

APOLLO INVESTMENT CORP

Form 10-K

May 26, 2010

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**UNITED STATES**  
**SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION**

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20549

**FORM 10-K**

x **ANNUAL REPORT PURSUANT TO SECTION 13 OR 15(d) OF THE SECURITIES EXCHANGE ACT  
OF 1934**  
FOR THE FISCAL YEAR ENDED MARCH 31, 2010

OR

.. **TRANSITION REPORT PURSUANT TO SECTION 13 OR 15(d) OF THE SECURITIES EXCHANGE  
ACT OF 1934**  
FOR THE TRANSITION PERIOD FROM            TO

COMMISSION FILE NUMBER: 814-00646

**APOLLO INVESTMENT CORPORATION**

(Exact name of registrant as specified in its charter)

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**Maryland**  
(State of Incorporation)

**52-2439556**  
(I.R.S. Employer Identification Number)

**9 West 57th Street**

**New York, N.Y.**  
(Address of principal executive offices)

**10019**  
(Zip Code)

**Registrant's telephone number, including area code: (212) 515-3450**

**Securities registered pursuant to Section 12(b) of the Act:**

<b>Title of Each Class</b>	<b>Name of Each Exchange on Which Registered</b>
<b>Common Stock, par value</b>	<b>The NASDAQ Global Select Market</b>

**\$0.001 per share**

**Securities registered pursuant to Section 12(g) of the Act: None**

Indicate by check mark if the registrant is a well-known seasoned issuer, as defined in Rule 405 of the Securities Act. Yes  No

Indicate by check mark if the registrant is not required to file reports pursuant to Section 13 or Section 15(d) of the Act. Yes  No

Indicate by check mark whether the Registrant (1) has filed all reports required to be filed by Section 13 or 15(d) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 during the preceding 12 months (or for such shorter period that the Registrant was required to file such reports), and (2) has been subject to such filing requirements for the past 90 days. Yes  No

Indicate by check mark whether the registrant has submitted electronically and posted on its corporate Web site, if any, every Interactive Data File required to be submitted and posted pursuant to Rule 405 of Regulation S-T during the preceding 12 months (or for such shorter period that the registrant was required to submit and post such files). Yes  No

Indicate by check mark if disclosure of delinquent filers pursuant to Item 405 of Regulation S-K is not contained herein, and will not be contained, to the best of Registrant's knowledge, in definitive proxy or information statements incorporated by reference in Part III of this Form 10-K or any amendment to this Form 10-K.

Indicate by check mark whether the registrant is a large accelerated filer, an accelerated filer, a non-accelerated filer, or a smaller reporting company. See the definitions of "large accelerated filer," "accelerated filer" and "smaller reporting company" in Rule 12b-2 of the Exchange Act.

Large accelerated filer  Accelerated filer  Non-accelerated filer  Smaller Reporting Company   
Indicate by check mark whether the registrant is a shell company (as defined in Rule 12b-2 of the Act) Yes  No

The aggregate market value of common stock held by non-affiliates of the Registrant on September 30, 2009 based on the closing price on that date of \$9.55 on the NASDAQ Global Select Market was approximately \$1.6 billion. For the purposes of calculating this amount only, all directors and executive officers of the Registrant have been treated as affiliates. There were 193,844,627 shares of the Registrant's common stock outstanding as of May 26, 2010.

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Portions of the registrant's Proxy Statement for its 2010 Annual Meeting of Stockholders to be filed not later than 120 days after the end of the fiscal year covered by this Annual Report on Form 10-K are incorporated by reference into Part III of this Form 10-K.

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**APOLLO INVESTMENT CORPORATION**

**FORM 10-K**

**FOR THE FISCAL YEAR ENDED MARCH 31, 2010**

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**PART I**

**Item 1. Business**

**Apollo Investment Corporation**

Apollo Investment Corporation ( Apollo Investment , the Company or we ), a Maryland corporation organized on February 2, 2004, is a closed-end, externally managed, non-diversified management investment company that has elected to be treated as a business development company ( BDC ) under the Investment Company Act of 1940 (the 1940 Act ). In addition, for tax purposes we have elected to be treated as a regulated investment company ( RIC ), under the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended (the Code ).

Our investment objective is to generate both current income and capital appreciation through debt and equity investments. We invest primarily in middle-market companies in the form of mezzanine and senior secured loans, as well as by making equity investments. From time to time, we may also invest in the securities of public companies.

Our portfolio is comprised primarily of investments in long-term subordinated debt, referred to as mezzanine debt, and senior secured loans of private middle-market companies, and from time to time includes equity interests such as common stock, preferred stock, warrants or options. In this Form 10-K, we use the term middle-market to refer to companies with annual revenues between \$50 million and \$2 billion. While our primary focus is to generate both current income and capital appreciation through investments in U.S. senior and subordinated loans, other debt securities and private equity, we may also invest a portion of the portfolio in opportunistic investments, including foreign securities.

Apollo Investment Management, L.P. ( AIM ) is the investment adviser for the Company and an affiliate of Apollo Global Management, LLC, and its consolidated subsidiaries ( AGM ). AGM and other affiliates manage other funds that may have investment mandates that are similar, in whole or in part, with ours. AIM and its affiliates may determine that an investment is appropriate both for us and for one or more of those other funds. In such event, depending on the availability of such investment and other appropriate factors, AIM may determine that we should invest on a side-by-side basis with one or more other funds. We may make all such investments subject to compliance with applicable regulations and interpretations, and our allocation procedures. In certain circumstances negotiated co-investments may be made only if we receive an order from the SEC permitting us to do so. There can be no assurance that any such order will be obtained.

During our fiscal year ended March 31, 2010, we invested \$716 million across 5 new and 24 existing portfolio companies, primarily through opportunistic secondary market purchases. This compares to investing \$435 million in 12 new and 13 existing portfolio companies for the previous fiscal year ended March 31, 2009. Investments sold or prepaid during the fiscal year ended March 31, 2010 totaled \$452 million versus \$340 million for the fiscal year ended March 31, 2009. The weighted average yields on our senior secured loan portfolio, subordinated debt portfolio and total debt portfolio as of March 31, 2010 at our current cost basis were 8.5%, 13.5% and 11.8%, respectively. At March 31, 2009, the yields were 8.2%, 13.2%, and 11.7%, respectively.

Our targeted investment size typically ranges between \$20 million and \$250 million, although this investment size may vary proportionately as the size of our available capital base changes. At March 31, 2010, our net portfolio consisted of 67 portfolio companies and was invested 30% in senior secured loans, 59% in subordinated debt, 1% in preferred equity and 10% in common equity and warrants measured at fair value versus 72 portfolio companies invested 26% in senior secured loans, 58% in subordinated debt, 5% in preferred equity and 11% in common equity and warrants at March 31, 2009.

Since the initial public offering of Apollo Investment in April 2004 and through March 31, 2010, invested capital totaled \$6.3 billion in 128 portfolio companies. Over the same period, Apollo Investment completed transactions with more than 85 different financial sponsors.

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At March 31, 2010, 64% or \$1.6 billion of our income-bearing investment portfolio is fixed rate debt and 36% or \$0.9 billion is floating rate debt, measured at fair value. On a cost basis, 65% or \$1.8 billion of our income-bearing investment portfolio is fixed rate debt and 35% or \$1.0 billion is floating rate debt. At March 31, 2009, 70% or \$1.5 billion of our income-bearing investment portfolio was fixed rate debt and 30% or \$0.7 billion was floating rate debt. On a cost basis, 66% or \$2.0 billion of our income-bearing investment portfolio is fixed rate debt and 34% or \$1.0 billion is floating rate debt.

