



WHITE BOOK 2025

25 years
anniversary
1999-2024

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Foreword by FECIF President

Vania Franceschelli
Chairperson

Dear reader,

In a rapidly evolving global landscape, financial services are undergoing significant transformation, driven by the acceleration of technological advancements, increasing concern for sustainability, the deepening of economic interdependence, and profound demographic shifts. Financial advisors are presented with new tools to enhance the efficiency and personalization of their services.

Amid these developments, financial advisors continue to play a pivotal role in helping individuals and families navigate the complexities of modern financial planning, guiding them through investments, savings, pensions, and retirement strategies, while also addressing the growing demand for sustainable financial practices.

At the same time, broader societal changes are influencing the financial sector. Individuals now have greater access to a wide range of financial products, and their financial literacy has improved. However, the role of the financial advisor has expanded well beyond traditional wealth management. Advisors are now tasked with providing guidance on the evolving needs of a population that faces not only financial complexity but also the implications of demographic shifts, such as aging populations and increasing life expectancies.

While these technological and societal shifts offer many opportunities, they also introduce new challenges. The financial advisory industry must continue to evolve in order to remain competitive and meet the diverse needs of consumers. As consumer expectations shift toward more personalized, transparent, and responsible investment options, financial institutions must ensure that their services not only address these new demands but also align with the principles of sustainability and ethical investment. This requires continuous adaptation

to the regulatory environment to support both innovation and consumer protection, ensuring that financial advisors can serve their clients effectively and responsibly.

FECIF remains committed to representing the vital role that financial advisors play at the European level. By ensuring that the regulatory framework supports their ability to serve clients effectively, FECIF works to ensure that advisors can meet the challenges posed by technological advancements, demographic changes, and increasing demand for sustainable financial practices.

Cooperation between the financial sector and EU institutions is essential to create a stable, innovative, and inclusive financial environment that supports both market growth and consumer protection. FECIF remains steadfast in its commitment to representing the vital role that financial advisors play across Europe, ensuring that the regulatory framework continues to support their ability to serve clients effectively and responsibly.

Please do not hesitate to reach out to further discuss the content of the 2025 FECIF White Book.

Wishing you a good reading of this publication,

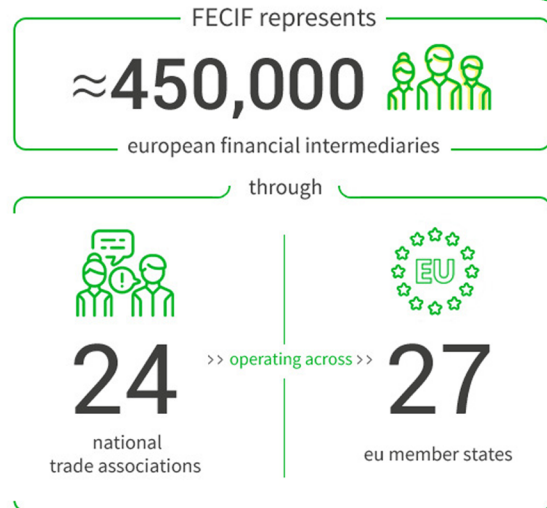
Vania



About FECIF

The European Federation of Financial Advisers and Financial Intermediaries (FECIF) was chartered in June 1999 to support and promote the role of financial advisers and intermediaries in Europe, whilst also representing them at the highest European levels.

FECIF is an independent and non-profit-making trade association that extensively assists its adviser members, who operate across Europe.



- **Based in Brussels**, FECIF is the only European body representing European financial advisers and intermediaries across the Continent.
- Via its membership, the Federation **represents more than 450,000 advisers and intermediaries**; when administration and back-office staff are included FECIF can be seen to support the activities of around 1,400,000 individuals

25 Years of achievements

This year **FECIF is celebrating its 25th anniversary**. The association has moved on a lot since it was created in 1999 by a group of successful entrepreneurs who had started to shape financial advice across Europe.

