PAYMENTS EUROPE

Copenhagen Economics CE

The Value of Card Payments in Europe's Economy

How card payments support consumers, merchants and governments across Europe

Introduction

Card payments play a central role in Europe's economy, supporting everyday transactions, enabling commerce and helping consumers and businesses participate in an increasingly digital society.

New independent research from Copenhagen Economics provides evidence on the economic value generated by card payments today and the opportunities associated with continued adoption across Europe.

Delivering measurable benefits today

€19.8 billion

annual economic benefits across consumers and merchants in 2024.

The study estimates that card payments generated approximately €19.8 billion in annual economic benefits across consumers and merchants in the EU in 2024.

Consumers

€11 billion

in annual benefits

- Faster and more convenient payments
- Reduced cash handling
- Greater security and consumer protections
- Improved payment experience

Merchants

€8.8 billion

in annual resource savings from lower payment-handling costs

- Increased efficiency
- Lower resource costs
- Faster transactions
- Improved customer experience

The benefits continue to grow

€33 billion

Potential annual benefits by 2035

If recent adoption trends continue, annual economic benefits across consumers and merchants could reach approximately €33 billion by 2035.



Supporting public finances

€21.6 billion

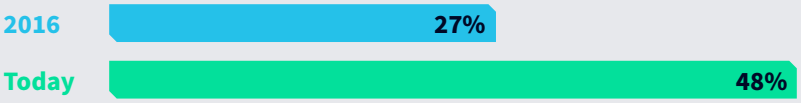
Additional annual VAT revenue associated with increased card usage since 2014

The study finds that increased card usage is associated with higher levels of transaction traceability and VAT compliance.

These effects are linked to an estimated €21.6 billion in additional annual VAT revenue across the European Union.

Card payments are becoming increasingly important across Europe

48% of EU point-of-sale transactions were made by card in 2024



Significant investment has already been made in card acceptance, technology and security across Europe. Yet cards still account for less than half of EU point-of-sale transactions, pointing to considerable potential for further economic value as adoption continues.

The benefits go beyond what can be quantified

The study highlights a range of wider benefits that are difficult to measure consistently but remain important to Europe's economy and society. **Card payments help support:**

- **Secure digital commerce**
- **Cross-border trade and market access**
- **Innovation and digital wallets**
- **Fraud prevention and consumer protection**
- **Operational resilience**
- **Consumer choice and convenience**

Together, these benefits help support a modern, competitive and innovative European economy.

The Copenhagen Economics study shows that card payments support consumers, merchants and governments through greater efficiency, convenience, security and trust, while continued adoption and innovation can further strengthen those benefits in the years ahead.

Source: The Role of Card Payments in Europe's Economy, Copenhagen Economics, commissioned by Payments Europe (2026).

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