

Directive (EU) 2019/1023 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 June 2019 on preventive restructuring frameworks, on discharge of debt and disqualifications, and on measures to increase the efficiency of procedures concerning restructuring, insolvency and discharge of debt, and amending Directive (EU) 2017/1132 (Directive on restructuring and insolvency) (Text with EEA relevance)

TITLE II

PREVENTIVE RESTRUCTURING FRAMEWORKS

CHAPTER 2

Facilitating negotiations on preventive restructuring plans

Article 5

Debtor in possession

1 Member States shall ensure that debtors accessing preventive restructuring procedures remain totally, or at least partially, in control of their assets and the day-to-day operation of their business.

2 Where necessary, the appointment by a judicial or administrative authority of a practitioner in the field of restructuring shall be decided on a case-by-case basis, except in certain circumstances where Member States may require the mandatory appointment of such a practitioner in every case.

3 Member States shall provide for the appointment of a practitioner in the field of restructuring, to assist the debtor and creditors in negotiating and drafting the plan, at least in the following cases:

- a where a general stay of individual enforcement actions, in accordance with Article 6(3), is granted by a judicial or administrative authority, and the judicial or administrative authority decides that such a practitioner is necessary to safeguard the interest of the parties;
- b where the restructuring plan needs to be confirmed by a judicial or administrative authority by means of a cross-class cram-down, in accordance with Article 11; or
- c where it is requested by the debtor or by a majority of the creditors, provided that, in the latter case, the cost of the practitioner is borne by the creditors.

Article 6

Stay of individual enforcement actions

1 Member States shall ensure that debtors can benefit from a stay of individual enforcement actions to support the negotiations of a restructuring plan in a preventive restructuring framework.

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Member States may provide that judicial or administrative authorities can refuse to grant a stay of individual enforcement actions where such a stay is not necessary or where it would not achieve the objective set out in the first subparagraph.

2 Without prejudice to paragraphs 4 and 5, Member States shall ensure that a stay of individual enforcement actions can cover all types of claims, including secured claims and preferential claims.

3 Member States may provide that a stay of individual enforcement actions can be general, covering all creditors, or can be limited, covering one or more individual creditors or categories of creditors.

Where a stay is limited, the stay shall only apply to creditors that have been informed, in accordance with national law, of negotiations as referred to in paragraph 1 on the restructuring plan or of the stay.

4 Member States may exclude certain claims or categories of claims from the scope of the stay of individual enforcement actions, in well-defined circumstances, where such an exclusion is duly justified and where:

- a enforcement is not likely to jeopardise the restructuring of the business; or
- b the stay would unfairly prejudice the creditors of those claims.

5 Paragraph 2 shall not apply to workers' claims.

By way of derogation from the first subparagraph, Member States may apply paragraph 2 to workers' claims if, and to the extent that, Member States ensure that the payment of such claims is guaranteed in preventive restructuring frameworks at a similar level of protection.

6 The initial duration of a stay of individual enforcement actions shall be limited to a maximum period of no more than four months.

7 Notwithstanding paragraph 6, Member States may enable judicial or administrative authorities to extend the duration of a stay of individual enforcement actions or to grant a new stay of individual enforcement actions, at the request of the debtor, a creditor or, where applicable, a practitioner in the field of restructuring. Such extension or new stay of individual enforcement actions shall be granted only if well-defined circumstances show that such extension or new stay is duly justified, such as:

- a relevant progress has been made in the negotiations on the restructuring plan;
- b the continuation of the stay of individual enforcement actions does not unfairly prejudice the rights or interests of any affected parties; or
- c insolvency proceedings which could end in the liquidation of the debtor under national law have not yet been opened in respect of the debtor.

8 The total duration of the stay of individual enforcement actions, including extensions and renewals, shall not exceed 12 months.

Where Member States choose to implement this Directive by means of one or more procedures or measures which do not fulfil the conditions for notification under Annex A to Regulation (EU) 2015/848, the total duration of the stay under such procedures shall be limited to no more than four months if the centre of main interests of the debtor has been transferred from another Member State within a three-month period prior to the filing of a request for the opening of preventive restructuring proceedings.

