Toolkit



Financial Empowerment for Youth Migrants & Refugees

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Introduction

The *YOUFIN Toolkit* is developed within the framework of the Erasmus+ project *YOUFIN: Financial Empowerment for Youth Migrants and Refugees*. The main goal of this project and so of this Toolkit is to support migrant and refugee youth in developing essential financial literacy skills to navigate everyday life with greater confidence, independence, and security.

Young migrants and refugees often face significant challenges when accessing financial services and understanding financial systems in their host countries. These challenges may include language barriers, lack of documentation, unfamiliarity with banking systems, low or irregular income, and limited financial education opportunities. Because of these barriers, many young people struggle to manage money, understand contracts, access safe financial services, or protect themselves from financial risks and online fraud.

The aim is to respond to these challenges by creating a practical, inclusive, and easy-to-use educational resource designed specifically for young people aged 16–30. Rather than focusing on complex financial theory, the Toolkit prioritises real-life situations and practical skills that young people can immediately apply in their daily lives.

The Toolkit is based on non-formal education methods and participatory learning approaches. It encourages active engagement, interaction, and co-creation with young people throughout the entire process. The content should therefore be accessible, youth-friendly, culturally sensitive, and adaptable to different national contexts.

This document serves as a common guide for all project partners involved in the development, testing, and implementation of the Toolkit. It outlines the objectives, structure, responsibilities, principles, and expected outputs to ensure consistency and quality across all partner countries.

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About the Toolkit

The *YOUFIN* Toolkit is a practical educational resource focused on improving financial literacy among migrant and refugee youth. It is designed to help young people better understand and manage financial aspects of daily life while supporting their social and economic inclusion.

The Toolkit focuses on practical knowledge and everyday financial situations, including:

- Managing personal budgets and saving money
- Understanding how banking systems work
- Accessing financial services such as bank accounts
- Learning about contracts and consumer rights
- Using digital financial tools safely
- Protecting themselves from scams and online fraud

> The Toolkit is not intended to be an academic or theoretical manual. Instead, it should provide practical guidance, relatable examples, and interactive learning experiences that are easy to understand and apply.

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MODULE 1

Smart Budgeting with Irregular Income

MODULE TOPIC

Budgeting & Saving

THEORETICAL PART

Key concepts of the module:

- **Income:** Money you receive from work or support.
- **Fixed Expenses:** Costs that do not change, like rent.
- **Flexible Expenses:** Costs you can change, like clothes.
- **Savings:** Money you keep for the future.

Simple Explanation of the general concept:

When your income changes from month to month, you need a simple plan for your money. A budget shows the money coming in (income) and the money going out (expenses). Some expenses are fixed, like rent, and must always be paid first. Others are flexible, like clothes or cafés, and can be reduced when money is tight. Saving a small amount during good months creates a safety net for the months when you earn less.

Real-Life Example:

Ali, aged 20, recently arrived in Brussels and works as a food delivery rider. In busy months he earns around €900, but in quiet months only around €450. During his first busy month, he spent a lot on cafés and a new phone case, and the next quiet month he could not pay his full rent. Ali then changed his habits: as soon as he gets paid, he puts aside money for rent and food, keeps a small amount in a separate savings pocket, and only then spends on extras. When work became quiet again, his savings covered the gap and his rent was paid on time.

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NON-FORMAL ACTIVITY

Activity Title

The Token Budget Game

Objective of the Activity

To help participants learn how to choose between needs and wants when their income changes.

Instructions (Step-by-Step)

1. Divide the participants into small groups of 3 or 4 people.

2. Give each group 20 tokens (representing money) and a list of expenses (Rent, Food, Phone, Clothes, Cafe, Savings).

3. Round 1: Tell groups they must pay for their fixed expenses (Rent and Food) first. They should also put at least 2 tokens into Savings. They can spend the rest of the tokens on other things.

4. Round 2: Tell the groups that work was quiet this month. Now they only have 10 tokens, plus the tokens they saved in Round 1. They must discuss and decide what to remove from their budget to make sure rent is paid.

5. Bring the whole group together. Each group shares what they removed from their budget, how their savings helped, and how it felt to make these choices.

Materials Needed

- **Physical:** Flip chart, markers, printed handouts, sticky notes, plastic tokens or counters.
- **Digital:** Laptop, projector, presentation slides, online tools.

Preparation

The facilitator must print and cut out the token sheets and create simple expense cards (including a Savings card) with clear pictures for each group.

Expected Outcome

Participants understand that essential expenses (needs) must always be paid before non-essential expenses (wants).

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SESSION FLOW

Introduction / Icebreaker (10–15 min)

What to do: Separate needs from wants.

Instructions: The facilitator names an item (e.g., Bread, Cinema, Rent, New trainers). Participants step to the left if they think it is a "Need" or to the right if it is a "Want".

Short Input (15–20 min)

What to explain: Explain the terms Income, Fixed Expenses, Flexible Expenses, and Savings using the key concepts and Ali's example.

Main Activity (30–50 min)

The Token Budget Game

Reflection & Discussion (10–15 min)

Questions:

- What did you learn?
- What was difficult?
- How can you use this in real life?

Key Takeaways (5 min)

Always pay rent and bills first. Save a small amount of money during good months to help you when income is low.

FACILITATOR TIPS

How to Explain Simply

Use physical objects like tokens and real envelopes to show how money moves. Avoid complex financial terms like "deficit" or "expenditure"; use simple phrases like "money coming in" and "money going out".

Adaptation Tips

For low literacy: Use clear illustrations, drawings, and pictures on the expense cards instead of long written text.

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For multilingual groups: Group participants who speak the same language together so they can talk about the concepts and support each other in their native language.

Things to Be Careful About

Money can cause a lot of stress, worry, or shame. Never ask any participant about their personal income, savings, or private financial situation. Keep all discussions focused on the fictional characters in the examples.

COUNTRY-SPECIFIC INFORMATION

How to Save and Manage Money

- **The Envelope Method:** When you receive your cash or wages, physically or digitally divide it immediately. Put your rent money in one place, food money in another, and never touch them for anything else.
- **The "Needs vs. Wants" Rule:** Before buying anything in Portugal, ask yourself: "Do I need this to survive (Rent, Water, Rice) or is it just for fun (Cafés, Brás, Video games)?"
- **The Emergency Cache:** Always try to hide a small amount of cash away from your daily wallet. This is your safety net for unexpected situations.

Portugal

Accessible / Low-Fee Options

Once you can manage your cash manually, use these local, low-cost Portuguese options to keep your growing savings safe from loss or theft:

- **Traditional Safety (Conta SMB):** Banks like CGD, Millennium BCP, and Banco BPI must legally offer you a Conta de Serviços Mínimos Bancários. It keeps your bulk savings safe under European insurance for less than €4.40 a year (often free).
- **Smart App Pockets (moey!):** This free digital account by Caixa de Crédito Agrícola lets you create digital "Saving Goals" on your phone. You can automatically swipe money away from your main balance into a hidden pocket so you don't accidentally spend it.

