

Mr Igor Zorčič,
President of the National Assembly
Šubičeva ulica 4
1000 Ljubljana

By email

The Consumer Voice in Europe

Ref.: BEUC-L-2021-106/MGO/ste

20 May 2021

Subject: Draft law on Swiss franc loans in Slovenia

Dear Mr Zorčič,

I am writing to you on behalf of BEUC, The European Consumer Organisation, which represents 45 well respected, independent national consumer organisations from 32 European countries.

BEUC strongly supports the draft law on Swiss franc (CHF) loans which is currently being scrutinised by the Slovenian policy-makers, and which is advocated for by our Slovene member Zveza Potrošnikov Slovenije. The aim of this legislation is to protect Slovenian borrowers by putting in place a «currency cap», which would limit the impact of exchange rate fluctuations, and ensure a more balanced allocation of currency risk between creditors and borrowers for Swiss Franc loans taken up between 2004 and 2010.

During the 2000s, millions of consumers in Central and Eastern Europe took out loans denominated in foreign currencies, mainly in Swiss Francs. An estimated 16,000-20,000 Slovenians took out a Swiss franc loan.

A wealth of evidence shows that financial institutions failed on their responsible lending obligations when granting these loans. Foreign currency loans should never have been marketed to individual borrowers as they do not have any protection against exchange rate risks to which they are being exposed. However, many banks actively advertised Swiss Franc loans as a safe and stable choice for consumers. As a consequence, borrowers have suffered huge losses when the Swiss currency sharply appreciated in 2008 and 2015. In that context, the issuing of new foreign currency loans by financial institutions has been prohibited in many Member States. In addition, several EU countries have taken measures to protect borrowers affected by currency exchange losses.

We welcome the draft law under discussion in Slovenia. It is high time to protect vulnerable borrowers and restore their confidence in the financial sector and public authorities. It is worth mentioning that the benefits of protecting vulnerable borrowers brought about by the draft law would outweigh any financial burden for banks resulting from the adoption of the aforementioned legislative proposal, which in any case, will be distributed among several banks that granted Swiss Franc loans.

We wish to stress that regulatory and supervisory authorities must ensure that financial service providers act responsibly and do not market toxic products to consumers in future.

With best wishes,



Monique Goyens,
Director General