Contribution ID: 1b50a610-4308-44fa-9df4-63ba0ed83003
Date: 02/02/2021 16:51:48

Targeted consultation on the review of the Regulation on improving securities settlement in the European Union and on central securities depositories

Fields marked with * are mandatory.

Introduction

1. Background to this consultation

Central Securities Depositories (CSDs) are systemically important institutions for financial markets. They operate the infrastructure (so-called securities settlement systems (SSS)) that enables securities settlement. CSDs also play a crucial role in the primary market, by centralising the initial recording of newly issued securities. Furthermore, they ensure the maintenance of securities accounts that record how many securities have been issued by whom and each change in the holding of those securities. CSDs also play a crucial role for the financing of the economy. Apart from their role in the primary issuance process, securities collateral posted by companies, banks and other institutions to raise funds flows through securities settlement systems operated by CSDs. CSDs also play an essential role for the implementation of monetary policy by central banks as they settle securities in central bank monetary policy operations.

Regulation (EU) No 909/2014 on central securities depositories (CSDR) aims to increase the safety and improve settlement efficiency as well as provide a set of common requirements for CSDs across the EU. It does this by introducing:

- shorter settlement periods
- cash penalties and other deterrents for settlement fails
- strict organisational, conduct of business and prudential requirements for CSDs
- a passport system allowing authorised CSDs to provide their services across the EU
- increased prudential and supervisory requirements for CSDs and other institutions providing banking services that support securities settlement
- increased cooperation requirements for authorities across Member States with respect to CSDs providing their services in relation to financial instruments constituted under the law of a Member State other than that of their authorisation and to CSDs establishing a branch in another Member State

Thus, CSDR plays a pivotal role in the post-trade harmonisation efforts in the EU, enhancing the legal and operational conditions in particular for cross-border settlement in the Union, while promoting cross-border competition within the single market. There have been diverging interpretations and application of the requirements related to cross-border activity. The Commission expects to be able to assess if there has been any evolution in the provision of CSDR core services on a cross-border basis and whether the objective of improving this activity is being reached.

2. Report on the Regulation

Article 75 of CSDR requires the Commission to review and prepare a general report on the Regulation and submit it to the European Parliament and the Council by 19 September 2019. However, a comprehensive review of CSDR is not possible at this point in time considering that some CSDR requirements did not apply until the entry into force of the relevant regulatory technical standards in March 2017 and that some EU CSDs were only recently authorised under CSDR.

Nevertheless, the forthcoming Commission report should consider a wide range of specific areas where targeted action may be necessary to ensure the fulfilment of the objectives of CSDR in a more proportionate, efficient and effective manner. Recent developments, in particular the pressure put on markets by the COVID-19 pandemic, have brought a lot of attention to the implementation of rules emerging from CSDR. For example, certain stakeholders argue that mandatory buy-ins would have been disproportionate as they would have heavily impacted market making and liquidity for certain asset classes (in particular the non-cleared bond market).

Furthermore, under Article 81(2c) of Regulation (EU) No 2010/10 establishing a European Supervisory Authority (European Securities and Markets Authority), the Commission is required, after consulting all relevant authorities and stakeholders, to conduct a comprehensive assessment of the potential supervision of third-country CSDs by ESMA exploring certain aspects, including recognition based on systemic importance, ongoing compliance, fines and periodic penalty payments.

The Commission 2021 work programme and the 2020 Capital Markets Union action plan already announce the Commission's intention to come forward with a legislative proposal to simplify CSDR and contribute to the development of a more integrated post-trading landscape in the EU. Enhanced competition among CSDs would lower the costs incurred by investors and companies in cross-border transactions and strengthen cross-border investment. The legislative proposal will also contribute to achieving an EU-rulebook in this area. Moreover, in its resolution on further development of the Capital Markets Union, the European Parliament has invited the Commission to review the settlement discipline regime under CSDR in view of the COVID-19 crisis and Brexit (European Parliament resolution of 8 October 2020 on further development of the Capital Markets Union (CMU): improving access to capital market finance, in particular by SMEs, and further enabling retail investor participation (2020/2036(INI)), para. 21.).

In the preparation of its report on the CSDR review, the Commission objective is to consult as wide a group of stakeholders as possible. In September 2020, the Commission held a Member States' Expert Group meeting, with the participation also of the ECB and the European Securities and Markets Authority (ESMA), where the issues to be examined within the context of the CSDR review were discussed.

In addition, under Article 74 of CSDR, ESMA is required to submit a number of reports to the Commission on the implementation of the Regulation annually. A first set of reports on: (a) internalised settlement and (b) the cross-border provision of services by CSDs and the handling of applications to provide notary and central maintenance services on a cross-border basis, were submitted to the Commission on 5 November 2020. Given the lack of available and meaningful data until a sufficient number of CSDs was authorised, which was considered to have been reached in 2020, no reports were submitted to the Commission before that point in time. Input from the ESMA reports will also feed into the forthcoming Commission report.

3. Responding to this consultation

The purpose of this document is to consult all stakeholders on their views and experiences in the implementation of CSDR to date. Interested parties are invited to respond by 2 February 2021 to the present online questionnaire. The responses to this consultation will provide important guidance to the Commission services in preparing their final report.

Responses to this consultation are expected to be of most use where issues raised in response to the questions are supported with quantitative data or detailed narrative, and accompanied by specific suggestions for solutions to address them. Such suggestions may relate to either the Regulation or to relevant delegated and implementing acts. Supplementary questions providing for free text responses may appear depending on the response to a multiple choice question.

All interested stakeholders are invited to respond to the questions set out below; please note that some questions indicate that feedback is sought only from specific types of stakeholders.

As mentioned above, it is acknowledged that certain core requirements and procedures provided for under CSDR are yet to be implemented. In particular, at this stage the settlement discipline regime is not yet in force. Nonetheless, the Commission services welcome the views of stakeholders as to any identified issues with respect to the implementation of upcoming requirements. Recent developments in the market due to the COVID-19 crisis may also be considered in the overall assessment.

Please note: In order to ensure a fair and transparent consultation process **only responses received through our online questionnaire will be taken into account** and included in the report summarising the responses. Should you have a problem completing this questionnaire or if you require particular assistance, please contact fisma-csdr-review@ec.europa.eu.

More information on

- this consultation
- the consultation document
- Central securities depositories (CSDs)
- the protection of personal data regime for this consultation

About you

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* Language of my contribution

- Bulgarian
- Croatian
- Czech
- Danish
- Dutch
- (•) English
- Estonian

- Finnish
- French
- German
- Greek
- Hungarian
- Irish
- Italian
- Latvian
- Lithuanian
- Maltese
- Polish
- Portuguese
- Romanian
- Slovak
- Slovenian
- Spanish
- Swedish

* I am giving my contribution as

- Academic/research institution
- Business association
- Company/business organisation
- Consumer organisation
- EU citizen
- Environmental organisation
- Non-EU citizen
- Non-governmental organisation (NGO)
- Public authority
- Trade union
- Other

* First name

Gianluigi

* Surname

Gugliotta

* Email (this won't be published)

assosim@assosim.it

* In which of the following categories does your organisation fall?

- ○ Organisation representing CSDs
- ○ Organisation representing issuers
- ○ Organisation representing investors' interests
- ◉ Other

* Organisation name

255 character(s) maximum

Italian Association of Financial Markets Intermediaries - Assosim
Please note that all the responses were drafted in cooperation with the Italian Banking Association (ABI)

* Organisation size

- ○ Micro (1 to 9 employees)
- ◉ Small (10 to 49 employees)
- ○ Medium (50 to 249 employees)
- ○ Large (250 or more)

Transparency register number

255 character(s) maximum

Check if your organisation is on the transparency register. It's a voluntary database for organisations seeking to influence EU decision-making.

* Country of origin

Please add your country of origin, or that of your organisation.

