

Directive 2014/65/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 May 2014 on markets in financial instruments and amending Directive 2002/92/EC and Directive 2011/61/EU (recast) (Text with EEA relevance)

TITLE II

AUTHORISATION AND OPERATING CONDITIONS FOR INVESTMENT FIRMS

CHAPTER II

Operating conditions for investment firms

Section 1

General provisions

Article 21

Regular review of conditions for initial authorisation

1 Member States shall require that an investment firm authorised in their territory comply at all times with the conditions for initial authorisation established in Chapter I.

2 Member States shall require competent authorities to establish the appropriate methods to monitor that investment firms comply with their obligation under paragraph 1. They shall require investment firms to notify the competent authorities of any material changes to the conditions for initial authorisation.

ESMA may develop guidelines regarding the monitoring methods referred to in this paragraph.

Article 22

General obligation in respect of on-going supervision

Member States shall ensure that the competent authorities monitor the activities of investment firms so as to assess compliance with the operating conditions provided for in this Directive. Member States shall ensure that the appropriate measures are in place to enable the competent authorities to obtain the information needed to assess the compliance of investment firms with those obligations.

Article 23

Conflicts of interest

1 Member States shall require investment firms to take all appropriate steps to identify and to prevent or manage conflicts of interest between themselves, including their managers,

employees and tied agents, or any person directly or indirectly linked to them by control and their clients or between one client and another that arise in the course of providing any investment and ancillary services, or combinations thereof, including those caused by the receipt of inducements from third parties or by the investment firm's own remuneration and other incentive structures.

2 Where organisational or administrative arrangements made by the investment firm in accordance with Article 16(3) to prevent conflicts of interest from adversely affecting the interest of its client are not sufficient to ensure, with reasonable confidence, that risks of damage to client interests will be prevented, the investment firm shall clearly disclose to the client the general nature and/or sources of conflicts of interest and the steps taken to mitigate those risks before undertaking business on its behalf.

3 The disclosure referred to in paragraph 2 shall:

- a be made in a durable medium; and
- b include sufficient detail, taking into account the nature of the client, to enable that client to take an informed decision with respect to the service in the context of which the conflict of interest arises.

4 The Commission shall be empowered to adopt delegated acts in accordance with Article 89 to:

- a define the steps that investment firms might reasonably be expected to take to identify, prevent, manage and disclose conflicts of interest when providing various investment and ancillary services and combinations thereof;
- b establish appropriate criteria for determining the types of conflict of interest whose existence may damage the interests of the clients or potential clients of the investment firm.

Section 2

Provisions to ensure investor protection

Article 24

General principles and information to clients

1 Member States shall require that, when providing investment services or, where appropriate, ancillary services to clients, an investment firm act honestly, fairly and professionally in accordance with the best interests of its clients and comply, in particular, with the principles set out in this Article and in Article 25.

2 Investment firms which manufacture financial instruments for sale to clients shall ensure that those financial instruments are designed to meet the needs of an identified target market of end clients within the relevant category of clients, the strategy for distribution of the financial instruments is compatible with the identified target market, and the investment firm takes reasonable steps to ensure that the financial instrument is distributed to the identified target market.

An investment firm shall understand the financial instruments they offer or recommend, assess the compatibility of the financial instruments with the needs of the clients to whom it provides investment services, also taking account of the identified target market of end clients as referred to in Article 16(3), and ensure that financial instruments are offered or recommended only when this is in the interest of the client.

3 All information, including marketing communications, addressed by the investment firm to clients or potential clients shall be fair, clear and not misleading. Marketing communications shall be clearly identifiable as such.

4 Appropriate information shall be provided in good time to clients or potential clients with regard to the investment firm and its services, the financial instruments and proposed investment strategies, execution venues and all costs and related charges. That information shall include the following:

- a when investment advice is provided, the investment firm must, in good time before it provides investment advice, inform the client:
 - (i) whether or not the advice is provided on an independent basis;
 - (ii) whether the advice is based on a broad or on a more restricted analysis of different types of financial instruments and, in particular, whether the range is limited to financial instruments issued or provided by entities having close links with the investment firm or any other legal or economic relationships, such as contractual relationships, so close as to pose a risk of impairing the independent basis of the advice provided;
 - (iii) whether the investment firm will provide the client with a periodic assessment of the suitability of the financial instruments recommended to that client;
- b the information on financial instruments and proposed investment strategies must include appropriate guidance on and warnings of the risks associated with investments in those instruments or in respect of particular investment strategies and whether the financial instrument is intended for retail or professional clients, taking account of the identified target market in accordance with paragraph 2;
- c the information on all costs and associated charges must include information relating to both investment and ancillary services, including the cost of advice, where relevant, the cost of the financial instrument recommended or marketed to the client and how the client may pay for it, also encompassing any third-party payments.

The information about all costs and charges, including costs and charges in connection with the investment service and the financial instrument, which are not caused by the occurrence of underlying market risk, shall be aggregated to allow the client to understand the overall cost as well as the cumulative effect on return of the investment, and where the client so requests, an itemised breakdown shall be provided. Where applicable, such information shall be provided to the client on a regular basis, at least annually, during the life of the investment.

