Contribution ID: 33e28bbd-cf52-419b-b496-3c873880abf3

Date: 28/09/2021 19:23:11

# The Directive on Distance Marketing of Consumer Financial Services: open public consultation

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#### Introduction

Directive <u>2002/65/EC</u> on Distance Marketing of Consumer Financial Services ('Directive') lays down rules on three key areas (pre-contractual information; right of withdrawal; ban of unsolicited services) concerning the distance marketing of consumer financial services. Any service of a banking, credit, mortgage, insurance, personal pension, investment or payment nature falls under the scope of Directive whenever the financial service is purchased at a distance.

The Directive aims at promoting the free movement of financial services in the single market by harmonising consumer protection rules governing this area. The Directive sets out a list of information items concerning the financial service that the consumer should receive before the distance contract is concluded.

The Directive applies horizontally across all EU legislation in the field of financial services, as long as the product-specific legislation (e.g. Consumer Credit Directive or Mortgage Credit Directive) or horizontal legislation (e.g. the General Data Protection Regulation) does not provide specific and more detailed rules. In this regard, the Directive is considered to contain a 'safety net', in the sense that in the absence of present or future rules regulating the issues covered by the Directive, the latter will apply. Whereas the Directive had clear value added when it entered into force, many of its substantial elements have been taken over by sectoral legislation that has been adopted afterwards, e.g. in the context and aftermath of the financial crisis.

In the 2017 EC Consumer Finance Action Plan, the Commission undertook to monitor the distance selling market of retail financial services in order to identify the potential consumer risks and business opportunities in this market and, on that basis, decide on the need to amend distance-selling requirements. In this context, a behavioural study was conducted: Behavioural Study on the digitalisation of the marketing and distance selling of retail financial services. On the basis of the Commission's 2019 Work Programme, the Commission launched an evaluation of the Directive. The evaluation found that the Directive has been partially effective in increasing consumer protection and is still of limited effectiveness in promoting the cross border delivery of financial services. While the Directive's objectives are still relevant, it is unclear to what extent it contributes to address the current challenges consumers face when purchasing a financial service at distance i.e. online or off premises. In particular, it found that digitalisation exacerbated some aspects not fully addressed by the Directive.

The Adjusted Commission 2020 Work Programme listed the Directive as subject to a "regulatory fitness"

exercise. In this context, the Commission will carry out an impact assessment to see whether and if so, how, to revise the Directive.

This public consultation is an opportunity for consumers, retail financial services professionals, national authorities and any other interested stakeholders to give their opinions on how they think the Directive is functioning. The results of this consultation will help the Commission when drafting the Impact Assessment and assessing the Directive.

The consultation consists of two short questionnaires. The first (set out in Part I) is aimed at the general public. The second (set out in Part II) is for other stakeholders such as associations, authorities and financial services providers.

The public consultation will be available in all 24 official languages of the EU. Shortly after the close of the consultation, the Commission will publish a summary of the contributions received.

## About you

\*Language of my contribution

Bulgarian
Croatian
Czech
Danish
Dutch
English
Estonian
Finnish
French
German
Greek
Hungarian
Irish
Italian
Latvian
Lithuanian
Maltese
Polish
Portuguese
Romanian
Slovak

Spanish Swedish  *I am giving my contribution as Academic/research institution Business association Company/business organisation Consumer organisation EU citizen Environmental organisation Non-EU citizen
*I am giving my contribution as  Academic/research institution  Business association  Company/business organisation  Consumer organisation  EU citizen  Environmental organisation
<ul> <li>Academic/research institution</li> <li>Business association</li> <li>Company/business organisation</li> <li>Consumer organisation</li> <li>EU citizen</li> <li>Environmental organisation</li> </ul>
<ul> <li>Academic/research institution</li> <li>Business association</li> <li>Company/business organisation</li> <li>Consumer organisation</li> <li>EU citizen</li> <li>Environmental organisation</li> </ul>
<ul> <li>Business association</li> <li>Company/business organisation</li> <li>Consumer organisation</li> <li>EU citizen</li> <li>Environmental organisation</li> </ul>
<ul><li>Company/business organisation</li><li>Consumer organisation</li><li>EU citizen</li><li>Environmental organisation</li></ul>
<ul><li>Consumer organisation</li><li>EU citizen</li><li>Environmental organisation</li></ul>
<ul><li>EU citizen</li><li>Environmental organisation</li></ul>
Environmental organisation
~ NOU-EU CIII/6U
Non-governmental organisation (NGO)
Public authority
Trade union
Other
*First name
Panya
*Surname
Monford
*Email (this won't be published)
pmonford@woccu.org
*Organisation name
255 character(s) maximum
World Council of Credit Unions
*Organisation size
Micro (1 to 9 employees)
<ul><li>Small (10 to 49 employees)</li></ul>
Medium (50 to 249 employees)

Large (250 or more)

# Transparency register number

255 character(s) maximum

Check if your organisation is on the <u>transparency register</u>. It's a voluntary database for organisations seeking to influence EU decision-making.