○ Afghanistan	○ Djibouti	○ Libya	○ Saint Martin
○ Åland Islands	○ Dominica	○ Liechtenstein	○ Saint Pierre and Miquelon
○ Albania	○ Dominican Republic	○ Lithuania	○ Saint Vincent and the Grenadines
○ Algeria	○ Ecuador	○ Luxembourg	○ Samoa

- American Samoa
- Andorra
- Angola
- Anguilla
- Antarctica
- Antigua and Barbuda
- Argentina
- Armenia
- Aruba
- Australia
- Austria
- Azerbaijan
- Bahamas
- Bahrain
- Bangladesh
- Barbados
- Belarus
- Belgium
- Belize
- Benin
- Bermuda
- Bhutan
- Bolivia
- Egypt
- El Salvador
- Equatorial Guinea
- Eritrea
- Estonia
- Eswatini
- Ethiopia
- Falkland Islands
- Faroe Islands
- Fiji
- Finland
- France
- French Guiana
- French Polynesia
- French Southern and Antarctic Lands
- Gabon
- Georgia
- Germany
- Ghana
- Gibraltar
- Greece
- Greenland
- Grenada
- Macau
- Madagascar
- Malawi
- Malaysia
- Maldives
- Mali
- Malta
- Marshall Islands
- Martinique
- Mauritania
- Mauritius
- Mayotte
- Mexico
- Micronesia
- Moldova
- Monaco
- Mongolia
- Montenegro
- Montserrat
- Morocco
- Mozambique
- Myanmar /Burma
- Namibia
- San Marino
- São Tomé and Príncipe
- Saudi Arabia
- Senegal
- Serbia
- Seychelles
- Sierra Leone
- Singapore
- Sint Maarten
- Slovakia
- Slovenia
- Solomon Islands
- Somalia
- South Africa
- South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands
- South Korea
- South Sudan
- Spain
- Sri Lanka
- Sudan
- Suriname
- Svalbard and Jan Mayen
- Sweden

- Bonaire Saint Eustatius and Saba
- Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Botswana
- Bouvet Island
- Brazil
- British Indian Ocean Territory
- British Virgin Islands
- Brunei
- Bulgaria
- Burkina Faso
- Burundi
- Cambodia
- Cameroon
- Canada
- Cape Verde
- Cayman Islands
- Central African Republic
- Chad
- Chile
- China
- Christmas Island
- Guadeloupe
- Guam
- Guatemala
- Guernsey
- Guinea
- Guinea-Bissau
- Guyana
- Haiti
- Heard Island and McDonald Islands
- Honduras
- Hong Kong
- Hungary
- Iceland
- India
- Indonesia
- Iran
- Iraq
- Ireland
- Isle of Man
- Israel
- Italy
- Nauru
- Nepal
- Netherlands
- New Caledonia
- New Zealand
- Nicaragua
- Niger
- Nigeria
- Niue
- Norfolk Island
- Northern Mariana Islands
- North Korea
- North Macedonia
- Norway
- Oman
- Pakistan
- Palau
- Palestine
- Panama
- Papua New Guinea
- Paraguay
- Switzerland
- Syria
- Taiwan
- Tajikistan
- Tanzania
- Thailand
- The Gambia
- Timor-Leste
- Togo
- Tokelau
- Tonga
- Trinidad and Tobago
- Tunisia
- Turkey
- Turkmenistan
- Turks and Caicos Islands
- Tuvalu
- Uganda
- Ukraine
- United Arab Emirates
- United Kingdom

- Clipperton
- Cocos (Keeling) Islands
- Colombia
- Comoros
- Congo
- Cook Islands
- Costa Rica
- Côte d'Ivoire
- Croatia
- Cuba
- Curaçao
- Cyprus
- Czechia
- Democratic Republic of the Congo
- Denmark
- Jamaica
- Japan
- Jersey
- Jordan
- Kazakhstan
- Kenya
- Kiribati
- Kosovo
- Kuwait
- Kyrgyzstan
- Laos
- Latvia
- Lebanon
- Lesotho
- Liberia
- Peru
- Philippines
- Pitcairn Islands
- Poland
- Portugal
- Puerto Rico
- Qatar
- Réunion
- Romania
- Russia
- Rwanda
- Saint Barthélemy
- Saint Helena Ascension and Tristan da Cunha
- Saint Kitts and Nevis
- Saint Lucia
- United States
- United States Minor Outlying Islands
- Uruguay
- US Virgin Islands
- Uzbekistan
- Vanuatu
- Vatican City
- Venezuela
- Vietnam
- Wallis and Futuna
- Western Sahara
- Yemen
- Zambia
- Zimbabwe

* Field of activity or sector (if applicable):

- [ ] Accounting
- [ ] Auditing
- [ ] Banking
- [ ] Credit rating agencies
- [ ] Insurance
- [ ] Pension provision
- [ ] Investment management (e.g. hedge funds, private equity funds, venture capital funds, money market funds, securities)

- [ ] Market infrastructure operation (e.g. CCPs, CSDs, Stock exchanges)
- [ ] Social entrepreneurship
- [x] Other
- [ ] Not applicable

* Please specify your activity field(s) or sector(s):

Investment services

The Commission will publish all contributions to this public consultation. You can choose whether you would prefer to have your details published or to remain anonymous when your contribution is published. **For the purpose of transparency, the type of respondent (for example, 'business association, 'consumer association', 'EU citizen') country of origin, organisation name and size, and its transparency register number, are always published. Your e-mail address will never be published.** Opt in to select the privacy option that best suits you. Privacy options default based on the type of respondent selected

* **Contribution publication privacy settings**

The Commission will publish the responses to this public consultation. You can choose whether you would like your details to be made public or to remain anonymous.

- ( ) **Anonymous**
  Only organisation details are published: The type of respondent that you responded to this consultation as, the name of the organisation on whose behalf you reply as well as its transparency number, its size, its country of origin and your contribution will be published as received. Your name will not be published. Please do not include any personal data in the contribution itself if you want to remain anonymous.
- (•) **Public**
  Organisation details and respondent details are published: The type of respondent that you responded to this consultation as, the name of the organisation on whose behalf you reply as well as its transparency number, its size, its country of origin and your contribution will be published. Your name will also be published.

- [x] I agree with the personal data protection provisions

I. CSD Authorisation & review and evaluation processes

CSDs are subject to authorisation and supervision by the competent authorities of their home Member Sate which examine how CSDs operate on a daily basis, carry out regular reviews and take appropriate action when necessary.

Under Articles 16 and 54 of CSDR, CSDs should obtain an authorisation to provide core CSD services as well as non-banking and banking-type ancillary services. Article 69(4) however allows CSDs authorised under national law prior to the adoption of CSDR to continue operating under such national law until they have been authorised under the new CSDR rules.

As of August 2020, 22 out of 30 existing EU CSDs are authorised under Articles 16 and/or 54 CSDR. ESMA's register of EU CSDs shows that the time to complete the authorisation process varies significantly and that 7 existing EU CSDs have not yet been authorised under CSDR, while one CSD has been authorised under Article 16 of CSDR, but not yet under Article 54 of CSDR (i.e. for banking-type ancillary services). The size and complexity of CSDs and the different services they offer, as well as their initial level of compliance with primary and secondary legislation at the time of its adoption, may explain, at least partially, such differences. Furthermore, there is also anecdotal evidence from some stakeholders that the administrative burden of the authorisation process under CSDR, or as applied by some NCAs, can act as a barrier to new market entrants, thereby limiting competition. Similar feedback suggests that the authorisation process might lack proportionality in circumstances where not all requirements are relevant to the activity envisaged by the applicant.

Once a CSD has been authorised, CSDR requires national competent authorities (NCAs) to review CSD's compliance with rules emerging from the Regulation and to evaluate risks to which a CSD is or might be exposed, as well as risks it might create. This review and evaluation must be done at least on an annual basis. Its depth and frequency is to be established by NCAs taking into consideration the size, nature and systemic importance of the CSD under supervision. The detail of the information to be provided on an annual basis by CSDs to NCAs is set forth in Delegated Regulation (EU) 2017/392.