### **Apollo Investment Management, L.P.**

AIM, our investment adviser, is led by a dedicated team of investment professionals. The investment committee of AIM currently consists of John J. Hannan, the Chairman of our board of directors; James C. Zelter, our Chief Executive Officer and a Vice President of the general partner of AIM; Patrick J. Dalton, President and Chief Operating Officer of Apollo Investment and a Vice President and the Chief Investment Officer of the general partner of AIM; Rajay Bagaria, a Partner of AIM; and Justin Sendak, a Partner of AIM. The composition of the investment committee of AIM may change from time to time. AIM draws upon AGM's 20 year history and benefits from the broader firm's significant capital markets, trading and research expertise developed through investments in many core sectors in over 150 companies since inception.

### **Apollo Investment Administration**

In addition to furnishing us with office facilities, equipment, and clerical, bookkeeping and record keeping services, Apollo Investment Administration, LLC ( AIA or Apollo Administration ) also oversees our financial records as well as prepares our reports to stockholders and reports filed with the SEC. AIA also performs and oversees the determination and publication of our net asset value, oversees the preparation and filing of our tax returns, the payment of our expenses and the performance of various third-party service providers. Furthermore, AIA provides on our behalf managerial assistance to those portfolio companies to which we are required to provide such assistance.

### **Operating and Regulatory Structure**

Our investment activities are managed by AIM and supervised by our board of directors, a majority of whom are independent of Apollo and its affiliates. AIM is an investment adviser that is registered under the Investment Advisers Act of 1940. Under our investment advisory and management agreement, we pay AIM an annual base management fee based on our average gross assets as well as an incentive fee.

As a business development company, we are required to comply with certain regulatory requirements. Also, while we are permitted to finance investments using debt, our ability to use debt is limited in certain significant respects (see Item 1A Risk Factors). We have elected to be treated for federal income tax purposes as a RIC under Subchapter M of the Code.

### **Investments**

Apollo Investment seeks to create a portfolio that includes primarily debt investments in mezzanine and senior secured loans and, to a lesser extent, private equity investments by generally investing, on an individual portfolio company basis, approximately \$20 million to \$250 million of capital, on average, in these securities of middle-market companies. The average investment size will vary as the size of our capital base varies. Our target portfolio will generally be more heavily weighted toward mezzanine loans. Structurally, mezzanine loans usually rank subordinate in priority of payment to senior debt, such as senior bank debt, and are often unsecured. As such, other creditors may rank senior to us in the event of an insolvency. However, mezzanine loans rank senior to common and preferred equity in a borrower's capital structure. Mezzanine loans may have a fixed or floating interest rate. Additional upside can be generated from upfront fees, call protection including call premiums, equity co-investments or warrants. We believe that mezzanine loans offer an attractive investment opportunity based upon their historic returns. Additionally, we may acquire investments in the secondary market if we believe the risk-adjusted returns are attractive.

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Our principal focus is to provide capital to middle-market companies in a variety of industries. We generally seek to target companies that generate positive free cash flows.

The following is a representative list of the industries in which we have invested:

Building materials	Education	Lodging/Leisure/Resorts
Business services	Energy/Utilities	Manufacturing/Basic industry
Cable television	Environmental services	Media
Chemicals	Financial services	Packaging
Communications	Food	Printing and publishing
Consumer products	Government services	Restaurants
Distribution	Healthcare	Transportation

We may also invest in other industries if we are presented with attractive opportunities.

In an effort to increase our returns and the number of loans that we can make, we may in the future seek to securitize our loans. To securitize loans, we may create a wholly owned subsidiary and contribute a pool of loans to the subsidiary. We may sell interests in the subsidiary on a non-recourse basis to purchasers whom we would expect to be willing to accept a lower interest rate to invest in investment-grade loan pools. We may use the proceeds of such sales to pay down bank debt or to fund additional investments. We may also invest through special purpose entities or other arrangements, including total return swaps and repurchase agreements, in order to obtain non-recourse financing or for other purposes.

We may invest, to the extent permitted by law, in the securities and instruments of other investment companies, including private funds. We may also co-invest on a concurrent basis with affiliates of Apollo Investment, subject to compliance with applicable regulations and our allocation procedures. Certain types of negotiated co-investments may be made only if we receive an order from the SEC permitting us to do so. There can be no assurance that any such order will be obtained.

At March 31, 2010, our net portfolio consisted of 67 portfolio companies and was invested 30% in senior secured loans, 59% in subordinated debt, 1% in preferred equity and 10% in common equity and warrants measured at fair value. We expect that our portfolio will continue to include primarily mezzanine and senior secured loans as well as, to a lesser extent, equity-related securities. In addition, we also expect to invest a portion of our portfolio in opportunistic investments, which are not our primary focus, but are intended to enhance our risk-adjusted returns to stockholders. These investments may include, but are not limited to, securities of public companies and debt and equity securities of companies located outside of the United States.

While our primary focus is to generate both current income and capital appreciation through investments in U.S. senior and subordinated loans, other debt securities and private equity, we may also invest a portion of the portfolio in opportunistic investments, including foreign securities.

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Listed below are our top ten portfolio companies and industries represented as a percentage of total assets for the years ended March 31, 2010 and 2009:

**TOP TEN PORTFOLIO COMPANIES AND INDUSTRIES AS OF MARCH 31, 2010**

<b>PORTFOLIO COMPANY</b>	<b>% of Total Assets</b>	<b>INDUSTRY</b>	<b>% of Total Assets</b>
Asurion Corporation	4.3%	Education	8.3%
Ranpak Corporation	4.2%	Healthcare	5.6%
BNY ConvergEx Group, LLC	3.7%	Insurance	5.2%
First Data Corporation	3.0%	Business Services	5.0%
TL Acquisitions, Inc. (Thomson Learning)	2.6%	Diversified Service	4.9%
MEG Energy Corp.	2.5%	Retail	4.6%
Ceridian Corp.	2.5%	Oil & Gas	4.3%
US Foodservice	2.4%	Packaging	4.2%
Playpower Holdings Inc.	2.4%	Financial Services	4.0%
Fleetpride Corporation	2.4%	Broadcasting & Entertainment	3.1%

**TOP TEN PORTFOLIO COMPANIES AND INDUSTRIES AS OF MARCH 31, 2009**

<b>PORTFOLIO COMPANY</b>	<b>% of Total Assets</b>	<b>INDUSTRY</b>	<b>% of Total Assets</b>
Asurion Corporation	4.8%	Education	7.7%
First Data Corporation	4.5%	Healthcare	7.2%
TL Acquisitions, Inc. (Thomson Learning)	3.8%	Financial Services	6.2%
Grand Prix Holdings, LLC (Innkeepers USA)	3.3%	Diversified Service	5.8%
Gray Wireline Service, Inc.	3.2%	Insurance	5.6%
Ceridian Corp.	2.9%	Oil & Gas	4.9%
Ranpak Corporation	2.9%	Consumer Products	4.1%
Playpower Holdings Inc.	2.8%	Transportation	3.9%
Fleetpride Corporation	2.8%	Retail	3.8%
Quality Home Brands Holdings LLC	2.6%	Industrial	3.6%

Listed below is the geographic breakdown of the portfolio as of March 31, 2010 and 2009:

<b>Geographic Region</b>	<b>% of Portfolio at March 31, 2010</b>	<b>Geographic Region</b>	<b>% of Portfolio at March 31, 2009</b>
United States	91.6%	United States	91.0%
Canada	3.1%	Canada	1.8%
Western Europe	5.3%	Western Europe	7.2%
	100.0%		100.0%

**Investment selection & due diligence**

We are committed to a value oriented philosophy and will commit resources to managing risk to the Company's capital. Our investment adviser conducts due diligence on prospective portfolio companies. In conducting their due diligence, our adviser uses information provided by the company and its management team, publicly available information, as well as information from their extensive relationships with former and current management teams, consultants, competitors and investment bankers and the direct experience of the senior partners of our affiliates.



