ICGN Press Release
15 October 2019

Sophie L’Hélias Receives Prestigious ICGN Lifetime Achievement Award

Today, the International Corporate Governance Network (ICGN) presented the prestigious ICGN Life-time Achievement Award (“the Award”) to Sophie L’Hélias in honour of her long-standing commitment to raising corporate governance standards across the globe. The announcement was made at ICGN’s Conference in Miami, hosted by Florida State Board of Administration, where 200 investors and business leaders convened to discuss future governance priorities.

Candidates for the Award are nominated by ICGN Members who are based in 47 countries and include investors representing assets under management in excess of US $34 trillion. The Award recognises individuals who have dedicated their life to improving corporate governance and who have demonstrated determination and resilience in overcoming barriers to achieve reforms.

A Founding ICGN Member, Ms L’Hélias has been at the forefront of corporate governance reform for over two decades. Her achievements include the establishment of the LeaderXXchange, an award-winning search engine dedicated to gender diversity in leadership. Ms L’Hélias also serves on the board of two asset management firms and is a lead independent director of Kering, a publicly traded company.

In receiving the award Ms L’Hélias said: “It is an immense honour to receive the ICGN Lifetime Achievement Award and follow in the footsteps of some the world’s most recognized leaders in corporate governance. The common threads of my work as an investor, board member and entrepreneur are integrity, purpose and inclusivity. The power of ideas, information and innovation is compounded when they are shared. That’s what drove us to co-found the ICGN. It remains true to its mission as a vital resource for investors and companies to step-up and address the critical global challenges of today.”

Ms L’Hélias was nominated by three ICGN Members: Dr Stephen Davis (Senior Fellow at Harvard Law School), Anne Simpson (Investment Director, Global Governance, CalPERS) and Nell Minow (Vice Chair, Value Edge).

Dr Davis said “Sophie L’Hélias has been among the preeminent thought leaders and architects of modern corporate governance for more than 25 years. She started in the early 1990s as head of a pioneering shareholder group. It would be difficult to overstate how innovative her thinking was at the time, and how hard it was to stand up then to a corporate order unused to challenge. Yet she showed courageous advocacy of advanced standards of transparency and accountability. She was among the founders of the ICGN itself, and she has played a vital, strategic role in guiding corporate governance evolution in Europe, North America, and Africa”

Ms Simpson said “Sophie L’Hélias is a visionary leader in the global corporate governance movement. In another age, she would be considered a Renaissance woman. She crosses cultural boundaries with ease, as a bi-lingual polymath, qualified in law both in France and North America, who has mastered exacting financial disciplines, and moved from the
Nell Minow said “Sophie’s patience and persistence, the sophistication and creativity of her strategic initiatives, her diplomacy in bringing together coalitions and creating consensus, and her impeccable integrity make her one of the leading figures globally in promoting excellence in governance.”

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EDITOR’S NOTES

About International Corporate Governance Network

Established in 1995, the International Corporate Governance Network (ICGN) is led by investors responsible for assets under management in excess of $US 34 trillion, ICGN is a leading authority on global standards of corporate governance and investor stewardship. We promote high standards of professional practice among investors and companies alike in their mutual pursuit of long-term value creation contributing to sustainable economies worldwide. www.icgn.org.

Sophie L’Helias Biography

Sophie L’Helias began her career as an M&A attorney in New York and Paris. An expert in international governance, Sophie is also a co-founder of the ICGN. Sophie currently serves and Lead Independent Director of Kering, a global luxury group that includes Gucci, Saint Laurent, Balenciaga and Alexander McQueen, where she also chairs the Compensation committee and is a member of the Audit committee. She serves as independent director of Africa50, the infrastructure investment arm of the African Development Bank where she serves on the Governance and Strategy committees, and on the board of Echiquier Positive Impact an SRI fund investing in companies that show a positive impact according to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

Sophie is currently Senior Fellow at the Conference Board’s Governance Center in New York, an International Advisory Board member of the Hawkamah Governance Institute in Dubai. She also served as an Advisor to the UN Global Compact’s Blueprint for SDG Leadership.

Sophie holds an MBA from INSEAD, an LLM from the University of Pennsylvania Law School, a Master of Laws from the University of Pantheon-Sorbonne, and after studies at the European Law Institute of the University of Saarbrücken in Germany.

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