

# Payment behaviour in Germany in 2025

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Foto: Tim Wegner

## Preface

Dear reader,

the latest study is the eighth time the Bundesbank has presented a comprehensive stocktake of payment behaviour among the general public in Germany. We have been conducting regular surveys of the general public's preferences and actual payment behaviour since 2008 – be it at the point of sale (POS), online or for payments between individuals, to public authorities and to charitable organisations. The study series thus uniquely documents how payment behaviour in Germany changes over time.

The results of the current study show that the trend towards cashless means of payment is continuing. For the first time, more transactions are being settled without cash than with cash – across all everyday payments under consideration. Mobile payment methods and e-payment methods continue to gain in importance. At the same time, cash remains the most frequently used means of payment at the point of sale for products and plays a key role in payments between individuals, for donations and in other areas of daily life. The study series therefore captures the digital transformation in payments as well as the continued importance of cash.

The variety of means of payment has increased further in recent years. In addition to traditional methods such as credit transfers, direct debits and card payments, mobile wallets, app-based and online payment methods are now well established. I welcome this diversity – it encourages innovation and competition and allows people to pay whichever way they prefer. That said, the results make it clear that not all population groups are equal participants in digitalisation. Older people and those with health constraints, on low incomes or with lower levels of digital literacy use cash more frequently and are particularly dependent on its availability.

Against this backdrop, preserving cash as a cost-effective, efficient and inclusive means of payment remains a key concern of the Bundesbank and the Eurosystem. However, the study also highlights developments that can impair people's freedom to pay as they choose. These include declining cash acceptance in individual areas – such as in local public transport or at self-service checkouts without a cash payment function – as well as the reduction in the number of ATMs and bank counters. At the same time, an increasing number of people reported that they were not able to pay with their preferred means of payment in all situations. Cashless payments, in particular, were not possible in a relatively large number of cases. This underlines how important it is to ensure access to and acceptance of cash as well as cashless means of payment.

As digitalisation advances, the Eurosystem is also working on the possible introduction of a digital euro to complement cash. A digital euro would continue to provide the general public with access to secure central bank money in an increasingly digital economy and – together with private sector payment solutions – could contribute to greater European sovereignty in payments. This study provides initial insights into how the general public perceive the digital euro.

For the Bundesbank, the results of the payment behaviour study are a key component in calibrating our cash strategy and our activities in the area of cashless payments on the basis of facts. At the same time, the results of the study series provide valuable guidance for the banking industry, retailers, payment service providers, policymakers and academia.

My special thanks go to everyone who took part in the survey and kept a payments diary.

Whether paying with cash, card or digitally– our aim is to make payments more efficient, secure and accessible for everyone and ensure that people continue to have genuine freedom to choose how they wish to pay.

I hope this study proves to be a thought-provoking and informative read!

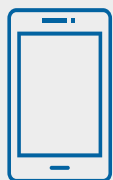


Frankfurt am Main, June 2026

Burkhard Balz  
Member of the Executive Board of the Deutsche Bundesbank



More than half (55%) of everyday payments were made using cashless means of payment in 2025. Cash was used in 45% of cases.



The share of mobile payments continues to rise sharply, accounting for 10% of all recorded payment transactions.



Generally, just over half of respondents prefer cashless means of payment, while 26% favour cash.



Respondents have an average of €98 in cash in their wallets.

## Summary

- **Payment behaviour according to the payments diary:** For the first time, more than half of the recorded everyday payments were made using cashless means of payment (55% compared with 49% in 2023). This corresponds to just over three-quarters of total expenditure (77%). Mobile payments are the main driver of this growth, seeing their share of payment transactions almost double. Cash remains the most frequently used means of payment by number of transactions (45%). Cash accounted for 23% of turnover, and debit cards made up 28%. People with health constraints, financial problems, low digital skills, and older people tend to use cash more frequently. Mobile payments are particularly common among younger people.
- **Payment behaviour in different payment situations:** Cash is still used most frequently when it comes to making day-to-day retail purchases, eating out, paying for recreational activities as well as at markets and street stalls. For other in-store purchases, debit cards are the most widely used means of payment. Mobile payment methods have gained ground in all areas. In 71% of cases, payments between individuals are made using cash, while 17% by means of mobile payment methods. E-payment methods, notably Paypal, account for 50% of payment transactions and 32% of turnover generated online.
- **Preferred means of payment:** Most people prefer cashless means of payment (52%), while one-quarter prefer cash (26%). Cashless means of payment are popular among respondents, partly because of their simplicity and speed. Regarding cash, respondents value privacy, the ability to keep track of their spending and the finality of the payment.
- **Cash holdings and withdrawals:** Respondents hold an average of €98 in cash in their wallets. Only 4% of them carried no cash at all. In addition, 43% have additional cash at home to top up their wallets, as a precautionary reserve or as an alternative way of saving. An increasing number of respondents also use the point of sale to withdraw cash, but more than 80% of the cash required still comes from ATMs.



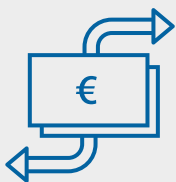
One-third of respondents already use instant credit transfers on a regular basis.



Cash acceptance remains high, and cash payments were possible in 94% of cases for in-store purchases.

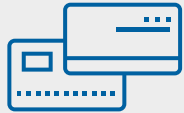


90% of respondents possess a girocard. It is the most prevalent debit card in Germany.



The acceptance of cashless means of payments has increased: in 86% of all recorded transactions it was possible to pay cashless.

- **Current account:** Almost all respondents (98%) have their own current account. Just over one-third have multiple accounts. Online banking is used by nine out of ten respondents. For the first time, primarily via an app rather than via web portal.
- **Payment cards:** Almost every respondent owns at least one debit card (98%). Girocard dominates (90%), but Visa Debit and Mastercard Debit are gaining ground, especially among younger people. Credit cards are losing reach slightly. More and more people are saving cards to mobile wallets.
- **Mobile payment methods:** 36% of respondents have already paid with a smartphone or wearable at least once. 10% of all transactions are now made using mobile payments. Apple Pay remains the market leader (41% of mobile payment users), followed by Google Pay and banks' own apps.
- **Acceptance of cash at payment locations:** Acceptance of cash is still high: 94% of in-store purchases were made using cash. However, in some payment locations, there are trends that may negatively impact cash acceptance. In particular, lower levels of cash acceptance were recorded at self-service checkouts as on public transport.
- **Cash supply:** Respondents feel that their access to cash is good overall, but 29% say that it has become more difficult to get to an ATM over the past two years. Perceptions of worsened access to cash were especially evident among those living in large cities.
- **Acceptance of cashless means of payment:** Cashless payment options are now available for 86% of purchases made in bricks-and-mortar retail – 5 percentage points more than in 2023. However, about one-quarter of respondents reported that they were unable to make cashless payments everywhere they wanted in the past month. Society is largely in support of broad-based acceptance of digital payment methods by retailers. 73% of the population in Germany support a potential obligation to always provide at least one cashless alternative alongside cash. Even though the vast majority are satisfied with the payment options in Germany overall, complete freedom of choice does not yet exist.



63% consider enhanced European autonomy in payments as necessary.



46% have already heard about the planned introduction of a digital euro as a complement to cash.



80% consider it important for Germany to retain the option of paying with cash in future.

- **The future of cashless payments:** The share of mobile payment methods has risen steadily. This trend is likely to continue. At the same time, instant credit transfers are now widespread and just under one-third of respondents use them regularly. Against the backdrop of current geopolitical tensions, the need for greater autonomy in European payments and increased use of European solutions is also figuring in more people's minds. According to 63% of respondents, this is something that is "urgently required" or "might be needed".
- **Digital euro:** The trend towards cashless payments has led to a special project in the euro area – the digital euro. The digital euro would be the next step in the evolution of euro cash in an increasingly digital world and would, for the first time, create a single European payment method for all payment situations – i.e. for person-to-person payments, in bricks-and-mortar retail, online as well as in transactions with public authorities – for the euro area as a whole. It would thus strengthen the strategic autonomy of European payments. Although the digital euro does not yet exist and is not planned to be introduced until 2029, 46% of respondents have already heard of it.
- **The future role of cash:** Respondents consider preserving cash to be very important for society. 80% believe it is important for Germany to retain the option of paying with cash. 68% of respondents agree that paying with cash should always be possible when paying at physical point of sales. Further 18% agree with this, at least in areas for essential goods and services.

## ■ 1 Introduction

Since 2008, the Bundesbank has conducted regular surveys of how representative members of the general public in Germany pay at the point of sale, online, in private payments and at public authorities. The results are published in the “Payment behaviour in Germany” study series, which now comprises eight reports. The studies shed light on habits around cash and cashless means of payment, looking at which payment instruments respondents have, what they think about them and how they use them. The extensive wealth of data that form the basis of the studies also allows for a multifaceted evaluation according to socio-demographic and industry-specific aspects. This means that we can capture the broad array of everyday realities when it comes to the use of payment instruments and expectations regarding payments.

Technical, societal, economic and legal developments have led to far-reaching changes in payment behaviour since the first survey in 2008. The data collected at regular intervals allow us to track these changes closely. At the same time, the study series is designed to capture new developments and contribute to current discussions. Issues relating to access to and acceptance of payment instruments have become more prominent over time. Furthermore, this study examines the role of international payment service providers in Germany in greater detail than before. In addition, questions on the digital euro were included in the study questionnaire for the first time.

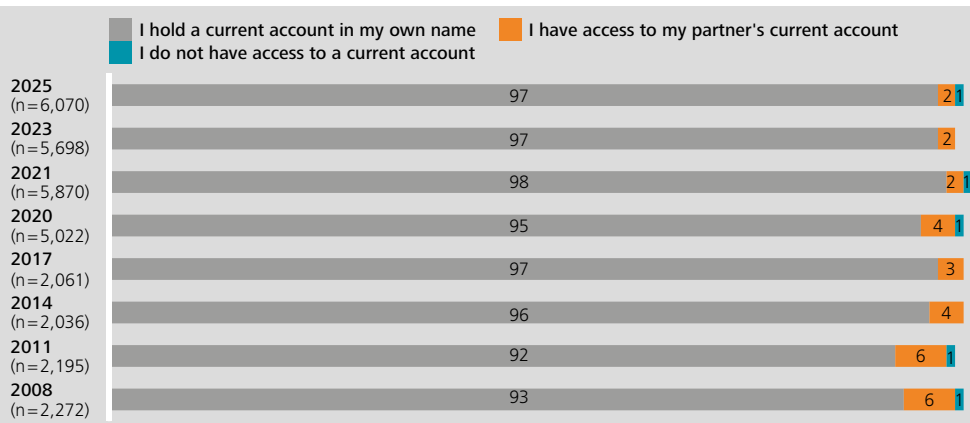
Since the study was launched, the series has included a questionnaire and a diary in which participants record the payments they made over several days. However, the methodology of the present study has been carefully adapted to reflect current developments. This concerns, for one thing, the interview survey methodology by means of the questionnaire. We went from having a purely telephone survey to using a mix of telephone and online interviews. For another, the survey instruments, in particular the payments diary, were adapted to the increasingly complex payment reality with a mix of in-person and remote payments as well as a large number of POS types.

