



# ACCIS 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary



**This year, the Association of Consumer Credit Information Suppliers (ACCIS) celebrates its 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary.**

**To commemorate this milestone, personalities from the association's past and present reflect on its formation and achievements, sharing insights to help future-proof ACCIS for the exciting road ahead.**



**Mariusz Cholewa**

*President of ACCIS*

“Today, ACCIS symbolises 30 years of experience and hard work of its members, cementing their businesses, promoting the benefits of credit and economic data collection, and a broader understanding of how credit bureaus and credit registers work. The work that allows both consumers and companies feel safer in the financial world, make informed and responsible decisions.”

## The Beginnings



**Neil Munroe**  
President of ACCIS from  
2009 until 2018

"ACCIS as an association was created in 1990 in recognition by senior executives from a number of credit reporting agencies operating in Europe that there may be a need for the industry to work together in a non-competitive way," says **Neil Munroe, President of ACCIS from 2009 until 2018.**

Credit referencing agencies (CRAs) hold information on consumer's past credit and current payment behaviour, in addition to acting as a third party between credit granters and borrowers. Thus, when the first concepts for the development of a pan-European space for the free movement of personal data personal originated, it became necessary to increase communication and collaboration in the sector. This need led to the creation of ACCIS.

## The First Decades

During its primary decade of existence, ACCIS set about achieving a first objective: establishing itself as a key body in representing the interests of the industry. The timing could not have been better. The introduction of the Data Protection Directive in 1995 by the European Union had far reaching consequences on the collection and use of data on individuals. The industry now needed a collective voice in Europe and ACCIS rose to the challenge of providing that voice.

"30 years ago, ACCIS started out with a networking goal, then, a few years after that, we took the next step and started to lobby in favour of the industry," says **Enrico Lodi**, who served as **President of ACCIS from 2018 to May 2020.** "Since the EU began focusing on data protection, we were able to effectively work with policymakers in Brussels but also at a domestic level."



**Enrico Lodi**  
President of ACCIS from  
2018 until May 2020

Committed to the strengthening of the internal market for consumer credit, it was early in ACCIS' existence, in 1996, when the association first established a cross-border model for data exchange (CrossBorder Data Exchange, CBDE), which allowed banks to access the credit history of consumers living in another country. The CBDE is still today an important contribution in the path towards a single market in retail financial services.

In the 2000's, important milestones for ACCIS were its participation in the European Commission's Expert Group on Credit Histories, whose 2009 report contributed

decisively to advance the concept of access to quality credit data for responsible lending in Europe, and in the international task force coordinated by The World Bank that produced international standards for credit reporting, published in 2011. The international Task Force was later on transformed into a more permanent structure, the International Committee on Credit Reporting (ICCR), where ACCIS is a key industry member.



## Present Day Priorities

### Addressing evolving needs in an ever-changing world

Starting out as a handful of regional players, ACCIS is now an association of 48 credit referencing agencies – 42 of which are European. The landscape in which these CRAs operate today is changing significantly. This is mainly in response to the evolving and inter-linked forces of rapid developments in technology, new customer expectations, new competitors, and strengthened regulatory requirements. Although these changes are still relatively new, one thing however is clear: staying the same is not an option for the industry.

ACCIS has a role to play in recognising emerging trends and in forging a vision that will enable its members to benefit from change.



**Soledad Gómez**  
EMEA Public Affairs  
Experian

"ACCIS provides us with a way to deliver our messages to stakeholders, not just in Brussels and in the EU but increasingly at a national level. It is recognised and respected at a national, EU, and global level and we benefit greatly from that," says **Soledad Gómez**, of **Experian**. "ACCIS is an agile association, which not only delivers on its membership objectives but revises them regularly to adapt to our needs and expectations," she says. "This is why it has grown year after year, and why – as the sector and the world changes in the future – it will adapt to new realities to promote the industry position and spread awareness."

A darker, very significant part of today's reality has to do however, with the outbreak of the COVID-19 global pandemic. The activities of the association and, specially, of its members, are geared towards lending support to businesses and households.





**Enrique Velázquez**  
Director General of ACCIS

"CRAs are working with lenders, to enable them to record relief measures approved by governments, such as debt moratoria, in a way that does not negatively impact on consumers' credit files", says **Enrique Velázquez**, *Director General of ACCIS*. "We have contributed to the emergence of best practices to mitigate COVID-19's impact on the economy and society not only in Europe, but also globally. CRAs are making a huge effort to implement them."



**Jan Panek**  
Head of Unit, DG Just  
European Commission

"Databases of credit information have a clear place in EU's internal market for consumer credit services, as recognized also in EU legislation. As we assess the options for improving EU's legislation on consumer credit, ACCIS's experience accumulated over 30 years as well as its current activities make ACCIS an important stakeholder and interlocutor for us." says **Jan Panek**, *Head of Unit, DG Just, European Commission*.

## The ACCIS Community

In addition to its policy work, ACCIS has also created an environment in which its members benefit from the connections they make with each other. Being part of the ACCIS community provides access to exchange of the best and most up-to-date information from the sector. It is also the place where best practices and experiences are shared.



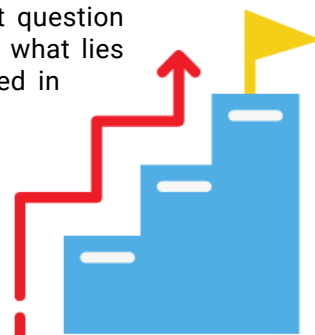
"ACCIS has always prided itself on its ability to facilitate relationships between practitioners in our industry, and I have always seen this as one of our strongest qualities and biggest values," says **Enrico Lodi**, *President of ACCIS from 2018 to May 2020*.

"From the very beginning, ACCIS has represented, promoted, and protected the basic interests of its members, being a link between them," says **Mariusz Cholewa**.

## The Next 30 Years

As ACCIS celebrates its 30<sup>th</sup> year, it is the perfect time for reflection, to consider what has gone before, and what is yet to come. One important question to address before considering what lies ahead is: has ACCIS succeeded in what it set out to do?

"In my view the association has made a very effective contribution to supporting the industry and its members over the last 30 years," says Neil Monroe, ACCIS president from 2009 until 2018. "It has seen a strong growth in membership; it is now recognised as the main body representing the industry in Europe and through its work is also recognised as one of the leading bodies for the industry globally." Indeed, the best evidence of its success is the fact that ACCIS now represents the largest group of credit reference agencies in the world.



"Now it is time to take a step forward as an industry," says **Mariusz Cholewa**. "We are committed to the development of the data-driven financial sector; we will proactively look for innovations within ACCIS, and at the same time we will be open to inviting new members to the Association - companies that specialize in collecting and distributing credit data and other data relevant to the assessment of the financial credibility of consumers and companies for even better understanding clients' needs and further advancement of our services."



## About ACCIS

The Association of Consumer Credit Information Suppliers (ACCIS) is an association of 48 credit referencing agencies – 42 of which are European – active in collecting and sharing consumer credit information to help creditors make better-informed decisions when providing credit to individuals and business.

More information on [www.accis.eu](http://www.accis.eu) or contact us at [secretariat@accis.eu](mailto:secretariat@accis.eu)