yourself up for long-term success.

In the days of in-person interviews, I liked to ask the receptionist how applicants treated them (and if a meal was involved, how the applicant treated the wait staff). In our remote work world, ask admin assistants how applicants treat them over email. How people treat others reflects their true character.

To encourage a culture of integrity, I own up to mistakes and encourage others to do the same. To screen for this, ask potential workers to explain an incident that occurred in their life that didn’t go as expected and how they resolved it. How they respond usually shows whether they are capable of taking responsibility when things go wrong. /www.forbes.com

**PARTIN PRUTHI**HEAD OF LEGAL, HEAD OFFICE,
TEB BANK SH. A.

The evolution of money - from a state perspective

Today, it is difficult to find a person that has not heard about cryptocurrencies. These new cool creations have caused quite a stir in all aspects of our lives, especially for those of us working in the financial sector. Whatever people's position is in terms of their acceptance, cryptocurrencies have achieved to do one thing that was not done for decades if not centuries: they have pushed people to discuss the concept of value and how we store and transfer it today in our mostly digital world. Some of those people happened to work in financial institutions that manage mo-

netary policies (i.e., Central Banks) and they were inspired by cryptocurrencies to explore whether their role and contribution can be improved. Thus, the concept of Central Bank-issued digital currencies was born.

Money used to be most represented in a physical form, either valuable metals, coins, or specially printed paper bills, but with the rise of computers, it started to transform and become digital. Today, most of the money is digital. Most people do not keep all the money they have in a physical format; they use banks to store their money safely. Consequently,

banks do not physically store all the money they have in possession in some safe. They keep sophisticated computerized books on who owes them money and who they owe money to. That means our digital money is based on legal agreements between individuals and financial institutions for storing, transferring, and exchanging.

Central Bank Digital Currencies (CBDC) on the other hand are meant to float above those agreements and provide a centrally managed platform where people can store and transfer money. Unlike cryptocurrencies such





as Bitcoin or Ethereum, CBDCs don't necessarily need to be blockchain-based or be decentralized. In a country where CBDC is used, people who have access to it would be on the same platform as if all of them had accounts with the same bank. There would be one centrally managed ledger, and the store and transfer of value would be managed by a central authority.

The reason why this concept is being explored by Central Banks is that it provides many benefits. The main one is efficiency: there would be no need for bank and payment networks, card payment schemes, settlement of funds, or any other complications that we have become used to. Payments would be transferred instantly because they would be on the same platform, and there would be no need for an intermediary. The costs would be lower since it would be one platform managed by a central bank. Another one would be

preventing unlawful activities such as crime or tax evasion. With a CBDC, money can be tracked as to where it goes and who has it; and if any crime were to occur, the ledger could be amended so that it is returned to the rightful owner instantly.

Central Bank Digital Currencies (CBDC) on the other hand are meant to float above those agreements and provide a centrally managed platform where people can store and transfer money.

It would make monetary policy changes more direct and effective. CBDCs have disadvantages as well. The main one is privacy. Having a CBDC would effectively mean that a state entity would know how much money all users have and where they are transferring it. Most people would not like a central bank employee having the possibility to know where they buy their groceries when they go out for drinks or their favorite food.

While here in Kosovo CBDCs are a mostly obscure idea, Central Banks of the world have been exploring and implementing CBDCs for a few years. The ECB has published a report and continues to discuss it. Whereas China, as the first major economy, already has an operating CBDC. The new form of money is undoubtedly coming, however, how open we are to adopting it, or what the role of banks will be, shall be up to us.



MUSA BAJRAKTARI
Senior Compliance Officer,
NLB Banka Sh. A. Pristina



VISAR MALOKU
Head of Compliance and Integrity,
NLB Banka Sh. A. Pristina

Managing Digital Currency developments from the perspective of the GRC

The Governance, risk, and compliance (GRC) framework is perhaps the most vital ‘system’ or ‘mechanism’¹ that banking and other financial and non-financial institutions may have. Put very simply, GRC is the instrument by which institutions are both engaged and meticulously handled on day-to-day basis. Similarly, events on digital currency developments,² in the last few years have shown a major influence on the payment ecosystem and infrastructure for banks, FinTech’s, and businesses, using payment data the benefit of consumers. The evolution of digital currency also has an impact on regulatory risk, specifically in areas of governance, risk management, and compliance, thus cannot be disregarded. In this regard, compliance risk carries an important feature in the overall risk framework of the banking sector and other financial services. Neither is enough nor is limited to simply complying with laws and regulations. It denotes more than this; it includes comprehensive fiduciary principles, prudent ethical standards, client documents, internal policies and procedures, and other contractual obligations.³

For this purpose, it is significant to understand the ratio of GRC, and why it is so critical for success. In this regard, a starting point is understanding the diversity of activities that are subject to regulations. The GRC

encompasses an umbrella framework that covers a combined institutions’ approach to the three distinct disciplines governance, risk and compliance. In practical aspects, these three components comprise an integrated and a more holistic approach in managing compliance matters, regulatory risks, which in turn enables decision-makers to make informed decisions.⁴ Managing digital currency developments is not an exception and should be viewed within the GRC framework. It is a need, to constantly align digital currency developments with regulatory compliance standards and expectations. Viewing this from a local perspective, we have a regulation that covers to some extent the GRC framework, nevertheless, it is the author’s view that there is a need and space to enhance regulatory compliance to further bring in line with digital currency development practices with best standards.