**This study is structured as follows:** Chapter 2 first provides an overview of the payment methods available to respondents. Beginning with the ownership and use of current accounts, it shows how much cash respondents have, how they withdraw it, which payment cards they own and whether they also participate in mobile payments. Chapter 3 focuses on respondents' preferences and attitudes towards payment instruments. In particular, it examines which means of payment they generally prefer and the key reasons behind this. Chapter 4 provides a detailed overview of actual payment behaviour. The diary records are used to determine the shares of the individual means of payment – measured both by the number of transactions and in terms of turnover. Specific payment situations are analysed and individual socio-economic groups are considered separately. Chapter 5 addresses current developments and challenges in payments. This includes focusing on acceptance of cash and cashless means of payment (e.g. at self-service checkouts and in public transport), the availability of ATMs and data security in cashless payments. Finally, Chapter 6 takes a look into the future: how important will cash be in an increasingly digital payment world? How will cashless payments evolve and what role will the digital euro play in the future?

## Current account ownership

Fig. 2.1.1

%, as reported by respondents

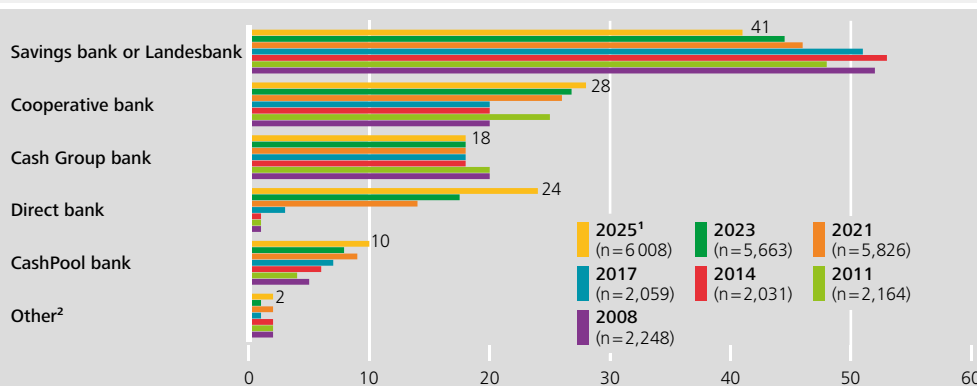


Basis: All respondents. May fail to sum to 100 due to rounding. Question: "Do you hold one or more current accounts?"  
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## Distribution of current accounts by group of institutions

Fig. 2.1.2

%, as reported by respondents



Basis: All respondents with a current account. Question: "Where is this current account or where are these current accounts held?" Multiple answers possible. In previous years, participants reported only their main current account (single response). <sup>1</sup> Landesbank not named. <sup>2</sup> Including "Don't know/No answer."

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# 2 Ownership of payment instruments

## 2.1 Current account and account-based payment methods

Current accounts continue to enjoy very high coverage levels in Germany. This indicates a high level of financial inclusion. Just over one-third of respondents have more than one current account. A current account is a prerequisite to use payment systems. It makes cashless transactions like credit transfers, direct debits and card payments possible, and enables people to access/withdraw cash. 97% of respondents reported that they had their own current account, while 2% had access to their partner's account (see Figure 2.1.1).<sup>1</sup> Most respondents (61%) use one current account, just under one-third (29%) use two, while 9% have three or more. The share of people with more than one current account has therefore risen by a significant 25 percentage points since 2023.

As in the previous study, most respondents said they hold an account with a savings bank. However, there has been a strong increase in the market shares of direct banks. 41% of respondents hold an account with a savings bank or Landesbank. This is therefore still the most widely used category of banks, followed by the cooperative banks (28%). Direct banks (24%) have almost drawn level with the cooperative banks, at 24%, after growing their market share by one-third. While savings banks saw the strongest decline, marginal growth was recorded by CashPool banks (up 2 percentage points; see glossary for definition) and cooperative banks (up 1 percentage point).

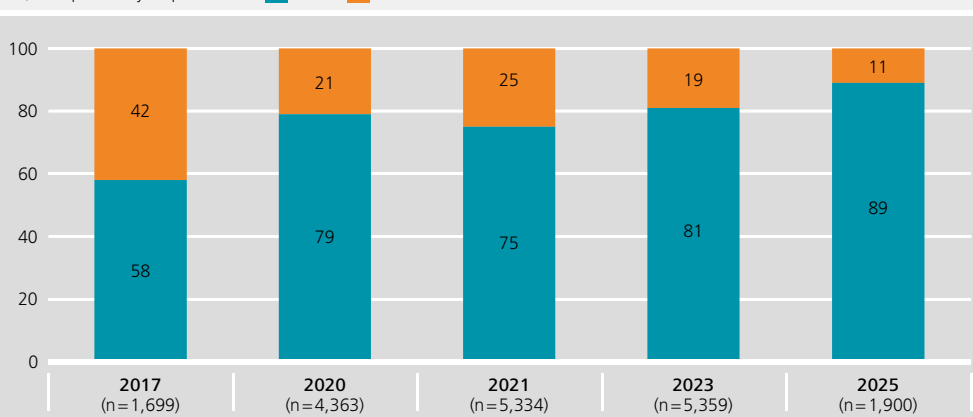
The choice of the primary bank is influenced by factors such as age and income. Young adults up to the age of 24 mainly hold an account with a savings or cooperative bank. This suggests that youth accounts are usually kept with the parents' primary bank since fees are often not charged until account holders have completed their studies or apprenticeships. That might also explain the age effect observed at direct banks in the 25 to 34 years age bracket and higher. Direct banks are most widespread in that age group, perhaps because current accounts there are often free of charge, and the market share declines with age. This would

<sup>1</sup> One reason for this broad coverage is the Payment Accounts Act (Zahlungskontengesetz), which gives everyone the right to hold a basic payment account.

### Use of online banking overall

Fig. 2.1.3

%, as reported by respondents



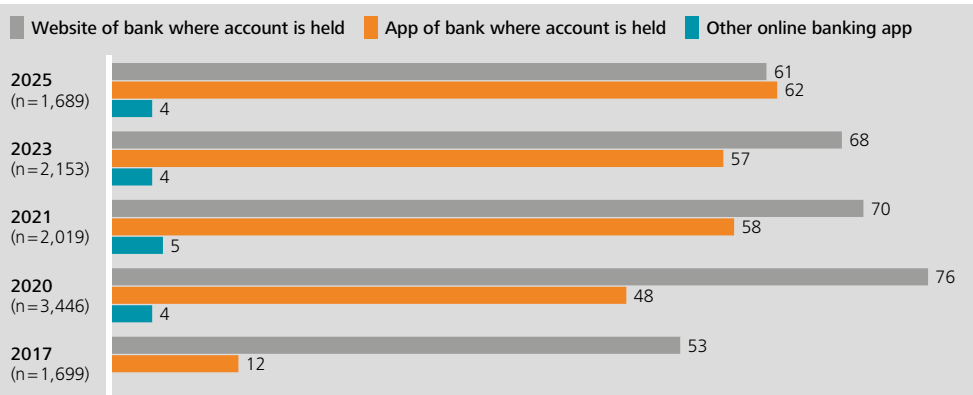
Basis: All respondents with access to a current account who have used the internet in the last three months. Question: "Do you use online banking?" 1 Including "Don't know/No answer."

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### Online banking method

Fig. 2.1.4

%, as reported by respondents, multiple answers possible



Basis: Respondents using online banking (2025: subgroup A; 2023: subgroup B). Question: "How do you conduct your banking? Do you use your bank's online banking website, your bank's online banking app or an online banking app not operated by your bank?"

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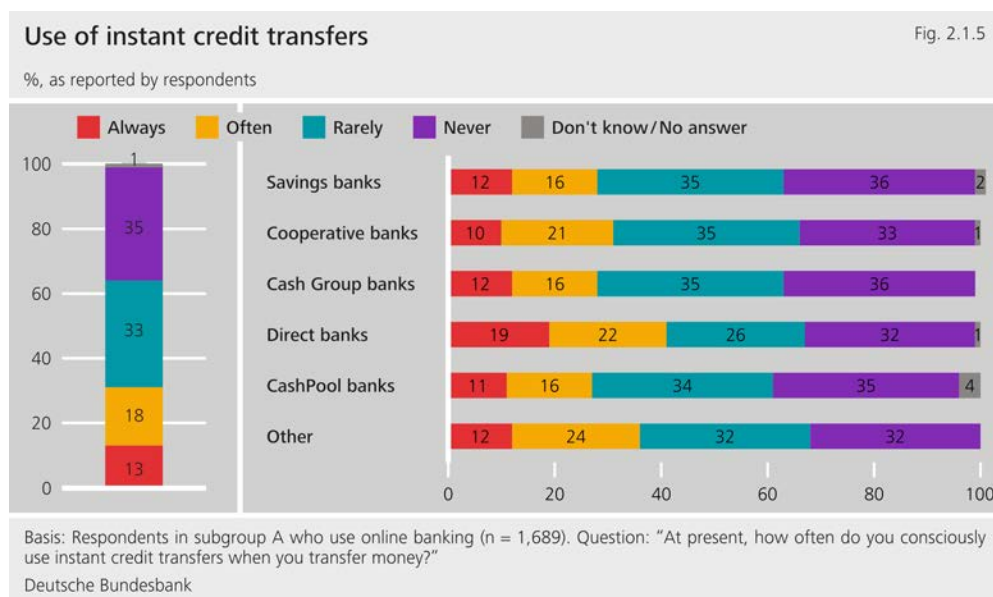
suggest that account holders seek out alternatives after they are first charged to hold a current account. The prevalence of an account with a cooperative or direct bank rises with income. In contrast, the proportion of accounts at savings banks tends to decrease as income rises.

