

PRESS RELEASE**October 2026****National Bank of Greece strengthens the entrepreneurship & innovation ecosystem in Cyprus through INSPIRE 2026**

“Innovation Cyprus 2.0” brought together entrepreneurs, investors, academics and leading technology executives, highlighting the power of collaboration in driving the growth of the Cypriot economy.

The National Bank successfully concluded its participation in the INSPIRE 2026 Entrepreneurial Festival, held in Nicosia on 7 and 8 October. For the second consecutive year, the Bank participated as Stage Sponsor of the Startup Stage, reaffirming its ongoing commitment to fostering innovation, entrepreneurship and outward-looking growth.

At the heart of its presence was **“Innovation Cyprus 2.0”**, held on 7 October at the headquarters of the bank in Nicosia. The event brought together representatives from government, the business and academic communities, investment funds, as well as senior executives from leading international technology organisations.

Through meaningful discussions and the exchange of diverse perspectives, participants highlighted the importance of connecting research with technology, entrepreneurship and funding. This connection is essential for transforming innovative ideas into sustainable business ventures with growth potential and a meaningful impact on the economy and society.

Through initiatives such as **NBG Business Seeds** and **Innovation Cyprus**, the National Bank of Greece in Cyprus builds bridges between people, ideas and capital, actively contributing to the development of the innovation ecosystem in both Cyprus and Greece.

Collaboration as a driving force for growth

In his opening address, the CEO of National Bank of Greece in Cyprus, **Mr George Agioutantis**, highlighted the crucial role of partnerships in shaping a strong and sustainable innovation ecosystem. As he noted:

“The role of a bank today is not only to finance the economy. It is also to help create the conditions that allow growth to emerge.”

Opening remarks were also delivered by **Mr Konstantinos Kollias**, Ambassador of Greece to Cyprus; **Professor Marios Dikaiakos**, Chairman of the Council of the University of Cyprus Centre for Entrepreneurship; and **Dr Spyros Arsenis**, Head of Business Innovation Development | NBG Business Seeds, Group Business Strategy, Startups and Partnerships Division.

A key highlight of the programme was the keynote speech by **John Christodoulou**, Chairman & Owner of the Yianis Group. Drawing from his own entrepreneurial journey, he underscored honesty and trust as fundamental prerequisites for building strong and lasting partnerships.

Equally significant was the discussion between **Mr Ernestos Panayiotou**, General Manager of Transformation, Strategy and International Activities at National Bank of Greece, and **Dr Nicodemos Damianou**, Deputy Minister of Research, Innovation and Digital Policy, focusing on the role of innovation and digital transformation in economic development.

The thematic discussions included representatives from government, institutional bodies and the business community, among them **Mr Charalambos Prountzos**, Mayor of Nicosia; **Mr George Pantelidis**, President of the Cyprus Employers and Industrialists Federation (OEB); **Ms Lia Riris**, Deputy CEO of Invest Cyprus; **Mr Dinos Lefkaritis**, CEO of Petrolina (Holdings) Public Ltd; and **Ms Despina Panayiotou Theodosiou**, Co-CEO of Tototheo Global.

The event's international technology and investment dimension was further strengthened by the participation of executives from **Microsoft**, **Mastercard** and **Amazon**, as well as representatives of **Uni.Fund VC**, **Metavallon**, **L-Stone Capital**, **Big Pi Ventures** and **Investing for Purpose**. Discussions focused on digital transformation, the commercialisation of research, and funding and growth opportunities for startups.

A particularly noteworthy moment was the presentation by the Cypriot startup **MammoCheck**, which secured first place in the **16th NBG Business Seeds Innovation & Technology Competition**. Its journey demonstrated how an innovative idea can evolve into a business venture with meaningful impact when supported by the right guidance and resources.

A trusted partner of the business community

Through its participation in the INSPIRE 2026 Entrepreneurial Festival and the organisation of **Innovation Cyprus 2.0**, the National Bank of Greece reaffirms its role in Cyprus as a trusted partner of the business community and an active contributor to the development of a dynamic and outward-looking innovation ecosystem.

Leveraging the expertise, strong foundations and capabilities of a leading banking group, the Bank continues to invest in the ideas and people shaping the future economy, actively supporting innovation and new entrepreneurship in both Cyprus and Greece.