# RETAIL PARTICIPATION: ARE THE SIU PROPOSALS SUFFICIENT?

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## From ambition to outcome: Making the Savings and Investment Union deliver

Europe has too much money sitting idle. A widely cited estimate puts roughly €10 trillion of household savings in EU bank accounts. These savings earn limited returns. Meanwhile, Europe needs capital for innovation, digitalization and competitiveness. At the AFM, our research "Underutilised assets" shows something striking. Around 2.6 million Dutch households do not invest, despite holding liquid assets well above a prudent emergency buffer[1].Investing part of this capital would strengthen their financial resilience. In total, these Dutch households could invest around €50 billion of underutilised assets. The capacity to invest is there. The real question is whether households can and will use it.

The EU's answer has been ambitious. Three initiatives were meant to work together: the Retail Investment Strategy (RIS), the Savings and Investment Accounts blueprint, and the Financial Literacy Strategy. They aim at a genuine shift of cash savings into productive, long-term investment, by ensuring that products deliver value for money, strengthening protection against conflicts of interest and modernizing disclosures through a digital-first Key Information Document. Together, these initiatives should improve supervision of financial influencers and strengthen financial literacy. The underlying logic is simple. Consumers will invest when they trust the market. They stay invested when products function in line with well-founded expectations. I still believe this underlying logic is correct.

**Has the original ambition survived?**

Now that the RIS has cleared trilogue, it is fair to ask what remains of that ambition. The value for money framework should in principle keep poor-value products off the market. The final text also brings real gains: clear accountability for marketing via finfluencers, and stronger tools for cross-border supervision. However, other important proposals were weakened along the way. The initial inducement ban is a notable example. It became a softer test, not too different from what we already had under MiFID II. Whether this delivers better products for EU retail clients remains to be seen. Savings and Investment Accounts are a case of underutilised ambition. What could have been a common European framework remains a recommendation, leaving part of its potential unrealised.

> Moving idle savings requires households who are ready, willing and confident to invest.

**Why consumer behaviour matters**

At the AFM, our focus starts with the consumer. Moving idle savings requires more than product rules. It requires households who are ready, willing and confident to invest. The Dutch experience shows what strong practice looks like: collective pension saving, built on automatic enrolment, safety, diversification and a long-term horizon. It is one reason why Dutch household pension assets invested in capital markets exceed 150% of GDP. Besides these collective investments through the pension system, direct investments by Dutch households remain below the European average. [2] Our research shows why this matters: around 800,000 Dutch households have sufficient assets to invest but don't do so, and risk an insufficient pension. For them, retail investing is a necessary complement to a sustainable retirement. That is exactly why RIS must get the fundamentals right: value for money, inducements under control, and clear, comparable information.

**Trust drives participation**

That is why we look at behaviour as much as knowledge. A financial system that is simple, transparent and genuinely trustworthy lets households start with confidence.

None of this makes RIS wrong. It makes it incomplete. If Europe wants that capital moving, the softened or dropped parts of RIS deserve a second look, not a quiet shelving. Above all, conflicts of interest need a genuinely robust answer.

**Finishing the Savings and Investment Union**

On Savings and Investment Accounts, Europe does not need to start from scratch. Sweden's ISK shows the way: a simple, transparent, low-threshold account with clear rules attracts retail investors at scale, without weakening protection. A common minimum EU standard, modelled on that logic, would serve households better than 27 diverging national versions. The Financial Literacy Strategy should be judged on behaviour change, not just on increasing knowledge. Our experience shows that these lessons apply at home too.

The capital is there. The initiatives are right, but unfinished. Three priorities stand out: finish what RIS started on conflicts of interest, give Savings and Investment Accounts one shared standard and judge financial literacy by behaviour change rather than information. It can work. We want it to work. But only with the right guidelines in place.

1. *AFM, "Underutilised assets" (2026) [2] DNB, "Dutch households invest less than European average" (2025)*

COLM KINCAID

Deputy Governor, Consumer and Investor Protection – Central Bank of Ireland

# Building resilience and financial wellbeing through retail investment

Retail investment in capital markets can deliver two important outcomes - provide opportunities for households to secure their long-term best interests and provide a critical source of funding for growing businesses, thereby enhancing overall productivity across the broader economy. This makes the European Union's retail investment initiative under Savings and Investments Union central to strengthening the economic and financial resilience of the EU and supporting its long-term competitiveness.

