

LETTER TO SHAREHOLDERS

Biel/Bienne, 21 July 2017

SWATCH GROUP: HALF-YEAR REPORT 2017

- Group net sales, +1.2% at constant exchange rates, of CHF 3 759 million, or CHF 3 705 million, -0.3% at current exchange rates.
- Sales growth of +2.9% at constant rates in the Watches & Jewelry segment (excluding Production). Sales for the whole segment, including Production +1.2%, adversely affected by low Production sales to third parties.
- Operating margin in the Watches & Jewelry segment (excluding Production) increases by almost 25%, from 10.7% to 13.2%, despite negative currency impact. The Watches & Jewelry segment, including Production, achieved an operating margin of 11.8% (previous year: 11.2%).
- Operating result increases by 5.1% to CHF 371 million, despite retention of production capacities for third parties and workforce. Operating margin grows from 9.5% in the previous year to 10.0%.
- Net income increases by 6.8% to CHF 281 million with a net margin of 7.6% (previous year: 7.1%).
- Accelerated growth of all brands in local currency in June and the first weeks of July, most pronounced in the Prestige and Luxury segment. The retained production capacities allow quick response to the positive development.
- Strong growth in local currency in the Group's own retail network.
- Positive outlook for the second half of 2017 with many new product launches. Good development in Production, which will mainly profit from the growth of the own brands, not only in value but also in volumes.

Group Key Figures

(CHF million)	1st half	1st half	Change in %		Total
	2017	2016	at constant rates	currency effect	
Net sales	3 705	3 716	1.2%	- 1.5%	- 0.3%
Operating result	371	353			5.1%
- in % of net sales	10.0%	9.5%			
Net income	281	263			6.8%
- in % of net sales	7.6%	7.1%			
Investments in non-current assets	204	285			
Equity, 30 June	10 768	10 853			
Market capitalization, 30 June	19 610	15 631			
Annualized return on equity (ROE)	5.1%	4.8%			
Basic earnings per share – expressed in CHF per share:					
- Registered shares	1.01	0.93			
- Bearer shares	5.07	4.65			

Unaudited figures.

Strategy

The successful long-term Group strategy remains unchanged:

1. Manufacturing base Switzerland for all segments;
2. Sustained investment in innovation, both in product development and in production;
3. Selective expansion of its own retail network including E-Commerce.

The long-term Group strategy and philosophy to keep its personnel employed, despite lower sales in Production, and to invest in the production base Switzerland, remain deliberately unchanged. This allows quick reaction to the noticeable increase in demand for watches and jewelry, which has been observed since last autumn.

Group overview

As in the previous year, the first half of 2017 was characterized by worldwide turbulence. However, the Swatch Group, with its 20 strong brands and its own retail network, is very well represented worldwide, and was therefore able to generate net sales of CHF 3 705 million (+1.2% at constant rates) in the first half of the year.

Sales in Watches & Jewelry were very positive in local currency, especially in the upper segment, where high double-digit growth was achieved in its own retail business.

The overvalued Swiss franc dampened growth in the first half of the year. However, the Swatch Group adheres to its consumer-friendly and defensive price adjustment policy.

Highlights of the first half 2017

Development in the segments and countries

Sales performance in Watches & Jewelry was very positive, although it was dampened by the ongoing unfavorable exchange rate situation and lower Production sales to third parties. The entire segment achieved net sales of CHF 3 576 million. Compared to the previous year, this is a decrease of 0.3% at current exchange rates, however, an increase of 1.2% at constant rates.

Sales performance in local currency varied, depending on the region. Mainland China recorded significant growth. Sales in Hong Kong have stabilized. Japan showed a mixed picture. Sales to local consumers were very positive, while sales to Chinese tourists decreased due to the negative currency situation. Swatch Group recorded very positive sales in the Middle East. In Europe, sales of the brands increased compared to the first half of the previous year, this in Great Britain, Spain, Italy, and also again in Switzerland. The North American markets showed growth in local currencies, especially in the Group's own retail. With conversion of sales at the weak USD rate, no growth remains in CHF. Wholesale has started to regain trust in many regions, thanks to the good consumer mood and the positive results achieved in the Group's retail business.