Where to Get Help

- **CNAIM / CLAIM Centres:** Local migrant offices that help you build a budget plan and understand your local financial rights for free.

- **DECO:** The Portuguese consumer protection group. They provide free templates and advice on how to track your daily expenses and avoid bad financial habits.

Spain

Accessible / Low-Fee Options

- **Basic Payment Account (Cuenta de Pago Básica):** Spanish banks (such as CaixaBank, BBVA, Santander, or Sabadell) are legally obligated to offer a basic account with essential services (debit card, transfers, cash withdrawals). The fee is capped by law at maximum €3/month, and it is completely free for vulnerable groups or low-income applicants.
- **Smart Banking Pockets (BBVA / N26 / Revolut):** Popular digital options in Spain offer free automatic sub-accounts (e.g., BBVA Metas, N26 Spaces) that let you automatically round up payments or move money into hidden savings vaults.

Where to Get Help

- **Red de Centros de Información y Asesoramiento a Migrantes (NGOs like Cruz Roja, Cear, Cáritas):** Community organizations that provide free guidance on opening basic bank accounts and managing household budgets.
- **CECU / OCU (Consumer Organizations):** Spanish consumer groups offering plain-language guides on basic banking rights and consumer protections.
- **Oficinas Municipales de Información al Consumidor (OMIC):** Local municipal offices offering free support regarding banking disputes and basic rights.

Belgium

Accessible / Low-Fee Options

- **Basic Banking Service (Service Bancaire de Base / Basisbankdienst):** Major Belgian banks (e.g., BNP Paribas Fortis, KBC, Belfius, ING) must legally provide a basic bank account to any legal resident. The maximum cost is legally capped around €18–€20 per year and covers basic digital banking and a debit card.
- **Digital Pocket Savings (Argenta / Hello bank!):** Free low-cost digital bank accounts in Belgium that offer easy, zero-fee savings sub-accounts directly linked to your smartphone for separating rent from daily spending money.

Where to Get Help

- **Fedasil / Local Integration Centers (e.g., Bon in Brussels, Atlas in Antwerp):** Regional integration agencies assisting migrants and refugees with administrative steps, including opening bank accounts.

- **OCMW / CPAS (Public Social Welfare Centres):** Municipal social services providing budget advice, debt prevention support, and guidance on accessing basic banking services.
- **Wikifin (FSMA):** The official Belgian public financial education platform offering free, easy-to-understand tools and budgeting simulators in multiple languages.

EVALUATION

A. Quick Reflection Questions (End-of-Session Debrief)

- Ask the group to share aloud or write on sticky notes (using words or drawings):
  - What is the first thing you must pay when you get paid? (Expected answer: Rent / Fixed expenses)
  - What can you change or cut when work is quiet? (Expected answer: Wants / Flexible expenses)
  - How does saving money during a good month help you later? (Expected answer: It covers basic bills during hard months)

B. "Exit Ticket" Check (Visual Assessment - 3 Minutes)

Give each participant a quick paper card before leaving:

- **Task:** Show 3 visual icons (e.g., Rent, Cinema Ticket, Electricity Bill).
- **Instruction:** Circle the Needs (Fixed costs) with a green marker and cross out the Wants (Flexible costs) with a red marker.

C. Self-Assessment Smileys (Confidence Check)

Ask participants to rate their confidence on a poster board with 3 smiley faces (☺/ 😐 / ☹):

- "I feel confident picking needs over wants when money is tight."
- "I know how a basic bank account can protect my savings."

RESOURCES

Useful Links

- **European Consumer Centres Network (ECC-Net):** Provides information on consumer rights, financial services, and banking protections across all EU member states. https://share.google/LWbcdwDZT6YivjNek
- **EU Financial Literacy Platform / EBA (European Banking Authority) Consumer Corner:** Information on basic payment account rights (PAD) and financial consumer protections

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in Europe. https://www.eba.europa.eu/activities/information-consumers/financial-education

- **Your Europe Portal:** Official EU portal providing clear advice on opening a basic bank account anywhere in the EU without discrimination. europa.eu/youreurope

Recommended Apps

- **Moey! / Revolut / N26:** Mobile accounts featuring free sub-accounts ("Spaces" or "Pockets") for setting aside savings automatically.
- **Monefy / 1Money:** Free visual budget tracking apps (offline, manual input) suitable for low literacy/multilingual users using icon-based categories.

Support Services

- **Local Youth Centres and NGOs:** Community organizations (like CPR - Conselho Português para os Refugiados or local youth associations) that offer direct personal support for filling out forms and translating banking terms.

RESULTS

Project Platform: https://youfin-project.com/

All Toolkit Resources (presentations, explanatory videos, infographics and evaluation games for all modules): https://youfin-project.com/results/

MODULE 2

Opening a Bank Account and Understanding KYC

MODULE TOPIC

Banking & KYC

THEORETICAL PART

Key concepts of the module:

- **Bank Account:** A safe place to keep your money, receive wages, and pay bills.
- **KYC (Know Your Customer):** A legal check where banks must verify who you are.
- **NIF:** Tax number.
- **IBAN (International Bank Account Number):** The unique code for your account used to send or receive money.

Simple Explanation

To live and work safely, you need a bank account. It protects your cash and allows employers to pay your wages directly. Before a bank can open an account for you, they must check your legal identity by law. This identity check is called KYC (Know Your Customer). You must bring specific official papers to the bank to prove your name, tax number, and where you live.

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Real-Life Example

Amira, aged 22 and a recent arrival in Porto, secured a part-time job in a supermarket, but her employer required her to have a Portuguese bank account with an IBAN so that her wages could be paid into it. On her first attempt, Amira went to the bank feeling very nervous and was turned away because she hadn't brought the correct documents and didn't know how to apply for a basic account. After doing her research, she returned fully prepared with her 'Golden Trio' of documents (passport, NIF and proof of address), and explicitly requested a Basic Banking Services account; thanks to this, she successfully passed the identity verification (KYC) process and opened a secure account with no excessive fees to receive her salary.

NON-FORMAL ACTIVITY

Activity Title

The Bank Counter Simulation

Objective of the Activity

To help participants practice the process of opening a bank account and prepare the correct documents required for the identity check (KYC).

Instructions (Step-by-Step)

1. Divide the room into two areas: "The Bank Desk" and "The Applicants". Split participants into pairs (one Bank Worker, one Customer).
2. Give each "Customer" a role card with a specific set of paper props (e.g., Role A has a Passport and NIF, but lacks proof of address; Role B has a Residence Permit, NIF).
3. Round 1: The Customer approaches the Bank Desk and tries to open an account using their paper props. The Bank Worker uses a simple checklist to accept or reject the application based on the documents shown.
4. Swap roles for Round 2 so everyone practices both sides.
5. Bring the whole group together to discuss which documents were missing and how it felt to ask for a basic account.

Materials Needed

- **Physical:** Flip chart, markers, printed handouts, sticky notes, printed prop documents (mock Passports, NIF sheets, utility bills, role cards), and printed verification checklists for the bank workers.

