

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1

ABOUT THE FSUG	3
FOREWORD	4
FSUG RESPONSES TO EU INSTITUTIONS CONSULTATIONS	6
FSUG OWN INITTIATIVE RECOMMENDATIONS/LETTERS TO EU OFFICIALS	11
FSUG MEETINGS IN 2019	14
SPECIAL FEATURE	15
FSUG RESEARCH PROJECT	18
FSUG MEMBERS	19

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ABOUT THE FSUG

In its White Paper on Financial Services Policy 2005–2010, the European Commission (EC) stated that it attached great importance to ensuring proportionate user representation in policy making. In the Communication for the European Council – *Driving European Recovery* – the Commission put the interests of European investors, consumers and SMEs at the centre of the financial market reforms.

As a measure to achieve these aims, the Commission set up a Financial Services User Group (FSUG). The FSUG's task is to:

- advise the Commission in the preparation of legislation and policy initiatives which affect the users of financial services
- provide insight, opinion and advice concerning the practical implementation of such policies
- proactively seek to identify key financial services issues which affect users of financial services
- liaise with, and provide information to, financial services user representatives and representative bodies at the European Union and national level.

FSUG has up to 20 members, who are individuals appointed to represent the interests of consumers, retail investors or micro enterprises, and individual experts with expertise in financial services from the perspective of the financial services user.

FSUG meets five times a year in Brussels and its Chair and two Vice Chairs are elected from amongst the group members. The Commission (jointly DG FISMA and DG JUST) provides secretarial services for the Group.

The Group works on a consensus basis and tries to ensure that it arrives at a collective opinion on issues it considers. However, from time to time, individual members may register a minority opinion.

As well as working on its agreed work programme, the FSUG:

- responds to relevant consultations from the European Commission and other policymakers
- proactively seeks to identify key financial services issues which affect users of financial services and
- liaises with, and provides information to, financial services user representatives and representative bodies at the European Union and national level.

Following a call for interests launched in April 2017, the Financial Services Users' Group was officially relaunched by the European Commission end of June 2017 for a *new* period of four years and with new Terms of Reference. As in previous FSUGs, the group is composed of a mix of representatives of consumers' organisations working at EU level and individual experts working at national level.

FOREWORD

The renewed FSUG started to work in a fast-moving context at EU level and turbulent financial markets at global level which require*d* strong vigilance and monitoring to avoid consumers' detriment. This report provides a summary of the FSUG activities in 2019.

With the European Parliament elections and renewal of the Commission's College, combined with the beginning of the Brexit transition period, 2019 was a very special year not only for the FSUG but for all stakeholders trying to influence EU policymaking. EU policymakers had only a few months at the beginning of the year to try to conclude some key dossiers before the European Parliament elections. Despite a slowing down in the EU legislative work in the first months of 2019, the FSUG had a busy time contributing input to on-going EU dossiers, advancing on FSUG's own work priorities and drawing recommendations for the new European Commission's College.

The FSUG met five times over the year for two day meetings on 31/01-01/02, 28-29/03, 23-24/05, 12-13/09 (in Rome with Italian banking/saving institutions and consumers' organisations. See special feature in the section on FSUG meetings), and 28-29/11 including a joint meeting with FIN-NET, the European network of national financial dispute resolution schemes.

During these physical meetings and virtually between meetings, the FSUG was consulted/updated by DG FISMA and DG JUST on various dossiers such as:

- the evaluation of the directive on distance marketing of financial services,
- the EC behavioural study on the digitalisation of the marketing and distance selling of retail financial services,
- the upcoming review of the Consumer Credit directive and replies received to the EC public consultation,
- the Mortgage Credit Directive in the context of coercive tied selling,
- EC work to combat fraud of non-cash means of payments,
- potential consumers' issues around cross-border payments and instant payments,
- the added value of the PSD2 directive for consumers,
- EU action on enforcement of consumer law, unfair commercial practices and financial exclusion,
- Ecolabels,
- EBA work on crypto-assets, etc.

