

CaixaBank brings together leading businesswomen in Milan to discuss the importance of women in leadership

- ***In his closing remarks the Spanish Ambassador in Italy, Jesús Gracia, highlighted the Spanish government's commitment to promoting equal treatment and opportunities among women and men***
- ***The participants shared their personal and professional experiences, reflecting on the importance of diversity in the workplace***

Milan, 1 June 2018

CaixaBank, the leading retail bank in Spain, held its fifth Diversity Talks event in Milan yesterday evening, focusing on the importance of ensuring gender diversity in business and sustainable management. The event was attended by senior executives at leading companies, who debated the role of women across Italian businesses.

The bank launched its Diversity Talks programme earlier this year with events held in Turkey and Poland. More recently, CaixaBank also hosted similar events in Dubai and Johannesburg. The final iterations of the event will be held in New York and Casablanca, marking the end of CaixaBank's seven-event series across its international network.

Among the panel participants in Milan was **Maria Elena Cappello**, member of the board at TIM, MPS, Saipem, Prysiam and FEEM; **Silvia Marinari**, head of human resources at Terna SPA; **Cristina Scocchia**, CEO of Kiko Make Up and member of the board at Pirelli, Elica and Luxottica; **Nicole Della Vedova**, head of capital markets at ENEL Spa, and **Monica Poggio**, CEO of Bayer Italy. The Spanish Ambassador in Italy, **Jesús Gracia**, closed the session, which was moderated by **Claudina Farré**, director of CaixaBank's representative office in Italy.

In his closing remarks, Jesús Gracia highlighted the Spanish government's commitment to instilling equality into corporate culture through its ongoing support for initiatives such as CaixaBank's Diversity Talks, as well as other methods aimed at fostering a balanced representation of women in leadership positions. He also noted that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation in Spain has recently created an ambassadorial position, with a specific remit of furthering gender equality. The role encompasses responsibilities for eliminating all forms of discrimination, as well as ensuring that anti-discriminatory attitudes are adhered to not only through human resources programmes, but at corporate level.

The CaixaBank event was attended by women holding senior positions, representing companies from a variety of sectors. It served as a forum to share their personal and professional experiences, and to reflect upon the importance of ensuring diversity in the workplace.

Silvia Marinari commented: “In Italy, there is still work to be done if we are to achieve equal representation of men and women in the workforce.” Marinari said she believed that firms should be engaging in more conversations with their employees to recognise their unique contribution to firm’s activities.

Cristina Scocchia highlighted: “It is important to support a meritocracy-based corporate culture in every organisation which ensures that we all have equal opportunities to demonstrate our strengths.”

Monica Poggio stated: “By moving forward with determination and clear objectives, women can build the professional career they desire, while reconciling it with their private and family lives.”

To achieve this, Maria Elena Cappello advised the attendees of the event to “follow your passions and, above all, to have fun.”

Nicole Della Vedova commented: “Working with passion and curiosity, showcasing your achievements and continuously developing your skills, is an affirmation of uniqueness in each of us.”

Diversity key for CaixaBank

CaixaBank is one of Europe’s pioneering organisations in terms of diversity, and has established a specialist team to coordinate cross-organisation projects that encompass multiple aspects of diversity, including cultural and gender as well as functional and generational diversity. Additionally, diversity is one of the core principals in CaixaBank’s corporate social responsibility programme.

For CaixaBank’s international banking division, diversity is not only an excellent approach to human resources management, but a key aspect of the business model. CaixaBank’s international network specialises in providing advice to Spanish companies undertaking projects overseas, which means that understanding the underlying cultural, social and gender-specific drivers of economic activity is just as important as having specialist international banking capabilities and services.

International presence

CaixaBank’s international network features diverse multicultural teams, responsible for providing close support to the bank’s clients, focusing on the specific requirements in each region. Gender diversity is particularly important: 42% of managerial positions in CaixaBank’s international network are held by women.

Currently, CaixaBank has an integrated international network of 26 operating branches and representative offices in 18 countries. The bank is present in Paris (France), Milan (Italy), Istanbul (Turkey), Beijing, Shanghai and Hong Kong (China), Dubai (UAE), New Delhi (India),

Cairo (Egypt), Santiago de Chile (Chile), Bogotá (Columbia), New York (USA), Singapore, San Paolo (Brazil), Algiers (Algeria), Johannesburg (South Africa) and Lima (Peru).

Additionally, the bank has international branches in Warsaw (Poland), Casablanca, Tangiers and Agadir (Morocco), London (UK) and Frankfurt (Germany). CaixaBank simultaneously maintains agreements with other international banks to facilitate its international operations and the needs of its external businesses and individuals around the world.

CaixaBank also participates in supplying capital to financial entities globally, with whom the bank has developed collaborative strategies. The bank holds an 84.5% stake in Portuguese bank BPI, and a 9.92% stake of the Austrian operator Erste Bank.

About CaixaBank

CaixaBank is leader in retail banking in Spain, with a 26.7% share among individual customers who make it their main bank. The bank, headed by chairman Jordi Gual, and led by CEO, Gonzalo Gortázar, has around 16 million customers in Spain and Portugal, with 5,379 branches, the largest commercial network in the Iberian peninsula. Additionally, CaixaBank holds an 84.5% stake in the Portuguese bank BPI and 9.92% of the Austrian operator Erste Bank.

CaixaBank also provides financing and specialized services to businesses via an extensive range of corporate banking solutions, including guarantees, bilateral loans, syndicated loans and transactional banking. Currently the bank has an international network comprised of 26 operating branches and representative offices in 18 countries.

CaixaBank has been named "Best Bank in Spain 2017" by the UK magazine Euromoney and New York magazine Global Finance also recognized recently the entity as the "Best Bank in Spain 2018". This year, Euromoney named CaixaBank, the "Best Private Bank in Spain" for the fourth time in a row.

It is also among the most sustainable in the world, according to the Dow Jones Sustainability Index, and was honored by Euromoney as the Best Bank for CSR in Western Europe.