

AXA Full Transcript (English)

EuroBusiness Media (EBM): AXA, a global leader in insurance and asset management, reports results for the first half of 2018. Thomas Buberl, welcome.

Thomas Buberl: Hello.

EBM: You are the CEO of AXA. How are these results?

Thomas Buberl: These are strong results. In the first half of this year, we generated organic growth of 3%, making it the most dynamic first Half Year in the last 5 years.

Above all, we achieved a very strong operating performance, with both underlying earnings and adjusted earnings up 9%.

It was the result of our actions across all the 5 geographies and our preferred segments.

EBM: So, AXA is doing well?

Thomas Buberl: Yes, the Group also has a very solid balance sheet. Our Solvency II ratio stands at 233%.

EBM: Yet during this first semester some of your choices sometimes raised some questions?

Thomas Buberl: Yes, because we have made very strategic decisions. And it takes a little bit of time for everyone to understand the course of these measures. It has however already begun.

EBM: You are referring to the acquisition of the XL Group?

Thomas Buberl: Effectively. This acquisition is very important. It allows us to significantly accelerate the transformation of the Group.

Thanks to this transaction, AXA will become the #1 global P&C commercial lines insurer, one of our key segments, as you know.

Our two groups are very complementary. Our union will provide our corporate customers with a unique offering that will drive AXA's earnings and growth in the years to come. For several months, we have been fully focused on the integration process. We are advancing very quickly.

EBM: So a major acquisition with XL Group on one hand indeed, and on the other some disposals?

Thomas Buberl: Yes, because we want to strengthen our priority segments, and at the same time we want to reduce our exposure to financial risk.

That's why last year we announced the IPO of a minority stake of our US operations. This transaction was a success. We did it in record time, we sold all the securities we wanted to sell, and we obtained the funds necessary to finance the acquisition of XL Group.

We also reorganized our Swiss Group Life business. All of this brings us greater financial flexibility.

EBM: What is the link between all these operations?

Thomas Buberl: These strategic operations are complementary. They enable us to reduce our exposure to financial risk and at the same time increase our technical margin.

In short, we are transforming the Group so that we have more control over its management.

EBM: In what ways do the partnerships that you signed, particularly with Uber and ING, fit into this strategy?

Thomas Buberl: I am convinced that we are going to enter a golden age of insurance. To seize all these new opportunities, AXA must transform itself. Be it, as I just told you, by the transformation of our risk profile.

It also involves a digital transformation to meet the new needs of our customers. Today, our customers do not just want their bills paid, they want innovative solutions that meet their needs. This is the essence of our Payer to Partner strategy.

EBM: So then a very active first half for AXA?

Thomas Buberl: Indeed. I think 2018 will be a defining moment in AXA's history. 2017 was the year of strategic choices, this year will be the year we deliver.

This is an immense source of satisfaction for us because, in the global competition, we are convinced that the difference will be made in the ability of companies to implement their strategic decisions.

It is the performance of all AXA teams that has made these achievements possible. I want to thank them sincerely for their commitment to our company.

EBM: Thomas Buberl, CEO of AXA, thank you very much.

Thomas Buberl: Thank you.