In 2019, the FSUG contributed input to three consultations:

- FSUG opinion and recommendations for the review of the Consumer Credit Directive (CDD), in response to open consultation, April 2019
- FSUG opinion about the market data fees ad consolidated tape, July 2019
- FSUG recommendations to the European Commission 2019-2024, November 2019

And published two own initiative opinion/letter:

- FSUG opinion and recommendations on coercive selling on tied deposit accounts: mortgage loans and fees related to maintenance of accounts, December 2019.
- FSUG letter to the European Commission on end users' representation in the High Level Forum on the Capital Market Union

Finally in 2019 the FSUG also developed terms of reference for a large-scale study on "NPLs in the EU: Impacts on regulation and consumer protection which was published through an open call for tenders in December 2019 and successfully launched in 2020.

More detailed information on the FSUG work and composition can be found on the FSUG website.

Anne-Sophie Parent

Chair

Christiane Hölz Vice-Chair Farid Aliyev Vice-Chair

5

FSUG RESPONSES TO EU INSTITUTIONS CONSULTATIONS

FSUG response to EC consultation for the review of the Consumer Credit Directive

In April 2019, the FSUG responded to a request for opinion from the European Commission for the review of the consumer credit directive.

Since the introduction of the EU Consumer Credit Directive more than 10 years ago, important developments have taken place in Europe, such as a major financial and economic crisis which resulted in high unemployment rates and lower household income in many Member States, historically low interest rate environment which gives further incentive to consumers to borrow for consumption, and digitalisation that has led to widespread online distribution of credit as well as the emergence of new business models such as peer-to-peer lending.

This paper analysed trends in the EU consumer credit markets and examined major drivers of irresponsible lending that may cause consumer detriment. Those elements include inappropriate product design, misaligned sales incentives, unsolicited credit offers, risks related to online distribution of credit, inadequate creditworthiness assessment by creditors, product cross-selling, lack of a harmonised EU personal bankruptcy scheme, and lack of effective supervision and enforcement by competent authorities.

On the basis of their analysis, the FSUG addressed their recommendations to EU policy-makers in view of the upcoming review of the Consumer Credit Directive. These recommendations are aimed at ensuring a well-functioning EU consumer credit market in which creditors and intermediaries act responsibly and treat consumers fairly; and prevention of excessive debt levels and over-indebtedness.

The full FSUG reply including concrete FSUG recommendations can be downloaded <u>here.</u>

FSUG response to ESMA open consultation about the market data fees ad consolidated tape

In European Union, fundamental changes have been introduced in the market for equity trading over the past decade. Next to significant technological improvements regulatory changes, especially through MiFID I and II, have fundamentally changed the landscape of equity trading markets in Europe.

In July 2019, in an open letter the FSUG raised concerns about the prices for standardized market data which should be set at marginal cost plus a reasonable profit margin equal for all users using the same kind of services regardless of their differences. FSUG further considered, that the current delay in receiving data free of charge is far too long. In times of increasingly automated trades, AI and high frequency trading, market data should be made available to all market participants free of charge at a delay of up to max. 2 min.

The FSUG highlighted that while MiFID I and II were introduced to better regulate financial markets and to ensure investor protection, in fact these regulations have increased the disruption of markets by facilitating alternative trading venues and so-called "dark trading venues" to emerge. The FSUG thus called for action at EU level to ensure that a stable price formation is being maintained and in no case is further weakened in order to ensure properly functioning equity markets.

Finally the FSUG expressed its support to the introduction of a publicly enforced and controlled consolidated tape and support a publicly enforced and controlled "consolidated tape" which would be easily and quickly accessible by all investors in the market.

The full text of this FSUG open letter can be found here.

FSUG recommendations to the European Commission 2019-2024

In November 2019, FSUG wrote to the Commission setting out what the group think should be the priorities for the Commission of 2019 – 2024 if EU financial markets and services are to work for financial users and SMEs.

Obviously, the size of EU financial markets and services, and the extent of chronic market failure in the sector, means there are numerous competing priorities to choose from. To make these manageable, FSUG grouped the priorities into themes with clear recommendations and description of the benefits to financial users and SMEs if these recommendations were adopted.