- **Digital:** Laptop, projector, presentation slides, online tools, digital timer.

Preparation

The facilitator must print the role cards, the simplified paper document props, and the bank worker checklists before the session starts.

> **Expected Outcome**
>
> Participants become familiar with the names of the documents and know exactly what to carry to a bank branch.

SESSION FLOW

Introduction / Icebreaker (10–15 min)

What to do: Document Match-Up

Instructions: The facilitator scatters large flashcards of Portuguese documents on the floor (e.g., NIF, Passport, Utility Bill, Working Contract). The facilitator calls out a scenario (e.g., "The bank wants to see your tax number!"). Participants must run and stand next to the correct card.

Short Input (15–20 min)

What to explain: Explain the concepts of a Bank Account, KYC, and the basic account system using the slides and Amira's story.

Main Activity (30–50 min)

The Bank Counter Simulation

Reflection & Discussion (10–15 min)

Questions:

- What did you learn?
- What was difficult?
- How can you use this in real life?

Key Takeaways (5 min)

Always prepare your ID, NIF, and proof of address before going to a bank. In Portugal, ask for a "Serviços Mínimos Bancários" account to avoid high fees.

FACILITATOR TIPS

How to Explain Simply

Do not use complicated words like "compliance compliance", "regulatory Framework", or "financial laundering". Instead, use phrases like "legal safety rules" or "proving who you are to the government". Use physical prop papers during the game so the layout looks like a real office desk.

Adaptation Tips

For low literacy: Use large flashcards that match the colour of the real documents (for example, make the NIF prop look like the official white paper sheet from Finanças).

For multilingual groups: Create pairs during the bank game where a stronger speaker supports a participant who is still learning English or Portuguese.

Things to Be Careful About

Many refugees have lost their official original papers or are waiting months for a residence appointment (AIMA). Be very gentle and positive. Emphasise that temporary protection documents or letters from the Junta de Freguesia are valid and useful legal papers.

COUNTRY-SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Portugal

How to Open a Bank Account

In Portugal, you must visit a local bank office branch (balcão) or use an authorised mobile app. You must tell the bank staff that you want to open a Conta de Serviços Mínimos Bancários (SMB). Banks are required by national law to offer this cheap version to any customer who does not already own a Portuguese bank account.

Required Documents (KYC)

To complete the legal identity check, you must hand over:

- **Identity:** A valid national Passport or an official Portuguese Residence Permit (Título de Residência).
- **Tax Number:** Your official document showing your NIF (Número de Identificação Fiscal) from the tax office (Finanças).
- **Address:** A recent utility bill, a legal rental contract, or an official residency certificate issued by your local neighbourhood council office (Atestado de Residência da Junta de Freguesia).

Accessible / Low-Fee Options

- **Traditional Banks:** Caixa Geral de Depósitos (CGD), Millennium BCP, and Novo Banco all offer the standard Serviços Mínimos Bancários account for under €4.50 per year.
- **Digital Options:** The app moey! (by Crédito Agrícola) offers a 100% free digital account with a Portuguese IBAN, which can be opened directly on a phone using a valid residence permit.

Where to Get Help

- **CNAIM / CLAIM Centres:** Migrant integration offices located across Portugal with staff who can help you gather your documents and explain your banking rights.
- **Banco de Portugal:** The official central bank which regulates these accounts and handles complaints if a commercial bank refuses to open your basic account.

Spain

How to Open a Bank Account

Visit a local branch or apply via official bank apps. By law (Real Decreto-ley 19/2017), Spanish banks must offer a Cuenta de Pago Básica (Basic Payment Account). The fee is capped at €3/month and is 100% free for vulnerable or low-income applicants.

Required Documents (KYC)

To complete the legal identity check, you must hand over:

- **Identity:** Valid Passport, EU Citizen Registration (Certificado de Registro de Ciudadano de la Unión), or Spanish Foreigner Identity Card (TIE - Tarjeta de Identidad de Extranjero).
- **Tax/Identification Number:** NIE (Número de Identificación de Extranjero) or NIF.
- **Address:** Municipal registration certificate (Empadronamiento), rental contract, or recent utility bill under your name.

Accessible / Low-Fee Options

- **Traditional:** CaixaBank, BBVA, Banco Santander, Sabadell (all offer basic accounts).
- **Digital:** N26 Spain or Revolut offer free online accounts with Spanish IBANs (ES…) using a valid passport or NIE/TIE.

Where to Get Help

Municipal Consumer Information Offices (OMIC); NGOs like Cruz Roja Española, CEAR, or Cáritas; consumer associations (OCU, CECU).

Belgium

How to Open a Bank Account

Apply online or make an appointment at a local bank branch. Under Belgian law, any legal resident has the right to the Basic Banking Service / Service Bancaire de Base / Basisbankdienst. The maximum annual fee is capped at around €18–€20 per year.

Required Documents (KYC)

To complete the legal identity check, you must hand over:

- **Identity:** National Passport, EU Identification Card, or Belgian Residence Permit (e.g., Electronic Residence Card Type A, B, or Certificate of Registration / Orange Card).
- **Tax/National Number:** Belgian National Register Number (Numéro National / Rijksregisternummer).
- **Address:** Official residence certificate issued by the municipality (Commune / Gemeente) or utility bill/rental lease.

Accessible / Low-Fee Options

- **Traditional:** BNP Paribas Fortis, Belfius, KBC, ING Belgium.
- **Digital:** Hello bank! (digital arm of BNP Paribas Fortis) or Argenta offer free or ultra-low-cost digital accounts with Belgian IBANs (BE…).

Where to Get Help

Regional integration hubs (Bon in Brussels, Atlas in Antwerp); Municipal Social Welfare Centres (CPAS / OCMW); Wikifin (FSMA public financial guidance portal).

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EVALUATION

To verify learning without inducing exam stress or language anxiety, use this multi-tiered evaluation approach:

A. The "Golden Folder" Group Checklist (Interactive Game - 5 Minutes)

Display 6 visual document cards on the wall. Ask participants in small groups to select the 3 essential cards needed for the "Golden Folder" to pass a KYC check:

- ☒ Card 1: Passport or Residence Permit (Identity)
- ☒ Card 2: Tax Identification Number Certificate (Tax ID)
- ☒ Card 3: Utility Bill or Municipality Letter (Proof of Address)
- ☐ Card 4: Gym Membership Card (Distractor)
- ☐ Card 5: Social Media Profile (Distractor)
- ☐ Card 6: Student Library Pass (Distractor)

B. Quick Debrief Questions (Oral or Sticky Notes)

- What does KYC mean in plain words? (Expected answer: The bank checking who you are by law)
- What account should you ask for to avoid high monthly fees? (Expected answer: Basic Bank Account / Basic Banking Service / Cuenta Básica / Serviços Mínimos)
- What unique code do you give your employer to receive your salary? (Expected answer: Your IBAN)

C. Visual Exit Ticket (Traffic Light System)

Before leaving, participants mark a simple chart with a green, yellow, or red sticker next to two statements:

"I know which 3 documents I need to take to a bank branch." 

