

CO³ voices: VIG Re



Martin Hartmann



Tobias Sondorfer

Karin Kafesie: Mr. Hartmann, could you describe VIG Re's strategic role within the VIG Group? How does VIG Re contribute to the overall risk management of the Group?

Martin Hartmann: The very purpose of reinsurance is to protect the capital of insurance companies and thereby to enable their business conduct and growth ambition. VIG Re's specific business model is based on two pillars: On the one hand, we act as a hub for VIG Group's outgoing reinsurance and on the other hand we provide reinsurance services to third party clients. Most of our third-party business we do actually outside of CEE, our home market. By doing so we diversify VIG's Group risk profile which in turn has a positive impact on the solvency ratio as well as on VIG's rating and thus generates additional benefits.

How does VIG Re collaborate with other entities within the VIG Group?

Martin Hartmann: Reinsurance – as part of the Central Functions – is in my view one of the frontrunners when it comes to collaboration at VIG. Since the foundation of VIG Re in 2008, we have been closely collaborating with the VIG Holding's Reinsurance department led by Gerhard Klemensich and the reinsurance teams of the local VIG companies. Especially the smaller VIG companies who may not have the resources to cover all aspects of the reinsurance spectrum. For instance, we organise reinsurance technical trainings, all reinsurance managers meet in summer at the VIG International Reinsurance Meeting conference and the management board members responsible for reinsurance at the local VIG companies gather in autumn at the VIG Re Reinsurance Executive Forum in Prague to exchange and discuss latest trends matters in the reinsurance market. Moreover, the VIG reinsurance community gets together twice a year at the reinsurance conferences in Monte Carlo and Baden-Baden. There, we present ourselves as one group, with one voice. And just as important: there is a continuous exchange through numerous bilateral meetings or calls which show how well the reinsurance network actually works at VIG. Personally, I see the Reinsurance community as one of the strongest and most established networks within our group.

You look back on your 12 years of being CEO of VIG Re. What are you most proud of? What do you see as the key challenges and opportunities for the company moving forward?

Martin Hartmann: As we aim to be in first place a client focused company what matters most for me is the reputation we have earned with our clients. Our key to success is that we work hard and interact very closely with our business partners to best understand their needs. The NMG Global P&C Re Study 2024, the leading independent reinsurance market survey, named VIG Re as the biggest mover over the last five years, ranking in Continental Europe as a TOP 10 reinsurer.



Besides the clients' testimonials, I am particularly pleased with the corporate culture at VIG Re. Despite our headcount is approaching 200, we were still able to maintain a vibrant, agile culture where we work very hard, but also celebrate successes. Our employees are empowered to drive the company, our leadership style is very participative – everybody is asked to make an impact. We promote dialogue and transparency as a foundation for our high-performance culture.

Last not but least we pleased our shareholder as the Company has been strongly growing over the past years, not only in top line but also in profits, and consistently paying out attractive dividends through all the years.

In terms of challenges, I see two major topics for VIG Re as for the whole reinsurance industry: One is technology and data. We have to keep pace that our tools, especially in underwriting, are state of the art. The other big challenge is attracting talents. There's a shortage when it comes senior underwriter, actuary, or IT. When positioning VIG Re as an employer of choice, we have to pay competitive salaries, but other factors like empowerment, opportunities for professional development, a healthy corporate culture and strong leadership make the real difference.

Speaking of opportunities, I see plenty for VIG Re. Reinsurance per se is a growth industry, and this is not only due to the increasing frequency and severity of natural disasters but also many emerging risks connected to the technological, economic and socio demographic changes we are facing. VIG Re is not a big tanker so we have the opportunity to make choices. To identify those niches where there is money to earn and where we as VIG Re can make a difference. We have demonstrated that we played this very well in the past. But the success of our past is not enough to guarantee our future success. The new management team, under the lead of Tobias, is now setting the new course.

Karin Kafesie: Mr. Sonndorfer, you have assumed the role of CEO in January 2025; what is your vision for VIG Re's future growth and development?

Tobias Sonndorfer: As already outlined by Martin, we see great opportunities for VIG Re ahead and we want to capture them in different ways: On the one hand by delivering our propositions at scale – meaning enlarging our underwriting capabilities as well as our regional footprint to become a more globalised player. On the other hand, we want to evolve our value proposition as such. That means for us, that we want to evolve from a product- to a solution provider by even more specifically addressing the needs of our clients through a deep understanding of motivations. This holds true for our clients within VIG Group but also for our third-party clients. Our aim is to spearhead our solutions proposition within VIG first and then build it out into the reinsurance marketplace. Our thinking here is based on client centricity – the closer we are to our clients the greater the opportunity and the more sustainable our business model. Finally, we don't want to be everything for everyone – copying other reinsurers is not an option for us. We want to deliver our capacity, knowledge, and solutions the “VIG Re way”.



In addition, we have a solid fundament we can build on. I see three elements that contribute to that: firstly, the striking development of VIG Re within the last 15 years that puts us in a privileged position to further evolve the company. Secondly, our strong brand – we are a business partner of choice – and thirdly, our very well-established relationships with our clients in CEE and beyond.

How do you see digital transformation shaping the future of reinsurance? What specific initiatives or technologies will you prioritise to enhance VIG Re's competitiveness and efficiency?

Tobias Sonndorfer: Technology and data management are key to our future success. At the end of the day our product is a promise on a piece of paper that comes along with trust in the people you deal with. A leap of faith that we must fulfil with the highest quality standards. Currently we focus on the implementation of an underwriting workbench that allows us an efficient and streamlined underwriting process. Technology helps to take the administrative burden from the underwriters so that they can focus on their core expertise. In terms of scalability, digitisation helps us to avoid overproportioned efforts and costs when scaling by lines of business and by regions. When it comes to emerging risks – first and foremost through AI – there are various new risks arising out of digitised societies. Thus, there is an ever-evolving development of the risk landscape and only if we keep the pace with those technological developments, we will be able to reinsure them and act as a partner on eye level for our clients.

What is your strategy to attract and retain top talent in a competitive industry?

Tobias Sonndorfer: Great minds want to make a difference and create an impact. To attract, keep and develop talents we want to be an employer of choice. We position VIG Re as a platform where our people can grow from a professional- but also from a personal point of view. With key topics like climate change and digitisation we are dealing with the major topics of today's society and thus also provide our employees with a purpose and a deeper meaning to their work. Working with VIG Re is doubtlessly demanding – but in a very positive way. You can make the difference and the way we have succeeded in attracting talents proves us right.

