

Aroundtown SA

Germany / Real Estate
 Frankfurt Stock Exchange
 Bloomberg: AT1 GR
 ISIN: LU1673108939

Update

RATING
BUY

PRICE TARGET
€ 5.10

Return Potential 152.0%
 Risk Rating Medium

SECTOR REELING; IS CURRENT PESSIMISM OVERBLOWN?

We are reducing mid- and long-term forecasts to account for the impact of the rising interest environment on FFOPS 1 and DPS. Sector sentiment is poor with investors worried about leverage levels, potential asset value declines, and for commercial landlords, the effects of a looming recession on office portfolios. We see good value in the AT1 stock after steep declines (-62% YTD), but there are few clear catalysts for a rebound on the horizon beyond a stabilisation of the macro environment. Adjustments to our discounted dividend model (DDM) result in a €5.1 target price (old: €7.3). Our rating remains Buy.

Sector sentiment is bad right now Global markets are going through their most painful adjustment since the global financial crisis. The primary cause of the market chaos is the Federal Reserve's battle with inflation. After losing the first three rounds since prices began to surge in 2021, the Fed is now looking to throw a haymaker with jumbo rate hikes, and the central bank expects to raise the federal funds rate to nearly 4.5% by the end of the year and perhaps higher in 2023. Until there is some sign that monetary tightening is coming to an end, we expect sector sentiment to remain poor and keep investors side-lined.

Risks to asset values have risen, but is current pessimism overblown?

While we acknowledge the increased risk to AT's asset values in the wake of rising discount rates, we don't see these as wobbly as the market currently expects based on a closer look (overleaf) at key issues weighing on sector sentiment: (1) the risk to the balance sheet in the event of property devaluations; (2) the risk to rental income streams; and (3) potential for covenant breaches. AT has adequate liquidity (€2.2bn) to cover debt maturities for three years, but financing costs will rise in the mid-term unless the current upturn in interest rates is reversed beforehand. Our updated mid- and long-term forecasts now factor in a higher cost of debt when large quanta of corporate debt need to be refinanced. (p.t.o.)

FINANCIAL HISTORY & PROJECTIONS

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022E	2023E
Net rent (€m)	633.00	765.70	1,003.00	1,085.70	1,202.73	1,180.81
Adj. EBITDA (€m)	606.0	772.7	944.1	974.9	1,008.5	1,000.3
Net income (€m)	1,827.80	1,709.10	906.40	1,078.10	964.51	1,252.89
EPS (diluted) (€)	1.54	1.12	0.50	0.55	0.57	0.76
EPRA NTA ¹ (€m)	n.a.	10,522.78	11,186.90	11,564.01	11,730.13	12,389.62
NTAPS ¹ (€m)	n.a.	8.59	9.51	10.21	10.65	11.25
DPS (€)	0.25	0.14	0.22	0.23	0.25	0.26
FFO 1 ² (€m)	359.64	445.58	357.80	353.20	360.28	375.51
FFOPS 1 ² (€)	0.34	0.38	0.27	0.30	0.33	0.34
Liquid assets (€m)	1,613.90	3,074.70	3,287.09	3,276.61	2,355.55	2,162.18

¹ No NTA data reported prior to 2019 ² after perpetual and covid-19 adjustments

RISKS

Risks include, but are not limited to, unfavourable interest rate developments, unfavourable macroeconomic developments, and the departure of key personnel.

COMPANY PROFILE

Aroundtown SA is a specialist real estate company focused on investing in and managing value-add properties primarily located in the German/ Netherlands real estate markets.

