

FITCH ALZA I RATINGS DI UNIPOL GRUPPO: UNIPOLSAI SALE A BBB+

Bologna, 10 giugno 2021

L'agenzia di rating Fitch Ratings ha alzato l'Insurer Financial Strength Rating (IFSR) di UnipolSai Assicurazioni S.p.A. a "BBB+" da "BBB", ovvero due notch sopra il rating Italia (BBB- / Outlook stabile). Conseguentemente anche il Long-Term Issuer Default Rating (IDR) assegnato a Unipol Gruppo S.p.A. è passato a "BBB" da "BBB-" e i rating delle emissioni di debito del Gruppo Unipol sono tutti migliorati di 1 notch:

- i prestiti senior di Unipol Gruppo S.p.A. sono passati a "BBB-";
- i prestiti subordinati di UnipolSai Assicurazioni S.p.A. sono passati a "BB+";
- il prestito subordinato perpetuo RT1 di UnipolSai Assicurazioni S.p.A. è passato a "BB-".

L'agenzia di rating ha, nel contempo, mantenuto l'outlook dei suddetti rating a "stabile".

Nella sua decisione, il Comitato Fitch ha riconosciuto la validità della strategia e i risultati conseguiti dal Gruppo in particolare in merito alla diminuzione del rischio di concentrazione nel portafoglio di investimento, e al conseguente rafforzamento del patrimonio nel 2020.

Si allega il testo integrale del comunicato stampa emesso dall'agenzia Fitch.

Unipol Gruppo S.p.A.

Unipol è uno dei principali gruppi assicurativi in Europa e leader in Italia nel Ramo Danni (in particolare nei settori Auto e Salute), con una raccolta complessiva pari a circa 12,2 miliardi di euro, di cui 7,9 miliardi nei Rami Danni e 4,3 miliardi nei Rami Vita (dati 2020). Unipol adotta una strategia di offerta integrata e copre l'intera gamma dei prodotti assicurativi e finanziari, operando principalmente attraverso la controllata UnipolSai Assicurazioni. Il Gruppo è attivo inoltre nell'assicurazione auto diretta (Linear Assicurazioni), nell'assicurazione trasporti ed aviazione (Siat), nella tutela della salute (UniSalute), nella previdenza integrativa e presidia il canale della bancassicurazione (Arca Vita, Arca Assicurazioni e Incontra). Gestisce inoltre significative attività diversificate nei settori del recupero crediti (UnipolReC), immobiliare, alberghiero (Gruppo UNA), medico-sanitario e agricolo (Tenute del Cerro). Unipol Gruppo S.p.A. è quotata alla Borsa Italiana.

UnipolSai Assicurazioni S.p.A.

UnipolSai Assicurazioni S.p.A. è la compagnia assicurativa del Gruppo Unipol, leader in Italia nei rami Danni, in particolare nei settori Auto e Salute. Attiva anche nei rami Vita, UnipolSai conta un portafoglio di oltre 10 milioni di clienti e occupa una posizione di preminenza nella graduatoria nazionale dei gruppi assicurativi per raccolta diretta pari a circa 12,2 miliardi di euro, di cui 7,9 nei Danni e 4,3 nel Vita (dati 2020). La compagnia opera attraverso la più grande rete agenziale d'Italia, forte di circa 2.400 agenzie assicurative distribuite sul territorio nazionale. UnipolSai è attiva inoltre nell'assicurazione auto diretta (Linear Assicurazioni), nell'assicurazione trasporti ed aviazione (Siat), nella tutela della salute (UniSalute), nella previdenza integrativa e presidia il canale della bancassicurazione (Arca Vita, Arca Assicurazioni e Incontra). Gestisce inoltre significative attività diversificate nei settori immobiliare, alberghiero (Gruppo UNA), medico-sanitario e agricolo (Tenute del Cerro). UnipolSai Assicurazioni è controllata da Unipol Gruppo S.p.A. e, al pari di quest'ultima, è quotata alla Borsa Italiana.

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RATING ACTION COMMENTARY

Fitch Upgrades Unipol's IFS Rating to 'BBB+'; Outlook Stable

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Fitch Ratings - Frankfurt am Main - 10 Jun 2021: Fitch Ratings has upgraded UnipolSai Assicurazioni S.p.A.'s (UnipolSai) UnipolSai's Insurer Financial Strength (IFS) Rating to 'BBB+' from 'BBB'. Fitch has also upgraded UnipolSai and parent Unipol Gruppo S.p.A. (Unipol Gruppo, together Unipol) Long-Term Issuer Default Ratings (IDR) to 'BBB' from 'BBB-'. The Outlooks are Stable.

UnipolSai is Unipol Gruppo's main operating entity.

A full list of rating actions is below.

KEY RATING DRIVERS

The upgrade reflects Unipol's reduced asset concentration risk, following the reduction in the group's exposure to Italian sovereign debt in 2020. The upgrade also reflects improvement to Unipol's capitalisation in 2020 despite the adverse and volatile business and capital-market conditions caused by the coronavirus pandemic. We expect both asset concentration risk and capitalisation to be maintained at current levels in 2021. The ratings continue to reflect Unipol's strong profitability, moderate leverage and 'most favourable' business profile among rated peers.

