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Press release

**AXIAN Group and ESCP Business School Award Co-Chair Roles
to Advance Responsible Innovation in Africa**

Pan-African conglomerate AXIAN and ESCP Business School have awarded co-chair roles to Professors **Nathalie Prime and Caroline Verzat** for the ESCP Chair of Responsible Innovation in Africa. Both positions are for an initial five-year term.

The co-chairs will work to bolster Africa's transition to a more sustainable future, and to help align labour-market skills and knowledge with the required human-capital standards to aid and steer the continent's social and environmental change.

The co-chairs will have the following objectives:

- Create a master's degree to educate young, promising Africans and Master in Management students on ethical innovation in Africa.
- Give businesses and students the opportunity to build successful careers in Africa.
- Support African students to join this programme via a system of grants and scholarships.
- Power advances in research and collate a body of expertise on ethical innovation in Africa.

*"We are contributing, by way of this chair, to Africa's evolution towards a sustainable future and nurturing the skills and values that are most crucial to this transformation," said **Professor Frank BOURNOIS, Dean of ESCP**. "This initiative echoes ESCP's mission: to educate ethical and open-minded leaders that understand social impact."*

*"AXIAN is a pan-African infrastructures and services conglomerate whose growth revolves around inclusion, collaboration and the sharing of expertise. As such, we are proud to support the ESCP Chair of Responsible Innovation in Africa. Its mandate is as exciting as it is crucial: to create bridges between Europe and Africa and inspire collaboration in the spirit of reciprocity, respect and trust, to amplify the voices of a new generation of Africans," said **AXIAN Group CEO Hassanein HIRIDJEE (ESCP 97), voted African CEO of the Year during the Africa CEO Forum 2022**.*

Professors Nathalie PRIME and Caroline VERZAT stated, “the stakes being addressed with the creation of this chair are of great importance: Africa is rich in natural resources, youthful potential (over 700 million young Africans are less than 25 years old as of 2022), digital opportunities and cultural diversity.

“Africa’s development will accelerate through regional integration, but only if it succeeds in creating local value chains and redefining relations between all 54 African countries and the rest of the world—particularly Europe.”

“By working together to educate young and promising prospects from Africa and the rest of the world, we aim to address challenges that only ethical innovation (at an institutional, social, economic, organisational and managerial level) can resolve while balancing economic growth with socio-economic and environmental justice. Young people, women, members of diasporas, public-private partnerships, African champions or even informal entrepreneurs are stakeholders in their own right that must be given support so as to allow all digital innovators, whether economic or social, that are attuned to Africa’s context, can be heard and appreciated on their merits.”

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ABOUT ESCP BUSINESS SCHOOL

Founded in 1819, ESCP Business School has chosen to pass on ethical and open-minded leadership that embraces European multiculturalism. Our campuses in Berlin, London, Madrid, Paris, Turin and Warsaw are really platforms that give students a full opportunity to evaluate this European approach to management on its merits.

Many generations of entrepreneurs and leaders have since been educated with the belief that the business world can augment society-at-large in a positive light.

This belief and our values—excellence, focus, creativity and multiplicity—guide our mission day-by-day and come to life through an approach to education that leverages them all.

ESCP welcomes over 9,000 students each year and over 5,000 managers and executives from over 130 different countries. Its greatest strength lies in its myriad of programs in both general and specialized management: Bachelor, Master, MBA, Executive MBA, Ph.D and continuing education; all of which are enhanced by a multi-campus experience.

It all starts here

Website: www.escp.eu / follow us on twitter: @ESCP_BS

ABOUT AXIAN

AXIAN is a pan African group that operates in ten countries and specializes in five industries with high growth potential; namely telecoms, financial services, real estate, energy and open innovation.

AXIAN is an engaged partner in the socio-economic growth of the countries where it operates. With over 6,000 daring and passionate staff, the group systematically ensures that its products and services have a positive and sustainable impact on the day-to-day lives of millions of Africans.

The AXIAN Group is a signatory of the United Nations’ Global Compact initiative and committed to the integration of its 10 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) into group strategy, policies and operations.

Find out more about AXIAN: www.axian-group.com