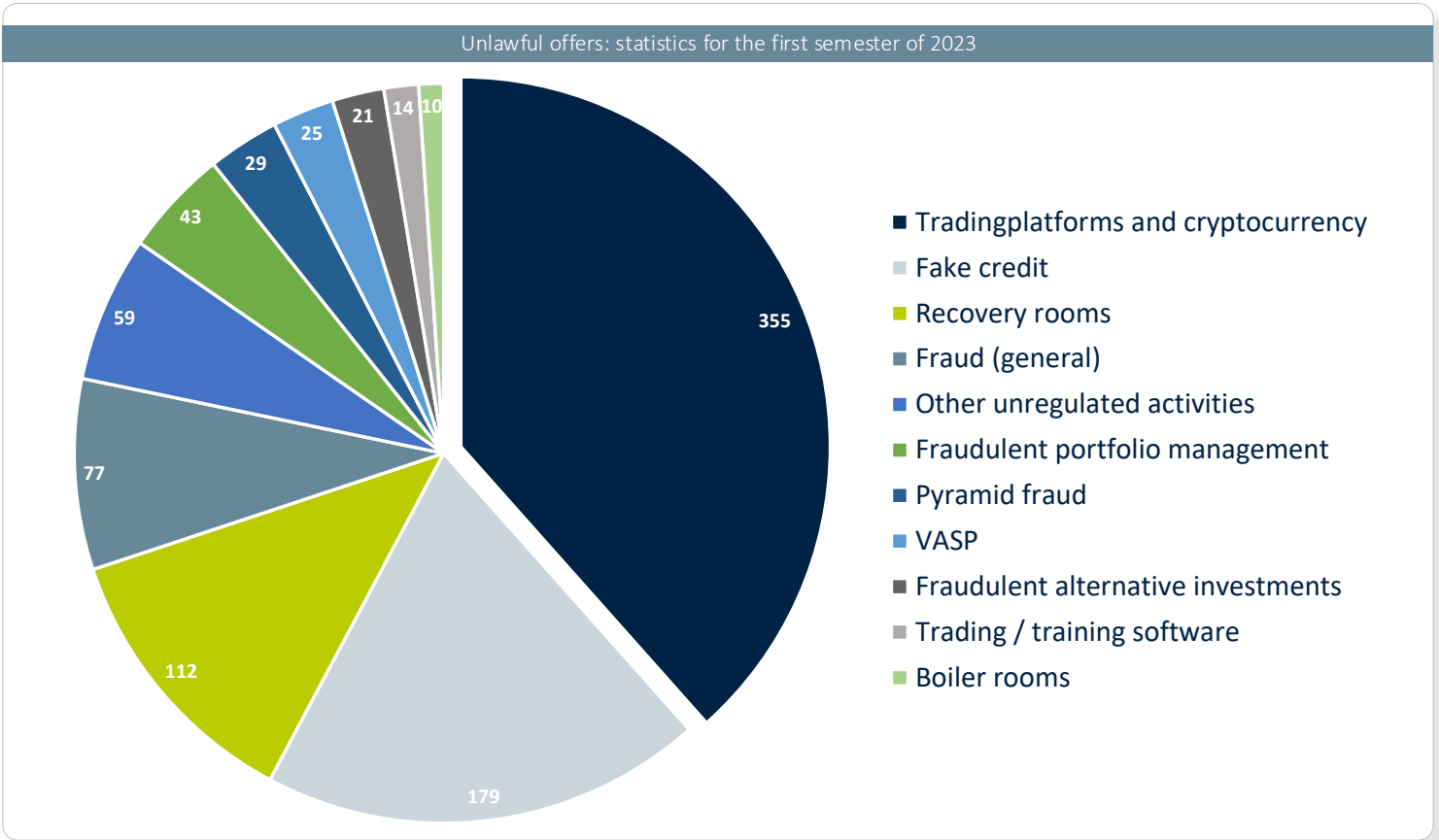




# Investment fraud and unlawful offers - Dashboard 1st half of 2023

July 2023

## 1. Evolution of the forms of fraud: main trends



### The first half of the year saw a sharp rise in “recovery room” fraud cases.

In the first six months of the year, reports of recovery room fraud rose by more than 165% compared with the same period in 2022. These scams, whereby fraudsters offer to help victims of a first fraud to recover their lost assets in exchange for one last payment, accounted for 6% of the questions about fraud received by the FSMA during the first semester of 2022; that proportion reached 12% in 2023.

