

# News release

## Preliminary *sigma* estimates for H1 2014: global catastrophe-related insurance losses comparatively low at USD 21 billion

- Total economic losses from disaster events reached USD 44 billion in H1 2014
- Insured losses from disaster events were USD 21 billion in H1 2014, low compared to previous years
- Natural catastrophe-related insurance claims were USD 19 billion in H1 2014
- More than 4 700 lives were lost as a result of natural catastrophes and man-made disasters in H1 2014

Zurich, 27 August 2014 — According to preliminary *sigma* estimates, total economic losses from natural catastrophes and man-made disasters reached USD 44 billion in the first half of 2014. The global insurance industry covered USD 21 billion of these losses, down from USD 25 billion in H1 2013 and lower than the average first-half year loss of the previous 10 years (USD 27 billion). In all, more than 4 700 people lost their lives in disaster events in the first six months of this year.

Natural catastrophes caused total economic losses of USD 41 billion, well below the USD 59 billion in H1 2013 and the average first-half year loss of the previous 10 years (USD 94 billion). Of the overall insured losses, USD 19 billion came from natural catastrophe events, down from USD 21 billion in H1 2013 and also below the average first-half year loss of the previous 10 years (USD 23 billion). Man-made disasters triggered an additional USD 2 billion in insurance losses in the first half of 2014.

In mid-May, a spate of severe storms bringing large hail stones hit many parts of the US over a five-day period, generating insured losses of USD 2.6 billion. In addition, harsh spring weather triggered thunderstorms and tornadoes, some of which caused insured claims of above USD 1 billion.

Extreme winter conditions earlier in the year, particularly in the US and Japan, likewise made a significant contribution to the insured losses from natural catastrophes. In the US, a long period of heavy snowfall and very cold temperatures hit the east and states in the south such as Mississippi and Georgia, resulting in combined insured losses of USD 1.7 billion. Japan also

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experienced heavy snowstorms in many areas, leading to property damage-related insurance claims currently estimated to be around USD 2.5 billion.

Western Europe went through a second successive year of intense storm activity in 2014. Storm Ela in June brought hail and strong winds, causing significant damage to properties and vehicles in parts of France, Germany and Belgium, and total insured losses of USD 2.5 billion.

Once again floods took lives and inflicted extensive property damage in several regions of the world in the first half of 2014. For example, in May heavy flooding in Serbia, Bosnia, Croatia and other eastern European countries resulted in total economic losses of USD 4.5 billion. However, with low insurance penetration, the associated insured losses were moderate.

**Table 1:** The most costly insured catastrophe losses in H1 2014 (USD billion)

Month	Insured losses <sup>1</sup>	Total losses	Event	Country
May	2.6	3.2	Thunderstorms, hail <sup>2</sup>	United States
June	2.5	2.7	Storm Ela <sup>3</sup>	France, Germany, Belgium
Feb	2.5	5.0	Snow storm <sup>4</sup>	Japan
Jan	1.7	2.5	Snow storm <sup>2</sup>	United States
May	1.1	1.7	Thunderstorms, tornadoes <sup>2</sup>	United States

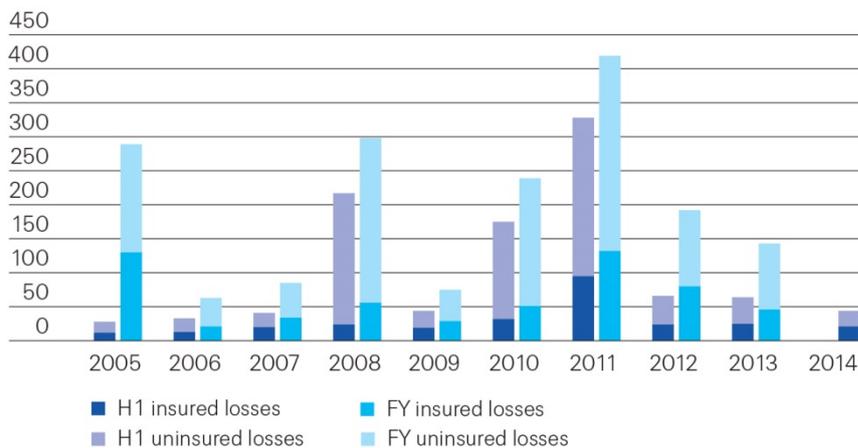
<sup>1</sup> Property and business interruption, excluding liability and life insurance losses

<sup>2</sup> US natural catastrophe figures with the permission of Property Claims Services (PCS)

<sup>3</sup> National insurance associations and Swiss Re estimates

<sup>4</sup> The General Insurance Association of Japan and Swiss Re estimates

**Figure 1:** Catastrophe-related losses (USD billion)



Note: insured losses + uninsured losses = total economic losses

Source: Swiss Re's *sigma* database

The estimates in this release include all latest updates to source data made by 14 August 2014.

**Notes to editors****Swiss Re**

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**Accessing data by sigma:**

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