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*Country of origin			
	of origin, or that of your organ		
Afghanistan	Djibouti	Libya	Saint Martin
Åland Islands	Dominica	Liechtenstein	Saint Pierre and
			Miquelon
Albania	Dominican	Lithuania	Saint Vincent
	Republic		and the
			Grenadines
Algeria	Ecuador	Luxembourg	Samoa
American Sar	noa <sup>©</sup> Egypt	Macau	San Marino
Andorra	El Salvador	Madagascar	São Tomé and
			Príncipe
Angola	Equatorial Gui	inea <sup>©</sup> Malawi	Saudi Arabia
Anguilla	Eritrea	Malaysia	Senegal
Antarctica	Estonia	Maldives	Serbia
Antigua and	Eswatini	Mali	Seychelles
Barbuda			
Argentina	Ethiopia	Malta	Sierra Leone
Armenia	Falkland Islan	ds <sup>©</sup> Marshall Island	ds <sup>©</sup> Singapore
Aruba	Faroe Islands	Martinique	Sint Maarten
Australia	Fiji	Mauritania	Slovakia
Austria	Finland	Mauritius	Slovenia
Azerbaijan	France	Mayotte	Solomon Islands
Bahamas	French Guiana	a Mexico	Somalia
Bahrain	French Polyne	esia <sup>©</sup> Micronesia	South Africa
Bangladesh	French Southe	ern <sup>©</sup> Moldova	South Georgia
	and Antarctic		and the South
	Lands		Sandwich

Islands

0	Barbados	0	Gabon		Monaco	0	South Korea
0	Belarus		Georgia		Mongolia	0	South Sudan
0	Belgium		Germany		Montenegro	0	Spain
0	Belize		Ghana		Montserrat	0	Sri Lanka
0	Benin		Gibraltar		Morocco	0	Sudan
0	Bermuda		Greece		Mozambique	0	Suriname
0	Bhutan	0	Greenland	0	Myanmar/Burma	0	Svalbard and
							Jan Mayen
0	Bolivia		Grenada		Namibia	0	Sweden
0	Bonaire Saint		Guadeloupe	0	Nauru	0	Switzerland
	Eustatius and						
	Saba						
0	Bosnia and		Guam	0	Nepal		Syria
	Herzegovina						
0	Botswana		Guatemala		Netherlands		Taiwan
0	Bouvet Island		Guernsey		New Caledonia		Tajikistan
0	Brazil		Guinea	0	New Zealand	0	Tanzania
0	British Indian		Guinea-Bissau	0	Nicaragua	0	Thailand
	Ocean Territory						
0	British Virgin	0	Guyana		Niger	0	The Gambia
	Islands						
0	Brunei	0	Haiti	0	Nigeria		Timor-Leste
0	Bulgaria	0	Heard Island and	0	Niue		Togo
_			McDonald Islands	3			
0	Burkina Faso	0	Honduras	0	Norfolk Island	0	Tokelau
0	Burundi	0	Hong Kong	0	Northern	0	Tonga
					Mariana Islands		
0	Cambodia	0	Hungary	0	North Korea	0	Trinidad and
							Tobago
0	Cameroon	0	Iceland	0	North Macedonia	0	Tunisia
0	Canada	0	India	0	Norway	0	Turkey
	Cape Verde	0	Indonesia	0	Oman	0	Turkmenistan
	Cayman Islands		Iran		Pakistan		Turks and
							Caicos Islands

