EUROPEAN CENTRAL BANK

EUROSYSTEM

Press release

11 September 2020

Payments statistics: 2019

- The total number of non-cash payments in the euro area increased by 8.1% to 98.0 billion in 2019 compared with the previous year, with a total value of €162.1 trillion.
- Card payments accounted for 48% of the total number of non-cash payments in the euro area, while credit transfers accounted for 23% and direct debits for 22%.
- The number of payment cards issued increased by 5.5% to 572 million in 2019, representing around 1.7 payment cards per euro area inhabitant.
- Around 45 billion transactions were processed by retail payment systems in the euro area worth €35.0 trillion.

The European Central Bank (ECB) has today published the 2019 statistics on non-cash payments, which comprise indicators on access to and use of payment services and terminals by the public, as well as volumes and values of transactions processed through payment systems. While this press release focuses on developments in the euro area as a whole, statistics are also published for each EU Member State, in addition to euro area and EU aggregates and comparative data.

Payment services[1]

The total number of non-cash payments in the euro area, comprising all types of payment services[2], increased by 8.1% to 98.0 billion in 2019 compared with the previous year, with a total value of €162.1 trillion. Card payments accounted for 48% of all transactions, while credit transfers accounted for 23% and direct debits for 22%.

The number of credit transfers within the euro area increased in 2019 by 6.6% to 22.4 billion, with a total value of €149.0 trillion. The relative importance of the number of credit transfers initiated electronically continued to increase, with the ratio of transactions initiated electronically to paper based transactions now standing at around thirteen to one. The number of direct debits within the euro area increased in 2019 by 3.1% to 21.3 billion, with a total value of €7.3 trillion. The number of card transactions rose by 12.3% to 46.6 billion, with a total value of €2.0 trillion. This corresponds to an average value of around €42 per card transaction. The number of cards in the euro area with a payment function increased in

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[1] SEPA instruments are included in the respective categories. Information on the SEPA instruments can be found on the ECB's website (http://www.ecb.europa.eu/paym/sepa/html/index.en.html).

[2] Including credit transfers, direct debits, card payments with cards issued by resident payment service providers, e-money payments, cheques and other payment services.

2019 by 5.5% to 572.1 million. With a total euro area population of 343 million, this represented around 1.7 payment cards per euro area inhabitant. Chart 1 below shows the development in the use of the main payment services in the euro area from 2000 to 2019.

The relative importance of the main payment services continued to vary widely across euro area countries in 2019. For example, the highest national percentage for card payments is displayed by Portugal at around 69%, the highest national percentage for credit transfers is found in Slovakia at around 41% and Germany accounts for the highest national percentage for direct debits at around 45% (see Annex).

In 2019, the total number of automated teller machines (ATMs) in the euro area decreased by 3.5% to 0.31 million, while the number of point of sale (POS) terminals increased by 8.1% to 11.7 million.

Chart 1

Use of the main payment services in the euro area

(number of transactions per year in billions)
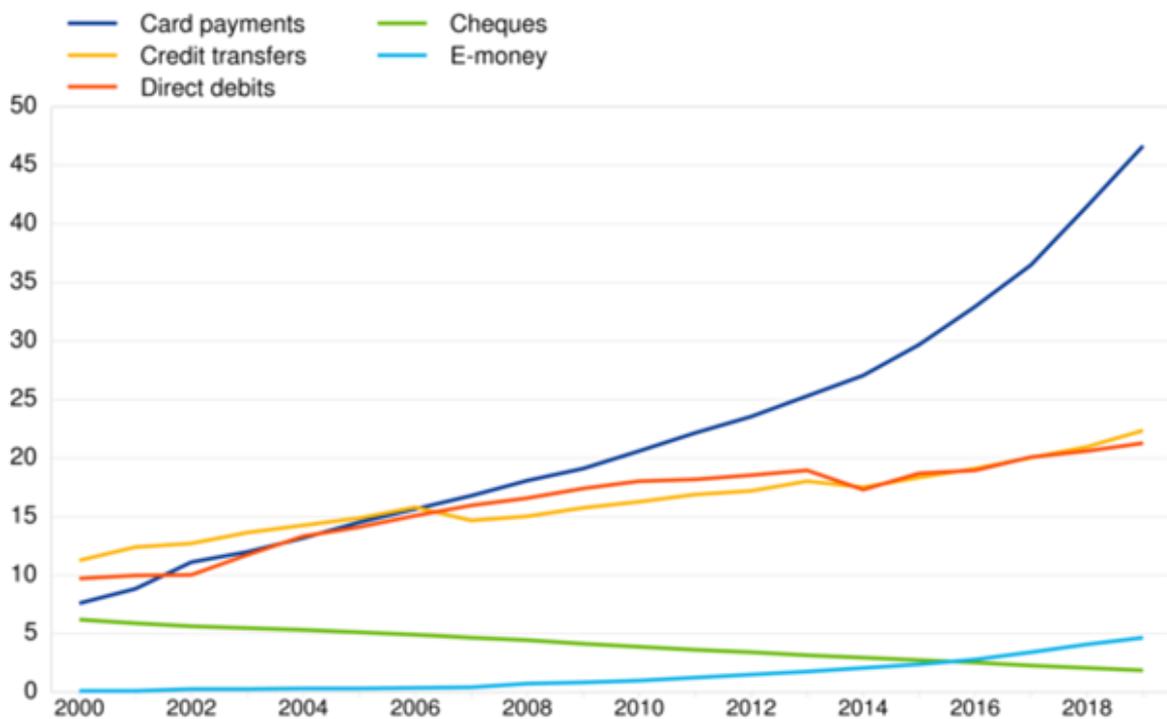
Source: ECB.