**The Irish experience**

Ireland's position in relation to retail investor participation is distinctive. Irish household wealth is heavily concentrated in housing, accounting for roughly two-thirds of total net wealth.[1] Where households do hold financial assets, these are mainly held indirectly in occupational pensions and life insurance. Also, approximately €175 billion sits in deposits in Irish banks.[2]

The result is that direct Irish retail participation in financial markets is limited compared to our European peers. This reflects a complex interplay of historical, cultural and structural factors that have shaped how Irish consumers think about savings and investment. Research undertaken by the Central Bank of Ireland suggests these factors are deeply rooted, reflecting Ireland's economic history and the financial crises we have experienced.[3] There are also knowledge and understanding gaps, and a perception that investment is complex and the preserve of the wealthy.

**The Action Needed**

No one intervention will be enough to enhance retail investor participation. It requires multiple sustained efforts from all stakeholders, and an eye to the longer-term.

It requires access to an appropriate range of products and services, delivered through channels that provide the right level of support for retail investors at different stages of their financial journey (including those looking to invest modest sums). Access to an appropriate range of supports and advice is especially important, as consumers look to step into areas of financial services that may be unfamiliar to them.

It requires a robust regulatory framework, clear disclosure requirements which effectively inform investors, and sustained efforts to improve and foster a positive investment culture, and restore public trust and confidence in capital markets.

> **Enhancing retail participation requires sustained efforts from all stakeholders.**

It requires that we advance the aims of our National Financial Literacy Strategy. Together with our colleagues in the Competition and Consumer Protection Commission and the Department of Finance, the Central Bank of Ireland is playing its part in advancing the aims of Ireland's National Financial Literacy Strategy, through our role on the Executive Board set up under that Strategy.

It requires that regulated firms apply the investor protection framework consistently and effectively, while robust safeguards against frauds and scams are critical to maintaining consumer confidence as retail investment grows.

**An Investment Account for Ireland**

This is the context in which the Irish Government has identified the development of an Investment Account for Ireland as a priority. Work is underway to deliver an account in-line with the European Commission's recommendation for simple, accessible, tax-efficient, easy to administer accounts that are transparent on fees and portable across borders where possible.

The Central Bank of Ireland is playing its role in supporting the Savings and Investments Union, in line with our mission to ensure the financial system operates in the best interests of consumers and the wider economy. This means that the regulatory framework supports retail investment, that consumer protections are robust and that greater trust and confidence in capital markets is created and sustained for the longer-term.

1. *https://www.centralbank.ie/statistics/data-and-analysis/household-wealth*
2. *https://www.centralbank.ie/statistics/data-and-analysis/credit-and-banking-statistics/bank-balance-sheets*
3. *https://www.centralbank.ie/publication/retail-investor-participation-in-ireland--consumer-research-and-analysis*

MARIANA KÜHNEL

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# Empowering EU retail investors through trust, literacy and simplicity

The Retail Investment Strategy (RIS), the blueprint for Savings and Investment Accounts (SIAs), and the Financial Literacy Strategy (FLS) are key pillars for strengthening retail participation in European capital markets while ensuring investor protection.

**A New Generation of Investors Is Reshaping the Investment Journey**

The RIS aims to ensure that investors feel adequately protected. At the same time, retail market developments show a clear shift towards younger, more digitally oriented investors. A recent FMA study highlights exactly this trend among Austrian consumers. This evolution is reshaping investment behaviour, both in terms of products and access channels. Financial services are increasingly accessed via digital channels, neo-brokers and investment platforms that serve as gateways to capital markets. The investor journey on neo-brokers and trading platforms offers a unique opportunity to provide the right information at the right time. Some firms already analyse investor engagement with educational content to improve its relevance and effectiveness. This can enhance the investor experience, strengthen financial literacy, and benefit companies, investors, and markets alike. Moreover, as products, ETFs act as entry points to capital markets. Young investors increasingly combine conservative investments such as ETFs with high-risk assets like cryptocurrencies and fractional shares, raising questions about their full understanding of the risks associated with crypto products. These trends underline that effective investor protection cannot rely on regulation alone and must be accompanied by the knowledge and skills needed to make informed financial decisions.

**From Information to Empowerment - Financial Literacy**

Protection alone is not enough; lasting participation requires investors to understand both the opportunities and risks. While the Financial Literacy Strategy can help address knowledge gaps and build trust in capital markets, its success depends on effective national implementation. A recent Austrian study shows that although general financial knowledge is relatively strong, specific knowledge remains weak. The FMA therefore considers targeted financial education and clear regulation, to be essential for empowering retail investors. The FMA's investor education efforts build on insights from investor enquiries and complaints, helping to address key market issues while ensuring initiatives remain coordinated and complementary.