"I know my right to ask for a low-cost Basic Bank Account." 

RESOURCES

Useful Links

- **EU Payment Accounts Directive (2014/92/EU):** The landmark legislation giving anyone legally residing in the EU the right to a basic bank account regardless of employment status or financial history.

- **Your Europe Portal (europa.eu/youreurope):** Official EU guide detailing citizens' and residents' rights to open basic bank accounts anywhere in the EU without discrimination.
- **FIN-NET Network:** The EU-wide network of national financial ombudsmen helping consumers resolve banking disputes out of court across borders.
- **European Banking Authority (EBA) Consumer Corner:** Clear factsheets explaining financial consumer rights, anti-money laundering checks, and account switching rules across the EU.

Recommended Apps

- **Digital Banking Apps with Local IBANs:** N26, Revolut, Wise (offer low/zero-fee accounts accessible with international passports and valid local addresses).
- **Local Payment Networks:** MB Way (Portugal), Bizum (Spain), Bancontact / Payconiq (Belgium) for instant phone-to-phone payments.

Support Services

- **Portugal:** Linha de Apoio ao Migrante (LAM) & High Commission for Migration / AIMA.
- **Spain:** Red de Centros de Atención a Inmigrantes & Oficina de Asilo y Refugio (OAR) support services.
- **Belgium:** Local CPAS/OCMW social advisors and Fedasil integration services.

RESULTS

Project Platform: https://youfin-project.com/

All Toolkit Resources (presentations, explanatory videos, infographics and evaluation games for all modules): https://youfin-project.com/results/

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MODULE 3

Understanding Contracts and Consumer Rights in Your New Country

MODULE TOPIC

Contracts and Consumer Rights

THEORETICAL PART

Key concepts of the module:

- What is a Contract?
- Rights and Responsibilities of Consumers.
- Understanding Terms and Conditions
- How to Make a Complaint and Seek Help

Simple Explanation

A contract is an agreement between two or more parties. It can be written, verbal, or digital. When signing a contract, you agree to follow specific rules and obligations.

Consumers have rights that protect them when buying goods or services. These rights include receiving accurate information, fair treatment, and solutions when products or services are faulty.

Terms and conditions explain the rules of a contract. It is important to read and understand them before signing.

If something goes wrong, consumers can often make a complaint, request a refund, or seek support from consumer protection organizations.

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Real-Life Example

Carla recently moved to a new country and signs a mobile phone contract. She later discovers additional fees that she did not understand because she did not read the contract carefully. By learning about consumer rights, she realizes she can ask the provider for clarification and file a complaint if the information was not provided clearly.

NON-FORMAL ACTIVITY

Activity Title

Contract Detective

Objective of the Activity

Participants learn how to identify important information in contracts and understand their consumer rights before signing agreements.

Instructions (Step-by-Step)

- Divide participants into small groups of 4–5 people.
- Give each group a simplified example contract (phone plan, gym membership, rental agreement, online subscription).
- Ask groups to identify:
  - Contract duration
  - Costs and fees
  - Cancellation conditions
  - Rights and responsibilities
  - Potential warning signs
- Each group presents their findings.
- Facilitate a discussion about how these situations may affect immigrants.

Materials Needed

- **Physical**
  - Printed sample contracts
  - Flip chart
  - Markers
  - Sticky notes

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- Digital
  - Laptop
  - Projector
  - Presentation slides

Preparation

- Prepare simplified contract examples.
- Print worksheets with guiding questions.
- Prepare presentation slides.

Expected Outcome

Participants will be able to:

- Recognize key elements of a contract.
- Ask important questions before signing.
- Identify unfair conditions.
- Understand where to seek help when problems arise.

SESSION FLOW

Introduction / Icebreaker (10–15 min)

What to do: "Have You Ever Signed Something?"

Instructions:

Ask participants:

- Have you ever signed a contract?
- What kind of contract was it?
- Did you read everything before signing?

Participants briefly share experiences in pairs and then with the group.

Short Input (15–20 min)

What to explain:

- Definition of a contract
- Common contracts immigrants may encounter:
  - Rental agreements

  - Employment contracts
  - Mobile phone contracts
  - Internet subscriptions
  - Online purchases
- Basic consumer rights
- Importance of reading terms and conditions
- Where to get support

Main Activity (30–50 min)

Contract Detective

Reflection & Discussion (10–15 min)

Questions:

- What did you learn?
- What was difficult?
- What information should you always check before signing?
- Where can you ask for help if you do not understand a contract?
- How can you use this knowledge in real life?

Key Takeaways (5 min)

- Never sign a contract you do not understand.
- Ask questions before agreeing.
- Keep copies of all contracts.
- Know your consumer rights.
- Seek support if problems arise.

FACILITATOR TIPS

How to Explain Simply

- Use everyday examples.
- Avoid legal terminology.
- Explain concepts visually.
- Check understanding regularly.

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- Encourage questions.

Adaptation Tips

For Low Literacy:

- Use images and symbols.
- Read contracts aloud.
- Use role-playing activities.
- Reduce written text.

For Multilingual Groups:

- Allow peer translation.
- Provide key vocabulary lists.
- Use visual materials.
- Speak slowly and clearly.

Things to Be Careful About

- Avoid giving legal advice.
- Respect different cultural experiences.
- Be sensitive to participants who may have experienced fraud or exploitation.
- Ensure examples are relevant to immigrants' daily lives.

COUNTRY-SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Portugal

Essential Contract Rules

Participants should learn:

- **Pre-Contractual Information:** Contracts must clearly specify the exact service provided, total monthly costs (including taxes), minimum duration, and termination penalties before you sign.
- **Language Rights:** You have the right to request clear explanations of all terms before signing. Never sign a contract in Portuguese if you do not understand its obligations.

- **Right of Withdrawal (Direito de Livre Resolução):** For purchases or contracts made online, over the phone, or at your doorstep, you have a mandatory 14-day cooling-off period to cancel without penalty or giving a reason.
- **Written Copies & Records:** Always request and keep a signed physical or digital copy of any contract (contrato), along with payment receipts and invoices (faturas with your NIF).

Standard Contract Types

Some of the most common contracts you may sign include:

- **Rental Agreements (Contrato de Arrendamento):** Housing leases registered with the tax authority (Finanças).
- **Telecom & Internet (Contrato de Telecomunicações):** Mobile, broadband, and TV service plans (often carry a 12 to 24-month loyalty period known as fidelização).
- **Employment Contracts (Contrato de Trabalho):** Temporary, open-ended, or seasonal work agreements.
- **Utility Contracts (Eletricidade, Gás e Água):** Supply contracts for electricity, gas, and municipal water.
- **Basic Bank Accounts (Serviços Mínimos Bancários):** Regulated low-fee banking agreements.
- **Subscriptions & Gyms:** Fitness memberships and recurring digital services.