Production, which is integrated into the Watches & Jewelry segment, recorded lower capacity utilization than in the prior-year comparative period. Particularly third-party brands are very insecure and delay orders. Conversely, Group brands increased orders compared to the previous year. Production of certain components, particularly watch cases, was again ramped up. Also, integrated gold production, from foundry to production of semi-finished goods, was centralized in one production site in Switzerland, which not only led to synergies but also optimized the entire production flow.

The Electronic Systems segment generated net sales of CHF 133 million in the first half of the year, corresponding to a slight decrease of 2.2%. Sales are very sensitive to the strength of the Swiss franc versus the USD and JPY, which did not favor this industrial area in the first half of the year. It can be stated that industry could not compensate for the Swiss franc shock. The operating profit in the Electronic Systems segment closed at break even.

Personnel

Again in the first half of 2017, jobs were deliberately maintained, particularly in Production, where the capacity utilization was less than in the previous year, this was at the cost of a temporarily lower operating margin. As a result, the number of employees at the end of June 2017 was approximately 35 000.

Training

The Swatch Group promotes vocational training at all levels. By the end of June 2017, more than 260 graduates received a professional diploma, of which 155 persons completed a regular apprenticeship in Switzerland. In Switzerland, roughly 150 apprentices were newly hired this year, so that the number of trainees in Switzerland is now approximately 450. Abroad, there are currently over 120 trainees, of which more than 60 at Glashütte Original alone. In addition, the Swatch Group is training approximately 150 students in its own watch-making schools in Miami (USA), Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia), Shanghai and Hong Kong (China), Pforzheim and Glashütte (Germany), and Manchester (UK). Almost all graduates have accepted positions within the Group.

Operating result and net income

Despite the lower utilization in Production and in the Electronic Systems segment, an operating result of CHF 371 million was achieved, corresponding to an operating margin of 10.0%. Net income reached CHF 281 million or 7.6% of net sales.

Product Highlights

The Omega Speedmaster, now celebrating its 60th anniversary, is and remains an absolute bestseller. The "Speedy Tuesday", launched in January, was sold out online in approximately four hours. Swatch ensured good revenues with the launch of the New Skin, Swatch X You and Sistem51 Irony. The first editions of the Longines Master Collection Blue and the Tissot Ballade Silicium and T-race Cycling ensured high volumes. Particularly in the Prestige and Luxury segment, new products accelerated growth into the high double digits. Harry Winston grew not only with its high jewelry collections Lotus Cluster, Art Deco and Sunflower, but also with its new most exclusive watch models such as the Midnight Date Moon Phase. Breguet was successful with its new ladies' watches Tradition and Phase de Lune, and Blancpain with the Villeret and Bathyscaphe collections.

Investments

Across all segments, the Swatch Group invested a total of CHF 204 million in non-current assets in the first half of 2017. The Group's retail network was selectively broadened with the opening of new boutiques in the best locations of growth regions, and Production was optimized with the latest equipment. Significant investment was also made in worldwide customer service.

Cash Flow

Operating cash flow increased compared to last year from CHF 381 million by 14.7% to CHF 437 million. To keep the cash balance low, and in order to avoid negative interest, a three-year share buyback program with a repurchase volume of maximum CHF 1 billion was launched on 5 February 2016. During the first semester 2017, treasury shares with a market value of CHF 135 million have been repurchased. The total volume repurchased since the beginning of the program amounts to CHF 467 million (details see note 8).

Inventories

Inventories have decreased slightly in value since the beginning of the year and amounted to approximately CHF 6.2 billion at the end of June, despite the fact that the retail network has been further expanded and many new products for the second half of the year are already in the production pipeline.

