

Autumn 2023

# European Consumer Debt Network Newsletter



## ECDN STATEMENT: ARTICLE 36 OF THE CONSUMER CREDIT DIRECTIVE LONG NEEDED – NOW ADOPTED: THE OBLIGATORY PROVISION OF DEBT ADVICE SERVICES

Europe has a problem of over-indebted persons and households.

In 2022, according to data of Eurostat 28,7 million people are severely materially and socially deprived.[1]

The most common triggers of over-indebtedness are unemployment, divorce/separation and illness. Children and elderly people belong to the most vulnerable groups and suffer a lot of the consequences of over-indebtedness like evictions or activities of the enforcement agencies. They suffer above average from deprivation, social and financial exclusion, stigma, isolation. About 20% of over-indebted people have mental health problems or illness.[2]

Therefore, [over-indebtedness is not only a financial issue but a welfare issue as well. The best remedy is the provision of holistic oriented debt advisory services.](#)

Now for the first time in the history of the European Union a Directive was adopted that makes the provision of debt advice services in each European member state obligatory. Article 36 (1) says: „Member States shall ensure that independent debt advisory services are made available to consumers who experience or might experience difficulties in meeting their financial commitments, with only limited charges payable for such services.”

Furthermore, creditors shall have processes and policies in place for the early detection of consumers experiencing financial difficulties and refer them to debt advisory services easily accessible to the consumer.

[We therefore call on all EU member states to start with the transposition of the Directive quickly.](#)

Debt advisory services help people with financial difficulties to get again [access to financial activities](#), to improve their [financial well-being](#) and health well-being, to bring them back into [economic life and social inclusion](#), to allow them to lead a [decent life](#).

- It is necessary that debt advisory services are [financed in a sustainable way](#) either by governments and/or by financial institutions.
- It is important that debt advices is done by professionally trained and skilled advisors.

The European Consumer Debt Network with its great expertise is at the disposal of all member states and willing and able to support all initiatives and capacity building.

Brussels, September 28, 2023

ECDN Management Committee

[1]Source: Eurostat 2022 ([ilc\\_pees01n](#)).

[2]ECDN webinar 20/09/2023

## CROATIAN STAKEHOLDERS & THE IMPROVEMENT OF DEBT ADVICE

To support the activities of our Croatian coordinator Igor Skrgatic, in July the ECDN president and lead coordinator of the Peppi project Dieter Korczak met representatives of the Croatian Banking Association, the Ministry of Finance, and Fina the leading Croatian provider of financial and electronic services.

Dr Korczak presented the goals of the PEPPi project, what had already been achieved in Croatia and what remains outstanding. Dr Korczak also explained and outlined the importance of the project against the backdrop of the new Consumer Credit Directive. The representatives of the three institutions were very interested in the project and will look for possibilities to support a better provision of debt advice in Croatia.

Pictures: Dieter Korczak and Igor Skrgatic with Tamara Perko, Director and Damir Vunic, Advisor, Croatian Banking Association, Ana Zoric, Director and Zvezdana Kidric, Head of Service, Ministry of Finance



## 30 November & 1 December PEPPI Conference

In light of the new Consumer Credit Directive, the European Consumer Debt Network (ECDN) will host a discussion event (30 November) and a conference (1 December 2023) to discuss debt advice, financial education, and different approaches and success stories from across the European Union. Speakers will include European Commission staff, academics and professionals working in the field of consumer debt advice, as well as organisational representatives providing practical and innovative examples of how they have established consumer-facing services over the last year, garnering State support, and building coalitions and cooperation.

**ECDN members & PEPPI participants:** 30 November 2023, Rue Washington 40, Brussels, Belgium 1400-1700 (CET) Attendees will discuss the consequences of the new Consumer Credit Directive on work & planning for ECDN, members and their organisations, and PEPPI participants.

**Open Attendance:** 1 December 2023, European Commission, Brussels, Belgium 9.30-1700 (CET) The conference will be an exciting opportunity to reflect on learning from the PEPPI project as it concludes, against the backdrop of the new Consumer Credit Directive. Speakers will not only include a selection of the PEPPI national coordinators, but also EU Commission officials, and members of the ECDN showcasing the useful legacy strands of the PEPPI project.

Register your interest to receive further information about this exciting event: [secretary@ecdnet.eu](mailto:secretary@ecdnet.eu)

## PEPPI Webinars

In September, ECDN hosted three sessions of a successful and well attended PEPPI webinar on 'Psychosocial Problems of Debtors' with speakers from Ireland, Sweden, and Germany. The recordings of the presentations are available to view on the PEPPI YouTube channel [<https://www.youtube.com/@ecdnet-peppi/featured>].

