

Financial Inclusion Policy Forum in Europe and Central Asia

Skopje Consensus

26 October, 2015

We, policymakers and regulators from the Europe and Central Asia (ECA) region, met in Skopje, Macedonia on 26 October, 2015 at the invitation of the Alliance for Financial Inclusion (AFI) and the National Bank of the Republic of Macedonia (NBRM), with support from the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development of Germany (BMZ) and the State Secretariat of Economic Affairs of Switzerland (SECO). We discussed ways of strengthening peer learning and knowledge sharing with the aim to advance financial inclusion in our nations and across the ECA region.

We examined, together with AFI and its partners, the opportunities and challenges to expanding financial inclusion in ECA. We exchanged views on the potential of innovative approaches to policy, regulation and advocacy that could effectively contribute to improving access to quality financial services for the financially excluded populace in ECA, and reflected on the role of policymakers and regulators in creating an enabling environment for the expansion of quality financial services in our countries and across the region.

Following our discussions, we have agreed on the following:

- We acknowledge that financial inclusion is a policy priority for our institutions.
- We commit to one another to address this priority through peer learning and knowledge sharing that leads to the development and implementation of innovative policies and regulations.
- We confirm that there is a high level of interest and commitment among our institutions to scale up peer-learning on financial inclusion policy within the ECA region.
- We agreed that common areas of priority within the scope of financial inclusion policy in the ECA region will include, but not be limited to: (1) Consumer Protection and Financial

Literacy; (2) SME Finance, (3) Digital Financial Services; (4) Financial Inclusion Data. We agreed to allow the possibility to incorporate additional areas of policy priority in the future.

- We also acknowledge a high level of interest in strengthening peer-learning between policymaking institutions in ECA with policymakers within the AFI network in other parts of the world.
- We agree that systematic public-private dialogue is an important element to inform policy design and implementation. Additionally, we welcome private sector support in strengthening the technical capacity of our institutions in areas where the private sector has substantial expertise.
- We agreed that AFI is uniquely positioned to carry forward the regional peer learning initiative in ECA. We call upon AFI to launch the regional peer-learning platform and commit our institutions to active participation in this platform.
- We thus encourage AFI's partners, funders and stakeholders, including SECO and BMZ, to support the rollout and implementation of this initiative.

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