CONSULTATION DOCUMENT
CAPITAL MARKETS UNION: ACTION ON A POTENTIAL EU PERSONAL PENSION FRAMEWORK

A. INFORMATION ABOUT THE RESPONDENT (p8)

1. Are you replying as: an organisation or a company

2. First Name, Last Name: Klaus Stiefermann

3. Name of your organization: Arbeitsgemeinschaft für betriebliche Altersversorgung e.V.

5. Contact email address: info@aba-online.de

6. Is your organisation included in the Transparency Register? Yes

7. If so, please indicate your Register ID number: 2170743761-61

8. Type of organisation: other, association for occupational pensions

12. Where are you based and/or where do you carry out your activity? : Germany

13. Field of activity or sector (if applicable): at least 1 choice(s)
Pension provision

14. Please specify your activity field(s) or sector(s)? The aba - Arbeitsgemeinschaft für betriebliche Altersversorgung e.V. - is the German association representing all matters concerning occupational pensions in the private and public sector. The aba has 1,100 members including corporate sponsors of pension schemes, IORPs, actuaries and consulting firms, employer associations and unions, as well as insurance companies, banks and investment managers. According to our statutes, our mission is to represent existing schemes as well as to expand coverage of occupational pensions independent of vehicle.

15. Contributions received are intended for publication on the Commission's website. Do you agree to your contribution being published?
Yes, I agree to my response being published under the name aba – Arbeitsgemeinschaft für betriebliche Altersversorgung.

B3. QUESTIONS FOR OTHER STAKEHOLDERS IN A PROFESSIONAL CAPACITY – FOR PROVIDERS, POTENTIAL PROVIDERS, STAKEHOLDER REPRESENTATIVES, PUBLIC AUTHORITIES REGULATING PERSONAL PENSIONS, ACADEMICS ETC. (p39)

PLEASE JUSTIFY YOUR CHOICE(S) – WHERE POSSIBLE PLEASE PROVIDE REFERENCE TO ANY EVIDENCE, DATA, REPORTS OR STUDIES.

A. ON THE CHALLENEGES TO PERSONAL PENSION DEVELOPMENT IN THE EU

At present, the EU personal pensions market does not seem to be reaching its full potential, both in terms of the products supplied and the level of demand from potential investors. There is evidence that personal pensions markets remain fragmented along national borders, are dominated by a limited number of national providers, and national tax requirements limit the possibility to purchase personal pension products from another Member State. As a consequence, cross-border provision of these services is limited. Competition is imperfect, restricting investors from enjoying the benefits of more innovative and efficient personal pension products.

Encouraging the provision of third pillar personal pensions by a wider range of financial institutions would foster more competition and could offer more choice with more attractive prices to consumers. Provided the above-mentioned challenges are overcome, the uptake of personal pensions would increase with more coverage among policyholders. Consumers could benefit from simpler, more innovative and more efficient personal pensions to complement their retirement income.

1. Do you offer personal pension products to consumers?

- ○ X No, we do not offer personal pension products
- ○ Yes , in one Member State
- ○ Yes, in more than one Member State

If yes, please specify in which Member States: EU and non UE

2. What are the issues which, in your view, limit the development of personal pensions in your Member State? (Please specify your answer below in maximum 500 characters. You may reply to one or several categories)

a. National legal requirements (e.g. prudential rules governing providers, administrative rules, tax regime for personal retirement saving, non-tax legal requirements, etc.)
Maximum 500 characters

b. Barriers to entry for providers (e.g. costs are too high to enter the market, competition is not strong enough on the market, the current low interest rates disincentives providers to offer long-term products, etc.)
Maximum 500 characters

c. X Insufficient demand from individuals for personal pensions (e.g. lack of information about pension savings, low level of individuals' financial literacy, lack of interest in pension savings, insufficient disposable income for pensions savings purposes)
Maximum 500 characters

- The need for personal pensions depends on the replacement income level the 1st and 2nd pillar provide.
- The willingness to sign up for a pension depends on the financial situation of the individual and the overall economic outlook.

