Dr. Stefan Hoops,

CEO of the Executive Board

DWS Group GmbH & Co. KGaA

Annual General Meeting

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Dear Shareholders,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the entire Executive Board, I would like to welcome you to the fifth Annual General Meeting of the DWS Group.

For me, this is the first Annual General Meeting at our company. It also means that I have been able to speak on behalf of DWS for almost exactly one year now. In the special situation that prevailed at the time I joined DWS, my main concern was to ensure stability in the company. To this end, I held many discussions with colleagues, clients, and also with some of you, dear shareholders. In the end, we were able to prevent that important colleagues and clients turn their backs on DWS. I would like to thank them most sincerely for the trust they have placed in us.

Following this first phase, we in the Executive Board looked closely at the changing conditions for asset managers. The main focus was, of course, the challenge of falling asset prices combined with rising inflation-driven costs. In addition, we discussed the fundamental changes in our industry, such as the disruption of business models by FinTechs and digital assets as well as the separation of various asset classes. Building on this analysis, we then reviewed and further refined DWS' strategy together with the Supervisory Board in the following months.

Ladies and gentlemen, before I present the cornerstones of this strategy and the strategic progress since the last Annual General Meeting, I would first like to look back with you at our results in the past year and in the first quarter of 2023.

2022 was what I have repeatedly called the “ultimate super bear scenario” for DWS. Globally, all asset classes were under pressure. Since February 2022, we have had to deal with another terrible war in Europe. As a result, we have faced energy supply shortages and related concerns about the German economy. In addition, there were DWS-specific challenges such as the accusations of so-called greenwashing that have been publicly discussed since the summer of 2021. All in all, this was an extremely difficult environment for the entire industry, in which your DWS was particularly challenged for specific reasons.

On the subject of greenwashing allegations, I would like to emphasize again today: DWS has been cooperating actively, openly and transparently with the authorities since the beginning of the investigations. The resolution of the allegations and conclusion of the external investigations remain a top priority for the Executive Board. Unfortunately, it is still not possible for us to talk today about potential results or the timeframes of the official investigations. We are dependent on the timing of the authorities here. With regard to our internal reviews, we can reiterate: We continue to stand by our financial disclosures and the prospectuses of our funds.

At the same time, we have of course drawn lessons from the ever-changing regulatory framework and our own findings: That is why we continue to improve our sustainability-related governance, processes and controls. More on this later.

Ladies and gentlemen, in this extremely challenging environment, DWS generated 2022 net inflows into high-margin Alternatives as well as into Active Multi-Asset and ESG products thanks to its diversified business model and expertise.

Overall, however, DWS was unable to escape the industry-wide net outflows. As a result, net inflows, which had previously been strong for three years, have stalled for the time being. Net outflows were mainly from Fixed Income, Cash and Passive, each of which have relatively lower margins. Across the board, the average management fee margin improved accordingly year-on-year. Assets under management declined to EUR 821 billion, mainly due to market movements. This also corresponds more or less with the decline at our competitors.

Yet, even in the exceptionally difficult environment of 2022, our relentless focus on acting as a fiduciary for our clients paid off. Thanks to the continued support of our clients, the perseverance of our colleagues and the strength of our business model, we were able to keep our adjusted revenues almost stable at EUR 2.7 billion. We even increased our management fees by another 4 percent compared to the record value of the previous year.

Despite inflationary pressures and investments into growth initiatives, adjusted costs only increased slightly by 3 percent to EUR 1.6 billion as we continued our strict cost control. The adjusted Cost-Income Ratio was at a good level at 60.6 percent in 2022, in line with our 2022 guidance of around 60 percent.

Adjusted Profit before tax decreased by 7 percent in 2022 compared to the record level of 2021. However, at just under EUR 1.1 billion, it was still far above the values of previous years. The net income decreased by 23 percent to EUR 599 million in 2022. This was due to a number of special items. Among others, we had to deal with an impairment of non-amortized intangible assets and a planned increase in transformation costs.

So, despite the challenging environment, your DWS delivered solid results last year. Based on these results, we are proposing to pay a higher dividend at the Annual General Meeting for the fourth year in a row. Specifically, EUR 2.05 per share for the financial year 2022.