5 The information referred to in paragraphs 4 and 9 shall be provided in a comprehensible form in such a manner that clients or potential clients are reasonably able to understand the nature and risks of the investment service and of the specific type of financial instrument that is being offered and, consequently, to take investment decisions on an informed basis. Member States may allow that information to be provided in a standardised format.

6 Where an investment service is offered as part of a financial product which is already subject to other provisions of Union law relating to credit institutions and consumer credits with respect to information requirements, that service shall not be additionally subject to the obligations set out in paragraphs 3, 4 and 5.

7 Where an investment firm informs the client that investment advice is provided on an independent basis, that investment firm shall:

- a assess a sufficient range of financial instruments available on the market which must be sufficiently diverse with regard to their type and issuers or product providers to ensure

that the client's investment objectives can be suitably met and must not be limited to financial instruments issued or provided by:

- (i) the investment firm itself or by entities having close links with the investment firm; or
 - (ii) other entities with which the investment firm has such close legal or economic relationships, such as contractual relationships, as to pose a risk of impairing the independent basis of the advice provided;
- b not accept and retain fees, commissions or any monetary or non-monetary benefits paid or provided by any third party or a person acting on behalf of a third party in relation to the provision of the service to clients. Minor non-monetary benefits that are capable of enhancing the quality of service provided to a client and are of a scale and nature such that they could not be judged to impair compliance with the investment firm's duty to act in the best interest of the client must be clearly disclosed and are excluded from this point.

8 When providing portfolio management the investment firm shall not accept and retain fees, commissions or any monetary or non-monetary benefits paid or provided by any third party or a person acting on behalf of a third party in relation to the provision of the service to clients. Minor non-monetary benefits that are capable of enhancing the quality of service provided to a client and are of a scale and nature such that they could not be judged to impair compliance with the investment firm's duty to act in the best interest of the client shall be clearly disclosed and are excluded from this paragraph.

9 Member States shall ensure that investment firms are regarded as not fulfilling their obligations under Article 23 or under paragraph 1 of this Article where they pay or are paid any fee or commission, or provide or are provided with any non-monetary benefit in connection with the provision of an investment service or an ancillary service, to or by any party except the client or a person on behalf of the client, other than where the payment or benefit:

- a is designed to enhance the quality of the relevant service to the client; and
- b does not impair compliance with the investment firm's duty to act honestly, fairly and professionally in accordance with the best interest of its clients.

The existence, nature and amount of the payment or benefit referred to in the first subparagraph, or, where the amount cannot be ascertained, the method of calculating that amount, must be clearly disclosed to the client, in a manner that is comprehensive, accurate and understandable, prior to the provision of the relevant investment or ancillary service. Where applicable, the investment firm shall also inform the client on mechanisms for transferring to the client the fee, commission, monetary or non-monetary benefit received in relation to the provision of the investment or ancillary service.

The payment or benefit which enables or is necessary for the provision of investment services, such as custody costs, settlement and exchange fees, regulatory levies or legal fees, and which by its nature cannot give rise to conflicts with the investment firm's duties to act honestly, fairly and professionally in accordance with the best interests of its clients, is not subject to the requirements set out in the first subparagraph.

10 An investment firm which provides investment services to clients shall ensure that it does not remunerate or assess the performance of its staff in a way that conflicts with its duty to act in the best interests of its clients. In particular, it shall not make any arrangement by way of remuneration, sales targets or otherwise that could provide an incentive to its staff to recommend a particular financial instrument to a retail client when the investment firm could offer a different financial instrument which would better meet that client's needs.

11 When an investment service is offered together with another service or product as part of a package or as a condition for the same agreement or package, the investment firm shall inform the client whether it is possible to buy the different components separately and shall provide for a separate evidence of the costs and charges of each component.

Where the risks resulting from such an agreement or package offered to a retail client are likely to be different from the risks associated with the components taken separately, the investment firm shall provide an adequate description of the different components of the agreement or package and the way in which its interaction modifies the risks.

ESMA, in cooperation with EBA and EIOPA, shall develop by 3 January 2016, and update periodically, guidelines for the assessment and the supervision of cross-selling practices indicating, in particular, situations in which cross-selling practices are not compliant with obligations laid down in paragraph 1.

12 Member States may, in exceptional cases, impose additional requirements on investment firms in respect of the matters covered by this Article. Such requirements must be objectively justified and proportionate so as to address specific risks to investor protection or to market integrity which are of particular importance in the circumstances of the market structure of that Member State.

Member States shall notify the Commission of any requirement which they intend to impose in accordance with this paragraph without undue delay and at least two months before the date appointed for that requirement to come into force. The notification shall include a justification for that requirement. Any such additional requirements shall not restrict or otherwise affect the rights of investment firms under Articles 34 and 35 of this Directive.

The Commission shall within two months from the notification referred to in the second subparagraph provide its opinion on the proportionality of and justification for the additional requirements.

