

CASH

Key points for consumers

Why it matters to consumers

Cash has many advantages: everyone can use it without a bank account. It guarantees consumers' privacy as transactions are not traceable and it is tangible and hence facilitates budget management. Cash also offers resilience as it is independent from energy outages or from information technology failures. But the offer of cash is decreasing with banks closing ATMs and branches, and many merchants accepting only cards and mobile payments. Therefore, in the interest of consumer inclusiveness in payments, access to and the acceptability of cash must be guaranteed.

This one-pager summarises BEUC's main recommendations on the European Commission proposal on the legal tender of Euro banknotes and coins. BEUC's factsheet on the topic can be found [here](#). The table assesses the proposals with the following symbols:



supports the Commission's proposal



supports in principle but there is room for improvement



considers that an important point is missing

COMMISSION PROPOSAL

BEUC POSITION



LEGAL TENDER: mandatory acceptance of cash without surcharges, but merchants can refuse cash in "good faith" (e.g. if there is temporarily no change available). In addition, merchants can decide not to accept cash where they agreed with the consumer on a different means of payment. Member States should monitor the level of unilateral exclusions of cash resulting from this exemption and take remedial actions where necessary. The Commission can add exemptions by delegated act.



BEUC strongly supports the principle of legal tender but fears that the text still allows for unilateral exclusions of cash by allowing merchants to impose on consumers another payment method (in a take-it-or-leave-it scenario). BEUC recommends adding an article similar to article 10 of the digital Euro proposal to clearly out-rule unilateral exclusions. If a narrow set of exemptions is deemed necessary, this should be defined by legislation. BEUC supports the idea that Member States should monitor the acceptance of cash, but this should be done on the basis of a precise legal framework.



OBLIGATION FOR MEMBER STATES TO ENSURE SUFFICIENT & EFFECTIVE ACCESS TO CASH THROUGHOUT THEIR TERRITORY. The Commission will set common indicators by implementing acts. Member States shall take remedial actions if access is not ensured.



Given the strong decline in ATMs and bank branches, BEUC supports the obligation to guarantee access to cash and measures taken at national level based on common indicators.



EFFECTIVE ENFORCEMENT of access and acceptance via annual reporting, appointment of competent authorities and introduction of penalties. Consumers are informed how to lodge complaints and receive remedies. delegated act.



BEUC supports strong enforcement measures to guarantee access and acceptance of cash on the ground. BEUC supports information to consumers on contact points for redress.