June 2025

European Consumer Debt Network Newsletter

Welcome to the June edition of our newsletter!

Before the summer break starts, we want to share some fresh inspiration from ECDN and our members.

Even though holidays are getting close, there's still a lot going on – like the 6th meeting of the Working Group on the CCDII Directive and our Annual General Assembly on June 27.

If you're thinking about becoming a member, now is the perfect time! Join us and take part in shaping what's next for ECDN.

In this edition:

- Financial Health Academy by SKEF, Poland;
- Letter from France: The number of overindebtedness procedures continues to rise in 2024;
- The Italian National Network of Social counseling centers for debt management and psychological support for families and businesses. The Know-how in the construction of services;
- Radio Cresus: a voice of the overindebted;
- Highlights from the Brussels Consumer Summit;
- Thoughtful Clicks – Worth a Read Or Listen This Summer.

Stowarzyszenie Krzewienia Edukacji Finansowej

ecdn european consumer debt network

FINANCIAL HEALTH ACADEMY BY SKEF, POLAND – BECAUSE SMART MONEY CHOICES ARE PART OF TAKING CARE OF YOUR HEALTH

The Polish Association for the Promotion of Financial Education (SKEF) has launched an important new educational initiative for seniors: a **series of workshops under the name "Financial Health Academy."**

The first session took place on May 11, 2025, at the Specialist **Hospital** in Biała Podlaska, gathering around 70 participants from the Virtual Senior Club and the University of the Third Age. The event was opened by Dr. Eng. Kazimierz Janiak, President of SKEF, who introduced the Association's mission and highlighted the vital role of Financial and Consumer Advisory Centres in preventing over-indebtedness. He emphasized the significant impact that financial well-being has on mental, physical, and social health. Following this, Magdalena Nastrabasz spoke about the role of financial education and its direct connection to health. Her presentation covered topics such as economic upbringing, financial resilience, the development of financial competencies, personal finance models, motivation theories, and the hierarchy of financial needs.

The next sessions in the series are already scheduled for September 2025.

This Academy is more than just a finance course for seniors – it offers a holistic look at health and financial security.

Topics include:

- **Financial well-being and stress** – exploring the links between financial pressure and health outcomes.

- **Debt and health** – addressing how over-indebtedness can affect psychological, physical, and social well-being. Description of anonymized cases from the situation of debt center clients.

- **Financial toxicity in cancer treatment** – how treatment-related costs can worsen patient outcomes by limiting access to proper therapy; SKEF wants to make seniors and hospital patients aware that the stress caused by mounting medical bills can worsen physical symptoms, weaken the immune system, and contribute to mental health problems such as anxiety and depression. SKEF wants to provide some tools for the conscious management of medical costs.

- **Legal and financial security** – from financial cyber security and health insurance to inheritance law and donations, all presented clearly and practically.

Participants will also have the opportunity to explore the findings of the 2024 **"Financial Health of Poles" report** and access **tools for self-assessing their financial health and managing treatment costs.**

Thanks to the Financial Health Academy, SKEF is proving that financial education can — and should — be part of **preventive healthcare.** Smart financial choices don't just ease the pressure on your wallet—they bring peace of mind, stability, and the strength to live well.

Over-indebtedness is more than a financial difficulty—it is a **serious health risk**. Mounting debts can trigger chronic stress, anxiety, depression, and physical conditions such as high blood pressure and sleep disorders. In a growing number of countries, healthcare professionals are beginning to respond to this reality, not only by referring patients to medical specialists, but also to debt advisors.

LETTER FROM FRANCE: THE NUMBER OF OVERINDEBTEDNESS PROCEDURES CONTINUES TO RISE IN 2024

IIn 2024, **134,803** overindebtedness cases were officially opened in France.

Without calling into question the decline of overindebtedness situations that have been underway for the last ten years (-42% since 2014), this **10.8% increase** compared with 2023 is mainly due to the **delayed effects of inflation**.

As a reminder, inflation figures reached record levels in 2022 (+5.2%) and 2023 (+4.9%). Over and above these indices, it is **food prices** (+7.3% in 2022 and +11.7% in 2023) and **energy prices** (+23.1% in 2022 and +5.6% in 2023) that have particularly increased and affected French households.

These figures are in line with the findings of the **Crésus** network. In 2024, the associations assisted more than **21,700 households (+10.2%)** for a total number of appointments of more than **37,600 (+12%).**

In addition, the network as a whole has noted an **increase in debts for current expenses, with more and more cases presenting no bank debts or credit** (excluding overdrafts).

Despite these developments, many people still contact Crésus with hesitation when it comes to submitting an overindebtedness application, due to fear of the procedure, leaving them unable to benefit from the protection and guidance it offers.

Like other EU Member States, France awaits the impact of the transposition of the Consumer Credit Directive, particularly in terms of regulating new credit products such as **buy-now-pay-later schemes and mini-loans**, which have so far fallen outside the scope of consumer credit legislation.