Looking forward, the lessons learnt from the way the authorisation procedures have run should also be useful for the CSDs' annual review and evaluation by their competent authorities. It has been argued that annual reviews should be integrated in NCAs' supervisory activities in such a way that they bring added value, suit their risk-based supervisory approach and ensure supervisory convergence at Union level.

Question 1. Given the length of time it has taken, and is still taking in some instances, to authorise CSDs under CSDR, do you consider that the application process would benefit from some refinement and/or clarification in the Regulation or the relevant delegated acts?

- Yes, some aspects of CSDR or the relevant delegated acts would merit clarification, although no legislative or regulatory amendment would be required.
- Yes, the CSDs authorisation process should be amended to be made more efficient.
- No, the length and complexity of the authorisation process reflects the complexity of CSDs' businesses.
- No, most of the CSDs in the Union have already been authorised under CSDR, there is no case for amending the authorisation process.
- Other

Question 1.1 Please explain your answer to question 1, providing where possible quantitative evidence and/or examples:

5000 character(s) maximum

including spaces and line breaks, i.e. stricter than the MS Word characters counting method.

Question 2. Should an end date be introduced to the grandfathering clause of CSDR?

- Yes
- No
- Don’t know / no opinion / not relevant

Question 3. Concerning the annual review process, should its frequency be amended?

- Yes
- No
- Don’t know / no opinion / not relevant

Please explain your answer to Question 3, providing where possible quantitative evidence and/or examples:

5000 character(s) maximum

including spaces and line breaks, i.e. stricter than the MS Word characters counting method.

Articles 41 and 42 of Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2017/392 prescribe the information and the statistical data that CSDs should provide to NCAs on an annual basis.

Question 4.1 Do you consider this information and statistical data to be relevant for the review and evaluation process described in Article 22 of CSDR?

- Yes, all information and statistical data are relevant.
- No, not all information and statistical data should be required to be provided on an annual basis.
- Don’t know / no opinion / not relevant

Question 4.2 Do you consider these requirements to be proportionate?

- ○ Yes, all information and statistical data must be provided on an annual basis.
- ○ No, not all information and statistical data should be required to be provided on an annual basis.
- ○ Don't know / no opinion / not relevant

Question 4.3 Please explain your answers to Questions 4.1 and 4.2, providing where possible quantitative evidence and/or examples:

5000 character(s) maximum

including spaces and line breaks, i.e. stricter than the MS Word characters counting method.

CSD participants, custodians and settlement agents do not have adequate, nor sufficient visibility of such "…information and statistical data that CSDs should provide to NCAs on an annual basis..." to have an opinion on this regard.

Question 5. Are there specific aspects of the review and evaluation process, other than its frequency and the content of the information and statistical data to be provided by CSDs, that should be examined in the CSDR review?

5000 character(s) maximum

including spaces and line breaks, i.e. stricter than the MS Word characters counting method.

Question 6. Do you think that the cooperation among all authorities (NCAs and Relevant Authorities) involved in the authorisation, review and evaluation of CSDs could be enhanced (e.g. through colleges)?

- ◉ Yes
- ○ No
- ○ Don't know / no opinion / not relevant

Question 6.1 Please explain your answer to Question 6 providing, where possible, quantitative evidence and/or examples:

5000 character(s) maximum

including spaces and line breaks, i.e. stricter than the MS Word characters counting method.

We are in favour of enhancing cooperation among authorities as we believe this could speed up the relevant processes, with final beneficial effects on the post-trading industry.

Question 7. How do you think ESMA's role could be enhanced in order to ensure supervisory convergence in the supervision of CSDs (for example with possible further empowerments for regulatory technical standards and /or guidelines, or an enhanced role in supervisory colleges, or direct supervisory responsibilities)?

5000 character(s) maximum

including spaces and line breaks, i.e. stricter than the MS Word characters counting method.

II. Cross-border provision of services in the EU

A core objective of CSDR is the creation of a single market for CSDs. CSDR provides important opportunities for cross-border activities by CSDs within the Union as it grants CSDs authorised in one Member State with a "passport" to provide their services in the EU without the need for further authorisation. This means also that CSD groups should be able to consolidate certain aspects of their operations in a much more efficient way. When a CSD provides its services in a Member State other than where it is established, the competent authority of the home Member State is responsible for the supervision of that CSD.

The procedure through which a CSD authorised in an EU Member State can provide notary and central maintenance services in relation to financial instruments constituted under the law of another EU Member State or to set up a branch in another Member State is set out in Article 23(3) to 23(7) of CSDR and is based on the cooperation of the CSD's home Member State competent authority with the host Member State competent authority. In that case, the home Member State competent authority bears the primary responsibility to determine the adequacy of the administrative structure and the financial situation of the CSD wishing to provide its services in the host Member State.

Despite the fact that most of the applying CSDs have been able to obtain a "passport" to offer notary and central maintenance services in one or several other Member States, anecdotal information from stakeholders has indicated that this process has been significantly more burdensome than previously thought. This, in turn, could potentially lead to a reduction in the level of cross-border activity, limiting potential efficiency gains and, potentially, competition. This may be due to differing interpretations of CSDR's requirements related to the provision of services in another Member

State, but could also arise from the requirements themselves. Challenges mentioned include, but are not necessarily limited to, the role of the host NCA in granting the passport and supervision cooperation among NCAs, the determination of the law applicable to the issuance and the assessment of the measures the CSD intends to take to allow its users to comply with the national law under which the securities are constituted.

Note that question 8 is mainly intended for issuers.

Question 8. One of the main objectives of CSDR is to improve competition between CSDs so as to enable market participants a choice of provider and reduce reliance on any one infrastructure provider.

In your view, has competition in the provision of CSD services increased or improved in your country of establishment in recent years?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know / no opinion / not relevant

Question 8.1 Please explain your answer to Question 8, providing where possible quantitative evidence and/or concrete examples.

Please indicate where possible the impact of CSDR on:

a. **the number of CDs active in the market**

b. **the quality of the services provided**

c. **the cost of the services provided**

5000 character(s) maximum

including spaces and line breaks, i.e. stricter than the MS Word characters counting method.

Note that question 9 is mainly intended for CSDs and/or issuers.

Question 9. Are there aspects of CSDR that would merit clarification in order to improve the provision of notary/issuance, central maintenance and settlement services across the borders within the Union?

- Yes
- No
- Don’t know / no opinion / not relevant

Question 9.1 Please explain your answer to Question 9, providing where possible quantitative evidence and/or concrete examples:

5000 character(s) maximum

including spaces and line breaks, i.e. stricter than the MS Word characters counting method.

Note that questions 10, 11 and 12 are mainly intended for CSDs.

Question 10. Have you encountered any particular difficulty in the process of obtaining the CSDR “passport” in one or several Member States different to the one of your place of establishment?

- Yes
- No
- Don’t know / no opinion / not relevant

Question 11. In how many Member States do you currently serve issuers by making use of your CSDR “passport”?

5000 character(s) maximum

including spaces and line breaks, i.e. stricter than the MS Word characters counting method.

Question 12. Are there any obstacles in the provision of services to issuers in a Member State for which you have obtained the CSDR “passport” that actually prevent you from providing such services?

- Yes
- No
- Don’t know / no opinion / not relevant

Question 12.1 Please explain your answer to Question 12, providing where possible quantitative evidence and/or concrete examples:

5000 character(s) maximum

including spaces and line breaks, i.e. stricter than the MS Word characters counting method.

Question 13. Do you think that the cooperation amongst NCAs would be improved if colleges were established for [or cooperative arrangements were always involved in] the Article 23 process?

- Yes
- No
- Don’t know / no opinion / not relevant

Question 13.1 Please explain your answer to Question 13, providing where possible quantitative evidence and/or concrete examples:

5000 character(s) maximum

including spaces and line breaks, i.e. stricter than the MS Word characters counting method.

Question 14. How do you think ESMA’s role could be enhanced in order to ensure supervisory convergence in the supervision of CSDs that provide their services on a cross-border basis within the EU?