The Commission shall communicate to Member States and make public on its website the additional requirements imposed in accordance with this paragraph.

Member States may retain additional requirements that were notified to the Commission in accordance with Article 4 of Directive 2006/73/EC before 2 July 2014 provided that the conditions laid down in that Article are met.

13 The Commission shall be empowered to adopt delegated acts in accordance with Article 89 to ensure that investment firms comply with the principles set out in this Article when providing investment or ancillary services to their clients, including:

- a the conditions with which the information must comply in order to be fair, clear and not misleading;
- b the details about content and format of information to clients in relation to client categorisation, investment firms and their services, financial instruments, costs and charges;
- c the criteria for the assessment of a range of financial instruments available on the market;
- d the criteria to assess compliance of firms receiving inducements with the obligation to act honestly, fairly and professionally in accordance with the best interest of the client.

In formulating the requirements for information on financial instruments in relation to point b of paragraph 4 information on the structure of the product shall be included,

where applicable, taking into account any relevant standardized information required under Union law.

- 14 The delegated acts referred to in paragraph 13 shall take into account:
- a the nature of the service(s) offered or provided to the client or potential client, taking into account the type, object, size and frequency of the transactions;
 - b the nature and range of products being offered or considered including different types of financial instruments;
 - c the retail or professional nature of the client or potential clients or, in the case of paragraphs 4 and 5, their classification as eligible counterparties.

Article 25

Assessment of suitability and appropriateness and reporting to clients

1 Member States shall require investment firms to ensure and demonstrate to competent authorities on request that natural persons giving investment advice or information about financial instruments, investment services or ancillary services to clients on behalf of the investment firm possess the necessary knowledge and competence to fulfil their obligations under Article 24 and this Article. Member States shall publish the criteria to be used for assessing such knowledge and competence.

2 When providing investment advice or portfolio management the investment firm shall obtain the necessary information regarding the client's or potential client's knowledge and experience in the investment field relevant to the specific type of product or service, that person's financial situation including his ability to bear losses, and his investment objectives including his risk tolerance so as to enable the investment firm to recommend to the client or potential client the investment services and financial instruments that are suitable for him and, in particular, are in accordance with his risk tolerance and ability to bear losses.

Member States shall ensure that where an investment firm provides investment advice recommending a package of services or products pursuant to Article 24(11), the overall bundled package is suitable.

3 Member States shall ensure that investment firms, when providing investment services other than those referred to in paragraph 2, ask the client or potential client to provide information regarding that person's knowledge and experience in the investment field relevant to the specific type of product or service offered or demanded so as to enable the investment firm to assess whether the investment service or product envisaged is appropriate for the client. Where a bundle of services or products is envisaged pursuant to Article 24(11), the assessment shall consider whether the overall bundled package is appropriate.

Where the investment firm considers, on the basis of the information received under the first subparagraph, that the product or service is not appropriate to the client or potential client, the investment firm shall warn the client or potential client. That warning may be provided in a standardised format.

Where clients or potential clients do not provide the information referred to under the first subparagraph, or where they provide insufficient information regarding their knowledge and experience, the investment firm shall warn them that the investment firm is not in a position to determine whether the service or product envisaged is appropriate for them. That warning may be provided in a standardised format.

4 Member States shall allow investment firms when providing investment services that only consist of execution or reception and transmission of client orders with or without ancillary services, excluding the granting of credits or loans as specified in Section B.1 of Annex I that do not comprise of existing credit limits of loans, current accounts and overdraft facilities of clients, to provide those investment services to their clients without the need to obtain the information or make the determination provided for in paragraph 3 where all the following conditions are met:

- a the services relate to any of the following financial instruments:
 - (i) shares admitted to trading on a regulated market or on an equivalent third-country market or on a MTF, where those are shares in companies, and excluding shares in non-UCITS collective investment undertakings and shares that embed a derivative;
 - (ii) bonds or other forms of securitised debt admitted to trading on a regulated market or on an equivalent third country market or on a MTF, excluding those that embed a derivative or incorporate a structure which makes it difficult for the client to understand the risk involved;
 - (iii) money-market instruments, excluding those that embed a derivative or incorporate a structure which makes it difficult for the client to understand the risk involved;
 - (iv) shares or units in UCITS, excluding structured UCITS as referred to in the second subparagraph of Article 36(1) of Regulation (EU) No 583/2010;
 - (v) structured deposits, excluding those that incorporate a structure which makes it difficult for the client to understand the risk of return or the cost of exiting the product before term;
 - (vi) other non-complex financial instruments for the purpose of this paragraph.

For the purpose of this point, if the requirements and the procedure laid down under the third and the fourth subparagraphs of Article 4(1) of Directive 2003/71/EC are fulfilled, a third-country market shall be considered to be equivalent to a regulated market.

- b the service is provided at the initiative of the client or potential client;
- c the client or potential client has been clearly informed that in the provision of that service the investment firm is not required to assess the appropriateness of the financial instrument or service provided or offered and that therefore he does not benefit from the corresponding protection of the relevant conduct of business rules. Such a warning may be provided in a standardised format;
- d the investment firm complies with its obligations under Article 23.