MARKET DATA

As of 01 Nov 2022

Closing Price € 2.02
 Shares outstanding 1537.02m
 Market Capitalisation € 3110.93m
 52-week Range € 1.84 / 6.28
 Avg. Volume (12 Months) 3,435,706

Multiples	2021	2022E	2023E
P/FFO 1	6.7	6.2	5.9
P/NTA	0.2	0.2	0.2
FFO 1 Yield	14.9%	16.2%	16.8%
Div. Yield	11.2%	12.1%	12.6%

STOCK OVERVIEW



COMPANY DATA

As of 30 Jun 2022

Liquid Assets € 2,200.00m
 Current Assets € 4,358.00m
 EPRA NTA € 11,428.00m
 Investment properties € 29,569.00m
 Current Liabilities € 1,809.00m
 Total Equity € 18,860.00m

SHAREHOLDERS

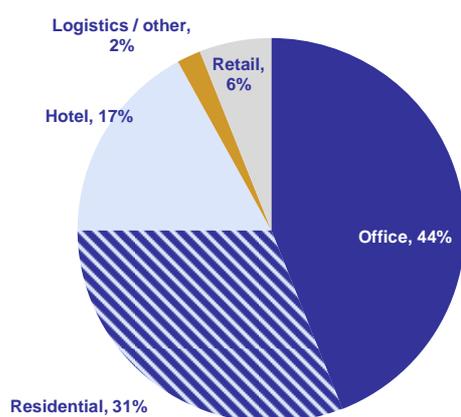
Treasury shares* 30.0%
 Avisco Group 15.0%
 Blackrock 6.3%
 Free Float 48.7%

* 12% are held through TLG Immobilien AG, voting rights suspended

HOW MUCH DOWNSIDE CAN THE BALANCE SHEET ABSORB?

We cannot imagine a scenario in which commercial property valuations do not take a hit with economic headwinds whipping across the globe. But we expect this to be a mixed bag dependent on the asset class. Good diversification (figure 1) that includes a sizable residential component should help buffer to the downside. Importantly, solid covenant headroom will allow Aroundtown to absorb a significant downturn in property values.

Figure 1: Portfolio diversification by asset type (Q2/22 GAV)



Source: First Berlin Equity Research; Aroundtown

Capital structure features several reassuring metrics including: (1) €24.2bn in unencumbered assets equal to 84% of rent; (2) sufficient liquidity to cover maturities for three years; (3) 5.4 year average debt maturity; (4) access to cheaper secured debt; and (5) significant headroom on all covenants as demonstrated below.

Baring a historic collapse, covenants look safe from devaluation risk The markets currently expect sizable asset devaluations to threaten the balance sheets of large landlords. To assess the impact of sharp declines in property valuations and rental income we have conducted a stress test on AT's balance sheet and specifically the EMTN (Euro Medium Term Note) 'debt limitation' and 'maintenance of coverage ratios' covenants, which are readily calculated from published financials.

Table 1: Covenants vs H2/22 KPIs

Type	Covenant	As of Q2/22
Debt limitation		
Debt / total assets	$\leq 60\%$	35%
Limitation of secured debt		
Secured debt / total assets	$\leq 45\%$	-3% ¹
Maintenance of unencumbered assets		
Unencumbered assets / unsecured debt	$\geq 125\%$	265%
Maintenance of coverage ratios		
Adjusted EBITDA / interest	$\geq 1.8x$	5.3x
¹ liquidity > secured debt		

Source: First Berlin Equity Research; Aroundtown



COVENANT STRESS TESTS

‘Debt limitation’ Total assets would have to tumble -41% and dip below ~€21.7bn (reported Q2 value: €36.8bn) before the $\leq 60\%$ “total debt / total asset” covenant is breached (table 2). This would imply a €15.1bn decline (-51%) in AT’s investment properties valued at €29.6bn in Q2. While we concede some devaluation risk in the commercial portfolio (office & hotels), we do not see a scenario in which investment properties shed >50% in value, particularly with more stable residential assets comprising 31% of the overall portfolio.

Exposure to more resilient residential market via Grand City helps Residential transaction volumes have slowed, but no one is dumping properties below BV at this point, and the wide demand / supply gap may be the fundamental force that keeps these asset values stable. Germany has suffered from an acute shortage of flats during the recent boom. Now with droves of refugees arriving from Ukrainian battle zones, the country is expected to absorb >1m net immigrants this year and put further strain on limited supply.

