

**The European Cards Stakeholders Group publishes a new version of the Volume with guidelines that facilitate the implementation of the Interchange Fee Regulation**

**Brussels, 1 March 2017 – The European Cards Stakeholders Group (ECSG), the industry association in charge of cards standardisation in the Single Euro Payments Area (SEPA), today published version 8.0 of the SEPA Cards Standardisation Volume (“the Volume”). This self-regulatory initiative will help ensure the interoperability and security of cards in Europe. Version 8.0 incorporates comments received during the public consultation, and takes effect immediately. In particular, it provides guidelines to facilitate the implementation of some aspects of the Interchange Fee Regulation (IFR).**

Over one thousand comments were received from stakeholders of the complete card value chain during the public consultation for this release.

Version 8.0 of the Volume therefore includes:

- **Final guidelines to ease compliance with some aspects of the IFR related to contactless payments and choice of application.**

Since June 2016, the IFR has required that all cards must be electronically identifiable (including those used in contactless payments), enabling payers and payees to unequivocally identify which brands and categories of prepaid cards, debit cards, credit cards, or commercial cards are chosen by the payer. The resulting implementation can be managed in several ways, so the Volume includes a non-exhaustive set of concrete examples that show card acceptors how to achieve it. These examples provide helpful clarifications on some complex aspects of the IFR.

- **Details regarding the use of a unique ID for the set of transactions used for pre-authorisation in the hospitality sector.**

This ID will make it convenient for card issuers and acquirers to follow the transaction created when, for example, customers booking a hotel room are asked to pre-authorise a guaranteed amount with their card.

- **A new annex providing a simplified overview of a card transaction.**

The transaction flow of each card payment may differ for commercial or technical reasons (e.g. if the card terminal includes multi-function touchscreen capabilities or only a minimum display, or if the card is used to make an online payment or to pay in a physical store). The annex explains why these differences in the payment process can in turn create different experiences for the customer. This annex aims to enhance understanding in the market of a card transaction flow. It doesn't contain requirements.

The Volume version 8.0 takes effect immediately for a three year period. The ECSG delayed the publication by two months to ensure that the high volume of comments was given sufficient analysis.

Claude Brun, Chair of the ECSG, declares: “While building on what has been developed in previous iterations, version 8.0 represents a major evolution for the Volume as it is now wholly owned and published by the ECSG – just a few months after the new group was created on the foundations of the Cards Stakeholders Group. Both the high level of responses received from multiple sectors during the consultation period and the focus on the updates for the IFR for this release illustrate its relevance to the market now more than ever.”



Jeremy Massey, Vice-Chair of the ECSG adds: “We believe that this new version 8.0 of the Volume will further assist the market both in achieving card standardisation and meeting the new legal requirements. We would also particularly like to thank all the ECSG expert teams and their members from all five sectors for their hard work in delivering this update and also the very many contributions from the public consultation that help to raise the quality of ECSG’s output.”

More information about the ECSG can be found on its [website](#).

**Media contact:**

ECSG secretariat: [secretariat@e-csg.eu](mailto:secretariat@e-csg.eu) / +32 2 733 35 33

**About the European Cards Stakeholders Group**

The European Cards Stakeholders Group (ECSG) is a multi-stakeholder association promoting card harmonisation in the Single Euro Payments Area (SEPA). The ECSG is made up of organisations from five sectors of the card payment chain: retailers/wholesale, vendors (card, payment devices, related IT systems), processors of card transactions, card schemes, and payment service providers. The ECSG is an international not-for-profit association. The objective of the ECSG is to contribute to making it possible for EU citizens to use their cards for payments and ATM withdrawals with the same ease and convenience throughout SEPA as in their own country, and to help remove technical, practical and commercial barriers to card harmonisation for the benefit of industry participants. It pursues this goal through the maintenance and evolution of the SEPA Cards Standardisation Volume (the Volume), a key document for the card industry defining guidelines for cards standardisation, interoperability and security in Europe. As a self-regulatory initiative, the ECSG also promotes conformance of the card industry to the Volume. The ECSG is not part of the EU institutional framework, yet its creation is supported by European Union institutions, which participate in its work as observers.

[www.e-csg.eu](http://www.e-csg.eu)



[@CardsECSG](https://twitter.com/CardsECSG)