**Online banking use is up again significantly.** For a number of years now, online banking has been a standard feature of many current accounts. 89% of respondents report that they now bank online, up 8 percentage points on 2023 (see Figure 2.1.3). No clear age effect is discernible, however, given that online banking is more widespread across all population groups. There is a slight indication that groups in society who have higher incomes and greater digital affinity<sup>2</sup> bank online somewhat more often than the average.

**People now often bank online using their bank's app, especially in the case of direct banks** (see Figure 2.1.4). The trend observed in recent years to bank online using an app has become further cemented. For the first time, more people are now using a bank's app to access online banking (62%) than its website (61%). It is still fairly rare for people to use a third-party app (4%). App-based online banking is being driven in particular by people who have accounts with direct banks. 83% of this group use app-based online banking (see Figure A.2.1.4). In all the other categories of banks, with the exception of "other banks", people generally bank online via their bank's website.

**Online banking use differs significantly across age groups** (see Figure A.2.1.4). While nearly all 18 to 24-year-olds bank online via their bank's app (92%) and only just over one-quarter (28%) use the website, that ratio reverses with age. Among people who are 65 years or older, just under four-fifths bank using the website (77%), while only just over one-third use the banking app (37%).

<sup>2</sup> Indicators of digital affinity include, for example, preferring to use cashless payment instruments, say, or internet use. Groups with a higher degree of digital affinity tend to bank online more.



**Instant credit transfers are available to all account holders, but the frequency of their use varies, especially between categories of banks.** Since 9 October 2025, the Instant Payments Regulation<sup>3</sup> requires all Banks within the euro area to offer instant credit transfers at the same price as traditional credit transfers. This year's study therefore asked respondents how often they use instant credit transfers.<sup>4</sup> Just under one-third of them said they are already using instant credit transfers regularly: 13% use them "always", a further 18% "often". Around one-third only use them rarely (33%) while 35% said they had not yet made an instant credit transfer payment (see Figure 2.1.5). These findings align with the statistics obtained from payment systems.<sup>5</sup> Instant credit transfers are used most frequently by direct bank customers. Because some direct banks introduced instant credit transfers as a standard feature early on, customer uptake has been strong in this particular category of banks.

**Younger people especially already regard instant credit transfers as an everyday payment feature** (see Figure A.2.1.5). Just under one-quarter of 18 to 24-year-olds said they "always" use instant credit transfers (24%), while a further 22% use them "often". Their use declines as age goes up, however.

<sup>3</sup> Regulation (EU) 2024/886 amending Regulations (EU) No 260/2012 and (EU) 2021/1230 and Directives 98/26/EC and (EU) 2015/2366 as regards instant credit transfers in euro.

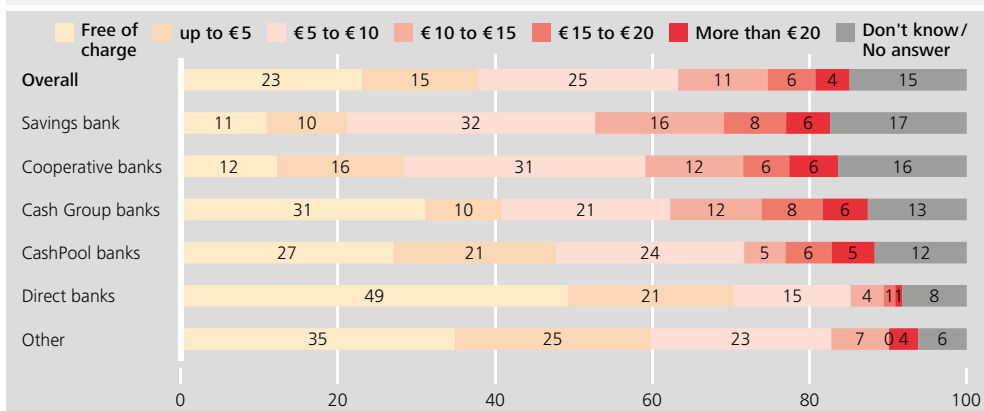
<sup>4</sup> The 2023 study asked respondents whether their bank provided this service. Because it has been mandatory since 2025, the question was modified accordingly.

<sup>5</sup> The European Payments Council reported as at Q4 2025 that instant credit transfers accounted for 34% of all credit transfers in the SEPA area, which is more than twice the share observed in 2023 (see [EPC scheme to make real-time payments in SEPA | European Payments Council](#)).

## Current account costs

Fig. 2.1.6

%, as reported by respondents



Basis: Respondents in subgroup A who hold one or more current accounts (n = 1,968). Question: "How much do you pay for your main current account per month?" May fail to sum to 100 due to rounding.

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Many respondents said their current account costs less than €10 a month (see Figure 2.1.6). Comparative studies on the costs of current accounts are rare because account models often differ significantly in terms of the services they offer. This makes it difficult to directly compare the costs of one current account model with another. To nonetheless gain a rough idea of the general cost level, respondents with access to a current account were asked to say how much the current account they use most costs each month. Respondents were not told which service components they should consider when estimating the costs (e.g. whether a credit card is provided). Just over one-fifth reported that their current account was completely free of charge (23%). A further 15% said they pay up to €5 a month. Most respondents reported that they paid monthly fees of between €5 and €10 (25%). Around 15% did not answer the question.

**Current accounts with direct banks are cheapest.** Some current accounts are more expensive because they come with a broader range of services, such as denser branch or ATM networks. The business model of direct banks is built around the idea that people bank via direct communication channels (website, app or phone) rather than at the traditional bank counter. By contrast, traditional bricks-and-mortar banks, such as savings banks, Cash-Group banks or cooperative banks, have their own dedicated branch and ATM networks. This physical infrastructure explains why their current accounts tend to be more expensive. Vulnerable groups and older people in particular value that branch infrastructure.

**Younger people in particular are much more likely to have a current account that is free of charge.** That is the case for significantly more than half of 18 to 24-year-olds (61%). That share declines steadily with age. Many credit institutions offer special types of accounts for school pupils, young people in training and students that are free of charge as a standard feature, which explains this strong age effect. Furthermore, having an account with a direct bank also correlates with age, as described above. The responses also differed significantly according to where the respondents lived. Somewhat fewer respondents living in rural areas said they had a free current account (17%) than those in urban core areas (28%).

## Cash carried in wallets

Tab. 2.2.1

As recorded in payments diary

|                                                    | 2014 | 2017 | 2021 | 2023 | 2025 |
|----------------------------------------------------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Average amount of cash in wallet (€)               | 103  | 107  | 100  | 103  | 98   |
| of which coins (€)                                 | 6    | 6    | 6    | 5    | 5    |
| Average number of banknotes                        | 5    | 5    | 4    | 4    | 4    |
| Average number of coins                            | 14   | 16   | 14   | 12   | 12   |
| No cash in wallet (percentage of respondents)      | 1    | 2    | 4    | 4    | 4    |
| No banknotes in wallet (percentage of respondents) | 4    | 4    | 9    | 9    | 8    |
| No coins in wallet (percentage of respondents)     | 6    | 3    | 9    | 15   | 13   |

Basis: All respondents with a payments diary.

Question: "What euro coins and euro banknotes did you have in your wallet/on your person at the beginning of the day?"

Note: Respondents without cash holdings are included in the calculation of averages with a value of 0.

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## 2.2 Cash

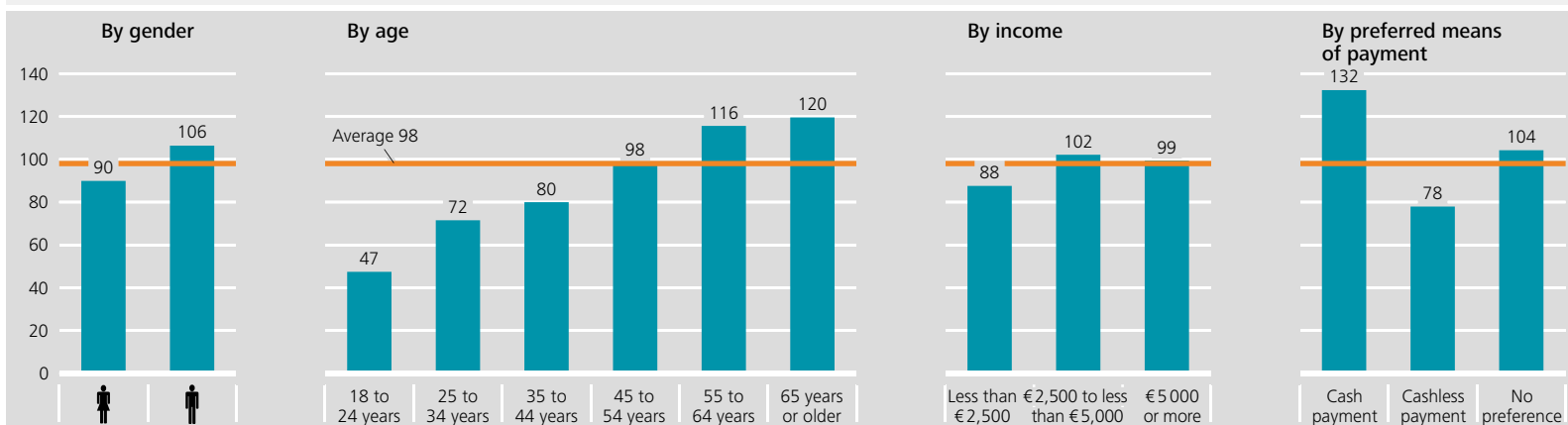
**Respondents had an average of €98 in cash on their person.** That amount was spread across 12 coins and four banknotes on average, with 13% of respondents holding no coins, 8% holding no banknotes, and 4% having no cash at all (see Table 2.2.1). The amount of cash held in wallets declined again somewhat over the past two years and now stands at less than €100 for the first time. The cash respondents had with them could cover their spending for 1.8 days on average. That figure is roughly the same as in 2023.

**Younger people carry far less cash and do so significantly less frequently than older people (see Figure 2.2.1).** 18 to 24-year-olds have just €47 on average in their wallets, and around 7% of them have no cash whatsoever on their person. In addition, around one in five people in that cohort have no coins or no banknotes on their person. The 65 years or older cohort, by contrast, have an average of €120 with them, and only 2% of them have no cash at all.