Outlook second half-year 2017

The Swatch Group anticipates very positive growth in local currency in the second half of the year. In addition to its already strong own retail business, wholesale should also develop positively, due to the gradual dissolution of uncertainty among individual distributors. In addition, further growth will generate improved capacity utilization in all production areas.

Omega and the IOC have extended their timekeeping contract for the Olympic Games by an additional 10 years, up to and including the Olympic Games 2032, so that Omega's term as official timekeeper of the Olympic Games will now total 100 years. In the second half of the year, Omega will launch new products such as the Seamaster Planet Ocean Big Blue, the Speedmaster Racing Co-Axial Chronometer and the Speedmaster 38 mm Collection onto the market. Blancpain with the new Bathyscaphe 38 mm and the Villeret 6104 ladies' watch, as well as Breguet with the Tradition Dame and the Classique Phase de Lune will support growth. Together with the new Harry Winston collections, the entire Prestige and Luxury brand sector will further accelerate growth in the second half of the year. Longines will cause a sensation and add further momentum with the Conquest V.H.P. (very high precision quartz movement with an almost infinite calendar), as well as Tissot, with the launch of the Chrono XL NBA and Every Time Swissmatic. This Tuesday, Swatch launched the unique Swatch Pay with its full credit card function in Shanghai, in partnership with UnionPay and 11 Chinese banks.

Incoming orders have further increased in the last months in the technology companies, thanks to a significant technological advantage in the area of Dual Frequency RFID technology (NFC and UHF), the smallest integrated circuits with minimum power consumption (lowest power ICs), and the new Real Time Clock (RTC) modules.

HALF-YEAR FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Consolidated Income Statement

	1st half 2017		1st half 2016	
	CHF million	%	CHF million	%
Net sales	3 705	100.0	3 716	100.0
Other operating income	44	1.2	48	1.3
Changes in inventories	46	1.2	158	4.3
Material purchases	- 794	- 21.4	- 894	- 24.1
Personnel expense	- 1 177	- 31.8	- 1 214	- 32.7
Depreciation and impairment on property, plant and equipment	- 210	- 5.7	- 191	- 5.1
Amortization and impairment on intangible assets	- 20	- 0.5	- 21	- 0.6
Other operating expenses	- 1 223	- 33.0	- 1 249	- 33.6
Operating result	371	10.0	353	9.5
Other financial income and expense	- 21	- 0.6	- 10	- 0.3
Interest expense	- 1	- 0.0	- 1	- 0.0
Share of result from associates and joint ventures	22	0.6	1	0.0
Ordinary result	371	10.0	343	9.2
Non-operating result	2	0.1	5	0.2
Profit before income taxes	373	10.1	348	9.4
Income taxes	- 92	- 2.5	- 85	- 2.3
Net income	281	7.6	263	7.1
Attributable to shareholders of The Swatch Group Ltd	269		251	
Attributable to non-controlling interests	12		12	

Earnings per share (EPS) – expressed in CHF per share:

Registered shares

Basic earnings per share	1.01	0.93
Diluted earnings per share	1.01	0.93

Bearer shares

Basic earnings per share	5.07	4.65
Diluted earnings per share	5.06	4.65

Unaudited figures.

HALF-YEAR FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Consolidated Balance Sheet

Assets	30.06.2017		31.12.2016	
	CHF million	%	CHF million	%
Current assets				
Cash and cash equivalents	994	7.7	1 136	8.7
Marketable securities and derivative financial instruments	331	2.6	326	2.5
Trade receivables	928	7.2	903	6.9
Other current assets	129	1.0	141	1.1
Inventories	6 206	48.3	6 259	47.7
Prepayments and accrued income	288	2.2	280	2.1
Total current assets	8 876	69.0	9 045	69.0
Non-current assets				
Property, plant and equipment	3 223	25.0	3 276	25.0
Intangible assets	140	1.1	142	1.1
Investments in associates and joint ventures	74	0.6	59	0.5
Other non-current assets	148	1.1	174	1.3
Deferred tax assets	407	3.2	410	3.1
Total non-current assets	3 992	31.0	4 061	31.0
Total assets	12 868	100.0	13 106	100.0

Unaudited figures.