> **Trust and participation grow when protection, literacy, simplicity and incentives align.**

**Making Long-Term Investing the Easy Choice**

For many retail investors, particularly first-time investors, trust is closely linked to simplicity, transparency and a clear understanding of how investment products contribute to long-term financial goals. SIAs can be an effective tool to increase retail participation by offering a simple, consumer-friendly investment solution. However, digital platforms (neo-brokers) are often the primary access point to capital markets for young investors. Aside from such benefits, the services offered by neo-brokers can raise investor protection concerns, particularly when traditional investments are marketed alongside speculative assets. It is therefore important to draw young investors' attention to less speculative, long-term investment models, such as SIAs. Consequently, SIAs should be designed as an attractive option for young investors.

**The Building Blocks of Successful Savings and Investment Accounts**

The effectiveness of SIAs depends on their ability to combine simplicity, attractive economic incentives, and strong consumer safeguards. Several conditions are essential for SIAs: First, account portability and cross-border usability to reflect the realities of the EU Single Market. Second, fees must remain transparent and proportionate. Third, eligible investments should allow diversification across shares, bonds and regulated investment funds while excluding unnecessarily complex or excessively risky products. Fourth, tax incentives must be meaningful and easy to understand. Finally, communication should focus on long-term wealth creation rather than short-term speculation.

Furthermore, simplicity and retail participation would benefit from greater convergence across Europe. However, SIAs' non-binding nature may limit their effectiveness, resulting in fragmentation and disparity of consumer protection. Common benchmarks, monitoring and the exchange of best practices supported by targeted European Commission funding and guidance could promote greater convergence. Significant disparities persisting may necessitate future legislative action.

The RIS, FLS, and proposed SIAs framework provide a credible basis for empowering retail investors. Their greatest strength lies in recognising that participation is driven by a combination of protection, financial literacy, simplicity and incentives. If implemented consistently across the EU, SIAs can help mobilise household savings, strengthen capital markets, and improve European citizens' long-term financial resilience and wealth.

REGINA DOHERTY

MEP ECON & Vice-Chair Tax Matters Sub-Committee – European Parliament

## Giving Europeans more options to build financial security

From an economic perspective, the Savings and Investments Union should be the only game in town. Boosting innovation, reducing gold-plating, and incentivising retail investment will make Europe a stronger global player.

We know the challenges. Europe's taxation levels are already among the highest in the world, yet businesses and communities struggle to get the funding they need. Mario Draghi has told us that €800 billion is needed to meet our competitiveness ambitions. We cannot meet our goals without capital markets. This is a mindset shift that needs to happen.

€10 trillion.

It's a lot of money.

That is the amount the European Commission estimates is sitting in bank accounts across Europe, sometimes earning less interest than inflation and losing value every year.

If used more productively to invest in small businesses, infrastructure, digitalisation or climate action, the benefits for society would be much greater.

To achieve this, we need to move from a culture of saving to a culture of investment. This means giving people more options than low-yield accounts, incentivising investment from an early age, building financial literacy, and helping people to make their own money work better.

This discussion should not be about closing ourselves off from non-EU markets, or making it harder for capital and investment from outside the EU to enter our market. If we want to be competitive, we need to compete.

People are already looking for these options. After a decade of inflation, with pension systems facing demographic challenges and pressure on public spending, the appetite to invest is a good-news story.

But this project must not lose momentum or be overshadowed by other pressing issues. It still requires work to help people understand the opportunities available.

This was clear in the Commission's SIU strategy, including the Retail Investment Strategy and Financial Literacy Strategy.

We need to incentivise people to consider investment opportunities from an early age, to build their financial literacy, and to make their own money work better for them.

Nowhere is this more urgent than in pensions. Encouraging Europeans to build their retirement savings by putting money into a supplementary pension product is vital.

If the Commission's PEPP reform is to succeed, it must help unlock access to capital currently not being used productively across the EU.

Member States are already making innovative policy choices in the area of pensions. From tax relief to auto-enrolment, there is a lot that we can learn from each other.

To succeed, PEPP must be attractive to providers and consumers alike. That means removing barriers and caps, encouraging competition and reducing unnecessary costs.

