

Glossary:Single euro payments area (SEPA)

Statistics Explained

The **Single euro payments area** , abbreviated as **SEPA** , is a self-regulatory initiative by the banking sector of Europe (represented in the European Payments Council – EPC) aiming to harmonise payment products, infrastructures and technical standards for the **euro** across the **euro area** in such a way that all electronic payments across borders become as easy as domestic payments. It applies to payments by citizens, companies and other economic actors made via credit card, debit card, bank transfer or direct debit.

The [European Commission Directive 2366/2015/EU](#) of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 November 2015 on payment services in the internal market (amending Directives 2002/65/EC, 2009/110/EC and 2013/36/EU and Regulation (EU) No 1093/2010, and repealing Directive 2007/64/EC) provides the necessary legal framework for SEPA, by regulating payment services and payment service providers throughout the [European Union \(EU\)](#) and [European Economic Area \(EEA\)](#) , with the objectives of both increasing competition and participation in the payments industry (also from non-banks) and providing for a level playing field by harmonising consumer protection and the rights/obligations for payment providers and users.

Implementation of SEPA in the Member States of the EU as well as in Iceland, Liechtenstein, Monaco, Norway and Switzerland has occurred on a step-by-step basis, the latest step being the launch of the 'SEPA direct debit capability' on 13 October 2009. To ensure that SEPA is fully implemented, the [European Commission](#) published a SEPA Roadmap for 2009-2012 identifying actions with clear deadlines under six priority areas. To date there has been no agreement on an end date for final implementation among the various stakeholders. SEPA includes territories considered to be part of the EU in accordance with Article 299 of the [Treaty of Rome](#) .

Further information

- [European Central Bank - SEPA links](#)
- [European Commission - Single Euro Payments Area \(SEPA\)](#)
- [European Payments Council - SEPA - Vision and Goals](#)

Related concept

- [Single market](#)