If Commission initiatives are to produce tangible benefits for financial users and SMEs, effective detailed policies will need to be designed from the perspective of financial users and SMEs. These policies will need to be implemented effectively and interventions monitored objectively sto ensure that the right outcomes are delivered for financial users and SMEs.

FSUG's work in 2019 focussed on developing detailed policies, persuading Commission officials to adopt these policies, and challenging the narratives of industry lobbyists.

The themes selected by the FSUG were: Capital Market Union issues; Retail Investor issues; Better Regulation and Supervision; and Digitalisation.

I. Capital Market Union issues

Recommendation	Benefit	
Make European capital markets more attractive and safer for retail private investors and foster household investment	Regain trust of individual investors and enable them to better invest across borders	
Make European capital markets more attractive for SMEs	Facilitate capital raising through capital markets instruments and by that reduce their dependency of bank financing	
Increase consumer and investor protection rules in delisting, payment or insolvency cases, and introduce common rules for collective redress also for individual direct investors	Create a level playing field as a standard across the EU and foster cross-border investing	

II. Retail investors' issues

Recommendation	Benefit
Simplify, standardise and streamline the range of retail investment products	Improve financial inclusion, the funding of the EU economy and offer better returns to long-term individual investors and savers
Push financial firms to act in the consumer's best interest	Ensure easy access to trustworthy good quality and affordable financial advice for financial services users
Improve consistency of EU financial market regulations	Reduce confusion among financial services users and complexity for firms
Improve and harmonise ESG disclosure and sustainability risks and impacts	Help consumers choose more sustainable investments and ensure ESG risks to the financial system are better managed

III. Better regulation and supervision

Recommendation	Benefit
Create a harmonised legislative regime at EU level for personal insolvency	Improve the protection for vulnerable EU borrowers, promote more responsible lending, restore trust in financial sector
Better enforcement of existing EU rules	Improve the impact of rules designed to make EU financial markets work and protect consumers, and tackle the main barrier to the development of a true Single Market
Improve the efficiency of EU institutions' procedures	Improve ability of EU institutions to respond to emerging risks, enhance consumer protection, restore trust in financial sector
EU financial 'driving license' to replace financial passport	Prevent regulatory arbitrage, improve consistency and effectiveness of consumer protection, restore trust in financial sector

IV. Digitalisation issues

Recommendation	Benefit
EU legislation on Open Banking	Upgraded legislation would protect consumers, make OB work for consumers
Financial inclusion for all	Promote inclusive financial innovation which meet needs of all citizens, not just a few
Understanding and mitigating the risks associated with digitalisation/ fintech/ Open Banking/ big data	Protect consumers from risks of: cyber- crime and scams; data abuse; firms exploiting behavioural biases; weak governance and conflicts of interest; and data profiling, discrimination, exclusion. Promote real trust in financial innovation.

The full FSUG recommendations to the new European Commission can be downloaded here.

FSUG OWN INITTIATIVE RECOMMENDATIONS/LETTERS TO EU OFFICIALS

Next to replying to open consultations, the FSUG produced the following own initiative opinion/letter addressed to EU officials on key topics the group considered of importance for financial services users:

FSUG Opinion and Recommendations on Coercive Selling on (tied) deposit accounts: Mortgage loans and fees related with maintenance of accounts

In December 2019, the FSUG issued a series of recommendations to improve existing EU legislation to ban unfair commercial practices. The Mortgage Credit Directive distinguishes tying and bundling of products, introducing a ban on tying practices. However, it also presents exemptions to this ban which have resulted in consumer detriment. Banks impose undue pressure on, or coerce, clients to buy products and/or services from the bank or any of its affiliates, as a condition for obtaining another product or service from the bank, where at least one of the products or services offered in the package is not available 2 separately ("tied package"), even when the products and/or services are functionally independent. Often, these "tied packages" contracts do not specify all the future prices, so that a long-term relationship is decided by short-term contracts. These practices include exploiting tied packages and/or use aggressive commercial practices. This results in onerous or disproportionate non-contractual barriers to the rights to terminate a contract or to switch to another product or another trader (coercion), maintaining customers "hostage" to a product or service that they do not want or need. In some cases, there is a possibility for creditors of terminating the contractual relationship regarding another product or service included in the package, creating ex post monopoly, for which firms compete ex ante.