Note: Data have been partially estimated for periods prior to 2010, as methodological changes were implemented in previous years and some corresponding data are not available. The historical estimation done by the ECB ensures comparability of figures over the entire period. Statistics are also collected on other payment services, which accounted for 1.3% of the total number of euro area transactions in 2019.

Data on payment services

Retail payment systems

Retail payment systems in the euro area handle mainly payments that are made by individuals, with a relatively low value, high volume, and limited time-criticality.

In 2019, data have been reported for 24 retail payment systems within the euro area as a whole. During the year, around 45 billion transactions were processed with a combined value of €35.0 trillion[3].

There continues to be a high degree of concentration in euro area retail payment systems in 2019. The three largest systems in terms of number of transactions (CORE in France, STEP2[4] and RPS in Germany) processed 66% of the volume and 70% of the value of all transactions processed by euro area retail payment systems. Chart 2 shows the number and value of transactions processed by euro area retail payment systems in 2019.

Chart 2

Retail payment systems in the euro area in 2019

(value of transactions in EUR trillions and number of transactions in billions)
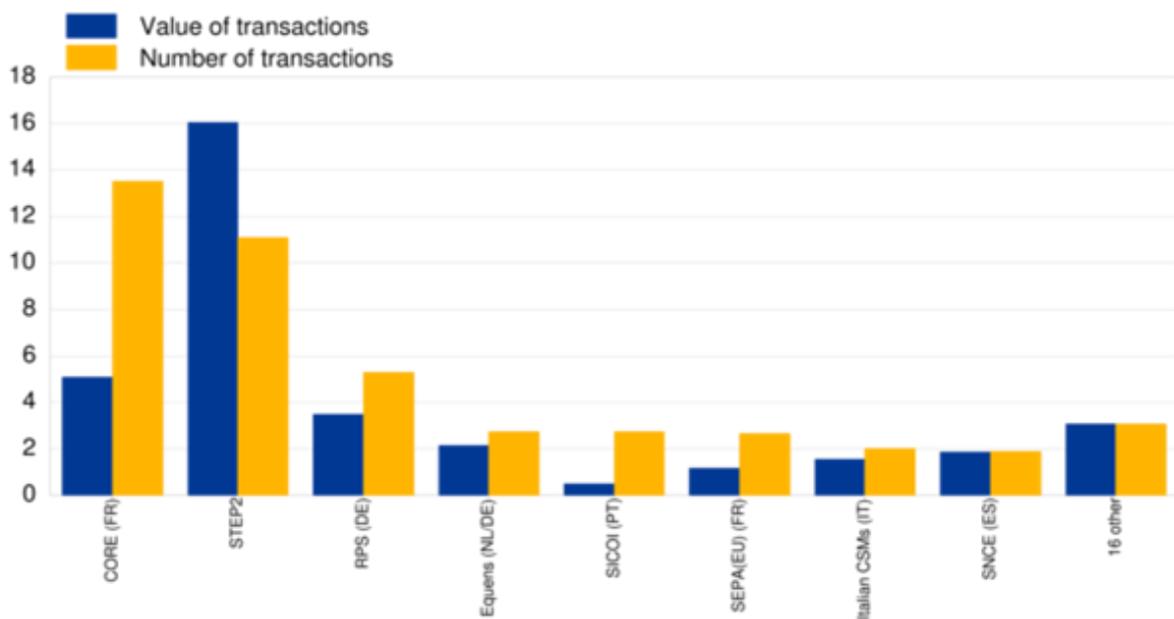
Source: ECB.