	Central African	0	Iraq	0	Palau		Tuvalu
	Republic						
0	Chad	0	Ireland	0	Palestine	0	Uganda
0	Chile	0	Isle of Man	0	Panama	0	Ukraine
	China		Israel		Papua New		United Arab
					Guinea		Emirates
0	Christmas Island		Italy		Paraguay	0	United Kingdom
	Clipperton		Jamaica		Peru	0	United States
	Cocos (Keeling)		Japan		Philippines	0	United States
	Islands						Minor Outlying
							Islands
0	Colombia		Jersey		Pitcairn Islands	0	Uruguay
	Comoros		Jordan		Poland	0	US Virgin Islands
0	Congo		Kazakhstan		Portugal	0	Uzbekistan
0	Cook Islands		Kenya		Puerto Rico	0	Vanuatu
0	Costa Rica		Kiribati		Qatar	0	Vatican City
0	Côte d'Ivoire		Kosovo		Réunion	0	Venezuela
0	Croatia		Kuwait		Romania	0	Vietnam
0	Cuba		Kyrgyzstan		Russia	0	Wallis and
							Futuna
0	Curaçao		Laos		Rwanda	0	Western Sahara
0	Cyprus		Latvia		Saint Barthélemy		Yemen
0	Czechia		Lebanon		Saint Helena	0	Zambia
					Ascension and		
					Tristan da Cunha		
	Democratic		Lesotho		Saint Kitts and	0	Zimbabwe
	Republic of the				Nevis		
	Congo						
0	Denmark	0	Liberia	0	Saint Lucia		

The Commission will publish all contributions to this public consultation. You can choose whether you would prefer to have your details published or to remain anonymous when your contribution is published. Fo r the purpose of transparency, the type of respondent (for example, 'business association, 'consumer association', 'EU citizen') country of origin, organisation name and size, and its transparency register number, are always published. Your e-mail address will never be published. Opt in to select the privacy option that best suits you. Privacy options default based on the type of respondent selected

## \*Contribution publication privacy settings

The Commission will publish the responses to this public consultation. You can choose whether you would like your details to be made public or to remain anonymous.

# Anonymous

Only organisation details are published: The type of respondent that you responded to this consultation as, the name of the organisation on whose behalf you reply as well as its transparency number, its size, its country of origin and your contribution will be published as received. Your name will not be published. Please do not include any personal data in the contribution itself if you want to remain anonymous.

#### Public

Organisation details and respondent details are published: The type of respondent that you responded to this consultation as, the name of the organisation on whose behalf you reply as well as its transparency number, its size, its country of origin and your contribution will be published. Your name will also be published.

I agree with the personal data protection provisions

# Part I: General questions

If you are not replying as a member of the general public, please go to Part II.

In this part of the questionnaire, we would like you to share your experience of buying retail financial services such as consumer loans, insurance and bank accounts using means of distance communication such as the internet, telephone or postal services. This part of the questionnaire does not cover face-to-face interactions with a financial services provider.

**1.** Have you bought one or more of the below financial services by means of distance communication (e.g. through the internet by using your computer /smartphone/tablet, or through the telephone or through postal service) in the past 5 years?

	Yes	No
Consumer credits (including credit cards)	0	0
Mortgages	0	0
Insurance products (e.g. car, home insurance, etc.)	0	0
Payment accounts	0	0
Investment products (e.g. shares, bonds or funds)	0	0

Payment services (such as money transfer services)	0	0
Personal pension products	0	0

**2a.** If you bought one or more of the below financial services by means of distance communication in the past 5 years, how satisfied were you with the information (e. g. information on the identity of the service provider and on the product/service, information on your rights) received before you concluded the contact?

	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Average	Not Satisfied
Consumer credits (including credit cards)	0	0	0	0
Mortgages	0	0	0	0
Insurance products (e.g. car, home insurance etc.)	0	0	0	0
Payment accounts	0	0	0	0
Investment products (e.g. shares, bonds or funds)	0	0	0	0
Payment services (such as money transfer services)	0	0	0	0
Personal pension products	0	0	0	0

Please explain your reply if you were dissatisfied with the information provided	prior
to the purchase of the financial service	

**2b.** In your opinion, would your experience of contracting any of the financial services mentioned above have been smoother if (5=completely agree, 1=totally disagree):

	5 (Totally Agree)	4 (Agree)	3 (Neutral)	2 (Disagree)	1 (Totally Disagree)
The pre-contractual information was adapted to your device (e.g. the information would fit into your smartphone)	0	•	0	•	0
The main information on the financial service provided at pre-contractual stage would be visible at a glance	0	0	0	0	0

The pre-contractual information provided by different suppliers would be provided side-by-side or through a comparison website	0	•	0	•	0
The pre-contractual information contained certain key information which highlighted in a prominent way (e.g. fees, charges)	0	•	0	•	0
Additional information would have been presented through the use of hyperlinks or sent separately e.g. in a pdf via email	0	0	0	0	0
The pre-contractual information would have used simpler and more straightforward language	©	0	0	0	•

**3a.** The Directive grants, for certain financial services a right of withdrawal to the consumer. If you bought one or more of the below financial services by means of distance communication in the past 5 years, how often, if ever, have you exercised your right of withdrawal?