In its own initiative opinion, the FSUG made the following statements and recommendations:

- In general, Member States should introduce measures to prohibit tying practices, when the product or service and their components are functionally independent. The provider must be available to sell them separately, specify all prices, and provide an estimation for future prices in case they evolve over time (so long as indexed to a relevant price index such as inflation).
- For example, banks sell actively home loans and a life insurance policy linked to home loans. Where those life insurance policies are created specifically to cover risks related to a particular home loan product, thus, cannot be available to be sold separately, we are dealing with a tied package. In those circumstances, banks must be available to sell a home loan without obligating the costumer to buy them life insurance.
- That is, tied packaging can only be allowed when one or more products that constitute it enable the consumer to reduce the risk of breach of contract of the relevant product or service established with the provider and, as a result of

this decrease of the risk, there is an unquestionable reduction of the price of all the products that make up the package compared to the offer and prices available on the market for the same type of products.

- It is unacceptable that the lender may require the purchase of a product and/or service that does not reduce the borrower's risk towards the lender in contracting a certain product and hence reduce the cost (spread) of the loan for the borrower or permit its approval. This is the case of a payment account which is used solely for the purpose of repayment. Moreover, the established process for direct debits (especially SEPA) ensures the frictionless option to ensure payments of instalments irrespective of where (payment institution) the account is held.
- Under no circumstances, be it a bundled package, should a provider be allowed to unilaterally change the contract terms of products or services sold, causing damages to the customer, and needs to specify all future prices of the package or an estimation for future prices in case there is a possible change in them (so long as indexed to a relevant price index such as inflation) and for each single product or service that are functional independent. The customer should be informed ex ante, with a clear breakdown of all relevant known present and future costs, such as monitoring and administration fees, transactions costs, and pre-payment penalties of the products or services contracted, and those conditions should not change over time.

The FSUG concluded their opinion with a series of proposal for amendments to the existing EU legislation which would address the problems of coercive selling.

The full FSUG opinion and recommendations on coercive selling can be downloaded <u>here.</u>

FSUG letter to the European Commission on the nomination of users' representatives in the High Level Forum on the Capital Markets Union (CMU)

The composition of the newly established High Level Forum on the Capital Market Union was made public in November 2019. In December, the FSUG decided to write to the European Commission to raise their concerns about the lack of users' representatives in this new expert group set by the European Commission to "propose targeted policy recommendations for future CMU actions, to ensure that citizens and businesses can access capital markets across the EU on equal terms and irrespective of their geographical location."

Notably the FSUG raised serious concern about the fact that among the 28 members of the HLG there were only two representatives of final users of financial services, both nominated in the sub-group on "Investment choice and accessibility to capital markets services to promote greater retail investors' participation", while the other two HLG subgroups had no end users' representative at all. The FSUG feared the voice of end users would not be heard adequately in these important debates.

The FSUG also used this opportunity to raise some general concerns about the CMU, regretting that so far EU capital markets have not delivered for real economy firms and financial users. The FSUG notably pointed to:

- a misallocation of financial resources to short term and rent-seeking financial activities, depriving real economy firms of long term patient capital;
- financial markets distorted with asset price bubbles and systemic risks created; and
- sustained poor investment performance by asset managers and high, opaque charges extracting huge value from the pensions and savings of individual financial services users.

The issue of end users' representation in all relevant EU expert groups was further debated within the FSUG and pursued in 2020. It eventually resulted in the FSUG being invited to meet briefly with the HLG subgroup "Investment choice and accessibility to capital markets services to promote greater retail investors' participation" as an external expert.

The FSUG remains strongly convinced that consumers' representation must be strengthened in EU expert groups to ensure that the CMU develops in a way that meets the needs of real economy firms and citizens as financial services users. To develop, the CMU needs to attract retail investors across the EU, and that requires that their voice is heard in all relevant EU debates.

