

Covered Bonds follow-up Rating

Commerzbank AG

Public Sector Covered Bond Program

Creditreform 
Rating

Rating Object	Rating Information	
Commerzbank AG, Public Sector Covered Bond Program	Rating / Outlook : AA / Negative	Type: Rating Update (unsolicited)
Type of Issuance : Public Sector Covered Bond under German law Issuer : Commerzbank AG	Rating Date : 10.12.2020 Rating Renewal until : Withdrawal of the rating Maximum Validity: 01.01.2050 Rating Methodology : CRA „Covered Bond Ratings“	
LT Issuer Rating : BBB+ (Commerzbank) ST Issuer Rating : L2 Outlook Issuer : Negative		

Program Overview			
Bonds nominal value	EUR 11,436 m.	WAL maturity covered bonds	5.49 Years
Cover pool value	EUR 12,557 m.	WAL maturity cover pool	11.29 Years
Cover pool asset class	Public Sector	Overcollateralization (nominal/committed)	9.80%/ 2.00%
Repayment method	Hard Bullet	Min. overcollateralization	2.00%
Legal framework	German Pfandbriefe Act	Covered bonds coupon type	Fix (44.48%), Floating (55.52%)

Cut-off date Cover Pool information: 30.09.2020

Rating Action

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This follow-up report covers our analysis of the public sector covered bond program issued under German law by Commerzbank AG („Commerzbank“). The total covered bond issuance at the cut-off date (30.09.2020) had a nominal value of EUR 11,436.35 m, backed by a cover pool with a current value of EUR 12,556.73 m. This corresponds to a nominal overcollateralization of 9.80%. The cover assets mainly include German public sector assets as well as obligations of regional and local authorities in Germany.

Taking into consideration the issuer rating, our analysis of the regulatory framework, liquidity- and refinancing risks, as well as our cover pool assessment and results of the cash flow analysis, Creditreform Rating AG (“Creditreform Rating” or “CRA”) lowers the rating of the covered bond program to AA from AA+ with a negative outlook. The rating and negative outlook are mainly due to the deteriorated overcollateralization and the current adverse economic development, which is characterized by a high degree of uncertainty on the issuer rating. However, the AA rating represents a very high level of credit quality and very low investment risk.

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Key Rating Findings

- + Covered Bonds are subject to strict German legal framework (PfandBG)
- + Covered bond holders have full recourse to the issuer.
- + Covered bonds are backed by appropriate cover asset class
- +/- Covid-19 can lead to sustained impact on the cover pool and the issuer rating
- High maturity mismatches between covered bonds and cover assets

Table1: Overview results

Risk Factor	Result
Issuer rating	BBB+ (rating as of 26.11.2020)
+ Legal and regulatory framework	+4 Notches
+ Liquidity and refinancing risk	+1 Notch
= Rating after 1 st uplift	AA
Cover pool & cash flow analysis	BB-
+ 2 nd rating uplift	+/-0 Notch
= Rating covered bond program	AA

