

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **New study launched ahead of International Women's Day reveals women are becoming more financially independent than men**

- While women globally are more likely to feel stressed overall, they find financial stress less worrisome than their male counterparts
- 25-34 years olds are the age bracket that feels the most financially independent

**Berlin, 8 March, 2021:** A new study from leading digital bank [N26](#) has revealed that women globally are edging out men in perceptions of their own financial independence with 59% of women feeling financially independent compared to 58% of men. The only country where more men (58%) feel financially independent than women (52%) is Germany.

The research delved further by asking respondents to rank the top indicators of financial independence. The top three were paying all bills on time (75%), being the owner of a motor vehicle (60%) and being in full-time employment (51%). Overall, the results showed that over one in ten adults don't feel financially independent but they're also less likely to stress about money than financially independent people.

The study also ranked the most stressful situations for the human brain, revealing that financially independent women, although more financially independent than men, are still 40% more likely to experience stress than their male counterparts. However, despite women being more likely to feel stressed overall, they find financial stress less worrisome than men. 58% of the most stressful scenarios were financial for men, compared to 47% for women.

The study, which was published by digital bank [N26](#) and led by neuroscientist [Dr Jack Lewis](#), put 1,000 participants in Europe and the US through an Implicit Reaction Test (IRT\*). The assessment determined whether stress was high or low across a series of common circumstances. The beauty of the implicit test is that it measures attitudes and beliefs that people may be unwilling or unable to admit.

### **Breaking down the gender differences of stress**

For financially independent women, losing a job (92%) was found to be the most stressful situation. For financially independent men, on the other hand, it's divorce or a break up (90%). Financially-reliant women find missing a mortgage payment (100%) to be the topmost stressful situation, with their male counterparts find having their credit card declined (97%) to be their most stressful scenario.

In the US, for financially independent women, the top three most stressful scenarios were a dead phone (92%), losing keys (92%) and traffic jams (92%). That's compared to overly

expensive restaurants (85%), breaking something (84%), and a dead phone (83%) among financially independent men. Interestingly, the most stress-reducing scenarios for financially independent women were a mixture of financial and non-financial; eating a nice meal (94%), a bonus at work (92%) and paying with cash (87%).

That shifts slightly for financially reliant women in the US, whose top most stress reducing situations were revealed as sales shopping (100%), getting a discount (100%), getting a compliment (100%) and getting a bonus at work (100%). That's compared to financially reliant men, with a nice banking app (100%) topping the list followed by getting a bonus at work (91%), cashback on spending (91%) and getting a pay-rise (91%). For financially independent women there were 14 scenarios that made 100% of those who responded stressed out, which is far higher than women who are financially independent in the US.

In Germany, financially independent men are actually more likely to be stressed out than financially independent women. Although, financially independent German women find it almost twice as stressful (21%) to ask for a pay rise than financially independent men (12%), which may be linked to their financial status.

**Dr Jack Lewis, neuroscientist and author of best-selling book *Sort Your Brain Out*, said:**

“Men and women respond differently to elevated stress, especially when it comes to decision making. High-stress circumstances tend to increase the attractiveness of risky decisions in men. But for women, high stress actually results in a decreased appetite for risky decisions. Sometimes the risky decision is the right choice to make, but only under circumstances where the risks have been carefully considered and the rewards are big enough to warrant any drawbacks associated with failure.

Global data is pretty clear on the fact that, on average, men get paid more than women. This disparity has many causes, of course, but a big part of the story is that men generally feel more comfortable than women when it comes to taking the risk of asking their boss for a raise. Perhaps that's why in some markets, such as Germany, getting a pay rise is almost twice as stressful for women than it is for men.”

**More women are turning to digital banking**

N26's own data shows that in 2020, the digital bank saw growth in its female customer base outpace growth in the male customer base for the second consecutive year and, across all its 24 European markets. The bank's female customer base grew by over 57% in the year, compared to 46.5% for the male customer base. This also led to an increase in the share of female versus male customers across all countries.

