



EUROPEAN CENTRAL BANK

EUROSYSTEM

# Digital euro – why?

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BRIE-CITRIS, Bruegel and  
the Bank of Finland Joint  
Workshop

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# European retail payments: dominated by non-European card schemes

Market share of **domestic solutions** for digital payments in shops<sup>1</sup>



**15 out of 21** countries do not have a significantly used<sup>2</sup> domestic solution **for digital payments in shops.**

**Nearly two-thirds** of euro area card transactions are processed by **international card schemes.**<sup>4</sup>

**The digital euro would offer an additional way to pay across the euro area – for all situations.**

Map based on data in Table 1 of [Progress on the preparation phase of a digital euro – closing report](#), ECB, October 2025.

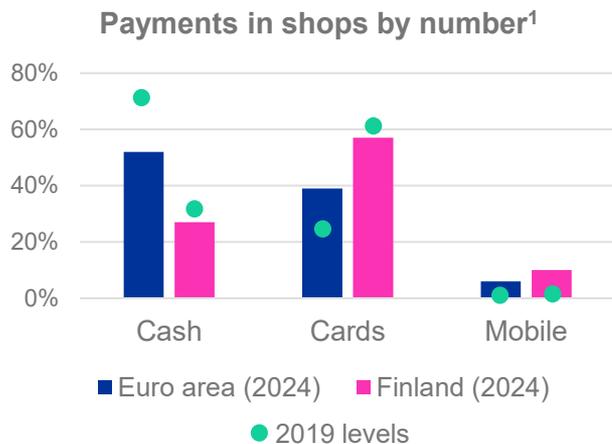
1) Bulgaria joined the euro area on 1 January 2026 – the country has a domestic solution (bcard) for digital payments in shops.

Data collection is in progress; 2) >10 percent market share; 3) >50 percent market share;

4) [Report on card schemes and processors](#), ECB, February 2025.

# As payments move online, public money must follow

## Finland is a frontrunner in digital payments adoption



## The digital euro: a digital form of cash

Complementing cash



Freedom of choice between cash and digital payments



Access to public money



# With the digital euro, Europe can strengthen its autonomy and resilience



The urgency of **preserving the resilience and autonomy of Europe's critical infrastructures** is clear.

Ensuring **strategic autonomy and resilience** in daily **payments** is just as urgent.

# A win-win for Europe: the digital euro brings benefits to consumers, merchants and payment service providers

## Consumers



- **Freedom of choice:** ensuring payments anywhere, anytime and for any payment situation
- **Privacy and data protection**
- An **inclusive and accessible** digital way to pay

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## Merchants



- **Lower fees and stronger negotiation power**, especially for small businesses
- **Instant receipt of funds**

## Payment service providers



- **Maintaining client relationships**
- **Fair remuneration** ensured by the compensation model

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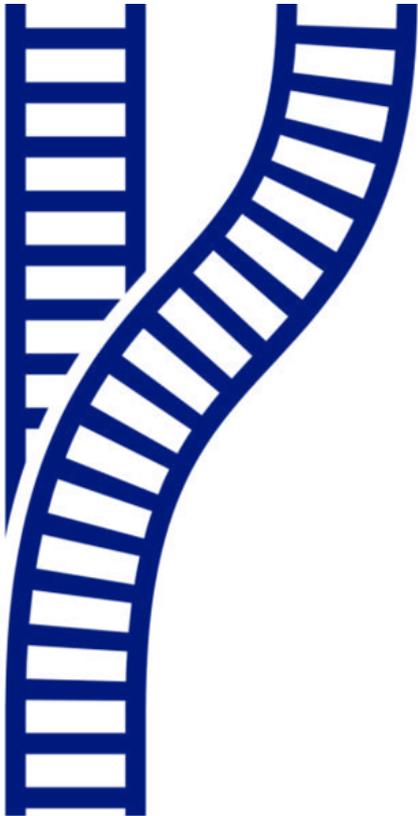
## Payment service providers



- **Maintaining client relationships**
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Available **online and offline**, so also in case of limited connectivity and power outages

# A public-private partnership: European rails for digital payments



## Digital euro



## Domestic and regional solutions

Domestic solutions adopt digital euro standards and achieve pan-European reach without heavy investment

# The Eurosystem pilot aims to fine-tune the digital euro's design and ensure its technical readiness

- A **12-month** pilot, starting in the second half of 2027, conducted in a controlled **Eurosystem environment** involving real-world transactions.
- A **limited number of payment service providers**, merchants and Eurosystem staff will participate. **Payment service provider selection** will start in the first quarter of 2026.
- Four **use cases** will be tested:
  1. Online person-to-person transactions using an alias or access number
  2. Offline person-to-person transactions with near field communication
  3. Online person-to-business transactions at the point of sale via near field communication
  4. Online person-to-business transactions in electronic or mobile commerce with an alias or access number
- The Eurosystem will **gather and apply feedback continuously** throughout the pilot to **further optimise the digital euro**.

## Objectives of the pilot



Test readiness before scaling up



Improve digital euro value proposition



Improve go-to-market strategy



Prepare for subsequent market roll-out

## Legislative preparations in full swing



The ECB appreciates:

- the **agreement** reached by the Council of the European Union's agreement on its negotiating position on the proposed digital euro Regulation;
- the **contributions** of several Member States, including Finland, in highlighting how the digital euro can enhance the resilience of euro area payments;
- the **discussions** in the European Parliament on the proposal, expected to reach a conclusive position in May.



The decision on whether to issue the digital euro will only be considered by the ECB's Governing Council **once the legislation has been adopted.**



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# Thank you

You can reach us at  
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## Additional supporting materials:

- [Progress on the preparation phase of a digital euro – closing report](#)
- Updated digital euro [FAQ](#)
- Webpage: [Digital euro and privacy](#)
- [ECB opinion](#) on the EU Commission's digital euro legislative proposal
- Digital euro [one-pager](#)
- Digital euro [LinkedIn page](#)