Management matters of currency developments cannot be viewed in isolation, but to encompass, and each activity to be enshrined within corporate governance, risk management, and compliance aspects with the laws, regulations, and standards that apply to the banking industry and other financial and non-financial services. On one hand, it could be argued that it is not

¹ The idea draws from study materials of the International Diploma in Governance, Risk and Compliance provided by International Compliance Association, London, UK.

² Raphael Auer and Rainer Böhme (June 2021), ‘BIS Working Papers No 948 Central bank digital currency: the quest for minimally invasive technology, last accessed June 11, 2021, at Central bank digital currency: the quest for minimally invasive technology (bis.org).

³ The idea draws from study materials of the Global Financial Compliance Certificate powered by Chartered Institute for Securities & Investments, London, UK.

⁴ Secure Digital Solutions (April 2014), “Governance, Risk and Compliance (GRC) White Paper, last accessed on June 11, 2021, at Governance-Risk-Compliance.pdf (trustsds.com)



enough to utilize the benefits of FinTech regarding digital currency developments. On the other hand, the management issues of the GRC framework cannot advance alone from the objective seeking activity on digital currency. For its success, we must have in consideration regulatory boundaries and limits, but also risk and rewards. To function effectively, everything must be brought into alignment and operate through fully integrated GRC capabilities. In practical aspects, a comprehensive application of the GRC framework comprises a system of people, processes, and technology⁵ advancements that would enable an organization, among others, to achieve digital currency objectives. Otherwise stated, digital currency developments should be viewed and managed from the GRC perspective.

The benefits of managing digital currency from the perspective of the GRC framework, are more than just regulatory compliance and avoiding the risk of sanctions. The GRC framework represents tools that must be viewed as integrated comprehensively (as opposed to viewing each one in isolation), for institutions to function appropriately. It provides

quality corporate governance for the board and high management to manage the business. In other words, the GRC framework regulates functions and activities by playing a vital role within the overall complex system of the company. Beyond this, some argue⁶ that GRC is an added value to the extent that it assists us to better understand ‘real-life’ matters that often restrict or prevent the financial and non-financial institutions from accomplishing a maximum value. In this meaning, the GRC framework enables all the processes of a company to function together effectively, ensures maximized sustainability, long framework compliance, and responsible performance⁷. “Compliance by all, for the benefit of all” is a message that most conveniently is achieved through the GRC framework. That said, the functioning of GRC systems and controls are essential for effective digital currency developments having in mind regulatory compliance standards and expectations.

To sum up, companies should apply the GRC framework in a way that seeks to advance and promote business activities, protects the interest of their clients, and help to preserve the integrity of the market.

⁵ OECG, “Governance, Risk, and Compliance (GRC)”: <https://www.org/about/what-is-grc/>

⁶ OECG, ‘GRC Capability Model (Red Book) Full Version: <https://go.oecg.org/grc-capability-model-red-book>

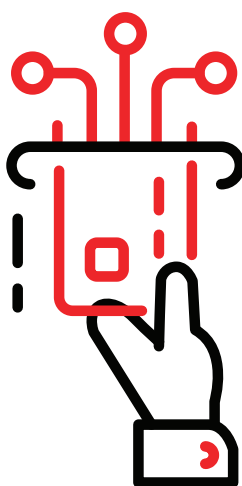
⁷ The idea draws from study materials of the International Diploma in Governance, Risk and Compliance provided by International Compliance Association, London, UK.

**ENEIDA THOMA**Managing Director,
Paylink Sh. A

Using payment cards during the era of digital finance

The pandemic that accompanied since the beginning of 2020, and expected to continue until late 2022 with the intention of worldwide population vaccination, supported a very stipulating aspect in the payment industry. Being part of the “digital era” nowadays is a must for the payment institutions which are competing to launch the most innovative solution aiming to “retain” loyal customers. As such, different loyalty schemas are being developed, especially for card instruments that suffered the most during the pandemic (credit cards), which are being used also to buy daily goods; or giving the installments features to such products, etc. According to Capgemini’s study of November 2020, the pandemic had a positive effect, where 24% of customers who used e-commerce to buy more than 51% of their monthly expenses, achieved a level of 47% during the pandemic. Meanwhile, customers who used e-commerce to do transactions less than 50% of their monthly expenses, were impacted from 76% to 53%, having so a considerable and a permanent shift of the e-commerce customers. The same study from Capgemini emphasizes that new traits were observed for the payment consumers, where around 41% of cash users turned on using con-

tactless cards during the pandemic; 35% of customers who owned a payment card, registered the latter in a digital wallet; and 27% of customers experimented by using QR code payments (where 2 out of 5 customers were above 40 years old, emphasizing this way even the adoption of an elder segment of the customer into digital innovations).



Same innovative trends were seen on the payment card personalization services.

The expansion of payments card usage into digital channels, has also impacted their exposure toward fraud. An additional trend that was observed during the pandemic, was the usage of Debit cards for online transactions (with an increase of 8% during 2020 compared to 2019, according to Pymnts.com). According to the same study, approximately 26% of customers who use DC for online transactions, confirm that the ease of use of DC for online transactions surpasses the fear of exposure towards fraud schemas and that they will continue using DC for online transactions. Even though clients seem to accept additional risk from fraud schemas, financial institutions themselves are working to help their customers to accept smoothly the new digital features that are being offered. So according to a study from

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Pymnts, as per actions taken from banks during 2021, it is noted that more than half of customers have difficulties in searching relevant information on the bank's websites; around 49% of the surveyed customers emphasized that they were using a lot more the online chats services offered from the banks; around 42% were using the mobile application as the main tool for financial education; and from the latter, approximately 72%, were keen to use more the services of those institutions which offer more information on how to use innovative services. These trends even though were initiated during the pandemic, it is expected to continue even after it. MC has forecasted that around 20-30% of online transactions increased in e-commerce during the pandemic, will continue to stay at these levels even after the pandemic.

