### **Annual Management Report of Fund Performance**

# **AGF European Equity Fund**

September 30, 2024



# Management Discussion of Fund Performance

This management discussion of fund performance represents the portfolio management team's view of the significant factors and developments affecting the fund's performance and outlook.

#### Investment Objective and Strategies

Pursuant to the Declaration of Trust, the investment objective of AGF European Equity Fund (the "Fund") is to provide long-term capital growth by investing primarily in shares of companies operating mainly in Europe and that trade on European stock exchanges. AGF Investments Inc. ("AGFI"), as portfolio manager, uses a bottom-up value investment approach to select stocks that appear to be trading at a discount to their estimated fair value. A bottomup investment approach focuses attention on a specific company rather than on the industry in which that company operates or on the economy as a whole. The portfolio manager evaluates the financial condition and management of a company, its industry and the overall economy, and looks for stocks that are selling at a substantial discount to its estimate of their intrinsic business value. During periods of market downturn or for other reasons, a significant portion of the Fund's assets may be held in cash, cash equivalents or fixed income securities.

#### Risk

The risks of investing in the Fund remain as disclosed in the current prospectus. Any changes to the Fund over the period have not affected the overall level of risk of the Fund.

The Fund continues to be suitable for investors investing for the long-term, seeking the growth potential of equity securities of European companies and who have medium to high tolerance for risk. The suitability of the Fund has not changed from what has been disclosed in the prospectus.

#### **Results of Operations**

For the year ended September 30, 2024, Series S Units of the Fund returned 26.5% (net of expenses) while the MSCI Europe Index returned 25.5%. Unlike the benchmark, the Fund may be subject to valuation adjustments as outlined in the Fund's valuation policies as they relate to non-North American equities held by the Fund. A fair value adjustment can either positively or negatively impact the Fund's rate of return.

The Fund out-performed the MSCI Europe Index due to strong security selection. Stock selection in the Industrials sector was the biggest contributor to performance. Stock selection and underweight allocations to the Consumer Staples and Information Technology sectors also

contributed. This was partially offset by an overweight allocation to the Energy sector, which detracted the most from relative performance.

From a country perspective, Italy was the biggest contributor to overall performance, followed by Germany and France. On the other hand, Switzerland was the biggest detractor, followed by Spain.

The Fund had net redemptions of approximately \$8 million for the current period, as compared to net redemptions of approximately \$18 million in the prior period. Rebalancing by fund on fund programs resulted in net redemptions of approximately \$0.3 million in the Fund. The portfolio manager does not believe that redemption activity had a meaningful impact on the Fund's performance or the ability to implement its investment strategy.

expenses before foreign withholding commissions and other portfolio transaction costs vary period over period mainly as a result of changes in average Net Asset Values (see Explanatory Note (1) a)) and investor activity, such as number of investor accounts and transactions. Expenses have remained fairly consistent throughout the periods. Interest expense decreased due to a decrease in overdraft positions throughout the period. The increase in registration fees and decrease in independent review committee fees were due to variances between the accrued amounts versus the actual expenses incurred in the previous period. All other expenses remained fairly consistent throughout the periods.

#### **Recent Developments**

European equities faced a number of headwinds during the reporting period. Economic growth was lacklustre. While the purchasing managers' index ("PMI") data managed to be on the positive side of the ledger for most of the period, it was all led by the services sector as the manufacturing data remained well below the 50.0 level, indicating a contraction. The PMI is an indicator of the prevailing direction of economic trends in the manufacturing and service sectors. An index reading above 50.0 indicates an overall increase in the sector and below 50.0 indicates an overall decrease. Towards the end of the reporting period, even the services data was dragged down. The challenging economic environment also weighed heavily on corporate earnings. It is expected that earnings in Europe will average at mid-single digit levels in 2024, which is below the long run average levels and well below what is being achieved in the other large trading blocs, such as the U.S., Japan and the emerging markets. Additionally, the two military conflicts on its border (i.e. Middle East and Ukraine) continued.

