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THE EUROPEAN UNION**

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"I" ITEM NOTE

from: Presidency /General Secretariat
to: Permanent Representatives Committee (Part II)

Subject: Proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on credit agreements relating to residential property (Mortgage Credit Directive-MCD)
- Approval of the final compromise text

1. On 5 April 2011 the Commission transmitted to the Council its proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on credit agreements relating to residential property (so-called Mortgage Credit Directive (MCD)). The Directive will be adopted under the ordinary legislative procedure with the European Parliament.
2. The European Central Bank adopted its opinion on the proposal on 5 July 2011, the European Economic and Social Committee its opinion on 14 July 2011, and the European Data Protection Supervisor its opinion on 25 July 2011.

On 7 June 2012 the relevant Committee of the European Parliament (ECON) voted on its opinion on the proposal. The position of the European Parliament at first reading is still pending. Following negotiations with the European Parliament, which were concluded on 22 April 2013, provisional agreement was reached on the compromise proposal as set out in document 8895/13 + COR 1 + COR 2. The only provision that was not agreed between the Presidency and the Parliament related to Article 28 (transposition). The Presidency, on behalf of Council, would not accept the following wording in Article 28:

"Where the documents accompanying notification of transposition measures provided by the Member States are not sufficient to assess fully the compliance of the transposing provisions with certain Articles of this Directive, the Commission may, upon a request from EBA in view of the application of Regulation (EU) No. 1095/2010 or on its own initiative, require Member States to provide more detailed information regarding the transposition and implementation of those provision and this Directive."

The Presidency advised the Parliament that it would not accept the above text as it is not in line with the Joint Political Declaration of 27 October 2011 of the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission. The Council therefore considers the agreed recital 46 sufficient for following up on the Directive's implementation. The Presidency expects that the Parliament will, in the end, fully respect the 2011 Joint Political Declaration.

4. Following a silence procedure within the framework of Working Party on Financial Services, which ended on Thursday, 2 May 2013, a strong qualified majority could agree to the outcome of the negotiations.

5. In these circumstances, the Permanent Representatives Committee (Part II) is invited to:
- (a) approve the final compromise text;
 - (b) confirm that the Presidency can indicate to the European Parliament that, should the European Parliament adopt its position at first reading in the exact form as set out in doc. 8895/13 + COR 1 + COR 2, the Council would approve the European Parliament's position and the Act shall be adopted in the wording which corresponds to the European Parliament's position, subject, if necessary, to revision by the legal linguist of both institutions, and
 - (c) enter into its minutes the statements set out in Annex.
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Statement by Austria

Austria still has concerns about the MCD compromise text because the requirements for pre-contractual information, which has to be provided on a mandatory form, and the obligation to assess the creditworthiness of the consumer contained in the MCD differ from those in the CCD. Like other Member States, Austria – when implementing Directive 2008/48/EC on credit agreements for consumers (CCD) – extended the scope of its new law on credit agreements for consumers to also apply to mortgage credit agreements. The MCD compromise text contains deviations from the CCD, which are not justified by the particularities of mortgage credit agreements, but would cause considerable additional costs for creditors and would be counterproductive as to a consistent legal situation (and thus equally for consumer understanding). Moreover, in the area of pre-contractual matters (information and creditworthiness assessment) and with respect to concrete individual cases, it will frequently be unclear (at pre-contractual stage) whether the credit is to be collateralised by a mortgage or not, and therefore whether this case would fall within the scope of the CCD or of the MCD. Different regulations/rules in the two Directives would result in great uncertainty as to which Directive to apply in a concrete case. As regards the APRC-calculation, we have problems with the restrictive interpretation of time intervals which would lead to the exclusion of day intervals from the scope of yearly fractions. This interpretation is currently incompatible with the methodologies used by many lending institutions across Europe. Any changes to the time intervals currently applied by lending institutions would impose a considerable and disproportionate administrative and financial burden with no obvious benefit for consumers.

Statement by Czech Republic

The Czech Republic, though aware of the importance and the need of the proposed directive, hereby declares its refusal of the current text of the proposal for Directive on Credit Agreements for Consumers Relating to Residential Immovable Property (further referred to as „MCD“).

Already in May 2012, the Czech Republic declared its only conditional acceptance of the MCD text provided that during the dialogues the text would be improved as regards the cooperation of the supervisory bodies.

According to our view there was and there still is a remaining issue in involving EBA (and excluding the cooperation of the consumer protection oversight bodies within the frame of the Regulation 2006/2004), namely in disputes where oversight bodies that are not EBA members are engaged. The agreed solution comprising of the duty of all non-EBA supervisory bodies to be subordinate to EBA (including binding mediation by EBA) is not simply acceptable, especially once there is a clear frame for cooperation of such consumer protection oversight bodies in Regulation No. 2006/2004.

Moreover, there are other important issues which support our disapproval of the text. These are:

1. the duty to impose caps on sanctions in the case of borrower's default (Arrears and Foreclosure Article 18b para 3); we are of the opinion that regulation of sanctions in case of borrower's default is a matter of private law and as such should be at the full discretion of a Member State;
2. the reinclusion of the word "residential";
3. the inclusion of a legally binding text on Financial Education in Article 4a; this directive is not a proper place to stipulate for financial education;
4. obligatory provision on Foreign Currency Loans, CZ supports discretionary provision;
5. the obligatory reflection period of 7 days which, regarding the lengthy and stressful process of obtaining a mortgage credit under time pressure from the side of the property seller, does not seem to be reasonable and will not be used by consumers;

Statement by Latvia and Luxembourg

Latvia and Luxembourg were not able to vote in favour of this Directive because its content was significantly watered down as compared to the Commission's initial proposal. The initial proposal aimed to create an efficient and competitive internal market for mortgage credit for consumers, creditors and credit intermediaries. Proposal sought to ensure both a well-functioning single market and a high level of consumer protection through a high level of harmonisation, which would have substantially reduced differences between national laws that act as barriers in the internal marketⁱ. Even though the initial proposal did not contain the mutual recognition principle, it formed a good basis for discussion. The text adopted today is a missed opportunity to achieve these two objectives, which were to be mutually reinforcing.

The lack of far-reaching harmonisation and mutual recognition, together with the large room for manoeuvre for Member States, will lead to serious legal uncertainty for the parties concerned. It is also contrary to the declared objectives of creating a fully integrated single market for mortgage credit and of ensuring a high and harmonised level of consumer protection. Both professionals and consumers stand to lose as a result of this text which has no added value. For businesses and consumers to take full advantage of their opportunities in the European Union, borders and barriers have to be lifted -and not to be reinforced.

Apart from having no clearly defined objective, the text as adopted is highly complex and at odds with the principles of "better regulation". It obliges Member States to change their rules without offering any benefits in return for businesses or consumers.

ⁱ Barriers are identified in the White Paper on the integration of EU mortgage markets, COM (2007) 807, 18.12.2007