Dr. Cornelius Riese, Chief Executive Officer

Dear Shareholders,

The DZ BANK Group can look back on a successful first half of 2026, generating a profit before taxes of €2.52 billion. This represents a significant increase compared with the prior-year period (first half of 2025: €2.13 billion) that was primarily driven by the very good operating performance of most group companies. The insurance and asset management segments made a particularly strong contribution.

The escalation of the conflict in the Middle East during the second quarter resulted in renewed uncertainty, disruptions to supply chains, and rising energy costs. Although fiscal stimulus measures provided support, growth in our home market was held back markedly by a return to elevated inflation, structural problems in industry, and subdued demand from private households. This stagnation of the real economy contrasted with pronounced optimism in the capital markets, which proved highly robust.

The DZ BANK Group's diversified business model enabled it to successfully weather these economic conditions. R+V Versicherung once again played a major role in the very strong results for the first half of the year driven by higher premiums and consistently low claims in non-life insurance and reinsurance. Union Investment also made a major contribution to the results. Supported by market trends, both volume-related and performance-related income components increased.

DZ BANK – central institution and corporate bank recorded a healthy level of customer business in all three business lines. The bank addressed the uncertainty stemming from the geopolitical situation by offering flexible solutions for customers. Increased demand from companies for long-term loans led to a rise in the lending volume. Project finance and international finance, in particular, increased significantly. Companies' hedging activities remained at a high level, with interest-rate hedges once again seeing especially strong demand. The Capital Markets business line also registered an increase compared with the prior-year period. The bank assisted many different customers with their classic and sustainability-related issuance activities. In the Transaction Banking business line, the number of payments processing transactions went up, as did the volume of funds in the depository business. With a processing volume of approximately eleven billion transactions per year, the bank ranks among the three largest SEPA clearing houses in Europe. The profit before taxes of the central institution and corporate bank was in line with the planning but lower than in the prior-year period, partly due to negative valuation effects on own issues.

DZ HYP delivered a steady operating performance and improved its profit before taxes. As expected, Bausparkasse Schwäbisch Hall achieved a further increase in its profit before taxes thanks, in part, to the rebound of consumer home finance. DZ PRIVATBANK also maintained the positive trajectory of its profit before taxes. The performance of TeamBank and VR Smart Finanz continued to be affected by the weak economic conditions. Across the group, the level of risk remained unremarkable.

The key results in detail:

The DZ BANK Group's **net interest income** declined to €1.80 billion (first half of 2025: €1.91 billion). Whereas net interest income rose at Bausparkasse Schwäbisch Hall and DZ HYP, it fell slightly at the central institution and corporate bank. **Net fee and commission income** increased significantly to €2.02 billion (first half of 2025: €1.66 billion), primarily owing to the growth of volume-related and performance-related income at Union Investment. **Gains and losses on trading activities** improved to a net gain of €351 million (first half of 2025: net gain of €191 million). The main reason for this increase was the very good level of capital markets business at the central institution and corporate bank. Moreover, IFRS valuation effects had less of an adverse impact than in the first half of 2025. **Gains and losses on investments** amounted to a net loss of €1 million (first half of 2025: net loss of €38 million). **Other gains and losses on valuation of financial instruments** deteriorated to a net loss of €31 million due to negative valuation effects (first half of 2025: net gain of €21 million). **Net income from insurance business** amounted to €1.10 billion, thereby exceeding the high level achieved in the prior-year period (first half of 2025: €766 million). **Loss allowances** came to €312 million (first half of 2025: €241 million). **Administrative expenses** swelled to €2.51 billion (first half of 2025: €2.32 billion) due to capital expenditure on technology, increased staff expenses, and contributions to the protection scheme.

With a common equity Tier 1 capital ratio of 18.9 percent (December 31, 2025: 18.4 percent), the DZ BANK Group has a very good level of capitalization.

On behalf of the Management Board, I would like to express my thanks to all employees of the DZ BANK Group. Their hard work played a key role in the very satisfying profit before taxes for the first half of the year.

The geopolitical situation remains fragile despite brief moments when hopes of peace emerge. High energy prices and disruptions to supply chains are likely to continue weighing heavily on the global economy for some time to come. In Germany, capital expenditure under the government's special off-budget fund for infrastructure and defense should start to stimulate growth. Our economists are predicting GDP growth of 1.1 percent for the year as a whole.

Bolstered by our very successful business performance in the first six months of 2026, we are nevertheless optimistic for the year as a whole and are anticipating that our profit before taxes will be in the range of €3.5 billion to €4.0 billion in 2026.

At the same time, the profound challenges facing Germany as a business location should not be underestimated. Following several years of economic stagnation and given that investment appetite among companies is at a historically low level, decisive action is now required. Policymakers have recognized where the problems lie, but the pace at which reforms are being implemented is nowhere near fast enough. It is now time for politicians, the business community, and society at large to show courage and determination in driving forward our country's transformation.

Back in 2016, DZ BANK demonstrated that it had the courage to bring about change when it merged with WGZ BANK. The merger led to the formation of one central institution for all German cooperative banks in August ten years ago. The merger was the culmination of the process to consolidate the superstructure of the Cooperative Financial Network and has resulted in the higher-performing and more profitable overall organization that we see today.

It is against this backdrop that we are forging ahead with our strategic initiatives. In a market environment characterized by shorter innovation cycles, fierce competition, and continual change, the pressure to adapt remains high. This makes it all the more urgent to embed artificial intelligence in our organization rapidly, efficiently, and productively. Another priority is to strengthen our positioning with regard to younger and tech-savvy customers. Throughout the DZ BANK Group, we are tailoring our products and services specifically to meet the needs of this target group. In collaboration with the Bundesverband der Deutschen Volksbanken und Raiffeisenbanken (BVR) [National Association of German Cooperative Banks] and the primary institutions, we are shaping the future of securities business, for example. To this end, we are continually expanding our product range, with DZ BANK and Union Investment working closely together in this context. As an example, we are continuing to roll out meinKrypto and further developing proven investment account models such as meinDepot as a matter of priority. Across the group, we are also working on innovative retirement solutions, such as the state-subsidized retirement savings account (Altersvorsorgedepot) and the state-subsidized retirement savings program for children (Frühstartrente).

We are maintaining a high level of momentum in other strategic action areas too. An example of this is the strengthening of our international business. We recently established a new unit in the Transaction Banking business line that will operate as a central point of contact for the primary institutions with regard to international business. This ensures that we are able to cater to the needs of the cooperative banks and their corporate customers in an even more targeted manner, both for our key anchor product of payments processing and beyond.

Across all group entities, we are accelerating the digitalization and automation of our processes – in particular by introducing modern, digital customer interfaces and future-proof cloud infrastructure, and by consistently using artificial intelligence. One of the main aims in doing so is to generate efficiencies and manage our costs with discipline.

All of our endeavors are in pursuit of a clear objective: to secure the long-term future of cooperative banking.

Kind regards,

Dr. Cornelius Riese
Chief Executive Officer