Today FECIF is a group of associations rather than distribution networks. This has helped us become larger and more representative, but also more exposed to regulation. Thanks to the work of these years, FECIF is now recognized as a stakeholder by the European Commission.

Best example of recent achievements is the discussion on **Retail Investment Strategy (RIS)** over the past 12 months: FECIF helped identify the problems and present the position of the financial advisors, in very close co-ordination with the work of each individual association with their local regulators, in co-operation with other European associations.

Another tangible example of the importance of this advocacy is the final text of the **Insurance Distribution Directive (IDD)**. All of the major points raised by FECIF were taken on board – and the adapted text was far more appropriate and feasible than previous drafts, a result that was highly beneficial for our members.



Introduction

The 2025 FECIF White Book serves as a forward-looking publication, providing an insight into the current situation, while outlining the vision for the future of financial services in Europe. It highlights key areas and trends that are already shaping the industry and will keep doing so in the years ahead, particularly focusing on the evolving role of financial advice in addressing the complex needs of clients.

Specifically, the White Book examines the importance of sustainability in financial practices, the ongoing digitalization of services, the need for secure retirement planning, and the overall state of capital markets in Europe. FECIF has observed that the regulatory landscape is evolving in response to existing trends in these areas. The EU has responded with initiatives such as the Capital Markets Union (CMU) and the upcoming Savings and Investment Union (SIU) driving the integration of financial services and markets across Europe. These initiatives aim to eliminate barriers to capital flow, improve investment opportunities, and ensure that financial services meet the needs of a diverse and aging population.

For this reason, FECIF has undertaken the effort to develop the 2025 FECIF White Book. The development of the 2025 FECIF White Book was based on a rigorous and comprehensive research process, ensuring a well-rounded and accurate representation of the financial advisory landscape across Europe. The methodology employed involved a combination of qualitative and quantitative research approaches to capture both expert opinions and hard data.

As for previous editions, the White Book relied on quantitative data to support its findings. The collection and consolidation of hard data were carried out by CMI Strategies, which sourced relevant statistical information from Eurostat. The collected data was then analysed and transformed into graphical representations to illustrate key trends and developments in a clear and accessible manner.

However, our experience is that data is very difficult to compare across countries and does not tell the whole story. To gather firsthand insights, bilateral interviews were conducted with representatives from all national associations that are members of FECIF. These structured interviews provided an in-depth understanding of the financial advisory sector within each country, exploring key topics such as the organization of the financial advisory market, perceptions and adoption of ESG principles among clients and advisors, trends in digitalization, and the structure and effectiveness of pension systems and retirement strategies.

Where possible, outreach efforts were extended beyond FECIF membership to include national financial advisory associations in non-member countries. This allowed for a broader and more comprehensive perspective on financial advisory trends across Europe. Notably, contacts were established with national associations in countries like Ireland to conduct interviews and integrate their viewpoints into the analysis. Additionally, through collaboration with members of EFPA (European Financial Planners Association), further interviews were conducted to cover markets such as Poland and Czechia, enriching the White Book with valuable insights from diverse financial landscapes.

Each interview lasted approximately one hour, during which participants were asked a series of targeted questions designed to uncover trends, challenges, and opportunities within their respective markets. The interviews were structured to facilitate meaningful discussions on core themes, including the regulatory environment, the growing emphasis on sustainability, digital transformation within the advisory sector, and pension and retirement planning strategies. The collected qualitative insights were meticulously analysed and synthesized by consultants from CZP&Co., ensuring coherence and consistency in the final report.

By integrating these diverse research methodologies, the 2025 FECIF White Book provides a well-rounded and data-driven analysis of the evolving financial advisory landscape in Europe. This structured approach ensures that the publication serves as a reliable and insightful resource for policymakers, industry stakeholders, and financial professionals alike.

This publication is a crucial guide for FECIF's discussions with policymakers, aimed at ensuring that the financial advisory sector remains adaptive, innovative, and supportive of European citizens' financial well-being. By continuing to focus on these priority areas, FECIF works to ensure that financial advisors are equipped to navigate the challenges of the future while providing clients with responsible, personalized, and effective advice.

