

Provision of European and National Platforms for the Prevention of Over-indebtedness

The PEPPi report

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Abstract

The European Consumer Debt Network (ECDN) was awarded by the European Union (EU) with a grant to build a European platform for the prevention of over-indebtedness and to improve the effectiveness of debt advice for citizens in thirteen different EU Member States. The project was given the acronym “PEPPi”.

The project started in July 2022 with a kick-off meeting and ended in December 2023 with a final conference. During the project period, a European platform was developed (<https://www.ecdn.eu>), including a Knowledge Platform and an Online Academy.

The Knowledge Platform provides the scientific and practitioners’ community with all the tools, information resources and guidance they need for an effective and efficient debt advisory service. The Online Academy ensures common starting points and guidelines for providing debt advice in EU Member States by providing professional advice on how to organize and execute debt advice. The European website was launched in March 2023. Within the framework of the Academy, ECDN has conceptualized twenty-five webinars, with a focus on relevant content for the training of debt advisors and the issue of financial fragility and over-indebtedness in general. The webinars were conducted by international experts and made a significant contribution to the dissemination of modern approaches to debt counselling. A total of around 1,600 people participated in the webinars.

The cooperating thirteen EU Member States were selected with regard to their state of the provision of debt advisory services. These countries offered no or only a few debt advisory services to their citizens.

This project enabled national experts and organizations to develop first access points for over-indebted citizens. The major activity in each country was also to develop a contact and information platform. For this purpose, numerous preparatory network meetings were held with the relevant national stakeholders from the administration, financial service providers, and civil society organizations. The national platforms were launched from September 2023 to December 2023. The report provides deep insights into the issue of private over-indebtedness and the challenges in establishing debt counselling centers. In addition, a curriculum for the professionalization of debt counselling will be presented. The PEPPi project faced great difficulties and challenges, but it was also a big step forward for access to debt advisory services in these countries. It was also a big step for the preparation of the transposition of the new EU Consumer Credit Directive (CCDII).

Keywords

Over-indebtedness, Financial Fragility, Debt advisory services, Knowledge platform, Online Academy, Consumer Credit Directive



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