Ladies and gentlemen, we also see the 2022 financial results as an indication that DWS is stable and on track. The reason for this is once again our employees, who have worked with the highest motivation and a strong sense of responsibility as trustees for the assets of our clients. I would like to thank them for this, also on behalf of my colleagues on the DWS Executive Board.

Even in the turbulent market environment in the first quarter of 2023, clients trusted our performance and advice. Thanks to their continued demand, we recorded net inflows again of EUR 8.8 billion excluding Cash. Our strong market position enabled us to record net inflows into Active funds as well as Xtrackers and ESG products from both institutional and retail investors. In addition, our Assets under Management increased compared to the end of last year to EUR 841 billion at the end of March.

The adjusted Cost-Income Ratio stood at 66.3 percent in the first quarter, above the 2022 ratio as expected, and we are on track to achieve our guidance of below 65 percent in 2023 – a year in which we will have high transformation-related costs, as announced. This is because we are working on a dual platform in 2023 – both that of Deutsche Bank and our own. We are thus continuing to build up our own capabilities to drive our development towards becoming a stand-alone asset manager.

Ladies and gentlemen, this step towards independence is greatly important for our future success. But what I mentioned briefly at the start is equally important: We must regularly review DWS' strategy and adapt it with foresight in order to respond to changes in our environment. This includes trends in the financial industry and changes in client behavior, but also regulatory developments and social challenges. And there has been a lot going on here recently.

Therefore, we in the Executive Board carried out a detailed analysis of our business last year and also discussed this intensively with the Supervisory Board. Based on our respective capabilities and growth prospects in each market segment, we have divided our business areas into the following four categories: Value, Growth, Build and Reduce.

What do we mean by these?

In Value, we are focused on maintaining our leadership position in mature markets. To do this, we want to expand thematic equity offerings and ESG products within our Equities business. Equities is hugely important to our business model, especially our retail business. This will always remain one of our focal points. In Multi Asset & SQI, i.e. the business with multi-asset and systematic and quantitative investments, we want to grow by building a modular investment platform. In Fixed Income, which includes the business with fixed income securities, our focus is on developing multi-sector strategies.

A topic that is particularly close to my heart in relation to active portfolio management: We will anchor a positive performance culture even more strongly at DWS! It is important to achieve a good risk-adjusted return for our clients through diversified investments. However, it is not enough for us to simply outperform the respective benchmark index. It must be our aim to manage our clients' money better than our competitors.

That is why we are working on linking the evaluation and remuneration of our portfolio managers more closely to the excess returns they generate for our clients. Of course, we are not about achieving success at any price. A positive performance culture is rooted in our fiduciary responsibilities, discipline and integrity. And it goes without saying that it must follow laws and regulations at all times – no ifs, ands or buts! And, of course, we will stand by our managers in dry spells. For certain investment strategies, we sometimes need to have patience and trust in the assumptions and abilities of our colleagues. But it is also clear: if the performance is not right for too long, we have to act. Ultimately, this is like in sports and cannot be any different for us if we want to justify our raison d'être to our clients.

Ladies and gentlemen, let us now turn to our second category, Growth. Here we are mainly focused on expanding core competencies. The Growth category includes business areas where we already have strong capabilities and can build on attractive growth rates in the respective market segment. At the same time, it reflects our unwavering global ambitions. For example, we want to continue expanding our Xtrackers and Passive business worldwide. This is because we are firmly convinced of the continued strong growth of passive products, which are highly profitable given a certain size. In Europe, DWS aims to regain its number two position in exchange-traded products such as ETFs. Building on our strength in the European ETF market, we are also investing in an ambitious growth plan for the US, which remains the largest market for Passive products worldwide. The focus there will be on customized Passive products. Our goal is to grow total Passive Assets under Management at a compound annual growth rate of more than 12 percent until 2025.

We also want to expand our Alternatives investments business. In the coming years, we see considerable potential for upside here – despite the subdued start to the year in the asset class globally. On the one hand, the potential is driven by a fundamental growing demand from private investors. On the other hand, we also expect growth to be driven by the increasingly important role of asset managers in lending – keyword: private credit. We have more than 50 years of experience in Alternative investments and a well-established Infrastructure and Real Estate business. On this basis, we have set ourselves the goal of increasing Assets under Management in Alternatives at a compound annual growth rate of more than 10 percent from 2022 to 2025.