The October webinars will be given by staff from DG Justice & Consumers:

19 October 2023, 11-11.45 (CET) Elena Brolis - The Content & Consequences of the Consumer Credit Directive

26 October 2023, 11-11.45 (CET) Francesco Gaetano - Return on Investment in Debt Advice Services

Please register for these webinars before 17h (CET) on 12 October with [secretary@ecdnet.eu](mailto:secretary@ecdnet.eu)

## Website

The ECDN website is regularly updated, and we encourage members to regularly check for information that may be of interest.



## Specialist Training in Financial Resilience for Domestic Violence Services Ireland

### What is Financial Resilience Training?

Financial Resilience Training (FRT) is a free intensive and tailored programme that helps communities, charities and individuals experiencing increased financial difficulty build their long-term financial resilience and get the most out of their income. The programme includes hands-on activities and group learning to help people and communities struggling with the current cost-of-living and energy crisis.

Money Advice and Budgeting Service (MABS) partnered with the Irish Banking and Culture Board (IBCB), Safe Ireland and the Think-tank for Action on Social Change (TASC), to design and deliver a specialist training in financial resilience for domestic violence services. The training was delivered using a 'Train the Trainer' approach. During these sessions the nature and impact of financial abuse were highlighted and discussed, relevant services were signposted, and staff were supported in developing the ability to help Domestic, Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (DSGBV) victims plan and manage their finances. See [www.frtdv.ie](http://www.frtdv.ie)

The training programme ran across four cycles (October 2022-March 2023) and was designed to build skills and knowledge in financial resilience for specialist domestic violence keyworkers who work directly with victims of domestic abuse. The aim was to allow them to support victims of financial abuse and coercion more effectively. 36 women working with Safe Ireland member organisations across Ireland completed the training. The training took place online across eight sessions. During these sessions the nature and impact of financial abuse was highlighted and discussed, relevant services were signposted, and staff were supported in developing the ability to help Domestic, Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (DSGBV) victims plan and manage their finances.

Session 1: Key concepts of economic control, financial abuse, and financial coercion

Session 2: Identifying and assessing financial abuse and coercion

Session 3: The cost-of-living crisis & strategies for managing bills & planning for the future

Session 4: Budgeting and saving

Session 5: Debt & credit, with an emphasis on managing debt incurred in abusive relationships

Session 6: Benefits and risks of using online tools and services

Session 7: National supports and entitlements

Session 8: Making a plan for financial recovery

Watch a short [video](#) by the IBCB from a bank staff member to hear more about the initiative, and find more information on financial awareness.

The [evaluation report](#) and [programme material](#) are available

More [information](#) on financial resilience training, its origins and the original Money Made Sense.

## PEPPI National Website Progress

One of the tangible outcomes of the PEPPI project is for each of the participating countries to develop a consumer-facing website for debt advice. The results, a culmination of hard work and determination, are impressive. In the last few days, Willy-Pierre Abbal of Temida in Bulgaria shared the work of the foundation, please see the website for this achievement. <https://temidafoundation.com>

In this newsletter, Romania and Slovakia have shared an overview of the significant work and progress they have made.

### Slovakia (Peter Daniels & Ladislav Suty)

Slovak Free Debt Counselling fully re-built its website [<https://pomahamedlznikom.sk/>] (as per PEPPI) and it now has a detailed Slovak version which can be accessed: In this readers can find several new sections:

- Household Finance Management with four advises regarding consumer contracts, funding vacation, dividing family budget to clusters, and deciding if to work as an employee and/or sole entrepreneur contract (many employers try to skip the Labor Code and push people to work based on business contracts instead).

- Life with a Debt with three sections (Legal, Economic, Psychological) advising what to do if the ex-partner does not pay for the child after the divorce, what to do if legacy is overindebted, personal bankruptcy pros & cons, consequences of not accepting incoming post, pros & cons of debt refinancing, personal income & expenditures balance, how to reduce telecommunications bills, how to face the inflation time, etc.

- Useful links with five sections (Execution Instalment Calculators, Other Calculators, Financial Literacy Self-testing, Useful Books, Partner Organizations, Other Useful Links). This section refers to the brochures of the governmental Legal Aid Centre on personal bankruptcy, consumer contracts, executions, court decisions, the letter samples recommended by the Slovak Chamber of Executors, link to the Association of Slovak Consumers, and the financial literacy education programme of the National Bank of Slovakia.

