



Press release

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KBC clients are making growing use of digital and remote channels

This year too, KBC further adjusts omnichannel network in line with shifting client behaviour

KBC continues to align its commercial distribution channels with the way clients carry out their banking and insurance business. Clients have increasingly opted for digital channels in recent years and months, possibly combined with expert advice.

At the end of March 2020, 56% of KBC clients were banking solely via a digital channel, with remote bank insurance (KBC Live) growing steadily. Large numbers of clients have also discovered banking by appointment since the corona lockdown measures.

In recent years, KBC has already responded to rapidly changing customer behaviour with its omnichannel distribution model, where the physical/brick branch network with human interaction plays a complementary role to remote banking and digital channels.

KBC examines annually how customers use the various channels and how, based on that information, it can gradually optimise its physical presence and its digital efforts in order to continue to offer its customers more expertise, greater accessibility and excellent customer service.

As in previous years, KBC has also reviewed its distribution network this year.

Based on a thorough study performed in the first two months of the current year, KBC has decided that in the course of 2020 and first quarter 2021,

- **37 bank branches in Flanders, the East Belgium Region and Brussels will be converted to self-service branches** for cash withdrawals, transfers and account information. Clients wishing to speak to a KBC employee will be able to do so in a neighbouring branch within an easily accessible distance. These clients can, of course, also contact a KBC employee in person via KBC Life (remote bank-insurance with expanded opening hours). Due to the coronavirus measures, bank branches will continue to work solely on an appointment basis for the time being.
- **17 bank branches and 22 self-service branches in Flanders, the East Belgium Region and Brussels will be closed** because of the relatively limited number of transactions and the adequate proximity of KBC alternatives.

Following the implementation of these changes, private individual **KBC clients in Flanders (including German-speaking Belgium) and Brussels** will be able to call on 531 bank branches, comprising **328 staffed branches (including 142 offering broad service) and 203 self-service branches**. This compares with 570 branches (382 staffed branches and 188 self-service branches) at the end of February 2020. **CBC – which has 84 branches in Wallonia – is not included in this exercise.**

As always, KBC has openly informed the employees concerned and the social partners of the situation. KBC will arrange for staff from the affected bank branches to continue in their post at a different bank branch or at KBC Live.

At the end of May 2020, **KBC Live** numbered 545 FTEs, with 80% of staff drawn from the branch network. They provide their expertise to clients via more than 100 000 phone calls and 14 000 chat sessions each month.

KBC also has a separate network of specialist branches for Private Banking and corporate s clients.

Clients are making growing use of digital and remote channels and large numbers of them are discovering the convenience of banking by appointment. KBC adapts network to customer's pace.

For several successive years now, KBC has noted that a growing number of clients are opting increasingly frequently – even exclusively in some cases – for the digital channels.

- More than half of those who contacted KBC at the end of March 2020 did so exclusively digitally (56%). They therefore account for the largest group of clients, and the trend is for this to grow further.
- Of the digitally active clients, 52% bank solely via KBC Mobile. What's more, the number of KBC Mobile-only clients continues to rise. Within the space of just one year, one in three new clients began their relationship with KBC via a digital channel. In absolute numbers, this digital inflow has risen 60% compared to 2018.
- The strongest growth in digital clients is located in the 55+ segment, thanks in particular to targeted client-education initiatives (DigiWijs). Over half (53%) of the 65–80 year-olds interact digitally with KBC, and almost a third (31%) of those aged over 80. This contradicts the cliché that older generations are unable to keep up with new banking technology.

Preventive efforts during the corona lockdown have also resulted in a sharp increase in client contacts in recent weeks.

- The number of remote appointments exploded from an average of 750 per month to no fewer than 35 000.
- The number of incoming client phone calls to their KBC bank branch rose 22% to 300 000 a month.
- The number of electronic communications between clients and a branch employee via the secure KBC Touch/KBC Mobile environment doubled from 30 000 to 60 000 a month.

At the same time, KBC Live continues to play a crucial supporting role in terms of responding to clients' questions, not only during working hours but also evenings and Saturdays. The number of telephone questions rose 22% during the lockdown weeks to an average of 104 000 a month.

KBC Group NV
Havenlaan 2 – 1080 Brussels
Viviane Huybrecht
General Manager
Corporate Communication/Spokesperson
Tel. +32 2 429 85 45

Press Office
Tel. +32 2 429 65 01 Stef Leunens
Tel. +32 2 429 29 15 Ilse De Muyer
Tel. +32 2 429 32 88 Pieter Kussé
E-mail: pressofficekbc@kbc.be

KBC press releases are available at www.kbc.com or can be obtained by sending an e-mail to pressofficekbc@kbc.be

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