We should also increase flexibility and allow products to adapt to consumers' needs throughout different stages of life.

Similarly, when it comes to the Commission's blueprint for Savings and Investment Accounts, we must make the case for these accounts across all Member States.

A year after the blueprint's publication, responsibility has moved from the Commission to Member States to drive retail investment forward. But the onus still rests on Member States to act.

Inspired by models such as the American 401(k), the British ISA, and the Swedish Investment Account, national SIAs should be accessible to as many people as possible, allowing regular investment at any level, in a tax-efficient manner, with limited red tape and the best possible returns.

Such accounts need tax incentives, simplicity and minimal administrative burdens.

**We need to move from a culture of saving to a culture of investment.**

If we really want to launch this culture change, then governments are going to have to get serious about making investing more attractive. This means changing the tax rules that dissuade people from doing it.

Investing must become truly democratised so everyone sees it as an option. This means reducing red tape, keeping fees low, simplifying tax reporting, creating incentives, widening access to financial instruments, ensuring competition, and not penalising people for achieving returns.

Many of these levers remain in the hands of Member States. The EU is speaking the right language about building a common market for savings and investment opportunities, but without domestic reforms that remove barriers and enable cross-border investment, progress will remain limited.

If we are serious about reform, there is no time like the present. We need to be brave and ambitious. This is how we build a culture of investment and turn savers into investors.


JONATHAN CLEBORNE

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## Smart EU policy can boost dynamic retail markets

Federal Reserve Governor Paul Volcker famously said in 2009 that the only useful financial innovation in decades was the ATM. Perhaps this was a harsh judgment but Volcker was making a serious point: in many areas of the industry, financial innovation did little to improve the lives of everyday investors. More recently with technology advancing rapidly, Vanguard sees the promise of real benefits for retail investors globally.

We are particularly excited about three major trends in financial innovation: artificial intelligence (AI); new digital platforms (or 'neo-brokers'); and the growing adoption of exchange-traded funds (ETFs). Through these trends, Europe's retail market is evolving faster than EU policy can match; 3-plus years of negotiations on the Retail Investment Strategy (RIS) have made this painfully clear.

Let's examine how each is impacting the retail market. Firstly, AI, which already provides the starting point for many retail investor journeys. Tools such as ChatGPT have started to shape how people understand financial topics, make early decisions and form behaviours. Whilst this trend presents potential risks for consumers, we see significant opportunities for AI within the regulated advice market. We believe AI can enable greater personalisation, sophistication and real-time engagement around critical life moments; whether investors remain self-directed or appoint a financial adviser.

Secondly, digital platforms are becoming key players in Germany, France and EU-wide, with more than €1 trillion in retail assets. The impact of digital platforms is evident on investment funds as well as retirement products like personal pensions. Neo-brokers are driving big changes to investor behavior and engagement and exerting real cost pressure, benefiting investors. The growth of EU neo-brokers is striking; client assets grew from €50 billion in 2020 to €150bn by 2023, according to ESMA data, and continue to grow rapidly.

Thirdly, diversified, low-cost ETFs are becoming a cornerstone of retail portfolios for EU investors. According to the consultancy ETFGI, total assets held in European ETFs have doubled since 2023 to reach €3.3 trillion. ETFs are bringing flexibility and product innovation with low costs to millions of new EU retail investors; many of whom are younger and new to markets, investing directly through monthly savings plans.

**Driven by AI, neo-brokers and product innovation, retail investing is evolving faster than policy.**

How should EU policymakers respond to this retail market innovation? They have the essential part right: advocating for broad and deep retail investment markets for Europe's economic competitiveness and prosperity, building on the Draghi and Letta agendas. Concretely, on regulation, recent experience suggests that the EU policy process alone cannot deliver precise interventions in a rapidly evolving retail market. However, both the Commission and ESMA should stay close to developments in AI, fund products and digital distribution – using their leadership roles and policy tools to take fear (including risk aversion) and friction out of retail investing.

Addressing fear, European policymakers should seek inspiration from other jurisdictions' efforts, such as two current UK initiatives. The first is work by the UK's FCA to make risk warnings to investors more informative rather than potentially discouraging retail investors as currently. The second is a partnership between industry and government, 'Invest for the Future', which aims to educate UK citizens on the importance of investing for their financial wellbeing. Addressing friction, we commend ESMA's plans to simplify the retail investor journey. ESMA's priorities here are sensible: streamlining disclosure; tackling information overload; and simplifying product governance, particularly in suitability and appropriateness assessments.