5 The investment firm shall establish a record that includes the document or documents agreed between the investment firm and the client that set out the rights and obligations of the parties, and the other terms on which the investment firm will provide services to the client. The rights and duties of the parties to the contract may be incorporated by reference to other documents or legal texts.

6 The investment firm shall provide the client with adequate reports on the service provided in a durable medium. Those reports shall include periodic communications to clients, taking into account the type and the complexity of financial instruments involved and the nature of the service provided to the client and shall include, where applicable, the costs associated with the transactions and services undertaken on behalf of the client.

When providing investment advice, the investment firm shall, before the transaction is made, provide the client with a statement on suitability in a durable medium specifying the advice given and how that advice meets the preferences, objectives and other characteristics of the retail client.

Where the agreement to buy or sell a financial instrument is concluded using a means of distance communication which prevents the prior delivery of the suitability statement, the investment firm may provide the written statement on suitability in a durable medium immediately after the client is bound by any agreement, provided both the following conditions are met:

- a the client has consented to receiving the suitability statement without undue delay after the conclusion of the transaction; and
- b the investment firm has given the client the option of delaying the transaction in order to receive the statement on suitability in advance.

Where an investment firm provides portfolio management or has informed the client that it will carry out a periodic assessment of suitability, the periodic report shall contain an updated statement of how the investment meets the client's preferences, objectives and other characteristics of the retail client.

7 If a credit agreement relating to residential immovable property, which is subject to the provisions concerning creditworthiness assessment of consumers laid down in Directive 2014/17/EU of the European Parliament and the Council⁽¹⁾, has as a prerequisite the provision to that same consumer of an investment service in relation to mortgage bonds specifically issued to secure the financing of and having identical terms as the credit agreement relating to residential immovable property, in order for the loan to be payable, refinanced or redeemed, that service shall not be subject to the obligations set out in this Article.

8 The Commission shall be empowered to adopt delegated acts in accordance with Article 89 to ensure that investment firms comply with the principles set out in paragraphs 2 to 6 of this Article when providing investment or ancillary services to their clients, including information to obtain when assessing the suitability or appropriateness of the services and financial instruments for their clients, criteria to assess non-complex financial instruments for the purposes of point (a)(vi) of paragraph 4 of this Article, the content and the format of records and agreements for the provision of services to clients and of periodic reports to clients on the services provided. Those delegated acts shall take into account:

- a the nature of the service(s) offered or provided to the client or potential client, having regard to the type, object, size and frequency of the transactions;
- b the nature of the products being offered or considered, including different types of financial instruments;
- c the retail or professional nature of the client or potential clients or, in the case of paragraph 6, their classification as eligible counterparties.

9 ESMA shall adopt by 3 January 2016 guidelines specifying criteria for the assessment of knowledge and competence required under paragraph 1.

10 ESMA shall develop by 3 January 2016, and update periodically, guidelines for the assessment of:

- a financial instruments incorporating a structure which makes it difficult for the client to understand the risk involved in accordance with points (a)(ii) and (a)(iii) of paragraph 4;
- b structured deposits incorporating a structure which makes it difficult for the client to understand the risk of return or the cost of exiting the product before term, in accordance with point (a)(v) of paragraph 4.

11 ESMA may develop guidelines, and update them periodically, for the assessment of financial instruments being classified as non-complex for the purpose of point (a)(vi) of paragraph 4, taking into account the delegated acts adopted under paragraph 8.

Article 26

Provision of services through the medium of another investment firm

Member States shall allow an investment firm receiving an instruction to provide investment or ancillary services on behalf of a client through the medium of another investment firm to rely on client information transmitted by the latter investment firm. The investment firm which mediates the instructions will remain responsible for the completeness and accuracy of the information transmitted.

The investment firm which receives an instruction to undertake services on behalf of a client in that way shall also be able to rely on any recommendations in respect of the service or transaction that have been provided to the client by another investment firm. The investment firm which mediates the instructions will remain responsible for the suitability for the client of the recommendations or advice provided.

The investment firm which receives client instructions or orders through the medium of another investment firm shall remain responsible for concluding the service or transaction, based on any such information or recommendations, in accordance with the relevant provisions of this Title.

Article 27

Obligation to execute orders on terms most favourable to the client

1 Member States shall require that investment firms take all sufficient steps to obtain, when executing orders, the best possible result for their clients taking into account price, costs, speed, likelihood of execution and settlement, size, nature or any other consideration relevant to the execution of the order. Nevertheless, where there is a specific instruction from the client the investment firm shall execute the order following the specific instruction.

Where an investment firm executes an order on behalf of a retail client, the best possible result shall be determined in terms of the total consideration, representing the price of the financial instrument and the costs relating to execution, which shall include all expenses incurred by the client which are directly relating to the execution of the order, including execution venue fees, clearing and settlement fees and any other fees paid to third parties involved in the execution of the order.

