

The card industry creates the European Cards Stakeholders Group, an association dedicated to cards standardisation in Europe

Brussels, 15 September 2016 – The first board meeting of the newly created European Cards Stakeholders Group (ECSG) was held today. This new industry association takes over the mission of the Cards Stakeholders Group (CSG), which was created in 2009. The role of this multi-stakeholder association is to promote card harmonisation in the Single Euro Payments Area (SEPA), notably through the development of the SEPA Cards Standardisation Volume (the Volume). This document is key to achieving cards standardisation within the European card industry. The ECSG is currently made up of 32 organisations from five sectors throughout the card payment chain. It also welcomes four observers, including some from European Union institutions which support its creation.

The ECSG is a newly created multi-stakeholder association, which aims to support and promote European cards standardisation. Built on the foundations of the CSG, which was created by the European Payments Council (EPC) in 2009 and has now reached maturity, the ECSG is taking over the CSG's mission. The transformation of the CSG into the ECSG, with the formal legal status of an international not-for-profit association, reinforces the commitment from the five industry sectors which were already represented in the CSG. These sectors are the retailers/wholesale, vendors (cards, payment devices, related IT systems), processors of card transactions, card schemes, and payment service providers.

In particular, the ECSG will strive for:

- The maintenance and evolution of the Volume in line with market needs, reflecting the evolution of card payment technology. The Volume, formerly developed by the CSG, is a key document for the card industry, aimed at achieving cards standardisation, interoperability, and security in Europe. The next Volume version (8.0) which will enter into effect in March 2017, following a public consultation which ended in August, will be the first to be owned by the ECSG.
- The promotion of Volume conformance throughout the card payments value chain, to enable a more harmonised SEPA card payment ecosystem. This conformance process is called "labelling". As the ECSG is a self-regulatory initiative, the labelling of card stakeholders is a voluntary self-assessment process, which is tremendously important to contributing to the harmonisation of cards in SEPA.

In addition to the 32 member organisations, the ECSG welcomes four observers including the European Commission and the European Central Bank. These European institutions have been supportive of the creation of the ECSG, just as they have acknowledged the CSG's achievements and the relevance of this body for European cards standardisation.

Claude Brun, Chair of the ECSG (and representative of the EPC), declares: "Having been involved with the creation of the original Cards Stakeholders Group, the establishment of the European Cards Stakeholders Group as a fully-fledged international not-for-profit association represents a major development in the efforts toward European cards standardisation. As in 2009, the Volume continues to be the focus for the association."

Jeremy Massey, ECSG Vice-Chair, adds "As a member of the retail sector from a global organisation that relies heavily on card payments and a cards expert myself, I too have worked within CSG since 2009 and fully support its cross-sector standardisation work. Continued maintenance of these Books is important in ensuring that these efforts are sustained and explains why there is such widespread multi-sector support in the creation of this new organisation."

More information about the ECSG can be found on its [website](#).

Media contact:

Carole Cissé, Communication Manager: carole.cisse@epc-cep.eu / +32 2 739 16 92

About the European Cards Stakeholders Group

The European Cards Stakeholders Group (ECSG) is a multi-stakeholder association promoting card harmonisation in the Single Euro Payments Area (SEPA). The ECSG is made up of organisations from five sectors of the card payment chain: retailers/wholesale, vendors (card, payment devices, related IT systems), processors of card transactions, card schemes, and payment service providers. The ECSG is an international not-for-profit association. The objective of the ECSG is to contribute to making it possible for EU citizens to use their cards for payments and ATM withdrawals with the same ease and convenience throughout SEPA as in their own country, and to help remove technical, practical and commercial barriers to card harmonisation for the benefit of industry participants. It pursues this goal through the maintenance and evolution of the SEPA Cards Standardisation Volume (the Volume), a key document for the card industry defining guidelines for cards standardisation, interoperability and security in Europe. As a self-regulatory initiative, the ECSG also promotes conformance of the card industry to the Volume. The ECSG is not part of the EU institutional framework, yet its creation is supported by European Union institutions, which participate in its work as observers.

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