	More than once	Once	Never
Consumer credits (including credit cards)	0	0	©
Mortgages	0	0	0
Certain insurance products (e.g. car or home insurance)	0	0	©
Payment accounts	0	0	0
Payment services (such as money transfer services)	0	0	0
Personal pension products	0	0	©

# **3b.** Would the right of withdrawal be easier to use if:

	Yes	No	Don't know
A reminder is sent to the consumers shortly (e.g. 3 days) before it expires	0	0	0
A withdrawal form is provided whenever a financial service contract is concluded	0	0	0
It is already easy to use and thus, no additional requirement is needed	0	0	0

**4.** The Directive exempts the consumer from any obligation in the event of unsolicited supplies (e.g. you are given a credit even though you did not request it). In the past five years, how often, if ever, have you been provided, without your request, with any of the below financial services?

	More than once	Once	Never
Consumer credits (including credit cards)	0	0	0
Mortgages	0	0	0
Insurance products (e.g. car, home insurance, etc.)	0	0	0
Payment accounts	0	0	0
Investment products (e.g. shares, bonds or funds)	0	0	0
Payment services (such as money transfer services)	0	0	©
Personal pension products	0	0	0

Please explain the outcome if you were supplied with any of the above financial
service in an unsolicited manner:
5. If you purchased your financial service by means of distance communication,
which of the below was/were the decisive factor(s) to conclude the contract at
distance rather than in a shop or office?
at most 3 choice(s)
It allows me to access offers from all over the European Union
It allows me to access cheaper offers
It allows me to compare offers more easily
It allows me to access services that are better adapted to my needs
It allows me to take more time to review the offers
It means I can access the service 24 hours a day
Other

Part II: Technical questions on the specific value added of the provisions of the Directive compared to other legal acts

This part is aimed at obtaining replies from experts and/or practitioners in the field (financial services providers, associations, authorities, academics). If you are a member of the general public, replies to Part I are enough and you do not need to reply to the forthcoming questions.

1. Considering the overlap with sector spe	cific legislation, b	oased o	n your	
experience, how often are the articles on p	re-contractual in	formati	on stem	ming
from the Directive applied or enforced with	regard to the fol	llowing	financia	]
services?				
	On a daily basis	Often	Rarely	Neve

	On a daily basis	Often	Rarely	Never
Consumer credits (including credit cards)	0	0	0	0
Mortgages	0	0	0	0
Insurance products (e.g. car, home insurance etc.)	0	0	0	0
Payment accounts	0	0	0	0
Investment products (e.g. shares, bonds or funds)	0	0	0	0
Payment services (such as money transfer services)	0	0	0	0
Personal pension products	0	0	0	0

Please explain how the articles on pre-contractual information stemming from the
Directive are still applied or enforced, providing the situation when it was applied or
enforced:

2. Considering the overlap with sector specific legislation, based on your
experience, how often are the articles on the right of withdrawal stemming from the
Directive applied or enforced with regard to the following financial services?

	On a daily basis	Often	Rarely	Never
Consumer credits (including credit cards)	0	0	0	0
Mortgages	0	0	0	0
Insurance products (e.g. car, home insurance etc.)	0	0	0	0
Payment accounts	0	0	0	0
Payment services (such as money transfer services)	0	0	0	0
Personal pension products	0	0	0	0

Please explain how the right of withdrawal stemming from the Directive is still	
applied or enforced, providing the situation when it was applied or enforced:	

3. Considering the overlap with sector spec	cific legislation, b	ased o	n your	
experience, how often is the article on unse	olicited services	of the D	Directive	applied
or enforced with regard to the following fina	ancial services?			
	On a daily basis	Often	Rarely	Never

	On a daily basis	Often	Rarely	Never
Consumer credits (including credit cards)	0	0	0	0
Mortgages	0	0	0	0
Insurance products (e.g. car, home insurance etc.)	0	0	0	0
Payment accounts	0	0	0	0
Investment products (e.g. shares, bonds or funds)	0	0	0	0
Payment services (such as money transfer services)	0	0	0	0
Personal pension products	0	0	0	0

Please explain how the article on unsolicited services stemi	ming from the Directive
is still applied or enforced, providing the situation when it was	as applied or enforced:

**4.** Considering the overlap with sector specific legislation, based on your experience, how often is the article on unsolicited communication of the Directive applied or enforced with regard to the following financial services?