For the purposes of delivering best possible result in accordance with the first subparagraph where there is more than one competing venue to execute an order for a financial instrument, in order to assess and compare the results for the client that would be achieved by executing the order on each of the execution venues listed in the investment firm's order execution policy that is capable of executing that order, the investment firm's own commissions and the costs for executing the order on each of the eligible execution venues shall be taken into account in that assessment.

2 An investment firm shall not receive any remuneration, discount or non-monetary benefit for routing client orders to a particular trading venue or execution venue which would

infringe the requirements on conflicts of interest or inducements set out in paragraph 1 of this Article and Article 16(3) and Articles 23 and 24.

3 Member States shall require that for financial instruments subject to the trading obligation in Articles 23 and 28 Regulation (EU) No 600/2014 each trading venue and systematic internaliser and for other financial instruments each execution venue makes available to the public, without any charges, data relating to the quality of execution of transactions on that venue on at least an annual basis and that following execution of a transaction on behalf of a client the investment firm shall inform the client where the order was executed. Periodic reports shall include details about price, costs, speed and likelihood of execution for individual financial instruments.

4 Member States shall require investment firms to establish and implement effective arrangements for complying with paragraph 1. In particular, Member States shall require investment firms to establish and implement an order execution policy to allow them to obtain, for their client orders, the best possible result in accordance with paragraph 1.

5 The order execution policy shall include, in respect of each class of financial instruments, information on the different venues where the investment firm executes its client orders and the factors affecting the choice of execution venue. It shall at least include those venues that enable the investment firm to obtain on a consistent basis the best possible result for the execution of client orders.

Member States shall require that investment firms provide appropriate information to their clients on their order execution policy. That information shall explain clearly, in sufficient detail and in a way that can be easily understood by clients, how orders will be executed by the investment firm for the client. Member States shall require that investment firms obtain the prior consent of their clients to the order execution policy.

Member States shall require that, where the order execution policy provides for the possibility that client orders may be executed outside a trading venue, the investment firm shall, in particular, inform its clients about that possibility. Member States shall require that investment firms obtain the prior express consent of their clients before proceeding to execute their orders outside a trading venue. Investment firms may obtain such consent either in the form of a general agreement or in respect of individual transactions.

6 Member States shall require investment firms who execute client orders to summarise and make public on an annual basis, for each class of financial instruments, the top five execution venues in terms of trading volumes where they executed client orders in the preceding year and information on the quality of execution obtained.

7 Member States shall require investment firms who execute client orders to monitor the effectiveness of their order execution arrangements and execution policy in order to identify and, where appropriate, correct any deficiencies. In particular, they shall assess, on a regular basis, whether the execution venues included in the order execution policy provide for the best possible result for the client or whether they need to make changes to their execution arrangements, taking account of, inter alia, the information published under paragraphs 3 and 6. Member States shall require investment firms to notify clients with whom they have an ongoing client relationship of any material changes to their order execution arrangements or execution policy.

8 Member States shall require investment firms to be able to demonstrate to their clients, at their request, that they have executed their orders in accordance with the investment firm's execution policy and to demonstrate to the competent authority, at its request, their compliance with this Article.

9 The Commission shall be empowered to adopt delegated acts in accordance with Article 89 concerning:

- a the criteria for determining the relative importance of the different factors that, pursuant to paragraph 1, may be taken into account for determining the best possible result taking into account the size and type of order and the retail or professional nature of the client;
- b factors that may be taken into account by an investment firm when reviewing its execution arrangements and the circumstances under which changes to such arrangements may be appropriate. In particular, the factors for determining which venues enable investment firms to obtain on a consistent basis the best possible result for executing the client orders;
- c the nature and extent of the information to be provided to clients on their execution policies, pursuant to paragraph 5.

10 ESMA shall develop draft regulatory technical standards to determine:

- a the specific content, the format and the periodicity of data relating to the quality of execution to be published in accordance with paragraph 3, taking into account the type of execution venue and the type of financial instrument concerned;
- b the content and the format of information to be published by investment firms in accordance with paragraph 6.

ESMA shall submit those draft regulatory technical standards to the Commission by 3 July 2015.

Power is delegated to the Commission to adopt the regulatory technical standards referred to in the first subparagraph in accordance with Articles 10 to 14 of Regulation (EU) No 1095/2010.

Article 28

Client order handling rules

1 Member States shall require that investment firms authorised to execute orders on behalf of clients implement procedures and arrangements which provide for the prompt, fair and expeditious execution of client orders, relative to other client orders or the trading interests of the investment firm.

Those procedures or arrangements shall allow for the execution of otherwise comparable client orders in accordance with the time of their reception by the investment firm.

2 Member States shall require that, in the case of a client limit order in respect of shares admitted to trading on a regulated market or traded on a trading venue which are not immediately executed under prevailing market conditions, investment firms are, unless the client expressly instructs otherwise, to take measures to facilitate the earliest possible execution of that order by making public immediately that client limit order in a manner which is easily accessible to other market participants. Member States may decide that investment firms comply with that obligation by transmitting the client limit order to a trading venue. Member States shall provide that the competent authorities may waive the obligation to make public a limit order that is large in scale compared with normal market size as determined under Article 4 of Regulation (EU) No 600/2014.

