# ascom

# Letter to Shareholders

# **Dear Shareholders,**

Ascom looks back to an eventful and successful financial year 2020, which was characterized by the unprecedented and ongoing Covid-19 pandemic that affected companies and economies globally. Despite this challenging environment, we succeeded in achieving our restructuring objectives while returning to profitable growth.

- Net revenue increased by 3.6% at constant currencies<sup>1</sup> compared to the previous year
- EBITDA<sup>2</sup> increased to CHF 24.9 million (2019: CHF 0.8 million) and EBIT-DA margin improved substantially to 8.9% (2019: 0.3%)
- Both incoming orders and order backlog showed strong developments
- Net profit increased to CHF 6.5 million (2019: CHF 0.5 million)
- Balance sheet structure improved and Ascom was able to return to a positive net cash position of CHF 12.8 million and an improved equity ratio of 35.0% as of 31 December 2020 (29.5% as of 31 December 2019)

# Solid operating results

At the beginning of 2020, we announced a new Group structure focused on a leaner organization and stronger customer proximity. The swift implementation has proven to be effective, improving our processes and allowing us to better handle the challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic. In addition, we implemented a series of measures to reduce cost, increase efficiency and better exploit Ascom's market potential.

Due to the strong dedication of our worldwide teams, Ascom was able to cope with the difficult market environment in 2020. Double-digit revenue growth at constant currencies was generated in the regions Nordics, UK, and Rest of World. The Netherlands and USA & Canada showed solid revenue growth as well. The DACH region had weaker demand from customers mainly in the Enterprise sector. And the markets in France & Spain were hit hard due to severe measures taken by their respective governments to address the pandemic.

During 2020, we experienced a strong increase in new orders and were able to win substantial contracts in the Healthcare sector, which underscores our ability to become a relevant long-term partner for our sophisticated customer base. In particular, we are very proud of entering a long-term partnership with NHS Wales with a total contract value of CHF 16.5 million. We will deploy Ascom products and services and jointly develop new solutions.

# Good starting position for 2021

Thanks to the top-line growth and targeted cost-cutting measures, Ascom increased its profitability in 2020. The optimization and further improvement of our margin and cost structure will continue to be an important focus in 2021.

### **Revenue by region**

#### Revenue by segment



France & Spain 6%

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Constant currencies are calculated by converting current numbers using the prior year's exchange rates.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Definition of EBITDA, see "Consolidated income statement" on page 67 of this Annual Report.

In 2020, we have laid the foundation for further profitable growth. The high order backlog, the improved balance sheet and Ascom's sound financial profile are a good starting position for the financial year 2021. A major target is to convert the high service order backlog into revenue. We will also concentrate on further developing of our product and service portfolio in order to exploit existing and additional market potential. It makes us optimistic to see that our customer base is becoming more and more interested in digital workflow solutions and sophisticated, "situational" communication infrastructures. Ascom is well positioned to make a valuable contribution to the implementation of optimized workflow, signaling and documentation processes in healthcare and industry.

#### Sustainability – our commitment

We understand and support the growing importance of a sustainable business model and the reporting thereof. As an internationally active group, we adhere to the principles of sustainable management, which take equally into account environmental aspects, the needs of society and economic objectives.

Our mission is to offer products and services which are environmentally friendly, safe, and reliable. Sustainable resource management is one of our priorities.

In the financial year 2020, we emphasized our sustainability agenda with a comprehensively revised Corporate Directive which is in effect since January 2021. It takes "Environmental, Social and Governance" (ESG) targets into account and it guides the way we work to ensure we consider all stakeholders and take a holistic approach in all processes.

#### Efficient and simplified management structure

As part of the ongoing transformation of the Company and to further improve efficiency within the Ascom Group, the management structure has been simplified effective as of 9 February 2021. The Executive Board now consists of two members, Jeannine Pilloud as CEO and Dominik Maurer as CFO.

# **Annual General Meeting 2021**

In 2020, we strengthened our Board of Directors with four new members, who are all experienced leadership personalities with extensive international backgrounds. At the upcoming Annual General Meeting, all members of the Board of Directors will stand for re-election for another oneyear term of office. In addition, the Board of Directors will propose the re-election of Valentin Chapero Rueda as Chairman of the Board. The Board of Directors will propose Nicole Burth Tschudi and Laurent Dubois for re-election as members of the Compensation & Nomination Committee.

# A word of thanks

Ascom is on track, as the solid 2020 results have shown. Nevertheless, there is still considerable work ahead of us to reach our goal of sustainable profitable growth. The year 2021 will be another year with many uncertainties. We are, however, confident that the worldwide Ascom team will manage all the challenges ahead of us and that 2021 will be another positive step in the development of the Company and of our business.

The Ascom team has shown outstanding morale and excellent team spirit during this very difficult year 2020. We have countless examples of employees going the extra mile and doing the nearly impossible to service our customers who themselves were in difficult and challenging situations.

The Board of Directors and the Executive Committee would like to express their sincere gratitude to all our employees for their tremendous work. We also want to extend our thanks to our customers and business partners for their trust and loyalty to us. Many of them have been and still are fighting the corona crisis on the frontlines, and we want to express our heartfelt appreciation and gratitude for everything they do and for the great service they deliver to all of us. We also thank our valued shareholders for the confidence they have shown in us and for their continuing support.

Sincerely,

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Dr Valentin Chapero Rueda Chairman of the Board

Jeannine Pilloud CEO

#### Ascom Holding AG

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