



## STATISTICAL RELEASE

### Payment Statistics: first half of 2024

#### Executive Summary

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

- Card payments in Cyprus are used more frequently (73%) compared to the euro area (56%) and stand out as the most popular method of non-cash payment transactions in Cyprus in volume terms. In value terms, credit transfers is the most popular method of non-cash payment transactions, representing 81% of the total value of non-cash payments for Cyprus, while cheques is ranked second with 8% confirming once again that its presence in the national market remains important.
- Cypriots used credit transfers (average value: €4.038) and cheques (average value: €3.498) for higher-value payments, whereas card payments (average value: €62) were mostly used for lower-value payments. It is highlighted that the average value of cheques in Cyprus was 3 times larger than that of the euro area (€1.129).
- In Cyprus, there was a relatively consistent preference for high-value card payments initiated remotely (i.e. online) rather than at physical POSs (i.e. at the store). It is noteworthy that the average value per card payment initiated online for CY cards (€119) 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 30% in the euro area.
- The total number of payment and electronic money institutions licensed in Cyprus (total: 38) displayed an upward growth during the last few years. It is noted that for Cyprus, the total number of payment and electronic money institutions per habitant was among the highest 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. Information<sup>1</sup> 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 PSP<sup>2</sup>, whereas card payments are further broken down by the initiation method and the type of goods/services acquired. 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. ANALYSIS OF NON-CASH PAYMENTS

In the first half of 2024, the total volume of non-cash payments increased by 9% to 150 million transactions compared with the first half of 2023,

<sup>1</sup> 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.

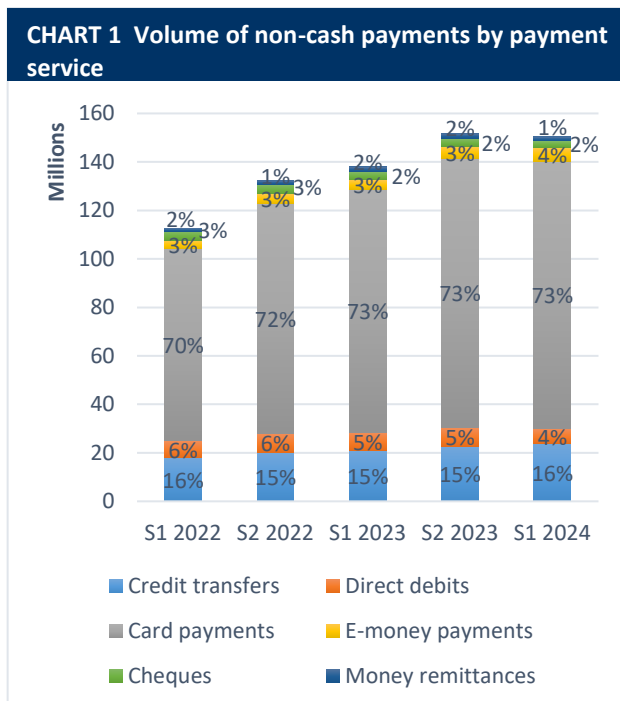
<sup>2</sup> The location of the payee's PSP.

while the total value rose by 8% to €118 billion for the same period. The total non-cash payment transactions in Cyprus increased at a higher pace than in 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 first half of 2024 increased by 7% to 72 billion compared with the first half of 2023, while the total value increased by 2% to €114 trillion.

1.1. Volume of non-cash payments by payment service

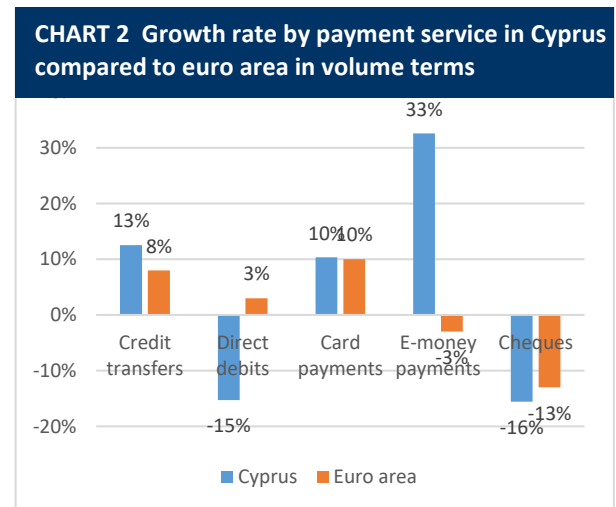
According to **Chart 1**, card payments are used almost 5 times more often than credit transfers which is placed second in terms of volume of transactions. For the first half of 2024, the relevant shares were 73% for card payments and 16% for credit transfers.

