



## Conversation with Corentine Poilvet-Clediere

**Corentine Poilvet-Clediere** - Chief Executive Officer, LCH SA

**David Wright** - President, EUROFI

### David Wright

Thank you very much, Didier. It is a real pleasure to welcome Corentine here today. The last time we met, I referred to Hotel California, saying that once you enter this world, you never leave. As Didier mentioned, you are the CEO of LCH SA and Head of the LSE Group in France. I also know from your background that you have studied and worked in the United States, in London, and of course across Europe. You bring with you extensive experience in capital markets — indeed, in many of the world's major financial centres.

When considering Europe's competitiveness, what would you say are the key priorities that come to mind from your perspective?

### Corentine Poilvet-Clediere

Good afternoon, everyone, and thank you, David, for the question.

I will take a very practical, private-sector perspective, which is likely the colour we want to introduce here. When I think about competitiveness, I consider the EU's attractiveness — both for domestic capital and for investment from outside the Union. Attractiveness matters because it protects us and enables us to finance ourselves.

Why do we need to do this? Because sovereignty cannot exist without proper financial underpinning. Grand political ambitions without adequate funding are hollow. And I would even argue, there is no room for pessimistic leadership if we wish to succeed.

If Europe is serious about fulfilling its ambitions in education, healthcare, climate, and infrastructure, it

must accept that none of these goals come cheap. We need to align our economic frameworks with our political ambitions within the next two to three years. I will repeat this: build the economics to match our politics. This alignment will not occur by chance.

How do we channel the necessary capital? And why must we do it? As you know, David, I am very outcome-oriented. We are attempting to sustain a value system — and unless we finance it properly, it simply may not survive. That is the level of urgency we are facing.

Commissioner Albuquerque quite rightly mentioned the existing capital within the Union — citizens' savings, which amount to around 15%. We need to ensure that it is attractive and meaningful for individuals to direct their savings into European companies and projects. This must be a combination of profitable investments, potentially linked to pension and retirement schemes, and appropriate incentives. Financial literacy is also key here. Again, we must align the economics with our politics.

My main concern, especially from the perspective of running international businesses, is how to attract non-European capital — and that depends on scale. Foreign investors are drawn to scale. They recognise that the EU, as a single market, represents 22% of global GDP, compared to 25% for the United States — not vastly different. Yet in practice, investors do not experience that scale in Europe, and we all know the reasons for that, as you have discussed at length.

So, we must deliver scale. For me, the key focus should be eliminating cross-border barriers and implementing a consistent, sector-specific playbook. In some cases, this may require a single supervisor; in others, perhaps not. But if it takes five years to establish one, we have

missed the point. What we need is a single, unified framework per sector to enable genuine competition. We also need to allow for European-level debt issuance for strategic sectors such as energy and defence — and to enable some degree of market consolidation.

This is not easy, but we must operate at the appropriate scale. Mergers and acquisitions should be allowed. That, in essence, is how I see the path forward.

### David Wright

You are very close to market developments and to the sentiment among financial players. Are you seeing a positive shift in Europe in this regard? Do you think the priorities outlined by the Commissioner for the Savings and Investment Union are the correct ones? Is anything missing? Are you feeling optimistic at this critical geopolitical juncture?

### Corentine Poilvet-Clediere

There is momentum. I will say something slightly controversial: no one disagrees with simplification or with the need for competitiveness. My humble experience, as someone in the private sector who is tasked with getting things done, is that you need key performance indicators.

We all agree on the direction — and it is clearly visible. The title "Savings and Investment Union" alone expresses the intention: to mobilise savings and convert them into productive investment. I welcome that. But in practice, we may still be relying on traditional, legacy processes that, while individually sound, are collectively too slow.

What I would suggest is a shift in approach — just as I would do in my own organisation. What does success look like in one year? Where do we want to be in one, two, or three years? Likely no further than that, because as you rightly said, David, the world is changing rapidly, and even three years feels long.

Let me offer a few KPIs: global market share of key sectors for European firms; the number of start-ups that successfully scale up; and the level of direct foreign investment into the Union.

Why do I emphasise this? Because I worry that we may inadvertently place all responsibility on the European Commission. While I truly appreciate what the Commissioner has said, the Commission has a defined toolkit — it is rule-based, and it is not sufficient alone. Broader engagement, particularly from the private sector, is vital to make the Savings and Investment Union a reality.

From experience, I have never accomplished anything substantial without first defining a short-term plan, establishing clear objectives, and linking them to measurable KPIs. You then monitor these quarterly or monthly — however frequently makes sense — and benchmark progress with stakeholders. That sort of rigour is essential. I do not yet see that aspect fully present — not necessarily because it is the Commission's job, but because we, as a community, need to build it. Otherwise, it remains a matter of wishful thinking.

