

PRESS RELEASE

S&P REVISES THE RATING OF CATTOLICA ASSICURAZIONI

Verona, 27 January 2012. The rating agency Standard & Poor's has communicated today the removal of Cattolica Assicurazioni from creditwatch negative and the revision of its rating from BBB+ to BBB, with a negative outlook.

Standard & Poor's states that such correction should be put in relation to the recent downgrading of the Italian Republic and that the negative outlook reflects the forecast on the adequacy of the level of capitalisation, which might be influenced by the persisting situation of unfavourable economic and financial market trends.

Nevertheless "the ratings continue to reflect Standard & Poor's view of the strong operating performance of Cattolica's property/casualty business, leading competitive position in the Italian market, and management's ability to deliver results".

SOCIETÀ CATTOLICA DI ASSICURAZIONE

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From Standard & Poor's Research Update

Italian Insurer Societa Cattolica di Assicurazione Ratings Lowered To 'BBB' On Weaker Capitalization; Outlook Negative

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Overview

Difficult financial market conditions and our view of increased credit risk in Italy have weakened Cattolica's risk-adjusted capital adequacy to marginal levels.

We are therefore lowering the ratings on Cattolica to 'BBB' from 'BBB+'.

We are also removing the ratings from CreditWatch, where they were placed with negative implications on Dec. 9, 2011.

The negative outlook reflects our view that the current market conditions and economic outlook in Italy and the eurozone will continue to weigh on Cattolica's financial profile.

Rating Action

On Jan. 27, 2012, Standard & Poor's Ratings Services lowered its long-term counterparty credit and insurer financial strength ratings on Italy-based composite insurer Società Cattolica di Assicurazione (Cattolica) to 'BBB' from 'BBB+'. At the same time, we removed all ratings from CreditWatch, where they were placed with negative implications on Dec. 9, 2011. The outlook is negative.

Rationale

The downgrade reflects our view that Cattolica's capitalization has weakened to marginal from adequate levels and that it could weaken further owing to the ongoing economic pressures in Italy and the rest of the eurozone, coupled with difficult financial market conditions.

We believe that Cattolica is experiencing increased risk capital requirements, through higher credit risk charges, mainly due to the downgrade on Jan. 13, 2012 of the Republic of Italy unsolicited sovereign ratings (BBB+/Negative/A-2). In our view, this has added to the pressure that Cattolica was already experiencing due to increased credit spreads and volatile equity markets, which have weakened the company's total adjusted capital.

We do not consider Cattolica's earnings capacity to be sufficient to restore capitalization to adequate levels over the next two years.

As of year-end 2011, Cattolica had a €5.8 billion exposure to Italian government debt--an estimated 49% of invested assets or 5.3x total shareholder funds. We estimate that a further 10% of total invested assets consist of bonds issued by, and deposits held by, Italian banks.

Partly offsetting Cattolica's marginal capital adequacy, the ratings continue to reflect Standard & Poor's view of the strong operating performance of its property/casualty business, leading competitive position in the Italian market, and management's ability to deliver results.

Outlook

The negative outlook reflects our view that we could lower the ratings over the next 12 months if capital adequacy were to deteriorate further as a result of unfavorable macroeconomic or financial trends.

If the company successfully rebuilds its capital base to a level that we consider to be more supportive of the current ratings, we could affirm the ratings with a stable outlook.

Related Criteria And Research

All articles listed below are available on RatingsDirect on the Global Credit Portal, unless otherwise stated.

Related criteria

Principles Of Credit Ratings, Feb. 16, 2011

Interactive Ratings Methodology, April 22, 2009

Rating Government-Related Entities: Methodology And Assumptions, Dec. 9, 2010

Refined Methodology And Assumptions For Analyzing Insurer Capital Adequacy Using The Risk-Based Insurance Capital Model, June 7, 2010

Criteria Update: Factoring Country Risk Into Insurer Financial Strength Ratings, Feb. 11, 2003

Nonsovereign Ratings That Exceed EMU Sovereign Ratings: Methodology And Assumptions, June 14, 2011

Group Methodology, April 22, 2009

Hybrid Capital Handbook: September 2008 Edition, Sept. 15, 2008

Use Of CreditWatch And Outlooks, Sept. 14, 2009

Ratings List

Downgraded; CreditWatch/Outlook Action

To From

Societa Cattolica di Assicurazione

Counterparty Credit Rating

Local Currency BBB/Negative/-- BBB+/Watch Neg/--

Financial Strength Rating

Local Currency BBB/Negative/-- BBB+/Watch Neg/--