The implementation is also expected to introduce the role of an **independent debt advisor** into French law, a measure that could significantly support households in financial distress.

THE ITALIAN NATIONAL NETWORK OF SOCIAL COUNSELING CENTERS FOR DEBT MANAGEMENT AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SUPPORT FOR FAMILIES AND BUSINESSES.
THE KNOW-HOW IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF SERVICES.

In the current complex socio-economic landscape, debt represents an increasingly pressing challenge for families and businesses. Recurring economic crises, unexpected events, and a growing complexity of financial products can lead to situations of over-indebtedness, with serious repercussions on individual and family well-being and on the continuity of productive activities. In this context, **it is essential to have tools and services that offer concrete and qualified support to address the debt problem effectively and sustainably.**

In this context, and light of CCD II, I Diritti del Debitore has already developed an integrated consultancy service.
The services are already available on the website:
https://www.consultorio-famiglie.it/,
https://www.consultorio-imprese.it/ ,
https://www.psicologo-sociale.it/ ,
The construction of the physical network is underway.

The project developed by the National Association "I Diritti del debitore" aims to outline an innovative and **integrated intervention model**, based on the creation of a National Network of Consultants specialized in debt management for **families and businesses**.

Through a multidisciplinary approach, involving professionals with expertise in the financial, legal, psychological and social fields, the consultants act as an accessible and competent point of reference for providing an **in-depth analysis of the debt and asset situation**, offering clear and personalized guidance on possible solutions, support the preparation of **sustainable repayment plan**s, promote the prevention of over-indebtedness through financial education, promote the psychological and social well-being of the involved individuals and families. The project, therefore, represents a valuable guide to understanding the dynamics of debt, the opportunities offered by current legislation, and the most effective strategies to address and overcome financial difficulties, helping to serene and sustainable future for families and businesses in our country.

Gaps in the debt support system

In Italy, despite the presence of precise and detailed legislation to support debt crises, the possibility of accessing debt crisis resolution procedures, provided for by the Crisis and Insolvency Code, is little known in its function and in any case, complex and limited. In fact, there is a **lack of a coordinated offer of services** that includes legal advice, psychological support, and financial education. A more **proactive and widespread approach is needed** to intercept needs and promote access to services and the prevention of debt crises. The key to the approach is, therefore, **multidisciplinary and less fragmented advice.**

Objectives, goals, and project status

The Objectives of the Network of Consultants are to create a stable and widespread network that can intercept the needs of the territory and provide **concrete and personalized responses to debt and insolvency crises**, or to intervene in the causes and effects of situations of economic difficulty in the territory and of individual and business activities.

The Consultants must have not only a consultancy and assistance function, with a proactive action of listening and recovery of people and businesses .Consultants play a key role in offering support and early identifying financial distress among individuals and businesses.

They are the first point of contact in the community. Family and businesses in difficulty often tend not to seek help out of shame, fear of being judged, or lack of knowledge of the new function of the Crisis Code and the procedures envisaged.

The counseling centers, thanks to their confidential and immediate use, via the web and in the territory, and to their ability to create trust, can intercept situations of potential crisis early, before they become unsustainable.

The Service Delivery Model (common to all types of Counselling Centres) uses the existing network of crisis resolution bodies and can be summarised as follows:

1. **Initial Phase (Online)**

- The person/business accesses the Counselling Centre website and fills out a **questionnaire** to describe the overindebtedness situation.
- The Counselling Centre assigns the case to the professional deemed most suitable.

2. **Needs Assessment** (Online or In-Person)

- The professional contacts the person/business for an introductory interview. evaluates the situation and identifies specific needs.

3. **Construction of the Personalised Path**

- The Counselling Centre evaluates the complexity and defines an intervention plan, if necessary, **multidisciplinary**.

4. **Implementation of the path**

- The interested professionals implement the intervention plan.

Founding system

The forms of financing are, at the moment, identifiable in the calls for tenders of the Ministry of Labor and Social Policies, in the National Recovery and Resilience Plan, in the regional funds and in the funds made available by banking foundations and philanthropic organizations.

The above could really constitute the first real application of the CCDII in Italy, we are ready to share the path.

Written by Luca Rizzitano
External relation and legal manager
- I Diritti del Debitore

RADIO CRÉSUS: A VOICE FOR THE OVER-INDEBTED

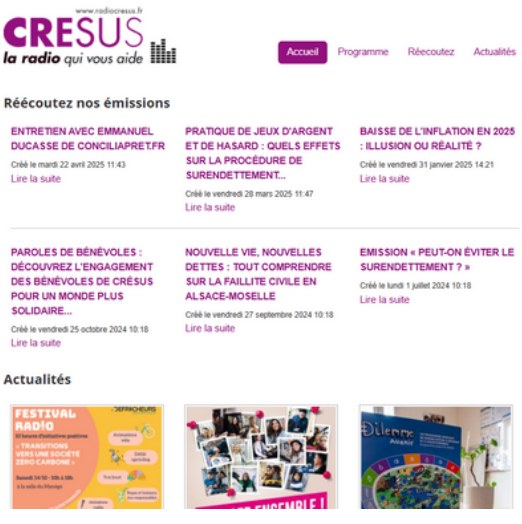
Radio Crésus was born out of the flood of requests for information that reached the volunteers of the Crésus association (Chambre régionale du surendettement social) in 2009.