## Cash carried in wallets

Fig. 2.2.1

€, as recorded in payments diary



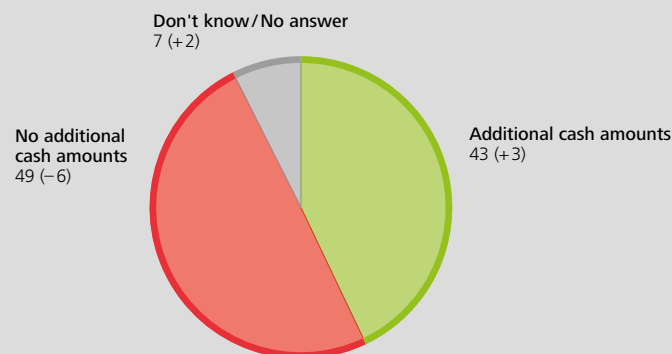
Basis: All respondents with a payments diary (n = 5,302). Question: "What euro coins and euro banknotes did you have in your wallet/on your person at the beginning of the day?"

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## Cash kept outside wallets

Fig. 2.2.2

% (change since 2023 shown in percentage points), as reported by respondents



Basis: All respondents (n = 6,070). Question: "Some people like to keep cash at home or somewhere else for various reasons, e.g. to top up their wallet, as a precautionary reserve or as an alternative way of saving. Do you personally keep extra cash?"  
Deutsche Bundesbank

**The relationship between income and cash held is not linear.** The median income brackets hold the highest amounts of cash. One explanation for this could be the contradictory effect of two factors. On the one hand, a higher income is correlated with higher spending, and that means (assuming cash payment is desired) that more cash is required. On the other, the preference for cash declines as incomes rise.<sup>6</sup>

## How much cash people have in their wallets also depends on their payment habits.

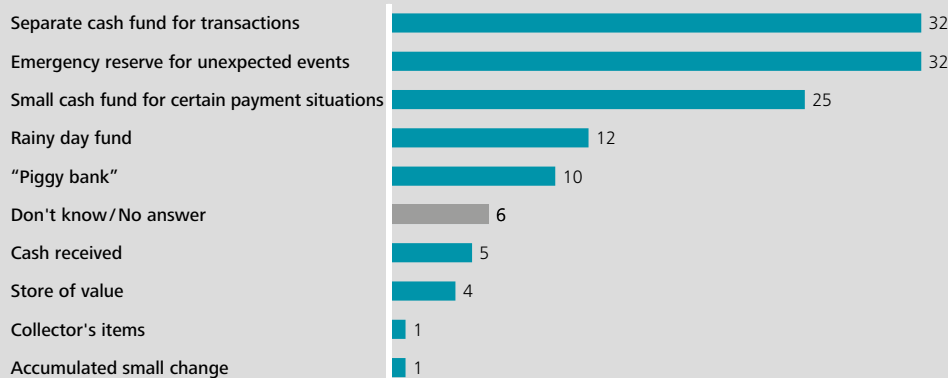
Respondents who prefer to pay in cash have the most money in their wallets (€132). Of that group, only 2% had no cash whatsoever in their wallets on the day of the survey. However, it is fairly rare to have an empty wallet, even among people who prefer cashless means of payment. On average, those people have around €78 on their person, and only 5% of them have no cash at all.

**On average, men have more cash in their wallets than women (€106 compared with €90) (see Figure 2.2.1).** This might be due to differences in shopping and payment behaviour or indirect income effects. However, personal safety considerations might also explain why women carry less cash on their person.<sup>7</sup>

## Reasons for holding additional cash

Fig. 2.2.3

%, as reported by respondents



Basis: Respondents holding additional cash (n = 2,592). Question: "And for what reasons do you store additional cash? Please also describe the types of situations for which you keep a stash of cash."

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## Cash kept outside wallets

**Besides the cash they have with them, 43% of the respondents said they also keep cash outside their wallets.** That share has risen by 3 percentage points since 2023 (see Figure 2.2.2). An open-ended question with a free text field invited respondents to explain why they keep cash outside their wallets. The open-ended question design made it easy for them to provide a direct response. The varied and authentic responses allowed us to identify the following reasons why people keep cash outside their wallets (see Figure 2.2.3).<sup>8</sup>

**Separate cash fund for transactions:** Just under one-third of respondents holding additional cash said they withdrew a supply of cash that they could gradually add

<sup>6</sup> Respondents are assigned to income brackets based on their reported net household income.

<sup>7</sup> Empirical social research shows that women are more afraid of crime on average, even though men are more likely to be victims of violent crime. See, for example, Rader, N. E., J. S. Cossman and M. Allison (2009), "Considering the gender fear paradox: gender, fear of crime, and perceptions of risk".

<sup>8</sup> NB: In the following, responses quoted verbatim from the free text fields are shown in speech marks.

to their wallets. Their aim was to be liquid at all times, and to be able to buy their day-to-day shopping in cash without having to carry all their money with them. Many respondents said they withdrew a supply of cash because they want to avoid unnecessary trips to an ATM or save cash withdrawal fees (“don’t need to run to an ATM all the time”, “the nearest ATM is far away”). For some of them, however, this approach also helped them budget their spending (“household money for a month”).

**Emergency reserve for unexpected events:** Again, just under one-third of respondents holding additional cash said they hoard cash at home in case they are unexpectedly unable to pay electronically and/or withdraw cash. Some of the scenarios they mentioned concern general circumstances (e.g. technical outages or a disaster) or just the respondent themselves (e.g. time pressure, illness, card loss or malfunction).

**Small cash fund for certain payment situations:** One-quarter of respondents holding additional cash keep it aside specifically for certain situations in which they know that only cash payment is possible or desirable. Frequent responses included eating and drinking out, tips, cash gifts, pocket or spending money for children, purchases from other persons, small change for parking, shopping at farm shops, village festivals, weekly markets and flea markets. People generally tended to hoard smaller banknotes and coins for these purposes.

**Rainy day fund:** Roughly 12% of respondents holding additional cash said they put it aside for unexpected spending that might overwhelm them financially (e.g. visits to the vet, a broken washing machine or a general “emergency stash” or “reserve fund” in case the account is empty). The responses reveal that it is important for these people to hoard cash separately, outside their account so that the money they save is left untouched by everyday payments.

**Piggy bank:** Around 10% of respondents holding additional said they use it to save up either for a particular expense, especially holidays, or simply to “treat” themselves every now and again. It is noticeable that this money is not saved over the long term, but spent again in the short to medium-term future.

## Cash withdrawal behaviour by place of withdrawal

Tab. 2.2.2

As reported by respondents

|                                                                | 2014 | 2017 | 2021 | 2023 | 2025 |
|----------------------------------------------------------------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Percentage of users                                            |      |      |      |      |      |
| ATM                                                            | 93   | 95   | 96   | 96   | 95   |
| Bank counter                                                   | 39   | 38   | 20   | 29   | 15   |
| Point of sale                                                  | 12   | 23   | 34   | 41   | 49   |
| Average number of withdrawals per year (based on all users)    |      |      |      |      |      |
| ATM                                                            | 43   | 42   | 30   | 27   | 22   |
| Bank counter                                                   | 12   | 10   | 13   | 15   | 5    |
| Point of sale                                                  | 12   | 8    | 15   | 14   | 13   |
| Average withdrawal amount (€, based on all users)              |      |      |      |      |      |
| ATM                                                            | 180  | 189  | 230  | 253  | 262  |
| Bank counter                                                   | 354  | 447  | 736  | 451  | 1035 |
| Point of sale                                                  | 87   | 87   | 94   | 102  | 109  |
| Percentage of total withdrawals per year made at each location |      |      |      |      |      |
| ATM                                                            | 81   | 84   | 81   | 78   | 81   |
| Bank counter                                                   | 18   | 14   | 11   | 13   | 8    |
| Point of sale                                                  | 2    | 2    | 8    | 9    | 11   |
| Amount left before next withdrawal (€)                         |      |      |      |      |      |
|                                                                | 32   | 34   | 40   | 44   | 54   |

Questions: "How often do you withdraw cash at an ATM/a bank counter/a point of sale?",  
"How much cash do you withdraw on average at an ATM/a bank counter/a point of sale?",  
"When you decide to withdraw more cash, how much do you usually still have in your wallet?"

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**Cash received:** A group of around 5% of respondents holding additional cash said there was no particular conscious reason for the cash they held. Rather, they said, it was cash they had received that had so far been neither deposited nor spent, and which they were now keeping at home for no particular purpose (e.g. wedding gifts, cash reimbursements of personal spending, income received in cash).

**Cash as a store of value:** Fewer than 5% of respondents holding additional cash said they use it as a long-term store of value. In many cases, safety issues motivated by cash's status as fail-safe central bank money were their main concern ("cash is king!"). Some of the responses also hint at a desire for secrecy ("secret reserve", "anonymity") or a mistrust of banks or government agencies. Given that people are very wary about commenting on larger volumes of cash, this motive will presumably be understated in the responses.

**Collector's items:** A small number of respondents hold cash as collector's items. The starter kits provided when the euro was introduced as a physical currency and the first series of euro banknotes were mentioned in the responses.

**Accumulated small change:** Likewise, a small number of people reported that they regularly take their coins out of their wallets and keep them at home until they have an opportunity to exchange them at the bank.

**Please note when interpreting these results that many respondents named multiple motives and it was not always possible to clearly assign their open-ended responses to a particular category.** For this reason, the reported percentage values should not be interpreted strictly in quantitative terms, but rather as an indication of the general public's primary motives for holding cash.

**95% of respondents said they get their cash from an ATM, where they withdraw an average of 81% of their total annual cash needs (see Table 2.2.2).** Those percentages have barely changed over the past years. Nowadays, though, just under one-half of respondents also use supermarket checkouts – this percentage has increased by 8 percentage points since

2023. On average, respondents obtain 11% of their total annual withdrawals there. Fewer and fewer people withdraw cash face to face from a bank employee at a bank counter (15%). At present, that means of obtaining cash is used for just 8% of people's average withdrawals each year.

**Withdrawals at the point of sale tend to be made more often by women, middle-aged people, people with higher incomes, and people who prefer to use cashless payment instruments.** People who prefer to pay in cash make a significantly smaller share of withdrawals at the point of sale. These people still mainly use ATMs.