- Those on low incomes have little/no money to set aside for retirement. An occupational pension offering the advantages mentioned in our General Remarks, potentially benefitting from employer contributions, would be a better solution for this group.

d. Insufficient public policy incentives to stimulate saving in personal pension products
Maximum 500 characters

e. Any other limitation:

3. What are the issues which, in your view, limit the development of personal pensions across borders? (Please specify your answer below in maximum 500 characters. You may reply to one or several categories)

a. X Varying national legal requirements (e.g. complexity of national legal frameworks, differing national tax requirements, difference in conduct of business rules, etc.)
M*aximum 500 characters*

The design and role of personal pensions depends on the first and second pillar, which differ significantly among Member States. This has led to different definitions and understandings of what constitutes a personal pensions in different EU Member States. The resulting different tax practices and the relation to labour and social law make cross border development of personal pensions difficult.

b. Challenges for providers to operate cross-border (e.g. high set up costs, high operating costs in another Member State, language issues, unfamiliar customer base, branding issues, local dominant distribution channels, presence of conflicts of interest in the distribution channels, etc.) *maximum 500 characters*

c. X Insufficient demand from individuals for cross-border pensions (e.g. uncertainty about cross-border providers, perception that a cross-border pension would only be relevant in case of mobility, etc.) *maximum 500 characters*

While there might be cases where a cross-border pension is relevant in the case of non-mobility, limited portability for mobile citizens is stated as a challenge a PEPP could overcome in the consultation paper. However, we would like to point out that while increasing over the last years, labour mobility across the EU is still very low, only affecting 3,3% of the working population in 2013. From our perspective this is not one of the most pressing problems to be addressed.

d. Any other limitation:

B. WHAT SHOULD BE THE KEY FEATURES OF AN EU PERSONAL PENSION FRAMEWORK?

As outlined in the 2014 EIOPA preliminary report, personal pension savings are expected to be a successful alternative source of retirement income and provide for replacement rates in the future but only in so far as those savings are safe in the sense of trustworthiness, cost effectiveness and transparency. They should also be sufficiently flexible to cater for a European labour market where workers' mobility is increasing.
Furthermore, the 2016 EIOPA technical advice19 outlined that objectives for personal pensions determine and affect to some extent the required product characteristics:

- <u>Safe products</u> imply the need for addressing conflicts of interests and information asymmetries between providers and savers. Conflicts of interests need to be addressed and incentives need to be aligned to facilitate optimised results for consumers. The main tools for ensuring safety could include authorisation and governance requirements and also cover controls and limits on product design and characteristics. Those product limitations could entail investment limitations or the inclusion of guarantees on capital or returns.

- Transparent products: As long-term savings are often perceived complex, relevant information on those products needs to be provided to consumers to make well-informed decisions about taking up and maintaining long-term savings. The nature, frequency of disclosure and presentation of information contributes to the overall transparency of these products. There are several recent examples in EU financial services legislation about information disclosure requirements, such as in the Regulation on Key Information Documents for Packaged Retail and Insurance-based Investment Products (PRIIPs), in the Markets in Financial Instruments Directive (MiFID II) and in the Insurance Distribution Directive (IDD) which could serve as a basis for establishing the appropriate disclosure requirements for personal pension products.

- Cost-effective products: building a stronger market for personal pensions could provide efficiency gains for providers through standardisation, enabling economies of scale and allowing for improved risk diversification. This can help reducing administrative costs arising from distribution, information and manufacturing and lower the asset management costs by increasing the size of the asset portfolio under management. According to EIOPA, such efficiency gains could be offered by a well-functioning Single Market for personal pension products, without obstacles to cross-border activities, facilitating healthy competition and financial innovation. Online distribution is often seen as a relevant alternative distribution channel that can help reduce those costs.