5000 character(s) maximum

including spaces and line breaks, i.e. stricter than the MS Word characters counting method.

We believe that cooperation between NCAs (through ESMA) is an important factor to ensure an efficient provision of CSDs' services on a cross-border basis within the EU. However, we note that there are still national barriers which may jeopardise the efficiency of CSDs' cross-border activities. Therefore, we would suggest to enhance ESMA's role by the promotion of further initiatives aimed at developing the existing interaction between market operators/infrastructures and NCAs in order to, inter alia, assess the aforementioned barriers and analyse possible operational remedies.

III. Internalised settlement

Article 9 of CSDR provides for internalised settlement reporting, whereby a settlement "internaliser" must report to the competent authority of its place of establishment, on a quarterly basis, the aggregated volume and value of all securities transactions that it settles outside a securities settlement system (SSS). The information which is required to be included in the quarterly internalised settlement reports is specified in Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2017/391, while the format of reports is outlined in Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2017/393.

The first internalised settlement reports were due to the competent authorities by 12 July 2019 and contained details of transactions settled internally from 1 April 2019 to 30 June 2019.

The objective of internalised settlement reporting is to enable NCAs to monitor and identify the risks (e.g. operational, legal) associated with internalised settlement. The identification of such risks or of any trends seems to have been limited to date. Nevertheless, the reported figures show very high volumes and values, high concentration, as well as high settlement fail rates. This proves the importance of monitoring the internalised settlement activity. Data quality issues (e.g. clarification of the exact scope of the requirement, development and implementation of IT tools and systems, correct implementation of reporting formats, etc.) and the relatively short timeframe since the start of this reporting regime (Q2 2019) may have limited any such analysis of risks and/or trends.

As part of its fitness check on supervisory reporting requirements, the Commission has committed to assessing whether the reporting objectives are set correctly (relevance), whether the requirements meet the objectives (effectiveness, EU added value), whether they are consistent across the different legislative acts (coherence), and whether the costs and burden of supervisory reporting are reasonable and proportionate (efficiency). Furthermore, the Commission is aware that changes to reporting requirements may imply costs and as such the overall benefits of any amendment to an established reporting requirement should exceed its costs.

Question 15. Article 2 of Delegated Regulation (EU) 2017/391 establishes the data which internalised settlement reports should contain.

Do you consider this data meets the objectives of relevance, effectiveness, EU added value, coherence and efficiency?

- (●) Yes
- ( ) No
- ( ) Don't know / no opinion / not relevant

Question 15.1 Please explain your answer to Question 15, providing where possible quantitative evidence and/or concrete examples:

5000 character(s) maximum

including spaces and line breaks, i.e. stricter than the MS Word characters counting method.

In general terms, we consider that the data of the internalised settlement reports meets the above-mentioned objectives. However, as it specifically regards 'coherence' and even more 'consistency', we highlight to the attention of the Commission that, within such reporting, for a transaction in fail the reporting prescribes to sum up the 'quantity' (nominal value) of the securities, as many times as the number of days in which such transaction remains in fail (i.e. € 5 mln of Bunds, in fail status for 3 days = € 15 mln of Bunds in fail are reported). Because of this, such reporting tends to provide for a view on 'internalised settlement fails' which may mislead or bear misunderstandings, i.e. by showing higher settlement fail amounts on internalised instructions, compared to those of other reporting files, i.e. the penalties' report for market trades, where we would see the 'quantity' of securities (€ 5 mln) separately for each business days, without summing them up.

Hence, lack of coherence/consistency is noted.

We are aware that such amendment would imply technical changes for banks/intermediaries' records and procedures which are now already implemented. In order to balance benefits and costs, we propose to deal with the above issue in a future occasion.

Question 15.2 If you are an entity falling under the definition of "settlement internaliser", what have been the costs you have incurred to comply with the internalised settlement reporting regime?

Where possible, please compare those costs to the volumes of your average annual activity of internalised settlement:

5000 character(s) maximum

including spaces and line breaks, i.e. stricter than the MS Word characters counting method.

Question 16. Do you think that a threshold for a minimum level of settlement internalisation activity should be set for entities to be subject to the obligation to report internalised settlement?

- ○ Yes, based on the volume of internalised settlement
- ○ Yes, based on the value of internalised settlement
- ○ Yes, based on other criterion
- ◉ No
- ○ Don't know / no opinion / not relevant

Question 16.1 Please explain your answer to Question 16, providing where possible quantitative evidence and/or examples.

Please indicate:

- **whether you consider that the introduction of such a threshold could endanger the capacity of NCAs to exercise their supervisory powers efficiently**
- **The cost implications of complying or monitoring compliance with such a threshold**

5000 character(s) maximum
including spaces and line breaks, i.e. stricter than the MS Word characters counting method.

Question 16 raised by the Commission on the possible introduction of a settlement internalization thresholds (THR) is welcome per se as it shows that the Commission is aware of the complexities that every settlement internaliser faced to develop and implement such reporting structure, regardless the dimensions/size of the business/internalization. However, given that the reporting systems are now up and running, even those of small-sized settlement internalisers, the introduction of such THR would appear as a late intervention. Moreover, the suggestion results too broad and generic as, for instance, it does not propose the timeframe the moving-average of the THR would have to be referred to, as well as other basic details which would allow a general, still proper, evaluation.

In any case, and worse, the introduction nowadays of any THR in this scope would imply a dedicated monitoring and the consequent activation/deactivation of the relevant internalised settlement reporting (upon overtaking the THR) which would make the process more complex to manage and run, compared to the "leaner" current set-up where internalisers report all their internalisation activity, regardless their level /dimension. Not to mention that the relevant supervisory NCA of an entity, overtaking from time to time or seasonally, the internalization THR, would see the relevant data reporting coming in only when the THR would be overtaken, and it would likely end in having a more fragmented view of the overall settlement internalization run by a certain operator in a certain market, compared to what an NCA can currently observe.

For all these reasons, we do not support the introduction of such a THR and we believe that it would have both i) implications on the capacity of NCAs to grasp a proper, complete overview of the internalization activity in a given market/Member State, and ii) very serious cost implications for the developing/monitoring processes that such a THR would require

IV. CSDR and technological innovation

CSDs and providers of ancillary services increasingly explore new technologies in relation to 'traditional' assets in digital form and crypto-assets that qualify as financial instruments. Two aspects can be distinguished: on the one hand the use of new technologies to service traditional assets (in digital form) and on the other hand, services provided for crypto-assets.

While CSDR is meant to be technology-neutral, the Commission services have received feedback from various stakeholders (including following the public consultation on an EU framework for markets in crypto-assets that ended in March 2020) who argue that some of its rules create obstacles to the use of distributed ledger technology (DLT) and the tokenisation of securities. However, feedback received so far by the Commission in this respect has not allowed for the full specification of those obstacles and potential solutions or proposals to address them in the framework of CSDR in order to ensure the full potential of these technological innovations with regard to the settlement of securities.

Furthermore, some of the feedback received suggests that certain definitions contained in the CSDR would require specific clarification to contextualise them in an environment where DLT is used and securities are tokenised. Some of these definitions are for example "securities account", "dematerialised form" or "settlement".

On 24 September 2020, as part of the digital finance package, a Commission proposal for a Regulation on a pilot regime on market infrastructures based on distributed ledger technology has been published. Under this proposal, a CSD operating a DLT SSS would be able to benefit from certain exemptions from CSDR rules that may be difficult to apply in a DLT context (e.g. exemptions from the application of the notion of transfer of orders, securities account or cash settlement). This should help stakeholders test in practice potential solutions.

Question 17. Do you consider that certain changes to the rules are necessary to facilitate the use of new technologies, such as DLT, in the framework of CSDR, while increasing the safety and improving settlement efficiency?

- Yes
- No
- The pilot regime is sufficient at this stage
- Don't know / no opinion / not relevant

Question 18. Would you see any particular issue (legal, operational, technical) with applying the following requirements of the CSDR in a DLT environment?

Please rate each proposal from 1 to 5.