With these goals in mind, FECIF is committed to supporting the development of a robust and sustainable financial ecosystem for Europe's citizens, now and in the years to come.

Policy recommendations

Building on the analysis conducted in the 2025 FECIF White Book, FECIF would like to present the following recommendations to EU policymakers to ensure a sustainable future for the financial advisory profession.

- 1. Enhance the Regulatory Framework for Financial Advisory Services:** Create a regulatory environment that supports the financial advisory professions.
- 2. Recognise the Social Role of Financial Advisors:** Acknowledge and support the essential social responsibility of financial advisors as trusted partners in improving financial well-being and financial literacy, capable of helping individuals and families navigate financial decisions, especially regarding long-term planning, retirement, and sustainable investments.
- 3. Guide the Digital Transformation in Financial Services:** Develop policies that facilitate the digitalisation of financial advice, ensuring that both financial advisors and consumers have safe use and access to the tools, platforms, and training needed to engage with digital financial services effectively.
- 4. Promote Financial Literacy Across Europe:** Invest in financial education programs to improve basic financial literacy. This will empower consumers to make informed decisions about their finances, from investment strategies to retirement planning.
- 5. Support Gender Equality in the Financial Sector:** Address the gender gap in financial services by encouraging policies that promote diversity and inclusion, both in financial advisory roles and in the broader financial services sector.

6. **Reduce Bureaucratic Barriers to Investment:** Streamline financial regulations across Europe to reduce unnecessary bureaucratic burdens, particularly those that hinder the ease of doing business and the flow of capital.
7. **Encourage Collaboration Between Financial Advisors and Regulators:** Create more opportunities for dialogue and collaboration between financial advisors, industry stakeholders, and EU institutions to ensure that the evolving needs of the sector are met through effective and inclusive policymaking.
8. **Guarantee a role for Financial Advisors in the Development of the Savings and Investment Union (SIU):** Continue to consult financial advisor on the development of the SIU, which is expected to provide significant opportunities for businesses, consumers, and financial advisors, by focusing on more efficient ways to connect savings with productive investments.
9. **Encourage a Holistic Approach to Retirement Planning:** Ensure that financial advisors are equipped to support clients in navigating the complexities of modern retirement planning, including integrating various types of savings products and pension plans to create secure, sustainable retirement solutions for Europeans.



Breakdown by country

This section provides a country-by-country analysis, which looks into the topics that have been touched upon in the previous chapters.

Specifically, it provides data on each country for financial trends and the state of the art of financial advisors in that market. It also looks into the country's overall position in the Capital Markets Union. Finally, it investigates the opinions of industry experts in the national markets on topics such as sustainability, digitalization and pensions.

Overview of



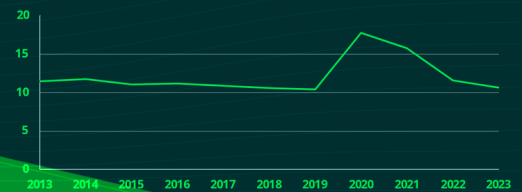
ITALY



Focus country, 2024

	GDP per capita	37,101 €
	GDP total	2,189 Bn €
	Purchasing Power Parity ⁽¹⁾	35,638 €
	Inflation rate ⁽²⁾	1.1 %
	Unemployment rate	8.1 %
	Saving rate	12.14 %

Evolution of household saving rate from 2013 to 2023



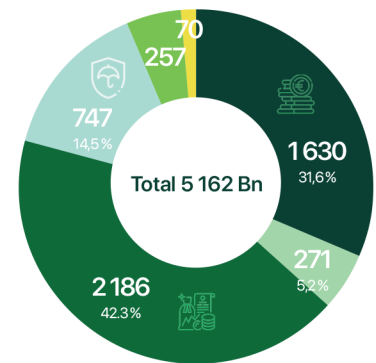
Market organization for financial advice

The financial advisory market in Italy is **primarily composed of tied agents**, who number **52,779** as of December 2024, making up the vast majority of professionals in the sector.