Accessible / Low-Fee Options

Portugal offers several protected and accessible options:

- **Serviços Mínimos Bancários (SMB):** A legally mandated basic bank account offered by all major commercial banks (CGD, Millennium BCP, Novo Banco) capping annual costs below €4.50 (often completely free).
- **Social Utility Tariffs (Tarifa Social):** Discounted rates on electricity and gas automatically available to lower-income households and social benefit recipients.
- **No-Fidelização Telecom Options:** Legal right to request telecom services without long loyalty periods (though initial setup costs may apply).
- **Digital Fee-Free Apps:** Free digital banking and payment options like moey! or MB Way for instant, zero-fee transfers within Portugal.

Where to Get Help

If you need advice or have a problem with a contract, you can contact:

- **DECO / DECO PROTESTE:** The primary Portuguese consumer protection association providing guidance on consumer disputes, debt, and contract clauses.
- **CIAB / CNIACC (Consumer Arbitral Centres):** Regional consumer dispute resolution centers offering free mediation between consumers and businesses.

- **CNAIM / CLAIM Centres:** Local migrant integration offices offering free support to review contracts and explain administrative rights.
- **CEC Portugal (European Consumer Centre):** Free assistance with cross-border consumer disputes involving companies in other EU countries.

Spain

Essential Contract Rules

Participants should learn:

- Contracts should always include clear information about the service, price, duration, and cancellation conditions.
- Consumers have the right to receive the contract in a language they understand whenever possible and to ask questions before signing.
- For many online or distance purchases, consumers have a 14-day cooling-off period to cancel the contract without giving a reason (with some legal exceptions).
- Always keep a copy of the signed contract and any payment receipts.

Standard Contract Types

Some of the most common contracts you may sign include:

- Rental agreements (Contrato de alquiler)
- Mobile phone and internet contracts
- Employment contracts
- Electricity, gas, and water supply contracts
- Bank account agreements
- Gym memberships and subscription services
- Insurance policies (car, home, health)

Accessible / Low-Fee Options

Spain offers several affordable financial and consumer options:

- Many banks offer fee-free current accounts if you meet certain conditions, such as receiving your salary into the account or using online banking.
- Basic payment accounts (Cuenta de Pago Básica) are available for eligible consumers, providing essential banking services at low cost or, in some cases, free of charge.
- Savings accounts and fixed-term deposits are available from most banks to help build financial security.

- SEPA transfers make it easy to send and receive money across Spain and the European Union.

Where to Get Help

If you need advice or have a problem with a contract, you can contact:

- **OMIC** (Oficina Municipal de Información al Consumidor) – Free consumer advice provided by many local councils.
- **Consumer Associations**, such as OCU (Organización de Consumidores y Usuarios) and FACUA, which offer guidance and support.
- **European Consumer Centre Spain (ECC-Net)** – Assistance with consumer disputes involving businesses in other EU countries.
- Local migrant support organisations, social services, or legal advice centres that can help explain contracts and consumer rights.

Belgium

Essential Contract Rules

Participants should learn:

- **Transparency & Clear Terms:** By law, contracts must clearly state the total price (all fees included), duration, automatic renewal conditions, and cancellation notice periods.
- **Language Requirements:** Official contracts are issued in the region's official language (Dutch in Flanders, French in Wallonia, both in Brussels). You have the right to seek translation or clarification before signing.
- **Right of Renunciation / Withdrawal:** For distance purchases (online, phone, or doorstep sales), consumers have a 14-calendar-day right of withdrawal to cancel without penalty.
- **Protection Against Unfair Clauses:** Belgian consumer law strictly prohibits hidden automatic renewal traps without prior notice and excessive cancellation penalties. Always store written copies and payment proof.

Standard Contract Types

Some of the most common contracts you may sign include:

- **Housing Leases (Contrat de Bail / Huurcontract):** Residential rental agreements (typically 3-year short-term or 9-year standard leases registered with the government).
- **Mobile & Internet Plans:** Telecom service subscriptions (Belgian law allows consumers to switch providers easily after 6 months without fee penalties).
- **Employment Contracts (Contrat de Travail / Arbeidsovereenkomst):** Official work agreements defining hours, wages, and notice periods.

- **Energy Contracts (Électricité et Gaz / Elektriciteit en Gas):** Fixed or variable rate supply plans for household utilities.
- **Basic Banking Agreements (Service Bancaire de Base / Basisbankdienst):** Regulated entry-level bank account contracts.
- **Public Transport & Insurance:** Monthly/annual transport passes (STIB/MIVB, De Lijn, TEC) and mandatory personal liability or health insurance (Mutuelle / Ziekenfonds).

Accessible / Low-Fee Options

Belgium provides structured social and low-cost consumer options:

- **Basic Banking Service (Basisbankdienst / Service Bancaire de Base):** Legally mandated basic bank account provided by major commercial banks (BNP Paribas Fortis, Belfius, KBC, ING) capped at around €18–€20 per year.
- **Social Energy Tariff (Tarif Social / Sociaal Tarief):** A reduced rate for electricity and gas for eligible low-income individuals, students, or benefit recipients.
- **Easy Telecom Switching (Easy Switch):** A government-backed service that allows you to change internet and TV providers without service interruption or double billing.
- **Free Digital Banking:** Online banking platforms (such as Hello bank! or Argenta) providing zero-fee daily banking and sub-accounts.

Where to Get Help

If you need advice or face a contract problem, you can contact:

- **Testachats / Testaankoop:** Belgium's largest independent consumer protection organisation offering legal advice and consumer rights assistance.
- **CPAS / OCMW (Public Social Welfare Centres):** Municipal social services providing free debt prevention advice, legal support, and contract guidance.
- **ECC Belgium (European Consumer Centre):** Assistance for disputes with traders based in other EU member states.
- **Integration Centres (e.g., Bon in Brussels, Atlas in Antwerp):** Regional agencies offering social guidance and assistance with administrative documents and contracts for newcomers.

EVALUATION

Reflection Questions

- What did you learn today about contracts?
- What was the most useful information?
- What should you check before signing a contract?

- Where can you seek help if you have a problem as a consumer?
- What will you use in real life from today's session?
- How confident do you feel about understanding contracts now?
- What would you like to learn more about in the future?

Evaluation Quiz

1. What is a contract?

A. A personal opinion
B. An agreement between two or more parties
C. A type of bank account
D. A government document

Correct Answer: B

2. Before signing a contract, you should:

A. Sign immediately
B. Ask a friend to sign for you
C. Read and understand the terms and conditions
D. Ignore the small print

Correct Answer: C

3. Which of the following is an example of a contract?

A. A text message from a friend
B. A gym membership agreement
C. A shopping list
D. A social media post

Correct Answer: B

4. If you do not understand a contract, what should you do?

A. Sign it anyway
B. Throw it away
C. Ask for clarification or assistance before signing
D. Ignore the difficult sections

Correct Answer: C

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5. Which information is important to check in a contract?