This annual management report of fund performance contains financial highlights, but does not contain the complete annual financial statements of the investment fund. You can get a copy of the annual financial statements at your request, and at no cost, by calling 1 800 268-8583, by writing to us at AGF Investments Inc., CIBC SQUARE, Tower One, 81 Bay Street, Suite 4000, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M5J 0G1 attention: Client Services, or by visiting our website at www.agf.com or SEDAR+ at www.sedarplus.ca.

Securityholders may also contact us using one of these methods to request a copy of the investment fund's proxy voting policies and procedures, proxy voting disclosure record, or quarterly portfolio disclosure.

Political uncertainty was another concern looming over the region. President Macron's decision in France to call a snap general election after his party's disappointing performance in the European elections created massive turbulence in France. The possibility of a far right or far left party seizing power appeared increasingly plausible. In the end, the centrist parties narrowly maintained their position, but the margin was thin. Additionally, the far right parties made substantial gains in state elections in Germany, raising concerns for the upcoming federal elections in that country next year.

That said, some positive aspects were apparent. Valuations remained attractive, particularly on a relative basis. Inflation numbers continued to fall from the double-digit levels seen in the early post-COVID years. Together with wage increases across the region, the pressure on consumers eased, making for a slightly more positive outlook. The inflation retrenchment also allowed the European Central Bank ("ECB") to begin cutting interest rates, with two 0.25% rate cuts, and the likelihood of one more such move in the last calendar quarter of 2024.

The open nature of the European market, characterized by its significant export-oriented economy, was also a benefit as the U.S. economy continued to perform strongly. The U.S. Federal Reserve (the "Fed") subsequently implemented a 0.50% rate cut, indicating confidence in the continuation of their economic strength.

The performance of European equities was very strong during the reporting period, despite market volatility. The rally in the final months of 2023 continued into the first calendar quarter of 2024. A sideways movement developed from April through August 2024 before moving higher again in September. Strong equity market returns were further bolstered by currency gains owing to the strength of the Euro versus the Canadian dollar.

European equities also received a strong boost towards the end of the reporting period after the Chinese authorities stepped in to support their weakening economy. After keeping the market waiting for some time, Chinese authorities finally decided to provide stimulus to the struggling property sector by injecting substantial liquidity to enhance bank lending. This action resulted in a sharp increase in stocks exposed to China into the end of the period.

The strong rally into the third calendar quarter of 2024 bodes well for the final quarter, which tends to be one of the stronger quarters of the year based on historical analysis. However, it is not without its risks. The economic data in Europe remains disappointing. As mentioned above, the PMIs in Europe have been falling, with the flash new orders indices for services and manufacturing now below 50.0 again, despite the ECB's interest rate cuts. The earnings for the third calendar quarter of 2024 look like they will be tougher than the previous quarter, given the continued sluggish economic performance. Additionally, there is potential turbulence around the U.S. election, which at this stage is too close to call.

That said, valuations in Europe remain reasonable and earnings growth in 2025 is expected to improve on the meagre performance seen in 2024. These combined with lower interest rates potentially boosting economic performance make a reasonable backdrop for European equities.

Further, the portfolio manager anticipates that the lowering of interest rates by the ECB, along with rate cuts by the Fed will likely provide the catalyst equity markets need to improve valuations in the region. The portfolio manager believes European stocks remain undervalued and that European markets may trend higher with a more positive earnings performance.

While this is a volatile time for Europe, the portfolio manager believes it is fundamental drivers, such as economic growth, earnings growth, valuation and dividends, that drive equity markets. Though markets may remain volatile over the short-term, the long run drivers of performance remain in place.

#### **Related Party Transactions**

AGFI is the manager ("Manager") and trustee of the Fund. Pursuant to the management agreement between the Fund and AGFI, AGFI is responsible for the day-to-day business of the Fund. AGFI also acts as the investment (portfolio) manager, managing the investment portfolio of the Fund. The Fund was also party to an investment advisory agreement with AGFI and AGF International Advisors Company Limited ("AGF International"). AGF International acts as an investment advisor and provides investment advisory services to the Fund. Under the management and investment advisory agreements, the Fund pays management and advisory fees calculated based on the Net Asset Value of Series S Units of the Fund. Management and advisory fees of approximately \$561,000 were incurred by the Fund during the period ended September 30, 2024.