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Our investment adviser's due diligence will typically include:

review of historical and prospective financial information;

on-site visits;

interviews with management, employees, customers and vendors of the potential portfolio company;

review of loan documents;

background checks; and

research relating to the company's management, industry, markets, products and services, and competitors.

Upon the completion of due diligence and a decision to proceed with an investment in a company, the professionals leading the investment present the investment opportunity to our investment adviser's investment committee, which determines whether to pursue the potential investment. Additional due diligence with respect to any investment may be conducted on our behalf by attorneys and independent accountants (retained by us or such portfolio company) prior to the closing of the investment, as well as other outside advisers, as appropriate.

### **Investment structure**

Once we have determined that a prospective portfolio company is suitable for investment, we work with the management of that company and its other capital providers, including senior, junior and equity capital providers, to structure an investment.

We seek to structure our mezzanine investments primarily as unsecured, subordinated loans that provide for relatively high interest rates that provide us with significant current interest income. These loans typically have interest-only payments. In some cases, we may enter into loans that, by their terms, convert into equity or additional debt securities or defer payments of interest after our investment. Also, in some cases our mezzanine loans may be collateralized by a subordinated lien on some or all of the assets of the borrower. Typically, our mezzanine loans have maturities of five to ten years.

We also seek to invest in portfolio companies in the form of senior secured loans. We expect these senior secured loans to have terms of three to ten years and may provide for deferred interest payments over the term of the loan. We generally seek to obtain security interests in the assets of our portfolio companies that serve as collateral in support of the repayment of these loans. This collateral may take the form of first or second priority liens on the assets of a portfolio company.

In the case of our mezzanine and senior secured loan investments, we seek to tailor the terms of the investment to the facts and circumstances of the transaction and the prospective portfolio company, negotiating a structure that protects our rights and manages our risk while creating incentives for the portfolio company to achieve its business plan and improve its profitability. For example, in addition to seeking a senior position in the capital structure of our portfolio companies, we seek to limit the downside potential of our investments by:

requiring an expected total return on our investments (including both interest and potential equity appreciation) that compensates us for credit risk;

generally incorporating call protection into the investment structure where possible; and

negotiating covenants and information rights in connection with our investments that afford our portfolio companies as much flexibility in managing their businesses as possible, consistent with our goal of preserving our capital. Such restrictions may include affirmative and negative covenants, default penalties, lien protection, change of control provisions and board rights, including either observation or participation rights.

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Our investments may include equity features, such as warrants or options to buy a minority interest in the portfolio company. Any warrants we receive with our debt securities generally require only a nominal cost to exercise, and thus, as a portfolio company appreciates in value, we may achieve additional investment return from this equity interest. We may structure the warrants to provide provisions protecting our rights as a minority-interest holder, as well as puts, or rights to sell such securities back to the company, upon the occurrence of specified events. In many cases, we may also seek to obtain registration rights in connection with these equity interests, which may include demand and piggyback registration rights.

We expect to hold most of our investments to maturity or repayment, but we may sell certain of our investments sooner if a liquidity event takes place such as the sale or recapitalization or worsening of credit quality of a portfolio company, among other reasons.

### **Managerial assistance**

As a business development company, we offer, and must provide upon request, managerial assistance to our portfolio companies. This assistance could involve, among other things, monitoring the operations of our portfolio companies, participating in board and management meetings, consulting with and advising officers of portfolio companies and providing other organizational and financial guidance. We may receive fees for these services. AIA provides such managerial assistance on our behalf to portfolio companies that request this assistance.

### **Ongoing relationships with portfolio companies**

#### ***Monitoring***

AIM monitors our portfolio companies on an ongoing basis as well as monitors the financial trends of each portfolio company to determine if each is meeting its respective business plans and to assess the appropriate course of action for each company.

AIM has several methods of evaluating and monitoring the performance and fair value of our investments, which can include, but are not limited to, the following:

Assessment of success in adhering to portfolio company's business plan and compliance with covenants;

Periodic and regular contact with portfolio company management and, if appropriate, the financial or strategic sponsor, to discuss financial position, requirements and accomplishments;

Comparisons to other portfolio companies in the industry;

Attendance at and participation in board meetings; and

Review of monthly and quarterly financial statements and financial projections for portfolio companies.

In addition to various risk management and monitoring tools, AIM also uses an investment rating system to characterize and monitor our expected level of returns on each investment in our portfolio.

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We use an investment rating scale of 1 to 5. The following is a description of the conditions associated with each investment rating:

<b>Investment Rating</b>	<b>Summary Description</b>
1	Capital gain expected
2	Full return of principal and interest or dividend expected, with the portfolio company performing in accordance with our analysis of its business
3	Full return of principal and interest or dividend expected, but the portfolio company requires closer monitoring
4	Some loss of interest, dividend or capital appreciation expected, but still expecting an overall positive internal rate of return on the investment
5	Loss of interest or dividend and some loss of principal investment expected, which would result in an overall negative internal rate of return on the investment

AIM monitors and, when appropriate, changes the investment ratings assigned to each investment in our portfolio. In connection with our valuation process, AIM reviews these investment ratings on a quarterly basis, and our audit committee monitors such ratings.

***Valuation Process***

The following is a description of the steps we take each quarter to determine the value of our portfolio. Many of our portfolio investments are recorded at fair value as determined in good faith by or under the direction of our board of directors pursuant to a written valuation policy and a consistently applied valuation process utilizing the input of our investment adviser, independent valuation firms and the audit committee. Investments for which market quotations are readily available are recorded in our financial statements at such market quotations if they are deemed to represent fair value. Market quotations may be deemed not to represent fair value where AIM believes that facts and circumstances applicable to an issuer, a seller or purchaser or the market for a particular security causes current market quotes not to reflect the fair value of the security, among other reasons. Examples of these events could include cases in which material events are announced after the close of the market on which a security is primarily traded, when a security trades infrequently causing a quoted purchase or sale price to become stale or in the event of a fire sale by a distressed seller.

With respect to investments for which market quotations are not readily available or when such market quotations are deemed not to represent fair value, our board of directors has approved a multi-step valuation process each quarter, as described below:

- (1) our quarterly valuation process begins with each portfolio company or investment being initially valued by the investment professionals of our investment adviser responsible for the portfolio investment;
- (2) preliminary valuation conclusions are then documented and discussed with senior management of our investment adviser;
- (3) independent valuation firms engaged by our board of directors conduct independent appraisals and review our investment adviser's preliminary valuations and make their own independent assessment;
- (4) the audit committee of the board of directors reviews the preliminary valuation of our investment adviser and that of the independent valuation firm and responds to the valuation recommendation of the independent valuation firm to reflect any comments; and
- (5) the board of directors discusses valuations and determines the fair value of each investment in our portfolio in good faith based on the input of our investment adviser, the respective independent valuation firm and the audit committee.