A. Duration of the agreement
B. Costs and fees
C. Cancellation conditions
D. All of the above

Correct Answer: D

6. What is a consumer right?

A. The right to receive clear information about a product or service
B. The right to avoid paying for services
C. The right to change a contract whenever you want
D. The right to break any agreement

Correct Answer: A

7. Which situation could be a warning sign of a scam?

A. The company provides clear contact information
B. The seller pressures you to sign immediately
C. You receive a written contract
D. The terms are explained clearly

Correct Answer: B

8. What should you do after signing a contract?

A. Throw it away
B. Forget about it
C. Keep a copy for your records
D. Delete all related messages

Correct Answer: C

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9. Where can you seek help if you have a consumer problem?

A. Consumer protection organizations
B. Legal aid services
C. Migrant support centres
D. All of the above

Correct Answer: D

10. What is the safest approach when signing a contract in a language you do not fully understand?

A. Sign first and ask later
B. Use translation tools and ask for support before signing
C. Ignore the contract
D. Ask another person to sign for you

Correct Answer: B

Scoring Guide

- 9–10 correct answers: Excellent understanding
- 7–8 correct answers: Good understanding
- 5–6 correct answers: Basic understanding
- Below 5 correct answers: Further support recommended

RESOURCES

Useful Links

European Union Resources

- **European Consumer Centre Network (ECC-Net)**

  Information on consumer rights, cross-border purchases, complaints, and dispute resolution within the EU.

- **Your Europe – Consumer Rights**

  Practical information about shopping, contracts, subscriptions, guarantees, and consumer protection in EU countries.

- **European Commission – Consumer Protection**

  Information about EU consumer legislation and protection measures.

- **EU Digital Services and Online Safety Resources**

  Guidance on safe online shopping, digital contracts, and protection against online fraud.
- **European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF)**

  Information about fraud prevention and reporting suspicious activities.

Financial Education Resources

- **European Money Quiz**

  Interactive financial literacy resources for young people.
- **Better Internet for Kids (BIK)**

  Resources on digital safety, online scams, and responsible internet use.
- **National Consumer Protection Authorities**

  Country-specific support and complaint mechanisms.

Recommended Apps

- **Google Translate:** Helps participants understand contracts and official documents in different languages.
- **DeepL Translator:** High-quality translation tool for reading terms and conditions.
- **Adobe Scan:** Allows users to scan and save contracts and important documents.
- **Microsoft Lens:** Digitizes documents and converts them into readable files.
- **Revolut:** Useful for managing personal finances, tracking spending, and making secure payments across different countries.

Support Services

- European Consumer Centre (ECC) offices
- Migrant support organizations
- Youth information centres
- Local consumer protection agencies
- Legal aid and advisory services
- Municipal integration and social support services
- Community mediation services

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RESULTS

Project Platform: https://youfin-project.com/

All Toolkit Resources (presentations, explanatory videos, infographics and evaluation games for all modules): https://youfin-project.com/results/

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MODULE 4

Digital Finance & Online Safety for Everyday Life in Belgium

MODULE TOPIC

Digital Finance & Online Safety

THEORETICAL PART

Key concepts of the module:

- Digital banking
- Online payments
- Online scams & phishing
- Protecting personal and financial information

Simple Explanation

Digital financial services make everyday life easier. You can pay bills, transfer money, shop online, and manage your bank account using your phone or computer. However, cybercriminals often target young people through fake messages, websites, social media, and phone calls. Knowing how to recognise scams, protect your personal information, and respond safely helps you use digital financial services with confidence.

According to the Belgian needs assessment, participants expressed a strong interest in learning how to protect their personal data, recognise scams, avoid fraud, and know what to do if they become victims of online scams.

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Real-Life Example

Malek, a 19-year-old refugee living in Belgium, receives a text message claiming to be from his bank. The message says that his account has been blocked and asks him to click on a link and enter his password.

Malek almost clicks the link, but remembers that banks never ask customers to share passwords, PIN codes, or security codes by SMS. Instead, he opens his bank's official app, checks his account, and contacts the bank using its official contact details.

The message is a phishing scam. Malek avoids losing his money, saves a screenshot as evidence, reports the suspicious message to Safeonweb, and blocks the sender.

NON-FORMAL ACTIVITY

Activity Title

Spot the Scam! – Digital Safety Challenge

Objective of the Activity

To help participants recognise common online financial scams, identify warning signs, and practise responding safely before clicking, paying, sharing information, or confirming an authentication or payment request.

Instructions (Step-by-Step)

1. Divide participants into small groups of 3–4 people.
2. Give each group a set of printed or digital scenario cards. Each card shows a realistic message or situation, such as:
   - A fake bank SMS saying the account is blocked.
   - A WhatsApp message asking for urgent money.
   - A fake job offer requesting an advance payment.
   - A Marketplace seller asking the buyer to use an unfamiliar payment link.
   - An unexpected authentication or payment approval request.
   - A legitimate payment request through an official banking app.
3. Ask each group to classify every scenario into one of three categories:
   - Safe
   - Suspicious
   - Definitely a scam

4. For each card, the group must identify the warning signs, such as:
   - Urgent or threatening language.
   - A suspicious link.
   - A request for a password, PIN or security code.
   - An unexpected authentication or payment approval request.
   - A request to transfer money before receiving a product or service.
   - Spelling mistakes or an unusual sender address.
5. Each group chooses one scenario and explains:
   - Why it is safe or unsafe.
   - What the person should do.
   - Who they should contact or report it to.
6. The facilitator reveals the correct answers and explains the safest response for each situation.
7. End with a short practical challenge: participants create their own fake scam message, then exchange it with another group, which must identify the warning signs.

Additional Challenge

Each group prepares three practical online safety tips based on the scenario and shares them with the rest of the participants. The facilitator writes all tips on a flipchart and creates a common "Digital Safety Checklist" with the group.

Materials Needed

- **Physical:**
  - Printed scenario cards.
  - Safe / Suspicious / Scam category cards.
  - Markers.
  - Sticky notes.
  - Flip chart.
  - Printed “Five Safety Steps” handout.
- **Digital:**
  - Laptop.
  - Projector.
  - Presentation slides.
  - Optional Mentimeter, Kahoot or Genially quiz.
  - Screenshots of simulated messages and payment requests.

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Preparation

The facilitator should prepare 8–10 realistic but fictional scam scenarios. No real personal data, bank details, QR codes or active payment links should be used. The facilitator should also check that examples are understandable for multilingual and low-literacy groups.

Expected Outcome

Participants will be able to identify common warning signs, pause before reacting, verify messages through official channels, protect their personal data and take the correct steps when they suspect fraud.

SESSION FLOW

Introduction / Icebreaker (10–15 min)

What to do:

Quick voting game: Would You Click?

Instructions:

Show five short messages on the screen. Participants move to one side of the room for Yes, I would click and the other side for No, I would not click.

Ask one or two participants to explain each choice. Do not reveal the answer immediately. Use the discussion to introduce the idea that scammers often create urgency, fear or curiosity.

