



VIA Outlets appoints first Group Sustainability Director and steps up its pan-European ESG strategy

23 November, 2020 - VIA Outlets - Europe's fastest growing owner-operator of premium fashion outlet destinations - is pleased to announce the appointment of Geert Paemen as Group Sustainability Director as part of its growing ESG strategy. The newly-created senior management position is designed to oversee and develop the business' sustainability strategy across its business operations and eleven outlet centres in Europe.

Geert Paemen joins VIA Outlets after six years at Telefonica where she held the position of Global Director for Sustainability, designing the group's Responsible Business strategy and leading the implementation of a wide range of ESG projects. She led an ambitious environmental and climate change strategy, a global responsible supply chain and human rights framework and a proactive investor and stakeholder engagement strategy - achieving leadership positions for Telefonica in the relevant sustainability rankings and indexes. Prior to this, she worked as Head of Strategy at the Telefonica Foundation and a lawyer at various international law firms. She holds a law degree from KU Leuven, a Master of European Law from the College of Europe and an MBA from the University of Chicago Booth School of Business.

Geert Paemen commented: "I am thrilled to be joining a business like VIA Outlets, which not only takes sustainability seriously, but puts it at the heart of everything it does. I look forward to bringing years' worth of experience in the sustainability field into this new role as we look at how we can further improve VIA's ESG strategy across all operations."

Otto Ambagtsheer, Chief Executive Officer, added: "The appointment of Geert strengthens VIA Outlets' commitment to sustainability and social responsibility and is part of an ongoing strategy to reduce our carbon footprint and ensure we as a business are fit for the future. Geert's experience in the field will help us stay at the top of the game at this critical point for the climate."

VIA Outlets' sustainability strategy is focussed on four main pillars: *Sustainable Buildings, Resilient Communities, Conscious Consumers* and *Engaged Stakeholders*.



- In recognition of the fact that 40 percent of global energy consumption is related to buildings and construction, VIA Outlets works towards creating *Sustainable Buildings*, which means it measures its environmental footprint, implements resource consumption reduction targets and works continuously on improving its Breeam certifications across all its centres. This work is important across its entire value chain, as indicated by its green lease clauses, tenant fit-out guides and sustainable supply chain standards.
- Under *Resilient Communities*, VIA Outlets focusses on creating a resilient environment for its stakeholders, in particular its employees and guests, through exhaustive health, safety and wellbeing standards and working towards making our centres more accessible.
- The *Conscious Consumers* pillar refers to VIA Outlets' commitment to responsible consumption in the outlet environment. The issue is a driver for its activity in the centres and in its brand relationships.
- Lastly, the *Engaged Stakeholders* pillar recognises the importance of communicating and engaging with stakeholders on sustainability issues, both at group and at centre level. This involves training and communication initiatives, brand engagement and the support and collaboration of local partners that allow VIA Outlets to contribute to its communities from a social and environmental perspective.

VIA Outlets is well on its way to achieving its 2020 sustainability goals, which include energy and water reduction and recycling improvement targets of four percent like-for-like, developing Sustainable Specification and Procurement Guidelines for all construction projects, putting together an Action Plan to improve the Health and Wellbeing of all brand partners and employees and continuing its climate change risk analysis, with the goal of mitigating its impact and adapting to a changing environment.

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