In contrast, fee-only **financial advisers, who operate on an independent basis** and are compensated solely by their clients, are much less common, with **only 741 registered**. Additionally, there are 89 other financial advisory undertakings that provide financial services under different regulatory frameworks.

This structure reflects a **market largely dominated by tied agents**.

Financial assets



- Currency and deposits
- Debt securities and Loans
- Equity & investment fund shares
- Life Insurance
- Pension funds
- Other

Non-Financial assets



Sources: Eurostat, CMI Analysis
 Note: (1) Purchasing Power Parity (as GNI per capita expressed as PPP); (2) Annual average rate of change (HICP)



Sustainability

Sustainable finance is growing, with European regulations, like Delegated Regulation 2021/1253, requiring financial advisors to consider clients' sustainability preferences in investment decisions. According to the 2024 CONSOB Report, **50% of Italian consumers are interested in sustainable investments, and 20% hold such assets.** Advisors play a key role, with **55% of their clients interested in ESG investments.**

The Anasf survey (July 2024) shows increasing portfolios dedicated to sustainable products (from 59% to 68%); moreover, the share of financial advisers holding EFPA ESG certification as of December 2024 is about 8% (vs. 7% at the end of 2023). While the SFDR regulation has improved sustainability disclosures, there is potential to simplify the framework and reduce administrative burdens to enhance competitiveness. Greater focus on governance ('G' in ESG) is also crucial for driving meaningful improvements in companies' sustainability performance.



Pensions

Italy's "demographic winter," characterized by an ageing population, declining birth rates, and longer life expectancies, threatens the sustainability of its public pension system. The shrinking workforce will struggle to support an increasingly elderly population, making the shift towards a pension system similar to those in Northern Europe — where private pensions play a significant role — seem inevitable. Financial advisors must play a crucial role in bridging the gap between consumers and pension products, addressing the country's low financial literacy. Despite some positive trends, such as a rise in pension fund participation among younger people, a larger shift in consumer engagement is needed.

The COVIP report reveals that the **majority of pension fund members are between 35 and 54 years old,** with participation from younger groups increasing. Proposals for reform include the creation of an EU Long-Term Savings Product with auto-enrolment and tax incentives, as well as simplifying the regulatory framework for the Pan-European Personal Pension Product. These steps aim to encourage broader participation in private pensions, addressing Italy's pension challenges in light of demographic trends.



Digitalization and new assets

The newly published Regulation (EU) 2024/1689 (AI Act) is seen as a positive step for integrating AI technologies into the financial advisory sector, ensuring consumer protection, and promoting innovation. While AI in financial advisory has enhanced personalized services and streamlined operations, it also presents risks such as data collection errors, privacy violations, and misleading advertising. A growing area of concern is the rise of crypto-assets, which, despite their potential for portfolio diversification, are highly volatile and present significant risks.

The Italian market has seen a notable increase in crypto-asset ownership, with **18% of households holding cryptocurrencies in 2024, up from just 2% in 2021.** This trend underscores the importance of financial advisors providing guidance to clients navigating these high-risk assets. With the upcoming full implementation of the MiCA Regulation, advisors need to be well-prepared for the challenges in this space.

Overview of



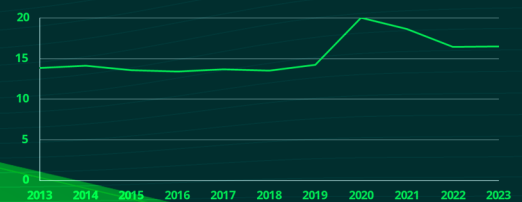
FRANCE FR



Focus country, 2024

	GDP per capita	42,970 €
	GDP total	2,922 Bn €
	Purchasing Power Parity ⁽¹⁾	36,265 €
	Inflation rate ⁽²⁾	2.3 %
	Unemployment rate	7.3 %
	Saving rate	18.16 %

