

# German Corporate Governance Code

(as amended on May 26, 2010 with proposals from the plenary session of 17 January 2012)

Government Commission  
German Corporate Governance Code



## 1. Foreword

This German Corporate Governance Code (the "Code") presents essential statutory regulations for the management and supervision (governance) of German listed companies and contains internationally and nationally recognized standards for good and responsible governance. The Code aims at making the German Corporate Governance system transparent and understandable. Its purpose is to promote the trust of international and national investors, customers, employees and the general public in the management and supervision of listed German stock corporations.

The Code clarifies the obligation of the Management Board and the Supervisory Board to ensure the continued existence of the enterprise and its sustainable creation of value in conformity with the principles of the social market economy (interest of the enterprise).

A dual board system is prescribed by law for German stock corporations:

The Management Board is responsible for managing the enterprise. Its members are jointly accountable for the management of the enterprise. The Chairman of the Management Board coordinates the work of the Management Board.

The Supervisory Board appoints, supervises and advises the members of the Management Board and is directly involved in decisions of fundamental importance to the enterprise. The chairman of the Supervisory Board coordinates the work of the Supervisory Board.

The members of the Supervisory Board are elected by the shareholders at the General Meeting. In enterprises having more than 500 or 2000 employees in Germany, employees are also represented in the Supervisory Board, which then is composed of employee representatives to one third or to one half respectively. For enterprises with more than 2000 employees, the Chairman of the Supervisory Board, who, for all practical purposes, is a representative of the shareholders, has the casting vote in the case of split resolutions. The representatives elected by the shareholders and the representatives of the employees are equally obliged to act in the enterprise's best interests.

Alternatively the European Company (SE) gives enterprises in Germany the possibility of opting for the internationally widespread system of governance by a single body (board of directors).

The form that codetermination takes in the SE is established generally by agreement between the company management and the employee side. All employees in the EU member states are included.

In practice the dual-board system, also established in other continental European countries, and the single-board system are converging because of the intensive interaction of the Management Board and the Supervisory Board in the dual-board system. Both systems are equally successful.

The accounting standards of German enterprises are oriented on the “true and fair view” principle and represent a fair picture of the actual conditions of the asset, financial and earnings situations of the enterprise.

The **recommendations** of the Code are marked in the text by use of the word "**shall**". Companies can deviate from them, but are then obliged to disclose this annually and to provide the reasons for such deviation ("comply or explain"). This enables companies to reflect sector and enterprise-specific requirements. Thus, the Code contributes to more flexibility and more self-regulation in the German corporate constitution. Furthermore, the Code contains **suggestions** which can be deviated from without disclosure; for this the Code uses terms such as "should" or "can." The remaining passages of the Code not marked by these terms contain provisions that enterprises are compelled to observe under applicable law.

For Code stipulations relating to not only the listed company itself but also its group companies, the term “enterprise ” is used instead of "company".

Primarily, the Code addresses listed corporations. It is recommended that non-listed companies also respect the Code.

As a rule the Code will be reviewed annually against the background of national and international developments and be adjusted, if necessary.

## 2. Shareholders and the General Meeting

### 2.1 Shareholders

2.1.1 To the extent provided for in the Articles of Association the shareholders exercise their rights before or during at the General Meeting and, in this respect, vote.

2.1.2 In principle, each share carries one vote. There are no shares with multiple voting rights, preferential voting rights (golden shares) or maximum voting rights.

### 2.2 General Meeting

2.2.1 The Management Board ~~submits~~ makes the Annual Financial Statements and the Consolidated Financial Statements available to the General Meeting ~~the Annual Financial Statements and the Consolidated Financial Statements~~. The General Meeting resolves on the appropriation of net income and the discharge of the acts of the Management Board and of the Supervisory Board and, as a rule, elects the shareholders' representatives to the Supervisory Board and the auditors.