Accordingly, in the euro area, card payments accounted for 56% of total number of non-cash payments in the first half of 2024 and credit transfers accounted for 22%.



<sup>3</sup> 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.

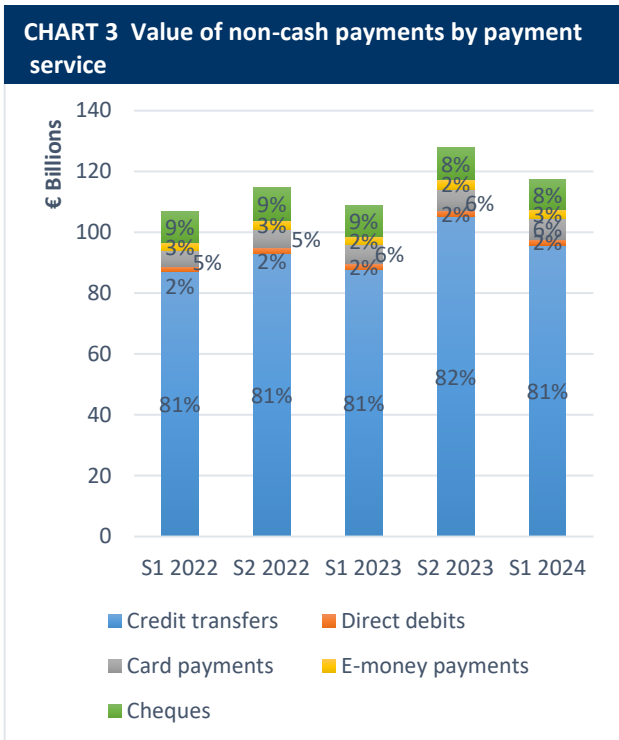
**Chart 2** shows that in volume terms, credit transfers and e-money payments expanded at a faster rate in Cyprus than that of the euro area. On the other hand, direct debits decreased in Cyprus, while they recorded a marginal increase in the euro area. Cheques decreased at a faster pace in Cyprus than that of the euro area in volume terms. It is further noted that the volume of cheques have exhibited a reduction of nearly 25% during the last 2 years, in Cyprus. Card payments have increased at a similar pace in Cyprus and in the euro area.



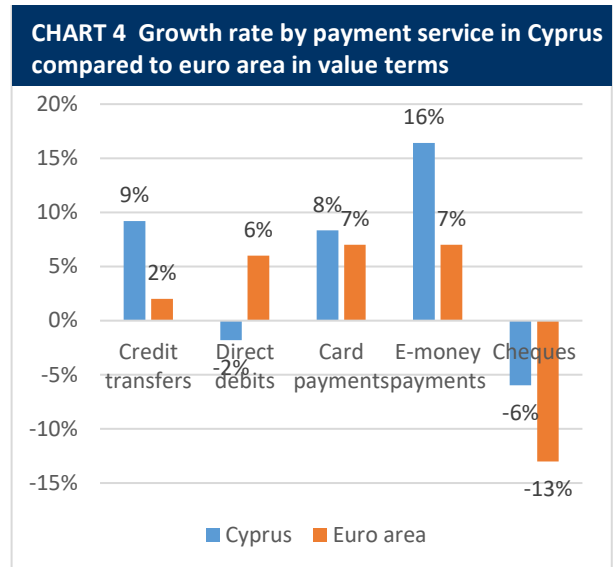
1.2. Value of non-cash payments by payment service

According to **Chart 3**<sup>3</sup>, higher-value payments were usually made by credit transfers, representing 81% of the total non-cash payments in Cyprus for the first half of 2024. Cheques were ranked second with 8% confirming once again that its presence in the national market remains important.

In the euro area, credit transfers accounted for 93% of total value of non-cash payments in the first half of 2024, and direct debits 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.