Fitch views Unipol's investment policy as prudent, with nearly 82% of the group's investment portfolio invested in good-quality fixed-income instruments at end-2020. Unipol's concentrated exposure to Italian sovereign debt significantly reduced in 2020 but remains high. Italian sovereign debt fell to 2.8x consolidated shareholders' equity at end-2020, and further decreased to 2.6x at end-1Q21, (2019: 3.5x, 2018: 4x) as a result of a de-risking initiative to protect the group's solvency capital from potential volatility of Italian government spreads. However, Unipol's reduced risky assets was more than offset by Fitch's downgrade of Italy in April 2020 that, under Fitch's insurance criteria, led to a deterioration of the group's risky assets ratio to 156% as at end-2020 (2019: 141%). This ratio slightly improved in 1Q21 to 146%.

Unipol's capital, as measured by Fitch's Prism Factor Based Model (Prism FBM), improved to 'Very Strong' based on end-2020 data from 'Strong' in 2019, due to very strong retained earnings. Fitch expects Unipol's Prism FBM score to remain 'Very Strong' in 2021. Unipol's solvency coverage was also very strong and improved to 216% at end-2020 from 187% at end-2019.

Fitch views Unipol's financial leverage ratio (FLR) as moderate for the group's ratings. In 2020, the FLR remained stable at 35%, following the issue of a EUR1 billion senior unsecured green bond by Unipol Gruppo (treated as 100% debt in FLR) and EUR500 million restricted Tier 1 notes by UnipolSai in 2H20 (100% equity). Unipol's FLR decreased to 32% at end-5M21, following the reimbursement of two subordinated notes totalling EUR562 million, in line with Fitch's expectations. We expect FLR to remain below 35% in 2021.

Fitch assesses Unipol's profitability as strong. The Fitch-calculated combined ratio improved to 87% in 2020 (93% in 2019), benefitting from significantly reduced claims frequency during lockdown in Italy. Fitch expects Unipol's underlying and net profitability to decline slightly in 2021 as general mobility recovers, but to remain strong and above pre-pandemic levels.

We assess Unipol's business profile as 'most favourable'. UnipolSai is the largest motor underwriter in Italy and the leader in the use of telematics in motor insurance. Unipol also has a strong market position in the Italian life insurance sector. The group has a strong franchise and can exploit its pricing power and strong distribution capabilities through its network of agencies and bancassurance agreements.

RATING SENSITIVITIES

Factors that could, individually or collectively, lead to positive rating action/upgrade:

--A reduction in Unipol's exposure to Italian sovereign debt to below 2.0x consolidated shareholders' equity on a sustained basis.

--A one-notch upgrade of Italy's Long-Term Local-Currency IDR.

Factors that could, individually or collectively, lead to negative rating action/downgrade:

--A one-notch downgrade of Italy's Long-Term Local-Currency IDR is likely to lead to downgrade of Unipol's ratings by one to two notches.

--An increase in Unipol's exposure to Italian sovereign debt to above 3.5x consolidated shareholders' equity.

--A decrease in Unipol's Prism FBM score to the lower range of 'Strong' or FLR weakening to above 40% on a sustained basis.

BEST/WORST CASE RATING SCENARIO

International scale credit ratings of Financial Institutions and Covered Bond issuers have a best-case rating upgrade scenario (defined as the 99th percentile of rating transitions, measured in a positive direction) of three notches over a three-year rating horizon; and a worst-case rating downgrade scenario (defined as the 99th percentile of rating transitions, measured in a negative direction) of four notches over three years. The complete span of best- and worst-case scenario credit ratings for all rating categories ranges from 'AAA' to 'D'. Best- and worst-case scenario credit ratings are based on historical performance. For more information about the methodology used to determine sector-specific best- and worst-case scenario credit ratings, visit <https://www.fitchratings.com/site/re/10111579>

Feedback

REFERENCES FOR SUBSTANTIALLY MATERIAL SOURCE CITED AS KEY DRIVER OF RATING

The principal sources of information used in the analysis are described in the Applicable Criteria.

ESG CONSIDERATIONS

Unless otherwise disclosed in this section, the highest level of ESG credit relevance is a score of '3'. This means ESG issues are credit-neutral or have only a minimal credit impact on the entity, either due to their nature or the way in which they are being managed by the entity. For more information on Fitch's ESG Relevance Scores, visit

www.fitchratings.com/esg

RATING ACTIONS

ENTITY/DEBT	RATING			PRIOR
UnipolSai Assicurazioni S.p.A.	LT IDR	BBB Rating Outlook Stable	Upgrade	BBB- Rating Outlook Stable
	Ins Fin Str	BBB+ Rating Outlook Stable	Upgrade	BBB Rating Outlook Stable
● senior unsecured	LT	BBB	Upgrade	BBB-
● subordinated	LT	BB+	Upgrade	BB
● subordinated	LT	BB-	Upgrade	B+
Unipol Gruppo	LT	BBB Rating Outlook Stable	Upgrade	BBB- Rating

[VIEW ADDITIONAL RATING DETAILS](#)

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Feedback