

THE PEI AWARDS 2015: EMEA



SPECIAL SITUATIONS/ TURNAROUND FIRM OF THE YEAR IN EUROPE

1. Sun European Partners

Endless

3. Rutland Partners

It was a tight race in a category where investment opportunities have been thin on the ground, but **Sun European Partners'** team seized the crown from last year's winner Endless thanks to its acquisition record and on-the-ground expansion.

The European arm of Sun Capital Partners reached into the homes of millions of Britons with its acquisition of one of the largest exporters of fresh produce and flowers from Africa into the EU, Finlays Horticulture, which supplies the likes of UK retailers Tesco and Marks & Spencer.

Tim Stubbs's promotion to senior MD responsible for operations and overseeing European portfolio performance means those acquisitions are in a safe pair of hands.

Stamping its footprint in the Nordics, the firm opened its first office in Stockholm, hiring Michael Palm as managing director to head its third European outpost. In Frankfurt, the addition of Andreas Bosenberg as managing director bolstered the team.



DISTRESSED DEBT FIRM OF THE YEAR IN EUROPE

1. Oaktree Capital Management

Apollo Global Management

3. Cerberus Capital Management

On an earnings call in the middle of 2015, US-based **Oaktree Capital Group** chief executive Jay Wintrob noted that the firm continued "to take advantage of opportunities arising from the prolonged dislocation in the European lending markets stemming from the global financial crisis".

The firm promptly launched two Europe-focused funds. Oaktree European Principal Fund IV (EPF IV) will target control investments "where dislocation or distress creates attractive investment propositions", Wintrob said.

Oaktree European Capital Solutions Fund (ECS) will lend to mid-market companies. The firm has been coy about fund sizes, but EPF IV is likely to be ambitious given its predecessor raised €3.2 billion. The earlier fund in the ECS series tapped a noteworthy €675 million.

And there was good reason for the firm's continued commitment to Europe. Its European assets generally outperformed the US markets in Q3, Wintrob noted in an

October call, with its European principal funds generating a 24 percent return over the previous 12 months.



FIRM OF THE YEAR IN AFRICA

1. Helios Investment Partners

The Abraaj Group

3. Actis

Africa saw a surge of investment in 2015, with figures from African Private Equity and Venture Capital Association's PE Data Tracker showing \$4.3 billion was raised for the region last year, compared with \$1.9 billion a year earlier.

It was in this booming environment that pan-African giant **Helios Investment Partners** knocked Actis off the top spot it had held for three consecutive years. After closing its third fund on its \$1.1 billion hard-cap, making it the largest ever fund dedicated to African private equity, Helios also made its first-ever Egyptian investment, backing electronic and payments platform Fawry.

Other notable investments included acquiring a 12.4 percent stake in Canadian oil and gas company Africa Oil Corp for \$100 million and backing Crown Agents, specialist providers of financial solutions in emerging markets.

The firm followed this up with the exit of outdoor advertising company Continental Outdoor Media, as well as offloading its shares in Equity Bank to NSSF Uganda.



FIRM OF THE YEAR IN BENELUX

1. Waterland Private Equity Investments

Gilde Buy Out Partners

3. H2 Equity Partners

It's a first-time win for Netherlands-headquartered **Waterland Private** »



Sun European Partners: flowering in Europe