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Macro-economic scenario

Financial markets scenario

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The just ended year was marked by a weak macro-economic situation, although there were some positive signs. In the Euro Zone, BCE measures were determinant, which were proven to be efficient in significantly reducing turbulence. At the same time, in this political contest, the framework for a European banking union was developed, which will help to reduce financial turbulence. Despite reducing financial turbulence, the economy of the European Union is struggling to grow, given the partial recovery in the Euro Zone. In the European Union, Italy is among the countries where economic activity slowed down significantly (the GDP fell by 1.8%). Encouraging signs of recovery came from the United States in the third quarter, where the GDP increased by +0.2%.

Financial markets

In 2012, financial markets showed signs of recovery, especially benefiting from the intervention by the European Central Bank. Bond markets reacted positively including with respect to government bonds. The strong recovery, which had a positive impact on the bond market, was also reflected in the corporate bond market. Corporate bonds also reacted positively to such measures: the spread on the bonds of European investment grade companies narrowed significantly.

The yield on ten-year German government bonds dropped from 1.83% of 31 December 2011 to 1.32% at 31 December 2012.

The yield on ten-year U.S. government bonds dropped from 1.88% to 1.76%, partly due to monetary policy measures.

The Bund two-year rate dropped, becoming negative from 0.14% at the end of 2011 to -0.01% at 31 December 2012.

The US two-year rate remained substantially stable at 0.25% (0.24% at the end of 2011).

Equity markets mainly showed positive performances, although characterized by high levels of volatility; after the Eurostoxx recovered significantly (up +15.53%). In particular, the segments with the best performances were the UK and France. The main European stock exchanges recorded generally positive performances: Frankfurt's DAX (up +29.06%), Paris's CAC 40 (up +15.53%), London's FTSE 100 (up +15.53%). In the US, the stock markets showed a similar positive yield thanks to the economic recovery. The S&P 500 was up +15.53%.

Insurance markets

The main European insurance markets on which the Generali Group operates showed performances that differed from the trend to show the downtrend that had characterized the previous year; however, there was a dichotomy between Europe and the US. As regards Italy, the trend in premiums written for direct labour for the first nine months of the year decreased by 1.1%. In Germany, premiums written have recovered from the decline during the previous year, thanks to the increase in the Motor segment. France continued to show the decline in premiums written observed in the previous year. Despite a deceleration in the first nine months, the trend in the main Central and Eastern European countries, life insurance markets have generally shown a positive trend. Also in Spain, the first estimates for 2012 show that the life segment market suffered a sharp decline (-9%), mainly due to the property & casualty segment. In Italy, the weakness of domestic demand had a negative influence on overall premiums written in the property & casualty segment. In Germany, there is a significant increase in premiums written in the Motor segment (+5.1%) and a positive result in the life segment. In France, the property & casualty segment showed an increase in premiums of 4%, in large part due to rate increases. Concerning the other main European operating Countries for the Group, there was a significant decline in Motor