EU policy efforts can and should be bolstered by national reforms, since they allow greater scope to be strategic and agile. The Dutch authorities have a longstanding pro-investor agenda, built on a strong research and evidence base. Denmark's regime for assessing funds' value for money is the foundation of the RIS compromise agreement. And the Irish authorities have a highly proactive agenda to drive retail participation, guided by their recent Fund Sector Review.

Partnership between EU and national level reforms can also drive progress in areas such as tax policy and pensions. On tax, for example, last year the Commission published a strong blueprint for Savings and Investment Accounts, drawing on best practice globally. We are greatly encouraged by the progress being made on SIAs, including in the Netherlands, Ireland and Poland – and openness to reform in Italy, Spain and beyond.

The lesson is clear: Europe's retail investment market is innovating rapidly, creating new opportunities for citizens to build wealth. Policymakers should support this momentum by removing barriers, embracing innovation and empowering more Europeans to become confident, long-term investors.

SERGIU CRISTIAN MANEA

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# Europe has the tools. Now it needs execution

The Commission has put forward a range of targeted initiatives in the context of the Savings and Investments Union (SIU), which have the potential to transform, in a positive way, citizens' engagement with capital markets.

What remains insufficient – at least for now – are the level of dedication and pace of implementation. While there are frequent and unequivocal political commitments to rapidly advance the SIU, these strong words have yet to become reality. Let me elaborate.

First of all, many national budgets are under significant pressure, and pension spending often represents one of their largest expenditure items, given that many EU citizens rely predominantly on state pensions. Against this backdrop, one would expect the Commission's pensions package from last autumn to come along just at the right moment.

However, we unfortunately see a response, which, to say the least, is not very enthusiastic, from many Member States to the suggestion of introducing automatic enrolment in second pillar pension schemes, which could be a genuine game-changer in familiarizing citizens with capital markets. Furthermore, the revision of the legal framework for the Pan-European Personal Pension Product (PEPP) presents a much-needed opportunity to revive this financial product. However, progress remains uneven across Member States. This is evident, for example, in their rejection of the Commission's proposal to grant PEPPs a favorable tax treatment, as was proposed by the Commission.

Moreover, the role and importance of funded pensions cannot be overrated in societies of increasing life expectancy, low birth rates, and a shrinking working-age population. These trends place intense pressure on public pension systems and budgets. However, funded pensions are capable of diversifying sources of retirement income, and they help improve the sustainability of pension systems overall.

Additionally, funded pension systems create large pools of 'patient capital' - funds can be invested with a long-term horizon. Such investments are crucial to support Europe's oftentimes weak economic growth and productivity, and they are essential in helping deliver on the EU's strategic objectives, such as digitalization, energy transition, defence sovereignty and infrastructure modernization.

**Design gets the headlines, delivery the results - the SIU's real test is execution, not architecture.**

Second, in my view, simple and well-incentivized investment accounts (SIAs), such as those envisaged in the Commission's blueprint, are essential to encourage a greater number of EU citizens to invest part of their savings. While SIAs already exist in several Member States, it is disappointing to see that others still have no (or no ambitious) plans to establish a dedicated framework for such accounts within their respective jurisdictions.

The policy initiatives proposed in recent months and years have been the right ones to address the persistently low level of retail investors in the EU. What is now needed is a strong commitment to implement the measures already on the table urgently, properly, and in full.

Moreover, we should bear in mind that other jurisdictions outside Europe have also recognized the value of well-designed, incentive-based SIAs. This is an important reality that should not be overlooked in the ongoing debate about Europe's global competitiveness.

To mention an example, Japan had its first, rather modest, SIA model as of 2014. It was fundamentally reformed in 2024 by, inter alia, making the tax-exemption period permanent and significantly increasing lifetime investment limits. The numbers speak for themselves: the Japanese SIAs surged from approximately EUR 118 billion at the end of 2023 to about EUR 210 billion by the end of 2024. Japan was determined to move on from a time-limited tax incentive to a lifetime wealth-building tool.

What's more, the United States have also introduced an additional SIA-type vehicle. The so-called 530A Account is a tax-advantaged investment account for US citizens under the age of 18, under which US Department of the Treasury will contribute USD 1,000 to investment accounts established for children born between 2025 and 2028.

