

18 MAY 2022 · SPOTLIGHT N 9

INTERVIEW WITH CHAIRMAN INNOCENZO CIPOLETTA

FeBAF Chairman Innocenzo Cipolletta, in an interview published May 8 by Corriere della Sera, proposes the creation of a fund of private equity and venture capital funds.

Cipolletta reiterates the need for an instrument to strengthen the capital of SMEs given the nature of innovations that have taken place in recent years, which has led to numerous transformations both in the area of digitalization and in the process of ecological transition. The proposal is among those contained in FeBAF's response to the MEF (Italian Ministry of Economy and Finance) consultation recently closed on the competitiveness of the Italian financial market and is part of the broader ongoing debate on the European Capital Markets Union.

Priorities in private banking

When Andrea Ragaini took over the chairmanship of AIPB at the end of last month, he underlined its commitment to three priorities: (a) the exploitation of private banking's distinctive features to win greater recognition; (b) a positioning on the front-line in the promotion of sustainable investments; and (c) the promotion of greater client awareness of asset management, particularly through a focus on longer investment time-horizons. With 10.5 per cent growth in assets under management from €932 billion to €1,030 billion, Italy's private bankers were able to celebrate excellent results in 2021, the closing year of the three-year chairmanship of Paolo Langé, Mr Ragaini's predecessor (Antonella Massari has been confirmed in the post of secretary-general.) Despite the geopolitical upheaval caused by the Russian invasion of Ukraine, which has led to a sharp drop in consumer and business confidence, as well as bringing increasing inflationary pressure and uncertainty in financial markets, the association expects average annual growth of assets under management by its members will be about 4 per cent over the coming three years.

AIPB believes that private banking's capacity for resilience and adaptation to change and complexity provides an edge in attracting new clients. This is expected to bring a 7.3 per cent increase in net fresh money over the three-year period. The other contributor to an expected overall 12.3 per cent growth of assets under management, to €1,157 billion at year-end 2024, is a 5.1 per cent gain on portfolio valuations. In addition to his three priorities, Mr Ragaini begins his term of office with three key-words for the association and its members: innovation, protection and sustainable-growth.

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Italian banks seek to protect their customers

ABI (the banking association) and the Italian state police are renewing their campaign to make bank customers aware of the risks of identity theft. In preparing a 12-point check-list of dos and don'ts, ABI and the police worked with ABI's own anti-crime research unit, CERTFin (a joint ABI and Bank of Italy body charged with beefing up cyber protection) and sixteen consumer associations. Although some points on the check-list seem obvious, they're worth repeating: destroying documents that contain personal information rather than simply throwing them away, for example, and reporting lost or mislaid key documents and credit cards as soon as their loss or absence is discovered. The list pays considerable attention to online security, underlining the need to safeguard access codes and to change passwords and make them hard to guess. Avoidance of the online traps by fraudsters is a major concern and the check-list reminds internet users never to click on links, and to install anti-virus programmes and keep them updated.

Tight email discipline is fundamental. As for social networks, the advice is to use them prudently "and above all never communicate personal or financial data on them." ABI notes that the campaign's aim is to reduce vulnerability factors and potentially risky behaviour. The day after announcing its check-list for the public, ABI released a brief press statement to say that since February it has been the target of cyber attacks. The association has taken all necessary measures to protect personal data and its IT infrastructure.

