

AIC

AACHEN INVESTMENT CLUB

Newsletter CW 23/24

News Recap

SpaceX's Public Debut Marks a Turning Point for Space and Capital Markets

On June 12, 2026, Elon Musk's SpaceX made its long-awaited debut on the Nasdaq and Wall Street has rarely seen anything like it. Priced at \$135 per share, the company raised \$75 billion, completing the largest IPO in history at a valuation of \$1.77 trillion, shattering Saudi Aramco's previous record of \$29.4 billion set in 2019. For a company founded in 2002 with the stated goal of making humanity multiplanetary, the milestone marks a remarkable inflection point, not just for SpaceX, but for the broader relationship between private innovation and public capital.

The numbers behind the offering are staggering. SpaceX's IPO shares were four times oversubscribed, and the stock opened at \$150 on its first day of trading - an 11% jump from the IPO price before closing nearly 20% higher. Retail investors alone submitted more than \$100 billion in orders ahead of the debut.

What investors are buying into is a company that has fundamentally reshaped the aerospace industry. SpaceX launched more rockets in 2025 than the rest of the world combined, putting up roughly 75% of everything that went into orbit, and operates a satellite constellation nearly ten times larger than any competitor. Its three core revenue streams - Starlink satellite internet, launch services, and AI - generated \$18.7 billion in revenue in 2025, with Starlink alone accounting for nearly 70% of that total. The company's financial picture is not without complexity. SpaceX posted a net loss of \$4.9 billion in 2025, reversing a profit of \$791 million the year before, largely a consequence of its early 2026 acquisition of xAI, Musk's artificial intelligence venture, which has been investing heavily in computing infrastructure. The integration of xAI transformed SpaceX from a pure-play aerospace company into a hybrid of rockets, satellite broadband, and AI.

One distinctive feature of the offering was its unusually generous treatment of individual investors. In a market where retail investors typically receive just 5-10% of IPO share allocations, SpaceX set aside as much as 30% for individual buyers which states a deliberate choice that echoes the retail-heavy shareholder culture Musk cultivated at Tesla. Roughly \$15 billion of the raise came from retail investors, a figure analysts described as larger than most IPOs of any size.

The market's reception signals something beyond SpaceX itself. Analysts view the debut as a potential catalyst for a broader wave of tech listings, with Anthropic and OpenAI frequently mentioned as candidates that could follow if the offering proves durable. For years, the most consequential companies in AI and deep tech have remained private, accessible only to institutional capital and early insiders. SpaceX's public listing suggests that window may be closing.

Whether the valuation holds is another question entirely. The public listing will expose SpaceX to scrutiny it has never faced as a private company, including quarterly earnings pressure and the demands of financial transparency. The same forces that made it the most anticipated IPO in recent memory will now test whether its ambitions can be converted into the kind of returns public markets expect.

(Sources: CNBC, The Motley Fool)

ECB Extends Easing Cycle With New Interest Rate Cut

The European Central Bank has extended its easing cycle with another 25-basis-point interest rate cut, lowering borrowing costs for the eighth time since June 2024. The decision takes the deposit facility rate to 2.00%, the main refinancing rate to 2.15%, and the marginal lending facility to 2.40%, marking another step away from the restrictive policy stance used to fight the post-pandemic inflation surge.

The move reflects a more favorable inflation backdrop. Eurozone inflation has returned close to the ECB's 2% target, with recent data showing price growth easing below that level in May. Lower energy prices, a stronger euro, and moderating wage pressures have all helped reduce inflation risks, giving policymakers more room to support a weak eurozone economy.

However, the decision also signals that the ECB may now be approaching the end of its easing cycle. President Christine Lagarde stressed that the central bank remains data-dependent and is not committing to a fixed rate path. Markets interpreted her comments as a signal that the ECB could pause at its next meeting, especially after a full year of steady rate reductions.

The policy debate is becoming more balanced. On the one hand, weaker growth, uncertainty around trade policy, and subdued investment argue for easier financial conditions. On the other hand, services inflation remains relatively sticky, and higher government spending on defence and infrastructure could create new medium-term price pressures.

For investors, the key question is whether this latest cut is simply another step in the easing cycle or the final move before a longer pause. For now, the ECB appears to be signaling that policy has become much less restrictive, but that further cuts will require clearer evidence of renewed economic weakness or inflation undershooting its target. *(Sources: ECB, Eurostat, Reuters)*

Deutsche Bank Delivers Strongest Profit Since 2007

Deutsche Bank has delivered its strongest annual profit since 2007, marking a major milestone in the turnaround of Germany's largest lender. For 2025, the bank reported net profit attributable to shareholders of €6.1 billion, while total net profit doubled to €7.1 billion. Profit before tax reached €9.7 billion, up 84% year-on-year, supported by stronger revenues, lower litigation burdens, and continued cost discipline.