Furthermore, the General Meeting resolves on the Articles of Association, the purpose of the company, amendments to the Articles of Association and essential corporate measures such as, in particular, inter-company agreements and transformations, the issuing of new shares and of convertible bonds and bonds with warrants, and the authorization to purchase own shares. It ~~can resolve~~ has the possibility of resolving on the authorization of the remuneration system for the members of the Management Board.

2.2.2 When new shares are issued, shareholders, in principle, have pre-emptive rights corresponding to their share of the equity capital.

2.2.3 Each shareholder is entitled to participate in the General Meeting, to take the floor on matters on the agenda and to submit materially relevant questions and proposals.

2.2.4 The chair of the meeting provides for the expedient running of the General

Meeting. In this, the chair should be guided by the fact that an ordinary general meeting is completed after 4 to 6 hours at the latest.

### 2.3 Invitation to the General Meeting, Postal Vote, Proxies

2.3.1 At least once a year the shareholders' General Meeting is to be convened by the Management Board giving details of the agenda. A quorum of shareholders is entitled to demand the convening of a General Meeting and the extension of the agenda. The convening of the meeting, as well as the reports and documents, including the Annual Report and ~~- if postal voting is offered -~~ the Postal Vote Forms, required by law for the General Meeting are to be published on the company's internet site together with the agenda.

2.3.2 The company ~~shall send~~sends notification of the convening of the General Meeting together with the convention documents to all domestic and foreign financial services providers, shareholders and shareholders' associations by electronic means if the approval requirements are fulfilled.

2.3.3 The company shall facilitate the personal exercising of shareholders' voting rights. The company shall also assist the shareholders in the use of ~~postal votes and~~ proxies. The Management Board shall arrange for the appointment of a representative to exercise shareholders' voting rights in accordance with instructions; this representative should also be reachable during the General Meeting.

2.3.4 The company should make it possible for shareholders to follow the General Meeting using modern communication media (e.g. Internet).

## 3. Cooperation between Management Board and Supervisory Board

3.1 The Management Board and Supervisory Board cooperate closely to the benefit of the enterprise.

3.2 The Management Board coordinates the enterprise's strategic approach with the Supervisory Board and discusses the current state of strategy implementation with the Supervisory Board at regular intervals.

3.3 For transactions of fundamental importance, the Articles of Association or the Supervisory Board specify provisions requiring the approval of the Supervisory Board. They include decisions or measures which fundamentally change the asset, financial or earnings situations of the enterprise.

3.4 Providing sufficient information to the Supervisory Board is the joint responsibility of the Management Board and Supervisory Board.

The Management Board informs the Supervisory Board regularly, without delay and comprehensively, of all issues important to the enterprise with regard to strategy, planning, business development, risk situation, risk management and compliance. The Management Board points out deviations of the actual business development from previously formulated plans and targets, indicating the reasons therefor.

The Supervisory Board shall specify the Management Board's information and reporting duties in more detail. The Management Board's reports to the Supervisory Board are, as a rule, to be submitted in writing (including electronic form). Documents required for decisions, in particular, the Annual Financial Statements, the Consolidated Financial Statements and the Auditors' Report are to be sent to the members of the Supervisory Board, to the extent possible, in due time before the meeting.

3.5 Good corporate governance requires an open discussion between the Management Board and Supervisory Board as well as among the members within the Management Board and the Supervisory Board. The comprehensive observance of confidentiality is of paramount importance for this.

All Board members ensure that the staff members they employ observe the confidentiality obligation accordingly.

3.6 In Supervisory Boards with codetermination, it is possible for representatives of the shareholders and of the employees ~~should to~~ prepare the Supervisory Board meetings separately, possibly with members of the Management Board.

If necessary, the Supervisory Board ~~should shall~~ meet without the Management Board.

3.7 In the event of a takeover offer, the Management Board and Supervisory Board of the target company must submit a statement of their reasoned position so that the shareholders can make an informed decision on the offer.

