

## Commission's High Level Conference on integrity of identities and payments – 22/23 November 2006

**T**he **High Level Conference**. The European Commission is organising a high level conference on **22/23 November 2006** in **Brussels** on "**Maintaining the integrity of identities and payments. Two challenges to fraud prevention**".

This conference is part of the awareness initiatives undertaken by the Commission services in order to improve the prevention of fraud and counterfeiting of non-cash means of payments. Indeed, it is one of the key actions foreseen in the **2004-2007 EU Action Plan to prevent fraud on non-cash means of payment**. The main goal of this Action Plan is to strengthen businesses and consumers' confidence regarding non-cash means of payments and in particular those done in non face-to-face situations. See background information for more details on the Action Plan.

The growing problem in this regard is **identity theft**, which is increasingly affecting society in Europe. In the payment area, this kind of fraud has serious implications for its victims (e.g. financial institutions and payment users, whether individuals or businesses) which go beyond the mere financial losses. Indeed, the emotional costs and the cost of "cleaning up own's name" for the payment users may be high. Phishing and generally e-fraud are also increasing problems.

The **aim of this High Level Conference** is to emphasise the importance of the wider **involvement of policy makers and high ranking representatives of national administrations** in these areas. Indeed, political support is also clearly required to tackle the threats of identity theft and payment fraud. This is why the target audience of the Conference should be composed of policy makers. The conference should also provide an ideal platform to discuss possible future Commission initiatives in this field.

This aim is also reflected in the **programme of the conference** (available at the website identified below) with particular high level representatives on the first day of the conference, including notably **Vice-President Frattini** and **Commissioner McCreevy**. Other speakers come from EU national governments, Europol and the private sector. They all will offer their views and discuss how to best prevent identity theft and payment fraud and enhance public confidence.

**Practical aspects and registering:** participation is free of charge and simultaneous interpretation will be provided from and into all EU official languages, subject to the availability of the interpreters. The Conference expects to bring together around 150 to 200 participants. You can register on-line at:

[http://ec.europa.eu/justice\\_home/news/events/news\\_events\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/justice_home/news/events/news_events_en.htm)

## Financing fraud prevention initiatives: AGIS funding in 2006.

**A**gis projects selected. The European Commission has recently taken a decision on the proposals submitted by interested parties for **AGIS** financing in 2006. A significant number of projects were presented, which made the evaluation difficult. Among the successful projects, there is one directly related to the prevention of payment fraud. This project had been presented by a group of national payment card schemes. It aims at making an opportunity and feasibility study for a **European Card Fraud Information Database**. There are other selected projects which may have an indirect interest for the prevention of payment fraud, such as some projects in relation to cyber criminality or a comparative study of the incidence and impact of the recruitment and/or infiltration by organised crime groups of persons employed within the retail banking sector with the purpose of facilitating the commission of serious fraud.

**AGIS** is a European Commission's framework programme that co-finances and supports transnational initiatives in Europe aiming at cooperating in the fight against crime. Further information about **AGIS** can be found at:

[http://europa.eu.int/comm/justice\\_home/funding/agis/funding\\_agis\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu.int/comm/justice_home/funding/agis/funding_agis_en.htm)

## Financing fraud prevention initiatives: the future Commission's programmes.

**2**006 should be the last year of operation for **AGIS**. In fact, the Commission adopted in 2005 a package of legislative proposals which includes among others a **new framework programme on Security with a budgetary envelope of 745 million euros for the period 2007-2013**. This framework programme is divided into two specific programmes covering respectively: Prevention of and Fight against Crime (600 million euros); and Prevention of Terrorism (140 million euros). A separate programme deals with Criminal Justice (200 million euros). This means an **enormous increase of EU financial intervention in the security area**.

The **new Crime Prevention Programme will still have among its priority objectives the prevention of financial crime**, including payment fraud and identity theft. A part of the Programme will be devoted to the co-financing of transnational projects. Another part will deal with framework partnership agreements, which may be concluded in cases where there is a need to work on a regular and stable basis with a network involving a certain number of beneficiaries, or to award grants for recurring actions to a limited group of beneficiaries, with a view to promote initiatives in specific areas indicated in the programme.

The Commission proposal for these programmes is still under discussion in the European Parliament and Council and is expected to be adopted by end 2006. **The calls for tenders and for proposals for all types of projects are expected to be launched in the beginning of 2007.**

## Next meeting of the FPEG: 28 November 2006

**N**ext meeting of the FPEG. The next meeting of the FPEG will most likely take place on **28 November 2006**, in Brussels. Further information will be sent to FPEG Members.

## Background information: the FPEG and the prevention of payment fraud in Europe

**The EU Action Plan.** In October 2004 the Commission issued an **Action Plan 2004-2007 of non-legislative measures to prevent fraud and counterfeiting of non-cash means of payments**, with a view to foster a more coherent approach to fraud prevention. This Action Plan builds on a previous one of 2001. It will complement the Commission's recent proposal for a directive on payment services in the internal market (the so-called "New Legal Framework for Payments", December 2005) in underpinning the creation of a Single Payment Area in the EU. It also complements the banking industry initiatives to establish a single euro payments area (SEPA) aiming to enable European citizens to make payments in the euro area as securely, quickly and efficiently as payments within national borders. SEPA should be in place by 2010. Finally, the Action Plan should notably continue and further strengthen the existing initiatives to prevent fraud and contribute to maintain and increase confidence in payments.

**The FPEG.** A **Fraud Prevention Expert Group** (FPEG) was established under those Action Plans. This experts' group at EU level includes representatives of all parties involved in fraud prevention: i.e. national and EU payment schemes, banks, national public authorities, European and international law enforcement agencies (e.g. Europol, Interpol) retailers, consumer groups, network operators etc. The FPEG provides for a platform where stakeholders can effectively exchange information and best practice to prevent fraud. It contributes to intensify cooperation between interested parties, especially at cross-border level. It provides advice to the Commission.

**How is the work of the FPEG organised?** The FPEG meets twice a year. The FPEG is chaired by the Commission, but a **steering group** of FPEG members helps in the preparation of the work of the FPEG and supervise the sub-groups activities. Currently, **seven subgroups** have been created, dealing with the following subjects: Security Evaluation, ATM and POS Security, Commerce Issues, Identity Theft and Phishing, Data Management, Law Enforcement and Communication Issues. The subgroups may not necessarily be chaired by the Commission. The secretariat of the FPEG and the subgroups is provided by the Commission.

## More Information

More information is available at the website of the **FPEG**: [http://europa.eu.int/comm/internal\\_market/payments/fraud/fpeg/index\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu.int/comm/internal_market/payments/fraud/fpeg/index_en.htm)

You may contact the **FPEG secretariat** through the e-mail address provided in the website.

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