Same innovative trends were seen on the payment card personalization services. Card payment issuers are now focusing on implementing biometric technology (such as user authentication through individual fingerprint, or the latest solution, through voice recognition offering payment possibilities to people with disabilities but also increasing security standards, being biometrics features unique for each individual and hard to copy for fraud intentions); or personalizing metallic payment card for customer segmentation and define specific benefits to that card owner. In a conclusion, times are changing fast, and payment institutions need to be attentive to new technologies that are implemented but focusing on predicting customer expectations with the clear intention to retain loyal customers.

THE SAME STUDY FROM CAPGEMINI EMPHASIZES THAT NEW TRAITS WERE OBSERVED FOR THE PAYMENT CONSUMERS, WHERE AROUND



41%

OF CASH USERS TURNED ON USING CONTACTLESS CARDS DURING THE PANDEMIC



35%

OF CUSTOMERS WHO OWNED A PAYMENT CARD, REGISTERED THE LATTER IN A DIGITAL WALLET

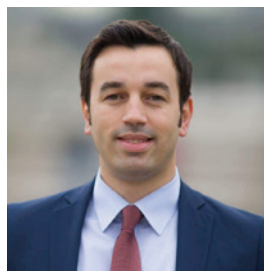


27%

OF CUSTOMERS EXPERIMENTED BY USING QR CODE PAYMENTS



MENTOR HAJDARAJ
Partner,
RPHS Law



FISNIK SALIHU
FISNIK SALIHU, Managing Partner,
RPHS Law

The digitalization of financial Services - overview of the legal and regulatory framework

RPHS LAW FIRM



The provision of financial services through digital platforms is an integral part of the daily activities of financial institutions in Kosovo. Financial institutions, especially banks in Kosovo, have been very active in making significant progress in the implementation

of advanced technologies, following the latest developments in this area. The legal framework plays a key role in promoting and building the foundations of digital banking. An important contribution in this regard has been given by the Central Bank of Kosovo,

through the approval of a regulatory framework, to support and enable the provision of financial services through mobile technology.

Currently, Kosovo has adopted a modern and comprehensive regula-

tory framework for financial services, closely following international practices, especially those of the European Union. The applicable legislation on e-documents, data privacy, and cybersecurity are in line with best practices, by providing a regulatory framework that firmly protects the customers.

Despite the development of the legal infrastructure for digitalization, the practice of creating contractual relations to utilize financial services has not been followed by the same approach. As a result, in order to be able to use these digital channels for financial services, clients are still required to physically appear in front of the financial institutions to sign the contracts and other documents. This is due to a conservative approach that has generally prevailed, that has questioned whether the existing legal framework allows the expression of the will of the parties to enter into contractual relations through electronic means and without physical presence.

This approach has significantly changed during the Covid-19 pandemic, due to the fact that financial institutions

have been forced to use electronic means of communication in order to regulate the contractual relations with their clients and provide certain services. This situation, in addition to having affected clients' behavior, has also influenced a more proactive and open approach by financial institutions, by enabling the signing of the documentation and contracts in distance.

It is important to note that electronic signatures and electronic transactions are recognized and accepted as evidence by courts in Kosovo. Despite the fact that the other two forms of electronic signature (digital signature and advanced electronic signature) are not yet fully regulated, the existing legal framework provides sufficient security for concluding contracts in distance, for most financial services. An exception is made for those contracts which, by law, are subject to special procedures (e.g., mortgage contracts). From an operational point of view, the existence of an internal procedure would be sufficient to conclude and prove that the client has given his/her consent to the content and conclusion of the contract.

The continuous development of electronic money and the advancement of the legal framework have contributed to improving the payments system efficiency. The registration of non-bank financial institutions for the issuance of electronic money and payment of services has enabled the creation of contractual relations in distance. As a result, the entire procedure of issuing, possessing, and using electronic payment instruments by these institutions is carried out remotely, and without physical presence of the clients.

Kosovo has made significant progress in providing an appropriate and effective legal and regulatory framework for digital transformation and inclusion of the financial sector, by opening up numerous opportunities to implement digital financial innovation. As digital transformation has become inevitable, it remains at the discretion of financial institutions to adapt and implement the existing legal framework, taking into account the positive changes in the courts' practice and other relevant institutions concerning the recognition and acceptance of e-signature, and electronic transactions in general.





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BANKING SECTOR IN NUMBERS

2021 Q1



210

NUMBER OF BANKING UNITS



513

NUMBER OF ATM



13,401

NUMBER OF POS



434,658

NUMBER OF E-BANKING ACCOUNTS



1,370,809

NUMBER OF E-BANKING ACCOUNTS



3,353

NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES

KBA with a new initiative for derivative instruments in international financial markets – ISDA



26.02.2021, **Pristina** Kosovo Banking Association held today the online webinar on Derivative instruments in the international financial markets – ISDA, the Importance of being able to sign ISDA CSA agreements with international counterparties.