There are quite a few matching elements between the 530A Account and ERSTE's 'Zukunftsdepot' idea (= securities account as a 'welcome package' for each newborn; we would provide the accounts for free), which we have been advocating for years and well before the US account was initiated.

All of these recent initiatives are even more important given that the Retail Investment Strategy (RIS) is unlikely to live up to the high expectations that accompanied its launch. The legislative process has not necessarily resulted in a simpler framework, quite the contrary. Hence, it is questionable whether the RIS will be able to serve as a major engine for bringing more EU citizens into capital markets.

Europe does not suffer from a lack of savings. It suffers from a lack of mechanisms that help citizens transform savings into long-term investment. The policy tools are increasingly available. The challenge now is implementation.

MICHAEL TAE

Group President of Funds, Issuer, and Data-Driven Solutions – Broadridge

# Financial literacy: building on-ramps to long-term investing

Financial literacy empowers retail investors to make better long-term investment decisions with their assets. Financial literacy is more than just education, it's empowering European citizens with information. Broadridge strongly supports efforts by regulators and the investment industry to increase retail investing, as this will be key to funding secure retirements for individuals and fuelling growth in the European economy. But to do so successfully, Europe's retail sector needs "on-ramps" to investing successfully for the long-term. Clear information, coupled with tools that build financial literacy, provides such an on-ramp.

**Building "on-ramps" to investing**

Broadridge is proud to be an industry leader in financial literacy and retail empowerment. At our annual Symposium in Brussels, we convene regulators and industry executives to discuss how to operationalize on-ramps that help households enter investment markets. Those on-ramps include better information about investment options and decisions as well as enhanced access to appropriate investment products. Technology and investor communications also have an important role to play. Broadridge works closely with fund providers and distributors to operationalize their digital tools, data analytics and production techniques to deliver the types of digestible, plain-language communications that enhance retail investor comprehension, trust and long-term participation in capital markets.

There are currently several EU policy initiatives underway aimed at growing retail participation in capital markets. The European Commission's Financial Literacy Strategy is designed to help citizens make sound financial decisions and improve their well-being, financial security and independence. The Retail Investment Strategy aims to deliver better information to investors. And the Markets Integration and Supervision Package includes proposals for data harmonization and simplification that may improve disclosures.

**Essential life skill**

In its 2025 Financial Literacy Strategy, the European Commission described financial literacy as an essential life skill that combines the "financial awareness, knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviours necessary to make sound financial decisions."

At its core, financial literacy is about empowering retail investors to make good investing decisions and take the types of educated risks needed to fund secure retirements and build capital for home buying and other major life milestones.

> High-quality investor communications correlate with higher levels of retail investor empowerment.

By nearly every possible measure, financial literacy and retail empowerment is lagging among Europeans. The 2023 edition of the E.U.'s Eurobarometer Survey showed that only 18% of E.U. citizens are highly financially literate. When Broadridge replicated this survey in the United States, we found that U.S. citizens significantly outperformed European citizens and generally had higher levels of financial literacy across the board. Given those results, it's no coincidence that U.S. households have far fewer assets sitting in bank savings accounts and a far bigger share of wealth invested in capital markets.

Regulators and the investment industry have recognized the problem and are joining forces to promote financial literacy and retail empowerment. There is ample evidence in support of this approach. Studies have demonstrated the direct link between higher levels of financial literacy and retirement preparedness.

**Clarity of investment disclosures as a foundation to better investing**

Broadridge analysed investment policy descriptions from UCITS KIIDs from each of the 50 largest U.K. asset managers. Only five of these disclosures came in at a readability level appropriate for a retail audience with limited financial expertise. Nearly half the disclosures were written at an academic or college level that would be difficult for most retail investors to understand. Presenting that information at a lower and more easily comprehensible reading level would significantly improve accessibility.

There is ample research documenting that high-quality investor communications correlate with higher levels of retail investor empowerment. To be considered high-quality, investor information and disclosures should be:

- Easy to view and understand,
- Pushed directly to physical or electronic addresses of the investor's choosing,
- Offer evidence of delivery and owner-initiated activity,
- Include layering and linking in digital formats, and
- Leave no investors behind.

Europe cannot afford to leave trillions in household savings idle while retirement gaps widen and the economy's need for growth capital remains unmet. Financial literacy is the foundation that helps individuals move from saving to investing with confidence and purpose. By building better on-ramps through education, technology and more effective investor communications, Europe can help millions of citizens participate more fully in capital markets while unlocking the investment needed to support innovation, growth and long-term economic resilience.