


# The Core Wealth Fund

Growth in Transition Economies

June 2024

Warsaw

An aerial photograph of the Warsaw skyline at dusk. The central focus is the Palace of Culture, a massive Stalinist skyscraper with a prominent clock tower and a spire. To its left is the modern, angular skyscraper known as the 'Skylon'. Other modern buildings with glass facades are scattered throughout the cityscape. The sky is a mix of blue and orange, indicating the time is either early morning or late evening. The foreground shows a mix of older, classical-style buildings and modern infrastructure like roads and parking lots.

## **We produce long-term asset growth in transition economies**

- **The Core Wealth Fund searches for misunderstood opportunities in Central and Eastern Europe. The more advanced the country (Poland and the Czech Republic), the more we will hold growth stocks. In less developed markets (Romania and Ukraine) we favour high-yielding stocks or bonds.**
- **The result is a balanced and ungeared portfolio of equities and bonds in countries where we believe the risk will fall and growth will be strong in the long term.**

# Who we are

- **Richard Wood founded Wood & Company, the Prague-based investment bank, in 1991.**
- **Vladimír Jaroš currently serves as its CEO.**
- **The fund exists primarily for their assets.**
- **Wood & Company's reputation and understanding of opportunities in Europe's newer market economies make it an important ally for our fund.**



# Where we invest

The Core Wealth Fund currently invests in

> Poland



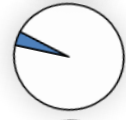
> Slovenia



> Romania



> Ukraine



> Czech Republic



> Lithuania



> Hungary



# Why Transition Economies?

There are many more emerging markets than there are Transition Economies; places where a shift in ideology creates seismic changes and a predictable re-ordering. We believe the direction is clearer in Transition Economies, and growth will be stronger.

# Performance

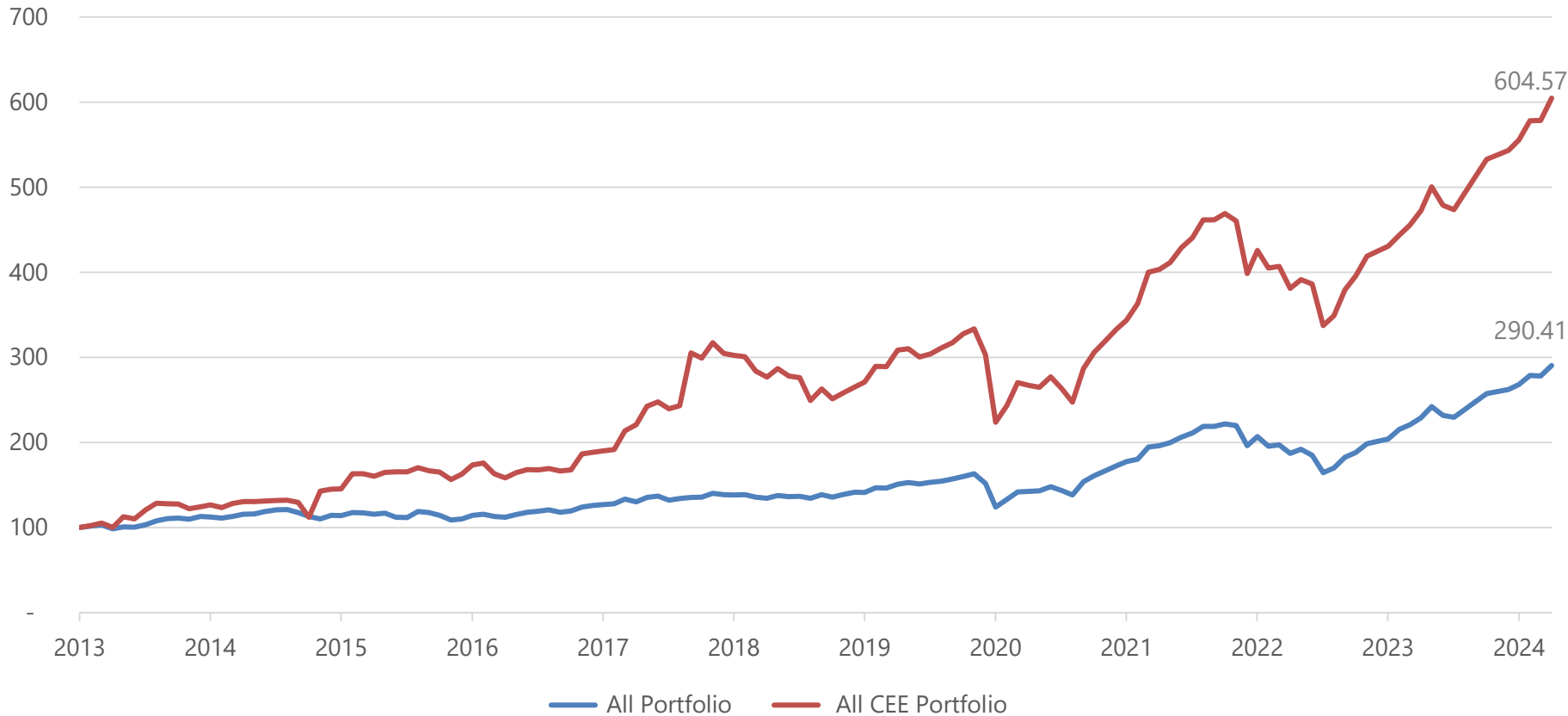
## Performance: Higher Ground Core Wealth Fund (USD Class)