HALF-YEAR FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Consolidated Balance Sheet

Equity and liabilities	30.06.2017		31.12.2016	
	CHF million	%	CHF million	%
Current liabilities				
Financial debts and derivative financial instruments	257	2.0	124	0.9
Trade payables	256	2.0	316	2.4
Other liabilities	140	1.1	166	1.3
Provisions	84	0.6	83	0.6
Accrued expenses	561	4.4	518	4.0
Total current liabilities	1 298	10.1	1 207	9.2
Non-current liabilities				
Financial debts	28	0.2	31	0.2
Deferred tax liabilities	544	4.2	569	4.4
Retirement benefit obligations	40	0.3	39	0.3
Provisions	56	0.4	55	0.4
Accrued expenses	134	1.1	132	1.0
Total non-current liabilities	802	6.2	826	6.3
Total liabilities	2 100	16.3	2 033	15.5
Equity				
Share capital	125		125	
Capital reserves	- 987		- 991	
Treasury shares	- 794		- 660	
Goodwill recognized	- 1 372		- 1 372	
Translation differences	- 222		- 142	
Retained earnings	13 939		14 027	
Equity of The Swatch Group Ltd shareholders	10 689	83.1	10 987	83.8
Non-controlling interests	79	0.6	86	0.7
Total equity	10 768	83.7	11 073	84.5
Total equity and liabilities	12 868	100.0	13 106	100.0

Unaudited figures.

HALF-YEAR FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Consolidated Statement of Cash Flows

	1st half 2017 CHF million	1st half 2016 CHF million
Operating activities		
Net income	281	263
Reversal of non-cash items	286	309
Changes in working capital and other items included in operating cash flow	4	6
Dividends received from associated companies	1	1
Interest received	4	5
Interest paid	-1	-1
Income tax paid	-138	-202
Cash flow from operating activities	437	381
Investing activities		
Investments in property, plant and equipment	-176	-252
Proceeds from sale of property, plant and equipment	4	7
Investments in intangible assets	-20	-16
Proceeds from sale of intangible assets	1	1
Investments in other non-current assets	-8	-17
Proceeds from sale of other non-current assets	6	2
Acquisition of subsidiaries – net of cash	-	0
Divestments of businesses	3	-
Purchase of marketable securities	-53	-47
Sale of marketable securities	59	91
Cash flow from investing activities	-184	-231
Financing activities		
Dividends paid to shareholders	-357	-403
Dividends paid to non-controlling interests	-15	-36
Repurchase of treasury shares	-135	-197
Sale of treasury shares	1	1
Change in non-current financial debts	-2	-2
Change in current financial debts	140	244
Sale of non-controlling interests	-	1
Cash flow from financing activities	-368	-392
Net impact of foreign exchange rate differences on cash	-27	-14
Change in cash and cash equivalents	-142	-256
Change in cash and cash equivalents		
– Balance at beginning of year	1 136	1 280
– Balance at 30 June	994	1 024
	-142	-256

Unaudited figures.