The discussion was chaired by Mr. Muharrem Inan who is the Chairman of the KBA Treasury Committee and Group Head Treasury for Financial Institutions and Private Banking, BKT.

During this webinar, the main speaker was Mr. Peter M. Werner - Senior Counsel at the International Swaps & Derivatives Association (ISDA), who explained the Role of ISDA and cooperation on any future legislative efforts in Kosovo to get a better legal and regulatory framework into existence.

The Central Bank of Kosovo was also present at the meeting with a representative from the Treasury Department showing interest in this topic and further cooperation.

Financial institutions, companies, and even individuals are subject to market risk due to volatility in foreign exchange rates, interest rates, and prices of financial assets. In this regard, derivatives instruments are developed in financial markets to hedge against these risks. With the development of financial markets, derivatives are used for investment purposes as well. Derivatives instruments are mainly “Forward, Futures, Swap and Options” which have a maturity longer than spot. Therefore, these instruments enable investors to buy or sell an asset at a future date. It is required

to sign ISDA [1] CSA [2] MA [3] with international institutions to be able to enter into derivatives transactions. However, ISDA netting opinion on the country is a prerequisite for signing ISDA CSA MA.

Especially with the pandemic, Risk Management became more crucial for the banking sector. With existing legislation, Kosovo banks can execute only spot transactions with international institutions due to the non-existence of netting opinion on the country. Therefore, it limits the sector’s ability in terms of risk management practices. In addition, it will accelerate the process towards the development of financial and capital markets together enabling local banks to cooperate with international institutions.

The banking sector met with the Central Bank of Kosovo and the Credit Guarantee Fund



04.03.2021, **Pristina** - The Board of Directors of KBA, respectively the representatives of commercial banks, were part of the meetings organized by the Central Bank of the Republic of Kosovo with the Credit Guarantee Fund. In this meeting was discussed the developments of the Fund, the measures taken regarding the implementation of Windows under the Recovery Package, as well as plans for future developments related to facilitating access to finance

for micro, small and medium enterprises in Kosovo, increasing employment and supporting the economic development of our country.

In this meeting was stressed the importance of implementing the recovery package in a way that would enable the financing of businesses with the most appropriate conditions to increase lending and affect the recovery of the economy in Kosovo.

KBA representatives thanked the CBK and KCGF for their inter-institutional cooperation by coordinating actions to increase access to finance.

The banking sector has approved over 1.2 billion euros in new loans during 2020 and has made a special contribution to overcoming the financial difficulties of banking customers caused as a result of the pandemic.

Kosovo Banking Association part of the working group to draft the Law on the Register of Beneficiary Owners



20.04.2021, **Pristina** The Kosovo Banking Association becomes part of the working group to draft the Law on the Register of Beneficiary Owners. During the meeting held with various economic actors, this working group will be developed and functionalized further, where the representative from the Kosovo Banking Association is Mr. Alban Hetemi, Manager of the PPP and Sanctions Control Department at TEB bank and at the same time Chairman of the AML Committee within the Kosovo Banking Association

Kosovo Banking Association concludes International Money Week 2021



02.04.2021, **Pristina** - The Kosovo Banking Association concluded the Global Money Week 2021. On this occasion, the KBA also awarded the students of the essay competition which was organized within this Week. Global Money Week

is part of a global awareness campaign about money issues.

The theme of Global Money Week 2021 and the theme of the essay contest was: "Take care of yourself, take care of your money" which also emphasizes the importance of saving habits as well as solidarity with people in need.

In this competition were selected the ten best essays written by students of public and private schools of the Republic of Kosovo, and at the same

time, the prizes for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place were awarded. The winners of the first three places are 1st place - Student Erin Laçi from the school "Hasan Pristina" - Pristina, 2nd place: Student Liza Zahiti from the school "European School of Kosovo" - Pristina, 3rd place to Student Gerti Dreni from the school "Fehmi Agani" - Gjakova. At the awards ceremony, students learned more about Global Money Week and the role, and mission of the Kosovo Banking Association as the voice of the banking industry in Kosovo



FORUMI I HAPJES SË JAVËS SË PARASË 2021



Anesa Besimi
Shoqata e Bankave të Kosovës (Moderatore)



Petrit Baliq
Shoqata e Bankave të Kosovës



Ajshe Ramosaj Ahmetaj
Banka Qendrore e Kosovës



Antigona Bejtullahu
Raiffeisen Bank



Syzana Dautaj
IFC



Arta Shehu
J-coders



Iliriana Nreca
NLB Bank

"RËNDËSIA E EDUKIMIT FINANCIAR PËR TË RINJTË NË KOSOVË – JAVA E PARASË 2021"

**E HËNË, 22 MARS 2021,
10:00 FACEBOOK LIVESTREAMING**



During this week, KBA organized various activities, most of which were conducted virtually. Some of the activities held were: Global Money Week opening forum on "The importance of financial education for young people in Kosovo - Money Week 2021; Publication of educational materials about finance; Online lectures with primary school students; Various articles about

financial education; Essay Contest with the theme "Take care of yourself, take care of your money".

The Kosovo Banking Association has been part of this organization since 2013, which is organized by the OECD International Network for Financial Education (OECD / INFE) and is supported by Kosovo commercial banks.

