

Press Release

Brussels, 3 August 2016

AMICE commends the Swiss Re sigma report findings on a resurgence of the mutual and cooperative insurance sector in Europe

Swiss Re's latest *sigma* report "[Mutual insurance in the 21st century: back to the future?](#)" highlights a renewed period of popularity leading to international expansion and the establishment of new mutuals.

European mutuals now account for more than 30% of insurance premiums, reflecting a "flight to quality" and customers seeking to invest their premiums in a "safe" and "trusted" place, according to Swiss Re's *sigma* report ¹. AMICE (Association of Mutual Insurers and Insurance Cooperatives in Europe) welcomed the report as a valuable overview of the mutual insurance industry in Europe and globally, reflecting significant changes in the sector over recent years.

In particular, several areas of intense activity by AMICE, including the challenges of aspects of Solvency II such as reporting and governance, digitalisation and opening up cross-border opportunities in Europe, have been noted in the report and will continue to be a focus of AMICE's activities in forthcoming months.

Sarah Goddard, AMICE Secretary General, commented:

"This sigma study is extremely timely, coming as it does so closely after AMICE has forged a new partnership with the global federation," she said. "In particular, it recognises the unique role of mutuals in keeping insurance affordable and certain risks insurable."

AMICE's recent alliance with the worldwide federation ICMIF (International Cooperative and Mutual Insurance Federation) reinforces AMICE's position as the European regional voice for the global mutual and cooperative insurance sector, strengthening the representation of the movement globally and regionally.

For many years AMICE has been successfully representing its membership in the EU's development of Solvency II requirements, most recently raising an alert on the proposed reliance on credit rating agencies for Standard Formula calculations. This has resulted in a call for advice from the European Commission to EIOPA for alternative options to tackle the issue.

The report highlights several areas of emerging challenges such as the bigger burden of corporate governance requirements and reporting rules which may have a greater impact on smaller mutuals. AMICE has long advocated that proportionality is vital to the proper application of all aspects of regulation. The report notes that considerable uncertainty remains on what proportionality means in practice. AMICE reminds regulators that proportionality not only concerns questions of scale but should also reflect the close relationship between mutuals and their members.

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“AMICE’s role is to help its members tackle challenges, as a venue for discussion, education and policy development,” said Ms Goddard.

Digital technology, alternative capital and removing barriers to business development were all topics at AMICE’s recent biennial Congress in Ghent. *“Many of the areas highlighted in the sigma report are active topics for AMICE,”* she said, *“and we will continue to develop and extend our remit in assisting our membership in facing these challenges, as well as being encouraged by the overall message in the sigma report that the mutual insurance industry is showing strong and consistent growth expected to extend into the future.”*

¹ The institutional scope of the *sigma* report is more limited than research carried out by the representative bodies for the mutual and cooperative insurance movement, and therefore some small variations in market share figures will be noted between the *sigma* report and European and global market share figures from AMICE and ICMIF.

Notes to the editors

About AMICE (Association of Mutual Insurers and Insurance Cooperatives in Europe)

AMICE is the voice of the mutual and cooperative insurance sector in Europe. The Brussels-based association advocates for appropriate and fair treatment of all mutual and cooperatives insurers in a European Single Market. It also encourages the creation and development of innovative solutions for the benefit of European citizens and society.

Mutual and cooperative insurance follows the principles of solidarity and sustainability, and is characterised by customer-membership and a democratic governance. The mutual business model, with its focus on using surpluses for the benefit of its members, is the natural way to provide insurance.

The close to 2,700 insurers united in the mutual and cooperative sector account for more than half of all insurance undertakings and for a market share of more than 30%. They provide cover for close to 400 million members/policyholders and employ more than 430,000 staff.

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