



STATISTICAL RELEASE

Payment Statistics: second half of 2024

Executive Summary

The main remarks of the Statistical release for the second half of 2024 in Cyprus are summarized below:

- Cypriots are shifting towards digital payments, while the use of cheques and cash remains important despite the gradual decrease in the volume of cheques and ATMs cash withdrawals.
- Card payments in Cyprus are used more frequently (74%) compared to the euro area (57%) and stand out as the most popular method of non-cash payment transactions in volume terms. In value terms, credit transfers is the most popular method of non-cash payment transactions, representing 83% of the total value of non-cash payments for Cyprus, while cheques is ranked second with 7%. It is highlighted that the average value of cheques in Cyprus (€3.615) was 3 times larger than that of the euro area (€1.140).
- In Cyprus, 98% of the total volume of credit transfers were performed electronically rather than in a paper-based form, as opposed to 92% in the euro area. It is noted though that the average uptake of instant payments in Cyprus (10%) was considerably well below the corresponding average for the euro area (20%).
- There is a consistent preference for higher-value card payments online rather than at physical POSs (i.e. at stores). It is noteworthy that the average value per online card payment for CY cards (€127) was one of the highest in the euro area.
- Cyprus strongly supports the contactless technology, since more than 75% of the total CY ATMs accepted contactless transactions, as opposed to 33% in the euro area.

INTRODUCTION

The current release of the Statistics Department of the Central Bank of Cyprus (CBC) gives an overview of the main developments in the volume (number) and values of non-cash payments in Cyprus. Information¹ is collected from all Cyprus resident payment service providers (PSPs) i.e. Credit Institutions, E-Money Institutions and Payment Institutions. Non-cash payments are broken down by payment service in the following categories: (a) credit transfers, (b) direct debits, (c) card payments, (d) e-money payments, (e) cheques, and

(f) money remittances (refer to [Appendix](#) for further information) and analysed by geographical area of the counterpart PSP², whereas card payments are further broken down by the initiation method and the type of goods/services acquired by the merchant's country. The release also provides useful information on the usage of payment cards and terminals by the public, as well as the growth in the numbers of payment and e-money institutions.

¹ The published data are collected in accordance with [Regulation ECB/2020/59 amending Regulation](#)

[ECB/2013/43 on payments statistics](#), which came into effect on 1 January 2022.

² The location of the payee's PSP.

1. ANALYSIS OF NON-CASH PAYMENTS

In the second half of 2024, the total volume of non-cash payments increased by 7% to 162 million transactions compared with the second half of 2023, while the total value rose by 6% to €136 billion for the same period. The total non-cash payment transactions in Cyprus increased at a similar rate with that of the euro area as a whole, in both volume and value terms. Indicatively, the total number of non-cash payments in the euro area in the second half of 2024 increased by 9% to 78 billion compared with the second half of 2023, while the total value increased by 4% to €117 trillion.

1.1. Volume of non-cash payments by payment service

According to **Chart 1**, in Cyprus card payments are used almost 5 times more often than credit transfers which is placed second in terms of volume of transactions. For the second half of 2024, the relevant shares were 74% for card payments and 16% for credit transfers.

Accordingly, in the euro area, card payments accounted for 57% of total number of non-cash payments in the second half of 2024 and credit transfers accounted for 21%.

It is also important to note that in Cyprus 98% of credit transfers were performed electronically rather than in a paper-based form, as opposed to 92% in the euro area.

Despite the aforementioned considerably high ratio of credit transfers performed electronically, the average launch of instant payments³ in Cyprus was considerably well below the corresponding average for the euro area for the second half of 2024. More specifically, an average of just 10% of all SEPA credit transfers being instant payments for

³ Instant payments are a type of credit transfers that make funds available in a payee's account within ten seconds of a payment order being made.

Cyprus, while the corresponding average for the euro area amounted to 20% for the second half of 2024. The uptake of instant payments is expected to significantly increase after the September 2025 deadline (as mandated by the Instant Payments Regulation), requiring all Payment Service Providers (PSPs) in the EU that already offer credit transfers in euro to also offer instant payment options.

