# Interim Management Report of Fund Performance

# **AGF European Equity Fund**

March 31, 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.

#### **Results of Operations**

For the six months ended March 31, 2024, Series S Units of AGF European Equity Fund (the "Fund") returned 16.7% (net of expenses) while the MSCI Europe Index returned 16.8%. Unlike the benchmark, the Fund may be subject to valuation adjustments as outlined in the Fund's valuation policies as it relates 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 slightly under-performed the MSCI Europe Index due to security selection decisions. The Health Care sector was the biggest detractor from performance, due to negative stock selection and an unfavorable underweight allocation. Negative stock selection in the Consumer Discretionary sector also detracted. This was partially offset by positive security selection and a favorable underweight allocation to the Consumer Staples sector, which contributed the most to performance. Positive security selection in the Materials sector also contributed. From a country perspective, Switzerland was the biggest detractor from overall performance, followed by France and Denmark. On the other hand, Germany was the biggest contributor, followed by the UK and Italy.

The Fund had net redemptions of approximately \$1 million for the current period, as compared to net redemptions of approximately \$14 million in the prior period. Rebalancing by fund on fund programs resulted in net subscriptions of approximately \$3 million in the Fund. The portfolio manager does not believe that redemption/subscription activity had a meaningful impact on the Fund's performance or the ability to implement its investment strategy.

Total expenses before foreign withholding taxes, 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 decreased as compared to the previous period due mainly to a decrease in average Net Asset Values. The decrease in interest expense was due to a decrease in overdraft positions throughout the period. The decrease in registration fees was 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**

During the reporting period, the global market was supported by moderating inflation as initial apprehensions of stagflation started to ease with rising incomes. The U.S. Federal Reserve (the "Fed") and European Central Bank ("ECB") were cautiously optimistic that the targeted inflation of 2.0% would be attained soon without significant central bank interventions. The Fed and ECB chose to delay rate cuts and to adopt a tighter monetary policy, as Fitch downgraded U.S. credit ratings from AAA to AA+. However, central banks adopted a more dovish tone, with Fed Chair Jerome Powell indicating reduced restrictions soon. Policy pronouncements have tempered expectations of rate cuts from September 2023. Increasing investor and consumer confidence in a narrow group of technology and consumer discretionary stocks has enhanced stock market activity.

At the monetary policy meeting in March 2024, the Governing Council of ECB acknowledged slowing inflation rate and wage growth. Public pronouncements of ECB policymakers dampened speculation of interest rate cuts, though structural and geopolitical challenges coupled with sluggish economic growth have strengthened the speculation of rate cuts by ECB this year. The central bank has alluded to the expectation of inflation reverting to its 2.0% target by mid-2025 as wage growth moderates, bolstering the argument for lower interest rates. Marginal fall in European unemployment has also added to market optimism. In 2023, the recovery of the European equity market was broadbased, but so far in 2024, it has been concentrated among fewer companies, spread over diverse industries.

The European equity market posted strong growth figures over the reporting period. The top performing sectors were Information Technology and Industrials. The top performers from the Information Technology sector, also leading the artificial intelligence ("AI") boom, gained from technology improvements and easing of chips scarcity, despite the protests and parliamentary restrictions imposed on AI companies. The Consumer Staples and Energy sectors were the main laggards.

European markets have started 2024 strongly, continuing the positive performance seen towards the end of 2023. However, the sluggish performance of the European economy is cast as the main reason for this with many countries seeing their gross domestic product growth expectations for 2024 already being guided lower. Whilst the European economy has been beating expectations over recent periods, as shown by the various economic surprise indices, these "beats" are more to do with the low expectations rather than a strong performance.

Earnings growth in Europe is expected to lag that of the U.S., but the gap does not justify the present discount in equities. In addition, Europe also offers a better dividend yield. If this is supplemented with looser interest rates by the ECB to stimulate economic growth, equity markets may rally and valuations can improve. It is also important to remember that uncertainty from geo-political conflicts, unemployment, inflation, German recession and a skewed purchasing managers' index ("PMI") can also dampen investor confidence. The PMI measures the economic health of the

This interim management report of fund performance contains financial highlights, but does not contain either the interim or annual financial statements of the investment fund. You can get a copy of the interim or 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.

manufacturing sector and is compiled based on new orders, inventory levels, production, supplier deliveries and employment environment.

Investor sentiment has improved as markets now expect rate cuts of 0.75% from June 2024. This shift in sentiment fueled significant optimism for a soft landing scenario. Industrial production in the Euro area has stabilized after two years of volatility. As such, the portfolio manager continues to believe that Europe, as a region, can avoid a recession on the back of a resilient global economy.

#### **Related Party Transactions**

AGF Investments Inc. ("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 \$282,000 were incurred by the Fund during the six months ended March 31, 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 six months ended March 31, 2024 and the past five years as applicable.