Issuer Risk

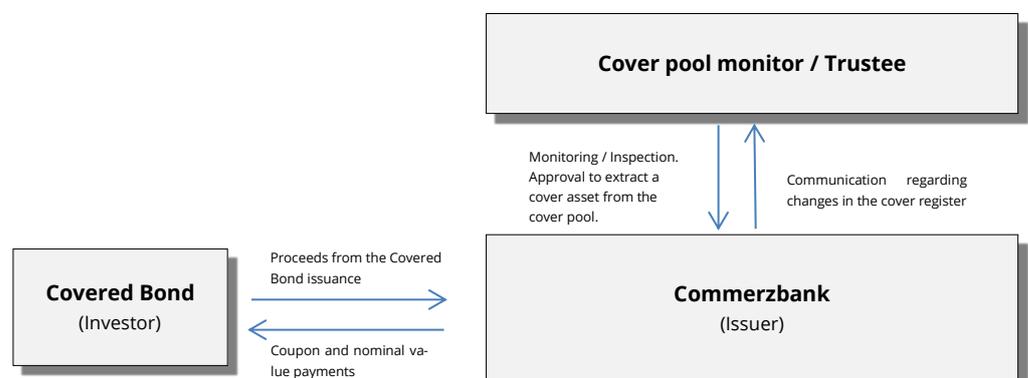
Issuer

Our rating of Commerzbank covered bond program is reflected by our issuer rating opinion of Commerzbank AG (Group) due to its group structure. CRA has affirmed the Long-term rating of Commerzbank at BBB+ with a negative outlook in a Rating Update dated 26.11.2020. Responsible for this decision were due, among other factors, to the high risk result in 2020, which may lead to a negative annual result in 2020, and the continuing economic weakness due to the corona pandemic. On the other hand, the Bank has a solid capital base and is aiming to change its strategy. For a more detailed overview of the issuer rating, please refer to the webpage of Creditreform Rating AG.

Structural Risk

Transaction structure

Figure1: Overview of Covered Bond emission | Source: CRA



Legal and Regulatory Framework

The legal basis of covered bond („Pfandbriefe“) programs in Germany is the German Covered Bond Act (Pfandbriefgesetz, "PfandBG") dated 22 May 2005 and the relevant secondary legislations. The PfandBG was last amended on 2019. Under this framework, banks can issue covered bonds backed by pool of mortgages, public sector assets, registered ship mortgages or registered liens on registered aircrafts.

The covered bondholders have direct recourse to the issuer and a preferential claim over the cover pool assets secured by its cover asset class. For public sector covered bonds (“Öffentliche Pfandbriefe“) the cover assets comprise of public sector exposures to sovereigns, regional and local authorities confined to EU/EEA countries, Switzerland, USA, Canada and Japan.

An independent trustee (Treuhänder) ensures that the cover assets are correctly recorded in the relevant cover register and that their inclusion meets eligibility criteria. In the event of issuers insolvency, a special administrator („Sachwalter“) will be appointed by the regulatory authority BaFin to manage the cover pool. Furthermore, on a regular basis BaFin audits cover pool assets, usually every two years.

In general, we consider the structural framework for covered bonds in Germany as positive, as the PfandBG defines clear rules to mitigate risks, in particular regarding insolvency remoteness, asset segregation, investor's special claim vis-à-vis other creditors, the roll and appointment of a special administrator, among other provisions. Due to those reasons, with regard to the regulatory and structural framework for German covered bond programs, we have set a rating uplift of four (+4) notches.

Liquidity and Refinancing Risk

According to PfandBG, it is compulsory for the covered bond issuers to maintain an overcollateralization (OC) of at least 2%, measured on a daily net present value and on a weekly stressed net present value basis. Furthermore, the Issuer is required to maintain a liquidity buffer to cover, for the next 180 days, all debt service outflows (interest and principal) and derivative transactions.

The underlying cover pool must be subjected to a stress test at least weekly to ensure the present value coverage, and that the OC is maintained in case of changes in interest rates and exchange rates. The stress scenarios are either static, dynamic or model-based. Derivatives can be an additional measure to hedge interest rate and currency risks.

In the event of issuer's insolvency, the PfandBG stipulates that the special administrator can sell covered pool assets or use them as a guarantee for liquidity operations if liquidity shortfalls are foreseeable.

The European Commission on November 2019 has also adopted the legislative package to provide for enhanced harmonisation of the EU covered bond market. Each of the Member States shall implement the Covered Bond Directive by 8 July 2021 and the national measures shall be applied at the latest from 8 July 2022. Once fully implemented, the directive might have a potential impact on legal and regulatory framework on the issuer and the covered bonds of each EU member states.

The German PfandBG and the stipulated risk management processes for liquidity risks constitute, in general, a comparatively strict framework by which they can be effectively reduced. Re-financing risks, however, cannot be structurally reduced due to the hard bullet repayment structure, which can only be cushioned by sufficiently high overcollateralization or other liquid funds to bridge the asset-liability mismatches. We assess the overall legal provisions on liquidity management for German Covered Bond programs as positive and set a rating uplift of one (+1) notch.