The bulk of fraud reports received by the FSMA are still about fake trading platforms. These continue to offer a multitude of financial products, but seem to be increasingly focusing on cryptocurrencies.

False credit offers remain prominent among fraud reports. They have represented about 20% of all reports received for several years now.

## 2. Warnings by the FSMA

During the first semester of 2023, the FSMA published 5 warnings against a total of 87 fraudulent entities and 105 websites.

Two thirds of the entities involved were fraudulent trading platforms.

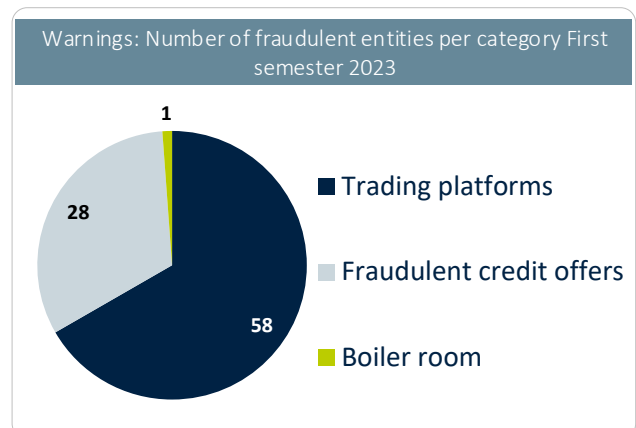
[23 February 2023 – Fraudulent trading platforms](#)

[8 March 2023 – AB Investment](#)

[27 March 2023 – False offers of credit](#)

[30 May 2023 – Fraudulent use of the name of the FSMA](#)

[5 June 2023 – Fraudulent trading platforms](#)



## 3. Focus: identity theft by fraudsters

Fraudsters use a variety of techniques to trick consumers and collect money from them. One such technique seems to have become particularly widespread in recent years: identity theft. Fraudsters pose as a third party whom the consumer believes he or she can trust.

### Fraudsters pass themselves off as ...

- **Authorized companies**

Swindlers take on the identity of authorized companies registered with a financial authority to lead consumers to believe that they have the necessary authorization to offer them financial products.

➤ [Beware of « cloned firms »](#)

- **Banks**

Scammers inspire confidence in their victims who think they are dealing with a well-known financial institution. Fraudsters often claim to represent a branch of a well-known foreign bank and offer entirely fictitious investment plans or false credits.

➤ [Scammers pass themselves off as banks](#)

- **Financial authorities**

Consumers who have already fallen victim to scams are contacted by new fraudsters posing as a financial authority. The fraudsters then promise to help them recover the sums they lost. However, it is a new trap designed to wheedle even more money out of consumers.

➤ [Fraudsters pretend to be employees of the FSMA](#)

- **And many others...**

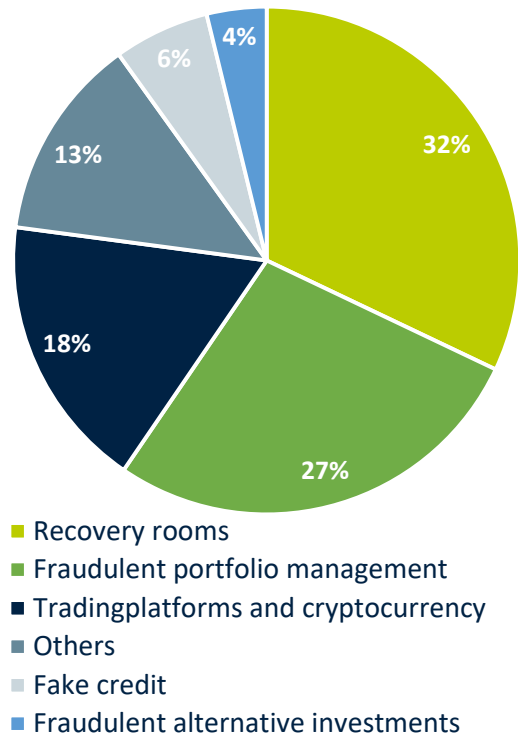
Law firms, experts in cryptocurrencies, judicial authorities ... Scammers can pose as a myriad different counterparties in order to catch consumers off guard.