Data on retail payment systems

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[3]   The figures for one Cypriot payment system are excluded from the euro area aggregates due to confidentiality.
[4]   STEP2 is a pan-European automated clearing house for retail payments in euro operated by EBA CLEARING.
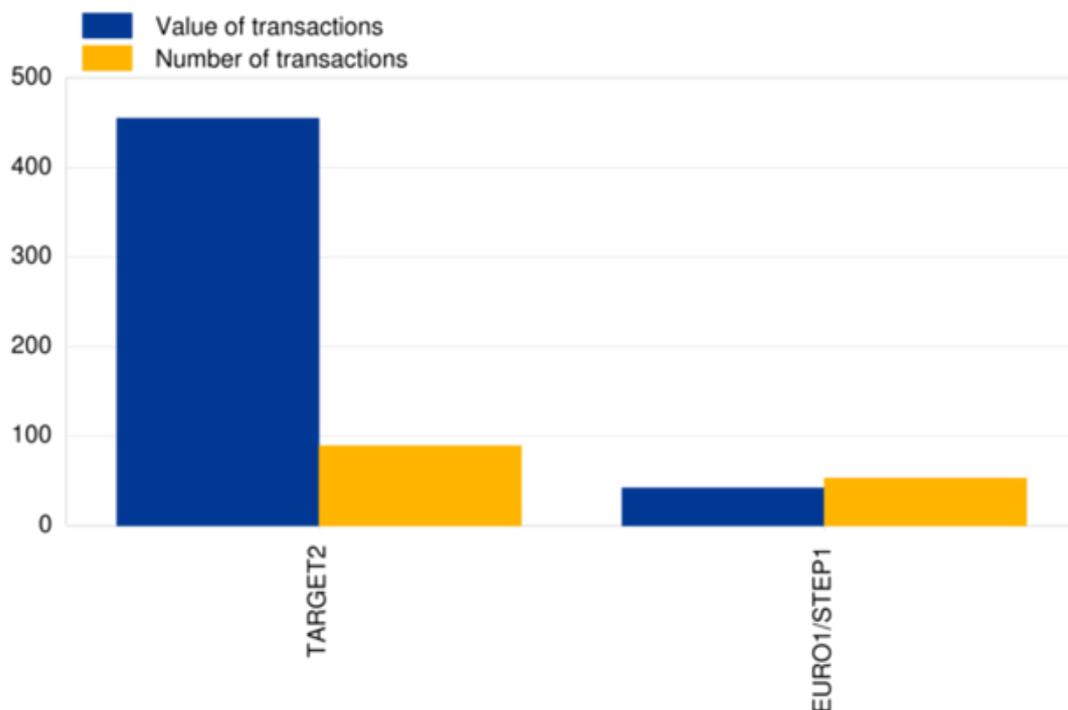
Large-value payment systems

Large-value payment systems (LVPSs) are designed primarily to process large-value and/or high-priority payments made between participants in the system for their own account or on behalf of their customers. Although, as a rule, no minimum value is set for payments made in such systems, the average size of such payments is usually relatively large. During 2019, the LVPSs systems settled 142 million payments with a total value of €497 trillion in euro payments, with TARGET2 and EURO1/STEP1 being the two main LVPSs[5].

Chart 3 below shows the number and value of transactions processed by the main LVPSs in 2019.

Chart 3

Main large-value payment systems in 2019

(value of transactions in EUR trillions and number of transactions in millions)

Source: ECB.

Data on large-value payment systems

For media queries, please contact Stefan Ruhkamp, tel.: +49 69 1344 5057.

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[5]   TARGET2 is the second-generation Trans-European Automated Real-time Gross settlement Express Transfer system. It is operated by the Eurosystem and settles payments in euro in central bank money.
EURO1/STEP1 is an EU-wide multilateral net large-value payment system for euro payments operated by EBA CLEARING. Payments are processed in EURO1 throughout the day and final balances are settled at the end of the day in TARGET2.

Notes:

- The full set of payment statistics can be downloaded from the Statistical Data Warehouse (SDW). The "Reports" section of the SDW also contains pre-formatted tables with payment statistics for the last five years. The data are presented in the same format as in the former "Blue Book Addendum". For detailed methodological information, including a list of all data definitions, please refer to the "Statistics" section of the ECB's website.

- As a result of the progressive implementation of the Single Euro Payments Area (SEPA) and other developments in the payments market in Europe, the methodological and reporting framework for payments statistics has been enhanced as of the reference year 2014. The new requirements are laid down in the Regulation on payments statistics (ECB/2013/43) and in the Guideline on monetary and financial statistics (recast) (ECB/2014/15). A background note, available on the ECB's website, describes the changes in more detail.

- In addition to annual payments statistics for 2019, this press release incorporates minor revisions to data for previous periods. The hyperlinks in the press release are dynamic; thus, the data might slightly change with the next annual release due to revisions. Unless otherwise indicated, statistics referring to euro area cover the EU Member States that had adopted the euro at the time to which the data relate.