**Annualised Gains Since Inception, 10.20%**

Past performance is not indicative of future returns.  
Net of all fees.

## Performance of Central European Components of Fund (USD Class)



### Annualised Gains Since 31<sup>st</sup> March 2013,

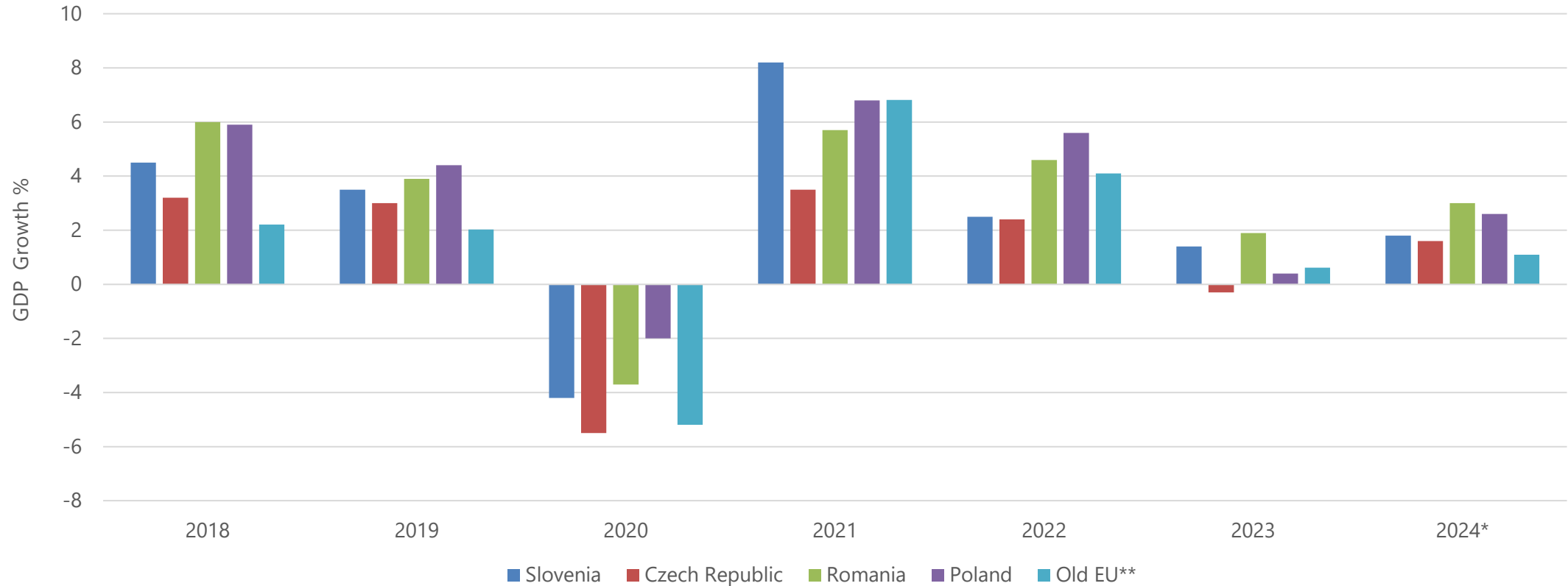
- All Portfolio, 10.02%
- All CEE Portfolio, 17.48%

Net of all fees.