	On a daily basis	Often	Rarely	Never
Consumer credits (including credit cards)	0	0	0	0
Mortgages	0	0	0	0
Insurance products (e.g. car, home insurance etc.)	0	0	0	0
Payment accounts	0	0	0	0
Investment products (e.g. shares, bonds or funds)	0	0	0	0
Payment services (such as money transfer services)	0	0	0	0
Personal pension products	0	0	0	0

Please explain how the article on unsolicited communication established by the
Directive is still applied or enforced, providing the situation when it was applied or
enforced:

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**5a.** How useful is the 'safety net' feature of the Directive (i.e. the application of the Directive in those instances when new products appear on the market and are not yet subject to specific regulation and when the product specific legislation does not cover, or does not cover sufficiently, the rules established by the Directive ) for the following financial services?

	Very useful	Useful	Not useful	Irrelevant
Consumer credits (including credit cards)	0	0	0	0
Mortgages	0	0	0	0
Insurance products (e.g. car, home insurance etc.)	0	0	0	0
Payment accounts	0	0	0	0
Investment products (e.g. shares, bonds or funds)	0	0	0	0
Payment services (such as money transfer services)	0	0	0	0
Personal pension products	0	0	0	0

Payment services (such as money transfer services)	0	©	0	0
Personal pension products	0	0	0	0
Please explain				
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<b>5b.</b> Can you provide concrete examples whe				
since they went beyond the rules covered by	-		_	
(e.g. the right of withdrawal for payment acco	ounts contr	acted at	a distance	9)?
5c. Can you provide concrete examples whe	en you appl	ied the r	ules of the	Directive
for products which are exempt from the prod	luct specific	legislat	ion (e.g. pa	ayday
loans, which are a type of credit agreement,	contracted	at a dis	tance and	are below
EUR 200)?				
,				
5d. Can you provide concrete examples whe	an vou anni	ied the r	rules of the	Directive
·				
for new products that appeared on the marke	•	•	pecific legis	Siation
was enacted (e.g. virtual currencies bought a	al a distanc	e)		

6. Has the application and enforcement of the articles of the Directive progressively
diminished due to the entry into application of subsequent product or horizontal
legislation?

0	۷۵٥	•
	1 ->	٠

O No

Don't know

### Please explain

Overlapping legislation creates unnecessary regulatory burden which increases costs to the financial institutions and ultimately to the consumer. Overlapping legislation can often be in conflict with either national-level regulation or other requirements related to Financial legislation, i.e., Insurance Distribution Directive, the Regulation on Packaged Retail and Insurance-based Investment Products and the Solvency II Directive; and the cross-sectoral legislation, i.e., e-commerce Directive and the General Data Protection Regulation are at the risk of overlap. Overlapping legislation exhausts resources and creates additional costs including expenditures covering staffing, training, auditing, etc.

## 7. Would the repeal of the Directive lead to:

	Yes	No	Don't know
Regulatory gaps leading to an unlevel playing field (e.g. undue competitive advantage for financial providers in Member States that would provide a less protective framework)	•	0	0
Lower consumer protection in those areas which are not as yet covered by product specific or horizontal legislation (e.g. pre-contractual information for consumer loans below EUR 200)	•	0	0
Increased difficulties for cross-border trade	•	0	0
A reduction of administrative burdens for Member States (e.g. reduction of costs for supervision of the obligations stemming from the Directive)	•	0	0
A reduction of regulatory costs for financial service providers (e.g. less compliance costs related to pre-contractual information obligations stemming from the Directive)	•	0	0
None of the above since in practice the Directive scope of application has lost most of its relevance	0	•	0

## Please explain

The complete repeal of the Directive would leave gaps in regulation protecting consumers through necessary disclosures. While some administrative burdens and regulatory costs would be alleviated, in the long run, the damage to consumers and a de-centralized approach to regulating distance marketing would lead to increased costs for financial service providers. A repeal and replace or revision of the Directive would be preferable. Further, all entities engaged in services covered by the Directive should be required to conduct services in the same manner.

8. The Directive bans unsolicited services and communications from suppliers
when such services or communications lack the consumer's consent. However,
over time, through the introduction of product specific and horizontal specific
legislation, in particular Directive 2002/58/EC (e-Privacy), Directive 2005/29/EC
(unfair business-to-consumer practices) and Regulation (EU) 2016/679 (General
Data Protection Regulation), the bans established by the Directive have lost their
relevance. Should the revision of the Directive lead to the repeal of the current
articles (Articles 9 & 10) concerning unsolicited supplies and unsolicited
communications?

0	Yes
	163

<sup>⊚</sup> No

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Contact

JUST-E1@ec.europa.eu