

## Geneva Association Economic Forum (GAEF) 2024

### Higher for Longer? Interest rate scenarios and their implications for insurers

Hosted by Ageas  
22–23 April  
Brussels, Belgium

The era of ‘free money’ seems to be over. Households and businesses are beginning to adjust to what could be a higher-for-longer scenario for interest rates. As major investors, insurers benefit from higher reinvestment yields. In addition, sales of (guaranteed) savings-type life insurance could increase and the profitability of in-force life savings products with guarantees could improve, partially offsetting negative earnings effects from higher lapses and surrenders.

What is the medium- to longer-term outlook for interest rates? Which political risks need to be considered? Which implications are expected for the strategic positioning and relevance of the insurance industry? And which consequences on the wider financial sector, including banks and asset and wealth managers, should insurers take into account? These and other questions will be discussed at GAEF 2024.

### Agenda

#### Monday, 22 April

19:30-21:30

#### Dinner

*Location: Ageas, Horizon Lounge, Manhattan Center, Avenue du Boulevard 21, Floor +17*

Welcome remarks by

**Bart De Smet**, Chairman of the Board of Directors, Ageas

#### Tuesday, 23 April

8:30-9:00

#### Registration and welcome coffee

*Location: AG Campus; Rue du Pont Neuf 17, Room: Pont Neuf 2 & 3*

9:00–9:30

#### Opening remarks

**Hans De Cuyper**, CEO, Ageas

**Michael Menhart**, Chief Economist, Munich Re and Chairman, GAEF

9:30–10:45

#### Session 1: The Primacy of Politics – An economic perspective on populism and geopolitics

Chair and speaker: **Jérôme Haegeli**, Group Chief Economist, Swiss Re

Speakers:

- **Gonzalo de Cadenas-Santiago**, Deputy General Manager, MAPFRE Economics
- **Philippe Trainar**, Director of SCOR Foundation for Science and Honorary Professor, CNAM

This stage-setting session will explore the economic implications of populist movements and geo-political tensions. With governments increasingly prioritising national resilience and security over the economic efficiency underpinned by free trade and global economic integration, which economic scenarios should insurers consider?

10:45–11:15

**Coffee break**

11:15–12:45

**Session 2: The Mid- to Long-term Outlook for Global Interest Rates**

Chair and speaker: **Vincent Chaigneau**, Head of Research, Generali Investments

Speakers:

- **Hervé Liévore**, Group Market Economist, AIA
- **Nathan Thooft**, Global CIO, Multi-Asset Solutions, Manulife Investment Management

This session will look beyond near-term inflation and economic growth as determinants of interest rates. It will address the more fundamental question of whether deglobalisation, increased spending on decarbonisation and defence, and demographic challenges will keep rates higher – even if inflation recedes. What consequences would this have for policymakers, for example, and the ‘free lunch’ view of government debt?

12:30–13:45

**Networking lunch**

13:45–14:30

**Special address: The Current Interest Rate Environment – Impact on the banking and insurance sectors**

**Vincent Magnée**, Member of the Board of Directors, National Bank of Belgium

14:30–15:55

**Session 3: Higher for Longer? Consequences for the insurance and financial services industries**

Chair and speaker: **Ben Coumans**, Managing Director Europe, Ageas

Speakers:

- **Linda Dougherty**, EVP, Chief Strategy & Enablement Officer, Sun Life
- **Ana Munera**, Head of Global Markets Strategy, BBVA
- **Mike Wells**, Group CEO, Athora

Building on the insights shared in the preceding special address, this session will further explore the anticipated and unexpected effects of 'higher for longer' on the financial services industry. Specifically, it will focus on life insurers and banks, examining potential impacts on profitability, as well as product management and distribution, while addressing interlinkages with bancassurance partners.

15:55–16:00

**Closing remarks**

**Michael Menhart**, Chief Economist, Munich Re and Chairman, GAEF

**Kai-Uwe Schanz**, Deputy Managing Director, The Geneva Association