AGFI and AGF International are indirect and direct whollyowned subsidiaries of AGF Management Limited, respectively.

#### **Caution Regarding Forward-looking Statements**

This report may contain forward-looking statements about the Fund, including its strategy, expected performance and condition. Forward looking statements include statements that are predictive in nature, that depend upon or refer to future events or conditions, or that include words such as "expects", "anticipates", "intends", "plans", "believes", "estimates" or negative versions thereof and similar expressions.

In addition, any statement that may be made concerning future performance, strategies or prospects, and possible future Fund action, is also a forward-looking statement. Forward-looking statements are based on current expectations and projections about future events and are inherently subject to, among other things, risks, uncertainties and assumptions about the Fund and economic factors.

The forward-looking statements are by their nature based on numerous assumptions, which include, amongst other things, that (i) the Fund can attract and maintain investors and has sufficient capital under management to effect its investment strategies, (ii) the investment strategies will produce the results intended by the portfolio manager, and (iii) the markets will react and perform in a manner consistent with the investment strategies. Although the forward-looking statements contained herein are based upon what the portfolio manager believes to be reasonable assumptions, the portfolio manager cannot assure that actual results will be consistent with these forward-looking statements.

Forward-looking statements are not guarantees of future performance, and actual events and results could differ materially from those expressed or implied in any forwardlooking statements made by the Fund. Any number of important factors could contribute to these digressions, including, but not limited to, general economic, political and market factors in North America and internationally, interest and foreign exchange rates, global equity and capital markets, business competition, taxation, changes in government regulations, unexpected judicial or regulatory proceedings, technological changes, cybersecurity, the possible effects of war or terrorist activities, outbreaks of disease or illness that affect local, national or international economies (such as COVID-19), natural disasters and disruptions to public infrastructure, such as transportation, communications, power or water supply or other catastrophic events.

It should be stressed that the above-mentioned list of factors is not exhaustive. You are encouraged to consider these and other factors carefully before making any investment decisions and you are urged to avoid placing undue reliance on forward-looking statements. Further, you should be aware of the fact that the Fund has no specific intention of updating any forward-looking statements whether as a result of new information, future events or otherwise, prior to the release of the next Management Report of Fund Performance.

## **Financial Highlights**

The following tables show selected key financial information about the Fund and are intended to help you understand the Fund's financial performance for the past five years as applicable.

Series S Units - Net Assets per Unit(1)

For the periods ended	Sept 30, 2024 (\$)	Sept 30, 2023 (\$)	Sept 30, 2022 (\$)	Sept 30, 2021 (\$)	Sept 30, 2020 (\$)
Net Assets, beginning of period <sup>(1)</sup>	11.85	8.85	10.88	8.52	9.59
Increase (decrease) from operations:					
Total revenue	0.58	0.43	0.45	0.36	0.30
Total expenses	(0.15)	(0.12)	(0.12)	(0.12)	(0.09)
Realized gains (losses)	1.09	0.68	(0.01)	0.37	0.07
Unrealized gains (losses)	1.61	2.81	(1.94)	2.11	(0.95)
Total increase (decrease) from operations <sup>(2)</sup>	3.13	3.80	(1.62)	2.72	(0.67)
Distributions:					
From income (excluding dividends)	-	-	-	-	-
From dividends	(0.39)	(0.32)	(0.34)	(0.22)	(0.37)
From capital gains	-	-	-	-	-
Return of capital	-	-	-	-	-
Total annual distributions <sup>(3)</sup> Net Assets, end of period <sup>(4)</sup>	(0.39) 14.54	(0.32) 11.85	(0.34) 8.85	(0.22) 10.88	(0.37) 8.52

