

Payments Statistics info



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Outcome of the Payments Statistics Workshop (30 November 2015)

During the workshop, an inventory of difficulties/issues that arose when preparing the first data collection was presented. These issues were specific to the different actors: the reporting agents, the NBB (while compiling the reported data) and the ECB (while applying a series of consistency checks).

The ECB is planning to organise a meeting to discuss the experiences in the different markets with the NCBs, but this meeting will only take place in February 2016. As guidance or feedback from the ECB will then be too late for the 2015 data collection, the NBB and the Belgian reporting agents have to decide on a way forward for the 2015 data collection.

This outcome should be read together with the slides presented during the workshop. It is published in the form of an infofiche to inform all stakeholders on the decisions taken in order to prepare the data collection process in 2016 (2015 payments data).

Slides 7-8-9-10: number of payment accounts

Some countries did not repeat the overnight transferable deposits (which can only be held by credit institutions) into the total number of payment accounts. Others did, like the Spanish example on the slide 8. The Belgian data on payment accounts reflect only the payment accounts held by ELMIs or payment institutions. The ECB is aware of the different approaches and is expected to provide more guidance. It is very well possible that the Belgian data on payment accounts for 2014 will have to be updated in 2016 in order to contain the overnight transferable deposits held by the credit institutions.

Outcome: this update can be done by the NBB on the basis of the already received data, no further intervention by the reporting agents.

Slides 12-13: formatting of the OneGate tables

Reporting agents were confronted with a confusing mix of data to be reported in units/thousands/millions, even within one single OneGate table. Although this was a source of a number of mistakes, it was agreed during the workshop NOT to change this and to keep continuity with the 2014 way of collecting.

Outcome: no update in OneGate.

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Slide 14: Card payment initiation (on POS of remotely) not available

The ECB is aware of the fact that this information is mostly not available.

Outcome: OneGate will however be updated to include a mathematic check on “total=POS+remotely”. If the distinction between POS and remotely is not available, reporting agents can report all transactions as POS transactions. A footnote in the ECB statistics will clarify that the published data are estimates.

Slides 14-15-25-26: Country breakdown of card payments not available (table 7a/8a)

A majority of card issuers (account holding PSPs of the card holder) declared not to be able to provide country breakdowns of card payments, mainly due to the fact that they only receive a limited set of information when they receive the payment data through the Belgian Clearing system CEC. The same card data were collected from the card network providers having the status of payment institution (reported data on slide 25), which were able to provide full country breakdown. The NBB therefore used the data coming from the network providers and not use the data provided by the card issuing PSPs.

A possible solution to this problem could be to add the (national and international) card schemes to the mandatory reporting agent scope. This was already proposed also by other NCBs to the Eurosystem, but this is only feasible in an upcoming review of the Regulation. Such a review could at the earliest be implemented in 2018.

Another workaround for our way forward in 2016 could be to ask only the terminal providers to report card transactions on the terminals they provide (meaning that no longer the card holder’s PSP would report but the terminal provider), but there are some downsides on this: it is a change in methodology and some participants were reluctant because of the considerable impact on the data retrieval processes. Moreover, some terminal providers have doubts on the availability of all requested data, and envisaged that they would have to require additional information from the card schemes in order to be able to report the required data.

Outcome: most reporting agents would prefer to keep the methodology as applied last year, but some reporting agents are still analysing. Their feedback is expected in the coming days. The NBB will publish ASAP a final decision on a potential change in methodology, but it seems not very likely.

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Slide 16: requested data not available: exchange rates

Outcome: ECB to be made aware of the missing exchange rates, and the cumbersome process if the reporting agents have to follow strictly the methodology (obliging them to use the ECB reference exchange rate or exchange rates applied for these transactions).

Slides 19-20: issues with number of cards in table 6

A number of reporting agents seem to have misinterpreted the breakdown in the number of cards with a payment function: the number of cards reported under “with a debit function”, “with a delayed debit function” and “with a credit function” was in some cases repeated under “with a debit and/or delayed debit function” and under “with a credit and/or delayed debit function”. These data are NOT meant to be reported twice, as the fields “with a debit and/or delayed debit function” and “with a credit and/or delayed debit function” can only be used for the number of cards where the functions of the card would not be clearly distinguishable.

Outcome: OneGate will be updated to clarify that the first category will be “cards with only a debit function”, the second category “cards with only a delayed debit function”, the third category will be “cards with only a credit function”. The fourth and fifth category should only be used in case the card function would not be clearly distinguishable. Furthermore, some mathematic checks leading to “warnings” (without blocking the user) could be added in order to detect data that would be identical in two subcategories. It should however be stressed that the Regulation allows to report cards that have more than one function, as mentioned in the annexes of the Regulation (under part 2.1) allowing the total number of cards to be less than the total. Here OneGate will react with a non-blocking “warning” whenever the total would be less than the underlying categories.

Slide 21: OneGate error to be corrected

The OneGate tool contained an error as described on slide 21. The reported data were replaced by an estimation on the basis of Febelfin data.

Outcome: OneGate will be corrected to clarify that the “cards with an e-money function which have been loaded at least once” are part of the overall total “Cards with an e-money function”, and not as presented by error.

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Slides 22-23-24: adding OneGate internal checks

Outcome: OneGate will be updated with further internal mathematical checks. The NBB will publish in a separate infofiche the newly added checks.

Slides 31-32-33 : Summary

All topics have been discussed, and only one open issue remains: how are table 7b/8b to be reported?

Two options remain:

1. Keep the reporting as before, meaning that the card issuers report to the NBB and the network providers also report to the NBB. As the network providers provide better data on country breakdowns, NBB will most likely choose the network providers' data
2. Ask only the terminal providers to report on all transactions on the terminals (at least for part a and b of these tables), but it is unclear whether the terminal providers dispose of all necessary information

Outcome: the reporting agents are invited to come back to the NBB on this question, by mid December. It seems at first sight that most reporting agents would prefer the continuation of last year's way of reporting, in order not to change fundamentally the data collection.

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