Early in this timeline, we held a minority of the fund in CEE. Latterly we are only invested in CEE. The red line shows our performance if the CEE components of our portfolio had been all we owned.

# Fastest Europeans

## GDP Growth in Our Core Countries



\* Forecast figures

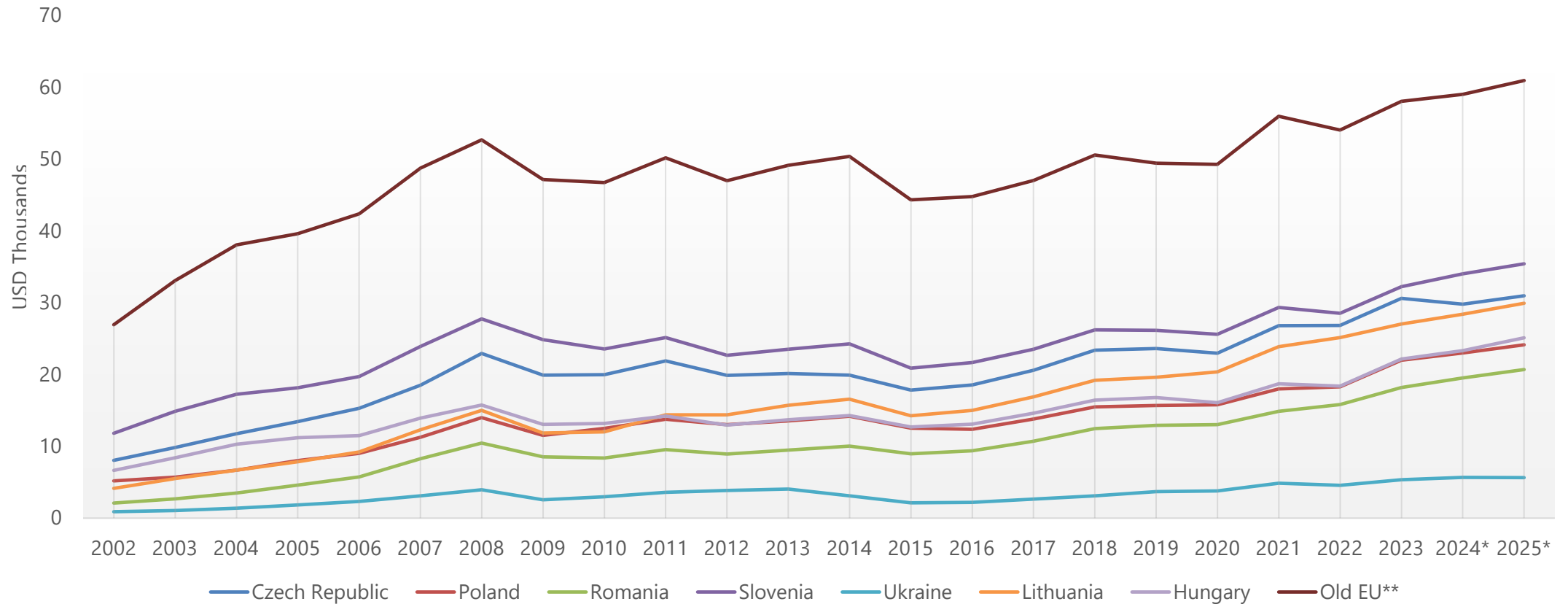
\*\* Belgium, France, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Germany, Denmark, Ireland, United Kingdom, Greece, Spain, Portugal, Austria, Sweden, Finland

