

Public Statement of Infrastructures promoting the SEPA Progress

We, the undersigning infrastructures, actively support the initiative for a Single Euro Payments Area (SEPA).

In order to provide the operational base for the exchange of SEPA payment instruments, we are offering the processing of SEPA Credit Transfer (SCT) to our customer banks, in line with the current provisions set forth by the European banking community and supported by the European Commission and the ECB/Eurosystem.

However, according to our assessment the adoption of the SEPA Credit Transfer has been below most stakeholders' expectations so far – although we have been providing the necessary infrastructural base. One reason for this is the fact that a lot of public administrations will only start their SEPA migration in the course of 2009. Likewise, corporations have been hesitant in adopting the SEPA. In order to facilitate the SEPA adoption by public administrations and corporations, we therefore welcome the recommendations already made by the Council of the European Union (ECOFIN) in February 2009 and the Eurosystem and appreciate every future reemphasis that all public administrations and corporations should consider adopting the SCT (and as soon as it is introduced the SEPA Direct Debit) as preferred payment instruments.

Another major reason for the moderate adoption rate might be the insecurity if and when legacy payment instruments will be phased out. It goes without saying that an indefinite parallel processing of legacy payment instruments and SEPA instruments leads to inefficiencies and additional costs for us infrastructures and our customer banks. Moreover increased SEPA Credit Transfer volumes would allow us and our customer banks to reap benefits of economies of scale.

For several years we, as well as our customer banks, have been making considerable investments in order to fulfil the SEPA requirements on time. Therefore, we are interested in planning security, which is likely to promote the diffusion of the SEPA Credit Transfer. In addition, increased planning security would serve those infrastructures which plan to introduce the SEPA Direct Debit (SDD) in 2009.

We are well aware that there are arguments in favour for one common SEPA migration end date for both SEPA instruments (i.e. credit transfers and direct debits) as well as for two separate dates. Although there are advocates for each of these possibilities among the undersigning infrastructures, all of us agree that any of these two outcomes would be better than having no SEPA migration end date at all.

For that reason we are in favour of (a) defined migration end date(s), after which the vast majority of all credit transfers and direct debits in euro (e.g. 90 per cent) will be processed with SEPA instruments only. When defining such (a) date(s), the typical investment cycles (i.e. 3 – 5 years) have to be taken into consideration. Although SEPA has in principal been a market driven project, there is a lot of political interest in the success of SEPA too. Therefore not only a self-regulated migration date but also a regulated one, based on consideration of market feedback, could be a way forward.

We therefore encourage all involved stakeholders to contribute to the discussion on the end date(s) for migration. Based on this discussion, the relevant entities should publish the SEPA migration end date(s) in the course of 2009.

- The undersigning infrastructures in alphabetic order -



In its capacity as the operator of BICOMP



In its capacity as the operator of RPS



In its capacity as the operator of STEP.AT