After the announcement of a takeover offer, the Management Board may not take any actions ~~outside the ordinary course of business~~ until the publication of the results that could prevent the success of the offer ~~unless the Management Board has been authorized by the General Meeting or the Supervisory Board has given its approval~~ except if another statutory provision applies. In making their decisions, the Management and Supervisory Boards are bound to the best interests of the shareholders and of the enterprise.

In appropriate cases the Management Board should convene an extraordinary General Meeting at which shareholders discuss the takeover offer and may decide

on corporate actions.

3.8 The Management Board and Supervisory Board comply with the rules of proper corporate management. If they violate the due care and diligence of a prudent and conscientious Managing Director or Supervisory Board member, they are liable to the company for damages. In the case of business decisions an infringement of duty is not present if the member of the Management Board or Supervisory Board could reasonably believe, based on appropriate information, that he/she was acting in the best interest of the company (Business Judgment Rule). If the company takes out a D&O (directors' and officers' liability insurance) policy for the Management Board, a deductible of at least 10% of the loss up to at least the amount of one and a half times the fixed annual compensation of the Management Board member must be agreed upon. A similar deductible shall be agreed upon in any D&O policy for the Supervisory Board.

3.9 Extending loans from the enterprise to members of the Management and Supervisory Boards or their relatives requires the approval of the Supervisory Board.

3.10 The Management Board and Supervisory Board shall report each year on the enterprise's Corporate Governance in the ~~Annual Report (Corporate Governance Report)~~Corporate Governance Declaration. This includes the explanation of possible deviations from the recommendations of this Code. Comments can also be provided on the Code's suggestions. The company shall keep previous declarations of conformity with the Code available for viewing on its website for five years.

## 4. Management Board

4.1 Tasks and Responsibilities

4.1.1 The Management Board is responsible for independently managing the enterprise in the interest of the enterprise, thus taking into account the interests of the shareholders, its employees and other stakeholders, with the objective of sustainable creation of value.

4.1.2 The Management Board develops the enterprise's strategy, coordinates it with the Supervisory Board and ensures its implementation.

4.1.3 The Management Board ensures that all provisions of law and the enterprise's internal policies are abided by and works to achieve their compliance by group companies (compliance).

4.1.4 The Management Board ensures appropriate risk management and risk controlling in the enterprise.

4.1.5 When filling managerial positions in the enterprise the Management Board shall take diversity into consideration and, in particular, aim for an appropriate consideration of women.

## 4.2 Composition and Compensation

4.2.1 The Management Board shall be comprised of several persons and have a Chairman or Spokesman. By-Laws shall govern the work of the Management Board, in particular the allocation of duties among individual Management Board members, matters reserved for the Management Board as a whole, and the required majority for Management Board resolutions (unanimity or resolution by majority vote).

~~4.2.2 At the proposal of the committee dealing with Management Board contracts, the~~The full Supervisory Board determines the total compensation of the individual Management Board members. The committee dealing with Management Board contracts shall submit proposals to the full Supervisory Board, and shall resolve and regularly review the Management Board compensation system.

The total compensation of the individual members of the Management Board is determined by the full Supervisory Board at an appropriate amount based on a performance assessment, taking into consideration any payments by group companies. Criteria for determining the appropriateness of compensation are both the tasks of the individual member of the Management Board, his personal performance, the economic situation, the performance and outlook of the enterprise as well as the common level of the compensation taking into account the peer companies and the compensation structure in place in other areas of the company.

If the Supervisory Board calls upon an external compensation expert to evaluate the appropriateness of the compensation, care must be exercised to ensure that said expert is independent of respectively the Management Board and the enterprise.

4.2.3 The total compensation of Management Board members comprises the monetary compensation elements, pension awards, other awards, especially in the event of termination of activity, fringe benefits of all kinds and benefits by third parties which were promised or granted in the financial year with regard to Management Board work.

The compensation structure must be oriented toward sustainable growth of the

enterprise. The monetary compensation elements shall comprise fixed and variable elements. The Supervisory Board must make sure that the variable compensation elements are in general based on a multi-year assessment. Both positive and negative developments shall be taken into account when determining variable compensation components. All compensation components must be appropriate, both individually and in total, and in particular must not encourage to take unreasonable risks.