All crazy about the Salone del Risparmio

Apart from obligatory FFP2 face-masks, when the Salone del Risparmio got underway on 10 May, the packed conference rooms at Milan's convention centre recalled pre-pandemic years. The annual event, organised by the asset managers' association, ran for three days and attracted 20,000 attendees, of whom more than one-third were in streaming. For this year's title, Assogestioni chose "Human, responsible, digital – economic and social development for the coming decade", subjects around which it organised 125 separate sessions, in seven streams that included: asset allocation and investment strategy; innovation and digitalisation; and distribution and consultancy. There were about 400 speakers, fund managers and asset management firms doing much of the heavy lifting, helped by contributions from institutions, associations (FeBAF has been one of the partners) and media organisations. In his opening speech, Carlo Trabattoni, Assogestioni's chairman, noted that "human capital is fundamental for facing the challenges that lie ahead" and how the association confirms "still greater commitment to financial education and a renewed effort to promote its spread." More than thirty of the event's sessions dealt with sustainability and human capital, while education and training accounted for more than twenty. Assoreti (the association of investment advisory firms with networks of tied agents), AIPB (the private banking association), the CFA (Chartered Financial Analysts) Society Italy and, of course, Assogestioni itself were among those who hosted sessions on aspects of human capital. A common thread in these sessions was the increasing complexity of the financial world, with new challenges like ESG and digitalisation, and how the various associations are dealing with the need to ensure continuous professional education. Assogestioni's session on the event's last day was dedicated to its human capital programme which seeks to encourage young people into careers in asset management. Enrico Maria Cervellati, a university professor of behavioural science, gave his light-hearted, yet serious, opening address for the session the title: "How to begin your professional life well and continue it better". Appropriately for an event dedicated to savings, Assogestioni included a session that commemorates the 75th anniversary of the Italian constitution, whose article 47 states that "The Republic encourages and protects savings in all its forms." The session celebrated the issuing of a postage stamp dedicated to Italy's industria del risparmio gestito, managed savings industry. The postage stamp is a recognition of merit and excellence, said Maria Bianca Farina, president of ANIA (the insurers' association) as well as of the Italian posts. Speaking on a video link, Ms Farina noted that the already high Italian propensity to save increased markedly during the pandemic. And she also drew attention to how the pandemic itself was not over and how Italians now also face the uncertainties of inflation and war. Even so, Ms Farina has no doubts about the future. "We are a nation of savers and we will continue to be so."



In brief

AIFI (the private equity venture capital and private debt association) reports that the Private Equity Monitor of LIUC university business school recorded 81 new private equity deals in Q1, a record number and 15 higher than in Q1 last year, itself a record. While northern Italy continues to be the main source of deals, AIFI notes that private equity operations are now increasingly being undertaken elsewhere. Moreover, deals are being arranged beyond the traditional sectors of activity. With the pandemic still affecting business and with new disruptive forces at work, AIFI notes that as the year progresses the challenge will be “to preserve and enhance investments in portfolio and to maintain the strongly proactive approach to the market characteristic of the past three years.”

On 4 May, Assoreti reported a total net inflow of €13.9 billion in Q1, an advance of 7.2 per cent on Q1 last year. The biggest increases were in liquidity of managed savings (net €5.5 billion higher) and insurance and pensions products (net €3.3 billion higher). Commenting on the figures, Marco Tofanelli, Assoreti's secretary-general, said they show that the association's members continue to provide the right response to ongoing geopolitical and macroeconomic uncertainty. “That an increasing number of Italians decide to turn to financial consultants for planning their investments is proof of the solidity of the model,” he noted.

Crypto assets under the microscope. Giuseppe Siani, head of banking and financial supervision at the Bank of Italy, described the ecosystem around crypto assets as being “still in a complex and fluid development phase, and extremely uncertain in its end results.” He was speaking on 3 May at a seminar on the regulation of new technologies based on DLT for LUISS university and the school of economic and financial policing. He drew attention to the need for harmonisation in the EU to avoid the risks of regulatory arbitrage. Mr Siani underlined how the search for a common regulatory framework “must safeguard the need for financial stability and consumer rights.”

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Save the Date

FeBAF organize:

Webinar:

"Il Finanziamento della sicurezza agro-alimentare nel nuovo contesto geopolitico europeo"

18 may 2022

15:00 CET

"Primavera dell'innovazione"

"Dallo Spazio alla Terra: gli Use Case della New Space Economy"

19 May 2022

9:30 CET

Centro Congressi Unione Industriali, Torino

among the speaker in session II-Insuretech,

the general secretary of FeBAF

Paolo Garonna

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