A more comprehensive overview of the regulatory framework can be found in our initial rating report. It is worth mentioning that, the PfandBG had a recent amendment that came into force on March 2019. It ensures that existing and future business with UK and Northern Ireland might remain eligible for the cover pool, in particular in case of UK being no longer a part of the EU. Hence, UK and Northern Ireland are now considered as third countries in the PfandBG, this implies that new lending business will be covered up by the same provisions as for third countries such as Switzerland, the USA, Canada and Japan.

ESG Criteria

CRA generally takes ESG-relevant factors (environmental, social and governance) into account when assessing Covered Bond ratings. Overall, ESG factors have a significant impact on the current rating of this Covered Bond program. CRA identifies governance factors, in particular, to have a highly significant impact on Covered Bond ratings. Since Covered Bonds are subject to strict legal requirements, regulatory risk plays an important role in assessing the credit rating.

The German covered bond legislation (PfandBG) defines clear rules to mitigate risks in particular regarding: insolvency remoteness, asset segregation, investor's special claim vis-à-vis other creditors, the roll and appointment of a special administrator, among other provisions. Additionally, Risk management and internal controls as well as the macroeconomic factors such as hedging strategies, interest rates and yield curve are considered to have a highly significant impact on the assessment of the credit rating. Other individual factors with a potential key rating influence were not identified, and therefore did not affect the final rating.

Credit and Portfolio Risk

Cover pool analysis

The analysis of the cover pool is based on public information which has been made available by the Issuer, in particular the Harmonised Transparency Template („HTT“) as per regulatory requirements. This information was sufficient according to CRA's rating methodology "Covered Bond Ratings".

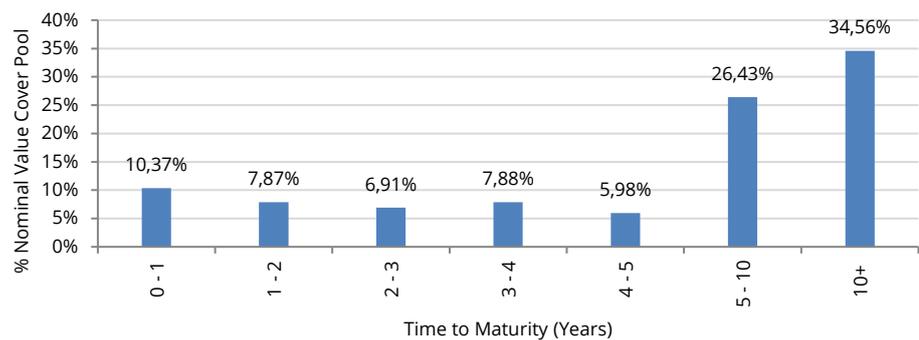
At the cut-off-date 30.09.2020, the pool of cover assets consisted of 752 debt receivables from 377 debtors, of which 59.15% are domiciled in Germany. The total cover pool volume amounted to EUR 12,556.73 m in bonds (14.58%), loans (85.42%) and others (0.00%) which have been lent to the central government, regional authorities and entities, and other debtors. The ten largest debtors of the portfolio total to 32.54%. Table 2 displays additional characteristics of the cover pool:

Table 2: Cover pool characteristics | Source: Commerzbank

Characteristics	Value
Cover assets	EUR 12,557 m.
Covered bonds outstanding	EUR 11,436 m.
Substitute assets	EUR 75.16 m.
Cover pool composition	
<i>Public Sector</i>	99.40%
<i>Substitute assets</i>	0.60%
<i>Other / Derivative</i>	0.00%
Number of debtors	377
<i>Bonds</i>	14.58%
<i>Loans</i>	85.42%
<i>Other</i>	0.00%
Average asset value	EUR 16,597.84 k.
Non-performing loans	0.0%
10 biggest debtors	32.54%
WA seasoning	Not relevant
WA maturity cover pool (WAL)	11.29 Years
WA maturity covered bonds (WAL)	5.49 Years

We have listed an extended view of the composition of the cover pool in the appendix section "Cover pool details". The following chart displays the maturity profile of the cover assets at the cut-off date 30.09.2020 (see figure 2):