For instance, share or index-based compensation elements related to the enterprise may come into consideration as variable components. These elements shall be related to demanding, relevant comparison parameters. Changing such performance targets or the comparison parameters retroactively shall be excluded. For extraordinary developments a possibility of limitation (cap) must in general be agreed upon by the Supervisory Board.

In concluding Management Board contracts, care shall be taken to ensure that payments made to a Management Board member on premature termination of his service contract without serious cause, including fringe benefits, do not exceed the value of two years' compensation (severance pay cap) and compensate no more than the remaining term of the contract. The severance payment cap shall be calculated on the basis of the total compensation for the past full financial year and if appropriate also the expected total compensation for the current financial year.

Payments promised in the event of premature termination of a Management Board member's service contract due to a change of control shall not exceed 150% of the severance payment cap.

The Chairman of the Supervisory Board shall outline the salient points material changes to ~~of~~ the compensation system ~~and any changes thereto~~ to the General Meeting.

4.2.4 The total compensation of each one of the members of the Management Board is to be disclosed by name, divided into fixed and variable compensation components. The same applies to promises of benefits that are granted to a Management Board member in case of premature or statutory termination of the function of a Management Board member or that have been changed during the financial year. Disclosure ~~may be~~ dispensed with if the General Meeting has passed a resolution to this effect by three-quarters majority.

4.2.5 Disclosure ~~shall be~~ made in the notes or in the management report. A compensation report as part of the management report shall disclose the compensation and also describe the basic elements of ~~a compensation report which as part of the Corporate Governance Report describes~~ the compensation system for Management Board members in a generally understandable way.

The compensation report shall also include information on the nature of the fringe

benefits provided by the company.

#### 4.3 Conflicts of Interest

4.3.1 During their employment for the enterprise, members of the Management Board are subject to a comprehensive non-competition obligation.

4.3.2 Members of the Management Board and employees may not, in connection with their work, demand nor accept from third parties payments or other advantages for themselves or for any other person nor grant third parties unlawful advantages.

4.3.3 Members of the Management Board are bound by the enterprise's best interests. No member of the Management Board may pursue personal interests in his decisions or use business opportunities intended for the enterprise for himself.

4.3.4 All members of the Management Board shall disclose conflicts of interest to the Supervisory Board without delay and inform the other members of the Management Board thereof. All transactions between the enterprise and the members of the Management Board as well as persons they are close to or companies they have a personal association with must comply with standards customary in the sector. Important transactions shall require the approval of the Supervisory Board.

4.3.5 Members of the Management Board shall take on sideline activities, especially Supervisory Board mandates outside the enterprise, only with the approval of the Supervisory Board.

### **5. Supervisory Board**

#### 5.1 Tasks and Responsibilities

5.1.1 The task of the Supervisory Board is to advise regularly and supervise the Management Board in the management of the enterprise. It must be involved in decisions of fundamental importance to the enterprise.

5.1.2 The Supervisory Board appoints and dismisses the members of the Management Board. When appointing the Management Board, the Supervisory Board shall also respect diversity and, in particular, aim for an appropriate consideration of women. Together with the Management Board it shall ensure that there is a long-term succession planning. The Supervisory Board can delegate preparations for the appointment of members of the Management Board, as well as for the handling of the conditions of the employment contracts including compensation, to committees.

For first time appointments the maximum possible appointment period of five years should not be the rule. A re-appointment prior to one year before the end of the appointment period with a

simultaneous termination of the current appointment shall only take place under special circumstances. An age limit for members of the Management Board shall be specified.

5.1.3 The Supervisory Board shall issue Terms of Reference.

5.2 Tasks and Authorities of the Chairman of the Supervisory Board

The Chairman of the Supervisory Board coordinates work within the Supervisory Board and chairs its meetings and attends to the affairs of the Supervisory Board externally.