In the top of the website the user can click on ECDN & PEPPI logos to go directly to the ECDN website. The main site also informs the user For Whom Are We Here, How the First Meeting is Held, How We Can Help You, Office Hours, Contacts, and shows the Map of Offices. In the Contacts, section we provide full details of each of 46 offices including the photos of buildings. The bottom of our website contains the fixed banner named Did You Know That? Giving information about debt risks. The credit for re-building of our website goes mainly to our colleague **Kristian Gregor** and external expert **Marian Vybostok**. Many thanks to both!



## Screenshot from the website - Slovak Free Debt Counselling

**omahame**  
**dížnikom**

BEZPLATNÉ DLHOVÉ PORADNÉ | RIADENIE FINANČNÝCH DOMÁCNOSTÍ | ŽIVOT S DUHMI | UŽITOČNÉ LINKY | O PROJEKTE | KONTAKT

**BEZPLATNÉ DLHOVÉ PORADNÉ**  
Rady šité na mieru a podpora, ktorú potrebujete.  
Dhoví poradcovia vám poskytnú bezplatnú pomoc a navrhnu možná riešenia pre vašu konkrétnu situáciu.

**Pre koho?**

Je poradňa boli vytvorené s cieľom pomôcť práve i ostatným ľuďom v ťažkej finančnej situácii, ktorí chádzajú v začarovanom kruhu dlhov.

lenstvo s odborníkmi vám pomôže pochopiť zložité situácie a najť možností riešenia.

Posúdime oprávnenosť nárokov vašich veriteľov voči vám.

Zanalýzujeme možnosti v súlade s platnou legislatívou.

Navrhujeme pre vás najvýhodnejšie riešenia.

Poradíme, aké kroky je potrebné vykonať na dosiahnutie cieľa.

**Ako prebieha prvé stretnutie**

Na prvom stretnutí v dthovej poradni sa váš poradca bude snažiť pochopiť vašu zložitú situáciu, v ktorej sa momentálne nachádzate. Je tu pre Vás, aby vám poskytol bezplatnú pomoc a našiel to najlepšie riešenie, ako splácať dlhy.

Na prvé stretnutie si prineste:

- Zoznam všetkých vašich záväzkov
- Doklady/zmluvy k vašim dlhom
- Výpis z bankového účtu
- Mesačné výdavky (TV, mobil, elektrina a pod.)

Podrobný zoznam, čo si priniesť na prvé stretnutie

**Ako vám môžeme pomôcť**

Napriaznivá dthová situácia naznačená len finančnými problémami. Vaše dlhy vyplývajú z rôznych zmluvných záväzkov. Postupne sa vám doma hromadia upomienky, výzvy na zaplatenie dlhov či exekučné príkazy. To vytvára veľký psychický nátlak a stres.

V dthových poradiach sa preto venujeme vašim problémom komplexne, integrovaním ekonomického, právneho a psychologickeho poradenstva. Spolu s dthovým poradcom vyhodnotíte, aké poradenstvo potrebujete.

**Otváracie hodiny**

Deň	Doobeda	Popoludie
Pondelok	8:00-12:00	13:00-15:00
Utorok	8:00-12:00	13:00-15:00
Streda	8:00-12:00	13:00-17:00
Štvrtok	8:00-12:00	13:00-14:00
Piatok	8:00-12:00	

Náš tím odborníkov je pre vás k dispozícii osobne na ktorejkoľvek z našich 46 poradní.

Pre istotu si stretnutie dohodnite telefonicky na kontaktnom čísle vašej najbližšej poradne.

**Kontakty**

VÚC BRATISLAVA, NITRA, TRNÁVA, TRNČÍN

blava Dunajská Streda Galanta Komárno Levice Malacky Nitra Nové Mesto nad Váhom Nové Zámky  
Pezvánske Pazinok Pezvánsky Považská Bystrica Prievidza Senica Topoľčany Trnčín Trnava

VÚC BANSKÁ BYSTRICA, VÚC ŽILINA

Banská Bystrica Banská Štiavnica Brezno Čadca Dolný Kubín Liptovský Mikuláš Lučenec Martin  
Námestovo Revúca Rimavská Sobota Ružomberok Veľký Krtíš Zvolen Žilina

VÚC KOŠICE, VÚC PREŠOV

Bereďov Humenné Kežmarok Košice Michalovce Poprad Prešov Rožňava Svidník Nová Ves  
Stará Ľubovňa Stropkov Trebišov Vranov nad Topľou

**Mapa poradní**

Sieťou Bezplatných dthových poradní pokrývame územie celého Slovenska.