Source: OECD Reports - Real GDP Growth Rate



# But Still Room to Outperform

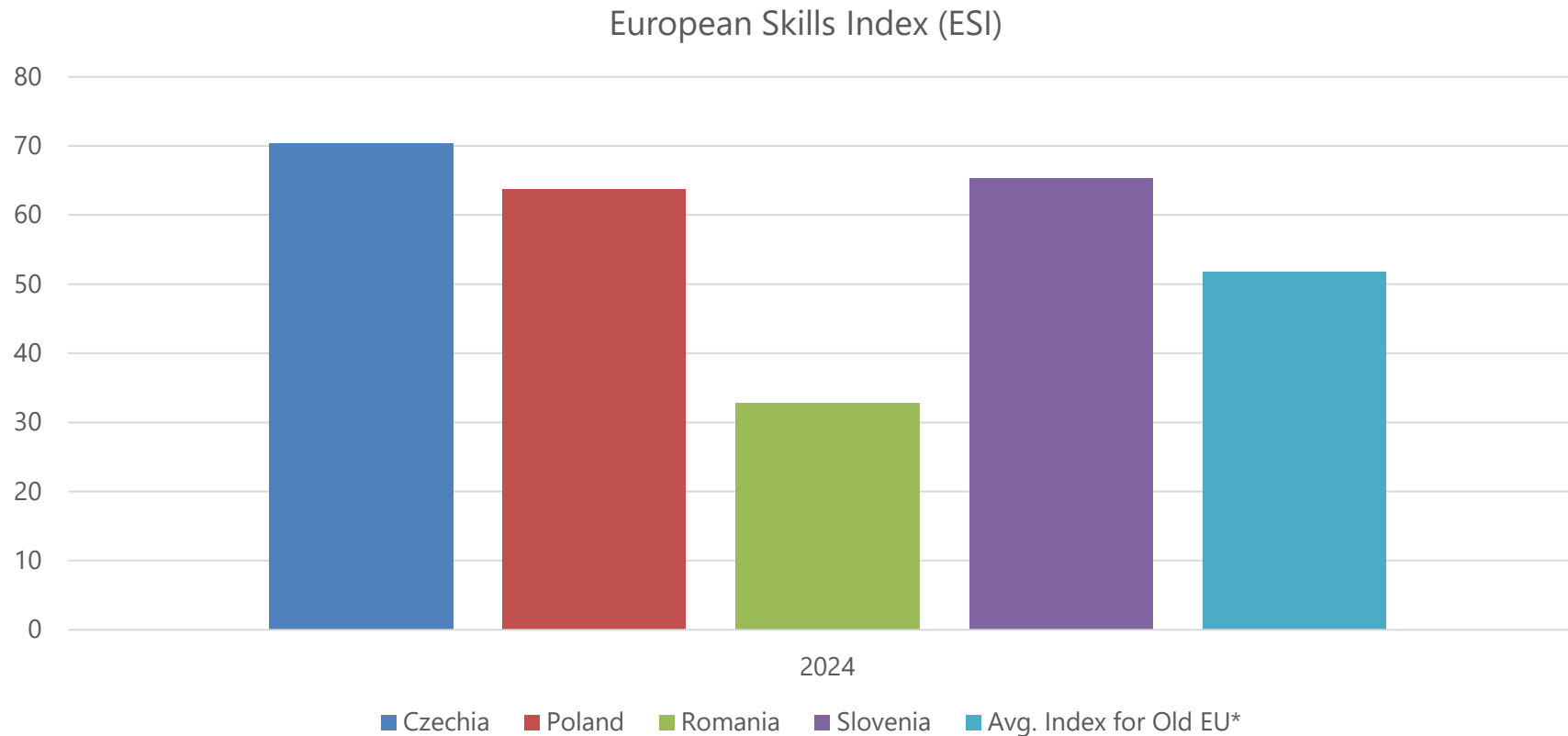
## GDP/capita (Current USD)



\* Forecast figures

\*\* Belgium, France, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Germany, Denmark, Ireland, United Kingdom, Greece, Spain, Portugal, Austria, Sweden, Finland

Source: International Monetary Fund



\* Belgium, France, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Germany, Denmark, Ireland, Greece, Spain, Portugal, Austria, Sweden, Finland

European skills index (ESI) analyses the performance of skills systems, within EU Member States. Index measures how smoothly people move into work; how many and which groups of the population are economically active; and how well their skills are utilized at work. Basically, Skills development, activation and matching.