No matter how your contact presents himself/herself, you should always remain vigilant and check the person's contact details on an official website.

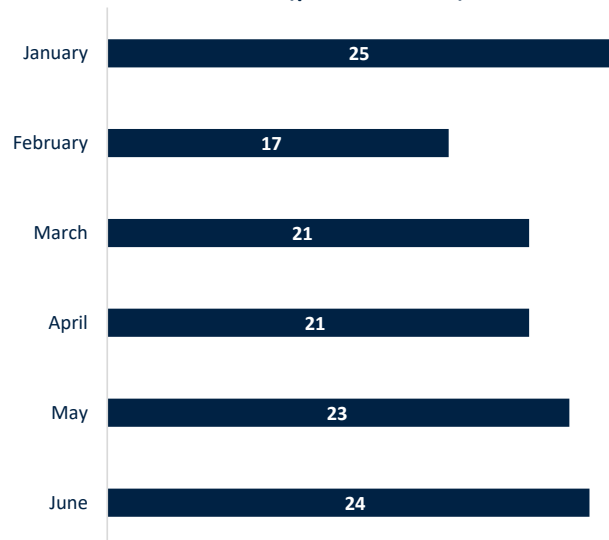
As a general rule, you should always be wary of proposals made to you without any prior initiative on your part, and of promises that are too good to be true.

➤ [How to recognize and avoid fraud](#)

### Cases of identity theft: breakdown of reports by type of fraud



### Consumers' reports regarding cases of identity theft (per month)



Consumers' reports regarding cases of identity theft account for a little under one in six questions with regard to fraud handled by the FSMA. Since the beginning of the year, the FSMA has received a total of 131 reports relating to cases of identity theft.

# Unlawful offers: statistics for the first semester of 2023

Reports to the FSMA of unauthorized or fraudulent activities have increased by 20% compared to the first semester of 2022. During the first six months of the current year, the FSMA received a total of 924 reports regarding such practices.

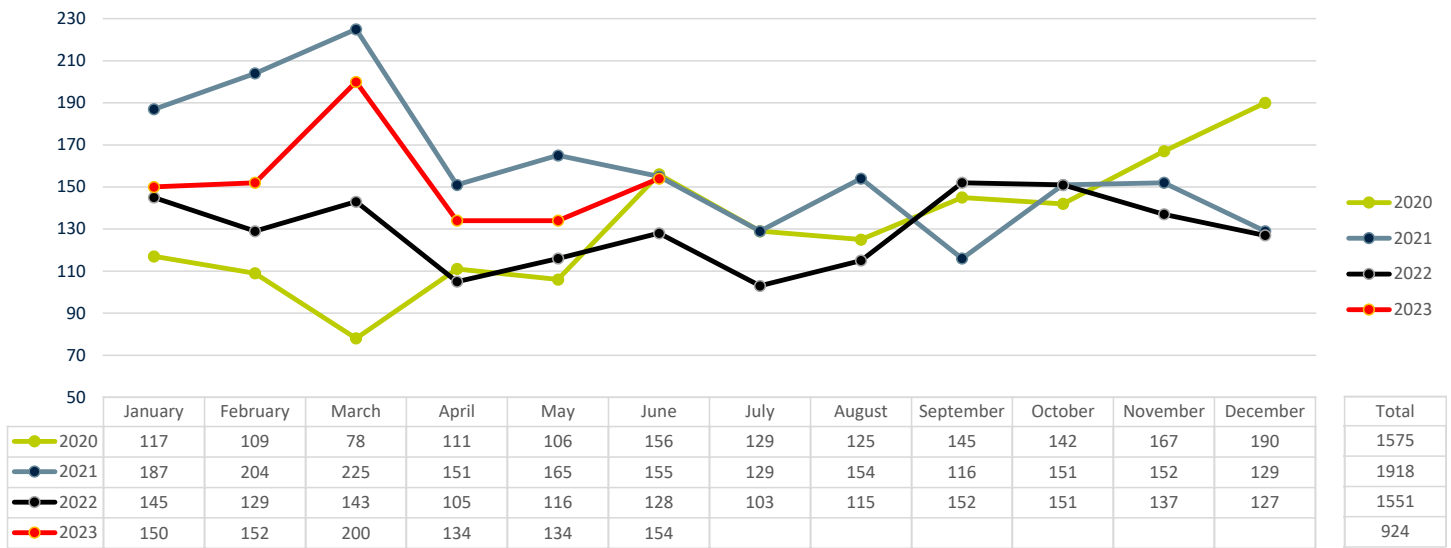
48% of these reports are complaints from consumers who have lost money. However, this proportion varies greatly depending on the type of fraud reported.

