

Prospects for 2018

The Volkswagen Group's Board of Management expects the global economy to record slightly weaker growth in 2018. We believe risks will arise from protectionist tendencies, turbulence in the financial markets and structural deficits in individual countries. In addition, growth prospects will continue to be hurt by geopolitical tensions and conflicts. We therefore expect somewhat weaker momentum than in 2017 in both the advanced economies and the emerging markets. We expect the strongest rates of expansion in Asia's emerging economies.

We expect trends in the passenger car markets in the individual regions to be mixed in 2018. Overall, growth in global demand for new vehicles will probably be slower than in the reporting period. We anticipate that unit sales volumes in Western Europe will fall slightly short of those seen in the reporting period. In the German passenger car market, we estimate that the market volume will be on a level with the previous year. Passenger car demand is expected to substantially exceed the prior-year figures in markets in Central and Eastern Europe. The volume of demand in the markets for passenger cars and light commercial vehicles (up to 6.35 tonnes) in North America is likely to be slightly lower than in the prior year. We expect demand in the South American markets for passenger cars and light commercial vehicles to grow perceptibly as a whole compared with the previous year. The passenger car markets in the Asia-Pacific region look set to continue their growth trajectory in 2018, albeit at a weaker pace.

We expect trends in the markets for light commercial vehicles in the individual regions to be mixed again in 2018. Overall, we envisage a slight dip in demand.

In the markets for mid-sized and heavy trucks that are relevant for the Volkswagen Group and in the relevant markets for buses, new registrations in 2018 are set to rise slightly above the prior-year level.

We believe that automotive financial services will continue to be very important for vehicle sales worldwide in 2018.

The Volkswagen Group is well prepared for the future challenges in the mobility business and the mixed developments in regional automotive markets. Our unique brand portfolio, our presence in all major world markets, our broad, selectively expanded product range and pioneering technologies and services place us in a good competitive position worldwide. In the course of transforming our core business, we will define the positioning of our Group brands more clearly and optimize the vehicle and drive portfolio with a view to the most attractive and fastest-growing market segments. In addition, we are working to make even more focused use of the advantages of our multibrand group by continuously developing new technologies and our toolkits.

We expect that deliveries to customers of the Volkswagen Group in 2018 will moderately exceed the prior-year figure amid continuously challenging market conditions.

Challenges will arise particularly from the economic situation, the increasing intensity of competition, exchange rate volatility and the diesel issue. In the EU, there is also a new, more time-consuming test procedure for determining pollutant and CO₂ emissions as well as fuel consumption in passenger cars and light commercial vehicles known as the Worldwide Harmonized Light-Duty Vehicles Test Procedure (WLTP).

We expect the sales revenues of the Volkswagen Group and its business areas to grow by as much as 5% year-on-year. In terms of the operating profit for the Group and the Passenger Cars Business Area, we forecast an operating return on sales in the range of 6.5–7.5% in 2018. For the Commercial Vehicles Business Area, we anticipate an operating return on sales of between 5.0–6.0%. In the Power Engineering Business Area, we expect a lower operating loss than in the previous year. For the Financial Services Division, we are forecasting an operating profit at the prior-year level.