**Overall, people who use ATMs, bank counters and points of sale to withdraw cash visit those cash withdrawal locations increasingly rarely.** On average, they visit an ATM 22 times a year, a bank counter five times a year, and the point of sale 13 times a year. The average amounts they withdraw there, however, have gone up: €262 at an ATM, €1,035 at a bank counter, and €109 at the supermarket checkout.<sup>9</sup> On balance, respondents' total annual withdrawals have gone down (to roughly €6,320 compared with around €7,312 in 2023).<sup>10</sup>

**The amount of left-over cash – that is, cash that respondents still have in their wallets when they withdraw new money – has increased steadily over the years.** This might be because respondents withdraw cash less often, but still want to keep enough cash in reserve to pay for their purchases in cash, if necessary.

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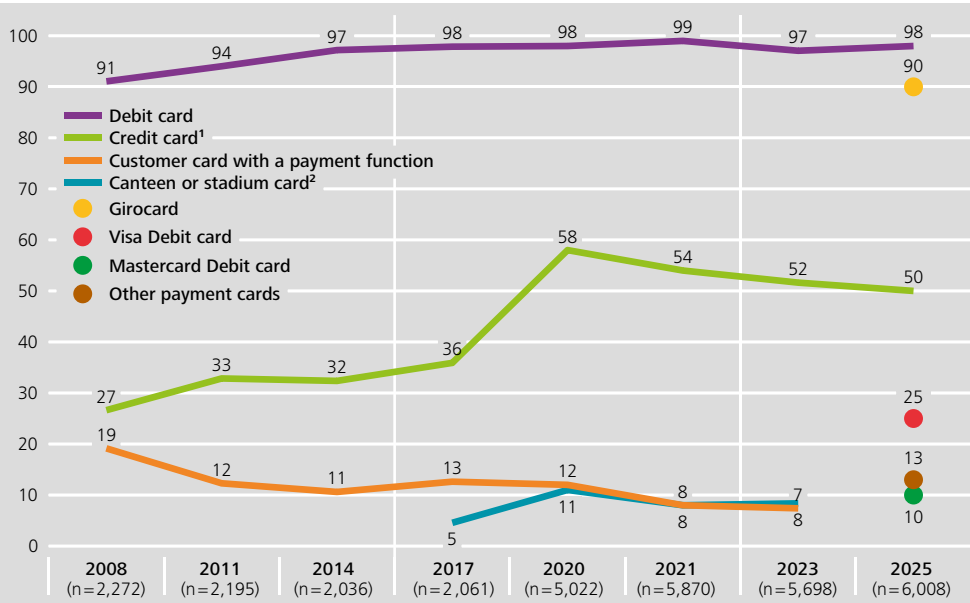
<sup>9</sup> The 2023 data for withdrawals at bank counters deviate significantly from the long-term trend. A trial survey was carried out after the 2023 survey wave with a view to continually improving the survey documentation. That exercise found that some young people had misunderstood "bank counter", confusing it with "ATM". To rectify this misunderstanding, the question was worded more clearly in the 2025 survey round: "How often do you obtain cash via a bank employee at the counter?" As a result of this change, the reported number of withdrawals at the counter went down again significantly in 2025, while the amounts withdrawn went up.

<sup>10</sup> Data provided by respondents on the frequency and amounts of their cash withdrawals are highly consistent with the official statistics on payments and securities trading. Official data for the first half-year suggest that cash withdrawals from ATMs in Germany came to around €330 billion for 2025. The payment behaviour study found that respondents withdrew an average of €5,151 per year from ATMs. Extrapolated to the adult population, that equates to roughly €355 billion.

## Ownership of payment cards between 2008 and 2025

Fig. 2.3.1

%, as reported by respondents, multiple answers possible



Basis: All respondents. Question: "Which of the following cards with a payment function do you own?" <sup>1</sup> Including prepaid credit cards since 2020. <sup>2</sup> Included in survey since 2017.

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## 2.3 Payment cards

**Payment card ownership has been fairly steady over the past years (see Figure 2.3.1).**

Almost all respondents in 2025 reported that they have at least one debit card (98%). Around half of them (50%) said they own a credit card. The slight decline observed since 2020 is thus ongoing. Other payment cards, such as customer cards with a payment function or canteen/stadium cards, are held by smaller user groups only, which is why this study reports them together as a single category. Overall, there have been only minor shifts in card ownership compared with the previous survey.

**Girocard is the most widespread debit card by far.** Germany's debit card market is spread across three card networks. Alongside girocard (previously the "EC card"), the debit card scheme operated jointly by the German banking industry, there are the debit cards provided by the global card networks of Visa and Mastercard. For the first time, the current study also asked people who owned a debit card what type of debit card that was. It was found that girocard is the most widespread card by far. 90% of respondents with a current account own one, followed by the Visa Debit card at 25% (see Figure 2.3.2).<sup>11</sup>

**Credit cards and girocards are particularly common amongst older population groups.**

**Younger people are much more likely to have international debit cards.** Almost one-third of 18 to 24-year-olds own a Visa Debit card. This might be because of the above-average share of direct bank customers in that age group.<sup>12</sup> Among customers aged 45 and over, meanwhile, credit cards are relatively widespread, with a share of around 55%. Furthermore, ownership of a credit card or international debit card is correlated with income. The prevalence of credit cards and debit cards from international providers tends to increase with household income. By contrast, girocard is the means of payment for everyone. It is used almost universally across all age and income groups (see Figure A.2.3.2).

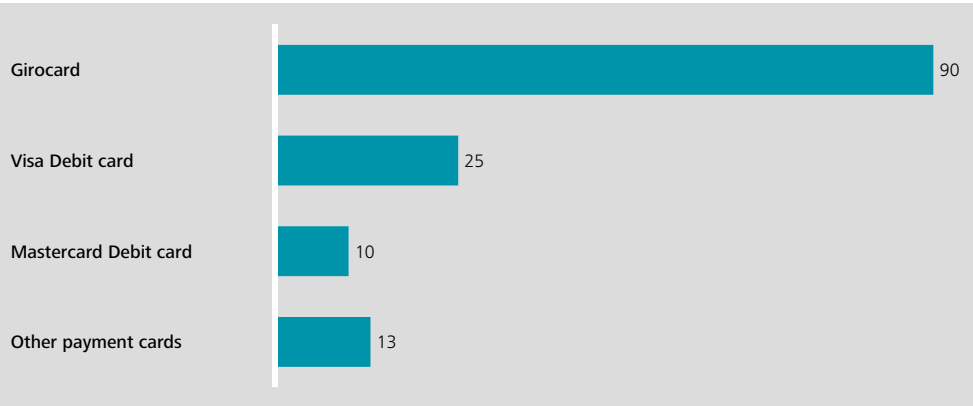
<sup>11</sup> Compared with the last survey, respondents were specifically asked this time whether the card they owned was a physical or virtual one. Any additional payment methods stored on girocards (co-badges) were not covered by the survey.

<sup>12</sup> Various direct banks with a large customer base in Germany (e.g. DKB and ING) offer their customers a Visa Debit card as standard when they open a current account. Further payment cards are often only provided for an additional fee.

### Ownership of debit cards

Fig. 2.3.2

%, as reported by respondents, multiple answers possible



Basis: All respondents who hold a current account (n = 6,008). Question: "Which of the following cards with a payment function do you own?"

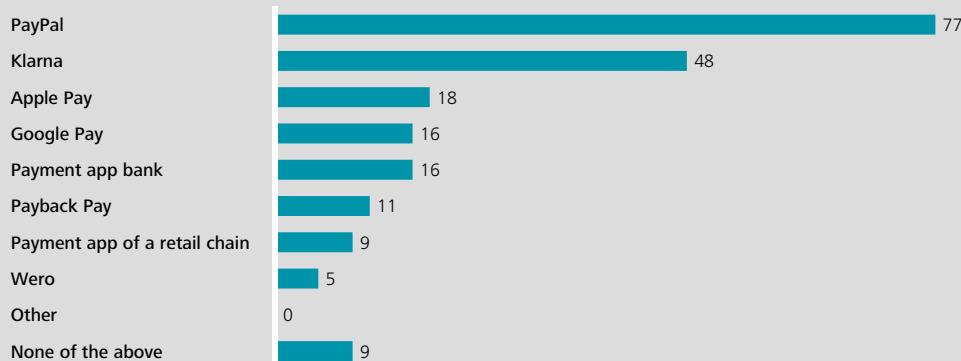
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**Payment cards are often stored digitally in mobile wallets, which means they support a wide range of payment options.** The storage of payment cards in mobile wallets varies depending on the type of wallet. As regards banks' own payment apps, girocard – being Germany's national card scheme – features by far the most heavily, with around three-quarters of users saving it to their mobile wallets. Lagging far behind, credit cards have a share of 23%, followed by Visa Debit (14%) and Mastercard Debit cards (5%). If sociodemographic factors are also considered, there is a noticeable negative income effect in the case of the girocard. Among households with a net monthly household income of less than €2,500, 86% store a girocard in their wallets, but if their income is €5,000 or more, that share goes down to just 68%. Apple Pay wallets are used to store a wider range of payment cards: credit cards (52%) and girocard (40%) are stored there most often, followed by Visa Debit cards (32%).

## Ownership of e-payment instruments

Fig. 2.4.1

%, as reported by respondents, multiple answers possible



Basis: Respondents in subgroup A who use the internet and can access a current account (n = 1,906). Question: "Which of the following payment methods have you ever tried or at least set up to use?"

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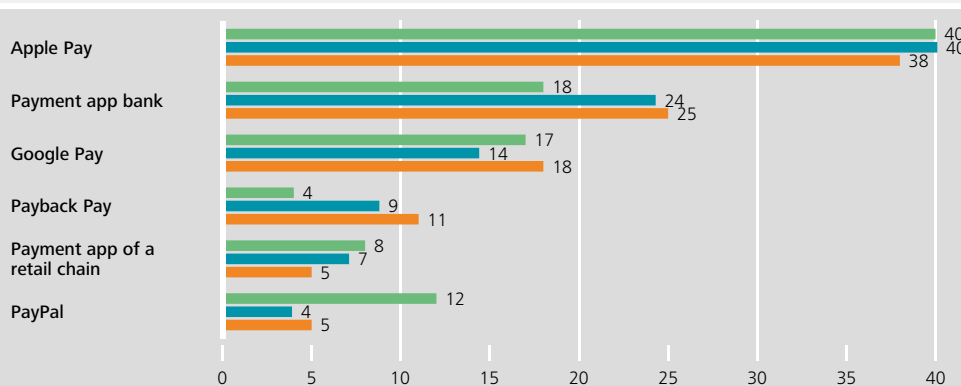
## 2.4 Mobile payments and e-payment methods

**Paypal dominates the market for mobile or e-payment methods and is being used by just over three-quarters of respondents.** Use of mobile payment methods and e-payment methods is widespread. Just over 9 out of 10 survey participants who have access to an account and use the internet reported that they had already used or set up at least one of the listed payment methods. Respondents most often have an account with Paypal (77%). This is followed by Klarna (48%) and the card-based wallets Apple Pay, Google Pay and banks' payment apps, each with around one-sixth of respondents (18% and 16%, respectively). Around 10% of respondents reported that they own retail payment solutions, such as Payback Pay or some Payment of a retail chain. 2025 saw a variety of European banks come together to launch the Wero payment app as a European payment method (see the info box entitled "Wero: the European payment method"). During the survey period (September to the beginning of December 2025), Wero's functions were still limited almost entirely to person-to-person payments. Although Wero had only been on the market for a relatively short time, 5% of respondents reported that they had set up an account for Wero (see Figure 2.4.1).