Evolution of household saving rate from 2013 to 2023



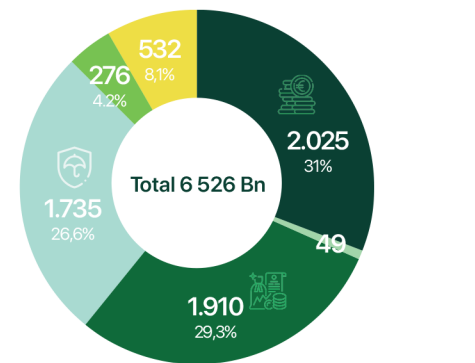
Market organization for financial advice

In France, financial intermediaries operate across various categories, primarily in insurance, banking, and investment services. In 2023, there were **69,277 registered intermediaries**, a 2.6% decrease from 2022. The total number of registrations across all categories was 116,938 (-2.4%).

The market includes **26,722 insurance brokers** (-0.6%), **11,847 general insurance agents** (+0.2%), and **2,715 tied insurance agents** (+0.1%). The number of **banking and payment service brokers stood at 6,294** (-9.6%), while **11,160 intermediaries** operated as exclusive banking and payment agents (+2.2%). Investment-related professionals included **6,710 financial investment advisors** (+5.5%) and **3,960 tied agents of investment service providers** (+4.5%).

Intermediaries are concentrated in three key regions: Île-de-France, Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes, and Occitanie. The market remains predominantly male (77.6%), with an average intermediary age of 50 years. Additionally, 63% operate as legal entities, while 37% are individual professionals.

Financial assets



- Currency and deposits
- Debt securities and Loans
- Equity & investment fund shares
- Life Insurance
- Pension funds
- Other

Non-Financial assets



Sources: Eurostat, CMI Analysis
 Note: (1) Purchasing Power Parity (as GNI per capita expressed as PPP); (2) Annual average rate of change (HICP)



Sustainability

Financial advisers in France continue to play a crucial role in conveying sustainability information to clients. **After the Covid pandemic, the percentage of clients requesting information on sustainability increased from 3% to 12%.** However, banning non-sustainable investments is perceived more as a political decision, rather than economic. French customers note that countries outside Europe do not prioritize sustainability in the same way and, while clients generally acknowledge the importance of sustainability, their primary focus remains on return on investment.



Pensions

In France, **the Pay-As-You-Go system** (both state-run and co-managed by employer and union representatives) **remains generous**, even with the current reforms. Many households supplement this with retirement savings focused on real estate, as people prioritize securing their homes, and also financial savings, mostly invested in liquid, capital-guaranteed products. The Macron **reform targeted the second pension pillar and is considered a significant success** with the introduction of the Plan d'Épargne Retraite (PER), bringing many existing systems into a single tax-advantaged structure. This to benefits primarily the wealthiest individuals initially, but becomes gradually available to employees across most of the private sector.



Digitalization and new assets

Firms in France are highly digitalized, with many financial advisers using digital tools, and a significant portion of marketing is done through websites. While digitalization may lead to fewer employees in the future, it is unlikely to eliminate jobs entirely. Robots will still require certification, and human interaction remains crucial, especially for wealthier clients. New types of financial assets are legally defined in France and are becoming more popular, with financial advisers increasingly offering them, though they still make up a small portion of the market.

Overview of



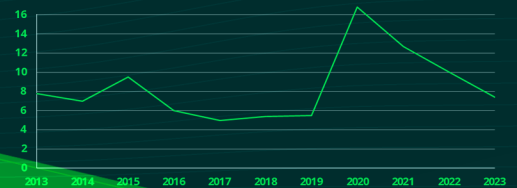
UNITED KINGDOM



Focus country, 2024

	GDP per capita	49,719 €
	GDP total	3,312 Bn €
	Purchasing Power Parity ⁽¹⁾	54,748 €
	Inflation rate ⁽²⁾	3.5 %
	Unemployment rate	3.9 %
	Saving rate	8 %