Building on the essential features of an EU personal pensions framework as outlined above through the EIOPA technical advice, an EU personal pension framework should be complemented by a number of areas which could be subject to enhanced standardisation. These areas include investment rules, guarantees provided, portability of pensions, information requirements, rules on switching providers or products and the options for pay-out. In addition, the key features should not be looked at in isolation, but in in the context of the tax regime of the personal pension, which is in many Member States a key driver for the take-up.
This section is thus divided into key features first (B1), and secondly how they affect the tax regime applied to personal pensions (B2).

B1 – KEY FEATURES

- ***INVESTMENT RULES***

Many long-term retirement savings are reliant on investments (in capital markets or other areas) in order to grow. Personal pension products create the opportunity for savers to invest long-term, potentially maximising their retirement savings. The range of investment options is a key issue to address in this area.

According to the 2016 EIOPA advice23, savers tend to have difficulties to determine their own investment portfolio, are often overwhelmed by the choice of investments and strongly influenced by the way that choice is presented to them. Savers seem to prefer choosing a "standard" default investment option over complex options. Savers are not aware that their needs may change over the lifetime of the product and may not monitor, review or rebalance the asset allocation of their investment portfolio over time.

In the work conducted by EIOPA, the options for a personal pensions framework range from including a default investment option to be provided to savers with a very limited number of alternative options in order to steer individuals towards a standard option, towards an approach where more investment options would be provided to cater for individuals with different risk appetites. In this context, the first approach, namely a default investment option, could provide the benefit of simplicity, provide safety and a limited risk for the majority of savers. The other approach, namely alternative investment options, could provide flexibility to cater for the needs of specific savers which specific investment profiles, with different risk return profiles.

EIOPA recommends in its technical advice a limited number of investment options to help limit information overload on consumers. Furthermore, EIOPA recommends a default or "core" investment option in case a product would incorporate more than one investment option in order to simplify decision-making for the majority via choice- and information architecture.

EIOPA also addresses the question whether there should be a guarantee to protect the individual saver, and/or a life-cycle strategy with de-risking when approaching retirement. A life-cycling strategy with de-risking (LCS) is an approach that ensures that savers do not have to make investment decisions during the lifetime of their personal pension product.

EIOPA recommends a de-risking strategy for at least the default investment option unless all
investment options contain a guarantee. The de-risking strategy should aim to maximise returns at defined risk levels for that investment option. These conditions would seek to mitigate potential issues of individuals' loss and regret aversion.

4. Should there be a default investment option in a personal pension product which would provide simplicity and safety catering for the needs of a majority of personal pension savers?

- o Yes
- o No
- o No opinion

5. Which type of protection should be attached to the default investment option ensuring simplicity and safety for investors in personal pensions?

e. Guarantee on capital
f. Guarantee on returns
g. No need for a guarantee
h. X Other

6. Should the number of alternative investment options be limited? If yes, please specify the scope of the limitation and which type of protection they should feature (max. 500 characters)

- ***PORTABILITY OF PERSONAL PENSIONS***

Personal pensions are typically long-term products as their focus is on retirement. Therefore, during their lifetime, investors' preferences and needs could change, and they may move between Member States for multiple reasons (employment, settling for retirement etc.).
Following changes in individuals' preferences and/or personal circumstances, the question of portability of pensions arises, within the same country or across borders. Portability would allow for the transfer of pension contributions across providers and across Member States.

A portability feature of personal pensions across the EU should make personal pensions a more attractive option for mobile workers in view of keeping their pension contributions together.

In addition, providers of personal pensions could scale up their activities in a more integrated EU market, and thus offer products across borders to savers in less mature personal pension markets.

7. Should a personal pension product be portable:

Please tick the appropriate field, only one choice is allowed per category of reply.	**Not at all important**	**Rather unimportant**	**Fairly important**	**Very important**	**No opinion**
Across Member States					

Within the same Member State					
Both within the same Member State and across Member States					

8. What are the main barriers for portability of existing personal pension products?
Please describe in max. 500 words.

- ***INFORMATION TO POLICY HOLDERS***

In order to determine which personal pension products best fit their needs, individuals should be appropriately informed of the key features of such products, in particular in view of the products' long-term nature and inherent complexity. There are several recent examples in EU financial services legislation about information disclosure requirements, such as in the Regulation on Key Information Documents for Packaged Retail and Insurance-based Investment Products24 (PRIIPs), Markets in Financial Instruments Directive25 (MiFID II) and Insurance Distribution Directive26 (IDD). PRIIPs introduces a Key Information Document (KID – a simple document giving key facts to retail investors in a clear and understandable manner) covering not only collective investment schemes but also other 'packaged' investment products offered by banks or insurance companies.