## Usual use of mobile payment methods at the POS

Fig. 2.4.2

%, as reported by respondents, multiple answers possible



Basis: Respondents who have paid at least once at the POS with their smartphone, smartwatch or fitness wristband. Question: "Which payment method do you usually use when paying with a smartphone, smartwatch or fitness wristband at the point of sale?"

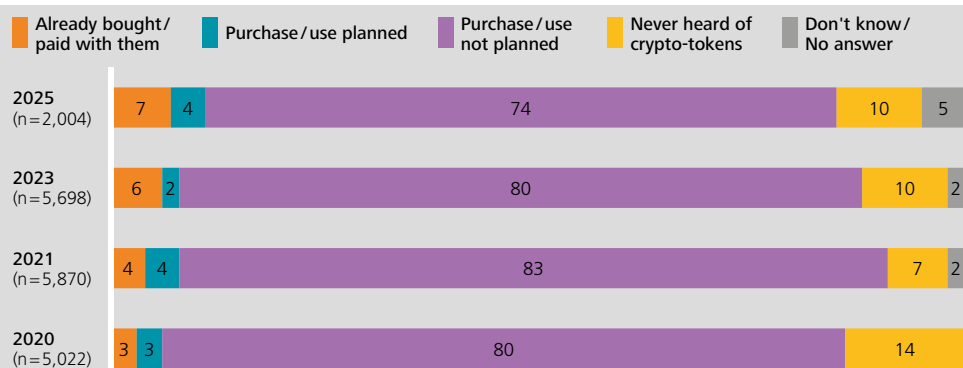
Deutsche Bundesbank

**Apple Pay is still the most widely used mobile payment method at the physical point of sale. 36% of respondents reported that they had already used a mobile device such as a smartphone, smartwatch or fitness wristband to pay.** Of those respondents who said they had already used a mobile payment method, 40% typically use Apple Pay, thus cementing Apple Pay's role as the clear market leader. The strongest gains were recorded by Paypal, whose share tripled from 4% in 2023 to 12%. 2025 saw Paypal roll out a virtual debit card in its app which is linked to the Paypal account. This enables users to pay by virtual card out of their Paypal credit balance at card terminals via the NFC interface. This new feature, alongside efforts to increasingly cater for physical points of sale by offering a dedicated Paypal wallet, appears to be paying off in terms of increased use. Google Pay and payment apps of a retail chain both recorded further slight gains, while considerable declines were posted by banks' own payment apps (down from 24% in 2023 to 18%) and Payback Pay (down from 9% to 4%). The latter decline might be the result of REWE Group's decision to leave the Payback scheme (see Figure 2.4.2).

## Potential purchase and use of crypto-tokens

Fig. 2.4.3

%, as reported by respondents



Basis: All respondents in subgroup A (n=2,004). Question: "Crypto-tokens such as Bitcoin have attracted regular attention over the past few years. Which of the following statements applies to you personally?"

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## Wero: the European payment method

Wero is a digital payment wallet that was rolled out in Germany and other countries such as the Netherlands, Belgium and France at the end of 2024. With Wero, it is currently possible to transfer money between individuals and small businesses and pay online. Going forward, Wero is also planning to cover payments at the point of sale as well as recurring payments such as subscriptions. In Germany, savings and cooperative banks, Deutsche Bank and Postbank, ING Deutschland and Revolut have integrated Wero into their banking apps or support the standalone Wero app. Wero leverages the European SEPA instant payment scheme for payments. Transactions are posted directly to the user's current account. Wero reports that users in Europe number more than 50 million, with around 7 million in Germany.

## Ownership and use of crypto-tokens

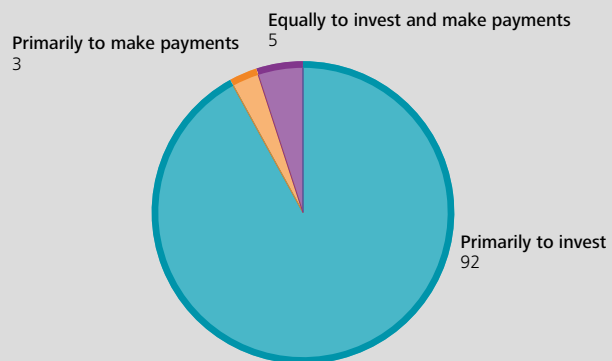
While crypto-token ownership is up slightly, it still only exists on the margins of society (see Figure 2.4.3). Crypto-tokens are cryptographically generated digital assets that can be transferred via distributed ledger technologies. In principle, payments are also possible with these digital tokens. Payment behaviour studies since 2020 have asked respondents about their ownership of crypto-tokens. The share of respondents who own crypto-tokens, or have planned to purchase crypto-tokens, has gone up by 1 and 2 percentage points, respectively. Hence, while the spread of crypto keeps on rising, it remains at a low level.

**Crypto-tokens are held almost exclusively as an investment, not for payment purposes.** Crypto-tokens such as Bitcoin or Ether still do not represent a suitable means of payment. For one thing, they are only accepted at a very small number of payment locations in Germany. For another, they fluctuate strongly in value. The survey respondents take a similar view. Among respondents who reported that they

### Main use of crypto-tokens

Fig. 2.4.4

%, as reported by respondents



Basis: Respondents in subgroup A who have purchased or paid with crypto-tokens before (n=139). Question: "You said you have purchased or paid with crypto-tokens before. What was your main use for these crypto-tokens?" May fail to sum to 100 due to rounding.

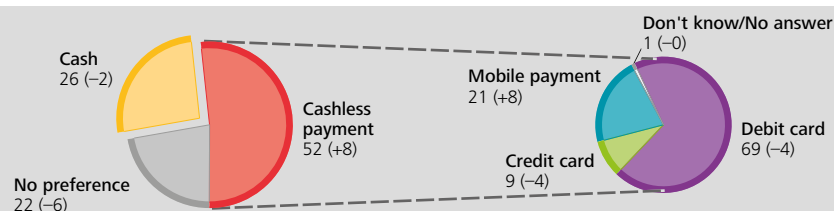
Deutsche Bundesbank

own crypto-tokens, 9 out of 10 said they use their tokens primarily to invest. 8% said they also use them to pay (5% "primarily to make payments" and 3% "equally to invest and make payments"). Hence, the share of respondents who said they pay with crypto-tokens has almost halved since 2023. Compared with 2023, then, the focus on crypto-tokens as a means of investment has increased again. Overall, people are giving somewhat more consideration to the idea of using crypto-tokens. Their practical use as a means of payment, however, is still a marginal phenomenon (see Figure 2.4.4).

### Preferred means of payment

Fig. 3.1.1

% (change from 2023 in percentage points), as reported by respondents



Basis: All respondents (n=6,070). Question: "If you were offered a choice of payment methods in-store, which would you prefer?"

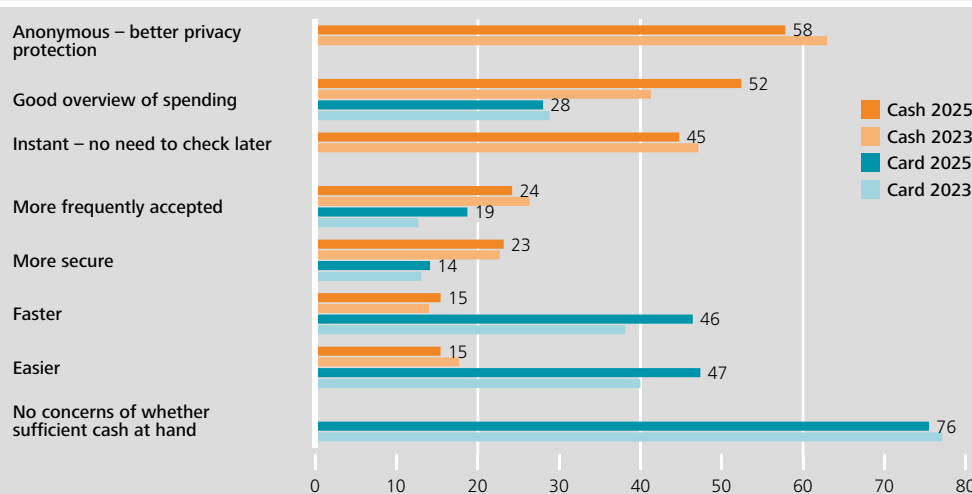
Deutsche Bundesbank

Basis: Respondents in subgroups B and C who prefer cashless means of payment or who have no clear preference (n=3,023). Question: "Which of these cashless payment methods do you prefer?"

### Comparison of advantages of cash payments and card payments (or mobile payments)

Fig. 3.1.2

%, as reported by respondents, multiple answers possible



Basis for advantages of cash: Respondents in subgroup B with valid answers (2023: n=5,698; 2025: n=2,052). Basis for advantages of cards: Respondents in subgroup A with valid answers (2023: n=5,698; 2025: n=1,925). Question: "In your opinion, what are the biggest advantages of cash payments over card payments (or mobile payments), and vice versa? You may select up to three answers."

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## 3 Attitudes to payment instruments

### 3.1 Perceptions and preferences

**The preference for cashless payments at the point of sale has continued to increase.** For example, 52% of respondents reported that they generally prefer cashless means of payment when paying in-store (see Figure 3.1.1, left-hand side). This share has increased by 8 percentage points over the past two years. However, there has not been an equally sharp decline in the preference for cash. Around one-quarter of respondents still prefer to use cash (down 2 percentage points). By contrast, the share of respondents with no preference has contracted (down 6 percentage points).

