

## **Financial Services Consumer Panel Policy Statement: Europe**

**The Panel will work to influence the development of EU financial services policy-making so that it reflects the interests of UK consumers and ensures that UK consumers can buy financial services with full confidence about market supervision, enforcement, transparency, competition and redress, including buying financial services cross-border if they choose to do so.**

### **Context**

It is the Panel's statutory duty to represent the interests of UK consumers and its main purpose is to provide advice to the FSA. The emphasis of the Panel's work is on activities that are regulated by the FSA. However, since the Panel was first established there has been a gradual but significant shift in the driving force behind regulatory change from the FSA itself to central EU policy-makers. Clearly, this has implications for the Panel.

The Panel continues to advise the FSA and others such as HMT on specific initiatives. However, it also needs to play a greater and more direct role in representing the interests of UK consumers within the EU's policy-making areas if it is to influence policy development at an early stage.

At the EU level, the Panel is particularly keen to see improved cross-border redress; tighter regulation of the passporting system under which firms/individuals permitted to carry on business in one Member State can conduct the same business in other Member States; and the strengthening of consumer representation in financial services policy-making.

### **Strategy**

The Panel will do this by:

1. Contributing actively and effectively to the consideration of new strategic policy initiatives emanating from within the EU and ensuring so far as possible that the consumer voice is heard.
2. Responding to specific proposals from the perspective of UK consumers.
3. Establishing and maintaining working relationships with H M Treasury; the FSA; the Commission; and EU Parliament and ensuring wherever possible that appropriate weight is given to the interests of UK consumers, while developing its own understanding of the objectives of EU policy-makers and of the single market as a whole.
4. Encouraging initiatives to strengthen effective consumer representation in financial services both at the EU level and within individual Member States.

## **Operational approach**

The Panel will use all available channels to influence developing EU policy and to achieve its overall objective. These include:

- a.** Through the FSA and H M Treasury.
- b.** Dealing directly with the Commission.
- c.** Through interested EU officials.
- d.** Through interested MEPs.
- e.** In conjunction with other consumer groups based within the UK; in other Member States; and within the EU consultative framework, such as BEUC, FINUSE and the Financial Services Consumer Group.

While the Panel will develop its own direct lines of communication with key stakeholders, equal importance is attached to the Panel's relationship with the FSA and HMT.

The Panel will, where appropriate, use forums such as conferences; open meetings organised by the Lamfalussy and other committees; and international organisations such as IOSCO. The Panel will also commission research where necessary to ensure that its policies are well-informed and evidence-based.

Adam Phillips  
Chairman  
Financial Services Consumer Panel  
2009