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When we make investments that involve deferrals of interest payable to us, any increase in the value of the investment due to the accrual of interest is allocated to the increase in the cost basis of the investment, rather than to capital appreciation or gain.

### **Competition**

Our primary competitors in providing financing to middle-market companies include public and private funds, commercial and investment banks, commercial financing companies, and, to the extent they provide an alternative form of financing, private equity or hedge funds. Some of our existing and potential competitors are substantially larger and have considerably greater financial, technical and marketing resources than we do. For example, some competitors may have a lower cost of funds and access to funding sources that are not available to us. In addition, some of our competitors may have higher risk tolerances or different risk assessments, which could allow them to consider a wider variety of investments and establish more relationships than we. Furthermore, many of our competitors are not subject to the regulatory restrictions that the 1940 Act imposes on us as a business development company. We also expect to use the industry information of Apollo's investment professionals to which we have access to assess investment risks and determine appropriate pricing for our investments in portfolio companies. In addition, we believe that the relationships of the senior managers of AIM and those of our affiliates enable us to learn about, and compete effectively for, financing opportunities with attractive middle-market companies in the industries in which we seek to invest.

### **Staffing**

The Company has a chief financial officer and a chief compliance officer and, to the extent necessary, they have hired and will continue to hire additional personnel. These individuals perform their respective functions under the terms of the administration agreement. Certain of our other executive officers are managing partners of our investment adviser. Our day-to-day investment operations are managed by our investment adviser. AIM has hired and will continue to hire additional investment professionals in the future. In addition, we generally reimburse AIA for our allocable portion of expenses incurred by it in performing its obligations under the administration agreement, including rent and our allocable portion of the cost of our chief financial officer and chief compliance officer and their respective staffs.

### **Sarbanes-Oxley Act of 2002**

The Sarbanes-Oxley Act of 2002 imposes a wide variety of regulatory requirements on publicly-held companies and their insiders. Many of these requirements affect us. For example:

Pursuant to Rule 13a-14 of the 1934 Act, our Chief Executive Officer and Chief Financial Officer must certify the accuracy of the financial statements contained in our periodic reports;

Pursuant to Item 307 of Regulation S-K, our periodic reports must disclose our conclusions about the effectiveness of our disclosure controls and procedures;

Pursuant to Rule 13a-15 of the 1934 Act, our management must prepare a report regarding its assessment of our internal control over financial reporting; and

Pursuant to Item 308 of Regulation S-K and Rule 13a-15 of the 1934 Act, our periodic reports must disclose whether there were significant changes in our internal controls or in other factors that could significantly affect these controls subsequent to the date of their evaluation, including any corrective actions with regard to significant deficiencies and material weaknesses.

The Sarbanes-Oxley Act requires us to review our current policies and procedures to determine whether we comply with the Sarbanes-Oxley Act and the regulations promulgated thereunder. We will continue to monitor our compliance with all regulations that are adopted under the Sarbanes-Oxley Act and will take actions necessary to ensure that we are in compliance therewith.

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You may read and copy any materials we file with the SEC at the SEC's Public Reference Room at 100 F Street, NE, Washington, DC 20549, on official business days during the hours of 10:00 am to 3:00 pm. You may obtain information on the operation of the Public Reference Room by calling the SEC at 1-800-SEC-0330. The SEC maintains an Internet site that contains reports, proxy and information statements, and other information regarding issuers that file electronically with the SEC. The address of that site is (<http://www.sec.gov>).

Our internet address is [www.apolloic.com](http://www.apolloic.com). We make available free of charge on our website our annual report on Form 10-K, quarterly reports on Form 10-Q, current reports on Form 8-K and amendments to those reports as soon as reasonably practicable after we electronically file such material with, or furnish it to, the SEC. Information contained on our website is not incorporated by reference into this annual report on Form 10-K, and you should not consider information contained on our website to be part of this annual report on Form 10-K.

### **Item 1A. Risk Factors**

*Investing in Apollo Investment involves a number of significant risks related to our business, structure, investments and investment in our common stock. As a result, there can be no assurance that we will achieve our investment objective.*

#### **CERTAIN RISKS IN THE CURRENT ENVIRONMENT**

**Capital markets have recently been in a period of disruption and instability. These market conditions have materially and adversely affected debt and equity capital markets in the United States and abroad, which have had, and may in the future have, a negative impact on our business and operations.**

The global capital markets have recently been in a period of disruption as evidenced by a lack of liquidity in the debt capital markets, significant write-offs in the financial services sector, the re-pricing of credit risk in the broadly syndicated credit market and the failure of certain major financial institutions. Despite actions of the United States federal government and foreign governments, these events contributed to worsening general economic conditions that materially and adversely impacted the broader financial and credit markets and reduced the availability of debt and equity capital for the market as a whole and financial services firms in particular. These conditions could continue for a prolonged period of time or worsen in the future. While these conditions persist, we and other companies in the financial services sector may have to access, if available, alternative markets for debt and equity capital. Equity capital may be difficult to raise because subject to some limited exceptions, as a BDC, we are generally not able to issue additional shares of our common stock at a price less than net asset value. In addition, our ability to incur indebtedness (including by issued preferred stock) is limited by applicable regulations such that our asset coverage, as defined in the 1940 Act, must equal at least 200% immediately after each time we incur indebtedness. The debt capital that will be available, if at all, may be at a higher cost and on less favorable terms and conditions in the future. Any inability to raise capital could have a negative effect on our business, financial condition and results of operations.

Moreover, recent market conditions have made, and may in the future make, it difficult to extend the maturity of or refinance our existing indebtedness and any failure to do so could have a material adverse effect on our business. The illiquidity of our investments may make it difficult for us to sell such investments if required. As a result, we may realize significantly less than the value at which we have recorded our investments.

Given the recent extreme volatility and dislocation in the capital markets, many BDCs have faced, and may in the future face, a challenging environment in which to raise capital. Recent significant changes in the capital markets affecting our ability to raise capital have affected the pace of our investment activity. In addition, significant changes in the capital markets, including the recent extreme volatility and disruption, have had, and may in the future have, a negative effect on the valuations of our investments and on the potential for liquidity events involving our investments. An inability to raise capital, and any required sale of our investments for liquidity purposes, could have a material adverse impact on our business, financial condition or results of operations.

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### **RISKS RELATING TO OUR BUSINESS AND STRUCTURE**

#### **We may suffer credit losses.**

Investment in small and middle-market companies is highly speculative and involves a high degree of risk of credit loss. These risks are likely to increase during volatile economic periods, as the US and many other economies have recently been experiencing.

#### **We are dependent upon Apollo Investment Management's key personnel for our future success and upon their access to Apollo's investment professionals and partners.**

We depend on the diligence, skill and network of business contacts of the senior management of AIM. Members of our senior management may depart at any time. We also depend, to a significant extent, on AIM's access to the investment professionals and partners of Apollo and the information and deal flow generated by the Apollo investment professionals in the course of their investment and portfolio management activities. The senior management of AIM evaluates, negotiates, structures, closes and monitors our investments. Our future success depends on the continued service of the senior management team of AIM. The departure of any senior managers of AIM, or of a significant number of the investment professionals or partners of Apollo, could have a material adverse effect on our ability to achieve our investment objective. In addition, we can offer no assurance that AIM will remain our investment adviser or that we will continue to have access to Apollo's partners and investment professionals or its information and deal flow.