**Cashless means of payment are often used for reasons of convenience.** When asked about the main advantages of cashless payments over cash, most respondents cite not having to worry about whether they are carrying enough cash to cover their needs (76%). Furthermore, cashless means of payment are considered easy (47%) and fast (46%). A greater proportion of people felt this than two years ago (see Figure 3.1.2).

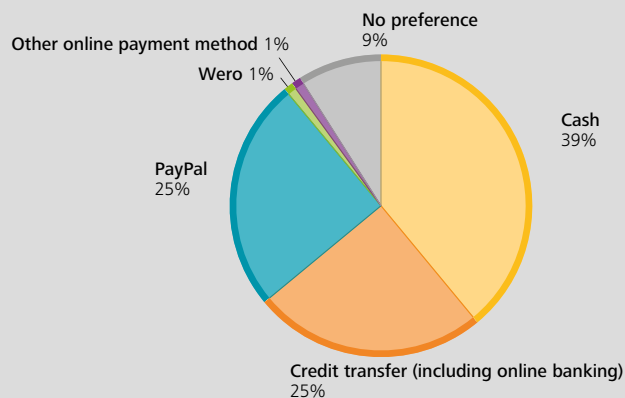
**The most commonly cited advantage of cash is still privacy protection (58%).** Furthermore, the good overview of spending and the immediate payment settlement are considered particularly advantageous by 52% and 45% of respondents, respectively. In summary, respondents consider cash to be a low-data, reliable and tangible means of payment.

**With regard to cashless means of payment, preferences continue to shift in favour of mobile payment methods.** Respondents who prefer to pay using cashless means of payment or do not have a preference were also asked about their preferred cashless payment method (see the right-hand side of Figure 3.1.1). Debit cards are by far the most frequently cited method, attracting 69% of responses. However, as in the previous study, they are becoming somewhat less popular (down 4 percentage points). The decline in the preference for credit cards is more pronounced, falling from 13% in 2023 to 9%. Among cashless means of payment, the trend away from physical cards towards mobile payments thus continues. The preference for mobile payments rose sharply to 21% and could thus be one of the drivers behind the rise in popularity of cashless payments.

### Typically preferred means of P2P payment

Fig. 3.1.3

%, as reported by respondents



Basis: All respondents in subgroup A (n=2,004). May fail to sum to 100 due to rounding. Question: "Now imagine you want to give money to family, friends, or acquaintances. Which payment method would you rather use?"  
Deutsche Bundesbank

**The girocard is by far the most popular debit card.** In the current payment behaviour study, respondents with a preference for cashless means of payment were also asked about debit card type for the first time. While just under one-fifth of respondents with a preference for debit cards prefer to use a debit card from an international card scheme (ICS), the vast majority (82%) favour a girocard. These results show, on the one hand, the high prevalence and acceptance of girocards. On the other hand, it should be borne in mind that ICS debit cards tend to be used more frequently for mobile payments (see Chapter 2.3) and are therefore stored to a greater extent as virtual cards in people's mobile wallets.

**Cash remains the payment method of choice for P2P payments.** If someone wants to send money to another individual, they mainly do so using well-established payment methods. Just under 40% of respondents stated that they prefer to use cash for such payment transactions (see Figure 3.1.3). This is followed by credit transfers and the online payment service provider Paypal, each accounting for 25% of the responses. So far, only 1% of respondents use Wero as their preferred means of payment for P2P payments.

**Payment preferences vary across societal groups.** The preference for cash is somewhat higher amongst older and lower-income people, although the majority in these groups, too, now prefer cashless means of payment (see Figure 3.1.4). Only in the lowest income group is there still a proportionally higher number of people who prefer cash (43% for cash vs. 35% for cashless payments). Debit cards are the most popular cashless payment method across all age and income groups, but tend to be preferred more often by older, lower-income individuals and women (see Figure 3.1.5). Conversely, mobile payment methods are more likely to be preferred by younger, higher-income individuals and men. Credit cards are cited as the preferred means of payment more frequently in the 55+ age range in particular.

### Preferred means of payment by population group

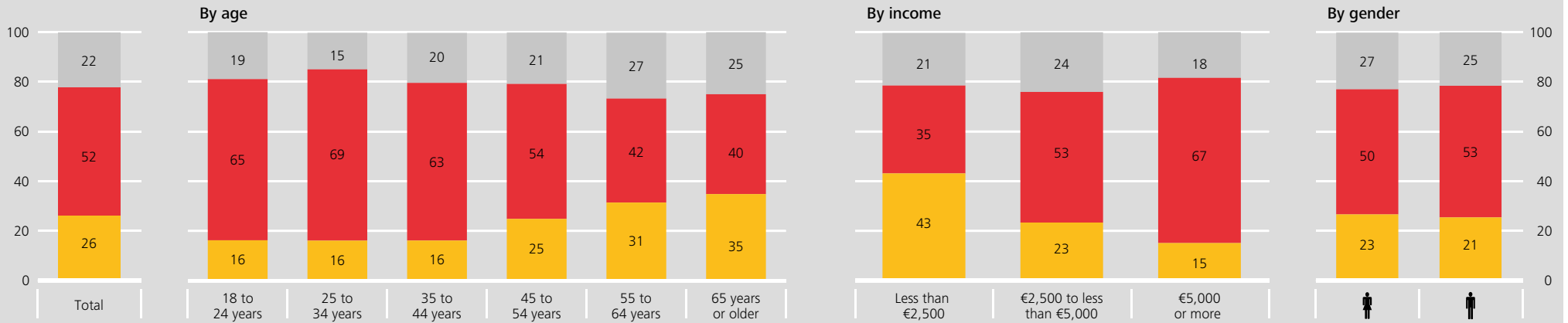
Fig. 3.1.4

%, as reported by respondents

Cash

Cashless means of payment

No preference



Basis: All respondents (n=6,070). Question: "If you were offered a choice of payment methods in-store, which would you prefer?"  
Deutsche Bundesbank

### Preferred means of payment by population group – cashless payments

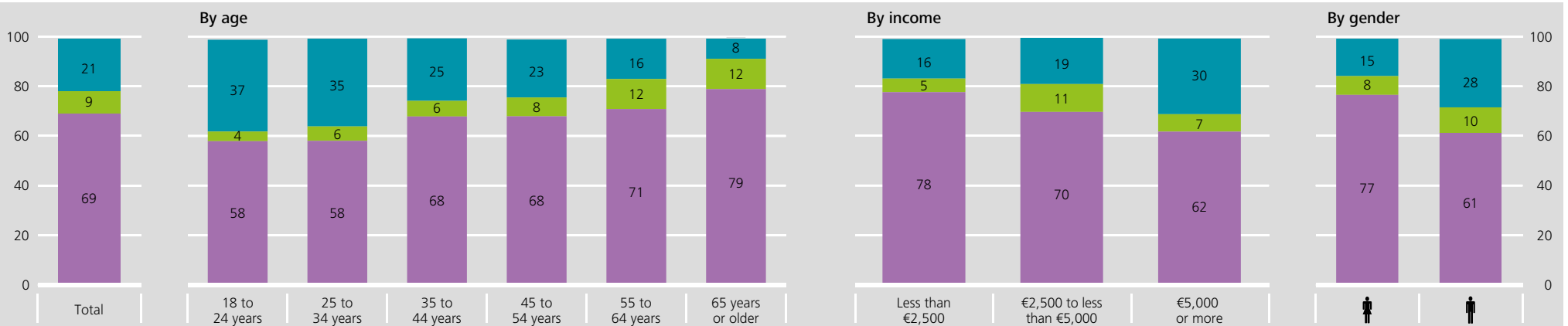
Fig. 3.1.5

%, as reported by respondents

Debit card

Credit card

Mobile payment

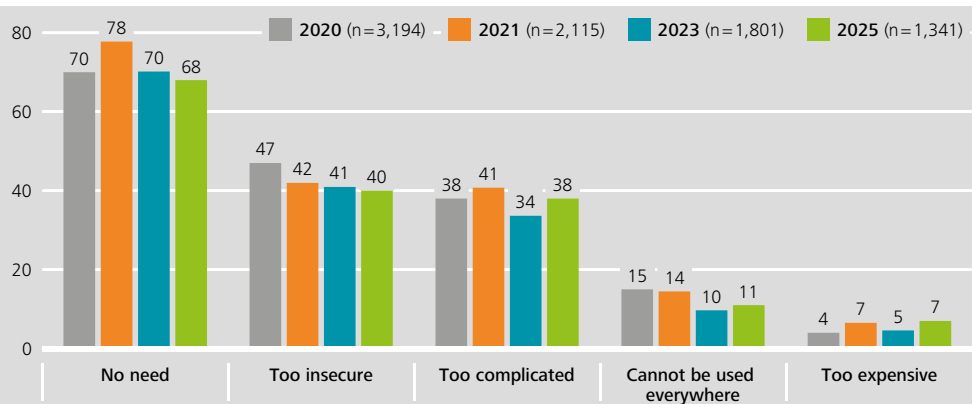


Basis: Respondents in subgroups B and C who prefer cashless means of payment or who have no clear preference (n=3,023). Question: "Which of these cashless means of payment do you prefer?"  
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### Reasons for not using mobile payment methods

Fig. 3.2.1

%, as reported by respondents, multiple answers possible



Basis: Respondents in subgroup A who have never paid using a smartphone, a smartwatch or a fitness wristband at the point of sale in a store before. Question: "Why have you not used any mobile payment methods at the point of sale in a store before?"  
Deutsche Bundesbank

## 3.2 Barriers to payment methods

Although 94% of respondents have a mobile device with a payment function, only one-third of respondents have already used this function. Of those who have never paid with mobile payment methods, more than two-thirds (68%) say this is because they have no need for such a payment solution (see Figure 3.2.1). Security concerns (40%) and high complexity (38%) are also a hindrance for many people. By contrast, lack of acceptance and cost reasons are only rarely cited. The reasons for not using mobile payment methods at physical POS terminals have remained virtually unchanged in recent years. Overall, the pattern has remained broadly stable since 2020: absence of need, security concerns and perceived complexity are the three main obstacles to the use of mobile payments.

