CSALB: We Recommend Consumers Make Informed and Rational Decisions Amid Public Debate on the ROBOR Index

June 11, Bucharest. The recent announcement by the Competition Council regarding fines imposed on 10 banks involved in the determination of the ROBOR index has generated significant concern among consumers who have taken out loans with interest rates linked to this benchmark. The subsequent public debate has prompted reactions and questions from consumers, particularly as certain public figures have encouraged borrowers to seek compensation through the courts.

However, the banks targeted by this measure have publicly stated that they intend to challenge the legality of the administrative act. This process is expected to involve several years of administrative litigation between the banks and the Competition Council before the courts ultimately determine the legality and merits of the authority's decisions. Until these proceedings are concluded, we believe it is in consumers' best interest to rely on credible sources of information and avoid making impulsive decisions influenced by the current public debate.

The **Alternative Banking Dispute Resolution Center (CSALB)** recommends that consumers make rational decisions rather than acting under the influence of emotions. Consumers should remain cautious and avoid being swayed by statements circulating in the public sphere, particularly since, at this stage, the Competition Council has not yet published the reasoning behind its decision, nor are the arguments supporting it publicly known.

Situations must be assessed individually

We remind consumers that **every loan agreement and every financial situation represents a unique case**. For this reason, solutions presented as universally applicable, or promises of identical outcomes for all consumers, should be approached with caution. We believe that each situation deserves individual assessment and that every consumer should have access to all relevant information before deciding on the most appropriate course of action and the appropriate timing for taking such action.

Consumers' right to seek redress through the courts is entirely legitimate. At the same time, before assuming the costs, risks, and potentially lengthy duration associated with litigation, **consumers should carefully evaluate all available options** and request comprehensive information regarding the legal and financial consequences of any proposed course of action. CSALB's experience over the past ten years has shown that many issues arising in the relationship between consumers and banks can be examined and negotiated, and that solutions reached through dialogue and conciliation are often faster and better tailored to the specific needs of each individual.

CSALB remains an alternative to court proceedings, available free of charge to all consumers who wish to clarify their contractual situation, engage in dialogue with their bank, or identify solutions to potential disputes arising in their relationship with a financial institution. Trust is built through dialogue, and sound decisions are made on the basis of complete information and a clear assessment of the available options.

The role of CSALB is to provide an independent, impartial, and transparent framework in which consumers and financial institutions can work together to find solutions to disagreements. Therefore, regardless of how ongoing administrative or judicial proceedings may evolve, consumers who believe they

have grounds for dissatisfaction in their relationship with their bank may also consider the option of conciliation through CSALB.

In times marked by uncertainty and intense public debate, balance, accurate information, and a careful evaluation of all alternatives remain the most effective tools for protecting consumers' interests. CSALB reaffirms its commitment to supporting constructive dialogue between consumers and financial institutions and to contributing to the identification of fair solutions for all parties involved.

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About CSALB: CSALB is an entity established following a European Directive and facilitates, free of charge and in less than three months, negotiations between consumers and banks or non-banking financial institutions (NBFIs) for ongoing contracts. Consumers from any county in Romania can submit requests to the Alternative Dispute Resolution Center for the Banking Sector (CSALB) by completing an online form on **www.csalb.ro**. If the bank agrees to enter the conciliation/negotiation procedure, a conciliator is appointed. CSALB works with 16 conciliators—top legal experts with financial-banking expertise. All disputes are resolved amicably, and the agreement reached by the parties has the force of a court ruling. For more information about the Center's activity, you can also call 021 9414 (standard rate).