In the work conducted so far on the key elements of information to be disclosed, the options for personal pensions range from using existing models such as the KID in PRIIPs as a basis with some adaptations, to designing a more specific set of information requirements tailored to the specific nature of personal pensions.

The EIOPA technical advice recommends using the existing rules based on the idea of the PRIIPs KID as a starting point for disclosure requirements for personal pensions. However, EIOPA recommends adjusting the PRIIPs KID to allow for the specificities of personal pensions to be accommodated. This could for example include information related to the choices to be made by savers or options provided by national law and options provided by the provider on reaching retirement.

According to EIOPA it is important to project and estimate how investments (typically including periodic contributions) and the related returns accumulate over a potentially very long time period, and what that could mean in terms of a retirement income. Therefore, projections could also be a feature of the disclosure requirements.

A distinction should also be made between information provided before subscribing to a product (pre-contractual information) and information provided to savers during the product lifetime.

9. The PRIIPs Key Information Document (KID) provides an example of pre-contractual information disclosure. Should the KID be used for the purposes of personal pensions disclosures? Alternatively, which KID elements could be directly used for disclosures regarding a potential EU personal pension and what are the elements that should be adapted (e.g. to take into account the long-term nature of the investment)?
Please specify, in max. 500 characters.

10. What information, in your opinion, is most relevant to individual savers before signing up to a product?

Please tick the appropriate field, only one choice is allowed per category of reply.	**Not at all important**	**Rather unimportant**	**Fairly important**	**Very important**	**No opinion**
Available investment options					
Different types of fees					

Level of fees disclosed annually					
The rate of return over the last two years					
Level of protection provided					
Information provided in a standardised format (similarly to the PRIIPs KID					
The tax regime for contributions, returns and pay-outs					
Is there any other information that would be of importance for savers before signing up to a product? Please specify (max 500 Characters)					

11. What information, in your opinion, is most relevant to individual savers during the lifetime of the product?

Please tick the appropriate field, only one choice is allowed per category of reply.	**Not at all important**	**Rather unimportant**	**Fairly important**	**Very important**	**No opinion**
Current investment option					
Available investment options					
Level of fees					
The rate of return					
Level of protection provided					
Accumulated benefits					
Expected benefits at retirement					
The tax treatment of savings					
Any other information that would be of importance for savers during the product lifetime? Please specify in max. 500 characters)					

- ***DISTRIBUTION***

As personal pension products are often considered complex and information asymmetries between providers and savers subsist, distributors play an important role. Distributors, and in particular the advice they could provide, could have a very significant impact on the development of a sound personal pensions market, reduce the asymmetry of information and ultimately serve the interests of consumers. Distributors can assist consumers in assessing personal pension products before purchase and help identify which product best meets their needs. They can provide advice to those with more complex needs. Distributors can also play a role during the lifetime of a personal pension product, assisting consumers in assessing their retirement provisions over time and helping trigger changes in consumers' allocation of resources within a personal pension product, or switching investment option over time, especially in the run-up to retirement.

Currently, personal pension products tend to be distributed face-to-face and through branches, which may or may not be accompanied by advice. However, technological developments may change the way personal pension products are distributed and how advice is provided. The choice and/or variety of distribution channels is a key factor in determining the success of a personal pension framework.

In the work conducted so far by EIOPA on this key feature (i.e. distribution aspects), the options range from encouraging physical sales in parallel to adapting key features so that personal pensions can easily be sold online. EIOPA recommends that at least for the default option, distribution without advice via the internet should be permitted in the case of non-complex personal pension products, easy for customers to access and understand.