	1 (not a concern)	2 (rather not a concern)	3 (neutral)	4 (rather a concern)	5 (strong concern)	Don't know / No opinion
Definition of 'central securities depository' and whether platforms can be authorised as a CSD						

operating a SSS which is designated under Directive 98/26 /EC (Settlement Finality Directive (SFD))						
Definition of 'securities settlement system' and whether a blockchain /DLT platform can be qualified as a SSS under the SFD						
Whether and under which conditions records on a DLT platform can fulfil the functions of securities accounts and what can be qualified as credits and debits to such an account;						
Whether records on a DLT platform can be qualified as securities account in a CSD as required for securities traded on a venue within the meaning of						

of Directive 2014/65/EU (MiFID II)						
Definition of ‘book entry form’ and ‘dematerialised form'	○	○	○	○	○	○
Definition of “settlement” which according to the CSDR means the completion of a securities transaction where it is concluded with the aim of discharging the obligations of the parties to that transaction through the transfer of cash or securities, or both; clarification of what could qualify as such a transfer of cash or securities on a DLT network/ clarification what constitutes an obligation and what would qualify as a discharge of the obligation in a DLT environment	○	○	○	○	○	○

What could constitute delivery versus payment (DVP) in a DLT network, considering that the cash leg is not processed in the network/ what could constitute delivery versus delivery (DVD) or payment versus payment (PVP) in case one of the legs of the transaction is processed in another system (e.g. a traditional system or another DLT network)						
What entity could qualify as a settlement internaliser, that executes transfer orders other than through an SSS						

Question 18.1 Please explain your answers to question 18 (if needed), including how the relevant rules should be modified:

5000 character(s) maximum

including spaces and line breaks, i.e. stricter than the MS Word characters counting method.

Question 18.2 Do you consider that any other changes need to be made, either in CSDR or the delegated acts to ensure that CSDR is technologically neutral and could enable and/or facilitate the use of DLT?

- Yes
- No
- Don’t know / no opinion / not relevant

Question 19. Do you consider that the book-entry requirements under CSDR are compatible with crypto-assets that qualify as financial instruments?

- Yes
- No
- Don’t know / no opinion / not relevant

Question 19.1 Please explain your answer to question 19:

5000 character(s) maximum

including spaces and line breaks, i.e. stricter than the MS Word characters counting method.

Question 20. Would you see any particular issue (legal, operational, technical) with applying the current rules in a DLT environment?

Please rate each proposal from 1 to 5.

	1 (not a concern)	2 (rather not a concern)	3 (neutral)	4 (rather a concern)	5 (strong concern)	Don't know / No opinion
Rules on settlement periods for the settlement of certain types of financial instruments in a SSS						

Rules on measures to prevent settlement fails						
Organisational requirements for CSDs						
Rules on outsourcing of services or activities to a third party						
Rules on communication procedures with market participants and other market infrastructures						
Rules on the protection of securities of participants and those of their clients						
Rules regarding the integrity of the issue and appropriate reconciliation measures						
Rules on cash settlement						
Rules on requirements for participation						
Rules on requirements for CSD links						

Rules on access between CSDs and access between a CSD and another market infrastructure	○	○	○	○	○	○
Rules on legal risks, in particular as regards enforceability	○	○	○	○	○	○

Question 20.1 Please explain your answers to question 20, in particular what specific problems the use of DLT raises:

5000 character(s) maximum

including spaces and line breaks, i.e. stricter than the MS Word characters counting method.

Question 20.2 If you consider that there are legal, operational or technical issues with applying other rules regarding CSD services in a DLT environment (including other provisions of CSDR, national rules regarding CSDs implementing the EU acquis, supervisory practices, interpretation,), please indicate them and explain your reasoning:

5000 character(s) maximum

including spaces and line breaks, i.e. stricter than the MS Word characters counting method.

V. Authorisation to provide banking-type ancillary services

According to Article 54 of CSDR, the provision of banking-type ancillary services by CSDs is allowed either by themselves or through one or more limited license credit institutions, provided that some requirements are complied with in terms of risk mitigation, additional capital surcharge and cooperation of supervisors in authorising and supervising the provision of these banking services to CSD users. It seems that limited license credit institutions do not

exist yet. Article 54(5) foresees an exception to conditions applying to credit institutions that offer to settle the cash payments for part of the CSD's securities settlement system, if the total value of such cash settlement through accounts opened with those credit institutions, calculated over a one-year period, is less than one per cent of the total value of all securities transactions against cash settled in the books of the CSD and does not exceed a maximum of EUR 2,5 billion per year. CSDs have voiced in the past difficulties regarding cash settlement in foreign currencies. Questions in this section aim at identifying these and other potential concerns as well as possible ways forward.

Note that questions 21 to 26 included are mainly intended for CSDs.

Question 21. Do you provide banking services ancillary to settlement to your participants?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know / no opinion / not relevant

Question 22. Do you think that the conditions set in Article 54(3) for the provision of banking-type ancillary services by CSDs are proportionate and help cover the additional risks that these activities imply?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know / no opinion / not relevant

Question 23. In your view, are there banking-type ancillary services that cannot be provided by CSDs under the current regime for this type of services?

5000 character(s) maximum

including spaces and line breaks, i.e. stricter than the MS Word characters counting method.

Question 24. Concerning settlement in foreign currencies, have you faced any particular difficulty?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know / no opinion / not relevant

Question 24.1 Please explain your answer to question 24 providing concrete examples and quantitative evidence:

5000 character(s) maximum

including spaces and line breaks, i.e. stricter than the MS Word characters counting method.

Question 25. What are the main reasons CSDs do not seek to be authorised to provide banking-type ancillary services?

Please explain in particular if this is so due to obstacles created by the regulatory framework:

5000 character(s) maximum

including spaces and line breaks, i.e. stricter than the MS Word characters counting method.

Question 26. Have you made use of the option to designate a credit institution to provide banking type ancillary services to CSDs?

- Yes
- No
- Don’t know / no opinion / not relevant

Question 27. In your view, are the thresholds foreseen in Article 54(5) set at an adequate level?

- Yes
- No
- Don’t know / no opinion / not relevant

Question 28. Do you think that the conditions set out in Article 54(4) for the provision of banking-type ancillary services by a designated credit institution are proportionate and help cover the additional risks that these activities imply?

- Yes
- No
- Don’t know / no opinion / not relevant

Question 29. Why do you think there are so few, if any, credit institutions with limited license to provide banking-type ancillary services to CSDs?

Please explain in particular if this is so due to obstacles created by the regulatory framework:

5000 character(s) maximum

including spaces and line breaks, i.e. stricter than the MS Word characters counting method.

Question 30. Are there requirements within Title IV of CSDR which should be specifically reviewed in order to improve the efficiency of the provision of banking-type ancillary services to and/or by CSDs while ensuring financial stability?

- Yes
- No
- Don’t know / no opinion / not relevant

Question 30.1 Please explain your answer to question 30, providing where possible quantitative evidence and/or concrete examples:

5000 character(s) maximum

including spaces and line breaks, i.e. stricter than the MS Word characters counting method.

VI. Scope

CSDR lays down a series of requirements for the settlement of financial instruments in the Union and harmonised rules on the organisation and conduct of CSDs. While the scope of rules applicable to CSDs seems clear, the requirements applying to the settlement of financial instruments has given rise to numerous questions. A certain number of these questions has been addressed by ESMA, especially in relation to the scope of requirements on internalised settlement, relevant currencies or the substantial importance of a CSD.

Article 2(1)(8) of CSDR defines financial instruments in accordance with the definition of financial instruments in Directive 2014/65/EU on markets in financial instruments (MiFID II) (i.e. transferable securities, money-market instruments, units in collective investment undertakings, various types of derivatives and emission allowances). Some CSDR provisions explicitly restrict the scope of their applicability to a subset of the above definition, e.g. Articles 3 on book entry-form (only transferable securities) and Article 5 on the intended settlement date. Other provisions are not explicit or refer generally to financial instruments or securities (e.g. Article 23 on the provision of services in another Member State).