FSUG MEETINGS IN 2019

The FSUG met five times over the year for two-day meetings on **31/01-01/02**, **28-29/03**, **23-24/05**, **12-13/09** (in Rome with Italian banking/saving institutions and consumers' organisations. See special feature below), and **28-29/11** (this meeting included a joint meeting with FIN-NET, the European network of national financial dispute resolution schemes).

During these physical meetings and virtually between meetings, the FSUG was consulted/updated by DG FISMA and DG JUST on various dossiers such as:

- the evaluation of the Directive on Distance Marketing of Financial Services,
- the EC behavioural study on the digitalisation of the marketing and distance selling of retail financial services,
- the evaluation and upcoming review of the Consumer Credit Directive and replies received to the EC public consultation,
- the Mortgage Credit Directive in the context of coercive tied selling,
- EC work to combat fraud of non-cash means of payments,
- potential consumers' issues around cross-border payments and instant payments,
- the added value of the PSD2 directive for consumers,
- EU action on enforcement of consumer law, unfair commercial practices and financial exclusion,
- Ecolabels and EU action on sustainable finance,
- EBA work on crypto-assets, etc.

For more details, you can find the minutes of FSUG meetings published on the FSUG website:

Minutes of the FSUG meeting held on 31 January and 1 February 2019

Minutes of the FSUG meeting held on 28 - 29 March 2019

Minutes of the FSUG meeting held on 23-24 May 2019

<u>Minutes of the FSUG meeting held on 12-13 September 2019</u>, in Rome (see also Special feature below)

Minutes of the FSUG meeting held on 28-29 November 2019, with joint session with FIN-NET

SPECIAL FEATURE

FSUG 2019 EXTERNAL MEETING, ROME 12 – 13 SEPTEMBER 2019

The 2019 FSUG external meeting took place in Italy at the Commission representation Office in Rome.

The work agenda had been organised over two days, the first day of the meeting was dedicated to presentations delivered by external speakers and following Q&A, the second day was dedicated to ordinary internal discussions among FSUG members.

The meeting has been very effective in providing the FSUG with a helpful insight into the current situation of Italian markets for banking, financial and insurance services, from the point of view of users' protection practices and issues.

- In particular during the first day of the meeting the work of the FSUG benefited from the detailed presentations and valuable discussion with representatives of the following Italian Authorities, independent consumer organisations, trade unions and academics:Banca d'Italia (Bank of Italy), Arbitro Bancario e Finanziario – ABF (i.e. the national ADR Scheme for the Banking and Payments Services);
- 2) Consob (Consob), Arbitro per le controversie finanziarie ACF (i.e. the national ADR Scheme for Investment Services);
- 3) Fondo Interbancario di Tutela dei Depositi (the Italian Deposit Guarantee Scheme);
- 4) Autorità Garante della Concorrenza e del Mercato (the Italian Competition Authority)
- 5) Altroconsumo (Italian independent consumer organisation member of BEUC);
- 6) Movimento Difesa del Cittadino (Italian independent consumer organisation);
- 7) Minerva (Laboratory on Gender Diversity and Gender Inequality, Sapienza University of Rome);
- 8) Federazione Autonoma Bancari Italiani (Italian banking sector trade union).

The presentation on the **Arbitro Bancario Finanziario (ABF)** was delivered by the ABF representative, **Mr. Ruggero Manenti**, which comprehensively presented the functioning and main characteristics of this ADR scheme established by Banca d'Italia in 2009 for banking and financial transactions and services, other than investment services. That ABF is an independent body but, without prejudice to the full decision-making autonomy of its seven panels, the Bank of Italy provides its full support to the system's activities, thanks above all to the technical secretariats, established at the Bank of Italy's branches in the cities where the panels operate. FSUG members had the opportunity to ask questions about the link between ABF and Banca d'Italia's supervisory functions, to get clarifications about ABF financial education actions and whether there are problems with payday lending in Italy.

