Net assets

The balance sheet total of the MLP Group increased to € 3,235.0 million (€ 2,799.6 million) as of 31 December 2020, which can be attributed to further increases in client deposits.

Intangible assets – essentially including the client base, brand and goodwill – declined to € 178.9 million (€ 183.1 million) as of the balance sheet date. Provisions of € 125.1 million (€ 130.9 million) were slightly below the previous year's level.

At € 880.6 million (€ 872.2 million), receivables from clients in the banking business were almost on a par with the previous year. Set against the background of increased investment in time deposits, receivables from banks in the banking business increased to € 751.5 million (€ 728.1 million). Around 80% of receivables from banks and clients have a remaining term of less than one year.

The "Inventories" item essentially represents the assets of the project enterprises in the field of real estate. This item increased significantly to € 17.8 million as of 31 December (€ 10.5 million).

Financial assets increased slightly to € 197.6 million (€ 178.6 million). At € 9.7 million, tax refund claims were significantly above the previous year's level (€ 4.5 million). The increase is essentially the result of recognising accounts receivable for 2020 at MLP Finanzberatung SE.

Other receivables and assets increased to € 199.8 million (€ 168.6 million). This item essentially comprises commission receivables from insurers resulting from the brokerage of insurance products. Due to the typically strong year-end business, these increase considerably at the end of the year and then decline again during the following financial year.

Cash and cash equivalents rose markedly to € 859.0 million (€ 510.8 million). This increase can be attributed to a greater deposit volume at the German Bundesbank. Among other factors, the dividend payment to our shareholders had the opposite effect. You can find detailed information on the change in cash and cash equivalents in the chapter entitled → "Financial position".

The equity capital backing of the MLP Group remains good. Shareholders' equity increased to € 454.0 million (€ 437.4 million) as of 31 December 2020. Minority interests have been disclosed in the balance sheet since 2019 due to the acquisition of a majority holding in the DI Group. These were € 0.8 million on the reporting date and thereby remained at the previous year's level (€ 0.8 million). Due to the higher balance sheet total, the equity ratio was 14.0% (15.6%). Based on a Group net profit of € 43.2 million (€ 36.9 million), we therefore achieved a return on equity of 9.9% (8.7%).

Further increase in balance sheet total

Increase in return on equity

Provisions of € 115.8 million (€ 101.6 million) were slightly above the previous year's level. The increase can essentially be attributed to a rise in pension provisions as well as provisions for obligations from IT services and litigation risks.

The deposits of our clients which are recorded under → "Liabilities due to clients in the banking business" increased to € 2,271.9 million (€ 1,894.8 million) at the end of the reporting period. This increase is primarily attributable to short-term deposits held in bank accounts and instant access savings accounts. Liabilities due to banks in the banking business rose to € 107.5 million (€ 98.4 million). This increase can mainly be attributed to a higher volume of promotional loans being passed on to our clients. This item includes the refinancing funds from funding institutions.

Tax liabilities rose to € 10.9 million (€ 6.1 million). At € 265.7 million (€ 250.6 million), other liabilities were slightly higher than in the previous year. This item further comprises increased liabilities from the underwriting business of DOMCURA, purchase price liabilities and current liabilities due to our consultants and branch office managers in connection with open commission claims (please refer to the section entitled → "Financial position").