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Economics of the Territories and Sustainable Development

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Now that the economic crisis seems to have alleviated its effects on the banking system, with some signs of recovery, Italian and European banks have to face several new challenges.

The restructuring operations in the Italian banking system are intended to continue with the objective of achieving further and effective operating cost management and improved profitability.

The new technologies, which facilitate the daily contact with banks via Internet, PC, tablets or smartphones, constantly oblige banks to adapt and innovate in order to be able to always be in line with customer needs.

Customers became more used to the new technologies and they may also feel comfortable with different bank concept, as demonstrated by the growing success of crowdfunding platforms or the willingness of several multinationals to enter in the financial market in order to increase their operational role in the online business.

Perhaps the main challenge for banks will be to try to match the expectations and demands, even in practical terms, of a progressively digitized clientele that will probably consider, at least in its younger segment, their services as any other service. Taking their decision on the base of other customers feedbacks, online comments, company image, or on the basis of its ability to operate on different fields (as it happens today with Google, Amazon or Facebook).

Or the most important challenge for banks will be to highlight how is important their connection with the territories and their community.

These requirements will be essential to promote economic development and social cohesion and to pursue a truly sustainable and inclusive growth. For this reason, we should give importance and value to the direct contact with customers and the territories. A value that is not possible to measure in terms of profitability but in terms of social capital in its broadest sense.

Interacting with your bank or financial intermediary through the screen of a computer, tablet, or smartphone will surely be more practical and effective, as well as economically advantageous. But these advantages are not enough if we will lose the relationship with the territories.

Serious policies aimed at enhancing communities and territories and relevant reference intermediaries are even more urgent and important today. In particular if we considering the size of the new competitors or the rise of new news small subjects operating in a grey area.

This is the bank's priority for the future, if we want to help our customers to face such radical mutations and to operate for a sustainable growth.