Figure 2: Distribution by remaining time to maturity | Source: Commerzbank



Maturity profile

The following charts present the cash flow profile of the Issuer (see figure 3 and figure 4):

Figure 3: Cover asset congruence | Source: Commerzbank

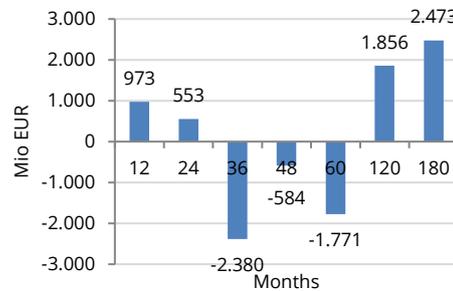
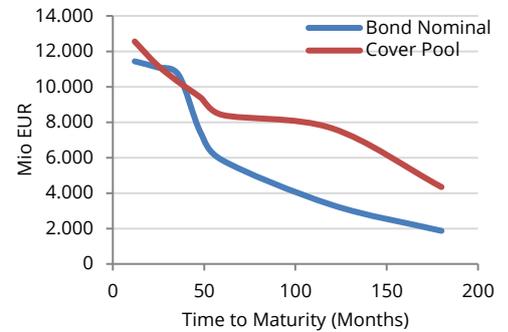


Figure 4: Amortization profile | Source: Commerzbank



During its cash flow modelling, CRA has taken into consideration the maturity structure of cover assets and liabilities. This structure was an integral part of the cash flow analysis.

Interest rate and currency risk

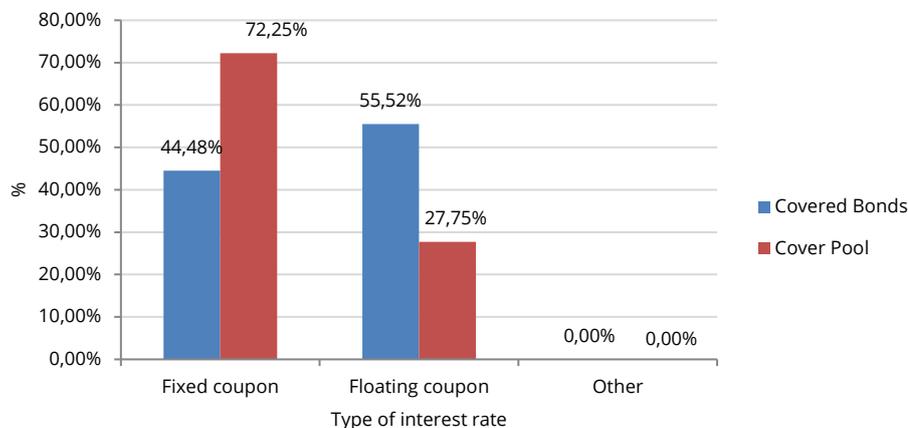
The legal framework provides for weekly stress tests to be conducted on interest rate- and currency risks. Therefore, interest rate risk could be mitigated by the 2% OC requirement. This program, however, possess significant currency risk as 25.71% of the cover pool assets and 2.25% of the cover bonds are denominated in currencies other than Euros. Therefore, we have applied interest rate and foreign exchange stresses on the cash flows for each rating level according to our methodology.

Table 3: Program distribution by currency | Source: Commerzbank

Currency	Volume	Share (%)
<i>Cover Pool</i>		
EUR	9,328 m.	74.29%
AUD	9 m.	0.07%
CHF	798 m.	6.35%
GBP	1,610 m.	12.82%
USD	813 m.	6.47%
<i>Covered Bond</i>		
EUR	11,179 m.	97.75%
CHF	257 m.	2.25%

Figure 5 shows the types of interest rate used in this program

Figure 5: Type of interest rate | Source: Commerzbank



Credit Risk

In Covered Bond Public Sector programs, CRA assesses the credit risk of the cover assets primarily through an assessment of the creditworthiness of the obligors and their future ability to meet all payment obligations. In order to derive a base case assumption for credit risk, CRA uses the CRA Sovereign Ratings of all obligors in the portfolio, which will be taken into account pro-rata. The rating reports of relevant sovereigns can be accessed at www.creditreform-rating.de. Using all portfolio information available (number of debtors, sovereign – sub-sovereign, maturity profile, regional diversification etc.), CRA has modelled the cover asset portfolio and, using Monte Carlo simulations, derived a distribution of defaults which can be used to elicit rating-level dependent default assumptions.