In the case, for instance, of the settlement discipline, stakeholders have indicated that the different provisions of CSDR setting out the scope of the requirements such as settlement fails reporting, cash penalties or buy-ins are not always clear. This lack of legal certainty could potentially lead to reducing the efficiency in securities settlement. Furthermore, feedback from some stakeholders suggests that in some circumstances the drafting of CSDR in relation to the scope of the settlement discipline is clear, however, its application could bring unintended consequences.

Question 31. Do you consider that certain requirements in CSDR would benefit from targeted measures in order to provide further legal certainty on their scope of application?

- (●) Yes
- ( ) No
- ( ) Don’t know / no opinion / not relevant

Question 31.1 If you answered "yes" to Question 31, please specify which provisions could benefit from such clarification and provide concrete examples:

5000 character(s) maximum

including spaces and line breaks, i.e. stricter than the MS Word characters counting method.

We believe that certain CSDR provisions would need to be amended according to the following suggestions:

A) Application of buy-in (BI) rules exclusively to trading parties (TPs) as far as non-CCP cleared transactions are concerned.

B) Exclusion from BI rules of certain transactions such as:
1 margin transfer or collateral movements,
2 portfolio transfers between accounts of the same client at different custodians,
3 market claims,
4 ETF creation and redemption process,
5 physical settlement of derivatives,
6 voluntary corporate actions where the outturn has an economic impact on the original transactions,
7 other transactions which do not directly represent the outright purchase or sale of a security,
8 SFTs. With specific reference to Repos, Securities Lending and/or Derivatives, we deem that the requirement to include CSDR mandatory BI provisions into the contractual agreements i) will not promote the goals pursued by CSDR, i.e. increasing efficiency of settlement, and rather ii) will create unnecessary additional regulatory overlay and a series of unhelpful complexities (e.g. need to repaper contracts).

C) Exclusion from penalty regime of certain transactions such as:
1 corporate actions on stock,
2 primary market operations (i.e. the process of initial creation of securities, whereby the securities are created but are not yet subscribed, thereby with no capital raised),
3 creation and redemption of fund units (i.e. the technical creation and redemption of fund units, unless done through transfer orders in a CSD-operated securities settlement system),
4 T2S realignment operations,
5 portfolio transfers where no change of final beneficiary occurs (carried out manually by intermediaries and which do not constitute the object of a contract between different entities),
6 settlement instructions automatically inserted by CSDs to execute Issuers' requests to credit/debt securities.

With specific regards to points B-2 and C-5 above, we believe that the transaction(s) identified by the PORT indicator (within T2S) should be excluded from the scope of application of penalties, where NCBO (No Change of Beneficial Ownership) is applicable (in other terms, the debtor and the creditor/beneficiary are same person). Indeed, as it currently works, the Receiving counterparty (CPTY), in a portfolio transfer operation with NCBO, can step-in the portfolio transfer process only after the Delivering CPTY has initiated the transfer process: the latter inputs the Intended Settlement Date (ISD) as equal to the date in which the final user/client intends having the transfer complete (no "T+ approach" is applicable). As the settlement discipline penalty's regime application is based on ISD, penalties are currently applicable also to portfolio transfers with NCBO, which appears to be a non-sense. We suggest the Commission to exempt the operations identified with the PORT indicator in T2S, where NCBO applies.

Question 31.2 If you answered "yes" to Question 31, please specify what clarifications/targeted measures could provide further legal certainty:

5000 character(s) maximum
including spaces and line breaks, i.e. stricter than the MS Word characters counting method.

As it regards the scope of "transactions subject to the buy-in requirement" we believe that the scope of the buy-in requirement should be refined to exempt (in a clear manner) any instructions not related to an effective sell/buy transaction. Indeed, the origin for both a penalty and a buy-in is a failing settlement instruction in the books of a CSD. If the application of penalties does not raise any concern per se, the application of a buy-in process based on failing instructions may lead to "absurd"/paradoxical cases, such as for portfolio transfer transactions with No Change of Beneficial Ownership.

In this regard, it could help to introduce a definition of "transaction", even borrowing the one adopted under

Art. 2(5) of Delegated Act 2017/590 on MIFIR transaction reporting (“a transaction for the purpose of … shall not include the following: …”).

As it regards “transaction types” subject to the cash penalty regime, by delineating the kinds of transactions to which the penalty regime should apply, many types of corporate action transactions and primary issuance transactions could be safely excluded as a result. Cash movements in and of themselves at CSDs, such as market claims in cash, and penalties for late payment, should be explicitly excluded from the penalty regime.

Finally, with regard to point A in our answer to Q.31.1 (Application of buy-in (BI) rules exclusively to trading parties (TPs) in the case of non-cleared transactions), we believe that i) BI should be performed at the level where the trade has been executed and where a contractual buy-and-sell obligation has been established; ii) a clear difference should be introduced between TPs and other entities, iii) other entities should not play any active role, as well as assume any risk and liability in relation to BI and should perform only an operational role, where appropriate.

Question 32. Do you consider that the scope of certain requirements, even where it is clear, could lead to unintended consequences on the efficiency of market operations?

- (●) Yes
- ( ) No
- ( ) Don’t know / no opinion / not relevant

Question 32.1 If you answered "yes" to Question 32, please specify which provisions are concerned.

5000 character(s) maximum

including spaces and line breaks, i.e. stricter than the MS Word characters counting method.

Question 32.2 If you answered "yes" to Question 32, please specify what targeted measures could be implemented to avoid those unintended consequences while achieving the general objective of improving the efficiency of securities settlement in the Union:

5000 character(s) maximum

including spaces and line breaks, i.e. stricter than the MS Word characters counting method.

One example could be represented by settlement transaction with no change of beneficial owner. These transactions should be exempted from reporting and settlement discipline measures.

VII. Settlement Discipline

CSDR includes a set of measures to prevent and address failures in the settlement of securities transactions ('settlement fails'), commonly referred to as 'settlement discipline' measures. Application of the relevant rules in CSDR is dependent on the date of entry into force of Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2018/1229 on settlement discipline, which specifies the following:

a. measures to prevent settlement fails, including measures to be taken by financial institutions to limit the number of settlement fails as well as procedures and measures to be put in place by CSDs to facilitate and incentivise timely settlement of securities transactions;

b. measures to address settlement fails, including the requirements for monitoring and reporting of settlement fails by CSDs; the management by CSDs of cash penalties paid by their users causing settlement fails; the details of an appropriate buy-in process following settlement fails; the specific rules and exemptions concerning the buy-in process and the conditions under which a CSD may discontinue its services to users that cause settlement fails.

Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2018/1229 was supposed to enter into force on 13 September 2020. However, in May 2020 the Commission adopted a Commission Delegated Regulation amending it, thereby postponing its date of entry into force from 13 September 2020 to 1 February 2021. This short delay was considered necessary to take into account the additional time needed for the establishment of some essential features for the functioning of the new framework (e.g. the necessary ISO messages, the joint penalty mechanism of CSDs that use a common settlement infrastructure and the need for proper testing of the new functionalities).

During the COVID-19 crisis, many stakeholders asked for a further postponement of the entry into force of Commission Delegated Regulation 2018/1229. Those stakeholders argued that the COVID-19 pandemic impacted the overall implementation of regulatory projects and IT deliveries by CSDs and their participants and that, as a result of that, they will not be able to comply with the requirements of the RTS on settlement discipline by 1 February 2021. On 23 October 2020, the Commission endorsed ESMA's proposal to postpone further the entry into force of the RTS on settlement discipline to 1 February 2022.

Question 33. Do you consider that a revision of the settlement discipline regime of CSDR is necessary?

- (●) Yes
- ( ) No
- ( ) Don't know / no opinion / not relevant

Question 33.1 If you answered yes to Question 33, please indicate which elements of the settlement discipline regime should be reviewed:

you can select more than one option

- [x] Rules relating to the buy-in
- [x] Rules on penalties
- [ ] Rules on the reporting of settlement fails
- [x] Other

Question 33.2 If you answered "Other" to Question 33.1, please specify to which elements you are referring:

5000 character(s) maximum

including spaces and line breaks, i.e. stricter than the MS Word characters counting method.