The result confirms the success of CEO Christian Sewing's restructuring strategy, which began in 2018 after years of losses, regulatory problems, and weak profitability. Deutsche Bank also achieved its key 2025 financial targets, including a post-tax return on tangible equity of 10.3% and a cost-income ratio of 64%. This marks an important shift from stabilization toward growth, giving management a stronger foundation for the next strategic phase.

A key driver was the investment bank, which benefited from resilient trading activity and stronger client demand. At the same time, asset management and private banking contributed to earnings growth, helping to diversify the profit base. The improvement was also supported by the absence of major one-off legal charges that had weighed on previous results, particularly those linked to Postbank litigation.

For investors, the earnings show that Deutsche Bank has become more profitable and more predictable than during earlier phases of its restructuring. The stronger capital position also allows the bank to increase shareholder distributions, including dividends and share buybacks. However, risks remain. A weaker macroeconomic environment, pressure on dealmaking activity, and new investigations related to money-laundering controls could still affect sentiment.

Overall, the 2025 results represent a symbolic turning point. Deutsche Bank is no longer defined primarily by restructuring, but by whether it can sustain profitability in a more difficult interest-rate and growth environment. The next challenge will be proving that the strongest profit since 2007 is not a one-off, but the beginning of a more durable earnings profile.

(Sources: Deutsche Bank, Reuters, Handelsblatt)



Germany's Fuel Tax Break Comes to an End

Germany's temporary fuel tax break is set to expire on 30 June, bringing an end to a two-month measure designed to protect households and businesses from the latest surge in global energy prices. From 1 July, the standard energy tax rates will apply again, potentially adding around 17 cents per litre to petrol and diesel prices if the increase is passed through fully at filling stations.

The government introduced the measure on 1 May after disruptions to international oil supplies and escalating conflict in the Middle East pushed fuel prices sharply higher. Under the Second Energy Tax Reduction Act, the energy tax on both petrol and diesel was lowered by 14.04 cents per litre. Because energy tax is also included in the calculation of value-added tax, the theoretical reduction at the pump amounted to roughly 17 cents per litre.

Chancellor Friedrich Merz's CDU/CSU–SPD coalition presented the policy as rapid support for motorists, commuters and companies dependent on road transport. The government estimated that the measure would provide approximately €1.6 billion in relief over May and June. It was particularly relevant for logistics companies, tradespeople and rural households, which generally have fewer alternatives to travelling by car.

However, the reduction was explicitly designed as an emergency intervention rather than a permanent change to Germany's tax system. Extending it would create further pressure on the federal budget, while offering a broad subsidy to all fuel consumers regardless of their income or actual need. Critics also argued that lower fuel taxes weaken incentives to reduce fossil-fuel consumption and primarily benefit people who drive frequently or own larger vehicles.

Another controversy concerned whether oil companies and filling stations passed the tax reduction on to customers in full. Early calculations by the ifo Institute suggested that only around four cents of the 17-cent reduction had reached diesel drivers during the first three days, compared with approximately 12 cents for petrol. The ADAC automobile association and the Federal Cartel Office also questioned some unusual price movements around the introduction of the measure.

Finance Minister Lars Klingbeil responded by warning that the relief was intended for consumers and the wider economy, not as an opportunity for oil companies to increase their margins. The government promised closer market monitoring and discussed stronger competition rules as well as measures targeting exceptional energy-sector profits.

The expiry could therefore lead to a noticeable but not necessarily immediate price increase. Fuel purchased by retailers under different tax rates may still be sold from existing inventories, while crude-oil prices, refinery costs, exchange rates and local competition will continue to influence pump prices. Nevertheless, households are likely to face renewed pressure on disposable income, particularly during the summer travel period.

Businesses with large vehicle fleets will also see their operating costs rise. Haulage and delivery companies may try to transfer these expenses to customers, contributing to higher prices for transported goods. At the broader economic level, the return to normal tax rates could temporarily lift consumer inflation after the tax break helped moderate fuel-related price pressures in May.

Politically, the measure illustrates the government's difficult balancing act: providing visible short-term relief without turning temporary crisis support into a costly permanent subsidy. Its end removes a burden from the federal budget, but it also means that consumers and businesses will once again be more directly exposed to volatile global energy markets.

(Sources: Bundesregierung, ifo Institute, Reuters)

Germany Sees No Need for Further Strategic Oil Reserve Release

Germany does not plan to release additional volumes from its strategic oil reserves, according to a spokesperson for the Economy Ministry. The announcement, made on 12 June 2026, follows the country's participation in the International Energy Agency's (IEA) coordinated emergency stock release earlier this year.

Germany contributed to the IEA-led measure in March, which aimed to offset supply disruptions and stabilise global energy markets amid heightened geopolitical tensions. The release formed part of a broader international effort to ensure adequate oil supply and reduce market volatility. Despite the drawdown, German authorities stated that current reserve levels and domestic supply conditions remain sufficient, eliminating the need for further releases at this stage.