Table 2: Stress test: total debt / total assets¹

	H1/22	Trigger	Variance
Total debt (€m)	13,017	13,017	0%
Total assets (€m)	36,821	21,695	-41%
Covenant $\leq 60\%$	35%	60%	
¹ Total net debt / net assets			

Source: First Berlin Equity Research; Aroundtown

‘Maintenance of coverage ratios’ We keep net cash interest costs stable, since no major refinancing volumes are imminent to push up near-term interest expenses. That means rental income would have to fall off a cliff (-67% or €-680m) to violate the $\geq 1.8x$ covenant. Again we assume residential performance would be safe, given that most Germans will not want to forgo having a roof over their heads. That means RI from offices (€361m), hotels (€239m), and retail properties (€75m) would likewise have to disappear—another outcome that feels highly improbable.

Table 3: Stress test: AEBITDA / net cash interest

€m	H1/22	Trigger	Variance
AEBITDA	1,020	340	-67%
Net cash interest	189	189	0%
Covenant $\geq 1.8x$	5.4x	1.8x	

Source: First Berlin Equity Research; Aroundtown

We judge ~43% of AT’s RI streams are well insulated from a prolonged downturn On Q2 numbers, the office portfolio accounts for ~41% of total rents. Of this figure, around 30% is traced to stable public sector tenants (DE and NL governments, Deutsche Bundesbank, etc.), which corresponds to ~12% of total rental income. Meanwhile, Grand City’s stable of residential properties generates around €361m or 31% of AT’s RI.

Hotels account for 20% of RI and rent collections have been improving of late. The hotel sector benefited from a strong uptick in travel demand this summer, but this may soften next year with travel budgets tightened by a recession and fiendishly high energy bills.

Retail rents make up 6% of portfolio RI but this is largely anchored by large grocers and has low exposure to high street retail. Another 2% of RI stems from logistics and industrial centres, which are still benefiting from the e-commerce boom, although a recession might dent consumer spending.



UPSHOT

While we aren't in a recession just yet, a faltering economy is the juggernaut menacingly approaching in the rear view mirror. Investors are now grappling with various scenarios of how deep a downturn will be and its impact on property landlords.

Barring a historic collapse in property values, AT's covenants look safe from valuation declines. Property values tumbled 20% to 30% depending on the region and asset class during the Global Financial Crisis (GFC). But the Great Recession was caused by the housing market collapse, whereas the looming recession is expected to pressure property valuations. We thus consider it unlikely that devaluations will outpace the GFC by a factor of two in some cases.

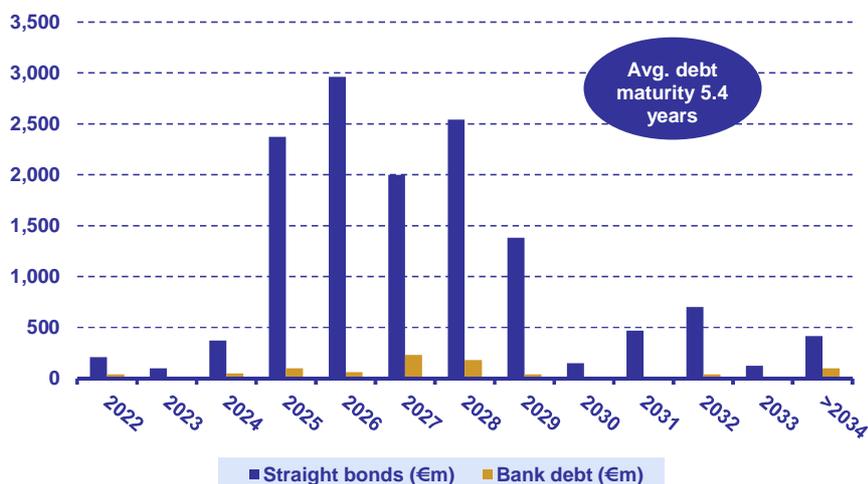
As demonstrated above, AT's near-term financial position is solid, and covenant headroom looks sufficient to absorb a sizable downturn. But investors need more convincing that Aroundtown will be able to manage its future refinancing needs and risks to its capital structure without equity dilution. We note that AT management have significant cyclical experience dating back to the global financial crisis 2007-2009, and we expect this veteran leadership to pilot the company through the current turbulence.