Timeline of settlement discipline (SD): Most of the proposals put forward in Section 7 of this consultation deserve support. Simultaneously, banks and intermediaries are actively engaged in the activities aimed at ensuring full and timely compliance with the currently applicable SD regime, expected to go live on 1/2/2022 (as per Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2021/70 of 23 October 2020).
Therefore, the EC should carefully consider the timing of the adoption, entry into force and operation of any amendments to SD regime as resulting from this consultation in order to avoid any circumstance in which the currently applicable regime goes live for a few months and then it is amended/replaced with a new one.
Transitional provisions could be considered with a view to i) providing market participants with enough time to adapt themselves to the amendments resulting from this Consultation and ii) to reduce the additional activities and related costs which market participants will incur, in all likelihood, to abide by the above-mentioned amendments.

Question 34. The Commission has received input from various stakeholders concerning the settlement discipline framework.

Please indicate whether you agree (rating from 1 to 5) with the statements below:

	1 (disagree)	2 (rather disagree)	3 (neutral)	4 (rather agree)	5 (fully agree)	Don't know / No opinion
Buy-ins should be mandatory	◉	○	○	○	○	○
Buy-ins should be voluntary	○	○	○	○	◉	○
Rules on buy-ins should be differentiated, taking into account different markets, instruments and transaction types	○	○	○	○	◉	○

A pass on mechanism should be introduced	○	○	○	○	◉	○
The rules on the use of buy-in agents should be amended	○	○	○	○	◉	○
The scope of the buy-in regime and the exemptions applicable should be clarified	○	○	○	○	◉	○
The asymmetry in the reimbursement for changes in market prices should be eliminated	○	○	○	○	◉	○
The CSDR penalties framework can have procyclical effects	○	○	○	◉	○	○
The penalty rates should be revised	○	○	◉	○	○	○
The penalty regime should not apply to certain types of transactions (e.g. market claims in cash)	○	○	○	○	◉	○

Question 34.1 Please explain your answers to question 34, providing where possible quantitative evidence and concrete examples:

5000 character(s) maximum

including spaces and line breaks, i.e. stricter than the MS Word characters counting method.

As it regards the 1st and 2nd item in the table above, we believe that the current mandatory buy-in should be converted into a voluntary for trades not cleared by a CCP. Existing CCP's mandatory buy-in rules should remain in place for cleared transactions. Moving from a mandatory to a 'voluntary' regime (will have to be included into an official framework (Guidelines even proposed by the industry and shared with ESMA) defining how such voluntary buy-in might be initiated and run, providing for harmonised rules valid across the Union. This would also make easier ensuring that the contractual agreements among parties, envisaging the option to buy-in, are based on such a common harmonized basis. For consistency, we underline the need of having both trading parties to include voluntary buy-in provisions in their contracts.

Coming to item 3, we note that some degree of differentiation should be introduced to account for differences on the liquidity status of some shares (i.e. SMEs' transactions).

As it regards item 5, we believe that, in some specific circumstances, a market participant should be given the opportunity to act as a buy-in agent for itself. Indeed, we note that the CSDR currently prescribes that a member of a trading venue, if acting on its own account on a given trade, cannot act as a buy-in agent for its own trade(s), should a fail occur. In such scenario, this member should have readily available a buy-in agency contract with another entity, ready to assist it in the completion of the trade. However, such party is not allowed to select such an agent among those brokers/counterparties that have usual business relations with the former. Hence, the current regulatory framework implies a complex process to identify and appoint a possible candidate buy-in agent and, as the example above shows, it leads to a longer time to achieve the expected goal.
For these reasons, we would suggest the Commission to amend L1 and L2 provisions in a way that the revised CSDR will allow a party to a trade to act as buy-in agent for itself, as this eventually would sensibly help achieving one of the primary goals of the CSDR, the stable improvement of settlement rates and the overall settlement efficiency.

Coming to item 6, we would ask the Commission to exempt:
- portfolio transfers, further to their exclusion from the penalties' regime (see answer to Q.31.1). Such exemption could be avoided though, should the Commission replace the mandatory regime of the buy-in with a voluntary one. Indeed, should a transfer fail to settle, under a voluntary buy-in the parties could firstly try to solve the issues leading to the fail, or they could convene to initiate the buy-in process;
- transactions relating to rights issue during the very last days of the offer since there would not be enough time to activate/implement the buy in process;
- market claims on securities, as these already represent an 'adjustment' of a pre-existing trade /transaction on a security (which might already by subject to a buy-in!);
- shares subject to tenders, public offers;
- securities subject to lending and borrowing transactions;
- market makers on regulated markets as these operators might be crossing a market operation with an OTC one and considering their key role in market liquidity and efficiency.

The principle underlying the list above is that the Buy-in should apply to trades of economic relevance for the parties to a trade; any settlement instruction not deriving from such a trade should not be included in the buy-in scope of application.

As for items 8 and 9, it could make sense to introduce very targeted improvements, only after the penalty

regime goes live, for the reasons described below.
A) “target rates (TRs) of settlement efficiency (SE)” with dynamic recalibration of penalty rates, with TRs of SE based on liquidity of relevant asset classes (the lower the liquidity, the lower the TR),
B) collection and distribution of penalties, for CCP-cleared and bilateral transactions, centralised on CSDs.

As it regards “transaction types” subject to the cash penalty regime (item 10), many types of corporate action transactions and primary issuance transactions could be safely excluded. Cash movements in and of CSDs, such as market claims in cash and penalties for late payment, should be explicitly excluded. However, the T2S settlement platform does not embed a Transaction Type field. Hence, operators cannot currently identify whether a fail (and a consequent penalty) is related to a specific Transaction Type (TT). Hence, the TT could be a useful information field to introduce in T2S for the punctual application of penalties and buy-ins, but this implies an amendment to T2S systems. Because of all the above, a voluntary buy-in regime would provide for a useful degree of flexibility, with beneficial synergies also on the penalties scope.

Question 35. Would the application of the settlement discipline regime during the market turmoil provoked by COVID-19 in March and April 2020 have had a significant impact on the market?

- (•) Yes
- ( ) No
- ( ) Don’t know / no opinion / not relevant

Question 35.1 Please explain your answer to Question 35, describing all the potential impacts (e.g. liquidity, financial stability, etc.) and providing quantitative evidence and/ or examples where possible:

5000 character(s) maximum
including spaces and line breaks, i.e. stricter than the MS Word characters counting method.

Question 36. Which suggestions do you have for the improvement of the settlement discipline framework in CSDR?

Where possible, for each suggestion indicate which costs and benefits you and other market participants would incur:

5000 character(s) maximum
including spaces and line breaks, i.e. stricter than the MS Word characters counting method.

We would suggest an amendment on the addressees of the buy-in provisions according to the following principle: buy-in rights and obligations should be placed on the trading parties (TPs), and not on the receiving and delivering CSD participants. TPs should be responsible for the enforcement, initiation, payment of costs relating to the buy-in (BI). This should be clearly provided in the regulation and consistent

terminology should be used throughout.
Payment of BI costs and/or cash compensation should not require the involvement of the CSD participant/s. The BI is a means to enforce obligations of a trading contract. The role of CSDs and CSD participants (direct and indirect) in the process should be limited to the provision of the necessary settlement information.
As pointed out above, custodians and settlement agents are not parties to the trade, nor do they have any authority on or role for the enforcement of trading agreements to which they are not a party. Settlement agents therefore cannot “police” or otherwise ensure BI.
The recommendations in respect of Art. 25 of Regulation 2018/1229 are to correctly identify roles and responsibilities of parties with respect to BI, regardless of whether it is mandatory or discretionary. This would correct a cost-benefit imbalance since the costs of repapering all contractual relationships through the settlement chain are highly disproportionate to any benefit.