3 The Commission shall be empowered to adopt delegated acts in accordance with Article 89 to define:

- a the conditions and nature of the procedures and arrangements which result in the prompt, fair and expeditious execution of client orders and the situations in which or types of transaction for which investment firms may reasonably deviate from prompt execution so as to obtain more favourable terms for clients;
- b the different methods through which an investment firm can be deemed to have met its obligation to disclose not immediately executable client limit orders to the market.

Article 29

Obligations of investment firms when appointing tied agents

1 Member States shall allow an investment firm to appoint tied agents for the purposes of promoting the services of the investment firm, soliciting business or receiving orders from clients or potential clients and transmitting them, placing financial instruments and providing advice in respect of such financial instruments and services offered by that investment firm.

2 Member States shall require that where an investment firm decides to appoint a tied agent it remains fully and unconditionally responsible for any action or omission on the part of the tied agent when acting on behalf of the investment firm. Member States shall require the investment firm to ensure that a tied agent discloses the capacity in which he is acting and the investment firm which he is representing when contacting or before dealing with any client or potential client.

Member States may allow, in accordance with Article 16(6), (8) and (9), tied agents registered in their territory to hold money and/or financial instruments of clients on behalf and under the full responsibility of the investment firm for which they are acting within their territory or, in the case of a cross border operation, in the territory of a Member State which allows a tied agent to hold client money.

Member States shall require the investment firms to monitor the activities of their tied agents so as to ensure that they continue to comply with this Directive when acting through tied agents.

3 Tied agents shall be registered in the public register in the Member State where they are established. ESMA shall publish on its website references or hyperlinks to the public registers established under this Article by the Member States that decide to allow investment firms to appoint tied agents.

Member States shall ensure that tied agents are only admitted to the public register if it has been established that they are of sufficiently good repute and that they possess the appropriate general, commercial and professional knowledge and competence so as to be able to deliver the investment service or ancillary service and to communicate accurately all relevant information regarding the proposed service to the client or potential client.

Member States may decide that, subject to appropriate control, investment firms can verify whether the tied agents which they have appointed are of sufficiently good repute and possess the knowledge and competence referred to in the second subparagraph.

The register shall be updated on a regular basis. It shall be publicly available for consultation.

4 Member States shall require that investment firms appointing tied agents take adequate measures in order to avoid any negative impact that the activities of the tied agent not covered

by the scope of this Directive could have on the activities carried out by the tied agent on behalf of the investment firm.

Member States may allow competent authorities to collaborate with investment firms and credit institutions, their associations and other entities in registering tied agents and in monitoring compliance of tied agents with the requirements of paragraph 3. In particular, tied agents may be registered by an investment firm, credit institution or their associations and other entities under the supervision of the competent authority.

5 Member States shall require that investment firms appoint only tied agents entered in the public registers referred to in paragraph 3.

6 Member States may adopt or retain provisions that are more stringent than those set out in this Article or add further requirements for tied agents registered within their jurisdiction.

Article 30

Transactions executed with eligible counterparties

1 Member States shall ensure that investment firms authorised to execute orders on behalf of clients and/or to deal on own account and/or to receive and transmit orders, may bring about or enter into transactions with eligible counterparties without being obliged to comply with the obligations under Article 24, with the exception of paragraphs 4 and 5, Article 25, with the exception of paragraph 6, Article 27 and Article 28(1) in respect of those transactions or in respect of any ancillary service directly relating to those transactions.

Member States shall ensure that, in their relationship with eligible counterparties, investment firms act honestly, fairly and professionally and communicate in a way which is fair, clear and not misleading, taking into account the nature of the eligible counterparty and of its business.

2 Member States shall recognise as eligible counterparties for the purposes of this Article investment firms, credit institutions, insurance companies, UCITS and their management companies, pension funds and their management companies, other financial institutions authorised or regulated under Union law or under the national law of a Member State, national governments and their corresponding offices including public bodies that deal with public debt at national level, central banks and supranational organisations.

Classification as an eligible counterparty under the first subparagraph shall be without prejudice to the right of such entities to request, either on a general form or on a trade-by-trade basis, treatment as clients whose business with the investment firm is subject to Articles 24, 25, 27 and 28.

3 Member States may also recognise as eligible counterparties other undertakings meeting pre-determined proportionate requirements, including quantitative thresholds. In the event of a transaction where the prospective counterparties are located in different jurisdictions, the investment firm shall defer to the status of the other undertaking as determined by the law or measures of the Member State in which that undertaking is established.

Member States shall ensure that the investment firm, when it enters into transactions in accordance with paragraph 1 with such undertakings, obtains the express confirmation from the prospective counterparty that it agrees to be treated as an eligible counterparty. Member States shall allow the investment firm to obtain that confirmation either in the form of a general agreement or in respect of each individual transaction.

4 Member States may recognise as eligible counterparties third country entities equivalent to those categories of entities referred to in paragraph 2.