Recovery and loss-severity assumptions have been determined in accordance with CRA rating methodology. This includes a differentiation of sovereign- and sub-sovereign credits in terms of loss severities, which is included using the current portfolio composition to determine a weighted average recovery rate.

Using both rating-level dependent default and recovery assumptions, the following loss assumptions have been derived for the current cover pool (see Table 4)

Table 4: Cover Pool Base case assumptions | Source: CRA

Rating	Default Rate (%)	Recoveries (%)	Expected Loss (%)
BBB-	10.44%	50.26%	5.19%
BB+	9.10%	51.92%	4.38%
BB	8.03%	53.59%	3.72%
BB-	6.68%	55.26%	2.99%
B+	5.64%	56.92%	2.43%
B	4.83%	58.59%	2.00%
B-	3.76%	58.59%	1.56%

Cash-Flow Analysis

Model Assumptions

Based on public information and using the base case loss assumptions, we implement a scenario-based cash flow model. This model aims to test the ability of the structure to service all covered bonds according to their payment profile in diverse stress scenarios. The CRA cash flow analysis assumes that the Issuer has defaulted, i.e. all obligations will be met using cash flows from the cover pool assets only. We also assume that no additional assets will be added to the cover pool during the wind-down phase.

The cash-flow analysis considers, among other factors, asset value haircuts (“asset-sale discount”), and the possible positive yield spread between covered assets and covered bonds (“yield spreads”). To derive the asset-sale discount, CRA assumes, based on secondary market data, a rating level haircut on the asset value. Furthermore, CRA, using available public information (i.e. issuer’s annual accounts), has derived estimations for yield spreads (see table 5):

Table 5: Cash-Flow Model assumptions | Source: CRA

Rating level	Asset-Sale Discount	Yield Spread
BBB-	6.82%	1.07%
BB+	6.05%	1.08%
BB	5.20%	1.08%
BB-	4.32%	1.09%
B+	3.47%	1.10%
B	2.58%	1.11%
B-	0.85%	1.13%

Rating Scenarios

In our cash flow model rating scenarios have been tested considering several central input parameters, such as:

- Portfolio composition (diversification, concentration, granularity)
- Probability of default of cover assets
- Correlations of cover assets and systematic risk factors
- Recoveries
- Maturity profile of covered bonds and cover assets (ALM)

Within a BB- rating scenario, the cash flow model showed that obligations can be paid fully and in a timely manner. Overall, the cash flow analysis revealed that the portfolio, given all available information as of 30.09.2020, may ensure the repayment of bonds’ nominal capital notwithstanding the occurrence of the presented stressed scenarios.

Overcollateralization Break-Even Analysis

CRA also performed a break-even OC analysis taking into considerations the following drivers: ALM, Loss level, Interest rate spreads, foreign currency mismatches and Recoveries. Performing the break-even OC analysis, we took rating-level specific stressed outcomes into account. Based on these analyses, the maximum OC required for each relevant rating level during the whole period has been presented in table 6.