The presentation on the **Arbitro per le controversie finanziarie – ACF**, clarified that the ACF is an Alternative Dispute Resolution scheme covering investment

services established by Consob in 2016. The ACF representative, **Ms. Arianna Fracassi**, explained the structure, functioning and objectives of the scheme. Although the scheme is quite recent, it is already dealing with a big amount of claims. FSUG members had the opportunity to better understand the definition of retail investor used by ACF and the relationship between ACF decisions and Courts decisions on same claims. Ms Fracassi also presented ACF future actions to promote financial education in Italy.

As to the **Fondo Interbancario di Tutela dei Depositi – FITD**, its President, **Mr Salvatore Maccarone**, presented the background of the scheme, detailed its functions and stressed that its primary objective is to maintain the trust of customers in the banking system. He reported on an recent case brought before the ECJ on whether measures granted by FITD to an Italian bank were to be considered state aid or not, where the General Court ruled that the support measures adopted by FITD for the benefit of one of its members did not involve state aid and therefore annulled the Commission's decision that such support measures constituted 'aid granted by a State'. He also stressed the importance of the set-up of a European deposit insurance scheme (EDIS) for bank deposits in the euro area. FSUG members asked where consumer protection stands in the complex balance between competition and financial stability. The possible implications of new technologies, such as blockchain, on bank deposits where also discussed.

The presentation of **Altroconsumo** on the PSD2 focused on the explanation by **Ms. Anna Vizzari**, senior economist at Altroconsumo, on how in a country like Italy, where the use of cash is still predominant, the PSD2 could change the payments market by reducing costs of digital transactions for customer and merchants, increasing consumer confidence in digital payments thanks to strong authentication and improving competition via open banking. A discuss took place on possible issues linked to the PSD2 provisions, such as the fact that there are several Application Programming Interfaces per Member State and the low consumer control over their data in the digital environment.

The presentation of the Autorità Garante della Concorrenza e del Mercato, delivered by Mr. Massimo Ferrero, gave the FSUG member a useful insight on unfair commercial practices in the Italian banking and financial sectors and the role and powers of the AGCM. The presentation was supported with the analisys of a number of investigations cases, for instance on misrepresentation of the applied economic conditions for consumer credit, or on the tying of loans and insurance products. FSUG members exchanged view with Mr Ferrero on several AGCM investigations.

The **Movimento Difesa del Cittadino (MDC)**, represented in this occasion by **Mr**. **Francesco Luongo**, MDC President, commented on the knowledge and use of digital payments in Italy, where confidence in digital payments and e-commerce is still quite low. He supported the option to encourage the use of electronic means of payments by granting tax incentives. In 2018, MDC together with other consumer organizations launched a project to raise awareness on the use of electronic payments among consumers. FSUG members stressed the risk of financial exclusion for vulnerable people linked to the move towards a cashless society.

As to the gender finance gaps and financial literacy, **Professor Marcella Corsi** from the **Minerva - Laboratory on Gender Diversity and Gender Inequality of Sapienza University of Rome**, highlighted the importance of financial literacy as a strategy to promote financial inclusion. She observed that individuals with a higher level of financial literacy are less prone to over-indebtedness and are more likely to make sound financial choices (saving behaviour, planning for retirement, etc.). This is very important for women because the gender gap in financial literacy is large and persistent across countries.

The **Federazione Autonoma Bancari Italiani (FABI)**, the most representative bank industry trade union in Italy, delivered a presentation on financial exclusion issues. **Ms. Elisabetta Mercaldo** illustrated FABI's perspective on how to manage the Italian economic situation after the financial crisis, which had high social impacts, and on how to face the digitalisation challenges. FSUG members asked about remuneration policies for banking staff in Italy.

The FSUG was very grateful to the Italian external speakers for the useful and targeted presentations delivered, their availability to have open discussions and their valuable views and comments on questions asked. FSUG members also thanked warmly its Italian member Simone Mezzacapo for the excellent programme he organized for the FSUG meeting in Rome.

FSUG RESEARCH PROJECT

Although the FSUG did not have a specific research project completed in 2019, the group spent a lot of efforts putting together the terms of reference for a study on Non-Performing Loans (or NPLs) which was outsourced through an open call for tenders in December 2019 (for more information click <u>here</u>).

