

**PRESS RELEASE**

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The Banco de España received 20,262 complaints and 38,804 queries in 2015

In 2015 a total of 20,262 complaints were filed with the Banco de España, representing a decline of 31.4% from the previous year and continuing the trend which began in 2014. On the available information, at 31 May 2016 the complaints received this year number slightly more than 7,000, foreseeably indicating that by end-2016 once again fewer complaints will be received than in the previous year. There was a similar decline in the number of queries by telephone in 2015 (35,567) which were down by 31.2%, whereas queries in writing (3,237) held at a very similar level to that in 2014. These figures can be found in the Complaints Report of the Banco de España published today.

Complaints relating to assets-side transactions (loans) account for 66.1% of the total. Of significance are the complaints relating to: mortgage loans, particularly the suppression of certain benchmark indices; the application by institutions of measures to strengthen mortgagor protection; and, once again, as in previous years, floor clauses, which showed a strong decline. By contrast, there was a slight increase in the relative weight of complaints relating to liabilities-side transactions (sight and term deposits).

In 2015, 13,354 opinions were issued: 6,000 were favourable to the complainant and 3,036 to the institution and in 327 cases it was not possible to issue an opinion. Furthermore, there were 3,919 acceptances of liability and in 72 cases complainants desisted. Thus, of the total opinions issued, 74.2% ended favourably for the complainant, either with a report favourable to the latter's pretensions (44.9%) or with acceptance of liability arising from the complainant's pretensions, once a complaint process had commenced (29.3%). The number of acceptances of liability represents an improvement on the previous year (26.6%), which evidently indicates that better attention is given to complainants' pretensions, although it is also a factor for evaluating the functioning of institutions' customer service departments, insofar as, initially, they always have an opportunity to resolve the dispute without the mediation of the Banco de España. The increase in institutions' average rectifications is also good news; in 2015 they stood at 40% of the reports favourable to the complainant (up 56.25% on the previous year). This improvement is particularly significant for floor clause complaints: 16.4% were rectified in 2014, increasing to 35.4% in 2015, although there were notable differences across institutions as regards general and floor clause complaints. As with the rates of acceptance of liability, rectification rates have valuable potential to provide information for the task of supervising institutions' conduct.

A new development this year is that the Complaints Report segments institutions using two criteria. Thus, on one hand, given the wide range of supervised institutions, the traditional system continues to

provide detailed information on reports favourable to complainants in complaints filed against the most active institutions by market share, in four segments: floor clause complaints, other mortgage loan complaints, complaints relating to sight deposits and complaints relating to cards. This year a new approach is added to the traditional system to assess changes at institutions and their performance, based on their classification into various groups defined according to their market share for certain products, the type of institution according to the Banco de España's official registers and whether or not they provide banking services to individuals. This classification, taken from that followed to determine the supervisory conduct profile, permits comparison of the most homogeneous institutions and assessment of the differences in performance across the groups and directly compares institutions' behaviour in resolving complaints through the supervisory activity of the Market Conduct and Claims Department.

The full text of the 2015 Complaints Report is available at www.bde.es

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