REVISED OUTLOOK

Aroundtown has cash and liquid assets of around €2.2bn—enough to cover debt maturities into mid-2025. Plus, the company says it has access to over €1bn in revolving credit facilities if needed.

Figure 2: Debt maturity schedule



Source: First Berlin Equity Research; Aroundtown

Much has changed this year In January, inflation was transitory according to central bankers. Russia hadn't invaded Ukraine, the energy markets were calm and world economies were still expanding. Now markets are gripped by fears of stubborn inflation, war, and a looming recession.

The Fed is determined to break the back of inflation with jumbo rate hikes. We have thus again bumped up our interest expense assumptions for Aroundtown starting in 2024 when the first batch of debt will need to be refinanced. The largest quanta (>€2.3bn) start maturing in 2025, which may be far enough down the road to for interest rates to settle down—although we do not expect them to return to January levels—and allow AT to refinance at more favourable terms.

Table 4: Changes to FBe and target price

	old	new	revision	upside	dividend yield	total upside
Target price (€)	7.3	5.1	-30.1%	152.0%	12.1%	164.1%
	2022E			2023E		
in €m	Old	New	variance	Old	New	variance
FFO 1	354	360	1.9%	417	376	-10.0%
Margin	30%	30%	-	35%	32%	-
FFOPS 1 (€)	0.32	0.33	1.9%	0.37	0.34	-10.0%

Source: First Berlin Equity Research estimates

After nudging up our mid- and long-term cost of debt assumptions to 1.75% earlier this year during this initial surge in bond yields, we are upping them another 150 bps to 3.25%. Our forecasts also now factor in: (1) higher debt repayments with disposal proceeds this year; (2) step-up rates for the four perpetual notes callable in 2023; and (3) lower disposals in H2/22 than previously modelled assuming some are pushed into next year. Rent increases from the residential portfolio plus some help from indexation for office property rents help offset the higher costs traced to the re-set 2023 perpetual notes. The combined adjustments point to a new target price of €5.1 (old: €7.3) in our DDM model (overleaf).



VALUATION MODEL

In the midst of the interest rate-shock, Germany's property bellwethers (Vonovia, Deutsche Wohnen, Aroundtown, Grand City, LEG, TAG) have shed some €41bn in market cap YTD and are trading well below (>65%) their respective NAVs.

Figure 3: YTD share price & NAV performances of German property bellwethers



Source: First Berlin Equity Research; Bloomberg

We see good value in AT1 shares after nearly 62% of its market capitalisation vanished in the sector rout, but investors need to be patient with no clear catalysts on the horizon beyond evolution of the macro environment. Our rating remains Buy.

in €m	2022E	2023E	2024E	2025E	2026E	2027E	2028E	2029E	2030E	TV
FFOPS 1 (€)	0.33	0.34	0.37	0.40	0.34	0.33	0.34	0.35	0.39	0.39
Payout ratio	75%	75%	75%	75%	75%	75%	75%	75%	75%	75%
Dividend (DPS) (€)	0.25	0.26	0.28	0.30	0.26	0.25	0.26	0.26	0.29	0.29
Y/Y		4%	9%	8%	-14%	-5%	4%	2%	11%	n.a.
NPV	0.24	0.24	0.25	0.25	0.21	0.19	0.18	0.18	0.19	3.51
CAGR 2022 to 2027	0.0%									
Terminal growth rate	1.0%									
Discount rate	5.6%									
NPV of dividends (€)	1.6									
NPV of TV (€)	3.5									
Fair value per share €	5.1									