Series S Units - Ratios/Supplemental Data<sup>(1)</sup>

	Sept 30,				
For the periods ended	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020
Total Net Asset Value (\$000's)	56,223	53,034	54,156	64,806	59,859
Number of units outstanding (000's)	3,867	4,476	6,121	5,957	7,022
Management expense ratio <sup>(5)</sup>	0.66%	0.57%	0.57%	0.57%	0.57%
Management expense ratio before waivers or absorptions <sup>(6)</sup>	1.33%	1.32%	1.30%	1.30%	1.31%
Trading expense ratio <sup>(7)</sup>	0.11%	0.14%	0.10%	0.11%	0.14%
Portfolio turnover rate <sup>(8)</sup>	14.43%	11.27%	17.34%	10.64%	20.52%
Net Asset Value per unit	14.54	11.85	8.85	10.88	8.52

#### **Explanatory Notes**

- (1) a) This information is derived from the Fund's audited annual financial statements. Under International Financial Reporting Standards ("IFRS"), investments that are traded in an active market are generally valued at closing price, which is determined to be within the bid-ask spread and most representative of fair value. As a result, there is no difference between the net assets per unit presented in the financial statements ("Net Assets") and the net asset value per unit calculated for fund pricing purposes ("Net Asset Value").
  - b) Series S Units of the Fund commenced operations in January 2015, which represents the date upon which securities were first made available for purchase by investors.
- (2) Net Assets and distributions are based on the actual number of units outstanding at the relevant time. The increase/decrease from operations is based on the weighted average number of units outstanding over the financial period.
- (3) Distributions were paid in cash/reinvested in additional units of the Fund, or both. The characterization of the distributions is based on management's estimate of the actual income for the year.
- (4) This is not a reconciliation of the beginning and ending Net Assets per unit.
- (5) The management expense ratio ("MER") of a particular series is calculated in accordance with National Instrument 81-106, based on all the expenses of the Fund (including Harmonized Sales Tax, Goods and Services Tax and interest,

but excluding foreign withholding taxes, commissions and other portfolio transaction costs) and the Fund's proportionate share of the MER, if applicable, of the underlying funds and exchange traded funds ("ETFs") in which the Fund has invested, allocated to that series, expressed as an annualized percentage of average daily Net Asset Value of that series during the period.

- (6) AGFI waived certain fees or absorbed certain expenses otherwise payable by the Fund. The amount of expenses waived or absorbed is determined annually on a series by series basis at the discretion of AGFI and AGFI can terminate the waiver or absorption at any time.
- (7) The trading expense ratio represents total commissions and other portfolio transaction costs, including the Fund's proportionate share of the commissions, if applicable, of the underlying funds and ETFs in which the Fund has invested, expressed as an annualized percentage of average daily Net Asset Value during the period.
- (8) The Fund's portfolio turnover rate ("PTR") indicates how actively the Fund's portfolio advisor manages its portfolio investments. A PTR of 100% is equivalent to the Fund buying and selling all of the securities in its portfolio once in the course of the year. The higher a fund's PTR in a year, the greater the trading costs payable by the fund in the year, and the greater the chance of an investor receiving taxable capital gains in the year. There is not necessarily a relationship between a high turnover rate and the performance of a fund.

PTR is calculated based on the lesser of the cumulative cost of purchases or cumulative proceeds of sales divided by the average market value of the portfolio, excluding short-term investments.

## **Management Fees**

The Fund is managed by AGFI. As a result of providing investment advisory and management services, AGFI receives a monthly management and advisory fee, based on the Net Asset Value of Series S Units. AGFI uses these management and advisory fees to pay for investment advice, as well as for general administrative expenses such as overhead, salaries, rent, legal and accounting fees relating to AGFI's role as manager.

		As a percentage of man	agement and advisory fees
	Annual rate	Dealer compensation	General administration and investment advice
Series S Units	1.00%	-	100.00%

#### Past Performance\*

The performance information shown assumes that all distributions made by the Fund in the periods shown were reinvested in additional securities of the Fund. Note that the performance information does not take into account sales, redemption, distribution or other optional charges that

would have reduced returns or performance. How the Fund has performed in the past does not necessarily indicate how it will perform in the future.

