

Press release

Payment Accounts: EBF cautiously welcomes trilogue agreement

- Agreement on access to basic bank accounts requires impact analysis
- Cross-border switching rightfully removed from agreement

The European Banking Federation welcomes, with caution, the trilogue agreement that European institutions have reached on the general approach to payment accounts in Europe.

The EBF has always supported the objectives of the proposal to strengthen transparency, to combat financial exclusion and to encourage the participation of consumers in the internal market. The EBF notes that the progress achieved by the EU institutions builds on initiatives developed by the banking industry in various member states.

The revisions that the European Parliament and the European Council have made to the draft directive have been encouraging in a number of areas. However, the EBF has consistently highlighted the risks of rushing to a conclusion. As a result, some important aspects of the compromise do not fully reflect the way customers undertake their day-to-day banking. The extent and scope of the provisions on access to basic bank accounts still need to be further analysed as they could inappropriately affect the offer of regular bank accounts.

The EBF welcomes the requirements for the provision of switching services at national level and notes that this new legislation has been derived from the set of voluntary principles set out in 2008 by the European Banking Industry Committee, with the approval of the European Commission and the Council of the EU.

The requirements for cross-border switching have been rightly removed from the final agreement. This is a good example of parliamentary scrutiny working well as a component of the law-making process. Imposing an international switching system would create significant operational and infrastructural challenges, with no proven demand for such a service.

About the EBF:

Launched in 1960, the European Banking Federation is the voice of the European banking sector from countries in the European Union and the European Free Trade Association. Members of the federation are 32 national banking associations. The EBF represents the interests of some 4,500 banks, large and small, wholesale and retail, local and cross-border financial institutions. Together, these banks account for over 80 percent of the total assets and deposits and some 80 percent of all bank loans in the EU alone.