		Terminal growth						
		-0.5%	0.0%	0.5%	1.0%	1.5%	2.0%	2.5%
Discount rate	4.4%	5.2	5.5	6.0	6.6	7.3	8.2	9.5
	4.8%	4.8	5.1	5.5	6.0	6.5	7.3	8.2
	5.2%	4.5	4.8	5.1	5.5	6.0	6.5	7.3
	5.6%	4.2	4.5	4.7	5.1	5.5	5.9	6.5
	6.0%	4.0	4.2	4.4	4.7	5.0	5.4	5.9
	6.4%	3.8	4.0	4.2	4.4	4.7	5.0	5.4
	6.8%	3.6	3.7	3.9	4.1	4.4	4.7	5.0
		Cost of Debt						
		2.50%	2.75%	3.00%	3.25%	3.75%	4.25%	4.8%
Discount rate	4.4%	7.8	7.4	7.0	6.6	5.7	4.9	4.1
	4.8%	7.1	6.7	6.3	6.0	5.2	4.5	3.7
	5.2%	6.5	6.1	5.8	5.5	4.8	4.1	3.5
	5.6%	6.0	5.7	5.4	5.1	4.5	3.9	3.3
	6.0%	5.5	5.3	5.0	4.7	4.2	3.6	3.1
	6.4%	5.2	4.9	4.7	4.4	3.9	3.4	2.9
	6.8%	4.8	4.6	4.4	4.1	3.7	3.2	2.7



INCOME STATEMENT

All figures in EURm	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022E	2023E
Net rent	633	766	1,003	1,086	1,203	1,181
Operating and other income	114	129	177	238	353	347
Rental and operating income (RI)	747	895	1,180	1,323	1,556	1,528
Capital gains, property revaluations & other	1,536	1,218	769	810	588	660
Result from equity-accounted investees	252	299	196	193	74	77
Property OpEx	-219	-228	-443	-533	-643	-578
Other income	0	0	0	0	0	0
Administration & other OpEx	-23	-27	-51	-57	-63	-60
Operating income (EBIT)	2,294	2,156	1,652	1,737	1,512	1,626
Net financial result	-115	-142	-201	-180	-181	-170
Other financial expenses	-94	46	-168	-162	-131	0
Pre-tax income (EBT)	2,085	2,060	1,283	1,394	1,200	1,457
Tax expense	-44	-71	-89	-100	-106	-105
Deferred tax	-213	-280	-287	-216	-129	-99
Tax result	-257	-351	-377	-316	-235	-204
Comprehensive net income	1,828	1,709	906	1,078	965	1,253
Minority interests	161	343	165	330	222	253
Perpetual notes	46	58	90	106	119	157
Net income to owners	1,620	1,308	652	642	624	842
Basic EPS (€)	1.54	1.12	0.50	0.55	0.57	0.76
AEBITDA	606	773	944	975	1,008	1,000
Ratios						
Adj EBITDA before JV contributions	95.7%	100.9%	94.1%	89.8%	83.8%	84.7%
Tax rate	7.3%	9.1%	9.5%	10.3%	10.5%	10.5%
Expenses as % of revenues						
Property OpEx	29.3%	25.5%	37.5%	40.3%	41.3%	37.8%
Administration & other OpEx	3.0%	3.1%	4.3%	4.3%	4.1%	3.9%
YY Growth						
Revenues	41.7%	19.8%	31.9%	12.1%	17.6%	-1.8%
Operating income	19.4%	-6.0%	-23.4%	5.1%	-12.9%	7.6%
Adjusted EBITDA	78.8%	27.5%	22.2%	3.3%	3.4%	-0.8%
Net income/ loss	26.3%	-19.3%	-50.2%	-1.5%	-2.8%	34.9%
Funds from Operations (FFO)						
AEBITDA before JV contribution	497	641	777	871	962	951
Finance expense	-115	-142	-201	-180	-181	-170
Tax expense	-44	-71	-89	-100	-106	-105
Minority adjustment	-7	-17	-36	-82	-125	-127
Other adjustments	8	3	9	7	8	8
Perpetual attribution	-46	-58	-90	-106	-119	-157
FFO 1 before JV contribution	293	357	371	409	438	400
JV FFO 1 contributions	67	89	107	69	22	26
FFO 1 before Covid adjustment	360	446	478	478	460	426
Extraordinary provision for uncollected rents	0	0	-120	-125	-100	-50
FFO 1¹	360	446	358	353	360	376