### David Wright

That is music to my ears, Corentine. I believe that having a robust system for measuring progress, clear timelines, and a defined final objective is the right approach. Jacques Delors always spoke of 1992 — nothing else — and that date became embedded in everyone's mind as the moment when the job had to be completed. Personally, I appreciate your emphasis on a rigorous delivery process. Let us turn to infrastructure.

Many believe Europe has too many fragmented systems and infrastructure. Do you think market consolidation is necessary? How important is it to foster a European dimension to financial infrastructure?

### Corentine Poilvet-Clediere

It is certainly one of the hot topics of the moment. I will return to my usual approach — focusing on outcomes. What are we trying to achieve with consolidation?

Ideally, we want to provide high-quality services at a scale that makes sense for both pan-European and international players who wish to operate within the Union. That should be our shared objective.

To deliver higher quality service, we need competition — which means firms must face one another on equal terms. That can only happen if they operate under the same playbook. Without this, they are not genuinely competing; they are playing in parallel arenas.

Does this imply the need for a single supervisor? Not necessarily. That is not the goal. The real goal is to establish a truly level playing field that fosters competitive tension, which in turn improves service quality.

Not every firm needs to be pan-European or global. But we need enough of them to generate competition. Is there an ideal number of players? Not really. However, I can say this: having only one provider is never ideal for clients, while having twelve equity market providers clearly dilutes the competitive dynamic. Whether the

number is four, five, or six, the point is to foster the right conditions for productive friction.

As quality rises, Financial Market Infrastructures (FMIs) will recognise the need to become larger and more diversified across asset classes. That is where resilience comes from.

Recent market events prove the point. If you operate purely in equities and are overly concentrated in one sector, you will experience a turbulent ride. But if your FMI spans equities, commodities, derivatives, fixed income, and more, you are far more stable.

Larger, more diversified FMIs are more resilient and can channel greater volumes of both European and international capital into key projects.

Another issue is our historical development of national silos, driven by local exchanges and clearing houses. This creates opacity: it is often unclear whether an FMI is profitable in its own right, as it is tied to the larger exchange group. That becomes a problem when you seek M&A opportunities, because you need to know whether you are acquiring a viable business.

Ironically, this siloed structure could be one of the greatest obstacles to market-driven consolidation.

### David Wright

So, in summary, we must create a level playing field and a market environment that allows competitive forces to thrive. That competition, along with clustering effects, will enhance efficiency.

Turning to new technologies — the LSE is clearly exploring innovations in trading, clearing, and settlement, including AI and cloud computing. Which of these technologies do you see as the most promising for the Group?

### Corentine Poilvet-Clediere

Interestingly, these technologies are converging. Our merger with Refinitiv six years ago was driven by the belief that the financial markets of the future would be fundamentally underpinned by broad, deep, accessible, and reliable data. Financial markets, by nature, also generate high-value data.

So, we decided to combine those worlds — and as a result, we now possess an incredibly rich and broad dataset. The challenge is how to harness it: how to filter, interrogate, and make it meaningful.

This is where artificial intelligence comes in. Across the Group, we have numerous use cases. But the most tangible value so far has emerged in data discovery — AI helping us surface what matters from a vast ocean of information.

What I find most encouraging — and I say this as a natural sceptic — is that the quality of AI's output improves in proportion to the sophistication of the questions asked.

This is cause for optimism. AI does not replace human thought; rather, it rewards better, more precise thinking. It is like driving a high-performance car: the better the driver, the better the performance.

When used purposefully, AI has immense potential — and that aligns with the risk culture we must develop.

AI is here to stay. We must embrace it wisely — not naively. Build your use cases, learn to control the technology, and integrate it into your value chain. For instance, we have established responsible AI standards, including auditable data from multiple sources, to uphold the ethical standards we wish to see.

Avoiding AI is avoiding reality.

And speaking of AI, we must also discuss cloud infrastructure. There is no AI without cloud. Unfortunately, this is where the EU faces a challenge. While we are keeping pace with AI, we are arguably lagging behind in cloud infrastructure.

This is partly due to divergent sovereignty requirements among Member States, which prevents the creation of a unified market. Without such a market, service providers lack strong business incentives to invest.

As a result, many parts of our industry are already behind in cloud adoption — which risks making us obsolete.

We must confront this head-on.

### David Wright

Corentine, it has been a pleasure having you here. I am glad I mentioned Hotel California, as our next meeting will be in Copenhagen — please book your ticket! Thank you once again for your thoughtful remarks, and also to the LSE Group for your continued support of Eurofi. We greatly appreciate it.

### Corentine Poilvet-Clediere

Thank you, David. It was a pleasure.