CHART 1 Volume of non-cash payments by payment service

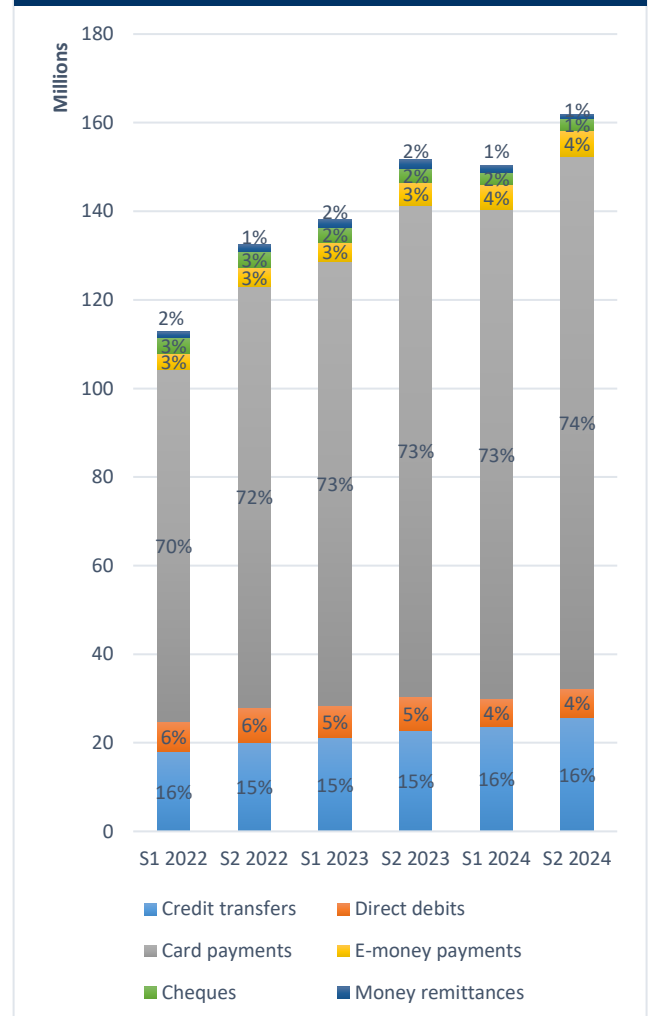
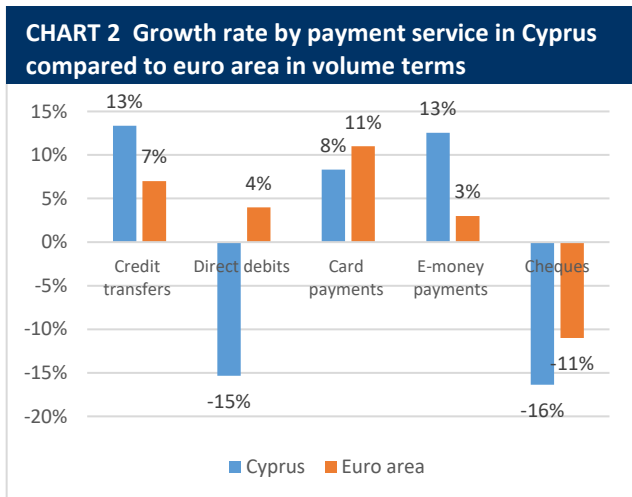


Chart 2 shows that in volume terms, credit transfers and e-money payments expanded at a faster rate in Cyprus than that of the euro area in the second half of 2024 compared to the second

half of 2023. On the other hand, direct debits decreased in Cyprus, while they recorded a marginal increase in the euro area. Cheques decreased at a faster pace in Cyprus than that of the euro area in volume terms. It is further noted that the volume of cheques have exhibited a reduction of nearly 27% during the last 2 years, in Cyprus. Card payments have increased at a faster pace in the euro area than that of Cyprus.

The decree that entered into force in September 2021 issued by the Ministry of Finance making the acceptance of payment cards compulsory for businesses operating in the retail trade and services sectors in conjunction with the European upward trend seems to have played a vital role in the increase of the cards' usage in Cyprus.



1.2. Value of non-cash payments by payment service

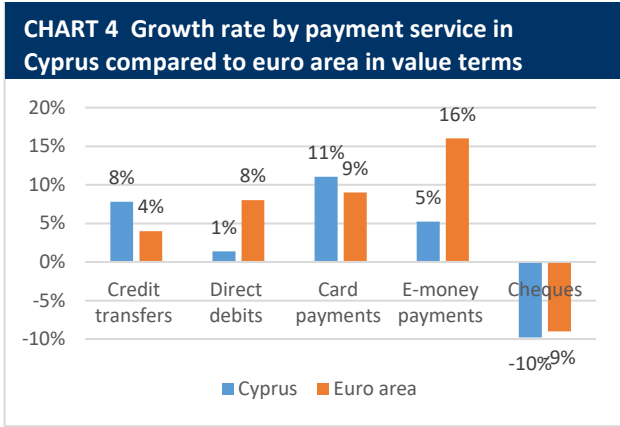
According to **Chart 3**⁴, higher-value payments were usually made by credit transfers (average value: €4.402), representing 83% of the total non-cash payments in Cyprus for the second half of 2024. Cheques were ranked second (average value: €3.615) with 7% confirming once again that its presence in the national market remains important.

