1. The background:

- Access to a payment account has become a pre-condition for participating fully in the economic and social life of a modern society, given that the use of cash is rapidly decreasing. In today’s world, not having access to a payment account makes everyday life difficult and more expensive.
- However, according to recent studies, around **58 million consumers over the age of 15 in the EU do not have a payment account.**
- Around **25 million consumers without a bank account would like to have one**\(^1\).
- Of the citizens without a bank account, it is estimated that around **2.5 million have been denied access to one**\(^1\).
- Only **3% of EU consumers have opened a payment account abroad.**

2. The figures:

2.1 EU citizens without a payment account

The figure below shows that the number of consumers without a payment account varies from 55% to less than 1% of the national population. The highest levels are reached in Romania (55%) and Bulgaria (47%), and the lowest in the Scandinavian countries (less than 1%).

*Consumers without a payment account*

2.2. Reasons for not having a payment account

The table below shows that 56% of consumers without a payment account say they do not need or want one. According to the Special Eurobarometer on Retail Financial Services, these are predominantly people over 55 (65%) and 69% of them are retired. This response is also more common amongst those with lower education, including 66% of people who left school aged 15 or under.

**Responses of EU consumers without bank accounts**

| EU  | AT  | BE  | BG  | CY  | CZ  | DK  | EE  | FI  | FR  | DE  | EL  | HU  | IE  | IT  | LV  | LT  | LU  | MT  | NL  | PL  | PT  | RO  | SK  | SI  | ES  | SE  | UK  | Source: Special Eurobarometer on Retail Financial Services, European Commission, February 2012, p.26 | *The numbers do not add up to 100% since the questionnaire allowed for a multiple answer |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 56% | 15% | 29% | 77% | 67% | 66% | 34% | 47% | 44% | 8%  | 24% | 54% | 84% | 74% | 49% | 77% | 72% | 9%  | 71% | 39% | 66% | 53% | 60% | 75% | 53% | 63% | 52% | 37% | |
2.3. % of consumers that have opened a payment account in a different EU country (actual) and who would consider opening an account in a different EU country (potential)

The *Special Eurobarometer* indicates that in the EU an average of 3% of consumers have opened a payment account in another Member State. The number of consumers who have opened a payment account cross-border varies considerably from country to country, from 8% in Estonia and Luxembourg to 1% in Romania, Bulgaria, Greece, Malta and France. Despite generally low levels of cross-border activity, the potential interest in opening a payment account cross-border is substantially higher in some Member States.

Source: *Special Eurobarometer on Retail Financial Services, European Commission, February 2012, p.30 and 35*