President’s **message**

Against a backdrop of conflict and geopolitical instability, 2023 proved a momentous year in the EBRD’s history.

Our shareholders backed the Bank with a €4 billion capital increase to continue our vital work in Ukraine, both now and in the future, while remaining a partner of choice for all our countries of operation. The shareholders also approved our expansion into new markets in sub-Saharan Africa and Iraq, for which we are now actively preparing.

It was a year in which our services were never more in demand and the Bank’s distinctive offering – of investment, coupled with transformative policy and advisory action – remained relevant and capable of adapting to changing circumstances.

Though we achieved record business volumes and met key targets, we are by no means complacent. We faced a demanding set of challenges: geopolitical upheaval, conflict and suffering in Ukraine and the Middle East, and severe natural disasters in several of our countries. Evidence of the climate emergency continued to confront us in every region where we work. Economic growth remained subdued in many countries amid the instability and the impact on emerging markets of tight monetary policies. It remains our job, therefore, to stay focused on delivering in all of our economies and to make sure we work efficiently and with agility, using the resources we now have at hand thanks to our internal transformation agenda.

I was determined that in 2023 we would maintain the level of support we had provided to Ukraine in the wake of the Russian invasion in February 2022. With €2.1 billion of financing last year, after €1.7 billion in 2022, we greatly exceeded our goal of deploying a total of €3 billion over 2022-23. Moreover, with the Governors voting for a paid-in capital increase in December, we now have the tools to maintain a significant level of investment in wartime and to scale it up in a future reconstruction phase. The year ended with little sign of a swift conclusion to the conflict, so there was no let-up in our work to restore and maintain Ukraine’s electricity supplies, to keep the trains running, support food supplies, help the postal service to keep letters and parcels flowing, and assist many other clients in the private sector or at municipal level.

Indeed, there was much to be done in all of our regions. Our crisis response was needed once again when Türkiye and Morocco were struck by terrible earthquakes. We made significant investments, coupled with policy support, in Egypt, where the economy remains under pressure. High levels of investment in Poland will support the decarbonisation of the economy, and we saw continued progress in some of our Central Asian markets.

Samarkand, Uzbekistan was the venue for our Annual Meeting in May 2023 – a wonderful location for a hugely successful event. Back home in London, the visit of King Charles III to formally open our new headquarters gave us a chance to demonstrate how we are becoming greener internally, as well as mitigating climate change externally.

From the start of 2023, all new EBRD activities were aligned with the goals of the Paris Agreement on climate change and the Bank maintained its pioneering role in driving private-sector finance towards climate action. Our Green Economy Transition (GET) finance hit a new record of €6.5 billion, accounting for 50 per cent of the Bank’s annual investment.

We finished 2023 with a clear view of what was required for the year ahead. I thank our Governors for their support and pay tribute to our staff, who work tirelessly on the ground and in headquarters. We know what is needed from us, and we pledge to accelerate our delivery and to contribute even further to making the EBRD an active partner in the multilateral development bank system.

Odile Renaud-Basso
EBRD President
April 2024