Founded in 1992 in Alsace, the association has grown to include twenty-seven branches throughout France, all with the same mission: to **welcome, listen to, and support over-indebted households.**

The aim of Radio CRÉSUS is to **give a voice to people who are over-indebted**, to combat preconceived ideas about over-indebtedness, and, through these personal talks, **to give people hope for a better future.**

On a regular basis, **legal experts and contributors from the social economy** will be on hand to offer **invaluable advice** on topics as varied as the dangers of revolving credit, car-sharing, the status of self-entrepreneur, the right to a bank account, security deposits, new ways of consuming that are both economical and ecological, insurance, support for business start-ups, consumer rights, etc.

You can find the link to Radiocresus at this link: https://www.radiocresus.fr



HIGHLIGHTS FROM EUROPEAN CONSUMER SUMMIT 2025

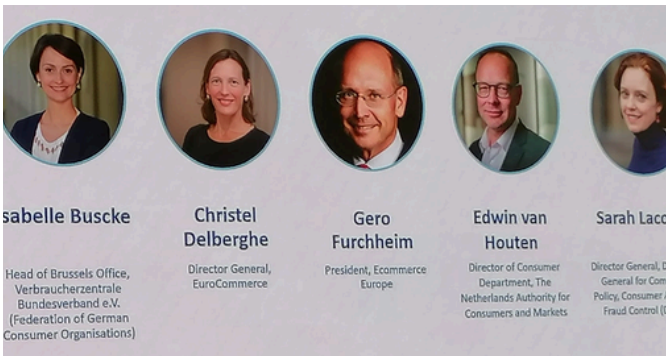
By invitation of **Michael McGrath, European Commissioner** for Democracy, Justice, the Rule of Law and Consumer Protection, the ECDN President Dieter Korczak participated in the European Consumer Summit 2025.

The summit took place on May 20, 2025, at the Thon Hotel Brussels City Centre. The general agenda of the summit was **"A better future for consumers and competitiveness"**.

During the Summit, three main topics were discussed. A High-Level panel addressed a competitive Europe protecting its consumers. It was followed by two thematic discussions, "**Strengthening consumer protection through effective enforcement"** and **"Shaping a safe digital market for young consumers"**. The panel (with Commissioner McGrath and Isabelle Pérignon, Director, DG Justice and Consumers) highlighted **the critical role of enforcement in upholding consumer protection** laws. The first thematic discussion also addressed the role of enforcement, the second one focused on shaping a safe digital market for young consumers.

According to Nils Behrndt, DG Justice and Consumers, the Summit had 400 registered participants. Dieter Korczak met Eleni Alevitrou (EKPIZO/Greece), Andrejs Vanags (Pateretajs/ Latvia), Kestutis Kupsys (LVOA/ Lithuania), who have been involved in the PEPPI project, and Alin Iacob (FSUG Chairman) and Vinay Pravin (DECO/Portugal).

The Summit made clear that **competitiveness, improving and protecting the digital consumer, and enforcement will be key priorities in the coming years.**



THOUGHTFUL CLICKS – WORTH A READ OR LISTEN THIS SUMMER

Explore a carefully curated list of noteworthy reads for the summer season. Selected to inform and inspire, whether you're reading from your desk or a deck chair.

FSUG published a position paper on debt advice written by Dieter Korczak.
Link:
https://finance.ec.europa.eu/document/download/e09be669-43bd-4b4d-82e1-80d9f838bc97_en?filename=fsug-opinions-250602-debt-advice_en.pdf

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The Italian Economic Journal published Dieter Korczak's article about **"The Role of Financial Education for the Prevention of Financial Fragility and Over-Indebtedness"**
Link: https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s40797-025-00334-5

Gwen Harris from MABS took part in two episodes of Melissa Boyle's podcast Master My Balance. She spoke about **comprehensive financial well-being**, the work of MABS, and how early action, informed choices, and open conversations can change the course of financial distress.
Links: Part 1, Part 2:

We would like to encourage you to share your new materials, educational resource publications, best practices (case studies, reports, and research), tools, templates, and success stories with us in our next edition. We are a growing community, and sharing our work helps us all learn and grow stronger as a consumer debt network.

You can email your contributions to secretary@ecdn.eu with a brief description of the materials.

Thank you for your dedication and support.