HALF-YEAR FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Consolidated Statement of Changes in Equity

(CHF million)	Attributable to The Swatch Group Ltd shareholders						Total	Non-controlling interests	Total equity
	Share capital	Capital reserves	Treasury shares	Goodwill recognized	Cumulative Translation differences	Retained earnings			
Balance at 31.12.2015	125	- 1 006	- 329	- 1 372	- 134	13 856	11 140	102	11 242
Net income 1st half-year 2016						251	251	12	263
Currency translation of foreign entities					- 22		- 22	- 1	- 23
Dividends paid						- 403	- 403	- 36	- 439
Share-based compensation:									
– Value of employee services (net of tax)		5					5		5
– Proceeds from sale of shares		1					1		1
Repurchase of treasury shares		0	- 197				- 197		- 197
Transactions with non-controlling interests				1			1		1
Balance at 30.06.2016	125	- 1 000	- 525	- 1 372	- 156	13 704	10 776	77	10 853
Net income 2nd half-year 2016						323	323	7	330
Currency translation of foreign entities					14		14	2	16
Dividends paid							0	0	0
Share-based compensation:									
– Value of employee services (net of tax)		9					9		9
– Proceeds from sale of shares		0					0		0
Repurchase of treasury shares		0	- 135				- 135		- 135
Changes in non-controlling interests				0			0		0
Balance at 31.12.2016	125	- 991	- 660	- 1 372	- 142	14 027	10 987	86	11 073
Net income 1st half-year 2017						269	269	12	281
Currency translation of foreign entities					- 80		- 80	- 4	- 84
Dividends paid						- 357	- 357	- 15	- 372
Share-based compensation:									
– Value of employee services (net of tax)		4					4		4
– Proceeds from sale of shares		1					1		1
Repurchase of treasury shares		- 1	- 135				- 136		- 136
Transactions with non-controlling interests				1			1		1
Balance at 30.06.2017	125	- 987	- 794	- 1 372	- 222	13 939	10 689	79	10 768

Unaudited figures.

Notes to the half-year financial statements 2017

1. Basis of preparation and significant accounting policies

These consolidated financial statements cover the unaudited half-year results for the six months ending 30 June 2017. They have been prepared in accordance with Swiss GAAP FER (Accounting and Reporting Recommendations). The consolidated interim financial statements for 2017 have been prepared in accordance with FER 31 "Supplementary Recommendation for Listed Companies". These interim financial statements do not contain all the information and disclosures required in the annual consolidated financial statements. They should therefore be read in conjunction with the consolidated financial statements as at 31 December 2016. In this interim report, Management has not made any significant changes to the estimates and assumptions compared to the previous period.

2. Changes to Group structure

At 30 June 2017 the Group consolidation structure comprised 165 legal entities (31 December 2016: 168). The decrease is due to intragroup mergers of two companies and one liquidation. Information on business combinations can be found in Note 5.

3. Key exchange rates

Currency	Unit	Average rates	Prevailing rates	Average rates	Prevailing rates	Prevailing rates
		01.01.-30.06.2017	30.06.2017	01.01.-30.06.2016	31.12.2016	30.06.2016
		CHF	CHF	CHF	CHF	CHF
CNY	1	0.1444	0.1415	0.1511	0.1472	0.1477
EUR	1	1.0796	1.0950	1.0998	1.0760	1.0900
HKD	1	0.1273	0.1229	0.1275	0.1320	0.1266
JPY	100	0.8853	0.8575	0.8915	0.8785	0.9550
USD	1	0.9901	0.9600	0.9898	1.0235	0.9815

4. Segment information

1st half-year 2017 (CHF million)	Watches & Jewelry	Electronic Systems	Corporate	Elimination	Total
– Third parties	3 576	127	2		3 705
– Group	0	6	3	– 9	0
Net sales	3 576	133	5	– 9	3 705
Operating result	422	0	– 51		371
– As a % of net sales	11.8%	0.0%			10.0%
1st half-year 2016 (CHF million)	Watches & Jewelry	Electronic Systems	Corporate	Elimination	Total
– Third parties	3 586	127	3		3 716
– Group	0	9	3	– 12	0
Net sales	3 586	136	6	– 12	3 716
Operating result	402	3	– 52		353
– As a % of net sales	11.2%	2.2%			9.5%
Total assets at 30.06.2017	11 638	290	5 173	– 4 233	12 868
Total assets at 31.12.2016	11 947	276	5 053	– 4 170	13 106

Unaudited figures.