9 Member States shall ensure that judicial or administrative authorities can lift a stay of individual enforcement actions in the following cases:

- a the stay no longer fulfils the objective of supporting the negotiations on the restructuring plan, for example if it becomes apparent that a proportion of creditors which, under national law, could prevent the adoption of the restructuring plan do not support the continuation of the negotiations;
- b at the request of the debtor or the practitioner in the field of restructuring;
- c where so provided for in national law, if one or more creditors or one or more classes of creditors are, or would be, unfairly prejudiced by a stay of individual enforcement actions; or
- d where so provided for in national law, if the stay gives rise to the insolvency of a creditor.

Member States may limit the power, under the first subparagraph, to lift the stay of individual enforcement actions to situations where creditors had not had the opportunity to be heard before the stay came into force or before an extension of the period was granted by a judicial or administrative authority.

Member States may provide for a minimum period, which does not exceed the period referred to in paragraph 6, during which a stay of individual enforcement actions cannot be lifted.

Article 7

Consequences of the stay of individual enforcement actions

1 Where an obligation on a debtor, provided for under national law, to file for the opening of insolvency proceedings which could end in the liquidation of the debtor, arises during a stay of individual enforcement actions, that obligation shall be suspended for the duration of that stay.

2 A stay of individual enforcement actions in accordance with Article 6 shall suspend, for the duration of the stay, the opening, at the request of one or more creditors, of insolvency proceedings which could end in the liquidation of the debtor.

3 Member States may derogate from paragraphs 1 and 2 in situations where a debtor is unable to pay its debts as they fall due. In such cases, Member States shall ensure that a judicial or administrative authority can decide to keep in place the benefit of the stay of individual enforcement actions, if, taking into account the circumstances of the case, the opening of insolvency proceedings which could end in the liquidation of the debtor would not be in the general interest of creditors.

4 Member States shall provide for rules preventing creditors to which the stay applies from withholding performance or terminating, accelerating or, in any other way, modifying essential executory contracts to the detriment of the debtor, for debts that came into existence prior to the stay, solely by virtue of the fact that they were not paid by the debtor. 'Essential executory contracts' shall be understood to mean executory contracts which are necessary for the continuation of the day-to-day operations of the business, including contracts concerning supplies, the suspension of which would lead to the debtor's activities coming to a standstill.

The first subparagraph shall not preclude Member States from affording such creditors appropriate safeguards with a view to preventing unfair prejudice being caused to such creditors as a result of that subparagraph.

Member States may provide that this paragraph also applies to non-essential executory contracts.

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5 Member States shall ensure that creditors are not allowed to withhold performance or terminate, accelerate or, in any other way, modify executory contracts to the detriment of the debtor by virtue of a contractual clause providing for such measures, solely by reason of:

- a a request for the opening of preventive restructuring proceedings;
- b a request for a stay of individual enforcement actions;
- c the opening of preventive restructuring proceedings; or
- d the granting of a stay of individual enforcement actions as such.

6 Member States may provide that a stay of individual enforcement actions does not apply to netting arrangements, including close-out netting arrangements, on financial markets, energy markets and commodity markets, even in circumstances where Article 31(1) does not apply, if such arrangements are enforceable under national insolvency law. The stay shall, however, apply to the enforcement by a creditor of a claim against a debtor arising as a result of the operation of a netting arrangement.

The first subparagraph shall not apply to contracts for the supply of goods, services or energy necessary for the operation of the debtor's business, unless such contracts take the form of a position traded on an exchange or other market, such that it can be substituted at any time at current market value.

7 Member States shall ensure that the expiry of a stay of individual enforcement actions without the adoption of a restructuring plan does not, of itself, give rise to the opening of an insolvency procedure which could end in the liquidation of the debtor, unless the other conditions for such opening laid down by national law are fulfilled.