



## Press Release

### Vasileios Rapanos: “We need a political framework that will foster consensus”

*The challenges that the economic policy had to face after the restoration of democracy in 1974, the progress made since then but also the weaknesses that persist, were highlighted by the Chair of Alpha Bank’s Board at the Delphi Economic Forum*

The need **to achieve consensus in our country on key issues that determine the course of the economy** was stressed by **the Chair of Alpha Bank’s Board of Directors, Vasileios Rapanos**, who spoke today at the Delphi Economic Forum IX Annual Meeting.

*“Democracy is the political system of consensus. **Economic policy cannot produce results without consensus mechanisms in place,**”* Mr. Rapanos pointed out, noting that despite the achievements of the post-1974 period, **we have not been able to create effective consensus mechanisms on major issues**, such as transparency and accountability in the wider public as well as in the private sector, while *“the term ‘reform’ has lost its meaning in Greece, because the slightest change is called a reform.”* Moreover, as he noted, **“most of the reforms were carried out primarily under pressure from the European Union and from our creditors”**.

In his intervention as a member of the panel “Restoration Of Democracy: The Greek Economy Over The Years And The Lessons Learnt”, Mr. Rapanos made a brief assessment of the economic policy in the post-1974 period, focusing on the increase of fiscal deficits and public debt and on the significant deterioration of the current account balance, which was exacerbated by Greece’s entry into the EEC.

#### The causes of the economic crisis

Referring to the economic crisis of the last decade, Mr. Rapanos remarked that the causes of the crisis and its long duration are linked to the absence of reliable institutions **that would raise barriers to policies which undermine the stability of the economy, would promote productive investments and would provide citizens with high-quality services.**

In this respect, the Chair of Alpha Bank’s Board of Directors identified as individual weaknesses the absence of effective accountability, by complying to the rules and by implementing modern control systems, at the level of both the public administration and the Parliament, together with the fact that *“the state legislates assuming citizens to be tax evaders as well as unreliable and, the citizens, as a result, are equally distrustful of the state,”* remarking that the creation of the Independent Authority for Public Revenue (AADE) was the most important achievement in the fiscal sector and a major step for the rationalization of the tax system, although there is still a lot to be done.

*“I do not consider myself a pessimist. There have indeed been major achievements in the post-1974 period, yet the important thing is to consolidate the lessons we have learned and try to apply them,”* he concluded.