5. Business combinations

There were no business combinations in the first half year 2017. In the first half of 2016 as well as 2017, transactions with former minority shareholders amounting to CHF 1 million each in treasury shares took place in connection with the takeover of the remaining minority interests in the company ASICentrum spol. s.r.o. in 2015.

The final contractual payment of CHF 3 million related to the sale of a China-based subsidiary in 2015 was received during the first semester 2017.

6. Investments in associated companies and joint ventures

In the first half year 2017 as well as 2016, there were no significant changes in investments in associated companies and joint ventures.

7. Goodwill

Goodwill is recognized directly in equity at the time of purchase of a subsidiary or an investment in an associated company. The theoretical capitalization of goodwill, based on a useful life of 5 to 10 years, would have the following impact on equity and net income:

Theoretical impact on equity

(CHF million)	30.06.2017	31.12.2016	30.06.2016
Equity, per balance sheet	10 768	11 073	10 853
Theoretical capitalization of net book value of goodwill	579	637	696
Theoretical equity including net book value of goodwill	11 347	11 710	11 549

Theoretical impact on net income

(CHF million)	30.06.2017	31.12.2016	30.06.2016
Net income, per income statement	281	593	263
Theoretical amortization of goodwill	- 58	- 119	- 60
Theoretical net income after goodwill amortization	223	474	203

8. Treasury shares / share buyback program

In February 2016, the Group launched a share repurchase program with a total value of CHF 1 billion which lasts until 4 February 2019 at the latest. During the first semester 2017, Swatch Group acquired through this buyback program 184 700 bearer shares (previous year: 296 800) and 1 001 250 registered shares (previous year: 1 489 250) representing a market value of CHF 135 million (previous year: CHF 197 million). Since the beginning of the program, treasury shares with a total market value of CHF 467 million have been repurchased (723 550 bearer shares and 3 691 017 registered shares).

In the period under review, as in the previous year, the Swatch Group sold treasury shares related to the employee stock option plan in the amount of CHF 1 million and transferred CHF 1 million to minority interests (see Note 5).

9. Dividend

The Company pays one dividend per fiscal year. For fiscal year 2016, the dividend agreed at the Annual General Meeting on 23 May 2017, with a value date of 30 May 2017, was distributed as follows:

	Dividend per share CHF	Total dividend CHF million
Registered shares	1.35	167
Bearer shares	6.75	208
Total dividend		375
Dividend not paid out on own shares		- 18
Total dividend paid		357

Based on the decision of the Annual General Meeting, the dividend due on treasury shares held by the Group was not paid out.

10. Seasonality of operations

Due to the somewhat seasonal pattern of the Watches & Jewelry segment, slightly higher revenues and operating profits are usually expected in the second half of the year in local currency. This is mainly due to stronger-than-average monthly sales from September to December related to the holiday and Christmas season.

11. Significant events and business transactions

During the period under review, no material events or business transactions occurred that might have an impact on the critical estimates, appraisals and assumptions to be found in the consolidated financial statements as at 31 December 2016. Also, there were no further material events or business transactions that might impact upon other positions in the consolidated financial statements (such as, for example, changes to contingent liabilities and receivables or business transactions involving associated enterprises and persons).

12. Events after the closing date

At the publish date of this press release, the company is not aware of any significant new event that would affect the half-year financial statements at 30 June 2017.

Original: German
Translations: English, French and Italian

CONTACTS

Investors

Felix Knecht, Investor Relations Officer
Phone: +41 32 343 68 11

Media

Bastien Buss, Corporate Communications
Phone: +41 32 343 66 80

The Swatch Group Ltd, Biel/Bienne (Switzerland)
E-mail: please use our «Contact Form»

The Swatch Group Ltd, Biel/Bienne (Switzerland)
E-mail: please use our «Contact Form»