The question of advice, and it being compulsory or not, remains a question in the case of more complex investment options and potentially higher risks for savers.

During the product's lifetime, EIOPA recommends that the distributor should monitor and review the product in the context of the saver's needs and future plans. For known trigger events, for example when the savers is nearing retirement, the distributor should inform the saver about the upcoming event, and provide all relevant information in order to enable the individual to choose the best option for his / her retirement.

12. As a provider, which types of distribution channels would you favour in order to maximise the benefits and efficiency gains of a Single Market for personal pensions (e.g. online/face-to-face, directly/via agents)? Please specify (500 characters max.)

13. Would you consider that advice should be mandatory for the provision of personal pensions? Please provide details (500 characters max.)

- ***SWITCHING BETWEEN PROVIDERS***

For personal pension products which are by nature very long-term products, it is necessary to offer consumers the flexibility to switch between products as well as providers. Switching allows investors a choice between products and providers, and could be a means to encourage competition and keep levels of fees under control. Being locked into in a product or with a provider for a long time, especially until reaching retirement age, regardless of whether the performance of the product is satisfactory or not, could be highly detrimental for the individual.

However, this needs to be weighed against the benefits provided by long-term investment, which requires that funds be made available over extended periods. In line with the idea of long-term saving and of creating a Capital Markets Union, personal pensions should help generate funding for long-term illiquid investments (for example infrastructure, real estate or unlisted SME equities). This objective could be undermined if consumers shifted providers constantly, leading to short term liabilities and forcing providers to invest in more liquid assets. Consequently, a balance should be struck between allowing the possibility for switching by savers and ensuring that providers can invest in long-term illiquid assets.

In the work conducted so far by EIOPA on this key feature, namely switching, the options range from allowing very limited switching possibilities over time to preserve the long-term investment, to fostering competition by allowing savers to switch more often their personal pension across providers.

EIOPA recommends that switching providers should be possible but that some limitations on switching, such as minimum holding periods, should be allowed. Switching costs should also be fair and transparent. EIOPA favours transparent, clearly allocated costs of switching over free charge switching whereby costs might be hidden elsewhere.

In this context switching refers to changing personal pension product across providers within a Member State; it is not intended to provide for switching outside the personal pensions environment.

In your opinion:

14. Under what conditions should it be possible to switch personal pension providers?

- **Switching should be without conditions**
- **Switching should be subject to a fee**

- **Switching should be only possible after a minimum lifetime of the product and allowed only a limited number of times**
- **Switching should not be possible**

Please explain max 500 characters:

- ***PAY OUT (DECUMULATION)***

Decumulation, or pay-out, starts at the legal age of retirement or when the policyholder chooses to retire. Different pay-out options should allow policyholders to choose the most appropriate decumulation option for them. In the work conducted by EIOPA on this key feature, the options range from allowing any type of pay-out, bearing in mind that a personal pension is typically supplementing the main source of pension revenue, to recommending one or several preferred pay-out options, notably in order to maximise consumer protection. In its technical advice, EIOPA does not recommend standardising the decumulation phase of personal pension products. It considers that more work should be done to determine the advantages and disadvantages of the distinct pay-out options.

15. Which forms of pay-out should be favoured? Please provide an explanation of your choice (Max. 500 words)

g. lump sum
h. life time annuities
i. temporary annuities (limited in time)
j. individuals' choice
k. any other
l. there should be flexibility on pay-out

16. Overall, in your opinion, what factors would encourage competition to offer high quality, affordable personal pension products?

Please tick the appropriate field, only one choice is allowed per category of reply.	**Not at all important**	**Rather unimportant**	**Fairly important**	**Very important**	**No opinion**
Level of fees and returns					
Transparency on fees and costs					
Type of investment policy (active vs passive)					
Ease of distribution					
Consumer awareness of the availability of retirement products					
A benchmark to assess the product's performance, safety and simplicity					
Tax and other financial incentives to personal pension savings					

B2 - EFFECT OF KEY FEATURES ON THE TAX REGIME OF PERSONAL PENSIONS

Personal pensions are vehicles which may benefit from national tax incentives under the form of tax relief at different stages of the life of the product. National tax rules may constitute an obstacle to the development of a single market for personal pensions given the complexity and variety of tax regimes applicable in Member States. Increased complexity could create additional administration costs for personal pension products and might reduce incentives for suppliers to operate across borders.

