



UBS Group AG and UBS AG

Annual Report 2018

Note 21 Provisions and contingent liabilities (continued)

1. Inquiries regarding cross-border wealth management businesses

Tax and regulatory authorities in a number of countries have made inquiries, served requests for information or examined employees located in their respective jurisdictions relating to the cross-border wealth management services provided by UBS and other financial institutions. It is possible that the implementation of automatic tax information exchange and other measures relating to cross-border provision of financial services could give rise to further inquiries in the future. UBS has received disclosure orders from the Swiss Federal Tax Administration (FTA) to transfer information based on requests for international administrative assistance in tax matters. The requests concern a number of UBS account numbers pertaining to current and former clients and are based on data from 2006 and 2008. UBS has taken steps to inform affected clients about the administrative assistance proceedings and their procedural rights, including the right to appeal. The requests are based on data received from the German authorities, who seized certain data related to UBS clients booked in Switzerland during their investigations and have apparently shared this data with other European countries. UBS expects additional countries to file similar requests.

The Swiss Federal Administrative Court ruled in 2016 that, in the administrative assistance proceedings related to a French bulk request, UBS has the right to appeal all final FTA client data disclosure orders. On 30 July 2018, the Swiss Federal Administrative Court granted UBS's appeal by holding the French administrative assistance request inadmissible. The FTA filed a final appeal with the Swiss Federal Supreme Court.

Since 2013, UBS (France) S.A., UBS AG and certain former employees have been under investigation in France for alleged complicity in having illicitly solicited clients on French territory, regarding the laundering of proceeds of tax fraud, and of banking and financial solicitation by unauthorized persons. In connection with this investigation, the investigating judges ordered UBS AG to provide bail ("caution") of EUR 1.1 billion and UBS (France) S.A. to post bail of EUR 40 million, which was reduced on appeal to EUR 10 million.

In March 2017, the investigating judges issued a trial order ("ordonnance de renvoi") that charges UBS AG and UBS (France) S.A., as well as various former employees, with illicit solicitation of clients on French territory and with participation in the laundering of the proceeds of tax fraud. The trial on these charges in the court of first instance took place from 8 October 2018 until 15 November 2018. During the trial, the prosecutors and the French State requested penalties and civil monetary damages in connection with the money laundering charges aggregating EUR 5.3 billion. On 20 February 2019, the court announced a verdict finding UBS AG guilty of illicitly soliciting clients on French territory and laundering the proceeds of tax fraud, and UBS France S.A. guilty of aiding and abetting unlawful solicitation and laundering the proceeds of tax fraud.

The court imposed fines aggregating EUR 3.7 billion on UBS AG and UBS France S.A. and awarded EUR 800 million of civil damages to the French state. UBS has appealed the decision. Under French law, the judgment is suspended while the appeal is pending. The Court of Appeal will retry the case de novo as to both the law and the facts and the fines and penalties can be greater than or less than those imposed by the court of first instance. A subsequent appeal to the Cour de Cassation, France's highest court, is possible with respect to questions of law.

UBS believes that based on both the law and the facts the judgment of the court of first instance should be reversed. UBS believes it followed its obligations under Swiss and French law as well as the European Savings Tax Directive. Even assuming liability, which it contests, UBS believes the penalties and damage amounts awarded greatly exceeded the amounts that could be supported by the law and the facts. In particular, UBS believes the court incorrectly based the penalty on the total regularized assets rather than on any unpaid taxes on those assets for which a fraud has been characterized, and further incorrectly awarded damages based on costs that were not proven by the civil party. Notwithstanding that UBS believes it should be acquitted, our balance sheet at 31 December 2018 reflected provisions with respect to this matter in an amount of USD 516 million. The wide range of possible outcomes in this case contributes to a high degree of estimation uncertainty. The provision reflected on our balance sheet at 31 December 2018 reflects our best estimate of possible financial implications, although it is reasonably possible that actual penalties and civil damages could exceed the provision amount.

In 2016, UBS was notified by the Belgian investigating judge that it is under formal investigation ("inculpé") regarding the laundering of proceeds of tax fraud, of banking and financial solicitation by unauthorized persons, and of serious tax fraud. In 2018, tax authorities and a prosecutor's office in Italy asserted that UBS is potentially liable for taxes and penalties as a result of its activities in Italy from 2012 to 2017.

UBS has, and reportedly numerous other financial institutions have, received inquiries from authorities concerning accounts relating to the Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) and other constituent soccer associations and related persons and entities. UBS is cooperating with authorities in these inquiries.

Our balance sheet at 31 December 2018 reflected provisions with respect to matters described in this item 1 in an amount that UBS believes to be appropriate under the applicable accounting standard. As in the case of other matters for which we have established provisions, the future outflow of resources in respect of such matters cannot be determined with certainty based on currently available information and accordingly may ultimately prove to be substantially greater (or may be less) than the provision that we have recognized.