

Prospects for 2019

The Volkswagen Group's Board of Management expects the growth of the global economy to slow somewhat in 2019. We still believe that risks will continue to arise from protectionist tendencies, turbulence in the financial markets and structural deficits in individual countries. In addition, growth prospects will be negatively impacted by continuing geopolitical tensions and conflicts. We therefore expect both the advanced economies and the emerging markets to show weaker momentum than in 2018. We anticipate 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 2019. Overall, global demand for new vehicles will probably be at the prior-year level. We anticipate that the volume of new registrations for passenger cars in Western Europe will be in line with the figure seen in the reporting period. After a positive performance overall in recent years, we estimate that demand in the German passenger car market will fall slightly year-on-year. Sales of passenger cars in 2019 are expected to slightly 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 new registrations in the South American markets for passenger cars and light commercial vehicles to grow moderately overall compared with the previous year. The passenger car markets in the Asia-Pacific region are expected at the prior-year level.

Trends in the markets for light commercial vehicles in the individual regions will be mixed again in 2019; on the whole, we anticipate 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 2019 are expected to slightly exceed the prior-year level.

We believe that automotive financial services will continue to be very important for vehicle sales worldwide in 2019.

The Volkswagen Group is well prepared overall for the future challenges pertaining to the automobility business and the mixed developments in regional vehicle markets. Our brand diversity, our presence in all major world markets, our broad, selectively expanded product range and pioneering technologies and services put us in a good competitive position worldwide. As part of the transformation of our core business, we are positioning our Group brands with a stronger focus on their individual characteristics and optimizing the vehicle and drive portfolio. The focus hereby is primarily on our vehicle fleet's carbon footprint and on 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 2019 will slightly 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 more stringent WLTP (Worldwide Harmonized Light-Duty Vehicles Test Procedure) requirements.

We expect the sales revenues of the Volkswagen Group and its Passenger Cars and Commercial Vehicles 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 2019. For the Commercial Vehicles Business Area, we anticipate an operating return on sales of between 6.0% and 7.0%. In the Power Engineering Business Area, we expect a loss around the previous year's level amid a slight rise in sales revenue. For the Financial Services Division, we are forecasting a moderate increase in sales revenues and an operating profit at the prior-year level.