Evolution of household saving rate from 2013 to 2023



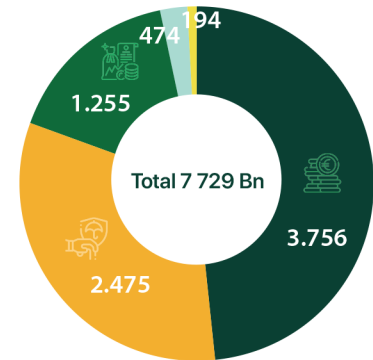
Market organization for financial advice

In the UK, the financial advisory market consists of both Directly Regulated (DR) firms and Appointed Representatives (AR) under FCA supervision. As of 2023, there were **4,654 DR financial adviser firms** with 27,941 staff advising on retail investment products. However, including **AR firms**, the total number of advisory firms is **estimated at around 12,000**, employing approximately 37,136 advisers.

The market is diverse, including 233 wealth management firms (5,596 advisers), 97 insurance intermediaries (288 advisers), 61 mortgage brokers (157 advisers), 37 investment/asset managers (171 advisers), and 29 banks and building societies (2,564 advisers). The industry also relies on approximately 74,000 support staff.

Financial advisory firms vary in size: 2,132 firms have only one adviser, while 1,931 have between two and five, 543 employ six to fifty, and 48 large firms have over fifty advisers. **The UK market remains fragmented, with ongoing consolidation efforts and increasing regulatory scrutiny.**

Financial assets



- Currency and deposits
- Debt securities and Loans
- Equity & investment fund shares
- Life Insurance
- Pension funds
- Other
- Life & Pensions

Non-Financial assets



Sources: Eurostat, Savills, ONS, World Bank, CMI Analysis
 Note: (1) Purchasing Power Parity (as GNI per capita expressed as PPP); (2) Annual average rate of change (HICP)



Sustainability

In the UK, **regulators have introduced rules on sustainability and ESG**, expecting financial advisers to ask clients relevant questions about sustainability preferences. This helps guide advisers in recommending appropriate products. While many **clients** invest in ESG products, they **tend to prioritize performance over sustainability**. There is also scepticism due to greenwashing, where investment firms rebrand without truly managing sustainable investments. Additionally, a generational divide exists, with younger investors generally more focused on sustainability and ESG, though this interest may be balanced by concerns over financial returns.



Pensions

Retirement planning is a key area of focus within the UK financial market, reflecting both its critical importance to customers and its profitability for advisors and institutions. Many **individuals rely heavily on retirement planning to ensure they have sufficient assets to support their transition** from the saving phase to the income phase of life. This planning ensures they can retire with financial confidence and stability, based on their accumulated wealth and assets.

The growth of this sector has been significantly influenced by regulatory changes and government initiatives. In particular, the **introduction of more flexible pension rules has allowed individuals greater freedom in deciding how to manage their pension funds** upon retirement. This flexibility has created a heightened demand for financial advice, as many clients seek professional guidance to navigate their options and make informed decisions. Additionally, the aging population in the UK has further fuelled this demand, with more individuals recognizing the importance of early and strategic retirement planning.



Digitalization and new assets

Digitalization in the UK has reached a high level, with more companies adopting advanced digital systems, including those powered by artificial intelligence (AI). **In the financial advisory sector, digitalization is widely viewed as a positive development due to the automation of processes**, which has significantly enhanced efficiency. This automation allows advisers to provide tailored advice more effectively and meet customer needs with greater ease. AI, in particular, has proven beneficial in streamlining tasks like notetaking, drafting minutes, and saving time across various functions. While the perception of AI has improved — shifting from being seen as a potential threat to an invaluable tool — there remain concerns about its long-term implications and the direction of its development. These uncertainties keep the overall enthusiasm for AI somewhat tempered.



Fédération Européenne des Conseils et
Intermédiaires Financiers Aisbl

Avenue Louise 143/4
B-1050 Brussels | Belgium

www.fecif.eu