

Media release

St.Gallen, 28 April 2017

Helvetia: Shareholders' Meeting approves all motions and elects Ivo Furrer as a new member of the Board of Directors

At the 21st ordinary Shareholders' Meeting of Helvetia Holding AG, the shareholders took note of the good business performance and the already realised synergies from the acquisitions of Nationale Suisse and Basler Austria. They were also provided with an insight into the implementation of the *helvetia 20.20* strategy. The Shareholders' Meeting approved all motions of the Board of Directors and elected Ivo Furrer as a new member of the Board of Directors.

At its 21st ordinary Shareholders' Meeting in St.Gallen, Helvetia Group once again presented a solid business performance to the 1,688 shareholders with voting rights in attendance (72.46% of the share capital represented). In 2016, Helvetia impressed with a 12% increase in underlying earnings to CHF 492 million after tax. The non-life business, in particular, contributed to the pleasing result, while the life business remained stable despite the challenging environment. The IFRS result, which was temporarily influenced by significant acquisition accounting effects, was CHF 376.6 million and thus 21.7% up on the previous year. The insurance group increased its business volume at Group level by 2.6% in original currency to CHF 8,512.7 million. The Shareholders' Meeting took note of this performance and approved the Management Report, financial statements and consolidated financial statements for 2016. It also discharged the Board of Directors and Executive Management for their activities in the 2016 financial year.

Pensions 2020 reform: unsatisfactory, but an important step

In his presentation, Chairman of the Board of Directors Dr Pierin Vincenz also addressed the Pensions 2020 reform, which the Swiss electorate and cantons will vote on in September. He explained to the Shareholders' Meeting why given the overall context, Helvetia supports the bill as an important step towards securing Swiss pensions over the long term, even though the reform is materially unsatisfactory for insurance companies.

Initial progress with the *helvetia 20.20* strategy

The shareholders also received an in-depth insight into the implementation of the *helvetia 20.20* strategy, which was presented a year ago. To ensure the efficient implementation of the strategy, Helvetia has established an integrated corporate structure that has been operational since the beginning of the year. With the new set-up, Helvetia is stepping up the collaboration between different areas within the organisation and optimising the basis for digitalisation and innovations – and is also closer to the market and its customers.

Helvetia customers can already take advantage of new digital offers. In Switzerland, for example, Helvetia is currently testing opportunities for the provision of electronic consulting services and is successfully positioned on the online market with smile.direct. In Germany, the insurance group marketed a new fully digital household insurance offering in 2016. And in Spain, the Helvetia Good Driver app has been launched in collaboration with the telecommunications company Telefonica I+D. Using this app, customers can improve their driving performance in a playful manner and take part in interesting competitions.

Significantly higher dividend

The Board of Directors proposed a dividend of CHF 21 to the Shareholders' Meeting. This marks a significant increase relative to the prior-year figure of CHF 19 and reflects the considerable progress made with the integration of Nationale Suisse and Basler Austria. "The underlying earnings include realised pre-tax synergies of CHF 118.3 million. Helvetia is thus ahead of its own schedule", explained Dr Philipp Gmür, CEO of Helvetia Group, to the shareholders in attendance. The Shareholders' Meeting approved the proposed dividend. The payout ratio based on the underlying earnings is thus 44%, or 58% based on the IFRS result after tax.

Ivo Furrer strengthens the Board of Directors

The shareholders confirmed all existing members of the Board of Directors for a further term of office of one year. As announced in March, Herbert J. Scheidt opted not to stand for re-election. Dr Pierin Vincenz praised his achievements: "Herbert J. Scheidt decisively shaped the company in the last few years with his profound expertise in financial, investment and risk matters and thus made an important contribution to the success of Helvetia. On behalf of the whole company, I would like to thank him for his many years of commitment to Helvetia." The Shareholders' Meeting elected Dr Ivo Furrer as a new member of the Board of Directors. As an accomplished management figure, he possesses profound expertise in the Swiss and international insurance business. Dr Pierin Vincenz is pleased about the strengthening of the Board of Directors: "Ivo Furrer can look back on a successful career in the insurance industry. He possesses all of the prerequisites required to create value for our customers, employees and shareholders together with the Board of Directors and Executive Management as per the objectives of *helvetia 20.20*."

Compensation approved

The Shareholders' Meeting also elected the members of the Compensation Committee for a term of office of one year each and voted on the fixed and variable com-

pensation of the members of the Board of Directors and Executive Management.
All motions were approved.

This media release is also available on our website www.helvetia.com/media. An info kit on the Shareholders' Meeting is available at www.helvetia.com/gvinfokit.



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The Shareholders' Meeting has no impact on the climate, as unavoidable greenhouse gas emissions caused by participants travelling to and from the event and the consumption of energy at the meeting venue are compensated for by purchasing emission reduction certificates.

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About the Helvetia Group

In over 150 years, the Helvetia Group has grown from a number of Swiss and foreign insurance companies into a successful international insurance group. Today, Helvetia has subsidiaries in its home market Switzerland as well as in the countries that make up the Europe market area: Germany, Italy, Austria and Spain. With its Specialty Markets market area, Helvetia is also present in France and in selected regions worldwide. Some of its investment and financing activities are managed through subsidiaries and fund companies in Luxembourg and Jersey. The Group is headquartered in St.Gallen, Switzerland.

Helvetia is active in the life and non-life business, and also offers customised specialty lines and reinsurance cover. Its business activities focus on retail customers as well as small and medium-sized companies and larger corporates. With some 6,500 employees, the company provides services to more than 5 million customers. With a business volume of CHF 8.51 billion, Helvetia generated underlying earnings of CHF 491.8 million in the 2016 financial year. The registered shares of Helvetia Holding are traded on the SIX Swiss Exchange under the symbol HELN.

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