KBA addresses the issue of using official addresses for the verification of bank clients



20.04.2021, **Pristina** Kosovo Banking Association held a virtual meeting with the Kosovo Cadastral Agency. The purpose of this meeting was to discuss the possibility of the update of bank customers' address data, respectively that the official address for each customer will be extracted from the application for the administration of the address system.

The Kosovo Banking Association meets with representatives from the French Development Agency

09.06.2021, **Pristina**

The Kosovo Banking Association held a meeting with representatives from the French Development Agency. The meeting took place on the occasion of the first mission of the FDA team on macroeconomic analysis, country risk analysis, and Kosovo sovereign risk. The mission was focused on 6 main pillars: Socio-political environment, growth trajectory, public finances, external balances, financial system, and exposure to the physical risk associated with climate change.



Electronic signature, an opportunity for the banking sector



20.05.2021, **Pristina** Kosovo Banking Association organized the virtual forum “Electronic signature and banking services” on May 20, 2021.

The electronic signature is one of the most important links in the digitalization of banking services. One of the challenges and difficulties that continues to remain in Kosovo is the lack of enforcement mechanisms for the application of the electronic signature in financial

services but also general in the private sector. Given the developments during the pandemic period, increasing the degree of digitalization of financial services has become even more important.

The panel was moderated by Mr. Kreshnik Kosumi - Senior Operations Officer in the Kosovo Banking Association, while the panelists of this forum were: Mr. Partin Pruthi - Head of Legal Department, TEB, Mr. Arbër Rogova - Enterprise Ar-

chitect, RBKO, Mr. Idajet Berisha - Legal Advisor, RBKO, Mr. Anton Sokoli - Product Development Manager, TEB, and Mr. Adonis Bllacaku - Head of Retail & Marketing Department, BpB.

The banking sector in Kosovo has grown rapidly, keeping pace with modern banking standards by continuously improving financial services for the country's economy while maintaining its financial stability.

The Assembly of the Kosovo Banking Association elected the chairmanship



ALBERT LUMEZI



SUAT BAKKAL

02.06.2021, **Pristina** The Kosovo Banking Association on 27.05.2021 held a meeting of the General Assembly on which occasion elected the new chairmanship and members of the Board of Directors for a two-year term (2021-2023). During this meeting, with unanimous votes for the position of the Chairman of the Board was re-elected: Mr. Albert Lumezi, Chief Executive Officer of NLB Banka while Vice-Chairman of the Board was elected: Mr. Suat Bakkal, Chief Executive Officer of the Banka Kombëtare Tregtare.

The Chief Executive Officer of the Kosovo Banking Association, Mr. Petrit Balijsa, congratulated the Chairman of the Board, Mr. Albert Lumezi, on his re-election for a second mandate and Mr. Suat Bakkal for the election as the Vice-Chairman, emphasizing that the past year caused great challenges and difficulties for all, however, the commitment and coordination of the Kosovo Banking Association, together with commercial banks in the country, state authorities, and other stakeholders have ensured the continuation of lending to the economy and uninterrupted banking services and at the same time have provided stability

and security for the banking sector in the country.

On this occasion, Mr. Albert Lumezi said: “The banking sector has proven to be in function and support of the country’s economy both in times of strong economic development as well as in difficult situations such as the pandemic. The banking sector is of great importance for the country’s economy, to increase access to finance, to increase employment, and to ensure the functioning of other links in the economy. Therefore, I strongly believe that with joint efforts and the continuation of incredibly good cooperation of all members of the Kosovo Banking Association, we will overcome all the challenges that are present in the banking sector and in the external environment of doing business.”

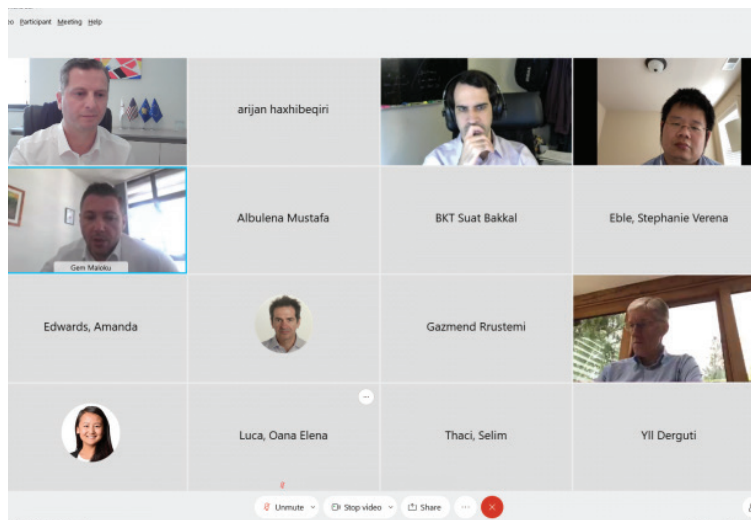
Furthermore, Mr. Suat Bakkal thanked the members of the Assembly for their support for the mandate of the next two years. On this occasion, he said: “Our industry will face strong competition, high regulatory requirements, and requirements for high standards of governance during this period. Therefore, I believe that with incredibly good cooperation with the Chairman Mr. Lumezi and the

Board Members we will keep the banking sector healthy so that it can be ready for the long-term economic support of Kosovo”.