⁴ Money remittances accounted for less than 1% of the total value of non-cash payments, and therefore they are not presented in Chart 3 and 4.

In the euro area, credit transfers (average value: €6.672) accounted for 93% of total value of non-cash payments in the second half of 2024, and direct debits (average value: €474) accounted for 5%. It is important to note that the share of cheques in the euro area was negligible (less than 1%) for the same period. In fact, the average value of cheques in Cyprus (€3.615) was 3 times larger than that of the euro area (€1.140).



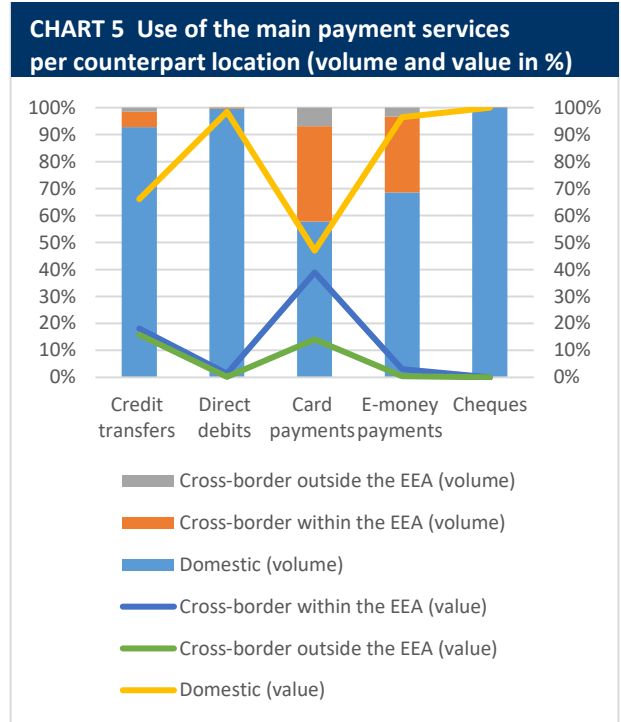
Chart 4 shows that in terms of values, credit transfers and card payments expanded at a faster rate in Cyprus than that of the euro area in the second half of 2024 compared to the second half of 2023. On the other hand, direct debits and e-money payments increased at a faster rate in the euro area than that of Cyprus. The value of cheques declined at a similar pace in Cyprus and in the euro area.



1.3. Non-cash payments by counterpart location

As shown in **Chart 5**⁵, domestic spending accounted for the majority (around to 70% in both number and value terms) of the total non-cash payments (i.e. the counterpart PSP location is in Cyprus).

Card payments appear to be the service used mostly for cross-border payments, in relative terms, for both volume (42%) and value (53%) in the second half of 2024. Indicatively, the largest card usage in countries within the EEA (excl. Cyprus) was reported in Lithuania based on the counterpart (PSP) location. On the other hand, Ireland had the highest card usage based on the location of the merchant. This is mainly attributed to the fact that Lithuania and Ireland are both recognized as leading fintech hubs in the EU.



1.4. Card payments per type of initiation

As presented in **Chart 6**, card payments were made almost 2,5 times more frequently at a physical POS (i.e. at the store) rather than remotely (i.e. online). Indicatively, for the second half of 2024, the split between card payments initiated at a physical POS and card payments initiated remotely (i.e. online) was 71% and 29% in terms of volumes, while the split in terms of value was 43% and 57%, respectively.

In the euro area, the split between the number of card payments initiated at a physical POS and card payments initiated remotely was 82% to 18%, while the split in terms of value was 72% to 28%, respectively.

