
14.01.2022

A new chapter in the improvement of financial education in Spain

Signing of the Agreement on the Financial Education Plan. Ministry of Economic Affairs and Digital Transformation, Banco de España and the National Securities Market Commission

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Governor

First Vice-President and Minister for Economic Affairs and Digital Transformation, Chair of the National Securities Market Commission (CNMV), ladies and gentlemen:

I would like to begin by stressing the importance of this ceremony. As has been the case since 2008, every four years the National Securities Market Commission and the Banco de España come together to reaffirm our joint commitment to the Financial Education Plan, which constitutes the framework for and informs our institutions' financial education endeavours. And this is what has brought us together again today.

On this occasion, the ceremony has further connotations. With the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Digital Transformation coming on board as a fully fledged promoter of this national financial education strategy, and at a time when championing financial education has taken centre stage globally, this ceremony marks the start of a new chapter (some might even call it a relaunch), in which, together, we will step up our ambitions to improve the Spanish public's financial education.

First of all, **the incorporation of the Ministry** marks a long-sought-after milestone that further cements Spanish society's commitment, through its most important finance-related public institutions, to strengthening education in this area. Starting today, it can now be said more confidently than ever that this is a national project with the full backing of the country's institutions.

Together with its human and material resources, the Ministry also brings to the Plan its undoubted expertise, its influence over Spain's social and economic agents, its privileged access to other key ministries in the field of financial education, such as the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training and the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, and its role as a representative in the European and global organisations that have the final say on financial education matters.

It is worth recalling its role as the driving force behind Spain's digital transformation, a key factor in financial market developments and, by extension, in the education of financial consumers, which, ultimately, means all of us. Not to mention its key function as the supervisor of one slice of the financial sector (insurance and social welfare) that has a major impact on how the economy performs.

The second aspect affording this ceremony the air of a relaunch is **financial education's prominence** on all international organisations' agendas. Indeed, the incorporation of the Ministry into this Plan could come at no better time.

While the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) has traditionally spearheaded the financial education push since the 2008-2010 crisis, it is now on the agenda of all international institutions, above all within the realm of the European Commission and the European supervisory authorities, and, at global level, the future plans of the G20. It should not be forgotten that, over the past two years, the pandemic and the ensuing crisis have brought home how important financial education is in managing the impact of such crises on the public.

Thus, there is now widespread consensus as to the role of financial education in striking a balance between the relative positions of providers and consumers in a complex financial market. The OECD points to the benefits of both shaping the conduct of providers through regulation and supervision, and of using education to build the expertise of consumers. All of this with the aim of facilitating financial inclusion, reducing the potential for conflict in the sector and, in short, ensuring the financial stability of our economy.

Thus, at this key juncture, **the 2022-2025 Financial Education Plan raises some important challenges.**

As I see it, chief among these is the need to produce **educational materials that target specific groups and needs.** So far the Financial Education Plan has yielded and disseminated a core of basic financial knowledge aimed at the general public; the time has now come to address specific needs that have proven to be important.

Notable among these is **digital education.** Our increasingly digitalised financial system calls not only for financial knowledge, but also for digital skills, to prevent some from being shut out from the use of certain channels and to ensure they can be used securely and in a way that guards against the rise in fraud. No less important is designing materials targeting **the most vulnerable** that help soften the impact of crises on their household economies.

Meanwhile, following on from the subject of the recent Financial Education Day, resources must be set in place to raise awareness among the general public of the concept of **sustainable finance** and the potential it holds.

The period 2022-2025 will see **financial education gain prominence on Spain's school curriculum.** Here too, we stand before a new era. We face the challenge of assisting the Ministry of Education and the respective regional education departments with the process of giving shape to the new syllabus in this area.

The Financial Education Plan also envisages for the period 2022-2025 an **assessment of how effective the action taken to date has been** to provide an empirical foundation for future initiatives. Similarly, to ensure its actions have a sounder statistical footing, the Banco de España is set to conduct the second **Survey of Financial Literacy**, which will feed into future decisions under the Plan.

At the **Banco de España**, we stand ready to embark on this new stage with responsibility, enthusiasm and our sights set ever higher. Indeed, in line with the national strategy, our **Strategic Plan 2024** contemplates an initiative aimed at strengthening financial education that has already ushered in changes and set in place initiatives, which will be further cemented during this new phase of the Financial Education Plan.

It is of paramount importance to ensure our institutions are best equipped to meet the expectations we have raised among the general public by signing this agreement. And we will have the opportunity to take stock, albeit partially and provisionally, on the occasion of the next Financial Education Day on 3 October this year.

Thank you.