#### **Our financial condition and results of operations depend on our ability to manage future growth effectively.**

Our ability to achieve our investment objective depends, in part, on our ability to grow, which depends, in turn, on AIM's ability to identify, invest in and monitor companies that meet our investment criteria. Accomplishing this result on a cost-effective basis is largely a function of AIM's structuring of the investment process, its ability to provide competent, attentive and efficient services to us and our access to financing on acceptable terms. The senior management team of AIM has substantial responsibilities under the investment advisory and management agreement, and with respect to certain members, in connection with their roles as officers of other Apollo funds.

They may also be called upon to provide managerial assistance to our portfolio companies. These demands on their time may distract them or slow the rate of investment. In order to grow, we and AIM need to hire, train, supervise and manage new employees. Any failure to manage our future growth effectively could have a material adverse effect on our business, financial condition and results of operations.

#### **We operate in a highly competitive market for investment opportunities.**

A number of entities compete with us to make the types of investments that we make. We compete with public and private funds, commercial and investment banks, commercial financing companies, and, to the extent they provide an alternative form of financing, private equity funds. Competition for investment opportunities intensifies from time to time and may intensify further in the future. Some of our existing and potential competitors are substantially larger and have considerably greater financial, technical and marketing resources than we do. For example, some competitors may have a lower cost of funds and access to funding sources that are not available to us. In addition, some of our competitors may have higher risk tolerances or different risk assessments, which could allow them to consider a wider variety of investments and establish more relationships than us. Furthermore, many of our competitors are not subject to the regulatory restrictions and valuation requirements that the 1940 Act imposes on us as a BDC. We cannot assure you that the competitive pressures we face will not have a material adverse effect on our business, financial condition and results of operations. Also, as a result of this existing and potentially increasing competition, we may not be able to take advantage of attractive investment opportunities from time to time, and we can offer no assurance that we will be able to identify and make investments that are consistent with our investment objective.

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We do not seek to compete primarily based on the interest rates we offer, and we believe that some of our competitors make loans with interest rates that are comparable to or lower than the rates we offer.

We may lose investment opportunities if we do not match our competitors' pricing, terms and structure. If we match our competitors' pricing, terms and structure, we may experience decreased net interest income and increased risk of credit loss.

### **Any failure on our part to maintain our status as a BDC would reduce our operating flexibility.**

If we do not remain a BDC, we might be regulated as a closed-end investment company under the 1940 Act, which would subject us to substantially more regulatory restrictions under the 1940 Act and correspondingly decrease our operating flexibility.

### **We will be subject to corporate-level income tax if we are unable to qualify as a RIC.**

To qualify as a RIC under the Code, we must meet certain source-of-income, asset diversification and annual distribution requirements. The annual distribution requirement for a RIC is satisfied if we distribute at least 90% of our ordinary income and realized net short-term capital gains in excess of realized net long-term capital losses, if any, to our stockholders on an annual basis. To the extent we use debt financing, we are subject to certain asset coverage ratio requirements and other financial covenants under loan and credit agreements, and could in some circumstances also become subject to such requirements under the 1940 Act, that could, under certain circumstances, restrict us from making distributions necessary to qualify as a RIC. If we are unable to obtain cash from other sources, we may fail to qualify as a RIC and, thus, may be subject to corporate-level income tax. To qualify as a RIC, we must also meet certain asset diversification requirements at the end of each calendar quarter. Failure to meet these tests may result in our having to dispose of certain investments quickly in order to prevent the loss of RIC status. Because most of our investments are in private companies, any such dispositions could be made at disadvantageous prices and may result in substantial losses. If we fail to qualify as a RIC for any reason and become subject to corporate-level income tax, the resulting corporate-level taxes could substantially reduce our net assets, the amount of income available for distribution and the amount of our distributions. Such a failure would have a material adverse effect on us and our stockholders.

To qualify again to be taxed as a RIC in a subsequent year, we would be required to distribute to our stockholders our earnings and profits attributable to non-RIC years reduced by an interest charge on 50% of such earnings and profits payable by us to the IRS. In addition, if we failed to qualify as a RIC for a period greater than two taxable years, then we would be required to elect to recognize and pay tax on any net built-in gain (the excess of aggregate gain, including items of income, over aggregate loss that would have been realized if we had been liquidated) or, alternatively, be subject to taxation on such built-in gain recognized for a period of ten years, in order to qualify as a RIC in a subsequent year.

### **We may have difficulty paying our required distributions if we recognize income before or without receiving cash representing such income.**

For federal income tax purposes, we include in income certain amounts that we have not yet received in cash, such as original issue discount, which may arise if we receive warrants in connection with the making of a loan or possibly in other circumstances, or payment-in-kind interest, which represents contractual interest added to the loan balance and due at the end of the loan term. Such original issue discount, which could be significant relative to our overall investment activities, or increases in loan balances as a result of payment-in-kind arrangements are included in income before we receive any corresponding cash payments. We also may be required to include in income certain other amounts that we do not receive in cash.

That part of the incentive fee payable by us that relates to our net investment income is computed and paid on income that may include interest that has been accrued but not yet received in cash. If a portfolio company defaults on a loan, it is possible that accrued interest previously used in the calculation of the incentive fee will



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become uncollectible. Consequently, while we may make incentive fee payments on income accruals that we may not collect in the future and with respect to which we do not have a formal clawback right against our investment adviser per se, the amount of accrued income written off in any period will reduce the income in the period in which such write-off was taken and thereby reduce such period's incentive fee payment.

Since in certain cases we may recognize income before or without receiving cash representing such income, we may have difficulty meeting the tax requirement to distribute at least 90% of our ordinary income and realized net short-term capital gains in excess of realized net long-term capital losses, if any, to maintain our status as a RIC. Accordingly, we may have to sell some of our investments at times we would not consider advantageous, raise additional debt or equity capital or reduce new investment originations in order to meet distribution and/or leverage requirements.

### **Regulations governing our operation as a BDC affect our ability to, and the way in which we raise, additional capital.**

We may issue debt securities or preferred stock and/or borrow money from banks or other financial institutions, which we refer to collectively as senior securities, up to the maximum amount permitted by the 1940 Act. Under the provisions of the 1940 Act, we are permitted, as a BDC, to issue senior securities only in amounts such that our asset coverage, as defined in the 1940 Act, equals at least 200% after each issuance of senior securities. If the value of our assets declines, we may be unable to satisfy this test. If that happens, the contractual arrangements governing these securities may require us to sell a portion of our investments and, depending on the nature of our leverage, repay a portion of our indebtedness at a time when such sales may be disadvantageous.

BDCs may issue and sell common stock at a price below net asset value per share only in limited circumstances, one of which is during the one-year period after stockholder approval. In the past, our stockholders have approved a plan so that during the subsequent 12 month period we could, in one or more public or private offerings of our common stock, sell or otherwise issue shares of our common stock at a price below the then current net asset value per share, subject to certain conditions including parameters on the level of permissible dilution, approval of the sale by a majority of our independent directors and a requirement that the sale price be not less than approximately the market price of the shares of our common stock at specified times, less the expenses of the sale. We may in the future seek to renew such authority on terms and conditions set forth in the corresponding proxy statement. There is no assurance such approvals will be obtained.