For Cyprus, the average value per card payment initiated at a physical POS for the second half of 2024 was approximately €39, whereas the average value per card payment initiated online amounted to €127, indicating a relative preference for higher-

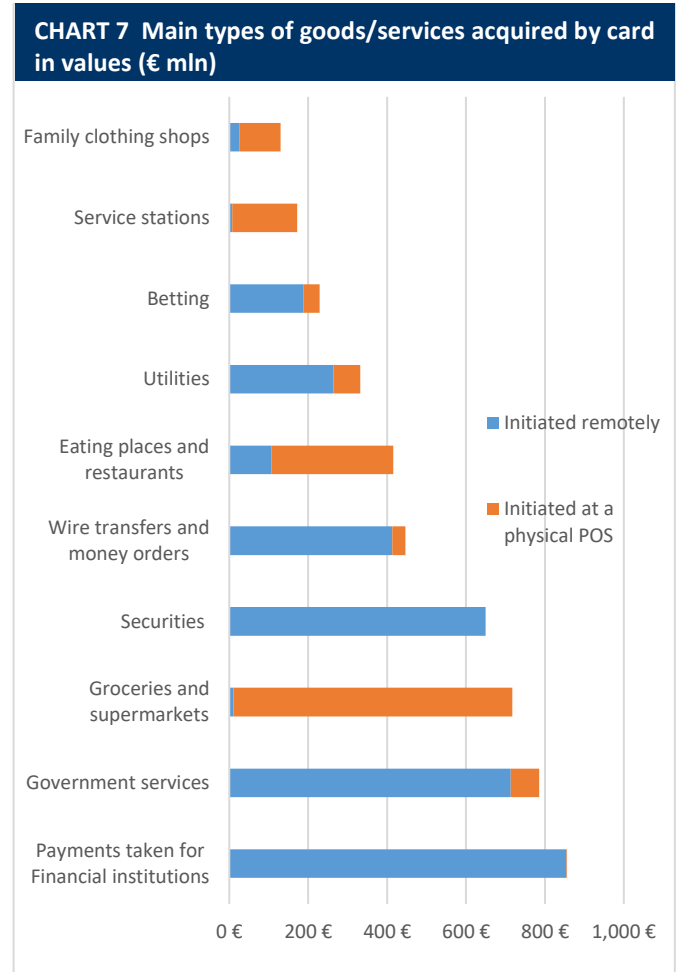
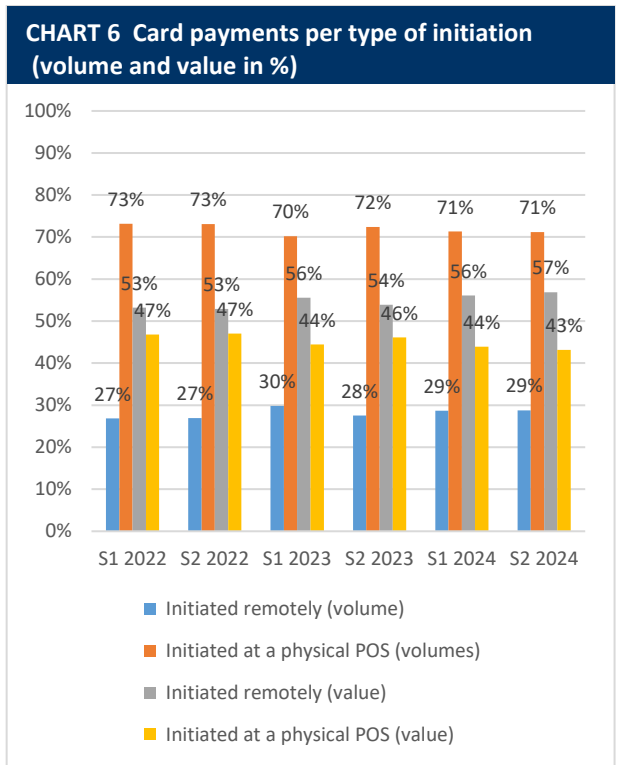
of the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) (Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway).

⁵ It is noted that the European Economic Area, abbreviated as EEA in Chart 5, consists of the Member States of the European Union (EU) and three countries

value card payments initiated remotely (i.e. online) rather than at a physical POS. It is notable that for Cyprus the average value per card payment initiated online was one of the highest in the euro area.

In the euro area, the average value per card payment initiated at a physical POS for the second half of 2024 was approximately €34, whereas the average value per card payment initiated online amounted to €60.

representing nearly 10% (€786 million) of the total of goods/ services acquired by card. Card payments in groceries and supermarkets held the third position with 9% (€718 million). Card payments used for payments taken for financial institutions and card payments in government services are primarily performed remotely (i.e. online), at 100% and 91% respectively, while card payments in groceries and supermarkets are almost entirely (99%) performed physically i.e. at stores.



1.5. Card payments per type of good/ services

Chart 7 illustrates the 10 most popular types of goods or services acquired via card payments in terms of value for the second half of 2024 broken by the type of initiation (i.e. remotely and non-remotely). Card payments are mostly used for payments taken for financial institutions⁶, accounting for 10% (€856 million) of the total card payments. Card payments in government services are ranked second in order of preference

⁶ This includes merchandise or services, and debt repayment.

