

Charter: private sector unites to help consumers address debt problems

Insurers, utility companies, collection agencies, telecom companies, enforcement agents and housing associations have joined hands to help consumers address their debt problems in the nation-wide coalition *Van Schulden naar Kansen* (From debts to opportunities). In their capacity as creditors, the parties see it as their responsibility to society to help customers in financial difficulties as much as they can. The coalition has drafted an ethical charter that is presented today during the New Year's Event of CSR Netherlands.

The charter contains ten rules for helping customers who have fallen into default and preventing financial problems from occurring. All signatories will use the charter as a basis for aligning their procedures and holding each other accountable. Examples of rules are compassion, clear-cut information and fair treatment.

Debt problems

There are about 700,000 households (1.5 million people) in the Netherlands who have debt problems, these are debts they cannot repay within three years. Another 800,000 households run the risk of landing themselves into debt problems. The average debt is 38,500 euro spread across 14 different creditors. The majority of these debts consist of fines, collection charges and enforcement fees. The coalition thinks in opportunities, for people living in poverty, for businesses and for the public sector. After all, debts are a major burden for everyone involved.

Ambition 2020

Delta Lloyd Foundation, of the insurer Delta Lloyd, has taken the initiative to create the nation-wide coalition. The Foundation has been committed to fighting poverty and promoting financial empowerment for many years and became ambassador of Poverty in CSR Netherlands' *Ambition 2020 programme* in 2014. Marie-Louise Voors, Manager of Delta Lloyd Foundation: *'Our ambition is for businesses, organisations and foundations to have joined hands on a structural basis by 2020 so as to address poverty in the Netherlands that is caused by debt problems. By teaming up, we will gain a better understanding of the issue, which will allow us to help people regain their financial footing. We all know that financial difficulties can be the cause of serious problems in people's lives.'*

Call to action

The first signatories are: Aegon, CZ, Delta Lloyd, De Key, Eigen Haard, Elbuco, KPN, MKB Doorstart, Nuon, Rochdale, T-Mobile, Vodafone en Zuidweg & Partners. And the enforcement agents: Van Arkel Gerechtsdeurwaarders & Incasso, DAS Incasso Rotterdam B.V., Faircasso, Flanderijn Incasso en Gerechtsdeurwaarders, GGN Mastering Credit, Hypocasso, PRC Gerechtsdeurwaarders & Incasso, Syncasso and Van der Hoeden|Mulder Gerechtsdeurwaarders. They are exchanging knowledge and calling upon others to follow their example. Manuel van der Hoek of health insurer CZ: *'Our experience with customer-oriented and proactive collection practices goes back a few years. We know they pay off in the end. I wholeheartedly invite other companies to follow our example so that we can come up with even better solutions. Together, we can help people leave their debt problems behind. Let's just get on with it.'*

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About Delta Lloyd Foundation

Since 2008, Delta Lloyd Foundation has supported initiatives that contribute to financial empowerment and financial awareness in society. www.deltalloydfoundation.nl