The Chairman of the Supervisory Board shall also chair the committees that handle contracts with members of the Management Board and prepare the Supervisory Board meetings. He ~~should~~ shall not be Chairman of the Audit Committee.

The Chairman of the Supervisory Board shall regularly maintain contact with the Management Board, in particular, with the Chairman or Spokesman of the Management Board and consult with him on strategy, planning, business development, the risk situation, ~~and~~ risk management and compliance of the enterprise. The Chairman of the Supervisory Board will be informed by the Chairman or Spokesman of the Management Board without delay of important events which are essential for the assessment of the situation and development as well as for the management of the enterprise. The Chairman of the Supervisory Board shall then inform the Supervisory Board and, if required, convene an extraordinary meeting of the Supervisory Board.

5.3 Formation of Committees

5.3.1 Depending on the specifics of the enterprise and the number of its members, the Supervisory Board shall form committees with sufficient expertise. They serve to increase the efficiency of the Supervisory Board's work and the handling of complex issues. The respective committee chairmen report regularly to the Supervisory Board on the work of the committees.

5.3.2 The Supervisory Board shall set up an Audit Committee which, in particular, ~~handles~~ shall concern itself with the monitoring of the accounting process, the efficacy of the internal control system, the risk management system and the internal auditing system, issues of accounting, risk management and compliance, the statutory audit, particularly the ~~necessary~~ independence ~~required~~ of the auditor, the additional services to be provided by the auditor, the issuing of the audit mandate to the auditor, the determination of auditing focal points and the fee agreement. The chairman of the Audit Committee shall have specialist knowledge and experience in the application of accounting principles and internal control processes. He ~~should~~ shall be independent and not be a former member of the Management Board of the company whose appointment ended less than two years ago.

5.3.3 The Supervisory Board shall form a nomination committee composed

exclusively of shareholder representatives which proposes suitable candidates to the Supervisory Board for recommendation to the General Meeting.

5.3.4 The Supervisory Board can refer other factual issues to one or more committees for handling. They include the enterprise's strategy, the compensation of the members of the Management Board, investments and financings.

5.3.5 The Supervisory Board can arrange for committees to prepare Supervisory Board meetings and to take decisions in place of the Supervisory Board.

#### 5.4 Composition and Compensation

5.4.1 The Supervisory Board has to be composed in such a way that its members as a group possess the knowledge, ability and expert experience required to properly complete its tasks.

The Supervisory Board shall specify concrete objectives regarding its composition which, whilst considering the specifics of the enterprise, take into account the international activities of the enterprise, potential conflicts of interest, the number of independent members of the Supervisory Board, an age limit to be specified for the members of the Supervisory Board and diversity. These concrete objectives shall, in particular, stipulate an appropriate degree of female representation.

Recommendations by the Supervisory Board to the competent election bodies shall take these objectives into account. The concrete objectives of the Supervisory Board and the status of the implementation shall be published in the Corporate Governance ~~Report~~Declaration. The members of the Supervisory Board shall on their own take on the necessary training and further education measures required for their tasks. They shall be supported by the company appropriately.

5.4.2 To permit the Supervisory Board's independent advice and supervision of the Management Board, the Supervisory Board shall include ~~what it considers an adequate~~a reasonable number of independent members. A Supervisory Board member is considered independent if he/she has no business or personal relations with the company, ~~or~~ its Management Board or third parties which ~~cause~~may cause a material conflict of interests. As a rule, a Supervisory Board member cannot be assumed to be independent if in particular he/she

- receives or has in the past two years received material additional compensation from the company in addition to the compensation received as a Supervisory Board member;
- has been a member of the company's Management Board in the past two years;

- holds 10 percent or more of the company's shares or is a statutory representative of another company which holds such a stake;
- can be considered to be a close member of the family of any of the Management Board members as defined in the applicable accounting rules;
- maintains or has in the past year maintained material business relations with the company to a substantial extent - directly or indirectly as a partner, shareholder, Management Board member or managing director of an enterprise which has such business relations with the company;
- is a partner of the company's auditor or is or has in the past three years or less been the responsible auditor for the company.

