

ROMANIA

Best local bank: **Raiffeisen Bank**

Romania's galloping GDP growth of 2017 that reached 7% slowed to a fast trot of 4%, which is a figure that many developed countries can only dream of. Our best bank, **Raiffeisen Bank**, is the group's largest bank in its Southeastern Europe network, and it posted good results last year including raising its assets by 10% to just under €9bn, attracting 11% more deposits up by €679mn and increasing its lending by 19% up by €898mn.

Interestingly, last year the Romanian subsidiary bank created a 'cross-divisional agile community', which aims to promote agile thinking and innovation, while also supporting both employees and managers in skill development. This pilot is one of many taking place at the group level to create a new working dynamic for a digital age.

The bank actively supports entrepreneurship through its "Factory by Raiffeisen" online platform,

Best foreign bank: **Raiffeisen Bank**

which promotes entrepreneurial culture and works to support start-ups. A contest run on the platform led to 27 entrepreneurs being selected for special direct support by the bank with special low-interest loans and unique access to courses and workshops specifically designed to develop and to grow their businesses. This program is just one of many initiatives run by the bank to support SMEs.

Raiffeisen Bank and the European Investment Fund (EIF) have been cooperating since 2010 with Raiffeisen being extended a line of credit of €500mn equivalent to lend-on to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) through the EU's program for the Competitiveness of Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (COSME) and the "SME Initiative" (SMEi). Presently 4,000 SME's are benefiting from increased access to financing enabled by the programmes through flexible collateral alternatives.

RUSSIA

Best local bank: **Sovcombank**

Best foreign bank: **Raiffeisenbank Russia**

Best investment bank: **VTB Capital**

Best asset manager:

VTB Capital Investment Management

Best broker: **VTB Capital Broker**

Dmitry Gusev, chairman of the board of **Sovcombank** said: "We are very grateful for the high recognition of our achievements in 2018 by EMEA Finance.

In the shortest time possible, the bank has successfully completed the integration of RosEvoBank, increased business volumes in all key segments, and attracted unprecedented in the current market amount of foreign investments from the largest foreign funds."

A repeat winner of our best local bank, Sovcombank, is among the top five largest privately-owned banks, and last year was busy transforming itself into what it describes as 'a full-scale universal bank, which provides a full range of services both to individuals and corporate clients'. RosEvoBank's corporate business was an important add-on, and will generate what the bank describes as 'even more ambitious and large-scale projects.'

Our best foreign bank in Russia, **Raiffeisenbank Russia**, recorded a profit after tax of €455mn, which is quite a triumph given the sanctions regime and what the bank's management describes as 'a fairly weak Russian

economic growth'. The Russian subsidiary of Raiffeisen Bank International serves 2.8 million customers, which is a fair number but still leaves a tremendous growth opportunity for the bank. The bank has extensive digital expertise within the RBI network, and last year Andrii Stepanenko, who was formerly deputy chairman of the management board in Russia and responsible for the retail business, joined RBI group's management board with responsibility for retail banking in March 2018.

Russia's most prolific deal-making financial institution, **VTB Capital**, celebrates its 10th anniversary. The firm maintained several leading positions in the Russian and CIS debt capital markets as a bookrunner again in 2018. The bank was the leading Russian international debt capital markets bookrunner with a 46.3% market share, and closed 13 deals with total value over US\$6bn. VTB Capital also secured 26.8% of the CIS international DCM market with 16 deals worth \$6.2bn. In the Russia ruble bond market, the firm was a bookrunner on 57 transactions with total value of US\$4.7bn and ended the year with a 23.4% market share.