

Preface by Angel Gurría

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Public trust in the financial sector is crucial for market economies. Yet, ten years after the crisis, and in spite of significant reforms, trust in financial institutions in OECD countries remains low. According to the *2019 Edelman Trust Barometer: Financial Services Report*, although the levels of trust in the sector among the general population have improved slightly, financial services remains the least-trusted sector measured by the barometer, with levels of trust of 57%. This needs to change.

Financial systems are made of trust. Their strength stems from public confidence. This is why ethics in financial institutions are vital. This is why we need to reflect and debate about ways to make this sector more reliable, more accountable, more transparent, more inclusive. And this is why efforts like the “*Ethics & Trust in Finance*” *Global Prize*, now in its 7th edition, published by Observatoire de la Finance are so important.

Building trust in finance and financial institutions is critical to the OECD’s mission and work. The OECD is helping governments to strengthen their financial regulations; promote competition within their financial systems; increase the transparency and integrity of financial institutions; and connect financial services to environmental priorities. We are also working with financial authorities to develop policies to promote financial literacy and more effective financial consumer protection. Moreover, our work on Automatic Exchange of Information (AEOI) and on Base Erosion and Profit Shifting (BEPS) is helping to build a fairer, more transparent and reliable global financial system.

We also work on a broader spectrum to help promote ethics and integrity in the business sector. We are helping to improve corporate governance and prevent corporate misconduct, including in the financial sector. Thus, the OECD and the G20 partnered to revise and upgrade the *G20/OECD Principles of Corporate Governance*, which provide globally-recognised standards on transparency, accountability and business integrity.

We are also home to the *OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises*, the first international corporate responsibility instrument to include risk-based due diligence. In this context, we have provided due diligence guidance to support enterprises in implementing our global standard for Responsible Business Conduct. In addition, in October 2019, the OECD released a *Guidance for Responsible Business Conduct in General Corporate Lending and Underwriting Transactions*, which sets out the first broadly recognised environmental and social standards for corporate lending and

underwriting transactions. The Guidance was developed in close consultation with leading global banks and approved by 48 governments - a clear and concrete example of constructive collective action to strengthen ethics and trust in finance. Likewise, we are also helping the finance sector implement OECD global standards against tax evasion and avoidance, as well as combat transnational bribery and corruption through the *OECD Anti-Bribery Convention*.

Our newly launched *Trust in Business Initiative* brings public and private sector leaders together to encourage good corporate conduct, examine market incentives for business decision-making, and respond to society's expectations in meeting current and future challenges. The OECD also recently created the *Business for Inclusive Growth (B4IG) Platform*, to unite governments and businesses behind a broad-based, sustainable growth agenda that places social and environmental returns at the same level as financial returns. Taken together, these efforts play a powerful role in supporting a level playing field.

I very much hope that this collection of essays will stimulate our imagination and enrich the debate on how to strengthen the ethical behaviour and the integrity of the financial sector. I want to congratulate all the finalists of the Ethics & Trust in Finance Prize for their ground-breaking works, their new ideas and their faith in more responsible and trusted financial sectors.

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