

International Credit Brokers Alliance (ICBA) Celebrates Its First Ten Years

Ottawa, ON (March 2010) - Paris au Printemps! The perfect setting to celebrate the Tenth Anniversary of the ICBA, and a return to the city where it all began. ICBA members took time out from their annual Spring conference last month to host executives of Europe's leading insurance companies in the five-star elegance of L'Hotel George V. It was an evening that underscored the growth and success of the ICBA. Today the alliance is the world's largest team of owner-operated specialty credit insurance brokerages.

In 1999, five independent credit insurance brokers came together to discuss an idea, a concept of how to better serve their global clients. Ten years later, the original founding members of the ICBA: Jean Busnot and Emmanuel Portier of France; Winnie Vogt from Germany; Luc Gillijns of Belgium; and Ireland's Michael Raleigh were honored by their fellow ICBA members for having created a unique global organization. The fact that the original four countries represented at that first meeting have since grown to twenty-five member countries on five continents is testimony to the original vision of the founders.

Addressing the assembled guests from major insurance companies such as Euler Hermes, Coface, Atradius, Chartis, Ace, Cesce, QBE, BNP, Ducroire and Eurofactor, ICBA Chairman Emmanuel Portier described the ICBA as a team of entrepreneurs. "Like our clients, we are highly motivated to develop our companies in a sustainable way, improving all that we do. We are not a standard sales team; we add value, and educate clients and prospects as to the reality of the credit insurance market." He challenged the underwriters to think beyond the notion that ICBA brokers are distributors of product, and encouraged the assembled insurers to view the allied brokers of ICBA as "contributors to the role underwriters and risk spreaders play in the global economy".

Over the last ten years ICBA brokers have worked hard providing "local" solutions to multinational clients, i.e., combining local service with global coordination in trade, credit and political risk insurance. As Mr. Portier emphasized in Paris, ICBA brokers believe that success in an ever-changing environment is reached by working together "choosing the right strategy and making the right decisions for each of our clients. Adaptability and flexibility are our priority and our strength. We are a global team. We don't just change, we progress".