Strategic oil reserves are maintained to protect against temporary supply shocks and are typically used only during exceptional market disruptions. Germany, like other IEA members, is required to hold emergency stocks equivalent to at least 90 days of net oil imports. The latest decision indicates that existing inventories continue to provide an adequate buffer against potential supply risks.



The announcement is relevant for energy markets because strategic reserves play a key role in maintaining supply security and supporting market stability during periods of geopolitical uncertainty. Germany's decision to refrain from further releases reflects confidence in current market conditions while preserving emergency stockpiles for future contingencies.

(Sources: Reuters)

M&A/VC News

New Mountain Capital to buy Asset Living in over \$2 billion deal

Private equity firm New Mountain Capital has agreed to acquire Asset Living, a U.S. residential property manager, for just over \$2 billion. The deal, confirmed by sources, includes Asset Living's owned real estate portfolio and its proprietary management software platform. Based in Houston and founded in 1986, Asset Living oversees multifamily, student and affordable housing communities across more than 40 U.S. states. The acquisition comes amid a wave of buyouts in the rental housing sector, as investors seek steady fee-based income from property management businesses without owning the underlying real estate. New Mountain said CEO Ryan McGrath will remain involved in the business after closing.

(Source: Reuters)

American Express to buy Tripadvisor's TheFork in \$700 million deal

American Express will buy TheFork, Tripadvisor's restaurant-booking platform, for \$700 million in an all-cash transaction. TheFork will continue to operate under its existing brand, and Tripadvisor said the sale will let it focus more on its core "experiences"-based business. For AmEx, the deal expands its dining network to about 75,000 bookable venues and bolsters its fast-growing international business, building on prior acquisitions of dining apps like Resy and Tock. The transaction is expected to close by the end of 2026.

(Source: Reuters)

Nuvei to buy Payoneer in \$2.75 billion cross-border payments deal

Canadian payments processor Nuvei has agreed to acquire Payoneer, a cross-border fintech platform, for about \$2.75 billion in cash. Nuvei will pay \$7.40 per share, roughly a 44% premium to Payoneer's pre-deal stock price. The acquisition will combine Nuvei's merchant-processing business with Payoneer's global payments network, positioning the combined company to benefit from growing demand for stablecoin transactions and AI-driven commerce while accessing major e-commerce clients like Amazon and Walmart. The transaction is expected to close in mid-2027, pending Payoneer shareholder approval and regulatory clearance.

(Source: Reuters)

Helion Energy raises \$465 million, reaches \$15.5 billion valuation

U.S. fusion energy startup Helion Energy said it raised \$465 million in its latest funding round, led by Thrive Capital, which valued the company at about \$15.5 billion. The Series G financing nearly triples Helion's valuation from a year ago and brings its total funding to roughly \$1.5 billion. Helion plans to use the proceeds to accelerate deployment of its fusion reactors – expanding manufacturing capacity and preparing to deliver clean electricity to customers. The funding round underscores strong investor interest in fusion power as a large-scale clean energy source to support energy-intensive industries, including growing AI data center demand.

(Source: Reuters)

DeepSeek to raise \$7.4 billion in funding round

DeepSeek, China's top AI startup, is set to raise about 50 billion yuan (\$7.4 billion) in its first funding round. The round – expected to be led by tech giants such as Tencent and battery-maker CATL – would value the company around \$52–59 billion post-money. The financing marks a reversal of DeepSeek's earlier policy of avoiding outside investors; the founders will use the capital to develop next-generation AI models beyond their current chatbot-based systems. The massive raise, one of China's largest private tech fundraisings, reflects Beijing's strategy to nurture homegrown AI champions amid export controls on advanced semiconductor technology.

(Source: Reuters)

Quobly raises \$133 million to advance quantum computing

Quobly, a French quantum computing startup, said it has raised €115 million (\$133.7 million) in a funding round led by France's state-backed Bpifrance and chipmaker STMicroelectronics. The financing comes amid a surge of government support for quantum technology (France recently pledged €1 billion to the field). Quobly's approach uses modified conventional semiconductor chips to build more affordable, scalable quantum processors. The company plans to offer cloud-based access to its first quantum computing systems from its Grenoble headquarters later this year. *(Source: Reuters)*

Outlook

Earnings and key events

- 17.06.: Vinci
- 18.06.: Accenture, FOMC Meeting
- 19.06.: Eurozone CPI
- 23.06.: FedEx
- 24.06.: Micron Technology
- 26.06.: U.S. PCE

Disclaimer: All texts as well as the notes and information provided do not constitute investment advice or recommendations. They have been compiled to the best of our knowledge and belief from publicly available sources. All information provided is intended solely for educational purposes and private entertainment.

Editorial Team:

Eric Bergmann, Paul Dzidonu, Leon Eckmann, Hannes Klettke, Jia-Syuan Li, Kjell Menzel, Ninh Nguyen, Mateo Prinz, Joschka Sanders, Nick Stumpp