

IS YOUR MONEY KEEPING YOU UP AT NIGHT?

7 questions answered for a good night's sleep

1 Is the system safer?

The financial system is definitely safer than it was 10 years ago. Strict rules were introduced, making banks stronger, safer and more liquid. For example, banks now set aside more money to counter the risks they run when granting credit to customers. As a result, banks are more resilient to unexpected losses. To make sure that banks follow the rules, supervision has been significantly tightened and adjusted. Governance and management of banks are closely monitored, reviewed and adjusted at both European and Belgian level.

2 Are my savings protected?

Your savings are more secure than ever before. Throughout the years, savings are much better protected since the introduction of the 'deposit guarantee scheme'. In concrete terms, the banks all contribute to a fund that guarantees depositors' savings up to 100,000 EUR, should a bank nevertheless run into difficulties. This amount is higher than before (20,000 EUR) and reimbursed faster as well.

3 Could a financial crisis happen again?

The banking system is much stronger and more resilient to a similar crisis. However, a new crisis may be caused by different factors. We are very careful with, for example, new technological developments that have been bringing major changes to the financial sector (Facebook payments, bitcoins, ...). For this reason, the banking sector not only protects itself from traditional risks, but also from dangers that lurk elsewhere.

4 What kind of return can I expect?

Currently, the minimum interest rate on a regulated savings account is set at 0.11%. Despite its relatively low return, a savings account does protect your savings and holds little to no risk. If you are looking to improve the return on your savings, you could invest in stocks or bonds, for example. However, these types of investments involve more risks, which is why it is important to make a well-informed choice. Your banker's expertise can definitely help you with that.

5 Is paying with my smartphone secure?

Contactless payments are completely safe. Contactless transactions are processed through the same highly secured networks used for card payments. Moreover, only small amounts of up to 25 EUR can be paid without entering your PIN. Thanks to additional security measures, you will be asked for your PIN after a certain number of small transactions - a small safety check to prevent fraud. For safety reasons, your PIN will always be required for higher amounts.

6 Can I still get a loan?

Helping people, businesses and authorities realize their dreams and projects through financing is a bank's core task and mission. The financial crisis did nothing to change that. On the contrary, we are now witnessing record numbers in terms of credit granting to households and companies in Belgium. However, banks are intentionally careful before granting a loan and they make sure that loans are repaid in a sound manner, which is of course in everyone's interest.

7 Am I still welcome at my local bank office?

Absolutely! Personal contact remains very important to our banks. We would like to make that even more pleasant than before. Fully supported by digital and mobile applications and solutions, of course. The convenience of online banking is what draws a lot of people in. Mobile and online banking are hugely successful. Customers have digital access to their financial assets 24/7 and can perform transactions themselves. In that way, digital solutions are partly replacing physical contact in bank offices, which is why banks have been adapting their offices and reducing the number of offices in Belgium.

But no need to worry: Belgium still has one of Europe's most dense networks of bank offices.