Short Input (15–20 min)

What to explain:

- Protecting personal data.
- How to recognise scams and phishing.
- How to avoid online fraud.
- Safe use of banking apps and digital payment services.
- Why passwords, PIN codes and itsme® confirmations must never be shared.
- What to do immediately after clicking a suspicious link or losing money.
- Where to report scams and get help.

Main Activity (30–50 min)

Use **Spot the Scam! – Digital Safety Challenge** described above.

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Suggested timing:

- **5 minutes:** Form groups and explain the task.
- **15 minutes:** Analyse scenario cards.
- **10 minutes:** Groups present their decisions.
- **5 minutes:** Facilitator reveals the correct answers.
- **5 minutes:** Groups create one fictional scam message.

Reflection & Discussion (10–15 min)

Questions:

- Which warning sign was easiest to recognise?
- Which scenario was most difficult?
- Have you ever received a similar message?
- What should you do before approving an authentication request?
- Who can help you after a scam?
- How can you warn friends or family without sharing the fraudulent link?
- Which online safety topic do you think is most useful for your daily life?
- What is one thing you will do differently after today's session?

Key Takeaways (5 min)

- Stop and think before clicking.
- Never share your password, PIN or security code.
- Never approve an authentication or payment request you did not initiate.
- Open your bank's official app yourself instead of using a link.
- Contact the bank through its official telephone number.
- Save evidence and report suspicious messages.
- Act immediately if money or banking information has been compromised.
- Report scams through official channels and ask for help immediately if you think you have been targeted.

FACILITATOR TIPS

How to Explain Simply

- Use clear and simple language.

- Avoid technical financial terms.
- Explain one concept at a time.
- Use real-life examples that participants can relate to.
- Encourage participants to share experiences without asking them to reveal personal banking information or sensitive details.
- Encourage questions and group discussion.
- Reinforce key messages through repetition and visual examples.

Adaptation Tips

For low literacy:

- Use pictures, icons and screenshots.
- Use simulated screenshots of banking interfaces and phishing messages, together with screenshots of official websites, whenever possible.
- Keep written text short and easy to read.
- Read instructions aloud.
- Demonstrate activities instead of relying only on written explanations.
- Repeat important information when needed.

For multilingual groups:

- Use simple English and avoid complex vocabulary.
- Encourage peer support and group discussion.
- Provide visual materials and translated keywords when possible.
- Allow extra time for questions and clarification.
- Check understanding through practical activities rather than only verbal responses.

Things to Be Careful About

- Respect participants' privacy and confidentiality.
- Never ask participants to share personal banking information or passwords.
- Avoid blaming victims of scams or fraud.
- Use fictional examples instead of real personal cases.
- Remind participants to verify information through official sources.
- Be aware that some participants may have experienced financial fraud and may feel anxious or embarrassed.

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COUNTRY-SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Portugal

Digital Wallets vs. Mobile Banking

- **Mobile Banking Apps:** This is the official app provided by your bank (like CGD, Millennium, or moey!). It connects directly to your legal bank account. Use it to check your real balance, download account statements, and transfer rent money.
- **Digital Wallets:** Apps like Apple Pay, Google Pay, or PayPal let you store a digital version of your debit card on your phone. They use a security process called "tokenisation", which hides your real card number from shops when you tap your phone to pay.
- **Instant Local Payments (MB WAY):** In Portugal, almost everyone uses MB WAY on their phone. It links your phone number to your bank card so you can send money to friends instantly or pay at shops using a QR code.

The Rules of Online Safety

- **Beware of Phishing (Fake Messages):** Scammers will send fake SMS text messages or emails that look exactly like your bank, Finanças, or a delivery company (like CTT or DPD). They will claim your account is "blocked" and give you a link. Never click the link. A real bank will never ask for your password or PIN via text.
- **The "Two-Factor" Shield (2FA):** Always turn on Two-Factor Authentication in your apps. This means that even if someone steals your password, they cannot steal your money because the bank will send a secret code to your physical phone number to approve any payment.
- **Public Wi-Fi Danger:** Never log into your banking app or MB WAY while connected to free public Wi-Fi (like at a café, mall, or train station). Hackers can easily watch your screen through unencrypted networks. Always use your mobile data (4G/5G) when checking your money.

Accessible / Low-Fee Options

You do not need to pay expensive monthly fees to use digital finance tools. Here are the safest, lowest-cost ways to use digital money:

- **Free Mobile Banking (moey!):** This is a 100% free digital banking app backed by a traditional Portuguese banking group (Crédito Agrícola). It gives you a fully functional, legal Portuguese IBAN with zero opening fees and zero monthly maintenance costs. It includes free virtual debit cards for safe online shopping.
- **No-Cost Local Transfers (MB WAY):** Using MB WAY through your bank's official app or the dedicated MB WAY app is usually completely free for standard daily use (sending small

amounts to friends or scanning QR codes at supermarket checkouts). Be aware that some traditional banks might charge a tiny fee if you exceed a high number of transfers per month, so always check your specific bank's rules.

- **Prepaid Digital Cards:** If you are worried about entering your main bank details on websites like Shein, Temu, or Uber, you can use your banking app to generate a virtual prepaid card (like an MB NET card in Portugal). These are temporary, free digital cards where you only put the exact amount of money you need for that specific purchase, ensuring no one can steal your main savings.

Where to Get Help

If you accidentally give out your details or notice money disappearing from your account, act immediately:

- **Freeze Your Card:** Open your banking app and click "Freeze" or "Block" on your card instantly.
- **Call Your Bank:** Use the official emergency number found on the back of your physical plastic card. Inform them that your account has been compromised.
- **Report to the Authorities:** Take screenshots of the fake messages or fraudulent transactions and report them to the police (GNR or PSP) or through the official Portal da Queixa.

Spain

Digital Wallets vs. Mobile Banking

- **Mobile Banking Apps:** This is the official app provided by your bank (like CaixaBank, BBVA, Santander, or N26 Spain). It connects directly to your legal bank account. Use it to check your real balance, download official account statements, and transfer rent money.
- **Digital Wallets:** Apps like Apple Pay, Google Pay, or PayPal store a digital version of your debit/credit card on your phone. They use a security process called tokenisation, which hides your real card number from merchants when you tap your phone to pay.
- **Instant Local Payments (Bizum):** In Spain, almost everyone uses Bizum (integrated directly inside your bank's official mobile app). It links your phone number to your bank card so you can send money to friends instantly or pay at online shops using just a phone number.

The Rules of Online Safety

- **Beware of Phishing (Smishing & Vishing):** Scammers send fake SMS text messages or emails claiming to be from your bank, the Spanish Tax Agency (Agencia Tributaria / Hacienda), or delivery services (like Correos or SEUR). They claim your account is "blocked"

or a package is pending and give you a link. Never click the link. A real bank will never ask for your passwords, PIN, or one-time codes via text or phone call.

