

Press Release



Reachability and Interoperability as of 1 January 2008

Equens and Italian Seceti collaborate on SEPA

Milan/Utrecht, 1 June 2007 - Equens N.V. and Seceti S.p.A. - a hundred percent subsidiary of the ICBPI Group in Italy - agreed on collaborating to clear their SEPA "cross community" payments via Equens and Seceti as of 1 January 2008. This collaboration allows both payment processors to offer European banks an alternative for clearing their payments throughout Europe. Clearing of payments means determining the amounts banks owe each other. After clearing, payments will be settled by the Central Banks.

The European payments market is changing significantly as a result of harmonisation and standardisation fostered by SEPA (Single Euro Payments Area). Moreover, reachability and interoperability between the different European payment processors and banks will be required. This means, that a service payment processor like Equens or Seceti ensures its clients, that any payment sent to any other bank account in the EU will reach its destination within the agreed time frame. The accessibility of every bank account number within the EU can only be guaranteed when there is systematic and consistent access to banks and payment processors.

Michael Steinbach, Chairman of Equens' Board of Directors: "According to our strategy we will offer a variety of clearing possibilities via e.g. an Equens clearing community, collaboration with partners and other ways to ensure reachability and interoperability. We can act as a single point of entry for our clients". The list of Equens's prominent current clients includes several leading European banks such as ABN AMRO, Citigroup, DZ BANK, ING, KBC Bank, OP Bank Group, Rabobank, etc. The client base of Equens is located in most of the European countries.

"Seceti as one of the biggest domestic payment processors in Italy is looking forward to create a maximum service level for our clients. The collaboration offers an alternative, extremely competitive, for clearing services in Europe" stated Giuseppe Capponcelli, General Manager of Seceti. With the start of SEPA on January 1, 2008, a euro-domestic market will arise and Seceti is SEPA ready.

Note for the editorial staff

About Equens

Equens is the first truly pan-European full-service payment processor. As one of the largest and most innovative payment processors in Europe, we lead the market for future-proof payments and debit card processing solutions. We offer a complete and highly competitive portfolio, which we can align seamlessly with the requirements of our clients, thanks to our flexible and client-oriented approach.

At Equens, payments are in good hands. We continue to build on many years of experience and the excellent reputation of our founders: Interpay Nederland and the German Transaktionsinstitut für Zahlungsverkehrsdienstleistungen. With a combined annual volume of 7 billion transactions and 1.9 billion switched POS and ATM transactions, our market share within the euro zone is well over 10%. Our current leading position makes us the obvious payment processor within SEPA. Our integrated, high-performance processing platform is SEPA-ready at this very moment. This means that clients will be able to purchase SEPA services from us from day one. Furthermore we will provide them with extensive support to ensure a smooth transition to SEPA. It is clear that together with our clients we are facing a challenging future.

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About Seceti

Seceti is one of the major companies in Italy specializing in outsourcing services for Payment Systems and an integral part of the ICBPI Group. It has a complete offering for management of electronic payment circuits, with an acknowledged leadership in full outsourcing (hardware and software) of ATMs where, through the "QuiMultibanca" network, it links over 8,000 ATM machines distributed throughout Italy. In the POS field, it handles the processing of more than 230,000 terminals and manages all the back end processes. For Corporate Banking Interbancario (C.B.I.) services, SECETI is a delegated technical structure.

In the card sector, Seceti's offering integrates and completes the ICBPI component, covering the entire range of infrastructural, applicative and operative services. Thanks to its position as service provider for international circuits, Seceti is able to manage numerous types of card, such as domestic, international and multi-function prepaid cards. In conclusion, as an Application Center for the National Inter-bank Network, as well as traditional routing services for domestic wholesale and retail payments, Seceti ALSO offers technological solutions for access to the SwiftNet network, enabling banks to participate in the BI-Rel Target and EBA Step2 systems, minimizing the costs of upgrading to the new infrastructures.

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