Table 6: Breakeven Analysis | Source: CRA

Rating Level	Break-Even OC
BBB-	14.79%
BB+	12.50%
BB	10.33%
BB-	7.82%
B+	5.72%
B	3.73%
B-	2.00%

Sensitivity Analysis

CRA also evaluates the sensitivity of the structure and program with respect to important input parameters. In particular, the following factors have been varied:

- Credit quality of cover assets
- Recoveries

The following table presents the rating impact of a decline in recoveries and an increase in the credit risk of single debtors (sovereigns). Starting from the best-case, which is represented by our base case assumptions, the analysis reveals the sensitivity of the rating with respect to recovery rates and credit risk. The worst-case scenario, in which we reduce recoveries by 50% and increase credit risk by 50%, the impact can be seen by a reduction in the base case rating by one notch to B+ (see Table 7):

Table 7: Covered Bond Program Sensitivity: Credit Quality und Recovery Rates | Source: CRA

Recovery Defaults	Base Case	-25%	-50%
Base Case	BB-	BB-	B+
+25%	BB-	B+	B+
+50%	BB-	B+	B+

In general, based on the presented cash flow analysis results, the rating of the cover pool within our covered bond program rating has been set at BB-. This, however, didn't ensure any secondary rating uplift which has been set to zero (0) notch.

However, it is worth mentioning that, the ongoing Covid-19 crisis could have a potential impact on the cover pool. It remains to be seen how serious the effects of the lockdown, among other things, will be. Should there be any changes to the cover pool and the issuer rating in the future, we will include them during our monitoring process.

Counterparty Risk

Derivatives

No derivatives in use at present

Commingling

In the event of issuer's bankruptcy, in order to avoid commingling of funds, the PfandBG stipulates that the cover assets should be isolated from the general bankruptcy estate (insolvency-free assets) and a special cover pool administrator will be appointed to manage the cover pool. Under that mandate the cover pool administrator will have first priority on the up-coming cash flows from the cover pool assets, which in turn should be used to cover interest and principal payments of the covered bond holders in event of the Issuer's insolvency.

Appendix

Rating History

Event	Rating Date	Publication Date	Result
Initial Rating	11.12.2018	16.12.2018	AA / stable
Rating Update	11.12.2019	17.12.2019	AA+ / stable
Monitoring	24.03.2020	28.03.2020	AA+ / watch negative
Rating Update	10.12.2020	16.12.2020	AA / negative

Details Cover Pool

Table 8: Characteristics of Cover Pool | Source: Commerzbank

Characteristics	Value
Cover Pool Volume	EUR 12,557 m.
Covered Bonds Outstanding	EUR 11,436 m.
Substitute Assets	EUR 75 m.
Share Derivatives	0.00%
Share Other	100.00%
Substitute Assets breakdown by asset type	
Cash	0.00%
Guaranteed by Supranational/Sovereign agency	0.00%
Central bank	0.00%
Credit institutions	100.00%
Other	0.00%
Substitute Assets breakdown by country	
Issuers country	100.00%
Eurozone	0.00%
Rest European Union	0.00%
European Economic Area	0.00%
Switzerland	0.00%
Australia	0.00%
Brazil	0.00%
Canada	0.00%
Japan	0.00%
Korea	0.00%
New Zealand	0.00%
Singapore	0.00%
US	0.00%
Other	0.00%
Cover Pool Composition	

Covered Bonds follow-up Rating

Commerzbank AG

Public Sector Covered Bond Program

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Public Sector	99.40%
Total Substitute Assets	0.60%
Other / Derivatives	0.00%
Number of Debtors	377
Distribution by debtor type	
Central Government	24.40%
Regional authorities	36.13%
Municipal authorities	34.36%
Other	5.11%
Distribution by asset type	
Loans	85.42%
Bonds	14.58%
Other	0.00%
Average asset value	EUR 16,598 k
Share of Non-Performing Loans	0.00%
Share of 10 biggest debtors	32.54%
WA Maturity (months)	Not relevant
WAL (months)	135.53
Distribution by Country (%)	
Austria	2.92
Belgium	0.59
Denmark	0.37
Estonia	0.02
Finland	0.82
France	0.73
Germany	59.15
Greece	0.13
Italy	5.10
Portugal	0.80
Spain	3.77
Sweden	0.15
United Kingdom	13.72
Iceland	0.74
Switzerland	7.74
Canada	0.26
Japan	0.34
US	2.64
Distribution by Region (%)	

