



Press Release

Brussels, 1 July 2021 – 2.30 p.m.

Remarkable success of investment plans and stock market transactions continues in 1H2021

Volume of KBC/CBC savings accounts also sees further growth

The continuing low interest rates combined with the good performance of the stock markets in the first half of 2021 are increasingly attracting our clients to our range of investment products.

- *The number of first-time investors continues to increase thanks to the ease of access offered by digital solutions in combination with a personalised approach.*
- *Our clients are increasingly opting to have their financial assets invested by our experts ('invest for me') in our balanced and multi-signal funds (Expertease). It is a clear sign of the confidence they place in our investment expertise.*
- *The number of Bolero transactions has seen unprecedented growth, rising by more than 39% compared with the same period in 2020 and no less than 230% higher than in the first half of 2019, though this trend is cooling somewhat in the run-up to the summer period. Compared with a year earlier, January and February were unequivocally strong months for share dealing. The average age of Bolero clients has fallen from 53 years in 2019 to 43 years in 2021, and no fewer than 38% of new Bolero clients are actually aged under 30.*

At the same time, many clients continue to appreciate the value of a regulated savings account. As in previous years, the upward trend is continuing. At the end of June 2021, the combined volume at KBC and CBC had increased further, to 52.29 billion euros. That represents an increase of 2.25 billion euros (+ 4.5%) compared with 31 December 2020, and an increase of 4.28 billion euros euro (+ 8.9%) compared with a year earlier.

Number of investors continues to increase

- Digital applications in KBC/CBC Mobile are helping new investors take their first steps into investing. The ability to invest small amounts in phases is making investing more and more accessible. A good example is 'Spare change investing', where payments are rounded up to the nearest euro and the difference is automatically invested in an investment plan. Both the number of clients with a 'Spare change investing' plan and those with a traditional investment plan, which allows investment from as little as 25 euros per month, have shown a further strong increase.

- The coronavirus pandemic has caused remote banking with investment advice to take off, giving it a permanent place in the contacts with our investment and other clients.
- We launched a new Premium Service at the end of 2020 for our wealthier clients: which was well received. Client can opt for the 'invest for me' service where, based on the client's comfort zone, our experts make a selection of global balanced funds or multi-signal funds (Expertease), possibly supplemented by a trend fund. They can also opt for the traditional approach ('making investments together'), where the client builds their investment portfolio in partnership with their relationship manager.
- The investment applications and investment information in KBC/CBC Mobile and KBC/CBC Touch are being systematically expanded. Use of these digital applications also continues to rise strongly.
- Diversification of the investments across different asset classes is important in view of the regularly changing tax treatment of investments. This is leading to an increase in the proportion of investment-type insurance products.
- The low interest rate environment means that interest in term investments has remained low.

Steadily growing interest in the stock market: Bolero & Matti

- Bolero saw consistently strong growth in the number of investors in the first half of the year. The number of transactions has also seen unprecedented growth since the start of the year, rising by more than 39% compared with the same period in 2020 and no less than 230% higher than in the first half of 2019, though this trend is cooling somewhat in the run-up to the summer period. Compared with a year earlier, January and February were unequivocally strong months for share dealing. The record numbers seen at the start of the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic in 2020 were however not matched in March and April 2021. Despite this, Bolero observed a marked uplift in 'DIY investing' during the 'Covid year' 2020, with new clients also being more active in the investment market.
- The average age of Bolero clients has fallen from 53 years in 2019 to 43 years in 2021, and no fewer than 38% of new Bolero clients are actually aged under 30, illustrating that investing in shares can also appeal to a younger public. Female investors are also increasingly finding their way to the stock markets.
- The overwhelming success of webinars on a variety of investment themes, as well as more than 10,000 subscriptions to the recent B-coach programme, in which Bolero focuses heavily on education, shows that share investors are well informed and are looking to begin investing with a good basic knowledge.
- Finally, Matti, Bolero's smart investment assistant, is also continuing to steadily attract new investors. One in four Matti clients holds several investment portfolios. The flexibility of the concept allows investors to invest for different purposes, such as travel, investing for grandchildren, building up a financial buffer for later, etc. The most popular motivations for building several portfolios are diversification based on term to maturity, risk profile and thematic preferences.
- As regards themes, socially responsible investment is still enjoying a boom across all generations. Geographically, Matti investors have a preference for Europe, the United States and the emerging markets. At sector level, Matti investors put most faith in the technology and energy sectors.

Strong growth in sustainable and socially responsible investment funds continues

- KBC is seeing a further acceleration in the shift towards sustainable and socially responsible investment funds. The milestone of 20 billion euros invested in sustainable and socially responsible funds was recently achieved. Today, more than half of our Belgian investors opt for a sustainable and socially responsible investment fund, and the amount invested in such funds has trebled in the space of two years. Investors are increasingly attaching importance to ecological and social criteria in the management of their assets, a trend which KBC only encourages.