At the same time, taxation is a key factor that determines the success of a framework for personal pensions because tax incentives play an important role in the decision to subscribe to personal pensions savings. Generally, a deferred taxation model is applied to personal pension products; contributions are deducted from an individual's taxable income and pensions are taxed within the framework of income tax or, in many instances at a favourable rate. In most Member States the investment results are tax exempt. However, the taxation rates and regimes vary widely between Member States.

While it is not envisaged to harmonise tax requirements for personal pensions, national tax incentives remain very important for the uptake of personal pensions in the framework of a potential EU initiative.

17. In your experience, to what extent are tax incentives important for the uptake of personal pension products by savers? Please explain in max. 500 words.

18. If you are a provider offering personal pension products in other Member States, how do you accommodate differing national tax regimes?

- We operate through branches or subsidiaries
- We operate directly across the border without branches or subsidiaries
- Other (please describe)

C. On the benefits of potential EU action on personal pensions

A true EU market for personal pensions could create a number of benefits and contribute to growth and investment within a Capital Markets Union. For investors, there could be more product innovation, better prices and a wider range of providers due to increased competition. Furthermore, products could be more transparent, easier to understand and also safer, if there were some minimum standards. It might also be more flexible to change provider or when move to another Member State. Providers could benefit from reduced complexity, facilitated cross-border activity, reduced administrative costs and efficiencies could be created by pooling assets from a larger investor base. Providers would be able to provide similar products within a wide range of Member States.

19. In your opinion, what are the most significant benefits of providing personal pensions on an EU scale?

Please tick the appropriate field, only one choice is allowed per category of reply.	**Not at all important**	**Rather unimportant**	**Fairly important**	**Very important**	**No opinion**
Larger pools of assets due to a wider reach					
Opens up the market to other providers					
Improved asset allocation					
Product innovation					

Improved returns					
Lower operating costs					
Attractive to mobile customers					
Attractive to regular (non-mobile) customers					
Encourages a level playing field between providers					
Others? Please specify					

D. On the type of potential EU action

The previous sections on the key features of a personal pension framework and on the benefits of potential EU action focused on assessing what the effects on the market of an EU initiative would be. The consultation now turns to views on how to best frame such an initiative, from self-regulatory approaches (cooperation among stakeholders) to more comprehensive EU intervention (harmonising at EU level the national personal pension regimes).

For each of the potential approaches, we invite respondents to detail how the chosen approach would address the problems identified in the first part of this consultation. These would address issues such as insufficient personal pension take up by individuals, insufficient cross-border provision, insufficient variety in personal pension providers, lack of efficiency of personal pensions on costs and returns, and insufficient innovation in personal pensions.

20. The EU could foster cooperation between stakeholders (Member States, providers, consumers) around a common approach to providing personal pension products. This would imply designing – together with the national authorities, pension industry and consumers – a series of recommendations which providers could follow when offering personal pensions.

Fostering cooperation among stakeholders would…

Please tick the appropriate field, only one choice is allowed per category of reply.	**…not address this challenge at all**	**…partly address this challenge**	**…largely address this challenge**	**…decisively address this challenge**	**No opinion**
Enhance the take-up of personal pensions by consumers in the EU					
Enhance cross-border offer of personal pension products by providers in the EU					
Widen the range of providers					
Enhance efficiency, asset allocation and returns when offering personal pension products					
Contribute to innovation within the personal pension product market					
Other (please specify)					

21. A European personal pension account could be established, similarly to the Individual Retirement Account (IRA) offered in the United States. An IRA is a personal savings plan that gives individuals tax advantages when saving for retirement. It encompasses different types of plans, depending on the income or employment status of an individual, their tax circumstances and the investment options they choose. There can be many different types of providers: an IRA can be opened with banks, credit unions, insurance companies, mutual fund companies and brokerage firms. Most IRA providers offer a broad variety of investment options, including stocks and bonds, money market funds and mutual funds.