Member States may also recognise as eligible counterparties third country undertakings such as those referred to in paragraph 3 on the same conditions and subject to the same requirements as those laid down in paragraph 3.

5 The Commission shall be empowered to adopt delegated acts in accordance with Article 89 to specify:

- a the procedures for requesting treatment as clients under paragraph 2;
- b the procedures for obtaining the express confirmation from prospective counterparties under paragraph 3;
- c the pre-determined proportionate requirements, including quantitative thresholds that would allow an undertaking to be considered to be an eligible counterparty under paragraph 3.

Section 3

Market transparency and integrity

Article 31

Monitoring of compliance with the rules of the MTF or the OTF and with other legal obligations

1 Member States shall require that investment firms and market operators operating an MTF or OTF establish and maintain effective arrangements and procedures, relevant to the MTF or OTF, for the regular monitoring of the compliance by its members or participants or users with its rules. Investment firms and market operators operating an MTF or an OTF shall monitor the orders sent, including cancellations and the transactions undertaken by their members or participants or users under their systems, in order to identify infringements of those rules, disorderly trading conditions, conduct that may indicate behaviour that is prohibited under Regulation (EU) No 596/2014 or system disruptions in relation to a financial instrument and shall deploy the resource necessary to ensure that such monitoring is effective.

2 Member States shall require investment firms and market operators operating an MTF or an OTF to inform its competent authority immediately of significant infringements of its rules or disorderly trading conditions or conduct that may indicate behaviour that is prohibited under Regulation (EU) No 596/2014 or system disruptions in relation to a financial instrument.

The competent authorities of the investment firms and market operators operating an MTF or an OTF shall communicate to ESMA and to the competent authorities of the other Member States the information referred to in the first subparagraph.

In relation to conduct that may indicate behaviour that is prohibited under Regulation (EU) No 596/2014, a competent authority must be convinced that such behaviour is being or has been carried out before it notifies the competent authorities of the other Member States and ESMA.

3 Member States shall also require investment firms and market operators operating an MTF or an OTF to also supply without undue delay the information referred to in paragraph 2 to the authority competent for the investigation and prosecution of market abuse and to provide full

assistance to the latter in investigating and prosecuting market abuse occurring on or through its systems.

4 The Commission shall be empowered to adopt delegated acts in accordance with Article 89 to determine circumstances that trigger an information requirement as referred to in paragraph 2 of this Article.

Article 32

Suspension and removal of financial instruments from trading on an MTF or an OTF

1 Without prejudice to the right of the competent authority under Article 69(2) to demand suspension or removal of a financial instrument from trading, an investment firm or a market operator operating an MTF or an OTF may suspend or remove from trading a financial instrument which no longer complies with the rules of the MTF or an OTF unless such suspension or removal would be likely to cause significant damage to the investors' interests or the orderly functioning of the market.

2 Member States shall require that an investment firm or a market operator operating an MTF or an OTF that suspends or removes from trading a financial instrument also suspends or removes derivatives referred to in points (4) to (10) of Section C of Annex I that relate or are referenced to that financial instrument where necessary to support the objectives of the suspension or removal of the underlying financial instrument. The investment firm or market operator operating an MTF or an OTF shall make public its decision on the suspension or removal of the financial instrument and of any related derivative and communicate the relevant decisions to its competent authority.

The competent authority, in whose jurisdiction the suspension or removal originated, shall require that regulated markets, other MTFs, other OTFs and systematic internalisers, which fall under its jurisdiction and trade the same financial instrument or derivatives referred to in points (4) to (10) of Section C of Annex I to this Directive that relate or are referenced to that financial instrument, also suspend or remove that financial instrument or derivatives from trading, where the suspension or removal is due to suspected market abuse, a take-over bid or the non-disclosure of inside information about the issuer or financial instrument infringing Articles 7 and 17 of Regulation (EU) No 596/2014 except where such suspension or removal could cause significant damage to the investors' interests or the orderly functioning of the market.

The competent authority shall immediately make public and communicate to ESMA and the competent authorities of the other Member States such a decision.

The notified competent authorities of the other Member States shall require that regulated markets, other MTFs, other OTFs and systematic internalisers, which fall under their jurisdiction and trade the same financial instrument or derivatives referred to in points (4) to (10) of Section C of Annex I that relate or are referenced to that financial instrument, also suspend or remove that financial instrument or derivatives from trading, where the suspension or removal is due to suspected market abuse, a take-over bid or the non-disclosure of inside information about the issuer or financial instrument infringing Articles 7 and 17 of Regulation (EU) No 596/2014 except where such suspension or removal could cause significant damage to the investors' interests or the orderly functioning of the market.

Each notified competent authority shall communicate its decision to ESMA and other competent authorities, including an explanation if the decision was not to suspend or

remove from trading the financial instrument or derivatives referred to in points (4) to (10) of Section C of Annex I that relate or are referenced to that financial instrument.

This paragraph also applies when the suspension from trading of a financial instrument or derivatives referred to in points (4) to (10) of Section C of Annex I that relate or are referenced to that financial instrument is lifted.