In the event we sell, or otherwise issue, shares of our common stock at a price below net asset value per share, existing stockholders will experience net asset value dilution and the investors who acquire shares in such offering may thereafter experience the same type of dilution from subsequent offerings at a discount. For example, if we sell an additional 10% of our common shares at a 5% discount from net asset value, a stockholder who does not participate in that offering for its proportionate interest will suffer net asset value dilution of up to 0.5% or \$5 per \$1000 of net asset value.

### **We currently use borrowed funds to make investments and are exposed to the typical risks associated with leverage.**

We are exposed to increased risk of loss due to our use of debt to make investments. A decrease in the value of our investments will have a greater negative impact on the value of our common stock than if we did not use debt. Our ability to pay dividends will be restricted if we fail to satisfy certain of our asset coverage ratios and other financial covenants and any amounts that we use to service our indebtedness are not available for dividends to our common stockholders.

### **The Amount Payable on Your Notes Is Not Linked to the Level of the Underlier at Any Time Other Than the Determination Date**

The final underlier level will be based on the closing level of the underlier on the determination date (subject to adjustment as described elsewhere in this pricing supplement). Therefore, if the closing level of the underlier dropped precipitously on the determination date, the cash settlement amount for your notes may be significantly less than it would have been had the cash settlement amount been linked to the closing level of the underlier prior to such drop in the level of the underlier. Although the actual level of the underlier on the stated maturity date or at other times during the life of your notes may be higher than the final underlier level, you will not benefit from the closing level of the underlier at any time other than on the determination date.

### **You May Lose a Substantial Portion of Your Investment in the Notes**

You can lose a substantial portion of your investment in the notes. The cash payment on your notes on the stated maturity date will be based on the performance of the underlier as measured from the initial underlier level to the closing level on the determination date. If the final underlier level is less than the buffer level, you will have a loss for each \$1,000 of the face amount of your notes equal to the product of (i) the sum of the underlier return plus the buffer amount times (ii) \$1,000. Thus, you may lose a substantial portion of your investment in the notes, which would include any premium to face amount you paid when you purchased the notes.

Also, the market price of your notes prior to the stated maturity date may be significantly lower than the purchase price you pay for your notes. Consequently, if you sell your notes before the stated maturity date, you may receive far less than the amount of your investment in the notes.

#### Your Notes Do Not Bear Interest

You will not receive any interest payments on your notes. As a result, even if the cash settlement amount payable for your notes on the stated maturity date exceeds the face amount of your notes, the overall return you earn on your notes may be less than you would have earned by investing in a non-indexed debt security of comparable maturity that bears interest at a prevailing market rate.

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### You Have No Shareholder Rights or Rights to Receive Any Underlier Stock

Investing in your notes will not make you a holder of any of the underlier stocks. Neither you nor any other holder or owner of your notes will have any rights with respect to the underlier stocks, including any voting rights, any right to receive dividends or other distributions, any rights to make a claim against the underlier stocks or any other rights of a holder of the underlier stocks. Your notes will be paid in cash and you will have no right to receive delivery of any underlier stocks.

### We May Sell an Additional Aggregate Face Amount of the Notes at a Different Issue Price

At our sole option, we may decide to sell an additional aggregate face amount of the notes subsequent to the date of this pricing supplement. The issue price of the notes in the subsequent sale may differ substantially (higher or lower) from the original issue price you paid as provided on the cover of this pricing supplement.

### If You Purchase Your Notes at a Premium to Face Amount, the Return on Your Investment Will Be Lower Than the Return on Notes Purchased at Face Amount and the Impact of Certain Key Terms of the Notes Will Be Negatively Affected

The cash settlement amount will not be adjusted based on the issue price you pay for the notes. If you purchase notes at a price that differs from the face amount of the notes, then the return on your investment in such notes held to the stated maturity date will differ from, and may be substantially less than, the return on notes purchased at face amount. If you purchase your notes at a premium to face amount and hold them to the stated maturity date, the return on your investment in the notes will be lower than it would have been had you purchased the notes at face amount or a discount to face amount. In addition, the impact of the buffer level on the return on your investment will depend upon the price you pay for your notes relative to face amount. For example, if you purchase your notes at a premium to face amount, the buffer level, while still providing some protection for the return on the notes, will allow a greater percentage decrease in your investment in the notes than would have been the case for notes purchased at face amount or a discount to face amount.

### An Investment in the Offered Notes Is Subject to Risks Associated with Foreign Securities

The value of your notes is linked to an underlier that is comprised of stocks from one or more foreign securities markets. Investments linked to the value of foreign equity securities involve particular risks. Any foreign securities market may be less liquid, more volatile and affected by global or domestic market developments in a different way than are the U.S. securities market or other foreign securities markets. Both government intervention in a foreign securities market, either directly or indirectly, and cross-shareholdings in foreign companies, may affect trading prices and volumes in that market. Also, there is generally less publicly available information about foreign companies than about those U.S. companies that are subject to the reporting requirements of the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission. Further, foreign companies are subject to accounting, auditing and financial reporting standards and requirements that differ from those applicable to U.S. reporting companies.

The prices of securities in a foreign country are subject to political, economic, financial and social factors that are unique to such foreign country's geographical region. These factors include: recent changes, or the possibility of future changes, in the applicable foreign government's economic and fiscal policies; the possible implementation of, or changes in, currency exchange laws or other laws or restrictions applicable to foreign companies or investments in foreign equity securities; fluctuations, or the possibility of fluctuations, in currency exchange rates; and the possibility of outbreaks of hostility, political instability, natural disaster or adverse public health developments. The United Kingdom has voted to leave the European Union (popularly known as "Brexit"). The effect of Brexit is uncertain, and Brexit has and may continue to contribute to volatility in the prices of securities of companies located in Europe and

currency exchange rates, including the valuation of the euro and British pound in particular. Any one of these factors, or the combination of more than one of these factors, could negatively affect such foreign securities market and the price of securities therein. Further, geographical regions may react to global factors in different ways, which may cause the prices of securities in a foreign securities market to fluctuate in a way that differs from those of securities in the U.S. securities market or other foreign securities markets. Foreign economies may also differ from the U.S. economy in important respects, including growth of gross national product, rate of inflation, capital reinvestment, resources and self-sufficiency, which may have a positive or negative effect on foreign securities prices.

#### Your Notes May Be Subject to an Adverse Change in Tax Treatment in the Future

The tax consequences of an investment in your notes are uncertain, both as to the timing and character of any inclusion in income in respect of your notes.

The Internal Revenue Service announced on December 7, 2007 that it is considering issuing guidance regarding the proper U.S. federal income tax treatment of an instrument such as your notes, and any such guidance could adversely affect the tax treatment and the value of your notes. Among other things, the Internal Revenue Service

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may decide to require the holders to accrue ordinary income on a current basis and recognize ordinary income on payment at maturity, and could subject non-U.S. investors to withholding tax. Furthermore, in 2007, legislation was introduced in Congress that, if enacted, would have required holders that acquired instruments such as your notes after the bill was enacted to accrue interest income over the term of such instruments even though there will be no interest payments over the term of such instruments. It is not possible to predict whether a similar or identical bill will be enacted in the future, or whether any such bill would affect the tax treatment of your notes. We describe these developments in more detail under “Supplemental Discussion of Federal Income Tax Consequences” on page S-41 of the accompanying product supplement no. 1,738. You should consult your tax advisor about this matter. Except to the extent otherwise provided by law, GS Finance Corp. intends to continue treating the notes for U.S. federal income tax purposes in accordance with the treatment described under “Supplemental Discussion of Federal Income Tax Consequences” on page S-41 of the accompanying product supplement no. 1,738 unless and until such time as Congress, the Treasury Department or the Internal Revenue Service determine that some other treatment is more appropriate.

