

## equinet Bank AG in merger talks with Norwegian investment bank Pareto Securities

**Frankfurt, February 14, 2018.** Pareto Securities AS has signed today share purchase and transfer agreements with shareholders of equinet Bank AG holding together over 50% of the share capital of such entity. The consummation of this transaction is, *inter alia*, subject to clearance by the European Central Bank and, further, to Pareto being able to acquire 95% or more of the share capital of equinet Bank AG. Formal steps have been taken in order to get ECB approval of the transaction. This acquisition would lay groundwork for the mid-sized investment bank's further internationalization. Headquartered in Oslo, Norway, Pareto Securities is an independent investment bank with a leading position within the Nordic financial services markets. Pareto Securities employs over 400 people worldwide and is part of the Pareto Group. The Pareto Group has equity of approx. EUR 700 million.

equinet Bank AG CEO Lutz Weiler commented: "The merger of equinet Bank and Pareto will pave the way for further business development. Participation in a globally active banking group will offer our clients a broader and more international market and product access."

The German entity trading under the name Pareto Securities AG following the acquisition will continue to focus on the German small and mid-cap market. Pareto Securities' current branch in Frankfurt will be integrated into the German company. "We've recently invested in our research and sales teams along with our CRM and IT systems. Our business is well positioned as a high-performance corporate broker in a changing market, and we can offer our clients attractive capital market access. We're now aiming to gradually expand our market share while continuing to approach the German market as an independent entity with an enhanced workforce, deal flow and placing power" Weiler added.

Ole Henrik Bjørge, Pareto Securities CEO, sees the equinet merger as an important step in the company's international expansion strategy. "With the well positioned equinet team on board we will strengthen our presence Central and Northern Europe. Germany is a key capital market in Europe and we believe our products, particularly our High Yield bonds, fit well into the German market. We are looking forward to building a broader German enterprise with equinet."

**About equinet Bank AG**

*equinet Bank AG, headquartered in Frankfurt /Main, was founded in 1999 and sees itself as an “entrepreneur among bankers.” It is primarily responsible for medium-sized companies in financing and capital market questions and offers trading and sales services, as well as research products. Around 80 experienced investment bankers, securities traders, analysts and sales professionals develop and implement individual solutions.*

**About Pareto Securities**

*Pareto Securities, founded in 1986, is headquartered in Norway, and also has offices in Denmark, Finland, Sweden, France, Germany, UK, Switzerland, USA, Singapore and Australia. Pareto Securities enjoys a leading position in the Nordic capital markets and a strong international presence within the oil services, E&P and shipping sectors. Pareto Securities offers a wide range of financial services including equity and fixed income brokerage, equity, debt and project finance capital raisings, and advisory services in relation to mergers and acquisitions and restructurings.*

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