



EURO ALLIANCE OF PAYMENT SCHEMES IS NOW OPEN TO INDIVIDUAL INSTITUTIONS

8 December, 2009 - Brussels: EAPS, the European card scheme of schemes for pan European ATM and POS transactions, has announced that it is widening membership to individual organisations. The move will provide individual participants, such as acquirers, with the option of accepting a growing number of EAPS cards within Europe even if they are not co-branded with the international payments schemes. This offers the potential for increased transaction volumes.

With EAPS participation opened beyond European domestic payment schemes, the move will be particularly beneficial for acquirers in European countries where no domestic payment scheme exists, as it will allow them to independently engage with EAPS to offer cross border transactions.

Ugo Bechis, Chairman of the EAPS Board and Head of SEPA-Payments at UBI Banca, comments: “On behalf of EAPS I would like to extend the warmest participation invite to individual institutions seeking a real and proven European alternative to other card schemes. Not only is EAPS EU driven - with European issues such as SEPA compliance at its core - but it offers a simple and cost effective way for individual institutions, such as acquirers, to increase the relevance of their existing ATM and POS acquiring across European boundaries. We look forward to welcoming these new members as we continue to drive EAPS’ success in becoming the leading European payment card scheme.”

Ralf-Christoph Arnoldt, Head of Payments at the German Association of Cooperative Banks, adds: “The opening of EAPS’ membership to individual organisations is a very important milestone for the European payments industry as it provides them with greater choice and control. The opening of EAPS to acquirers offers the opportunity for unprecedented acceptance of the increasing number of our girocard/EAPS cards, which are not co-branded. In addition to increasing acceptance from a broader card base, this development will allow them to benefit from very low net costs, low implementation effort and have the ability to offer a variety of card products to merchants.”



Currently owned and operated by six European domestic payment schemes*, EAPS was launched in 2007 to unite independent domestic card schemes throughout Europe under a single European scheme of schemes. It provides a European alternative to the international payment schemes.

Under the new scope of participation, card schemes, banks and payment institutions compliant with European requirements and the SEPA Cards Framework of the European Payments Council are encouraged to join to benefit from new business opportunities.

***About EAPS:**

The Euro Alliance of Payment Schemes (EAPS) is an alliance of European card schemes - a 'scheme of schemes' - founded by Consorzio Bancomat (Italy), Eufiserv (Europe), Euro 6000 (Spain), Link (UK), SIBS (Portugal) and Zentraler Kreditausschuss (Germany). Together EAPS participants represent more than 222m cards, 2.2m POS payment terminals and almost 200,000 ATMs. EAPS offers a European alternative to international card schemes.