**Chart 4** shows that in terms of values, credit transfers, card payments and e-money payments expanded at a faster rate in Cyprus than that of the euro area. On the other hand, direct debits slightly decreased in Cyprus, while they recorded an increase in the euro area. Cheques declined at a faster pace in the euro area than in Cyprus. It is important to note that the average value of cheques in Cyprus (€3.498) was 3 times larger than that of the euro area (€1.129).



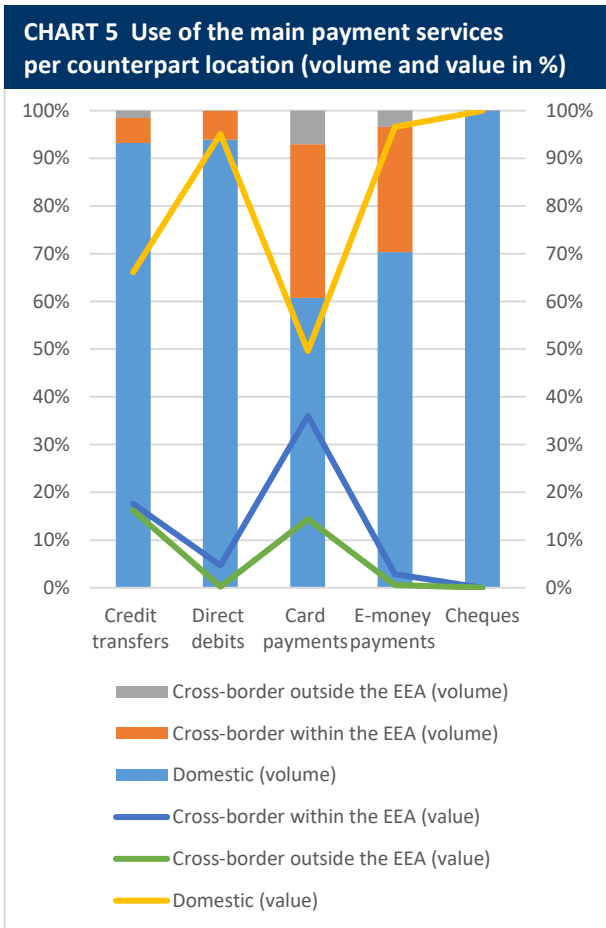
### 1.3. Non-cash payments by counterpart location

As shown in **Chart 5**<sup>4</sup>, 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 (39%) and value (50%) in the first 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.

<sup>4</sup> 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

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



#### 1.4. Card payments per type of initiation

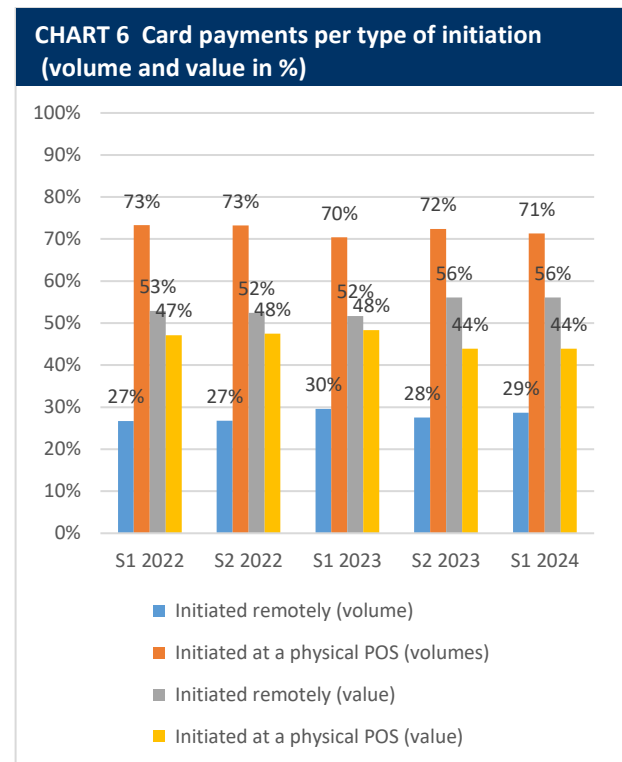
As presented in **Chart 6**, card payments were mostly initiated at a physical POS (i.e. at the store) in terms of volumes. For the first half of 2024, the split between card payments initiated at a physical POS and card payments initiated remotely (i.e. online) was 71% and 29% in terms of volumes, while the split in terms of value was 44% and 56%, 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 transaction initiated at a physical POS for the first half of 2024 was approximately €38, whereas the average value

per transaction initiated online amounted to €119, indicating a relative preference for high-value card payments initiated remotely (i.e. online) rather than at a physical POS. It is notable that the average value per transaction initiated online was one of the highest in the euro area.

