

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **The Results are in: Global Investors and Directors' Response to Climate Change**

Millstein Center & LeaderXXchange Global Climate Survey Reveals Impact of ESG Issues on Investment and Boardroom Decisions

**NEW YORK, October 13, 2020** —Environmental, social, and governance (“ESG”) issues, long considered niche, are now core material concerns of investors and boards of directors alike, according to a survey conducted by the [Ira M. Millstein Center for Global Markets and Corporate Ownership](#) at Columbia Law School and [LeaderXXchange](#)®.

A team of academics from the Millstein Center and experts at LeaderXXchange® surveyed more than 130 investors and directors in Europe and North America to understand whether and how institutional investors and board directors incorporate climate-related issues in their investment decision making and their oversight responsibilities.

More than 60% of directors and 70% of investors surveyed indicated that climate risk is already impacting their business today. Other key findings, detailed below, reveal not only that both groups find ESG issues to be material, but that there are certain demographic and regional differences within each group’s views. For additional information, see the full report on the survey findings [here](#) and the executive summary [here](#).

Eric Talley, the Isidor and Seville Sulzbacher Professor of Law at Columbia Law School and co-director of the Millstein Center, stressed the importance of gathering evidence to understand how the global business community is taking climate change into account. “Corporations are being urged by commentators and policy makers alike to serve the interests of all of their stakeholders (not just shareholders), and climate has been an important part of that conversation. We hope that this survey will serve as an important start to understanding how investors and directors are responding to that pressure and the business impacts of climate change.”

Sophie L’Helias, President of LeaderXXchange®, said “We are delighted to have partnered with Columbia Law School’s Millstein Center to jointly conduct a first of its kind global survey on climate risk that breaks silos separating investors and board directors. By identifying gaps to close, we hope to achieve meaningful impact and contribute to building a bridge of shared knowledge on a critical topic for investors and companies alike.”

Looking ahead, Professor Talley noted that the Millstein Center and LeaderXXchange® hope to continue studying the evolving views of directors and investors on climate and related issues. “Particularly in light of the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic across the globe,” he said, “it will be illuminating to see how the business community’s strategy around ESG adapts.”

### **Selected Key Findings**

- **Investors and directors believe climate change issues are material.**
  - More than 60% of directors and 70% of investors indicated that climate risk is already impacting their businesses today.

- 75% of respondents believe they hold an ethical obligation to incorporate climate risk into their strategy.
- **Investors and directors view climate disclosure as a significant deciding factor.**
  - A majority of both groups indicated they view climate disclosure and financial reporting as equally important.
- **Investors in Europe appear more interested in climate-related issues.**
  - 88% of European investors think that climate risk reporting is at least equally as important as financial reporting; only 67% of North American investors agree.

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### **Further Information**

For further information, you may contact Sophie L'Hélias at LeaderXXchange ([info@leaderxxchange.com](mailto:info@leaderxxchange.com)) or Brea Hinricks at the Millstein Center ([millsteincenter@law.columbia.edu](mailto:millsteincenter@law.columbia.edu)).

The full report is available [here](#), and the executive summary is available [here](#).

### **Note to Editors**

The survey was conducted over a period of three months in Summer 2019, during which the Millstein Center and LeaderXXchange<sup>®</sup> each contacted relevant organizations within their networks, via personal contacts, organizational events, and directed social media postings, to help disseminate the survey to directors and investors globally. Both organizations also invited individual investors and directors within their networks to anonymously complete the survey. Most respondents were based in Europe and North America. There were more than 130 respondents: approximately 40% directors and 60% investors. A high level of disclosure by respondents provided excellent demographic insights: over 90% of respondents shared their age and gender. The survey responses also exhibited near gender parity with 53% female respondents, as well as a broad age distribution with 19% of respondents under 35 years of age, 34% of respondents between 35-50 years of age, 33% of respondents between 50-65 years of age, and 11% older than 65 years of age.

### **About the Millstein Center**

Building on Columbia Law School's longstanding strength in corporate and securities law, the Millstein Center operates at the forefront of new thinking about how corporations are governed. The center engages with business leaders and board directors to create meaningful dialogue about the challenges companies face, and serves as a focal point for the most innovative research into the policy solutions required to tackle those challenges.

### **About LeaderXXchange<sup>®</sup>**

LeaderXXchange<sup>®</sup> is a purpose-driven organization that advises and promotes diversity and sustainability in governance, leadership & investment. An advisory firm recognized for its innovative and award-winning ESG solutions for investors and companies, LeaderXXchange also partners with organizations to engage investors, directors or management to develop thought leadership.