

MEDIA RELEASE

IOSCO/MR/02/2026
Madrid, 11 February 2026

IOSCO announces Pre-Valentine's Day Campaign Focused on Combating Relationship Investments Scams

The International Organization of Securities Commission (IOSCO) announces the start of a worldwide initiative to raise awareness about **relationship investment scams** and the devastating effect they can have on an investor's financial future.

These scams are called various names, including romance scams, crypto investment scams, financial grooming scams, and "pig butchering" scams. They involve a "long con" where fraudsters target people through wrong-number texts, dating apps, and social media over time to **build trust** through friendship, romance, or an offer to help them achieve their financial goals.

As the world celebrates love and connection, the campaign that runs from 11 February to 14 February, 2026 encourages the public to learn how to recognize relationship investment scams and share the information to warn others.

"Anyone can fall victim to a scam, especially in a world of fast-moving new technologies. With investor protection as a cornerstone of IOSCO's mission, this campaign aims to alert retail investors to the warning signs of a scam."

- *Jean-Paul Servais, IOSCO Board Chair*

“Repeated, continuous, and concerted awareness efforts have the power to foster essential investor vigilance against fraud. This initiative is further proof of IOSCO members' genuine commitment to financial protection and education.”

- ***Camille Beaudoin, Director, Financial Education Expertise and Partnerships, AMF Québec and Chair of IOSCO's Committee on Investor Education***

After the relationship is established, fraudsters claim to know about profitable investment opportunities. Individuals are then directed to a legitimate looking (but fake) investing website or app. Once individuals have invested all their money, the “new friend” disappears, and so does their money.

Relationship investment scams are estimated to have caused the loss of tens of billions of dollars globally. This campaign aims to inform investors about the **warning signs of the scams** and help empower them with information to protect themselves and those they care about:

Red Flags

- Unsolicited investment advice and opportunities.
- Conversations that are moved off social or dating platforms to encrypted messaging apps or to an unmonitored space.
- A prolonged inability to meet in person.
- Repeated suggestions for investments or requests for money.

Protect Yourself

- Ignore, delete, and block messages from senders you don't know.
- Make investment decisions independent of the advice of someone who makes unsolicited contact with you online or through an app or text message.
- Research investment opportunities thoroughly.
- Protect information about your identity and personal finances.
- Never pay money to recover your investment or to release funds.

More information on relationship investment scams [here](#).

Report scams to your local authority. You can find some contacts [here](#).

Notes to Editors

1. IOSCO is the leading international policy forum for securities regulators and the global standard setter for financial markets regulation. It develops, implements and promotes adherence to internationally recognized standards for financial markets regulation and works closely with other international organizations on the global regulatory reform agenda.
2. The Organization's membership regulates more than 95% of the world's securities markets in some 130 jurisdictions. By providing high quality technical assistance, education, and training, IOSCO supports its members to come together to achieve the following three objectives:
 - Enhance investor protection;
 - Ensure markets are fair and efficient; and
 - Promote financial stability by reducing systemic risk.
3. The IOSCO Board is the governing and standard-setting body of IOSCO and is made up of 35 securities regulators. Mr. Jean-Paul Servais, the Chair of Belgium's Financial Services and Markets Authority (FSMA), is the Chair of the IOSCO Board. Dr Mohamed Farid Saleh, Executive Chairman of the Financial Regulatory Authority, Egypt; is Vice-Chair of IOSCO Board.
4. The Growth and Emerging Markets (GEM) Committee is the largest Committee within IOSCO, representing more than 75% of the IOSCO membership, including ten of the G20 members. Dr Mohamed Farid Saleh is Chair of the GEM Committee. The Committee unites members from growth and emerging markets and communicates their views at other global regulatory discussions.
5. IOSCO counts four regional committees: (1) Africa / Middle-East (AMERC), chaired by H.E. Waleed Saeed Al Awadhi, Chief Executive Officer, Securities and Commodities Authority, United Arab Emirates; (2) Asia & Pacific (APRC), chaired by Ms. Julia Leung Chief Executive Officer of the Hong-Kong Securities and Futures Commission; (3) European Regional Committee (ERC), chaired by Mr. Jean-Paul Servais; and (4) Inter-American Regional Committee (IARC), chaired by Ms. Lucia Buenrostro Vice President of Regulatory Policy at the Mexican Comisión Nacional Bancaria y de Valores.
6. IOSCO's General Secretariat is headquartered in Madrid, Spain. The Secretariat supports and coordinates the work of IOSCO and is comprised of permanent staff and member secondees. It is led by Rodrigo Buenaventura who was appointed IOSCO's Secretary General in January 2025.

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