¹ Previously FFO 1 after perpetuals, covid adjusted



BALANCE SHEET

All figures in EURm	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022E	2023E
Assets						
Current assets, total	2,102	3,743	4,781	5,529	3,962	3,543
Cash and cash equivalents	1,243	2,192	2,692	2,873	1,951	1,757
Short-term investments	366	878	454	376	376	376
Receivables	277	454	617	1,219	1,407	1,381
Other current assets	5	5	141	28	28	29
Assets held for sale	211	214	877	1,033	200	0
Non-current assets, total	16,939	21,702	26,241	33,854	34,364	35,166
Property, plant & equipment	33	20	877	1,849	1,855	1,860
Investment properties	14,174	18,127	21,172	29,116	29,698	30,499
Equity accounted investees	2,215	2,506	3,177	1,223	1,247	1,232
Other LT assets	517	1,049	1,014	1,667	1,564	1,575
Total assets	19,041	25,445	31,022	39,383	38,327	38,709
Shareholders' equity & debt						
Current liabilities, total	606	857	1,074	1,607	1,198	1,168
Short-term debt	27	246	181	544	56	56
Accounts payable	451	343	435	621	682	633
Provisions & other current liabilities	128	268	458	442	460	478
Long-term liabilities, total	8,491	11,209	14,364	18,620	17,686	17,236
Long-term debt	7,444	9,759	11,680	15,026	13,994	13,418
Deferred tax liabilities	882	1,107	2,026	2,766	2,895	2,994
Other LT liabilities	164	342	659	828	797	823
Minority interests	567	1,309	2,025	3,875	4,097	4,350
Shareholders' equity	9,377	12,070	13,558	15,281	15,346	15,956
Total consolidated equity and debt	19,041	25,445	31,022	39,383	38,327	38,709
Ratios						
ICR (x)	4.7	4.8	4.3	4.9	5.0	5.3
Net debt / adj. EBITDA (x)	11.8	10.9	11.1	14.2	12.2	11.9
Equity ratio	52.2%	52.6%	50.2%	48.6%	50.7%	52.5%
Financial leverage	62.6%	57.9%	63.4%	80.8%	76.2%	70.9%
EPRA NTA	n.a.	10,523	11,187	11,564	11,730	12,390
EPRA NTAPS (€)	n.a.	8.6	9.5	10.2	10.7	11.3
Net debt	5,871	6,985	8,598	12,344	11,694	11,312
Return on equity (ROE)	19.5%	14.2%	6.7%	7.1%	6.3%	7.9%
Loan-to-value (LTV)	35%	34%	34%	39%	38%	36%