Source: Euro Stats – [cedefop.europa.eu](https://cedefop.europa.eu)

# Current Portfolio

Investments	Country	Sector	% of AUM
Alior Bank	Poland	Banking	5.2
Astarta	Ukraine	Agriculture	0.9
Benefit Systems	Poland	Health	8.1
Banca Transilvania	Romania	Banking	5.0
Dom Development	Poland	Real Estate	4.6
Kety	Poland	Aluminum	3.0
Kruk	Poland	Debt Workout	6.5
Med Life	Romania	Health	2.2
Metinvest Bonds	Ukraine	Power Generation	0.5
MHP	Ukraine	Agriculture	1.7
Moneta Bank	Czech	Banking	5.4
Nova Ljubljanska Banka	Slovenia	Banking	9.8
Nuclearelectica	Romania	Power Generation	6.6
Orlen	Poland	Oil & Gas	4.8
Oschadbank Bonds	Ukraine	Banking	0.1
PZU	Poland	Insurance	6.5
Sava Re	Slovenia	Insurance	2.7
Siauliu Banka	Lithuania	Banking	2.8
Tauron	Poland	Power Generation	3.8
Ukrainian State Bonds	Ukraine	Sovereign Bonds	1.2
Wirtualna Polska	Poland	Technology	6.2
Wizz Air	Hungary	Airline	4.3
Zavarovalnica Triglav	Slovenia	Insurance	5.2
Cash			1.9
Other Assets			1.3
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>100.0</b>

# The Leadership Team

Seasoned professionals in Transition Economies

HIGHERGROUND  
SICAV PLC



**Richard Wood**

*Board Member  
Investment Advisor*

Richard founded Wood & Company, the Central and Eastern European investment bank, in 1991. During his ten years running the firm, it played a central role in the coupon privatisation programs of central Europe. Wood & Company now has offices in Prague, Warsaw, Bratislava, Bucharest, Milan, London, and New York. The firm today remains the largest stockbroker and investment bank in the region.

Prior to that, Richard was a Vice President in the fixed income derivatives department of Salomon Brothers. After leaving Durham University with a degree in Economics, he spent four years as a lending banker with Barclays Bank in London, New York, and Pittsburgh. Richard is a citizen of UK and Canada and lives in London. He is an anchor investor in all Higher Ground's funds.



**Miroslav Nosal**

*Investment Committee  
Member*

Miroslav Nosal is the CEO of Wood & Co., Asset Management. With a background spanning 30 years, he brings a wealth of experience in the Banking, Finance, and Energy industries. Having served as an Investment Director, Miroslav has a proven track record in identifying investment opportunities, overseeing due diligence, and project valuation, particularly within Central and Eastern Europe. His substantial experience contributes valuable knowledge and insights to Higher Ground. Miroslav is also a CFA Charter holder

# The Leadership Team

Strong Governance in Malta

HIGHERGROUND  
SICAV PLC



**Michael Warrington**

*Board Member*

*Investment Committee Member*

Michael started his career with the Bank of Valletta, moving on to Air Malta and subsequently the AX Group – real estate, healthcare, and hotels. Until recently, Michael was CEO of Novum Bank. He has held board positions with GO PLC, Malta Properties PLC, and AX Investments PLC, all of which are listed on the Malta Stock Exchange. He is currently the Chief Executive Officer of the AX Holdings Group of Companies, a director of AX Investments, Forthnet A.E, Citadel Insurance, Ni International Insurance, and Valletta Cruise Port.



**David Curmi**

*Board Member*

*Investment Committee Member*

David runs Curmi & Partners, a multi-generational fund management business in Malta. Before taking over from his father in 1995, he worked at James Capel in London. He holds a degree in Economics from Oxford Brookes University

# Term Sheet

## Description of fund

Open-ended, self-managed, 'professional investor fund' incorporated in Malta as a sub-fund of Higher Ground SICAV plc and licensed by MFSA from May 2009.

## Liquidity

Month end subscriptions/redemptions at NAV. 3 months notice for redemptions.

## Board of Directors and Investment Committee

Richard Wood (London), Vladimir Jaros (Prague) - exiting, Miroslav Nosal (Prague) - joining, David Curmi and Michael Warrington (Malta). [www.higherground.mt](http://www.higherground.mt) for CV's.

## Investment Objective

The investment objective is to provide shareholders with capital preservation, limited volatility, and long-term capital appreciation from investments in transition economies.

## Investment Policy

The Sub-Fund will generally invest in publicly-traded securities, other collective investment schemes and in cash and money market instruments.

## Classes of Shares

EUR, GBP, USD

## Minimum Investment

EUR100,000 or equivalent.

## Investment Management Fee

1% per annum of the Net Asset Value.

## Performance Fee

10% of gains with high water mark.

## Administrator

Apex Fund Services

## Custodian

Wood & Company Financial Services a.s. Prague & Swissquote Financial Services (Malta) Ltd

## Auditor

PwC