Would such an approach address the challenges below?

A personal pension account would…

Please tick the appropriate field, only one choice is allowed per category of reply.	**…not address this challenge at all**	**…partly address this challenge**	**…largely address this challenge**	**…decisively address this challenge**	**No opinion**
Enhance the take-up of personal pensions by consumers in the EU					
Enhance cross-border offer of personal pension products by providers in the EU					
Widen the range of providers					
Enhance efficiency, asset allocation and returns when offering personal pension products					
Contribute to innovation within the personal pension product market					
Other (please specify)					

22. A European personal pension product could be established on a voluntary basis, based on a set of common and flexible features, in order to provide pension income on reaching retirement. Such features could include transparency and disclosure requirements, investment options, accumulation and decumulation options, distribution specificities, guarantees on the product and fees and charges levied. The main difference between a personal pension account (described under question 21) and a personal pension product is that a personal pension account does not pre-define investment options. The role of tax advantages would be similar for the personal pension account and the personal pension product. This approach could take inspiration from the Undertakings for Collective Investment in Transferable Securities (UCITS), European Long Term Investment Funds (ELTIF), the EuVECA and EuSEF funds, the European company statute and the EIOPA advice on the development of a Pan-European Personal Pension Product.

Would such an approach address the challenges below?

A European personal pension product would…

Please tick the appropriate field, only one choice is allowed per category of reply.	**…not address this challenge at all**	**…partly address this challenge**	**…largely address this challenge**	**…decisively address this challenge**	**No opinion**
Enhance the take-up of personal pensions by consumers in the EU					

Enhance cross-border offer of personal pension products by providers in the EU					
Widen the range of providers					
Enhance efficiency, asset allocation and returns when offering personal pension products					
Contribute to innovation within the personal pension product market					
Other (please specify)					

23. The EU could consider harmonising national personal pension regimes, in particular on the aspects of prudential supervision, possible providers, maximum costs, disclosure requirements, distribution models etc. but excluding tax requirements.

Would such an approach address the challenges below?

Harmonising national personal pension regimes would…

Please tick the appropriate field, only one choice is allowed per category of reply.	**…not address this challenge at all**	**…partly address this challenge**	**…largely address this challenge**	**…decisively address this challenge**	**No opinion**
Enhance the take-up of personal pensions by consumers in the EU					
Enhance cross-border offer of personal pension products by providers in the EU					
Widen the range of providers					
Enhance efficiency, asset allocation and returns when offering personal pension products					
Contribute to innovation within the personal pension product market					
Other (please specify)					

24. Would you favour an alternative EU approach?
Please provide details. Max. 500 words.

Demographic developments paired with cuts in state pension provision create the need to supplement state retirement income by private pensions. The first choice in this regard are occupational pensions. Because of the involvement of employers, occupational pensions can be organised at a collective level. Occupational pensions are therefore good value for money, particularly for those on low incomes. They balance security against returns and provide a life-long pension for their beneficiaries, who share the risks around death and invalidity. In contrast to personal pensions, occupational pensions can therefore address these risks without undertaking an individual assessment. In contrast to personal pension products, occupational pensions are mainly governed and protected by social and labour law. The employer or tariff partners choose an occupational pension provider for the employees, which overcomes behavioural barriers such as inertia on part of the employee and addresses issues around asymmetric information, reducing the complexity for the individual. Often employers or tariff partners are better placed to choose a pension provider than the individual. The interests of employees are protected by representatives in the relevant committees.

These advantages should be used. Occupational pensions should be strengthened further in all 28 Member States, thus ultimately preventing old age poverty while at the same time relieving public finances in the medium and long-term. Existing systems should be further developed and enhanced to reach their potential before additional systems are established and supported.