CASH FLOW STATEMENT

All figures in EURm	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022E	2023E
Net income	1,828	1,709	906	1,078	965	1,253
Depreciation & amortisation	2	2	4	16	16	15
Capital gains, property revaluations & other	-1,536	-1,218	-769	-810	-588	-660
Profit share from equity accounted investees	-252	-299	-196	-193	-74	-77
Shared based payment in a subsidiary	3	5	3	6	0	0
Net finance expenses	208	96	369	343	312	170
Tax result	257	351	377	316	235	204
Operating cash flow	510	646	694	755	865	905
Changes in working capital	-39	-34	-36	-57	-149	-29
Provisions for other liabilities	-3	-3	-3	-4	20	21
Dividend received	51	61	43	24	49	92
Tax paid	-46	-57	-83	-93	-106	-105
Net operating cash flow	473	614	616	626	680	884
CapEx/ intangibles	-5	-3	-36	23	-21	-21
Disposal / investment in investment properties, net	-915	-2,311	1,427	1,179	815	59
Acquisition / disposals of subsidiaries	-1,829	0	0	0	0	0
Proceeds from investments in financial assets	-175	-576	-377	-124	-39	18
Cash flow from investing	-2,924	-2,890	1,014	1,078	755	56
Debt financing, net	2,588	2,148	-493	-1,320	-1,520	-575
Equity financing, net	601	596	0	0	0	0
Payments for own shares	0	0	-1,001	-444	-400	0
Share buy-back in a subsidiary	0	0	0	-270	0	0
Dividends paid	-226	-209	-22	-252	-173	-271
Other financing activities	87	854	94	-120	-82	-119
Net paid financing expenses	-97	-161	-212	-201	-181	-170
Cash flow from financing	2,953	3,228	-1,634	-2,607	-2,357	-1,134
Net cash flows	501	952	-5	-903	-922	-194
Assets held for sale - cash	6	-4	-3	-2	0	0
Fx effects	-1	1	-1	16	0	0
Cash & equivalents from TLG	0	0	509	1070	0	0
Cash, start of the year	736	1,243	2,192	2,692	2,873	1,951
Cash, end of the year	1,243	2,192	2,692	2,873	1,951	1,757
FFO 1 before covid adjustment	360	446	478	478	460	426
FFO 1 ¹	360	446	358	353	360	376
FFOPS 1 before covid adjustment (€)	0.34	0.38	0.37	0.41	0.42	0.39
FFOPS 1 ¹ (€)	0.34	0.38	0.27	0.30	0.33	0.34

¹ Previously FFO 1 after perpetuals, covid adjusted

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The present financial analysis is based on the author's own knowledge and research. The author prepared this study without any direct or indirect influence exerted on the part of the analysed company. Parts of the financial analysis were possibly provided to the analysed company prior to publication in order to avoid inaccuracies in the representation of facts. However, no substantial changes were made at the request of the analysed company following any such provision.

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The recommendations determined in accordance with the share price trend anticipated by First Berlin in the respectively indicated investment period are as follows:

Category		1	2
Current market capitalisation (in €)		0 - 2 billion	> 2 billion
Strong Buy ¹	An expected favourable price trend of:	> 50%	> 30%
Buy	An expected favourable price trend of:	> 25%	> 15%
Add	An expected favourable price trend of:	0% to 25%	0% to 15%
Reduce	An expected negative price trend of:	0% to -15%	0% to -10%
Sell	An expected negative price trend of:	< -15%	< -10%

¹ The expected price trend is in combination with sizable confidence in the quality and forecast security of management.

Our recommendation system places each company into one of two market capitalisation categories. Category 1 companies have a market capitalisation of €0 – €2 billion, and Category 2 companies have a market capitalisation of > €2 billion. The expected return thresholds underlying our recommendation system are lower for Category 2 companies than for Category 1 companies. This reflects the generally lower level of risk associated with higher market capitalisation companies.

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RECOMMENDATION & PRICE TARGET HISTORY

Report No.:	Date of publication	Previous day closing price	Recommendation	Price target
Initial Report	29 September 2015	€3.40	Buy	€5.70
2...45	↓	↓	↓	↓
46	15 April 2021	€6.34	Buy	€8.60
47	31 May 2021	€6.89	Buy	€8.60
48	30 August 2021	€6.47	Buy	€8.60
49	23 September 2021	€6.06	Buy	€8.60
50	25 November 2021	€5.91	Buy	€8.60
51	31 March 2022	€5.27	Buy	€8.30
52	31 May 2022	€4.40	Buy	€7.40
53	26 August 2022	€2.99	Buy	€7.30
54	Today	€2.02	Buy	€5.10

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- key sources of information in the preparation of this research report
- valuation methods and principles
- sensitivity of valuation parameters

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