Members of the Board of Directors of the Kosovo Banking Association were confirmed: Robert Wright - CEO Raiffeisen Bank Kosovo, Eriola Bibolli - CEO ProCredit Bank Kosovo; Orçun Ozdemir – CEO, TEB; Shpend Luzha – CEO, Banka Ekonomike; Arton Celina – CEO, Banka për Biznes; Oguzhan Ceylan - General Director, IS Bank - Kosovo Branch; Meriton Sunduri - General Director, Ziraat Bank - Kosovo Branch; Selman Lamaj – CEO, Credins Bank Kosovo; and Petrit Balijsa – CEO, Kosovo Banking Association.

Among the topics discussed at this meeting were the Law on Banks and other important topics for the banking sector. The ongoing work of the Kosovo Banking Association in representing the banking sector and managing and coordinating critical activities during the pandemic situation, to maintain the stability of the banking sector and increase access to finance for citizens and businesses of the Republic of Kosovo, was highly recognized.

The International Monetary Fund held its consultative meeting with the banking sector in Kosovo



04.06.2021, **Pristina** The Kosovo Banking Association held a meeting with representatives of the International Monetary Fund. The topic of discussion included the latest economic developments in the country, relief measures, and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as the financial stability of the market in Kosovo.

KBA Board members addressed several issues that would help advance the banking sector and increase access to finance, including the need to adopt the draft law on Banks, the implementation of the country credit rating, etc. The attendees of the meeting agreed to continue the more detailed consultations on other specific issues in the upcoming days.

The Kosovo Banking Association and Minister Murati discussed the Issuance of Diaspora Bonds



11.06.2021, **Pristina** The Minister of Finance, Labor and Transfers Hekuran Murati hosted a meeting with the Kosovo Banking Association, respectively the representatives of commercial banks in Kosovo, where the new initiative of the Government of Kosovo for

the issuance of Diaspora Bonds was discussed.

On this occasion, Minister Murati presented this initiative of the Government of Kosovo as one of the key points of the governing program, a point that aims to channel the capital of our diaspora towards strategic investments that

create jobs and result in growth and economic development. Minister Murati emphasized that the Government of Kosovo is interested in cooperation with the CBK and commercial banks to launch Diaspora Bonds as a new financial product, which is dedicated to our diaspora.



SHQATA E BANKAVE TË KOSOVËS
KOSOVO BANKING ASSOCIATION



“BE PRACTICAL, PAY BY CARD” CAMPAIGN LAUNCHED BY THE KOSOVO BANKING ASSOCIATION IN COOPERATION WITH MASTERCARD



Kosovo Banking Association in cooperation with Mastercard launches the informing campaign on the use of bank cards: “Be practical, Pay by Card”. The payment market in Kosovo is further developing and banking services and products are in the process of digitalization. Commercial banks in Kosovo are also adapting to new standards in product sophistication. One of these products is payments with a bank card, where, bank cards enable the execution of payments without wasting time, in very secure ways, and without any additional costs.

Citizens need different ways of paying so, through this campaign, citizens can be informed about the many benefits offered by contactless bank card payments. Some of the many benefits of contactless payment are:
Security and efficiency in your payments by enabling payment for transactions for small and daily amounts.
You save time and you don't need to withdraw CASH at ATMs every time, wait in line at bank counters or keep CASH with you, you can also make purchases and payments online with a bank card. Bank card payments can be made on

all POS equipment of Kosovo banks, without commission and regardless of the amount you pay, so the commission for card payment is ZERO.

Card payments are recorded in your bank account enabling better management of personal expenses and finances. Card payments help fight the informal economy and prevent the distribution of counterfeit money.

The campaign will take place during June - August 2021 and is expected to have a positive impact on informing the citizens and the Kosovar society about the advancement of the payment market.



Banka Ekonomike sponsor of FC Mabetex Pristina Futsal

The support of Banka Ekonomike for sports projects has continued, recently, in the framework of social responsibility, where we have also supported the futsal club, the current champion FC Mabetex Pristina..

This step reaffirms once again that as a local institution, we are committed to

supporting activities that contribute to youth development and increased well-being.

FC Mabetex Pristina is a club that recently made history by participating in the qualifying competitions of the UEFA Champions League, where it played matches against the champion of Spain, Barcelona Futsal.

Banka Ekonomike sponsor of the Football Club SHKËNDIJA

Sports support is another special dimension for which Banka Ekonomike is continuously committed, especially sports projects with a direct impact on young people.

Football as the most popular sport, for further development, quality increase, and its massive development, undoubtedly needs institutional support, and in this regard, Banka Ekonomike

has decided to support the project of Shkëndija Football Club.

KF Shkëndija is a newly formed club that competes in the third league of Kosovo and is currently declared the autumn champion in this group. The club also has a fairly organized academy.



Banka Ekonomike supports the production of the series film "Kosovars"

The field of culture is another segment to which Banka Ekonomike pays special attention. In this regard, we have recently supported the newest project which is under development, the series film "Kosovars".

Through this film project, which will be a local production, designed by American screenwriter and director Darren Denison,

the difficult journey of the Albanian people and the struggle of the Kosovo Liberation Army towards freedom and independence of our country will be reflected.

This project aims to be broadcast to local and international audiences, in order to reflect the just war of the Kosovo Liberation Army.

BKT Kosovo in support of the Agricultural Cooperative KRUSHA



BKT Kosovo has supported the opening and operation of the new facility of the Agricultural Cooperative KRUSHA, whose inauguration took place on the 8th of March, due to the fact that the history of this cooperative is closely linked to the power of the women of Krusha e Madhe.