The FSUG felt that such study was needed to better understand the recovery process of NPLs both by banks and specialised debt collection firms in the European Union with regard to individuals with non-performing loans, against the background of current EU and national law. The study had to focus on the different impacts (economic, social, reputational) of these processes on consumers/debtors in arrears.

NPLs are bank loans that are subject to late repayment or are unlikely to be repaid by the borrower. NPLs can pose both a financial stability and a financial consumer protection issue. Indeed, on the financial stability side a significant amount of NPLs puts in question the viability of a bank as it may cause losses that diminish the bank's capital and limit its capacity to provide credit to viable businesses. It also poses risks of cross-border spill-overs in terms of the overall economy and financial system of the EU and it alters market perceptions of the European banking sector as a whole. At the same time, on the consumer protection side, it affects consumers in case these NPLs are sold to funds that specialise in the collection of money from distressed debtors or in case banks outsource the debt collection to specialised firms.

The inability of borrowers to pay back their loans was aggravated by the 2007-2009 financial crisis and the 2010-2012 euro area sovereign debt crisis. This was very damaging to the EU banking sector in some Member States. Massive volumes of NPLs were accumulated in the banks' books. Although the volumes of NPLs have been decreasing in recent years, in 2017, according to the EBA dashboard (Q1 2018), the total reported NPLs in the EU still amounted to EUR 779.2 billion which were concentrated in countries such as Greece, Cyprus, Italy and Portugal. According to the Consolidated Banking Data by the European Central Bank, which includes both EU Member States and third countries, the total reported NPLs were above 1 trillion.

A 2012 study commissioned by the European Commission on behalf of the FSUG, analysed the means to protect consumers in financial difficulty, focusing specifically on the availability and use of personal bankruptcy and datio in solutum solutions of mortgages as legal solutions to problems of over-indebtedness faced by a number of consumers in the EU and on the legal framework under which debt collection institutions operate, in particular any restrictions on debt collection abusive practices.

The specific objectives of this new study - which will be completed in 2020 - are:

- To understand the recovery process of NPLs by banks involving consumers,
- To map the types of actors (e.g. debt recovery/collection institutions) involved in this process and to understand the business model of each type of actors,
- To assess the impacts on consumers,
- To survey best practices in other countries in the European Union,

• To provide conclusions which will be used by the FSUG to build their own recommendations.

FSUG MEMBERS

In 2019, the FSUG had up to 20 members, who are individuals appointed to represent the interests of consumers, retail investors or micro-enterprises, and individual experts with expertise in financial services from the perspective of the financial services user.

Members as of 31 December 2019:

Name	Title
Anne-Sophie PARENT (Chair)	AGE platform Europe
Christiane HÖLZ (Vice Chair)	DSW - Deutsche Schutzvereinigung für Wertpapierbesitz e.V.
Farid ALIYEV (Vice Chair)	BEUC – Bureau Européen des Unions de Consommateurs
Rym AYADI	Academic, HEC Montreal, CASS Business School in London
Morten BRUUN PEDERSEN	Danish Consumer Council
Alexandre CAGET	Union Défense des Experts d'Assuré (UDEA)
Desislav DANOV	Bulgarian financial forum
Federico FERRETTI	Associate professor, University of Bologna
Robin JARVIS	Professor of accounting, Brunel University
Olivier JERUSALMY	Finance Watch
Aleksandra MACZYNSKA	Better Finance
Mick MCATEER	Financial Inclusion Centre
Simone MEZZACAPO	Legal counsel
Joost MULDER	FairFin
Vinay PRANJIVAN	DECO - Associação Portuguesa para a Defesa do Consumidor

Edyta RUTKOWSKA- TOMASCEWSKA	Academic, Warsaw University
Martin SCHMALZRIED	COFACE – Confederation of Family Organisations in the EU
Jan SEBO	Academic, Matej Bel University
Daniela VANDONE	Academic, Università degli Studi di Milano
Octávio VIANA	Portuguese Investors' Association ATM

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