**Georg Hauer, General Manager for DACH and Northern Europe at N26**, said: “The pandemic has made it clear that women are juggling an intense amount of responsibilities, and unsurprisingly, have been impacted by high-stress levels, regardless of their financial status. That's why we're on a mission to make banking simpler, more transparent and more flexible, so that it fits more seamlessly into our modern busy lives, and becomes, hopefully, one less thing to worry about.

We're committed to understanding the factors that make people feel financially stressed so that we can help to alleviate them. We also want to help people feel more financially independent and in control of their finances whether that's through setting spending limits, introducing savings goals or simply checking their balance more often.”

To explore the impact of the global pandemic on women, N26 commissioned a study in 2020 to look at the broader issues and disparities that still exist between genders, as well

as workplace achievements, and the factors that drive female independence through its [Female Opportunity Index](#). While there is still much work to be done, the results celebrate the countries that encourage female opportunity and where women are thriving in governmental leadership, management, entrepreneurship and more.

### **Understanding stress to put our mind and our money back in sync**

#### **Dr Jack's top three stress busting tips:**

1. The best thing to do to first tackle this stress is firstly, do more research. Slow down, update your brain and ask yourself: "What did I do last time?"
2. Secondly, make decisions when you're fresh. Before you make that final decision, get your brain in a state that's ready to make calm, rational decisions. Distract yourself by going for a walk in nature, giving your unconscious brain a chance to mull it over, and make the decision on your return.
3. And last, but not least, remember to ask for help if you need it. Whether it's friends, colleagues, neighbours, or anyone in between, the information that can help make your decision the right one is waiting to be found.

**-END-**

#### **Notes to editors**

#### **Top ten most stressful scenarios for women in Germany who are financially independent**

1. Losing a job (98%)
2. Traffic jam (95%)
3. Big arguments (93%)
4. Caught lying (93%)
5. Divorce / break-up (90%)
6. Losing keys (90%)
7. Forgetting bank passwords (88%)
8. Credit card declined (86%)
9. Dentist appointment (86%)
10. Maxed out overdraft (86%)

#### **Top ten most stressful scenarios for men in Germany who are financially independent**

1. Caught lying (96%)
2. Big arguments (91%)
3. Losing keys (91%)
4. Broken boiler (89%)
5. Divorce / break-up (89%)
6. Gaining weight (89%)
7. Losing a job (89%)
8. Breaking something (88%)
9. Forgetting bank passwords (86%)
10. Parental loans (86%)

**\*Methodology (Implicit Reaction Test):** Research partners, Neuroformed and Lumen, designed a research study exploring the differences in relative stress levels between

different financial and non-financial scenarios. Respondents were shown sixty scenarios and asked to associate them as either 'stressful' or 'stress reducing'. The scenarios were equally split as either everyday and financial related scenarios; within each group, they were an equal split of stressful and non-stressful.

### **About N26**

N26 is building the first mobile bank the world loves to use. Valentin Stalf and Maximilian Tayenthal founded N26 in 2013 and launched the initial product in early 2015. Today N26 has more than 5 million customers in 25 markets. The company employs more than 1.500 employees across 5 office locations: Berlin, New York Barcelona, Vienna and São Paulo. With a full European banking license, state-of-the-art technology and no branch network, N26 has redesigned banking for the 21st century and is available on Android, iOS, and desktop. N26 has raised more than \$800 million from the world's most established investors, including Insight Venture Partners, GIC, Tencent, Allianz X, Peter Thiel's Valar Ventures, Li Ka-Shing's Horizons Ventures, Earlybird Venture Capital, Greyhound Capital, Battery Ventures, in addition to members of the Zalando management board, and Redalpine Ventures. N26 currently operates in: Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the US, where it operates via its wholly-owned subsidiary, N26 Inc., based in New York. Banking services in the US are offered by N26 Inc. in partnership with Axos® Bank, Member FDIC.

### **N26 Press Contact**

[press@n26.com](mailto:press@n26.com)