Our heroine Mrs. Fahrije Hoti together with the women of Krusha have opened the doors of the new factory, continuing to make an unparalleled contribution to the empowerment of the role of women in society. Mrs. Fahrije Hoti thanked BKT Kosovo for the contribution given in the completion of this project.



“Your blood saves lives”

For years BKT Kosovo continued with its humanitarian mission of blood donation in cooperation with Blood Transfusion - Kosovo to come to the aid of people in need.

This time too, the blood donation activity organized by BKT Kosovo was successful. This was obvious from the enthusiasm shown by the Bank employees who fully supported the activity. This enthusiasm was also welcomed by the Officers of the Blood Transfusion Center, who were very pleased with

the great interest of the employees to donate blood.

BKT Kosovo hopes that the volunteering of its employees will serve as a good example for raising the awareness of the population to donate blood and save the lives of those in need.

“Your blood saves lives” is part of the bank’s social responsibility program, based on the “Contribute to society” principle that supports charitable activities.

BKT Kosovo continues to support children with autism

In honor of World Autism Awareness Day, BKT Kosovo has again signed a co-operation agreement with the ‘Autism’ Association based in Pristina, to continue financial support in the treatment of children with autism, for another 12 months.

This support was welcomed by the Association “Autism” - Pristina, which thanks BKT Kosovo for its continued

support, and hopes that such an example will be followed by others. Financial supporters are considered as an irreplaceable source for achieving the mission and vision of the association, towards creating a better social environment in support of children with autism. BKT Kosovo continues to support activities that focus on having a positive impact on society.



NLB Banka donates medical equipment and medications for UCCK



Seeing the difficult conditions and challenges that the University Clinical Center of Kosovo is facing, NLB Banka has donated medical equipment and medicines in the amount of € 19,765. The first part of the donation was delivered in December 2020 while in March two Trinocular Microscopes were delivered to the Pediatric Clinic for the Hematology ward and medical equipment for the Anesthesiology Clinic where patients with the most severe condition caused by Covid-19 are treated.

By signing the United Nations Principles for Accountable Banking, NLB Banka is committed to actively supporting sustainable development in society.

NLB Banka continues to support micro and small businesses through the #SupportFramework project

Individual local businesses, micro, and small ones are an important pillar of the economy and are most affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. That is why NLB Banka has prepared the project #SupportFramework this year as well to support them in recovering from the pandemic and in developing their business by providing them with advertising space on television channels, news portals, billboards, and city lights throughout Kosovo.

Through the project #SupportFramework, we will help micro-businesses, small businesses, whose activity is: production of local products, trade, services, agriculture, and which bring innovative projects for environmental protection and social welfare by providing them advertising space.

The application deadline is closed. The commission will review the applications and make the selection based on the criteria.

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“Vepra e saj” supported by Raiffeisen Bank in Kosovo



“Vepra e saj” by Alketa Xhafa Mripa, a book that reveals the stories of Albanian pioneer women from Kosovo was promoted at the Dukagjini bookstore in Pristina on 12 April 2021 with an extraordinary interest in purchasing this work.

“Vepra e saj” summarizes the personal stories of 100 women who with unwavering effort and will advance their dream: The dream of brave women who believed in their talent, passion, and ability to leave deep traces in all the areas of Kosovar society, from arts, education, health, economy, science, sports to various forms of activism.

“Vepra e saj” was supported by Raiffeisen Bank in Kosovo as part of the contribution to society, in this case - the empowerment of women.

Chopin Piano Fest returns after a year break after the pandemic



Culture remains one of the main areas where Raiffeisen Bank in Kosovo continues to engage, so this year we have supported one of the main cultural events - Chopin Piano Fest. The Chopin Piano Festival offers concerts, master courses

for students, and a symposium dedicated to the life and work of composers or pianists that are commemorated every year around the world. The Bank initiated and supported special seminars and master courses for young artists during

the festival in order to enable cultural and educational activities for students coming from university or high schools. So, this year, Chopin Piano Fest included “EduWeek” week with a special educational program.

TEB Bank and the Kosovo Olympic Committee reach a sponsorship agreement

After the proven support to some important sports, TEB Bank is now a sponsor of the Olympic Movement in Kosovo or more precisely, the Kosovo Olympic Committee (KOC).

The reached agreement between the managing director of TEB Bank, Orcun Ozdemir and the president of KOC, Ismet Krasniqi contains support for the next four years of the Olympic spirit and their regular annual activities.

TEB Bank is also a sponsor of the Football Federation of Kosovo (FFK) and the Basketball Federation of Ko-



sovo (FBK), all these agreements in the framework of the strategy to support national federations in their best presentation in the international plan

and various national sports projects.

The agreement is expected to be formalized in the upcoming days with an organization of the media and the public.

ProCredit Bank plants 452 trees in the park of the University of Pristina Campus

ProCredit Bank, as a bank that contributes daily to environmental care, has planted today 452 trees in the park of the University of Pristina Campus.

More than 113,703 m2 of public space has been greened and will be equipped with seats and baskets - turning this space into a comfortable park for residents to stay and use. This investment of ProCredit Bank is made possible in cooperation with the Municipality of Pristina.



BPB sponsors the Tennis Federation of Kosovo

Banka për Biznes (BPB) has become the general sponsor of the Tennis Federation of Kosovo, in order to advance the sport of tennis. This agreement was signed by the Executive Director of Banka për Biznes, Arton Celina, and the President of the Tennis Federation of Kosovo, Mejdi Rexhepi.