This does not have any effect on the special conditions arising from the Act on Co-Determination of Employees in the Supervisory Board or the One Third Employee Representation Act.

Not more than two former members of the Management Board shall be members of the Supervisory Board and Supervisory Board members shall not exercise directorships or similar positions or advisory tasks for important competitors of the enterprise.

5.4.3 Elections to the Supervisory Board shall be made on an individual basis. An application for the judicial appointment of a Supervisory Board member shall be limited in time up to the next General Meeting. Proposed candidates for the Supervisory Board chair shall be announced to the shareholders.

5.4.4 Management Board members may not become members of the Supervisory Board of the company within two years after the end of their appointment unless they are appointed upon a motion presented by shareholders holding more than 25% of the voting rights in the company. In the latter case appointment to the chairmanship of the Supervisory Board shall be an exception to be justified to the General Meeting.

5.4.5 Every member of the Supervisory Board must take care that he/she has sufficient time to perform his/her mandate. Members of the Management Board of a listed company shall not accept more than a total of three Supervisory Board mandates in non-group listed companies or in supervisory bodies of non-group companies ~~with similar requirements~~ which impose similar requirements.

5.4.6 Compensation of the members of the Supervisory Board is specified by resolution of the General Meeting or in the Articles of Association. It takes into account the responsibilities and scope of tasks of the members of the Supervisory Board as well as the economic situation and performance of the enterprise. Also to

be considered here shall be the exercising of the Chair and Deputy Chair positions in the Supervisory Board as well as the chair and membership in committees.

Members of the Supervisory Board shall receive ~~fixed as well as performance-related compensation~~ compensation commensurate with their duties and responsibility. If members of the Supervisory Board are granted both fixed and Performance-related compensation, the latter should also predominantly contain components based on the long-term performance of the enterprise.

The compensation of the members of the Supervisory Board shall be reported individually in the ~~Corporate Governance Report~~ Compensation Report, subdivided according to components. Also payments made by the enterprise to the members of the Supervisory Board or advantages extended for services provided individually, in particular, advisory or agency services shall be listed separately on an individual basis in the ~~Corporate Governance Report~~ Compensation Report.

5.4.7 If a member of the Supervisory Board took part in less than half of the meetings of the Supervisory Board in a financial year, this shall be noted in the Report of the Supervisory Board.

## 5.5 Conflicts of Interest

5.5.1 All members of the Supervisory Board are bound by the enterprise's best interests. No member of the Supervisory Board may pursue personal interests in his/her decisions or use business opportunities intended for the enterprise for himself/herself.

5.5.2 Each member of the Supervisory Board shall inform the Supervisory Board of any conflicts of interest, in particular those which may result from a consultant or directorship function with clients, suppliers, lenders or other business partners.

5.5.3 In its report, the Supervisory Board shall inform the General Meeting of any conflicts of interest which have occurred together with their treatment. Material conflicts of interest and those which are not merely temporary in respect of the person of a Supervisory Board member shall result in the termination of his mandate.

5.5.4 Advisory and other service agreements and contracts for work between a member of the Supervisory Board and the company require the Supervisory Board's approval.

## 5.6 Examination of Efficiency

The Supervisory Board shall examine the efficiency of its activities on a regular basis.

## 6. Transparency

6.1 The Management Board must disclose insider information directly relating to the company without delay unless it is exempted from the disclosure requirement in an individual case.

6.2 As soon as the company becomes aware of the fact that an individual acquires, exceeds or falls short of 3, 5, 10, 15, 20, 25, 30, 50 or 75% of the voting rights in the company by means of a purchase, sale or any other manner, the Management Board will disclose this fact without delay.

6.3 The company's treatment of all shareholders in respect of information shall be equal. All new facts made known to financial analysts and similar addressees shall also be disclosed to the shareholders by the company without delay.

6.4 The company shall use suitable communication media, such as the Internet, to inform shareholders and investors in a prompt and uniform manner.

