

IN FRANCE, CARDS ARE THE PREFERRED METHOD OF PAYMENT FOR CONSUMERS AND RETAILERS ALIKE, BUT NEW PAYMENT METHODS ARE BEGINNING TO GAIN ACCEPTANCE

The proliferation of payment methods available on the French market has been welcomed by consumers and retailers alike. However, all agree on one key priority: security. In this respect, cards are still widely perceived as the most reliable payment method.

Paris, Brussels, 17 April 2025 – According to the latest study commissioned by Payments Europe, France stands out from other European countries as having made a more marked transition to digital payments. French consumers use less cash than the European average, preferring cards for reasons of convenience and security. This dynamic is prompting French retailers to rapidly adapt their payment services.

Robrecht Vandormael, Secretary General of Payments Europe, says: “Our study confirms that digital payments have become an integral part of French payment habits, much more so than elsewhere in Europe. Merchants now share this reflex and are adapting the payment methods that they offer accordingly. The survey also reveals that French people have already widely adopted new payment methods, such as instant payment, and that they expect to make greater use of them in the future.”

A payments market in the process of transformation

The study, based on a survey of French consumers and merchants, highlights a payments market that is constantly evolving: increasingly digitised and increasingly competitive, responding to users' growing expectations surrounding simplicity and security.

As far as retailers are concerned, this evolution is well underway. 71% of French merchants now express a preference for digital payments over cash. If given the choice, 64% would like to be able to refuse cash. This preference is explained by the additional guarantees and enhanced security that cards offer: 67% of French merchants prefer cards to any other payment method, as it ensures the correct receipt of funds, limits the risk of fraud, and offers a better customer experience.

What's more, 90% of merchants believe that the value offered by cards outweighs the cost, and 74% of them even say that the cost of cards has fallen or remained stable in recent years.

What merchants are telling us:



79% of French merchants appreciate the **variety of payment options** available to them



90% of French merchants believe that the **value offered by cards outweighs their cost**



71% prefer **digital payments over cash payments**



85% believe that by accepting a **wide range of payment options, they have been able to increase sales**

Cards are becoming an integral part of French life

The use of cash is declining faster in France than elsewhere in Europe: the number of consumers who paid with cash in 2024 was 8% lower than the European average. In shops, 72% of French consumers prefer to pay by card, even when another payment method is available.

Consumers highlight the ease, security and speed of card payments. 74% believe that it offers added value when compared with other payment methods, particularly when it comes to managing returns or complaints, a benefit cited by 81% of consumers surveyed.

78% of consumers say they trust their card more than any other payment method, and 57% consider access to credit to be a key benefit of cards.

What's more, consumer behaviour is changing: more than half of French people say they are prepared to make greater use of instant payments over the next 12 months. However, certain obstacles remain: 33% cite a risk of fraud linked to real-time transfers, and 22% fear that these payments will not be accepted everywhere.

What consumers are telling us :



85% of French consumers believe that the **payment methods currently available meet their needs**



74% of French consumers believe that card payments offer **added value compared to other payment methods**



78% **trust their card more** than other payment methods



52% say they are prepared to make **greater use of instant payments**, even though they are less popular in France than in other European markets

The digital euro: a concept that is still poorly understood

In line with trends across other European countries, French consumers feel they have limited knowledge of the digital euro and its development, and 44% have never heard of it, with 27% of consumers unsure how the digital euro would benefit them and 25% believing that there would be no benefits at all.

Of the approximately 9% of French consumers who consider themselves to be informed about the digital euro, more than a third believe that its main benefits would be greater speed and convenience.

Methodology

This study is based on a survey commissioned by Payments Europe and carried out in 2024.

It was carried out among 2,250 physical retail merchants and e-merchants, and 250 professionals in Greece, Austria, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, Hungary, Ireland, Latvia and Lithuania respectively. 13,000 consumers were questioned, 1,000 from each country, including France, Greece, Austria, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Sweden.

In 2023, the survey was completed by 1,560 retailers operating in France (264), Germany (252), Italy (263), Spain (271), Sweden (242) and Poland (268).

Respondents were weighted according to region, gender and age to ensure representativeness.

About Payments Europe

Payments Europe is the leading European association representing the main players in the European payments industry. Its 13 members, ACGIE, AirPlus International, Bank of America, Card Payment Sweden, Citi, DKB, Elavon, JP Morgan, Lloyds, Mastercard, PSA, Visa and Wex, are European and global financial institutions and payment networks of all sizes. All are committed to promoting the value of digital payments and contributing to the policies that shape the industry. Payments Europe is committed to a dynamic, innovative and competitive European payments market, based on a balanced regulatory framework and focused on consumer protection. For more information:

www.paymentseurope.eu



Press Contact

FTI Consulting – Léonard Lechien

leonard.lechien@fticonsulting.com – T. + 33 (0) 6 77 28 51 77

Payments Europe

secretariat@paymentseurope.eu