



Jo Willaert, President of FERMA

Opening speech to FERMA-CRE awards dinner and presentation

On behalf of the Federation of European Risk Management Associations (FERMA), I am delighted to welcome everyone to this first European Risk Management Awards presentation and dinner.

These awards recognise excellence in our profession and among our risk partners in the insurance industry and beyond. We are grateful to Commercial Risk Europe (CRE) for organising the awards and this gala dinner. I congratulate all the winners: the risk managers and risk partners.

Risk management is an essential part of a smoothly running organisation. but it isn't one that's often visible from the outside. We know our advisors, our brokers, our insurers – our friends here in the room. But we do not sign off on public documents, like the report and accounts. Our pictures do not often appear on in corporate documents.

Yet, we are working to make our organisations resilient and able to take new opportunities. We support senior management in decision making. We work with other functions across the business, possibly across the globe, to build enterprise risk management. Some of us place insurance. We reduce losses, and many other things besides.

Raising the profile of risk management strengthens our position in helping our organisations, and so this is a key goal for FERMA. The response to these awards indicated that the risk management community shares our aim. We had 12 shortlisted candidates for the four FERMA-CRE Excellence in Risk Management awards, and just getting to this stage was already a recognition of their professionalism and expertise. Among the candidates, I was delighted to see a spread of countries, industries, and men and women represented.

Shortly, we will announce the names of the four winners of the Excellence in Risk Management Awards. These awards showcase the varied roles and expertise of risk managers in performing this role in Europe.

As you probably know, education is one of my themes as President of FERMA. Excellence in Risk Management works hand-in-hand with FERMA's certification project rimap® to build understanding of the professional standing of European risk managers. In October, the first 18 risk managers to pass the rimap examination received their certificates. More will follow in 2017.

These awards which we are presenting tonight for the first time are not only important for the public profile of risk management, but also help us within our own companies and in the industry. They will shine a light on the risk manager and what he or she does within their

own organisations. This helps us do our jobs, because that human contact, the soft skills, remain important to the work of many risk managers.

In terms of the profession, they will put faces to names, helping people in their careers and creating role models. We believe they will help attract new people into what is a very rewarding and valuable career, but one that may not be on the lips of new graduates.

Customer service and industry leadership

Now it's very important for me to turn focus on our risk partners. FERMA also welcomes the award winners in the categories for customer service and industry leadership. We have a close relationship with our risk partners. Seeing organisations recognised for excellent service and innovation will encourage others to put forward their own projects in future.

As FERMA, we appreciate the support you give us in our projects. We are aware of the enormous expertise that exists within these companies from which we can benefit – and they will also benefit from our experience. Communication is another one of my themes. With our risk partners and especially our sponsors, we are creating a true European risk management community.

In Europe today, there are many challenges. We are stronger meeting them together. Over the next years I see this community growing steadily into an ever more influential and coherent voice for risk management in Europe.

And this emphasises my third theme as president: leadership. As FERMA we welcome our members, their members, our risk partners and others to work with us to lead our organisations and societies to greater resilience and success.

Thank you to Commercial Risk Europe which proposed the idea of these awards to us. The very name of the publication stresses Europe. And even though Adrian and his friends are based in the UK, we think they will remain true Europeans.