- **The "Two-Factor" Shield (SCA / 2FA):** Always activate Strong Customer Authentication (2FA) in your banking apps. Even if someone steals your password, they cannot access your money because the bank requires approval through an SMS code or biometrics (fingerprint/Face ID) on your registered device.
- **Public Wi-Fi Danger:** Never log into your banking app or send Bizum payments while connected to free public Wi-Fi networks (at shopping centers, buses, or cafes). Hackers can intercept unencrypted data. Always switch to your mobile data (4G/5G) when checking your money.

Accessible / Low-Fee Options

You do not need to pay expensive monthly fees to manage digital money in Spain:

- **Free Mobile Banking (Online Accounts):** Banks like BBVA (Cuenta Online Sin Comisiones), Openbank, N26 Spain, or Revolut offer 100% free digital banking with zero maintenance fees and a legal Spanish IBAN (ES...). They include free virtual debit cards for safe digital spending.
- **No-Cost Instant Payments (Bizum):** Using Bizum directly inside your official banking app is completely free for standard daily transfers between individuals.
- **Virtual Single-Use Cards:** To protect your main savings on shopping sites like Shein or AliExpress, generate a temporary virtual card (Tarjeta Virtual / Prepago) in your banking app. Put only the exact amount needed for that single purchase so no one can steal your savings.

Where to Get Help

If you accidentally share your credentials or spot unauthorized transactions:

- **Freeze Your Card & Block Access:** Open your banking app and tap "Freeze Card" (Bloquear / Apagar tarjeta) or lock your online access immediately.
- **Call INCIBE / Your Bank:** Call the free Spanish cybersecurity hotline at 017 (INCIBE) or call your bank's 24/7 emergency card block hotline found on the back of your physical card.
- **Report to the Police:** Take screenshots of fake messages or fraudulent bank charges and file an official report (denuncia) with the Policía Nacional or Guardia Civil.

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Belgium

Digital Wallets vs. Mobile Banking

- **Mobile Banking Apps:** This is the official app provided by your bank (like BNP Paribas Fortis, Belfius, KBC, or ING Belgium). It connects directly to your legal bank account. Use it to check your real balance, download account statements, and pay your rent.
- **Digital Wallets:** Apps like Apple Pay, Google Pay, or PayPal let you store a digital version of your debit/credit card on your phone. They use tokenisation to replace your actual card credentials with a unique virtual code, protecting your details at checkout.
- **Instant Local Payments (Bancontact Pay / Payconiq):** In Belgium, mobile payments are made using Bancontact Pay (formerly Payconiq) or directly inside your banking app. It lets you scan QR codes to pay in stores, pay online, or send instant money to friends using a smartphone.

The Rules of Online Safety

- **Beware of Phishing:** Scammers send fake SMS messages or emails claiming to be from your bank, itsme®, public administration (SPF Finances / FOD Financiën), or postal delivery services (bpost, DHL). They claim an urgent problem requires you to "verify" your identity. Never click the link.
- **Protect Your itsme® & Banking 2FA:** Never approve an unexpected itsme® request or enter your bank card reader code unless you initiated the transaction yourself. A genuine bank or public service will never call or message you asking to confirm an itsme® action.
- **Public Wi-Fi Danger:** Avoid opening banking apps, making Bancontact Pay transactions, or logging into authentication services on free public Wi-Fi (at train stations or cafes). Always use your personal mobile data connection (4G/5G).

Accessible / Low-Fee Options

Safe digital banking in Belgium does not require high monthly fees:

- **Free Digital Accounts:** Digital banks like Hello bank! (backed by BNP Paribas Fortis) or Argenta offer free daily banking, free debit cards, and a Belgian IBAN (BE...) with no monthly account maintenance fees.
- **No-Cost Mobile QR Payments:** Scanning Bancontact QR codes in stores or sending instant peer-to-peer money through Bancontact Pay or your bank app is free for standard personal use.
- **Virtual / Disposable Prepaid Cards:** Create virtual debit cards through digital banking tools (or digital wallets like Revolut) for online shopping. This ensures your main bank account remains isolated from potential online store breaches.

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Where to Get Help

If you suspect your digital security or bank details have been compromised:

- **Call Card Stop Immediately:** Call Card Stop Belgium at 078 170 170 (available 24/7) to immediately block your bank cards and digital payment apps.
- **Forward the Phishing Message:** Forward any suspicious email or SMS to suspicious@safeonweb.be (the official Belgian Center for Cybersecurity portal) before deleting it.
- **Report to the Police:** Contact your local police station or file an official cybercrime report online via Police-on-Web (policeonweb.be) if money was stolen.

EVALUATION

Reflection Questions

- What did you learn today?
- What was the most useful part of the session?
- What will you use in real life?
- How confident do you feel using digital financial services safely after this session?
- What would you do if you received a suspicious banking message?
- Where would you go for help if you became a victim of online fraud?
- Which online safety topic would you like to learn more about in the future?

Expected Learning Outcomes

By the end of the session, participants should be able to:

- Explain what digital finance is.
- Recognise common online scams and phishing attempts.
- Identify warning signs of fraudulent messages.
- Apply safe practices when using digital financial services.
- Know where to get help in Belgium in case of fraud or cybercrime.
- Know how to report scams through reliable official channels.

RESOURCES

Useful Links

- **European Union Agency for Cybersecurity (ENISA):** Official EU agency portal providing guides on cyber hygiene, emerging digital threats, and online safety. enisa.europa.eu

- **Europol – Cybercrime (EC3):** The European Cybercrime Centre portal offering tools and advice on avoiding online scams, phishing, and ransomware. europol.europa.eu/crime-areas/cybercrime
- **No More Ransom Project:** An official initiative by Europol and European law enforcement agencies to help victims of online fraud and cyber attacks. nomoreransom.org
- **European Consumer Centres Network (ECC-Net):** EU-wide network helping consumers resolve cross-border online shopping, banking, and digital subscription disputes. eccnet.eu

Recommended Apps

- **Authenticator Apps (e.g., Google Authenticator, Microsoft Authenticator):** Free multi-factor authentication (MFA) tools to secure your online banking and personal accounts across Europe.
- **SEPA-Compatible Digital Wallets (Google Wallet / Apple Pay):** Secure tokenized mobile payment systems that keep card numbers hidden during point-of-sale and online transactions.
- **EU Digital Identity Wallet / eIDAS Platforms:** Standardized secure digital identification systems being rolled out across EU member states for safe online authentication.

Support Services

- **National Computer Emergency Response Teams (CSIRTs / CERTs Network):** Official EU network linking national cyber response teams in every member state to handle severe online breaches and fraud. csirts-network.eu
- **FIN-NET Network:** The EU-wide financial dispute resolution network helping consumers resolve out-of-court complaints with financial service providers across European borders. ec.europa.eu/info/business-economy-euro/banking-and-finance/consumer-finance-and-payments/financial-disputes-fin-net_en
- **European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF):** Official EU body for reporting systemic digital fraud and financial corruption involving European funds or cross-border entities. https://anti-fraud.ec.europa.eu/index_en

RESULTS

Project Platform: https://youfin-project.com/

All Toolkit Resources (presentations, explanatory videos, infographics and evaluation games for all modules): https://youfin-project.com/results/



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