#### United States Alien Holders Should Consider the Withholding Tax Implications of Owning the Notes

The Treasury Department has issued regulations under which amounts paid or deemed paid on certain financial instruments (“871(m) financial instruments”) that are treated as attributable to U.S.-source dividends could be treated, in whole or in part depending on the circumstances, as a “dividend equivalent” payment that is subject to tax at a rate of 30% (or a lower rate under an applicable treaty), which in the case of any amounts a United States alien holder receives upon the sale, exchange or maturity of the notes, could be collected via withholding. If these regulations were to apply to the notes, we may be required to withhold such taxes if any U.S.-source dividends are paid on the stocks included in the underlier during the term of the notes. We could also require a United States alien holder to make certifications (e.g., an applicable Internal Revenue Service Form W-8) prior to the maturity of the notes in order to avoid or minimize withholding obligations, and we could withhold accordingly (subject to the United States alien holder’s potential right to claim a refund from the Internal Revenue Service) if such certifications were not received or were not satisfactory. If withholding was required, we would not be required to pay any additional amounts with respect to amounts so withheld. These regulations generally will apply to 871(m) financial instruments (or a combination of financial instruments treated as having been entered into in connection with each other) issued (or significantly modified and treated as retired and reissued) on or after January 1, 2021, but will also apply to certain 871(m) financial instruments (or a combination of financial instruments treated as having been entered into in connection with each other) that have a delta (as defined in the applicable Treasury regulations) of one and are issued (or significantly modified and treated as retired and reissued) on or after January 1, 2017. In addition, these regulations will not apply to financial instruments that reference a “qualified index” (as defined in the regulations). We have determined that, as of the issue date of your notes, your notes will not be subject to withholding under these rules. In certain limited circumstances, however, you should be aware that it is possible for United States alien holders to be liable for tax under these rules with respect to a combination of transactions treated as having been entered into in connection with each other even when no withholding is required. You should consult your tax advisor concerning these regulations, subsequent official guidance and regarding any other possible alternative characterizations of your notes for U.S. federal income tax purposes.

#### Foreign Account Tax Compliance Act (FATCA) Withholding May Apply to Payments on Your Notes, Including as a Result of the Failure of the Bank or Broker Through Which You Hold the Notes to Provide Information to Tax Authorities

Please see the discussion under “United States Taxation — Taxation of Debt Securities — Foreign Account Tax Compliance Act (FATCA) Withholding” in the accompanying prospectus for a description of the applicability of FATCA to payments made on your notes. The discussion in that section is hereby modified to reflect regulations proposed by the Treasury Department indicating its intent to eliminate the requirements under FATCA of withholding

on gross proceeds from the sale, exchange, maturity or other disposition of relevant financial instruments. The Treasury Department has indicated that taxpayers may rely on these proposed regulations pending their finalization.

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## THE UNDERLIER

The EURO STOXX 50<sup>®</sup> Index is a free-float market capitalization-weighted index of 50 European blue-chip stocks and was created by and is sponsored and maintained by STOXX Limited. Publication of the EURO STOXX 50<sup>®</sup> Index began on February 26, 1998, based on an initial index value of 1,000 at December 31, 1991. The level of the EURO STOXX 50<sup>®</sup> Index is disseminated on the STOXX Limited website. STOXX Limited is under no obligation to continue to publish the index and may discontinue publication of it at any time. Additional information regarding the EURO STOXX 50<sup>®</sup> Index may be obtained from the STOXX Limited website: [stox.com](http://stox.com). We are not incorporating by reference the website or any material it includes in this pricing supplement.

The top ten constituent stocks of the EURO STOXX 50<sup>®</sup> Index as of February 14, 2019, by weight, are: Total S.A. (5.74%), SAP SE (4.42%), Sanofi (3.63%), LINDE PLC (3.55%), Siemens AG (3.42%), Allianz SE (3.41%), LVMH Moët Hennessy Louis Vuitton SE (3.39%), Unilever N.V. (3.22%), ASML Holding N.V. (3.06%) and Banco Santander S.A. (2.82%); constituent weights may be found at [stox.com/download/indices/factsheets/SX5GT.pdf](http://stox.com/download/indices/factsheets/SX5GT.pdf) under “Factsheets and Methodologies” and are updated periodically.

As of February 14, 2019, the sixteen industry sectors which comprise the EURO STOXX 50<sup>®</sup> Index represent the following weights in the index: Automobiles & Parts (4.03%), Banks (10.39%), Chemicals (8.12%), Construction & Materials (2.91%), Food & Beverage (4.32%), Health Care (9.91%), Industrial Goods & Services (10.61%), Insurance (6.58%), Media (0.97%), Oil & Gas (7.38%), Personal & Household Goods (10.42%), Real Estate (0.87%), Retail (3.91%), Technology (10.16%), Telecommunications (4.67%), and Utilities (4.74%); industry weightings may be found at [stox.com/download/indices/factsheets/SX5GT.pdf](http://stox.com/download/indices/factsheets/SX5GT.pdf) under “Factsheets and Methodologies” and are updated periodically. Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding. Sector designations are determined by the underlier sponsor using criteria it has selected or developed. Index sponsors may use very different standards for determining sector designations. In addition, many companies operate in a number of sectors, but are listed in only one sector and the basis on which that sector is selected may also differ. As a result, sector comparisons between indices with different index sponsors may reflect differences in methodology as well as actual differences in the sector composition of the indices.

As of February 14, 2019, the eight countries which comprise the EURO STOXX 50<sup>®</sup> Index represent the following weights in the index: Belgium (2.49%), Finland (1.36%), France (38.67%), Germany (27.27%), Ireland (4.54%), Italy (4.82%), Netherlands (10.73%) and Spain (10.12%); country weightings may be found at [stox.com/download/indices/factsheets/SX5GT.pdf](http://stox.com/download/indices/factsheets/SX5GT.pdf) under “Factsheets and Methodologies” and are updated periodically.

The above information supplements the description of the underlier found in the accompanying general terms supplement no. 1,734. This information was derived from information prepared by the underlier sponsor, however, the percentages we have listed above are approximate and may not match the information available on the underlier sponsor's website due to subsequent corporate actions or other activity relating to a particular stock. For more details about the underlier, the underlier sponsor and license agreement between the underlier sponsor and the issuer, see “The Underliers — EURO STOXX 50<sup>®</sup> Index” on page S-75 of the accompanying general terms supplement no. 1,734.

The EURO STOXX 50<sup>®</sup> is the intellectual property of STOXX Limited, Zurich, Switzerland and/or its licensors (“Licensors”), which is used under license. The securities or other financial instruments based on the index are in no way sponsored, endorsed, sold or promoted by STOXX and its Licensors and neither STOXX nor its Licensors shall have any liability with respect thereto.