In the case of online trading platforms, complaints from consumers who have invested money account for almost 76% of all reports received.

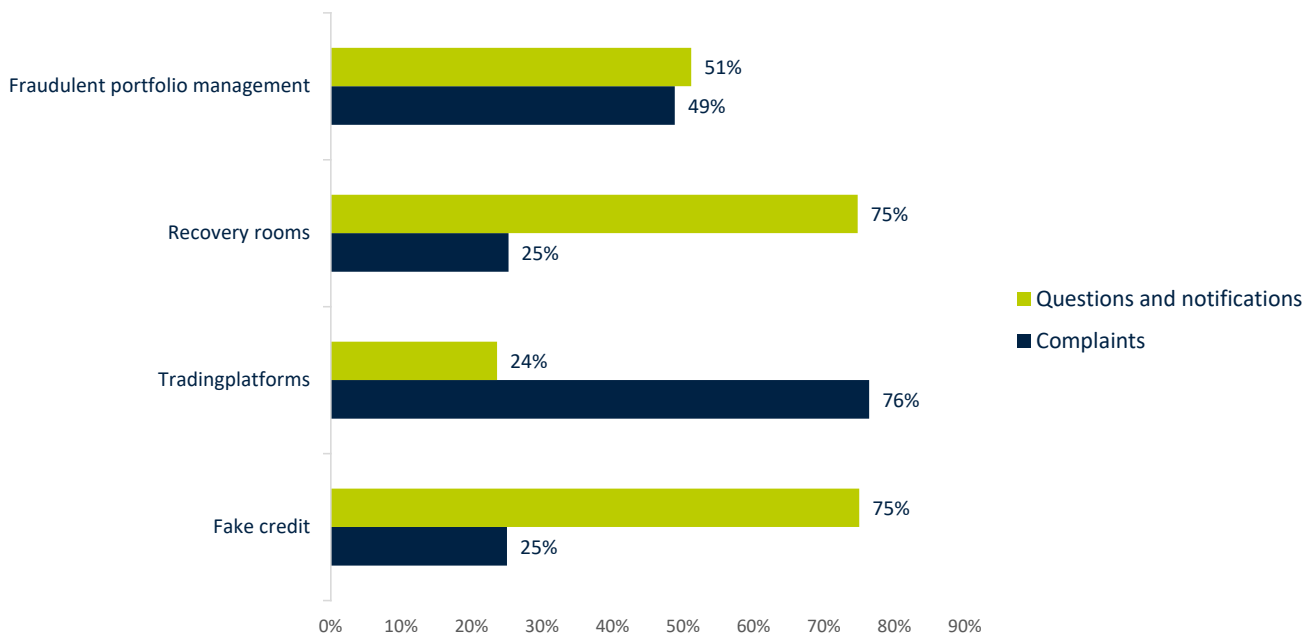
Conversely, consumers who have already been victims of fraud and are subsequently contacted again in a "recovery room" fraud are more likely to contact the FSMA before following up on these offers. Only 25% of these reports are complaints from consumers who have already sent money to fraudsters.

Consumers also seem to have become more wary of suspicious credit offers: 75% of the reports received in this category by the FSMA were sent by consumers who had not yet paid the "costs" demanded by the fraudsters.

Changes in number of questions about unlawful activities or fraud received per month since 2020\*



Breakdown complaints / questions by type of fraud in reports received by the FSMA in the first semester of 2023.



\* Figures quoted in this document only include reports made by consumers to the FSMA concerning fraud or illicit offers falling within the supervisory scope of the FSMA.

### Contact

Contact the FSMA if you have a question or want to check whether your supplier is reliable

[Contact form](#)

For all your questions about money

[wikifin](#)

### Doubts about your provider?

Search the FSMA website to gather information about a company or check whether a warning has been published against it.

[Search function](#)

[Warnings](#)

### More information about fraud

More information about fraud is available on our website

[Beware of fraud!](#)

### Keep informed

[FSMA's Newsletter](#)

### External links



### Annual report of the FSMA

[Annual report 2022](#)