The notification procedure referred to in this paragraph shall also apply in the case where the decision to suspend or remove from trading a financial instrument or derivatives referred to in points (4) to (10) of Section C of Annex I that relate or are referenced to that financial instrument is taken by the competent authority pursuant to points (m) and (n) of Article 69(2).

In order to ensure that the obligation to suspend or remove from trading such derivatives is applied proportionately, ESMA shall develop draft regulatory technical standards to further specify the cases in which the connection between a derivative as referred to in points (4) to (10) of Section C of Annex I relating or referenced to a financial instrument suspended or removed from trading and the original financial instrument implies that the derivative is also to be suspended or removed from trading, in order to achieve the objective of the suspension or removal of the underlying financial instrument.

ESMA shall submit those draft regulatory technical standards to the Commission by 3 July 2015.

Power is delegated to the Commission to adopt the regulatory technical standards referred to in the first subparagraph in accordance with Articles 10 to 14 of Regulation (EU) No 1095/2010.

3 ESMA shall develop draft implementing technical standards to determine the format and timing of the communications and the publication referred to in paragraph 2.

ESMA shall submit those draft implementing technical standards to the Commission by 3 January 2016.

Power is conferred on the Commission to adopt the implementing technical standards referred to in the first subparagraph in accordance with Article 15 of Regulation (EU) No 1095/2010.

4 The Commission shall be empowered to adopt delegated acts in accordance with Article 89 to list situations constituting significant damage to the investors' interests and the orderly functioning of the market referred to in paragraphs 1 and 2 of this Article.

Section 4

SME growth markets

Article 33

SME growth markets

1 Member States shall provide that the operator of a MTF may apply to its home competent authority to have the MTF registered as an SME growth market.

2 Member States shall provide that the home competent authority may register the MTF as an SME growth market if the competent authority receives an application referred to in

paragraph 1 and is satisfied that the requirements in paragraph 3 are complied with in relation to the MTF.

3 Member States shall ensure that MTFs are subject to effective rules, systems and procedures which ensure that the following is complied with:

- a at least 50 % of the issuers whose financial instruments are admitted to trading on the MTF are SMEs at the time when the MTF is registered as an SME growth market and in any calendar year thereafter;
- b appropriate criteria are set for initial and ongoing admission to trading of financial instruments of issuers on the market;
- c on initial admission to trading of financial instruments on the market there is sufficient information published to enable investors to make an informed judgment about whether or not to invest in the financial instruments, either an appropriate admission document or a prospectus if the requirements laid down in Directive 2003/71/EC are applicable in respect of a public offer being made in conjunction with the initial admission to trading of the financial instrument on the MTF;
- d there is appropriate ongoing periodic financial reporting by or on behalf of an issuer on the market, for example audited annual reports;
- e issuers on the market as defined in point (21) of Article 3(1) of Regulation (EU) No 596/2014, persons discharging managerial responsibilities as defined in point (25) of Article 3(1) of Regulation (EU) No 596/2014 and persons closely associated with them as defined in point (26) of Article 3(1) of Regulation (EU) No 596/2014 comply with relevant requirements applicable to them under Regulation (EU) No 596/2014;
- f regulatory information concerning the issuers on the market is stored and disseminated to the public;
- g there are effective systems and controls aiming to prevent and detect market abuse on that market as required under the Regulation (EU) No 596/2014.

4 The criteria in paragraph 3 are without prejudice to compliance by the investment firm or market operator operating the MTF with other obligations under this Directive relevant to the operation of MTFs. They also do not prevent the investment firm or market operator operating the MTF from imposing additional requirements to those specified in that paragraph.

5 Member States shall provide that the home competent authority may deregister a MTF as an SME growth market in any of the following cases:

- a the investment firm or market operator operating the market applies for its deregistration;
- b the requirements in paragraph 3 are no longer complied with in relation to the MTF.

6 Member States shall require that if a home competent authority registers or deregisters an MTF as an SME growth market under this Article it shall as soon as possible notify ESMA of that registration or deregistration. ESMA shall publish on its website a list of SME growth markets and shall keep that list up to date.

7 Member States shall require that where a financial instrument of an issuer is admitted to trading on one SME growth market, the financial instrument may also be traded on another SME growth market only where the issuer has been informed and has not objected. In such a case however, the issuer shall not be subject to any obligation relating to corporate governance or initial, ongoing or ad hoc disclosure with regard to the latter SME growth market.

8 The Commission shall be empowered to adopt delegated acts in accordance with Article 89 further specifying the requirements laid down in paragraph 3 of this Article. The measures shall take into account the need for the requirements to maintain high levels of investor

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protection to promote investor confidence in those markets while minimising the administrative burdens for issuers on the market and that de-registrations do not occur nor shall registrations be refused as a result of a merely temporary failure to meet the conditions set out in point (a) of paragraph 3 of this Article.

- (1) Directive 2014/17/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 4 February 2014 on credit agreements for consumers relating to residential immovable property and amending Directives 2008/48/EC and 2013/36/EU and Regulation (EU) No 1093/2010 ([OJ L 60](#), 28.2.2014, p. 34).