One particular growth area where we will leverage our strong capabilities in Alternatives is providing risk capital for European transformation. By 2027, we aim to mobilize up to EUR 20 billion of private capital to help finance transformation needs in Europe. At the same time, this will enable our clients to invest in and benefit from the continent's further development. We aim to meet the financing needs for the European transformation through a series of investment solutions. We already announced the first of these investment strategies in March: It offers investors – and, for the first time, German retail investors – the opportunity to invest in European infrastructure projects.

In our third category, "Build", we want to develop business areas with high potential. To do this, we have primarily looked at long-term trends and identified business areas in which we want to develop capabilities for future growth. These areas will initially receive seed funding, with further tranches of funding only released once tangible progress has been made.

On the one hand, we are interested in building so-called API capabilities in order to be able to offer products and services via digital platforms. This is because clients are increasingly choosing their products via third-party platforms. On the other hand, we want to bring products onto the blockchain. We are convinced that the time has come for trusted, regulated market participants to offer services on the blockchain. That is why we are working, for example, on bringing so-called "digital twins" to the market, which make existing funds investable for clients with digital wallets.

Furthermore, we are striving to issue a Euro Stablecoin, i.e. a digital currency that is backed one-to-one by the Euro. In the medium term, our vision is to become a "tokenizer" ourselves, i.e. to be able to bring real and virtual assets onto the blockchain. We consider this additional service relevant because we believe that more and more assets will be mapped on the blockchain in the future. This also opens-up opportunities for trusted providers like your DWS.

As a first important step in this direction, we already agreed a strategic alliance with Galaxy Digital at the end of April. The aim of this alliance is to develop digital asset management solutions in Europe. Together, we want to drive the development of ETPs – exchange-traded products – on certain digital assets such as cryptocurrencies in Europe in the future. Hopefully, this will soon allow our clients to have secure access to digital assets through well-known and trusted investment vehicles.

Ladies and gentlemen, this brings me to our fourth category: "Reduce". In order to self-finance the upcoming investments in growth with a total of EUR 70 million by the end of 2024, we are shifting financial resources from other areas of DWS. In doing so, we have identified several levers with which we can save costs on the one hand, but which should not have an undue negative impact on the business on the other. The measures include divesting businesses, reducing hierarchies in the organizational structure and basically streamlining the management structure.

And this is exactly how we have begun to implement our strategy. Ladies and gentlemen, since the last Annual General Meeting and especially since we announced our refined strategy in December last year, we have already made some important progress in implementing our strategy.

We have already carried out the most significant restructuring activities in the first quarter of 2023. As part of this, we had to part with about 15 percent of our managers. This was not easy for everyone involved, but it was necessary. We would like to thank all former colleagues for their valuable contribution during their time at DWS.

At the same time, we also started the planned strategic divestments. Firstly, we completed the transfer of our digital investment platform to our strategic partner BlackFin. As DWS holds a 30 percent stake in the new company MorgenFund, we still benefit from our partner's expertise and growth opportunities in the platform market. Secondly, we have transferred our Private Equity Solutions business to Brookfield Asset Management.

This transaction also allows us to focus on financing new initiatives. And we will do so in the key areas where we are strong – in Alternatives, for example, in Real Assets, and in the growing Private Credit segment. With Paul Kelly, our new Global Head of Alternatives, we have gained an excellent professional with many years of experience, including as Chief Operating Officer at the world's largest private credit provider.

However, we have not only downsized and restructured in the past 12 months, but we were also able to agree on important strategic partnerships to secure future revenues. First and foremost is the extension of our strategic alliance with Nippon Life for another five years. As part of the strategic alliance, we have agreed with Nippon Life to work on expanding distribution reach and product innovation. We have also formed a local strategic alliance with KB Asset Management, the asset manager of South Korea's largest financial conglomerate KB Financial Group. The aim of the alliance is to combine our respective capabilities to jointly identify and best develop business opportunities in the asset management industry in South Korea.