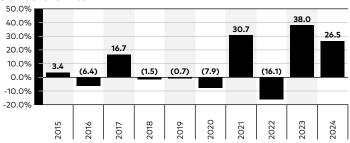
It is AGFI's policy to report rates of return for series in existence greater than one year. The performance start date for each series represents the date of the first purchase of such series, excluding seed money.

All rates of return are calculated based on the Net Asset Value.

#### Year-By-Year Returns

The following bar chart shows the Fund's annual performance for each of the past 10 years to September 30, 2024 as applicable, and illustrates how the Fund's performance has changed from year to year. The chart shows, in percentage terms, how much an investment made on the first day of each financial period would have grown or decreased by the last day of each financial period.

#### Series S Units



Performance for 2015 represents returns for the period from January 15, 2015 to September 30, 2015.

#### **Annual Compound Returns**

The following table compares the historical annual compound returns for each series with the index, for each of the periods ended September 30, 2024.

Percentage Return:	1 Year	3 Years	5 Years	10 Years	Since Inception
Series S Units	26.5	13.6	12.0	N/A	7.1
MSCI Europe Index	25.5	9.7	10.0	N/A	8.5

The MSCI Europe Index is a free float-adjusted market capitalization-weighted index that is designed to measure the equity market performance of the developed markets in Europe.

For a discussion of the relative performance of the Fund as compared to the index, see Results of Operations in the Management Discussion of Fund Performance.

<sup>\*</sup> The indicated rates of return shown here are the historical annual compounded total returns including changes in security value and reinvestment of all distributions and do not take into account sales, redemption, distribution or other optional charges by any securityholder that would have reduced returns or performance. Mutual funds are not guaranteed, their values change frequently and past performance may not be repeated.

## **AGF European Equity Fund**

### **Summary of Investment Portfolio**

As at September 30, 2024

The major portfolio categories and top holdings (up to 25) of the Fund at the end of the period are indicated in the following tables. The Summary of Investment Portfolio may change due to ongoing portfolio transactions of the Fund and the next quarterly update will be in the Quarterly Portfolio Disclosure as at December 31, 2024.

Portfolio by Country	Percentage of Net Asset Value (%)
France	23.6
United Kingdom	22.1
Germany	14.4
Switzerland	12.1
Ireland	7.5
Italy	5.8
Netherlands	5.1
Spain	4.7
Luxembourg	3.4
Cash & Cash Equivalents	0.8
Other Net Assets (Liabilities)	0.5

Portfolio by Sector	Percentage of Net Asset Value (%)
Financials	21.7
Industrials	14.6
Health Care	12.9
Materials	11.1
Consumer Staples	10.2
Energy	7.9
Consumer Discretionary	7.6
Utilities	6.9
Information Technology	5.8
Cash & Cash Equivalents	0.8
Other Net Assets (Liabilities)	0.5

Portfolio by Asset Mix	Percentage of Net Asset Value (%)
International Equity	98.7
Cash & Cash Equivalents	0.8
Other Net Assets (Liabilities)	0.5

Top Holdings	Percentage of Net Asset Value (%)
Novartis AG	4.9
Siemens AG	4.4
Compagnie de Saint-Gobain SA	4.3
BNP Paribas SA	4.0
Bank of Ireland Group PLC	4.0
Shell PLC	3.7
ING Groep NV	3.7
Danone SA	3.5
Nestle SA	3.4
Intesa Sanpaolo SpA	3.4
ArcelorMittal SA	3.4
Smith & Nephew PLC	3.2
SAP SE	2.8
AXA SA	2.7
Rio Tinto PLC	2.6
Roche Holding AG	2.6
Dalata Hotel Group PLC	2.6
CRH PLC	2.5
Enel SpA	2.4
Iberdrola SA	2.4
Sanofi	2.2
Veolia Environnement SA	2.1
Tesco PLC	2.0
adidas AG	1.9
BP PLC	1.6
Total Net Asset Value (thousands of dollars)	\$ 56,223



For more information contact your investment advisor or:

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