Series S Units - Net Assets per Unit(1)

For the periods ended	Mar 31, 2024 (\$)	Sept 30, 2023 (\$)	Sept 30, 2022 (\$)	Sept 30, 2021 (\$)	Sept 30, 2020 (\$)	Sept 30, 2019 (\$)
Net Assets, beginning of period <sup>(1)</sup>	11.85	8.85	10.88	8.52	9.59	9.94
Increase (decrease) from operation	ıs:					
Total revenue	0.20	0.43	0.45	0.36	0.30	0.40
Total expenses	(0.08)	(0.12)	(0.12)	(0.12)	(0.09)	(0.12)
Realized gains (losses)	0.46	0.68	(0.01)	0.37	0.07	(0.68)
Unrealized gains (losses)	1.37	2.81	(1.94)	2.11	(0.95)	0.13
Total increase (decrease) from operations <sup>(2)</sup>	1.95	3.80	(1.62)	2.72	(0.67)	(0.27)
Distributions:						
From income (excluding dividends)	-	-	-	-	-	-
From dividends	(0.39)	(0.32)	(0.34)	(0.22)	(0.37)	(0.25)
From capital gains	-	-	-	-	-	-
Return of capital	_	-	-	_	-	-
Total annual distributions <sup>(3)</sup> Net Assets, end of period <sup>(4)</sup>	(0.39) 13.42	(0.32) 11.85	(0.34) 8.85	(0.22) 10.88	(0.37) 8.52	(0.25) 9.59

#### Series S Units - Ratios/Supplemental Data(1)

For the periods ended	Mar 31, 2024	Sept 30, 2023	Sept 30, 2022	Sept 30, 2021	Sept 30, 2020	Sept 30, 2019
Total Net Asset Value (\$000's)	58,749	53,034	54,156	64,806	59,859	65,285
Number of units outstanding (000's)	4,379	4,476	6,121	5,957	7,022	6,808
Management expense ratio <sup>(5)</sup>	0.65%	0.57%	0.57%	0.57%	0.57%	0.57%
Management expense ratio before waivers or						
absorptions <sup>(6)</sup>	1.31%	1.32%	1.30%	1.30%	1.31%	1.27%
Trading expense ratio <sup>(7)</sup>	0.16%	0.14%	0.10%	0.11%	0.14%	0.22%
Portfolio turnover rate <sup>(8)</sup>	11.94%	11.27%	17.34%	10.64%	20.52%	23.57%
Net Asset Value per unit	13.42	11.85	8.85	10.88	8.52	9.59

#### **Explanatory Notes**

- (1) a) This information is derived from the Fund's audited annual financial statements and unaudited interim 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 bidask 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 computation of the distributions per unit does not take into account the management fee distributions, if applicable (see note 5 below). 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.

#### (1), (2), (3), (4), (5), (6), (7) and (8) see Explanatory Notes

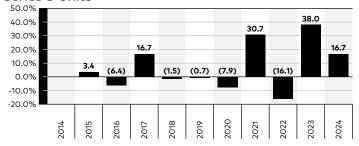
<sup>\*</sup> The indicated rates of return shown here are the historical returns including changes in security value and reinvestment of all distributions and do not take into account sales, redemption, distribution or other optional charges by any securityholder that would have reduced returns or performance.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

# **AGF European Equity Fund**

#### Year-By-Year Returns

The following bar chart shows the Fund's annual performance for each of the past 10 years to September 30, 2023 (interim performance for the six months ended March 31, 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.

## **Summary of Investment Portfolio**

As at March 31, 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 June 30, 2024.

Portfolio by Country	Percentage of Net Asset Value (%)
France	26.0
United Kingdom	18.5
Germany	12.9
Switzerland	11.2
Ireland	10.2
Netherlands	6.1
Italy	5.6
Spain	5.1
Luxembourg	3.7
Cash & Cash Equivalents	0.5
Other Net Assets (Liabilities)	0.2

Portfolio by Sector	Percentage of Net Asset Value (%)
Financials	24.2
Industrials	15.7
Health Care	10.8
Materials	10.7
Consumer Staples	9.6
Energy	9.1
Consumer Discretionary	7.6
Utilities	5.9
Information Technology	5.7
Cash & Cash Equivalents	0.5
Other Net Assets (Liabilities)	0.2

Portfolio by Asset Mix	Percentage of Net Asset Value (%)		
International Equity	99.3		
Cash & Cash Equivalents	0.5		
Other Net Assets (Liabilities)	0.2		

Top Holdings	Percentage of Net Asset Value (%)
BNP Paribas SA	5.7
Siemens AG	4.8
Compagnie de Saint-Gobain SA	4.5
Novartis AG	4.5
ING Groep NV	4.1
Shell PLC	4.0
Bank of Ireland Group PLC	3.9
AXA SA	3.8
ArcelorMittal SA	3.7
Intesa Sanpaolo SpA	3.7
Nestle SA	3.5
Danone SA	3.3
SAP SE	2.6
Dalata Hotel Group PLC	2.6
Smith & Nephew PLC	2.5
CRH PLC	2.3
Rio Tinto PLC	2.2
Veolia Environnement SA	2.2
TotalEnergies SE	2.0
ASML Holding NV	2.0
Roche Holding AG	2.0
Enel SpA	1.9
Iberdrola SA	1.8
Sanofi	1.8
BAE Systems PLC	1.8
Total Net Asset Value (thousands of dollars)	\$ 58,749



For more information contact your investment advisor or:

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