

ELFA Creates AI Committee and Appoints Three New Co-Chairs

**Mikko Iso-Kulmala appointed new Co-Chair of ELFA Private Debt Investor Committee;
Joe Alston and Ashwant Bihal appointed inaugural Co-Chairs of ELFA AI Committee**

January 31st 2024, London: The European Leveraged Finance Association (ELFA) is pleased to announce the creation of a new AI Committee that will focus on members' perspectives and experiences of AI. The AI Committee will be co-chaired by Joe Alston of AlbaCore Capital and Ashwant Bihal from HPS Investment Partners who will work with members and stakeholders to better understand the issues, opportunities and trends relating to AI in asset management.

As with the other seven ELFA committees, ELFA will communicate to the leveraged finance market through the ELFA Insights Series and workshops, with a focus on how AI is impacting market participants, and how it can enhance transparency and disclosure across the leveraged finance markets.

ELFA also welcomes the appointment of Mikko Iso-Kulmala from Fidelity International as the new Co-Chair of the Private Debt Investor Committee (PDIC), taking over from Kirsten Bode of Muzinich & Co., one of the founding Co-Chairs of the committee.

Mikko Iso-Kulmala is Head of Private Credit Solutions at Fidelity International. He joined Fidelity in early 2022 having previously worked at Barings (formerly known as Babson Capital) where he was responsible for strategic and investment business management across the credit platform, as well as Client Portfolio Manager for leveraged credit. Prior to Barings, he worked at J.P. Morgan Asset Management as a Client Portfolio Manager for Global Multi-Asset Group. Whilst at J.P. Morgan Asset Management, Mikko passed the New York Bar Exam.

Joe Alston is a Director and Deputy Portfolio Manager at AlbaCore Capital Group. He has 9 years of experience in sub-investment grade credit. Prior to AlbaCore, he was at Voya Investment Management, a listed US firm with \$460bn AUM and a leading CLO issuer globally. He started his career at Janus Henderson in the Performance Analytics team. Joe holds an M.Sc. in Finance and a BA(hons) in Accountancy and Finance from Lancaster University Management School.

Ashwant Bihal is a Managing Director at HPS Investment Partners and is Global Head of the Risk & Quant Strats (RQS) Team. Prior to joining HPS in 2017, Mr. Bihal held various roles at BlueMountain Capital, including Lead Risk Manager for the Multi-Asset Private Capital and Opportunistic Investment Business, Credit Index Option Trader and Senior Market & Credit Risk Manager. Prior to that, Mr. Bihal worked as a Portfolio Manager at two Hedge Funds, D.B. Zwirn (UK) Limited and CQS. Mr. Bihal began his career as an Analyst at Deutsche Bank. Mr. Bihal holds a MSc, with distinction, in Mathematical Trading and Finance from CASS Business School and BSc with Honors in Mathematics and Computer Science from University College London (UCL).

Sabrina Fox, CEO at ELFA commented: "I am excited about our new AI Committee and working the new Co-Chairs, Joe Alston and Ash Bihal, who will lead ELFA's work to better understand the implications for asset management of the growth of AI in the leveraged finance market. I also want to thank Kirsten Bode, one of the founding Co-Chairs of the Private Debt Investor Committee, for her significant contribution and dedication to ELFA. I welcome Mikko Iso-Kulmala as its new Co-Chair and look forward to working with him as the committee guides members through the challenges and opportunities arising in the private credit market in 2024 and beyond."

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About ELFA

ELFA is a trade association comprised of European leveraged finance investors from over 60 institutional fixed income managers, including investment advisers, insurance companies, and pension funds. ELFA seeks to support the growth and resilience of the leveraged finance market while acting as the voice of its investor community by promoting transparency and facilitating engagement among European leveraged finance market participants. For more information, please visit ELFA's website: www.elfainvestors.com.

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