ÇFARË JANË AKADEMITË E NDËRMARRËSISË?

Shpesh të quajtura si shërbime jo-financiare ose shërbime mbështetëse të biznesit që janë shërbime të zhvillimit të ndërmarrjeve ose shërbime të vlerës së shtuar, Akademitë e Ndërmarrësisë plotësojnë ofertat financiare të një banke.

Tabela më poshtë tregon shembuj të shërbimeve të tilla.



KONSULENCË

Trajnim dhe këshillim nga kompani konsultante të jashtme me aftësi të larta dhe gjithashtu nga ekspertë të bankave në vend.



TRAJNIME

Seminare specifike të punës për aftësi dhe planifikimit të biznesit dhe strategjive të zhvillimit dhe menaxhimit financiar.



STATISTIKA DHE MBËSHTETJE INFORMACIONI

Artikuj mbi NMVM, platforma në internet, revista, materiale mediatike.



RRJETËZIM

Ngjarje të punëtorive/takime dhe shkëmbimi i përvojës, shërbimet e biznesit dhe klubet.

PSE BPB?

- Ne jemi liderë të tregut për mikro biznese dhe shumë konkurrues në segmentin agro dhe të NMVM.
- BPB ka përvorë në programin e përfshirjes financiare.
- Ne kemi ofruar jo vetëm qasje në financa por edhe zgjidhje të përshtatura enkas sipas edukimit financiar.
- Kemi implementuar disa shërbime dhe produkte të orientuara drejt zgjidhjes specifike të biznesit (Cash Advance/SME CSP), duke krijuar tregje dhe mundësi aty ku ato janë të nevojshme më shumë.
- Mbi 11 mijë klientë aktivë të NMVM, dhe mbi 88 milionë € të kredive aktive.
- Qasje holistike për klientët e NMVM (qasja e limitit të kredisë).

PROPOZICIONI YNË I VLERËS?

• BPB ka kryer vlerësime dhe hulumtime të tregut me klientë ekzistues dhe potencialë për të vlerësuar nevojat e NMVM-ve. Ne kemi theksuar dhe nxjerrë analiza të hendeikut me qëllim për të ndërtuar ekosistemin e ardhshëm të ndërmarrësisë.

Sfidat për të cilat ne ofrojmë zgjidhje:

- planifikimi dhe pozicionimi strategjik
- strategjia e rrjetës.

- Ne ofrojmë udhërrëfyesin për në peizazhin e konkurrencës së tregut,
- Strategjia për zhvillimin e BNJ,
- Njohuri financiare, me tregues të performancës për të matur operacionet e biznesit.

• Zgjidhje dhe shërbime specifike dhe të përshtatura:

- Artikuj të NMVM-ve me interes të informacionit
- Akademitë e ndërmarrësisë, të ofruara nga konsulentët dhe stafi i bankave.



BPB së bashku me partnerin e saj strategjik FEEJ po ofrojnë zgjidhje të personalizuar në lidhje me sfidat e NMVM-ve që u përshtaten nevojave të klientëve të biznesit. Përveç kësaj, ne bashkohemi me klientët për sa i përket pozicionimit strategjik duke u rritur së bashku përmes parimit të shkallëzimit.



- Qasje e ndryshme në krijimin e mundësive të biznesit, mundësi të segmenteve të reja.
- Kontributi në menaxhimin e marrëdhënieve.

ENTREPRENEURSHIP ACADEMY

Banka Për Biznes, in cooperation with its strategic partner European Fund for Southeast Europe (EFSE), has started providing non-financial services or support services to small businesses in Kosovo.

These non-financial services, the so-called Entrepreneurship/Business

Academy, offer various training which will enable businesses to develop their strategic plans, marketing plans, and financial management, facilitating the management, growth, and continuity of their businesses.

These academies will be organized in the 7 largest cities of Kosovo, where

about 300 businesses will participate. The training in this academy will be provided by the company GURU Academy from Turkey, a company with many years of experience in the field of business consulting.

Participation in these academies will be free for all clients.



BPB

në partneritet me

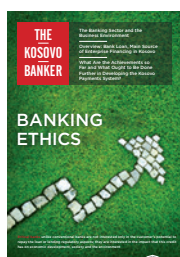
Entrepreneurship Academy
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PUBLICATIONS OF THE KOSOVO BANKING ASSOCIATION

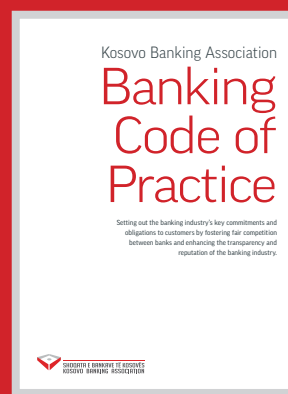
“The Kosovo Banker” is a publication of the Kosovo Banking Association. The magazine is published twice a year with the aim to properly inform the public on the banking industry in Kosovo. For more information, please go the web site of the Kosovo Banking Association:

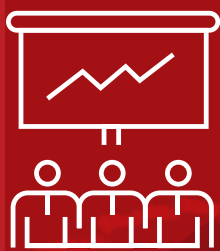


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The Banking Training Center within its training program also offers internationally recognized certifications, webinars and e-learning training in the field of banking industry.



SHOQATA E BANKAVE TË KOSOVËS
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