

ROBERT VAN KERKHOFF

BNP Paribas, Luxembourg Branch

FROM CRO TO COO TO CEO

ROBERT VAN KERKHOFF, HEAD OF LUXEMBOURG, IRELAND & THE CHANNEL ISLANDS FOR THE SECURITIES SERVICES BUSINESS OF BNP PARIBAS, EXPLAINS THE GROUP'S 2025 STRATEGY, WHICH IS ALL ABOUT DRIVING GROWTH, TECHNOLOGY AND SUSTAINABILITY.

How would you describe your professional journey?

It has been quite a journey so far in different countries and roles, which has given me a broad international view of what is happening in a financial institution.

I started my career at the options exchange in the Netherlands as a risk manager. I had just graduated when I was confronted with the trading culture in Amsterdam. I sometimes had to physically go to the open outcry (for some younger readers something completely unknown) to tell a trader to start reducing his exposure!

In 2002, I joined Fortis Bank. After several years of Heading the Risk department, I changed my scope and became Deputy COO and later COO for Fortis Spain and Portugal. This was a fantastic experience abroad where cultural dynamics played an important role. In 2009, when BNP Paribas took over Fortis, I joined the Securities Services activity in Spain. As part of a global bank, my international journey continued and three years later I moved to Paris as Deputy Head of Operations for Asset and Fund Services followed by a 4 years' experience as Head of the Netherlands for Securities Services.

In 2019, I came to Luxembourg to head the Securities Services with

regional responsibility over Ireland & the Channel Islands. This has been another great journey so far, getting to know new people with different nationalities and in a very dynamic Ecosystem. So in a nutshell my journey went from CRO to COO to CEO! Next to my daily duties, I am also a board member of the Luxembourg Stock Exchange and Luxembourg Alternative Administrators Association (L3A).

What are your main goals?

For some years, we have a leading "Top 3" position in the Luxembourg market leveraging our global footprint and capabilities. Now we are seeking to further enhance our positioning with an ambitious proactive strategy plan for 2025 based on Growth, Technology and Sustainability. Our activities in Luxembourg started in the UCITS space, followed by the creation of Corporate Trust Services to assist both the issuance and administration of corporate debt. This latter service plays currently a pivotal role in the issuance of Social and Green bonds. More recently, we have created a Private Equity activity. Only a few years ago our PE franchise was less than 30 staff and today we are reaching around 250 FTEs fully dedicated to PE. So somehow, we have in an entrepreneurial way achieved a leading position in the alternative market! From a technological perspective, we are partnering with FinTechs as they provide "marketplace" solutions that facilitate data sharing between multiple actors, creating the kind of efficiency that was not possible before as everyone was "doing their own thing". We are looking to partner with the best actors

in the FinTech space, bringing our business know-how together with their technology to provide state-of-the-art products for our clients. In Private Capital, we are further developing our core platform and automating as much as possible manual processes (which still do exist a lot in this market!). Furthermore, we have developed, together with a German tech company, advanced reporting layers for GPs and LPs. Finally, we are co-developing with our clients, especially in the digital assets area. Securities Services' ambition is to be the leading positive-impact asset servicer and partner of choice for large financial institutions. In Luxembourg, we are one of the few custodians awarded an ESR label. This requires allocating resources to building a framework and making sure that our staff are fully aware of belonging to a socially responsible company. Our goal is to embed sustainability in all our daily operational activities. This will have multiple beneficial effects for our clients but most of all it will bolster our positive impact on society and the environment. Diversity and inclusion are key drivers in our strategy and an engagement as a responsible bank.

What are the most important developments taking place in the fund industry?

There have been several notable developments in recent years. Luxembourg has been actively promoting sustainable finance and responsible investment. Within the Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) factors, we are keen to support the

investment decision-making process. Our expertise and open ESG platform Manaos can support our clients with leading technologies. Sustainable finance goes hand in hand with a robust Know Your Client (KYC) process. Fund managers need to have a clear understanding of their clients' preferences, values and risk appetite. Thanks to a comprehensive KYC process based on new technologies, we support Management Companies to gather this information and allow the investment managers to tailor investment solutions.

The European Long-Term Investment Fund and its Eltif 2.0 regulation is an example of regulatory initiatives that will enable retail investors to get access to long-term investments in the alternative segment. As a market leader in Eltifs with more than 30% market share in Luxembourg, we perfectly understand how to service this business and are ready to support our clients in launching these new vehicles.

All technological and regulatory evolutions require the market to benefit from a huge expertise. To stay up to date with the latest developments in the fund industry, we have started initiatives to upskill the expertise and knowledge of our teams like the Digital Data and Agile Academy and established strong links with universities such as Telecom Nancy, HEC Liège Luxembourg and the University of Luxembourg. The fund industry in Luxembourg is still experiencing a permanent strong demand for talented professionals in key areas like Fund Administration, Risk Management and Compliance, Legal and Regulatory, Technology and Data Analytics. ●

ROBERT VAN KERKHOFF

FACTS & FIGURES

Birthday: 26-01-1970

Nationality: Dutch

Languages: Dutch, English, Spanish, German and French

Hobbies: Theatre, cinema and sports

MY FAVOURITE

Cities: Amsterdam, Madrid and Grave

Restaurants: Tapas and Japanese

Places: On a boat in the Amsterdam channels

Books: My Left Foot (book or movie are both great)

Music: All kinds of music from Jazz to Flamenco

Artist: Lita Cabellut



COMPANY

BNP Paribas, Luxembourg Branch, Securities Services Business

POSITION

Head of Luxembourg, Ireland & the Channel Islands for the Securities Services Business of BNP Paribas

www.decisionmakersluxembourg.com/robertvankerkhoff