In the euro area, the average value per transaction initiated at a physical POS for the first half of 2024 was approximately €34, whereas the average value per transaction initiated online amounted to €58.

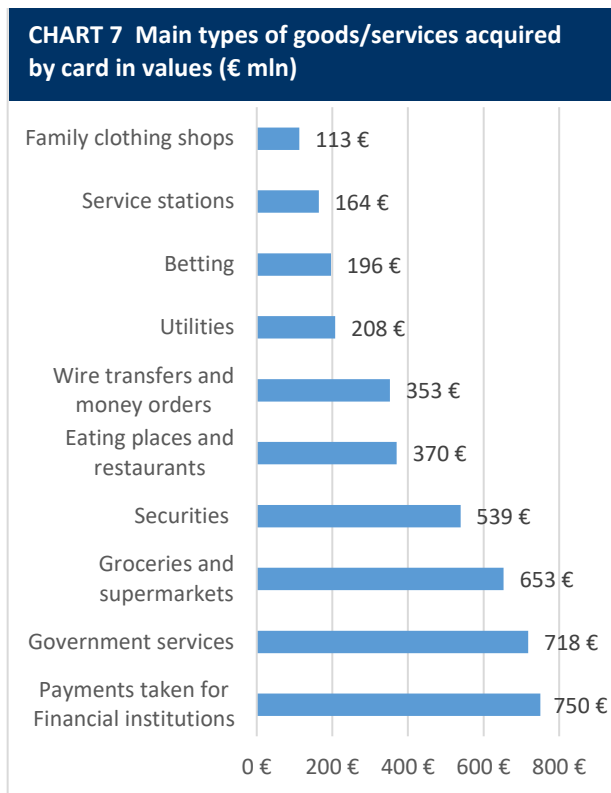


#### 1.5. Card payments per type of good/ services

**Chart 7** illustrates the 10 most popular types of goods or services acquired via card payments in terms of value for the first half of 2024. Card payments are mostly used for payments taken for financial institutions<sup>5</sup>, accounting for 10% (€750 million) of the total card payments. Card payments in government services are ranked second in order of preference representing nearly 10% (€718

<sup>5</sup> This includes merchandise or services, and debt repayment.

million) of the total of goods/ services acquired by card.



## 2. PAYMENT CARDS

At the end of the first half of 2024 the number of payment cards outstanding increased by 11% to 2 million compared with the first half of 2023, averaging two payment cards per Cypriot inhabitant.

In the euro area, the number of payment cards outstanding at the end of the first half of 2024 increased by 4% to 720,6 million compared with the first 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 first half of 2024 shows that consumers are 83% more likely to own a debit card rather than a credit or delayed debit card.

## 3. TERMINALS

The total number of automated teller machines (ATMs) across Cyprus has remained relatively stable from the end of the first half of 2023 (ATMs: 401) to the end of the first half of 2024 (ATMs: 397). It is noteworthy that more than 75% of the total ATMs accepted contactless transactions by the first semester of 2024.

Similarly, the total number of ATMs in the euro area remained relatively stable from the end of the first half of 2023 (ATMs: 268.887) to the first half of 2024 (ATMs: 260.880). Of these, only 30% accepted contactless transactions.

ATMs continue to remain a valuable channel of self-service in Cyprus with €2,4 billion of withdrawals reported in the first half of 2024 recording a modest increase of 3% compared to the corresponding period of 2023.

## 4. PAYMENT INSTITUTIONS AND ELECTRONIC MONEY INSTITUTIONS

The total number of payment and electronic money institutions licensed in Cyprus displayed an upward growth rate during the last few years. Indicatively, the total number of payment and electronic money institutions licensed in Cyprus increased by 19% from the end of the first half of 2023 (total: 32) to the end of the first half of 2024 (total: 38).

In the euro area, the total number of licensed payment institutions and electronic money institutions remained relatively stable from the end of the first half of 2023 (σύνολο: 984) to the end of the first half of 2024 (σύνολο: 992).

It is important to note that for Cyprus, the total number of licensed payment and electronic money institutions per habitant was one of the highest in the euro area (0,004%).

## 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.*