



ECDN Newsletter – January to March 2021

With Dear members of the ECDN, as those of you following our social media accounts know, we have had a busy start of the new year, participating in the seminar on Best Practice as a part of the Debt Advice tender organized by the European Commission.



Valdani Vicari & Associati
ECONOMICS & POLICY

VVA Workshop

In January, our president, Sandy Madar had the pleasure of participating in the online seminars and following workshops arranged and conducted by the Valdani Vicari and Associati Group (VVA). Nearly 400 debt advisors, policy makers and other stakeholders participated with the common goal of sharing experience on good practices in Debt Advice. The online seminar formed part of the project on *“Provision of actions to extend the availability and improve the quality of debt-advice services for European households, commissioned by the European Commission.*

During the three online seminars on the 19th, the 21st and the 26th of January, experiences were exchanged through nine presentations on good practices, one of which were by our president, Sandy Madar, who presented the experiences of the Social Legal Aid in Denmark, emphasizing the importance of applying the Ethics Code in building trust between the debtors, creditors, and debt counsellors. We are proud to be able to say that the following workshop was the most well-attended at the seminar. On the last day of the seminar Commissioner Didier Reynders opened the conference and expressed his intentions to promote the delivery and availability of debt advise for all EU citizens.

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Meeting in the Scientific Group

On the 2nd of February, the members of our Scientific Group met online. The members discussed the situation in each of their countries one year after COVID-19 initially hit us and placed our societies under lockdown. the account of the members showed that the economy of the northern countries (Denmark, Norway, and Finland) have had a surprisingly low number of layoffs and corporate bankruptcies, but at the same time the restaurants and leisure industries are hit hard. Austria is experiencing a rise in bankruptcies and in Lithuania, Latvia and Hungary the small businesses are hit especially hard. Malta is suffering both from the effects of the COVID-19 lockdowns, but at the same time Brexit has affected the economy deeply as small





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business have lost a lot of income. In Ireland the unemployment rate is high and based on experience from the first reopening of society in the summer of 2020 the number of people in need of debt counselling is expected to rise significantly when the society reopens. Research from Ireland indicates that the people who are marginalized are the ones who suffers the most due to the COVID pandemic.

Roundtable meeting with the Commissioner for financial services, financial stability, and Capital Markets Union

The interest of the European Commission for the work done by the ECDN continued in February, as we participated at a roundtable meeting arranged by the Commission and with the attendance of other important stakeholders. In the first session of the meeting, the representatives of the lenders and insurers presented their experiences on the impact of the COVID-19 relief measures and the best practices in the different member states, followed by feedback from representatives of the consumers and businesses.












The second part was focused on the future of the relief measures. Sandy Madar had been asked to make an intervention and presented the situation as experienced by the members of the ECDN and emphasized the risk of dire consequences if the phasing out of the relief measures is done too abruptly.



The online community platform of the ECDN – Sociale.one

After the successful launch of the ECDN's online platform in the fall of 2020 it has grown to have 38 members and, a number of exciting possibilities for you. All former issues of Money Matters have been uploaded and you can find them under Projects and Money Matters (Collection). We have also uploaded all former Newsletters under Newsletter (Collection). Furthermore, the blog has grown a bit, and please feel free to write a blog post and share any exciting news or information with the other members.

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IBCB

Meeting with IBCB

As you know the ECDN had a catch-up meeting with the IBCB (the Irish Banking Culture Board) in February. The organization has the goal of making banking in Ireland trustworthy again by among other things improving their ethical standards. It was a very interesting meeting where we talked about the past year and how COVID-19 had affected both Ireland and Europe, as well as the Roundtable with the European Commission on February 5th. We also discussed the importance of improving Financial Literacy, and how it is in the interest of banks and other creditors to prevent their customers from getting into financial difficulties. The mistrust in banks is still a big problem, and an example which was highlighted at the meeting concerned the banks of Ireland. They have tried to get a message out to people to say: “Please contact us, we are also here to help you”, but the message has been mostly disregarded due to the mistrust which have existed since the financial crisis of 2008.

New intern at the ECDN

Our new political intern at the ECDN coordinator office is Stine who will be responsible for all coordination for the Scientific group, the Expert group, the Stakeholder group, and the Education group. She has previously worked with NGO's and her field of expertise in project management and international politics. She is currently taking a master's in the Political Science at Aarhus University and is interested in international cooperation and relations. She looks forward to contributing to the important fight against over-indebtedness and help spread the information about ECDN and the need for accessible debt management in Europe.



New book by MC member Dieter Korczak

Our MC member and the editor of the ECDN's magazine Money Matters has written a new book. In the book, the 6 authors take a dive into the new digital reality of our age and links to health and big data. Some of the topics are “Does our health evolution need digitalization?”, “Measuring yourself online, self-improvement or a product of data economy?”, “Covid-19 civil rights and the corona-app.” And much more.

The book is published by Mabuse-Verlag in German and is called “Digitale Heilsversprechen. Zur Ambivalenz von Gesundheit, Algorithmen und Big Data”



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MONEY MATTERS

New issue of Money Matters



The Money Matters Issue no. 18 will be published any minute now on our website ecdn.eu. It is an exciting issue following up on the economic situation in twenty European countries after one year with COVID-19. How has the pandemic affected Bulgarians Roma-

nians, and are some social groups more at risk of being affected by the financial consequences of the pandemic, than others? These are just some of the interesting questions, which you can read the answer to in the new issue. You can also read the countries' economic forecasts for 2021, and texts about the vaccination strategies and efforts across Europe.

Follow the ECDN on Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn

Remember if you want to be sure to stay 100% updated on everything that happens within the ECDN please follow us on either [Facebook](#), [LinkedIn](#), and [Twitter](#) – or all of them, and remember to like and share our posts, to ensure that the messages of the ECDN reaches a wider audience.



Best wishes,

Sandy Madar, President of ECDN / Sebastian Løper, Coordinator of ECDN

Stine Linea Pedersen, Political Consultant at The Social Legal Aid.

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