2. PAYMENT CARDS

At the end of the second half of 2024 the number of payment cards outstanding increased by 9% to 2 million compared with the second half of 2023, averaging two payment cards per Cypriot inhabitant.

Similarly in the euro area, the number of payment cards outstanding at the end of the second half of 2024 increased by 8% to 750 million compared with the second half of 2023, averaging two payment cards per euro area inhabitant.

Debit cards are, by far, the most popular card function in Cyprus. Data from the second half of 2024 shows that consumers are 84% more likely to own a debit card rather than a credit or delayed debit card. VISA and MasterCard are the most common debit cards in Cyprus.

3. TERMINALS

The total number of automated teller machines (ATMs) across Cyprus has remained stable from the end of the second half of 2023 (ATMs: 398) to the end of the second half of 2024 (ATMs: 398). It is noteworthy that more than 75% of the total ATMs accepted contactless transactions by the second semester of 2024.

Similarly, the total number of ATMs in the euro area remained relatively stable from the end of the second half of 2023 (ATMs: 261.880) to the second half of 2024 (ATMs: 253.740). Of these, only 33% accepted contactless transactions.

ATMs continue to remain a valuable channel of self-service in Cyprus with €2,7 billion of withdrawals reported in the second half of 2024 recording a modest increase of 4% compared to the corresponding period of 2023. Nevertheless, the reduction in the total volume of ATM withdrawals outpaced the slight increase in the total value of ATM withdrawals leading to an increase in the average amount per withdrawal. It is notable that the average amount per withdrawal has increased

by 19% from the end of the second half of 2022 (€307) to the end of the second half of 2024 (€365).

4. PAYMENT INSTITUTIONS AND ELECTRONIC MONEY INSTITUTIONS

The total number of payment and electronic money institutions licensed in Cyprus remained relatively stable from the end of the second half of 2023 (36) to the end of the second half of 2024 (38).

Similarly, the total number of licensed payment institutions and electronic money institutions in the euro area remained relatively stable from the end of the second half of 2023 (σύνολο: 965) to the end of the second half of 2024 (σύνολο: 989).

APPENDIX

Methodological Notes:

1. The published data are collected in accordance with [Regulation ECB/2020/59 amending Regulation ECB/2013/43 on payments statistics](#), which came into effect on 1 January 2022. Detailed data are published by the ECB in the [Statistical Data Warehouse](#).
2. The methodology underpinning the current release entails the collection of statistical information from all Cyprus PSPs.
3. Payments include payment transactions initiated by non-MFIs to any counterparty or by PSPs if the counterparty is a non-MFI.
4. Definitions of each payment service:
 - i. *Credit transfer* means a payment service for crediting a payee's payment account with a payment transaction or a series of payment transactions from a payer's payment account by the payment service provider which holds the payer's payment account, based on an instruction given by the payer.
Mainly used for payments of salaries/ pensions and transfers of funds through Internet Banking.
 - ii. *Direct debit* means a payment service for debiting a payer's payment account, where a payment transaction is initiated by the payee on the basis of the consent given by the payer to the payee, to the payee's payment service provider or to the payer's own payment service provider.
Used mostly for recurring and one-off payments e.g. utility bills, insurance, subscriptions following an expression of consent and authorization given by the payer to the payee.
 - iii. *Card payment* means a service based on a payment card scheme's infrastructure and business rules to make a payment transaction by means of any card, telecommunication, digital or IT device or software if this results in a debit or a credit card transaction. Card-based payment transactions exclude transactions based on other kinds of payment services.
Includes payments with a debit, credit and delayed debit card.
 - iv. *E-money payment* means a payment transaction using electronic money.
Includes transfers via wallets and/or cards with an e-money function only.
 - v. *Cheque* is a written and signed order from one party, i.e. the drawer, to another, i.e. the drawee, which is in principle a credit institution, requiring the drawee to pay a specified sum unconditionally and on demand to the drawer or to a third party specified by the drawer.
 - vi. *Money remittance* means a payment service where funds are received from a payer, without any payment accounts being created in the name of the payer or the payee, for the sole purpose of transferring a corresponding amount to a payee or to another PSP acting on behalf of the payee, and/or where such funds are received on behalf of and made available to the payee.
Used mainly by foreign workers in Cyprus and for students. To carry out a transaction it is necessary to present some valid identification document and a valid residence permit.