BANKING SERVICES FOR DEVELOPMENT OF RURAL AREAS

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Keywords: banking services, rural areas, commercial banks, financial prosperity

SUMMARY

Development of rural areas represents a priority for the European Union which has elaborated a series of strategies for sustainable rural development. In this respect, commercial banks can also be involved in the sustenance and development of rural areas, which can transform into new and attractive customer markets for banks (Kirschner, 2005). First step towards conquering these markets is the extension of territorial banking network in rural areas with great and diverse customer potential. In their portfolios of banking products and services, commercial banks can devise banking services specific for customers from rural areas. An important objective for rural areas is the increase of the level of banking culture and civilisation, which is the next step towards financial prosperity. The existence of a modern IT banking system provides a high-quality management of complex banking services and products in rural areas as well as a quick and efficient customer service (Stanciu, 2004).

Some of the modern and complex banking products and services are listed below:
- Private banking services which provide banking information about customers’ accounts, electronic payments and various operations within customers’ accounts;
- Internet banking, Home banking, Mobile banking, Telephone banking, etc.
- Direct debit and Standing Order, which enable the customers from rural areas to make payments of utilities directly to their bank accounts;
- bank cards, global instruments for payment, cash withdrawal;
- bank credits destined for various categories of customers from rural areas;
- speciality services of banking counselling and consultancy.

Apart from banking services offered, some commercial banks have been actively involved in the life of the rural community. Bankpost, for example, in the period 2006-2007 continued its social mission, being involved in financial sustenance of various cultural, educational, environmental and tourist potential projects. The perspective of rural development creates great opportunities for commercial banks. Thus, a market of prosperous customers brings prosperity for the commercial banks that activate within it.

REFERENCES