Table 9: Participant counterparties | Source: Commerzbank

Role	Name	Legal Entity Identifier
Issuer	Commerzbank	851WYG NLUQLFZBSYGB56
Servicer	Not applicable for the jurisdiction	Not applicable for the jurisdiction
Account Bank	Not applicable for the jurisdiction	Not applicable for the jurisdiction
Sponsor	Not applicable for the jurisdiction	Not applicable for the jurisdiction

Figure 6: Arrears Distribution | Source: Commerzbank

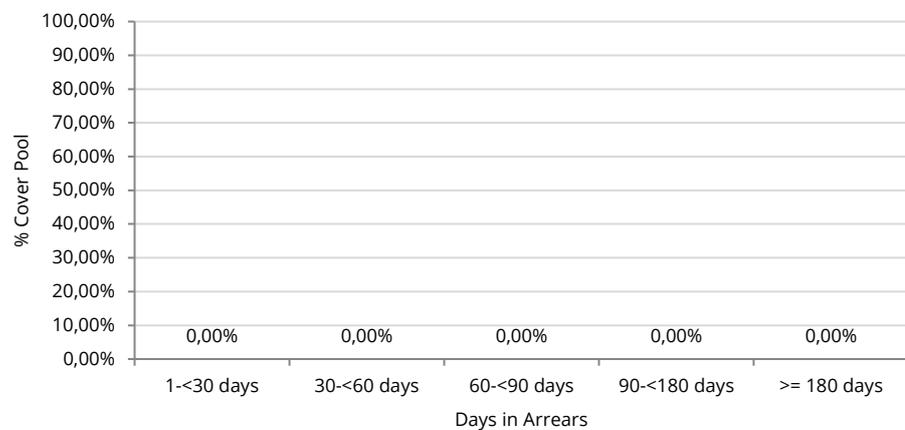
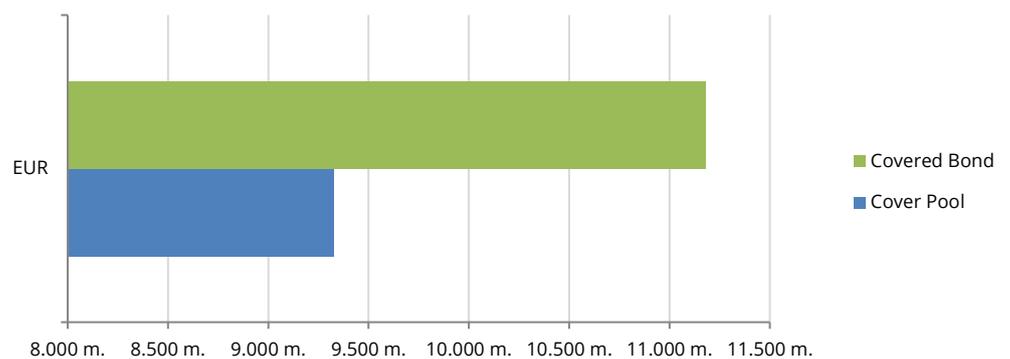


Figure 7: Program currency mismatches | Source: Commerzbank



Key Source of Information

Documents (Date: 30.09.2020)

Issuer

- Audited consolidated annual reports of the Commerzbank AG (group) 2016-2019
- Final Rating report as of 26.11.2020
- Miscellaneous Investor Relations Information and Press releases
- Peergroup-Data and other data from CRA eValueRate databank

Covered Bond and Cover Pool

- HTT Reporting from Commerzbank as of 30.09.2020
- Market data of Public Sector Covered Bond Program.

Regulatory and Legal Disclosures

Creditreform Rating AG was neither commissioned by the rating object nor by any other third parties for the rating. The analysis took place on a voluntary basis by Creditreform Rating AG and is to be described in the regulatory sense as an unsolicited rating. The rating was conducted on the basis of Creditreform Rating's "["Covered Bond Ratings" methodology \(v1.0, July 2017\)](#)" and "["Technical Documentation Portfolio Loss Distributions" \(v.1.0, July 2018\)](#)" in conjunction with Creditreform's basic document "["Rating Criteria and Definitions" \(v1.3, January 2018\)](#)". On the subject of ESG (environment, social and governance), Creditreform Rating AG has published the basic document "["The Impact of ESG Factors on Credit Ratings" \(March 2020\)](#)".