Nájdite najbližšiu Bezplatnú dthovú poradňu v mapách Google

### Romania (Dr Rodica Apan)

<https://consiliereconsumatori.ro/>

This is the first website dedicated to debt counseling in Romania. Consequently, it is necessary to include general information regarding the concept of counseling in matters of indebtedness, as it is reflected in the consumer protection rules and in those of social assistance. Also, a series of tips both to prevent over-indebtedness and for (over)indebted people are on the website, to help those in need. Moreover, we have developed a series of tips and recommendations for various vulnerable groups, such as the elderly, and now we are preparing a series of tips for people with disabilities, because the site is in a continuous dynamic.

On the site we have the contact details of the 3 consumer associations in Romania whose objective is the protection of consumers in the field of financial services. These 3 associations at our initiative, under the auspices of the PEPPI RO project, established the ProConFin coalition, to represent a voice in consumer protection debtors. Also available on the site are materials drafted and presented during the project meetings in the national network as they help to explain the phenomenon of debt counseling in Romania, its interdisciplinary character, the role of the public sphere and private in counseling and the directions to follow. Also, the European experience found in counseling models from other member states can be found on the website, in order to convince the public in Romania, that the counseling paradigm in matters of indebtedness is viable, sustainable and has beneficial social consequences. Also, we posted the information about the PEPPI project and about ECDN. Last but not least, the site includes the list of partners, from the public and private environment, which is constantly expanding.

## Organisation of the Romanian Website

Main menu	Sub-menu
Financial education	AbeceFINANCIAL
	Decision to take a loan
	The ABCs of Insurance
Management of financial resources	Rights of consumers of financial services
	Obligations of financial service providers
	Tips to prevent over-indebtedness
	Tips & Tricks for Millennials
Debt management	Over-indebtedness: causes and methods of prevention
	Awareness of the state of (over)indebtedness
	Recommendations for consumers in payment difficulty and/or representing a social case
	Insolvency procedure of natural person
Associations specialized in the protection of consumers of financial services	Free and independent counselling of over-indebted consumers
	Where to find help
	<b>ProConsFin Coalition</b>
	<i>Who are we?</i>
	<i>ProConsFin coalition's objectives</i>
	<i>Legislative initiatives</i>
Counselling and social assistance	Social Assistance System and Debt Counselling
	Protection of the elderly
	Regulation of protection measures for persons with intellectual and psychosocial disabilities
	Webinars for debt advisors
Video	<a href="http://revcurentjur.ro/old/index.php?page=arhiva&amp;lang=en&amp;nr=2022#202202">http://revcurentjur.ro/old/index.php?page=arhiva&amp;lang=en&amp;nr=2022#202202</a>
Resource	<a href="https://edutime.ro/">https://edutime.ro/</a>
	<a href="https://www.educatiefinanciara.info/">https://www.educatiefinanciara.info/</a>
	<a href="https://www.birouldecredit.ro/wps/portal/bcro/Home/acasa!ut/p/z1/04">https://www.birouldecredit.ro/wps/portal/bcro/Home/acasa!ut/p/z1/04</a>
	<a href="https://www.bnr.ro/Home-Mobile.aspx">https://www.bnr.ro/Home-Mobile.aspx</a>
	<a href="https://www.bnr.ro/Indicele-de-referin%C8%9Ba-pentru-creditele-consumatorilor-">https://www.bnr.ro/Indicele-de-referin%C8%9Ba-pentru-creditele-consumatorilor-</a>
	<a href="https://www.consilium.europa.eu/ro/press/press-releases/2022/06/09/consumer-">https://www.consilium.europa.eu/ro/press/press-releases/2022/06/09/consumer-</a>
	<a href="https://www.consilium.europa.eu/ro/press/press-releases/2022/06/09/consumer-">https://www.consilium.europa.eu/ro/press/press-releases/2022/06/09/consumer-</a>
	<a href="#">ECDN - The European Consumer Debt Network</a>
PEPPI Project	PEPPI - Provision of a european platform for the preventon of over-indebtness
	PEPPI EN
	Disclaimer
	Main activities carried out within PEPPI-RO
Events	
Partners	Current information – possible misleading practices of banks reported by ANPC
Blog	Legal protection of (over)indebted elderly persons
	Managing difficulties is paying

## Organisation of the Romanian Website

Contact	<a href="tel:0040_0730_078_888">(0040) 0730 078 888</a>
	<a href="mailto:office@consiliereconsumatori.ro">office@consiliereconsumatori.ro</a>
	Consumer advice on debt in Romania
	Common objectives to prevent (over)indebtedness and promotion independent and free counselling of vulnerable persons
	The future of debt advice
	European debt advice models
	<i>French model</i>
	<i>Slovak model</i>
	<i>Irish model</i>
	<i>German model</i>
	Income calculator