Governance in Brief

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Microsoft to buy Activision Blizzard for nearly USD 70 billion

Microsoft has announced plans to acquire Activision Blizzard in a USD 68.7 billion all-cash transaction. The deal, which is pending approval from regulators and Activision Blizzard shareholders, is expected to be completed in FY2023. The deal will turn Microsoft, which has recently acquired a string of increasingly sizeable video game producers, into the world's third-largest gaming company by revenue. Activision Blizzard CEO Bobby Kotick will continue to head the game developer for the time being, but is expected to leave the company with a potential USD 292.9 million golden parachute once the acquisition is finalized. Both employees and shareholders have recently called for Kotick to resign following his alleged failure to prevent and later address a toxic workplace culture hallmarked by sexual harassment and gender discrimination complaints from female employees. Analysts have highlighted the challenge of Microsoft, a company with an "extraordinary high" employee satisfaction rating, successfully tackling these lingering cultural issues as it assimilates Activision Blizzard's workforce.

Microsoft | Yahoo | Forbes | The Wrap | Reuters | SEC | Washington Post | PC Gamer | Guardian |

Credit Suisse Chair resigns after breaking C-19 quarantine

António Horta-Osório has resigned as the Chairman of Credit Suisse, reportedly due to having broken COVID-19 guarantine rules. Axel Lehmann has taken over the bank's chairmanship with immediate effect. Horta-Osório was appointed board Chair in May 2021, as the Swiss bank emerged from significant losses from the collapse of hedge fund Archegos Capital Management and supply chain finance company Greensill Capital in 2021, as well as the 2020 resignation of a former CEO amid an espionage scandal. Credit Suisse | BBC | CNN |

Shareholders urge Unilever to increase share of healthy products

A group of investors with a combined USD 215 billion in assets have filed a proposal ahead of Unilever's 2022 AGM requesting that the firm disclose and significantly increase by 2030 the proportion of its sales coming from healthy foods. The resolution is backed by UK-based responsible investment charity Share Action. Recently, hedge fund manager Terry Smith criticized Unilever for pursuing sustainability credentials "at the expense of...fundamentals" as well as its failed bid for GSK's consumer business, which he describes as a "near-death experience.".

Share Action | FN London | Yahoo | City AM |

SEC proposes tighter disclosure rules for hedge funds

The U.S. SEC is proposing tightening the rules under which hedge funds disclose purchases and sales of securities. Specifically, the agency would shorten the current 10-day disclosure deadline when crossing the 5% ownership threshold in a public company. SEC Chair Gary Gensler has expressed concern over the possibility for funds to amass significant positions within this window, leading to information asymmetry and sudden price movements once the acquisition is disclosed. The change is part of a broader suite of policy updates aimed at hedge funds and private equity. CNBC | Yahoo | Frank Nez | Nasdaq | WSJ |

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