- For several years now, KBC AM has applied a strict policy for sustainable and socially responsible investment funds, with a zero-tolerance approach to funds that invest in fossil fuels. In addition to thermal coal, our sustainable and socially responsible investment funds also exclude other fossil fuels such as oil and gas, as well as nuclear energy. Only renewable and safe energy sources are admitted to the sustainable and socially responsible investment funds.
- We are also taking steps to mitigate the impact on the climate of our conventional investment funds. On 1 January 2021, KBC introduced a strict investment policy for both the investment funds operated by KBC Asset Management (KBC AM) and for its own investment portfolio; from that date, mining companies which extract coal* are excluded from all investment funds, along with utility companies which generate more than 25% of their electricity using coal. Today (1 July 2021), the final threshold has been removed, and a zero-tolerance policy has now also been introduced for utility companies.

* Excluding coal for steel-making, as no viable alternative is currently available for that production process.

But the savings account still remains popular 2021

- The volume of regulated savings accounts also continued to grow in the first half of 2021: at the end of June 2021, the total amount held in KBC and CBC savings accounts stood at 52.29 billion euros.
- That is an increase of 2.25 billion euros (+ 4.5%) compared with 31 December 2020, and an increase of 4.28 billion euros euro (+8.9%) compared with a year earlier.

Total deposits in regulated savings accounts at KBC and CBC in Belgium:

(If we want to compare the KBC figures accurately with those of other financial institutions active across the whole of Belgium, we need to take into account the figures for both KBC and CBC.)

Aggregate volume of funds in regulated savings accounts held at KBC and CBC:

- **30/06/2021: 52.29 billion euros**
- 31/12/2020: 50.04 billion euros
- 30/06/2020: 48.01 billion euros

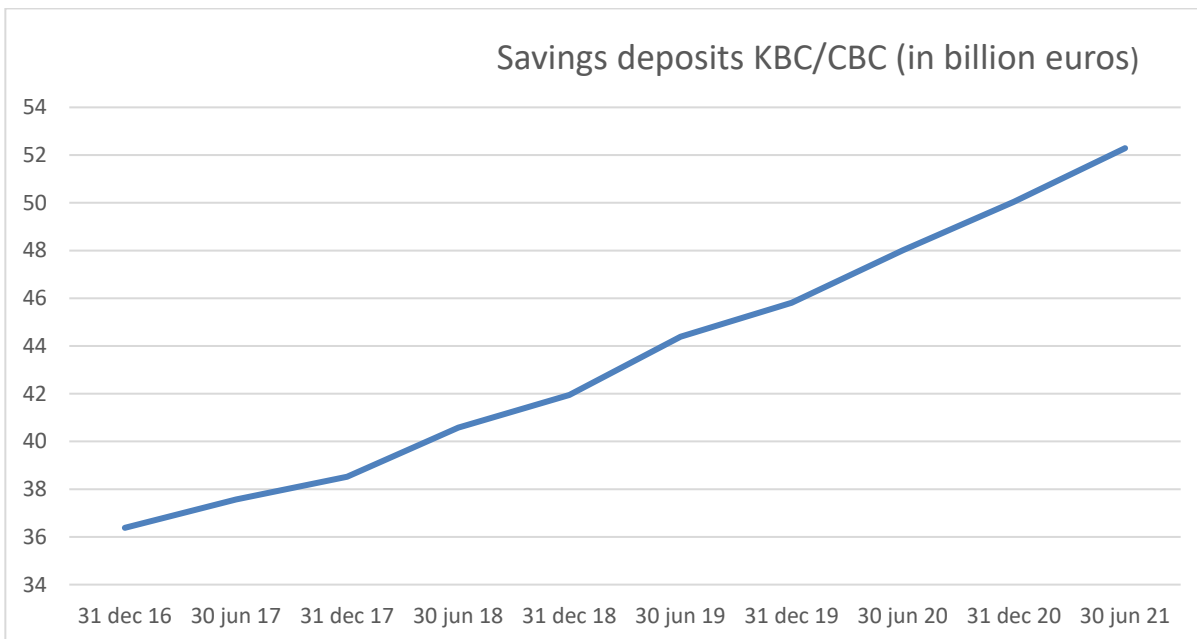
Regional breakdown

Volume of funds in regulated savings accounts held at KBC and KBC Brussels (active in Flanders and Brussels):

- **30/06/2021: 47.75 billion euros**
- 31/12/2020: 45.73 billion euros
- 30/06/2020: 43.87 billion euros

Volume of funds in regulated savings accounts held at CBC (active in Wallonia):

- **30/06/2021: 4.54 billion euros**
- 31/12/2020: 4.31 billion euros
- 30/06/2020: 4.14 billion euros



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