Unsolicited Credit Rating

With Rated Entity or Related Third Party Participation	NO
With Access to Internal Documents	NO
With Access to Management	NO

The rating is based on publicly available information and internal evaluation methods for the rated bank and program. The issuer's quantitative analysis is based mainly on the latest annual accounts, interim reports, other information of the bank pertaining to investor relations, and key figures calculated by CRA/eValueRate subject to a peer group analysis of 24 competing institutes. The cover pool's quantitative analysis for the rated Covered Bond Program was based on the "Harmonised Transparency Template" (HTT) published by the Commerzbank.

Information on the meaning of a rating category, definition of default and sensitivity analysis of relevant key rating assumptions can be found at "Creditreform Rating AG, Rating Criteria and Definitions":

<https://www.creditreform-rating.de/en/about-us/regulatory-requirements.html>

This rating was carried out by analysts AFM Kamruzzaman (Analyst) und Qinghang Lin (Analyst) both based in Neuss/Germany. On 10.12.2020, the rating was presented to the rating committee by the analysts and adopted in a resolution. The function of Person Approving Credit Ratings (PAC) was performed by Stephan Giebler (Senior Analyst).

On 10.12.2020, the rating result was communicated to Commerzbank, and the preliminary rating report was made available. The Issuer and all relevant parties examined the rating report

prior to publication and were given at least one full working day to appeal the rating committee decision and provide additional information. The rating decision was not amended following this examination.

The rating is subject to one-year monitoring from the creation date (see cover sheet). Within this period, the rating can be updated. After one year at the latest, a follow-up is required to maintain the validity of the rating.

In 2011 Creditreform Rating AG was registered within the European Union according to EU Regulation 1060/2009 (CRA-Regulation). Based on the registration Creditreform Rating AG (CRA) is permitted to issue credit ratings within the EU and is bound to comply with the provisions of the CRA-Regulation.

Endorsement

Creditreform Rating did not endorse the rating according Article 4 (3), CRA-Regulation.

Conflict of Interests

No conflicts of interest were identified during the rating process that might influence the analyses and judgements of the rating analysts involved or any other natural person whose services are placed at the disposal or under the control of Creditreform Rating AG and who are directly involved in credit rating activities or approving credit ratings and rating outlooks.

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To prepare this credit rating, CRA has used following substantially material sources:

1. Transaction structure and participants
2. Transaction documents
3. Issuing documents
4. Other rating related documentation

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In cases where the credit rating is based on more than one methodology, or where reference only to the principal methodology might cause investors to overlook other important aspects of the credit rating, including any significant adjustments and deviations, Creditreform Rating AG explains this fact in the credit rating and indicates how the different methodologies and other aspects are taken into account in the credit rating. This information is integrated in the credit rating report.

The meaning of each rating category, the definition of default or recovery, and any appropriate risk warning, including a sensitivity analysis of the relevant key rating assumptions, such as mathematical or correlation assumptions, accompanied by worst-case scenario credit ratings as well as best-case scenario credit ratings, are explained.

The date at which the credit rating was released for distribution for the first time and when it was last updated including any rating outlooks, is indicated clearly and prominently in the rating report and/or Press Release as a "Rating action"; first release is indicated as "initial rating", other updates are indicated as an "update", "upgrade or downgrade", "not rated", "confirmed", "selective default" or "default".

In the case of a rating outlook, the time horizon is provided during which a change in the credit rating is expected. This information is available within the rating report and/or Press Release.

In accordance to Article 11 (2) EU-Regulation (EC) No 1060/2009 registered or certified credit rating agency shall make available in a central repository established by ESMA information on its historical performance data, including the ratings transition frequency, and information about credit ratings issued in the past and on their changes. Requested data are available at the ESMA website: <https://cerep.esma.europa.eu/cerep-web/statistics/defaults.xhtml> .

An explanatory statement of the meaning of Creditreform`s default rates are available in the credit rating methodologies disclosed on the website.

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