Further to the above, we take this occasion to underline the importance of establishing that CSDs should be responsible for the collection and distribution of penalties for CCP-cleared transactions as well as for bilateral transactions, and this could be done by amending Art. 19 of Level 2. Indeed, the process, as currently framed, substantially increases the complexity and technology required by all parties involved, creating an additional layer of actors to the collection/distribution process. A simplification of the process eliminates the need for additional technology build by CCPs, clearing members and all parties in the chain.

Also, we would suggest amending Art. 39 of Delegated Regulation UE 2018/1229 (RTS) in order to provide clarity on the fact that a CSD participant will be subject to a suspension under Article 7(9) of CSDR only where the CSD participant itself (as opposed to its clients) meets the criteria for failure to consistently and systemically deliver securities. Indeed, the Participant is an intermediary in the settlement chain, and cannot influence the trading patterns of its clients and necessarily prevent settlement fails. Also, the way in which performance is measured in Article 39(1) of the RTS does not promote a common level playing field amongst CSD participants at the CSD. This is because CSD participants with smaller settlement volumes will be penalised for settlement fails by their clients by reference to their overall settlement volume at the CSD, but if the same client was using a different CSD participant with larger settlement volumes at the CSD, the settlement failures of the client may not breach the settlement efficiency rate. As such, CSD participants with lower settlement volumes (compared to CSD participants with larger settlement volumes at the same CSD) will be unfairly penalised by this provision. Such proposal would safeguard proportionality and level playing field for all CSD participants.

In addition to the above, we would also suggest the following:

A) Introducing, in Art. 7(3) of CSDR L1, a principle according to which timeframes for BI process must be differentiated on the basis of a) the market structure and liquidity of the market segment of the underlying instrument, and b) the impact on orderly and smooth functioning of markets. ESMA would then perform technical assessment with a view to adopting Level 2 regulation.

B) Introduction of new L1 provision enabling the receiving trading parties, in relation to non-cleared transactions, to execute the BI on their own. Consequently, Art.31 of the above mentioned RTS to be amended accordingly.

C) Amendments to Art.7(6) of CSDR so that, where the BI value is higher than the securities subject to trade, the receiving TP shall be entitled to receive the difference from the original failing TP (and viceversa). This would imply Art. 35(2) RTS to be amended accordingly and consistently to Art. 35(1) RTS.

D) Removal of CCPs responsibility (Art. 19 of the above mentioned RTS) in relation to collection and distribution of penalties to clearing members affected by the settlement fails; centralization on CSDs of the responsibility to collect and distribute penalties for CCP-cleared and bilateral transactions

VIII. Framework for third-country CSDs

Article 25(1) of CSDR provides that third-county CSDs may provide their services in the EU, including through setting up branches on the territory of the EU.

Article 25(2) requires a third-country CSD to apply for recognition to ESMA in two specific cases:

a. where it intends to provide certain core CSD services (issuance and central maintenance services related to financial instruments governed by the law of a Member State); or

b. where it intends to provide its services in the EU through a branch set up in a Member State.

Services other than those described (including settlement services) do not require recognition by ESMA under Article 25 CSDR.

ESMA may recognise a third-country CSD that wishes to provide issuance and central maintenance services only where the conditions referred to in Article 25(4) of CSDR are met. One of those conditions is that the Commission has adopted an implementing act determining that the regulatory framework applicable to CSDs of that third country is equivalent in accordance with CSDR.

One CSD has applied to date for recognition to ESMA, i.e. the UK CSD in the context of Brexit. At least two other CSDs have contacted ESMA and have expressed their intention to apply for recognition as third-country CSDs. However, according to the current provisions of Article 25 of CSDR, the recognition process is only triggered once there is an equivalence decision issued by the European Commission in respect of a particular third country. In the meantime, according to Article 69(4) of CSDR, third-country CSDs can continue providing services in the EU under the national regimes.

Question 37. Do you use the services of third-country CSDs for the issuance of securities constituted under the law of the EU Member State where you are established?

- Yes
- No
- Don’t know / no opinion / not relevant

Question 38. Do you consider that an end-date to the grandfathering provision of Article 69(4) of CSDR should be introduced?

- Yes
- No
- Don’t know / no opinion / not relevant

Question 39. Do you think that a notification requirement should be introduced for third-country CSDs operating under the grandfathering clause, requiring them to inform the competent authorities of the Member States where they offer their services and ESMA?

- Yes
- No
- Don’t know / no opinion / not relevant

Question 39.1 Please explain your answer to question 39, providing where possible examples:

5000 character(s) maximum

including spaces and line breaks, i.e. stricter than the MS Word characters counting method.

Question 40. Do you consider that there is (or may exist in the future) an unlevel playing field between EU CSDs, that are subject to the EU regulatory and supervisory framework of CSDR, and third-country CSDs that provide / may provide in the future their services in the EU?

- Yes
- No
- Don’t know / no opinion / not relevant

Question 40.1 Please explain your answer to question 40, elaborating on specific areas and providing concrete examples:

5000 character(s) maximum

including spaces and line breaks, i.e. stricter than the MS Word characters counting method.

Question 41. Which aspects of the third-country CSDs regime under CSDR do you consider require revision / further clarification?

Please rate each proposal from 1 to 5:

	1 (irrelevant)	2 (rather not relevant)	3 (neutral)	4 (rather relevant)	5 (fully relevant)	Don't know / No opinion
Introduction of a requirement for third-country CDS to be recognised in order to provide settlement services in the EU for financial instruments constituted under the law of a Member State	○	○	○	○	○	○
Clarification of term "financial instruments constituted under the law of a Member State" in Article 25(2) of CSDR	○	○	○	○	○	○
Recognition of third-country CSDs based on their systemic importance for the Union or for one or more of its Member States	○	○	○	○	○	○
Enhancement of ESMA's supervisory tools over	○	○	○	○	○	○

recognised third-country CSDs						

Question 41.1 Please explain your answers to question 41, providing where possible concrete examples:

5000 character(s) maximum

including spaces and line breaks, i.e. stricter than the MS Word characters counting method.

Question 42. If you consider that there are other aspects of the third-country CSDs regime under CSDR that require revision/further clarification, please indicate them below providing examples, if needed:

5000 character(s) maximum

including spaces and line breaks, i.e. stricter than the MS Word characters counting method.

IX. Other areas to be potentially considered in the CSDR Review

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Question 43. What other topics not covered by the questions above do you consider should be addressed in the CSDR review (e.g. are there other substantive barriers to competition in relation to CSD services which are not referred to in the above sections? Is there a need for further measures to limit the impact on taxpayers of the failure of CSDs)?

5000 character(s) maximum

including spaces and line breaks, i.e. stricter than the MS Word characters counting method.

The CSDR settlement discipline rules require the use of certain complex reference data e.g.

- for the determination of in-scope instruments,
- for the determination of penalty rates,
- for the determination of market value/prices,
- exchange rates etc.

Such reference data is not (centrally) available nowadays for the new processes. Recommendation is for such data to be centrally placed at the disposal of the market participants, for example at ESMA level.

Additional information

Should you wish to provide additional information (e.g. a position paper, report) or raise specific points not covered by the questionnaire, you can upload your additional document(s) below. **Please make sure you do not include any personal data in the file you upload if you want to remain anonymous**.

The maximum file size is 1 MB.
You can upload several files.
Only files of the type pdf,txt,doc,docx,odt,rtf are allowed

Useful links

More on this consultation (https://ec.europa.eu/info/publications/finance-consultations-2020-csdr-review_en)

Consultation document (https://ec.europa.eu/info/files/2020-csdr-review-consultation-document_en)

More on central securities depositories (CSDs) (https://ec.europa.eu/info/business-economy-euro/banking-and-finance/financial-markets/post-trade-services/central-securities-depositories-csds_en)

Specific privacy statement (https://ec.europa.eu/info/files/2020-csdr-review-specific-privacy-statement_en)

More on the Transparency register (http://ec.europa.eu/transparencyregister/public/homePage.do?locale=en)

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