

8 March 2017

### Opening of the session, Wednesday 8 March 2017 - International Women's Day

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The **Athens Stock Exchange** welcomed today, the International Women's Day, Wednesday 8 March 2017, in the opening bell ceremony, **Professor Mrs. Charoula Apalagaki**, Secretary General of Hellenic Bank Association.

The International Women's Day is a day of awareness and reflection. This day is dedicated to all women who fight their small or major battles with courage and determination on a daily basis.



Mrs. Charoula Apalagaki is Professor of the Civil Procedural Law in the Faculty of Law, at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki with a great variety of writing and research works both in Greece and abroad. She has been, inter alia, an interim Chairman of the Piraeus Bank Board of Directors, member of the Board of Directors and Legal Adviser in the same bank, a member of the Legal Council of the Hellenic Bank Association and member of several preparatory legislative committees on issues of civil and administrative procedural law.

The attendees of the ceremony wished all the best to Mrs. Apalagaki for her new position as Secretary General of the Hellenic Bank Association and expressed their confidence that her actions shall contribute significantly to the development of the Hellenic Bank Association's projects.

The **Chairman** of the **Athens Stock Exchange Group**, Mr. **Iakovos Georganas**, pointed out: *"Our choice to invite Mrs. Apalagaki to participate today in the process of the opening ceremony has a great value for the broader contribution of women in business activities. We all believe that more women in the highest levels of management of businesses or bodies will benefit in general the economy as well as the Greek society"*.

In commemoration of the International Women's Day, Mr. **Georganas** gave to Mrs. Apalagaki a copy of the authoritative French language Swiss newspaper "**Le Temps**" published on 6<sup>th</sup> March 2017 containing a special tribute to the contribution of women. He highlighted that *"By 1970, women had no right to vote in Switzerland"*.

The **CEO** of the Athens Stock Exchange Group, Mr. **Sokratis Lazaridis**, who handed over the commemorative bell - a traditional symbol of the Opening Ceremony - stated: *"It is our great*



*pleasure and honor that Professor Mrs. Apalagaki, the General Secretary of the Hellenic Bank Association and an exceptionally important person of both the academic and banking sector, is here today, to open the Stock Exchange's meeting which coincides with the International Women's Day.*

He further stated that *"the requirements of this new position are particularly important, given the structural changes taking place in the banking sector, both on a global and on a European level, while the digital revolution identifies new challenges in the broader financial sector.*

He concluded that *"both at European and local level, has emerged the need for balanced development of the banking system and the capital market, in order to meet the financial needs of the companies through fund raising and with the purpose of supporting their development plans. This currently constitutes an intensely pursued objective for all".*

**Professor Mrs. Apalagaki** declared the Opening of the meeting and stated the following: *"On behalf of all women participating in the country's economic development, I would like to thank you for this honorable invitation and wish the Athens Stock Exchange, which maintained strong hopes even during the crisis, to be able to achieve considerable success this time next year and to celebrate significant growth of the economy, the banking sector and the overall economy".*

A speech of Mrs Apalagaki followed with the topic: **"The woman in the modern business world"**. The main points discussed were:

- A brief flash-back (what occurred and how this day was established).
- The legislative introduction of formal equality (at European and national level).
- The transition from formal equality to substantial or qualitative aspect of equality between the genders. The "glass ceiling" phenomenon (Recent statistics, further initiatives - laws and recommendations -, and notably the principles of corporate governance. The concept of quotas.
- Necessary differentiation of the female entrepreneurship. Its features.
- The composition of diversity. The obvious benefits for the economy and growth.

Attached:

- Photo gallery of the ceremony