6.5 Any information which the company discloses abroad in line with corresponding capital market law provisions shall also be disclosed domestically without delay.

6.6 Beyond the statutory obligation to report and disclose dealings in shares of the company without delay, the ownership of shares in the company or related financial instruments by Management Board and Supervisory Board members shall be reported if these directly or indirectly exceed 1% of the shares issued by the company. If the entire holdings of all members of the Management Board and Supervisory Board exceed 1% of the shares issued by the company, these shall be reported separately according to Management Board and Supervisory Board.

The aforesaid disclosures shall be included in the Corporate Governance ~~Report~~[Declaration](#).

6.7 As part of regular information policy, the dates of essential regular publications (including the Annual Report, interim financial reports) and the date of the General Meeting shall be published sufficiently in advance in a "financial calendar".

6.8 Information on the enterprise which the company discloses shall also be accessible via the company's Internet site. The Internet site shall be clearly structured. Publications should also be in English.

## 7. Reporting and Audit of the Annual Financial Statements

### 7.1 Reporting

7.1.1 Shareholders and third parties are mainly informed by the Consolidated Financial Statements. During the financial year they are additionally informed by means of a half-year financial report and, in the first and second halves, by interim reports or quarterly financial reports. The Consolidated Financial Statements and the Condensed Consolidated Financial Statements in the half-year financial report and the quarterly financial report are prepared under observance of internationally recognised accounting principles.

7.1.2 The Consolidated Financial Statements must be prepared by the Management Board and examined by the auditor and Supervisory Board. Half-year and any quarterly financial reports shall be discussed with the Management Board by the Supervisory Board or its Audit Committee prior to publication. In addition, the Financial Reporting Enforcement Panel and the Federal Financial Supervisory Authority are authorized to check that the Consolidated Financial Statements comply with the applicable accounting regulations (enforcement). The Consolidated Financial Statements shall be publicly accessible within 90 days of the end of the financial year; interim reports shall be publicly accessible within 45 days of the end of the reporting period.

7.1.3 The ~~Corporate Governance~~Compensation Report shall contain information on stock option programmes and similar securities-based incentive systems of the company.

7.1.4 The company shall publish a list of third party companies in which it has a shareholding that is not of minor importance for the enterprise. The trading portfolios of banks and financial services companies, on which voting rights are not exercised, are disregarded in this context. The following shall be provided: name and headquarters of the company, the amount of the shareholding, the amount of equity and the operating result of the past financial year.

7.1.5 Notes on the relationships with shareholders considered to be "related parties" pursuant to the applicable accounting regulations shall be provided in the Consolidated Financial Statements.

### 7.2 Audit of Annual Financial Statements

7.2.1 Prior to submitting a proposal for election, the Supervisory Board or, respectively, the Audit Committee shall obtain a statement from the proposed auditor stating whether, and where applicable, which business, financial, personal and other relationships exist between the auditor and its executive bodies and head auditors on the one hand, and the enterprise and the members of its executive bodies

on the other hand, that could call its independence into question. This statement shall include the extent to which other services were performed for the enterprise in the past year, especially in the field of consultancy, or which are contracted for the following year.

The Supervisory Board shall agree with the auditor that the Chairman of the Supervisory Board or, respectively, the Audit Committee will be informed immediately of any grounds for disqualification or partiality occurring during the audit, unless such grounds are eliminated immediately.

7.2.2 The Supervisory Board commissions the auditor to carry out the audit and concludes an agreement on the latter's fee.

7.2.3 The Supervisory Board shall arrange for the auditor to report without delay on all facts and events of importance for the tasks of the Supervisory Board which arise during the performance of the audit.

The Supervisory Board shall arrange for the auditor to inform it and/or note in the Auditor's Report if, during the performance of the audit, the auditor comes across facts which show a misstatement by the Management Board and Supervisory Board on the Code

7.2.4 The auditor takes part in the Supervisory Board's deliberations on the Annual Financial Statements and Consolidated Financial Statements and reports on the essential results of its audit.