We have also made further progress in our transformation into a stand-alone asset manager. For example, over the past twelve months we have brought in employees who were already providing services for us. Most recently, this involved around 600 employees in India who are now based in DWS entities. We have also made progress in building our own IT infrastructure platform. This is an essential building block for establishing DWS as a stand-alone asset manager and one that is largely independent from Deutsche Bank's IT. For example, we were able to gradually commission new applications that are tailored to the requirements of our fiduciary business. In this context, as mentioned earlier, we will operate on a dual platform in the current year before we can switch to our own IT system.

As I mentioned at the start, we have not only adjusted our organizational set-up for sustainability, but we have also defined our sustainability strategy as a whole for the future. First, let me turn to our set-up in the area of sustainability. For the new organizational structure, we have taken into account both the changed sustainability approach of the asset management industry and the evolving needs and wishes of our stakeholders – especially our clients.

We are pursuing a three-pronged approach: the sustainability strategy is the responsibility of a separate team that reports to me. We have transferred responsibility for implementing the strategy to the business units, which make decisions in a Group Sustainability Committee as a committee of the Executive Board. We have also established a Sustainability Oversight Office as a control unit to monitor compliance with sustainability governance throughout the company. These adjustments will help us to continue to consistently implement our sustainability strategy, processes and controls across our organization.

Allow me now to outline our sustainability strategy. As a company and also as a trusted partner to our clients, we have a critical role to play in supporting the transition to a more sustainable future. Our newly updated sustainability strategy fleshes out our role, goals and priorities. A particular focus is on climate change. Because there is no doubt in scientific terms: climate change poses one of the greatest risks to humanity and also to the global economy. If we want to limit climate change, the global community must take action and change.

For DWS, the following applies: We are first and foremost trustees of our clients' assets. We invest the money entrusted to us in line with the goals and interests of our clients. In doing so, we aim to create long-term assets – taking account of investment risks and opportunities appropriately. This also includes taking into consideration risks from climate change and opportunities from climate protection.

At the same time, as one of the largest asset managers in Europe, we have a duty to make our own positive contribution to the transformation towards a more sustainable future. This means that we want to use our market position and influence to convince both our clients and, above all, the companies in which we invest, of the need for this transformation.

Along the way, there will be situations where the interests of our stakeholders will conflict. For example, when it comes to the conflict between short-term energy supply security for industry and households versus the necessary decarbonization of our society, as was the case last year. Or when the demand to exclude so-called “brown” companies from the investment universe collides with the approach as active shareholders to move these companies towards a sustainable transformation.

We see it as part of our responsibility to enter into dialogue with our clients and the public to address such conflicts with our stakeholders and to find compromises. In the long-term, we want to contribute to a harmonization of perspectives. Our overarching goal is to support our clients in managing sustainable change in the real economy. To this end, we stand by them with our investment expertise and appropriate solutions.

To underpin this goal, we have built our sustainability strategy around three priorities: First, we want to make new climate-related investment opportunities accessible to our clients. Second, we want to further strengthen our engagement with businesses and other relevant stakeholders. And third, we want to continue to drive our own business transformation towards a more sustainable future. This is in line with our philosophy as a responsible trustee of our clients' assets. Our sustainability efforts have also been recognized externally. With our improved CDP rating of A-, we now rank in the top fifth of all asset managers.

Ladies and gentlemen, with the measures we have initiated and the financial results of the first quarter, we are on track to achieve our goals for the current year.

With the announcement of our refined strategy in December last year, we have also set new financial targets until 2025. I already outlined the targeted growth rates in Passive including Xtrackers as well as for our Alternatives business. The most important goal for us, however, is to achieve earnings per share of EUR 4.50 in 2025. By then, the adjusted Cost-Income Ratio should be below 59 percent. Through gross cost savings and our optimized platform, we expect annual efficiency gains of around EUR 100 million by 2025.

We are also aiming for an attractive payout ratio of around 65 percent by 2025. Furthermore, we expect to propose an extraordinary dividend of up to EUR 1 billion in 2024, subject to capital commitment for organic and inorganic growth initiatives.

Dear shareholders, I can promise you one thing with certainty: Together, our management team will do everything in its powers to achieve these ambitious goals so that we can increase the value of the company for you!

Thank you for your attention!