

digit returns must suffice -shareholder lobby

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FRANKFURT, Jan 16 (Reuters) - Corporate executives and investors should be satisfied with single-digit returns, a lobby group representing more than 4,000 private shareholders in Germany said.

The association of ethical shareholders, in existence for more than 20 years and authorised to vote on behalf of its members at companies' annual general meetings, called on the corporate sector to care more about the common good. In a statement on Friday it said the financial market crisis was a reason to focus on corporate responsibility and proposed three "rules":

- Be an honourable merchant, not a gambler. Executives and investors should once more be satisfied with single-digit percentage returns.
- Look to the common good. Responsible corporate action must focus more on stakeholder value than has been the case until now.
- Commit yourself to abide by the rules. Corporate responsibility must be anchored in law. Whoever breaks the rules will be brought to justice.

(Reporting by Peter Starck)