



# Introductory speech: President of Insurance Europe

14th International Conference: Protect. Connect. Invest.

Helsinki, 30 May 2024

Ladies and gentleman,

Let me start by thanking Arno and Finance Finland for co-organising this conference and hosting us in your beautiful capital.

Yesterday, I was honoured to be elected President of Insurance Europe.

To all our members: thank you for giving me your trust.

I am building on the solid foundations set by my predecessor, Andreas, our Director-General, Michaela, the Insurance Europe team and our members. I would like to thank them all for this.

Everybody agrees that Insurance Europe is a very useful organization with a very professional team.

My Presidency comes at a pivotal moment.

## **What is the context**

This year, half the world is voting, including in the EU elections in just over a week.

This will impact the economic, business and societal environment and our industry as well.

But whatever the results, governments, industry, civil society, regulators and supervisors must continue to cooperate to protect people and allow them to take risks.

Our world is complex

In recent history we have faced:

- a global pandemic,
- the invasion of Ukraine and wars in many parts of the world
- rapid digitalisation
- climate change and extreme weather events
- extremely low interest rates and then high inflation

Despite these challenges, the European insurance sector remains strong and keeps a worldwide leadership position.

This must be preserved.

Ladies and gentlemen, in such a context, my main priority will be to contribute to build a better and more competitive Europe. The insurance industry is part of the solution and is keen to engage constructively & work with all stakeholders to develop and co-build the right solutions.

Our industry is here to prevent, protect and invest

## **What are the challenges**

**1/ Our climate is changing. Our industry mitigates risks, helps societies to adapt and supports the green transition.**

Climate change is causing more regular and extreme natural catastrophes, putting more people and assets at risk.

In 2023, the global insurance industry paid out 100bn euros for Nat Cat claims, to help communities rebuild after a disaster.

However, Global losses were around 260bn euros, so only 40% was insured.

And in Europe, EIOPA estimates that only 25% of all climate-related catastrophe losses are insured.

Therefore, the level of protection needs to increase, and Europe could and should play its part, it calls for a new approach on how to collectively handle these risks with the different stakeholders including public authorities.

## **2/ Demographic changes are impacting our societies, economies and pension systems. Our industry can deliver the protection to give peace of mind for old age**

People are living longer.

According to the World Health Organisation, the number of people aged 80 years or older is expected to triple between 2020 and 2050.

And the harsh truth: our last European survey found [more than one-third](#) of people were not saving for their old age.

The current discussions on the CMU are a great opportunity to tackle at the same time the challenge of an ageing Europe and the one of insufficient investment in capital markets.

Our industry can play a key role in raising awareness and offering solutions to encourage long term savings and protection for old age dependency.

To increase awareness, we need to engage young people – as future industry leaders, policymakers and pensioners.

I am therefore pleased to announce today's launch a cooperation between Insurance Europe and the European Youth Parliament with which we will be organising several activities.

I thank Anya – their executive director – who will be speaking during our conference today.

## **3/ The protection gap is significant for our citizens and for companies, especially the health protection gap is growing and here again our industry can contribute by**

- increasing access to healthcare
- reducing the strain on governments
- promoting health prevention measures, such as screenings and check-ups

To achieve this it requires more discussion and a consensus on how to access, share and use data for the optimum benefit for society and our consumers.

## **4/ Last but not least, digitalisation is revolutionising society : our industry is a user and facilitator of digital solutions including AI, as well as a provider of protection.**

The insurance sector is fully committed to develop and use AI in a responsible way and to invest in the digital transition. However, we need well balanced legislation and a reflexion on private – public partnership for cyber risks.

## **What are the solutions**

### **What will it require to face these challenges together for the benefit of citizens, society as a whole, and European business ?**

- An increase in the number of public-private partnerships
- A more agile and less complex European regulatory framework, more focused on lawmaking built on solid impact assessments for the economy, society, and individuals.
- A keener understanding that to preserve European competitiveness policymakers need to keep in mind how other jurisdictions are moving forward.

### **What does it mean for us collectively?**

- Making every effort possible to enhance the co-construction of positions through an open dialogue
- Clearly acknowledging the various market realities and how these may affect the envisaged solutions
- Being even more proactive than in the past to keep up with the evolutions in this rapidly transforming environment.

### **And how can our industry contribute?**

In this context, full of uncertainties, we need as an industry to be courageous, to be innovative, to engage early enough with all stakeholders including the civil society. We will bring to the table our capacities to:

- build prevention solutions
- invest in line with European priorities taking into account our clients interests
- help to bridge the protection gap accepting to take more insurance risk when necessary and working
- with public authorities to develop sustainable private public partnerships
- reinforce dialogue with our consumers to find the best solutions
- contribute to the climate agenda both as insurer and institutional investor.

**Thank you**