#### Historical Closing Levels of the Underlier

The closing level of the underlier has fluctuated in the past and may, in the future, experience significant fluctuations. Any historical upward or downward trend in the closing level of the underlier during the period shown below is not an indication that the underlier is more or less likely to increase or decrease at any time during the life of your notes.

You should not take the historical levels of the underlier as an indication of the future performance of the underlier. We cannot give you any assurance that the future performance of the underlier or the underlier stocks will result in your receiving an amount greater than the outstanding face amount of your notes on the stated maturity date.

Neither we nor any of our affiliates make any representation to you as to the performance of the underlier. Before investing in the offered notes, you should consult publicly available information to determine the levels of the underlier between the date of this pricing supplement and the date of your purchase of the offered notes. The actual performance of the underlier over the life of the offered notes, as well as the cash settlement amount, may bear little relation to the historical closing levels shown below.

The graph below shows the daily historical closing levels of the underlier from February 13, 2009 through February 15, 2019. We obtained the closing levels in the graph below from Bloomberg Financial Services, without independent verification.

#### Historical Performance of the EURO STOXX 50<sup>®</sup> Index

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## SUPPLEMENTAL DISCUSSION OF U.S. FEDERAL INCOME TAX CONSEQUENCES

You will be obligated pursuant to the terms of the notes — in the absence of a change in law, an administrative determination or a judicial ruling to the contrary — to characterize each note for all tax purposes as a pre-paid derivative contract in respect of the underlier, as described under “Supplemental Discussion of Federal Income Tax Consequences” on page S-41 of the accompanying product supplement no. 1,738. Pursuant to this approach, it is the opinion of Sidley Austin LLP that upon the sale, exchange or maturity of your notes, it would be reasonable for you to recognize capital gain or loss equal to the difference, if any, between the amount of cash you receive at such time and your tax basis in your notes. Pursuant to Treasury regulations, Foreign Account Tax Compliance Act (FATCA) withholding (as described in “United States Taxation — Taxation of Debt Securities — Foreign Account Tax Compliance Act (FATCA) Withholding” in the accompanying prospectus) will generally apply to obligations that are issued on or after July 1, 2014; therefore, the notes will generally be subject to the FATCA withholding rules. Pursuant to recently proposed regulations, the Treasury Department has indicated its intent to eliminate the requirements under FATCA of withholding on gross proceeds from the sale, exchange, maturity or other disposition of relevant financial instruments. The Treasury Department has indicated that taxpayers may rely on these proposed regulations pending their finalization.

## SUPPLEMENTAL PLAN OF DISTRIBUTION; CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

See “Supplemental Plan of Distribution” on page S-49 of the accompanying product supplement no. 1,738 and “Plan of Distribution — Conflicts of Interest” on page 94 of the accompanying prospectus. GS Finance Corp. estimates that its share of the total offering expenses, excluding underwriting discounts and commissions, will be approximately \$10,000.

GS Finance Corp. will sell to GS&Co., and GS&Co. will purchase from GS Finance Corp., the aggregate face amount of the offered notes specified on the front cover of this pricing supplement. GS&Co. proposes initially to offer the notes to the public at the original issue price set forth on the cover page of this pricing supplement. Each securities dealer will receive from us a structuring fee of up to 0.26% of the face amount of each such note.

GS&Co. has engaged Incapital LLC to provide certain marketing services from time to time relating to notes of this series. Incapital LLC will receive a fee of 0.5% of the face amount of each note offered hereby from us in connection with such service. GS&Co. is an affiliate of GS Finance Corp. and The Goldman Sachs Group, Inc. and, as such, will have a “conflict of interest” in this offering of notes within the meaning of Financial Industry Regulatory Authority, Inc. (FINRA) Rule 5121. Consequently, this offering of notes will be conducted in compliance with the provisions of FINRA Rule 5121. GS&Co. will not be permitted to sell notes in this offering to an account over which it exercises discretionary authority without the prior specific written approval of the account holder.

We will deliver the notes against payment therefor in New York, New York on February 22, 2019. Under Rule 15c6-1 of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, trades in the secondary market generally are required to settle in two business days, unless the parties to any such trade expressly agree otherwise. Accordingly, purchasers who wish to trade notes on any date prior to two business days before delivery will be required to specify alternative settlement arrangements to prevent a failed settlement.

We have been advised by GS&Co. that it intends to make a market in the notes. However, neither GS&Co. nor any of our other affiliates that makes a market is obligated to do so and any of them may stop doing so at any time without notice. No assurance can be given as to the liquidity or trading market for the notes.

The notes will not be listed on any securities exchange or interdealer quotation system.

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## VALIDITY OF THE NOTES AND GUARANTEE

In the opinion of Sidley Austin LLP, as counsel to GS Finance Corp. and The Goldman Sachs Group, Inc., when the notes offered by this pricing supplement have been executed and issued by GS Finance Corp., the related guarantee offered by this pricing supplement has been executed and issued by The Goldman Sachs Group, Inc., and such notes have been authenticated by the trustee pursuant to the indenture, and such notes and the guarantee have been delivered against payment as contemplated herein, (a) such notes will be valid and binding obligations of GS Finance Corp., enforceable in accordance with their terms, subject to applicable bankruptcy, insolvency and similar laws affecting creditors' rights generally, concepts of reasonableness and equitable principles of general applicability (including, without limitation, concepts of good faith, fair dealing and the lack of bad faith), provided that such counsel expresses no opinion as to the effect of fraudulent conveyance, fraudulent transfer or similar provision of applicable law on the conclusions expressed above and (b) such related guarantee will be a valid and binding obligation of The Goldman Sachs Group, Inc., enforceable in accordance with its terms, subject to applicable bankruptcy, insolvency and similar laws affecting creditors' rights generally, concepts of reasonableness and equitable principles of general applicability (including, without limitation, concepts of good faith, fair dealing and the lack of bad faith), provided that such counsel expresses no opinion as to the effect of fraudulent conveyance, fraudulent transfer or similar provision of applicable law on the conclusions expressed above. This opinion is given as of the date hereof and is limited to the laws of the State of New York and the General Corporation Law of the State of Delaware as in effect on the date hereof. In addition, this opinion is subject to customary assumptions about the trustee's authorization, execution and delivery of the indenture and the genuineness of signatures and certain factual matters, all as stated in the letter of such counsel dated July 10, 2017, which has been filed as Exhibit 5.6 to the registration statement on Form S-3 filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission by GS Finance Corp. and The Goldman Sachs Group, Inc. on July 10, 2017.

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We have not authorized anyone to provide any information or to make any representations other than those contained or incorporated by reference in this pricing supplement, the accompanying product supplement no. 1,738, the accompanying general terms supplement no. 1,734, the accompanying prospectus supplement or the accompanying prospectus. We take no responsibility for, and can provide no assurance as to the reliability of, any other information that others may give you. This pricing supplement, the accompanying product supplement no. 1,738, the accompanying general terms supplement no. 1,734, the accompanying prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus is an offer to sell only the notes offered hereby, but only under circumstances and in jurisdictions where it is lawful to do so. The information contained in this pricing supplement, the accompanying product supplement no. 1,738, the accompanying general terms supplement no. 1,734, the accompanying prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus is current only as of the respective dates of such documents.

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\$739,000

GS Finance Corp.

Leveraged Buffered EURO STOXX 50® Index-Linked Notes due 2021

guaranteed by

The Goldman Sachs Group, Inc.

Goldman Sachs & Co. LLC