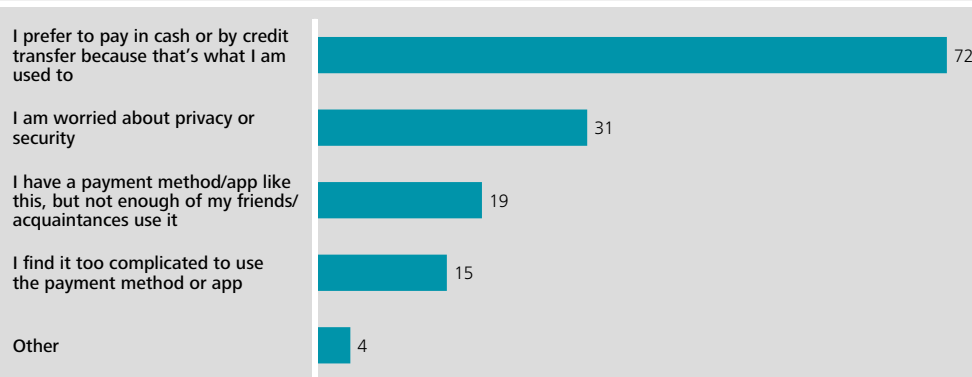
Many respondents also remain unconvinced of the potential benefits of mobile payment methods when it comes to P2P payments as well. For payments to individuals, almost two-thirds of respondents use first and foremost well-established means of payment, namely cash and credit transfers, or do not have a preferred means of payment. The majority of these respondents already have a P2P app such as Paypal or Wero. Those who prefer to pay in cash or by credit transfer despite having such an app do so mostly out of habit (72%) (see Figure 3.2.2). Just under one-third are concerned about data protection and security (31%). Worries about these apps still not being sufficiently widely used or being too complicated were more of a secondary concern.

Those who do not have a P2P app such as Wero or Paypal stick to the familiar as well. Around three-quarters of these respondents prefer to use cash or credit transfer out of habit (see Figure 3.2.3). Respondents also cited data protection and security concerns (41%) and a lack of technical know-how (34%). Lack of knowledge about or access to such payment solutions play hardly any role. It is therefore clear that habitual factors are a very important factor in the adoption of payment instruments.

### Reasons for not preferring to use digital payment methods

Fig. 3.2.2

%, as reported by respondents, multiple answers possible

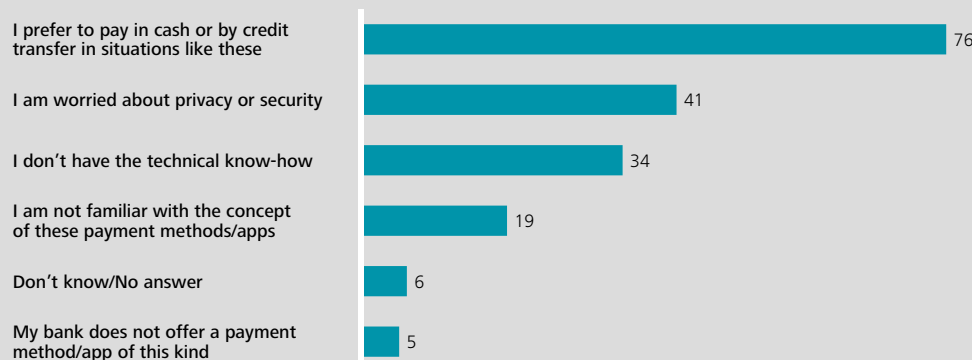


Basis: Respondents in subgroup A who have PayPal or Wero and chose cash, credit transfer, no preference or don't know for P2P payments (n=961). Question: "What are the reasons you (prefer) not to use a digital payment method/app such as Wero or PayPal to make payments to other people?"  
Deutsche Bundesbank

### Reasons for not using digital payment methods/apps for P2P payments

Fig. 3.2.3

%, as reported by respondents, multiple answers possible



Basis: Respondents in subgroup A who have set up neither PayPal nor Wero (n=408). Question: "You said that you do not have any digital payment methods/apps such as Wero or PayPal for making payments to other people. What are your reasons for not using a digital payment method/app?"

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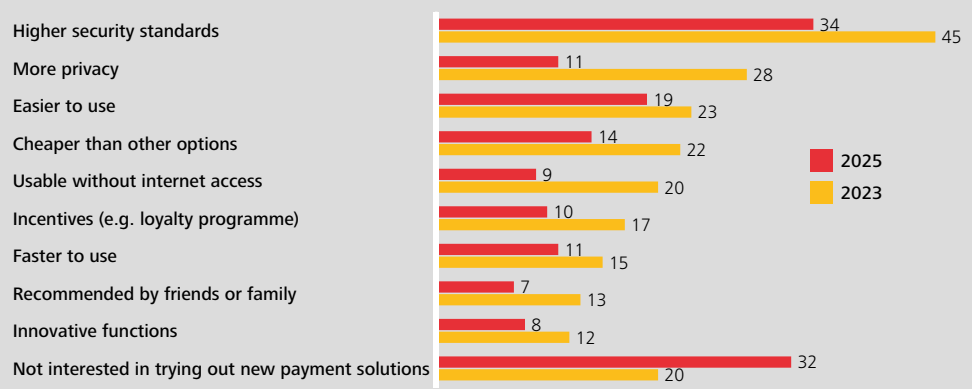
**An increasingly cautious approach is shaping the way new payment solutions are handled.** The results show that many people use new payment solutions in a very conscious and considered manner. Alongside the reasons for the non-use of certain payment methods, the question arises as to which factors are conducive to the adoption of new payment solutions. Participants were therefore asked about the two main reasons for trying out new payment solutions. As in the 2023 study, higher security standards remain the most important reason for testing a new payment solution (see Figure 3.2.4). However, this figure has declined somewhat compared with the 2023 survey (down 10 percentage points). At the same time, the share of those who reported currently not being interested in additional new payment methods increased from 20% to 32%.

**The importance of individual reasons varies across age and income groups.** Security, speed and innovative functions are particularly important for younger people, while satisfaction with the methods already in use goes up with age. For households with a monthly net income of less than €2,500, potential cost savings are a more salient issue, while higher earners emphasise the security aspect and are generally more open to new payment solutions (see Figure A. 3.2.4).

### Reasons to try out new payment solutions

Fig. 3.2.4

%, as reported by respondents, multiple answers possible



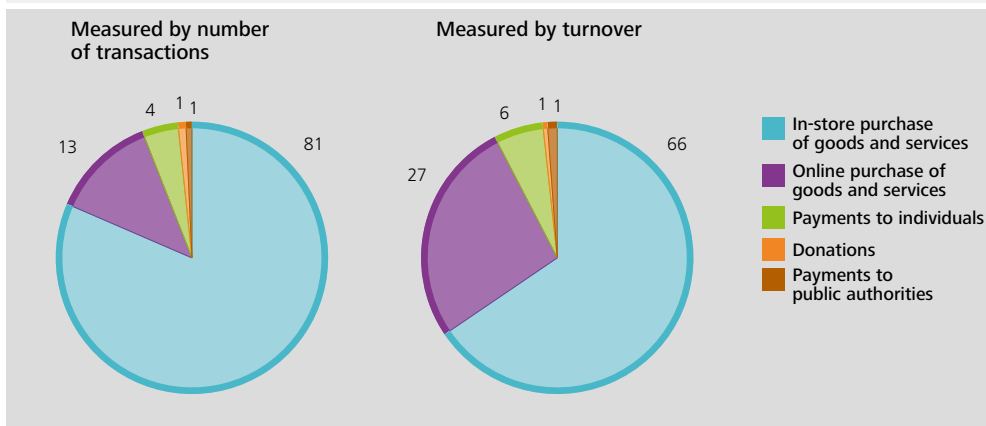
Basis: All respondents in subgroup A (2025: n=2,004, 2023: n=2,853). Question: "What are the most important factors that would convince you to try out a new payment solution?"

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## Type of payment

Fig. 4.1.1

%, as reported in payments diary



Basis: All transactions (n=18,497, total value: €822,538).  
Deutsche Bundesbank

# 4 Use of means of payment

## 4.1 Overview of expenditure

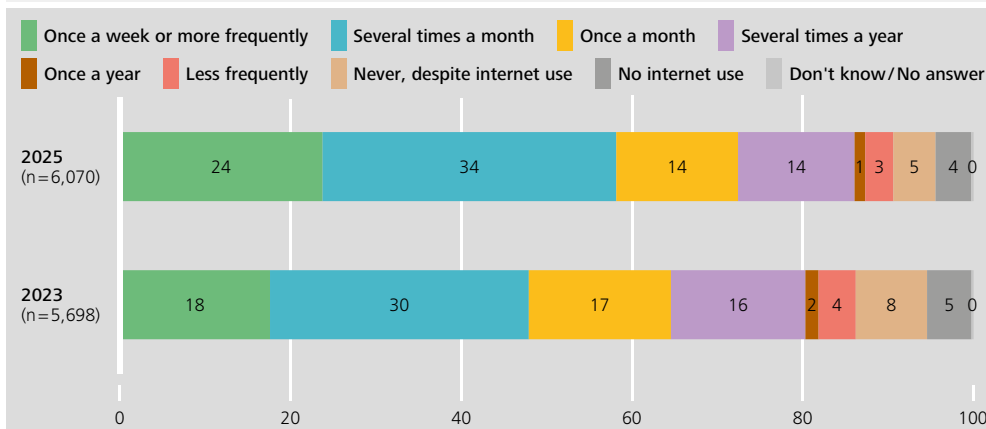
To compile information on their actual payment behaviour, after the telephone interviews, participants noted down the payments they made in a diary for three days. The diaries document all of the actively initiated, one-off payments made by the respondents during this period. Regular recurring payments for items such as rent, utilities, insurance or subscriptions are excluded.<sup>13</sup> A total of 5,302 people were willing to fill out a diary. After adjusting for incomplete transactions and expenditure abroad, information is available on 18,497 transactions with a total value of €822,538.

The diaries cover a wide variety of payment scenarios. In addition to the purchase of goods and services, participants also recorded payments to private individuals, donations to charitable causes and one-off payments to the offices of public authorities and administrations (see the overview on the next page). They also indicated whether the purchase was made in a physical location, such as a store or a market, or remotely (from a distance). Remote purchases include all expenditure incurred online, using an app or over the telephone. The place where the purchase was made does not always correspond to the place of payment. For example, goods ordered online can be paid for when they are delivered or collected in-store. In some cases, goods or services purchased at a physical location are paid for remotely and retroactively, for example by credit transfer. The payments diary was revised significantly compared with the previous surveys in order to capture the wide variety of payment situations, as well as the various places where purchases are made and payments are settled. The overview on the next page shows how the various purchasing and payment situations were categorised in this study.

## Internet purchase frequency

Fig. 4.1.2

%, as reported by respondents



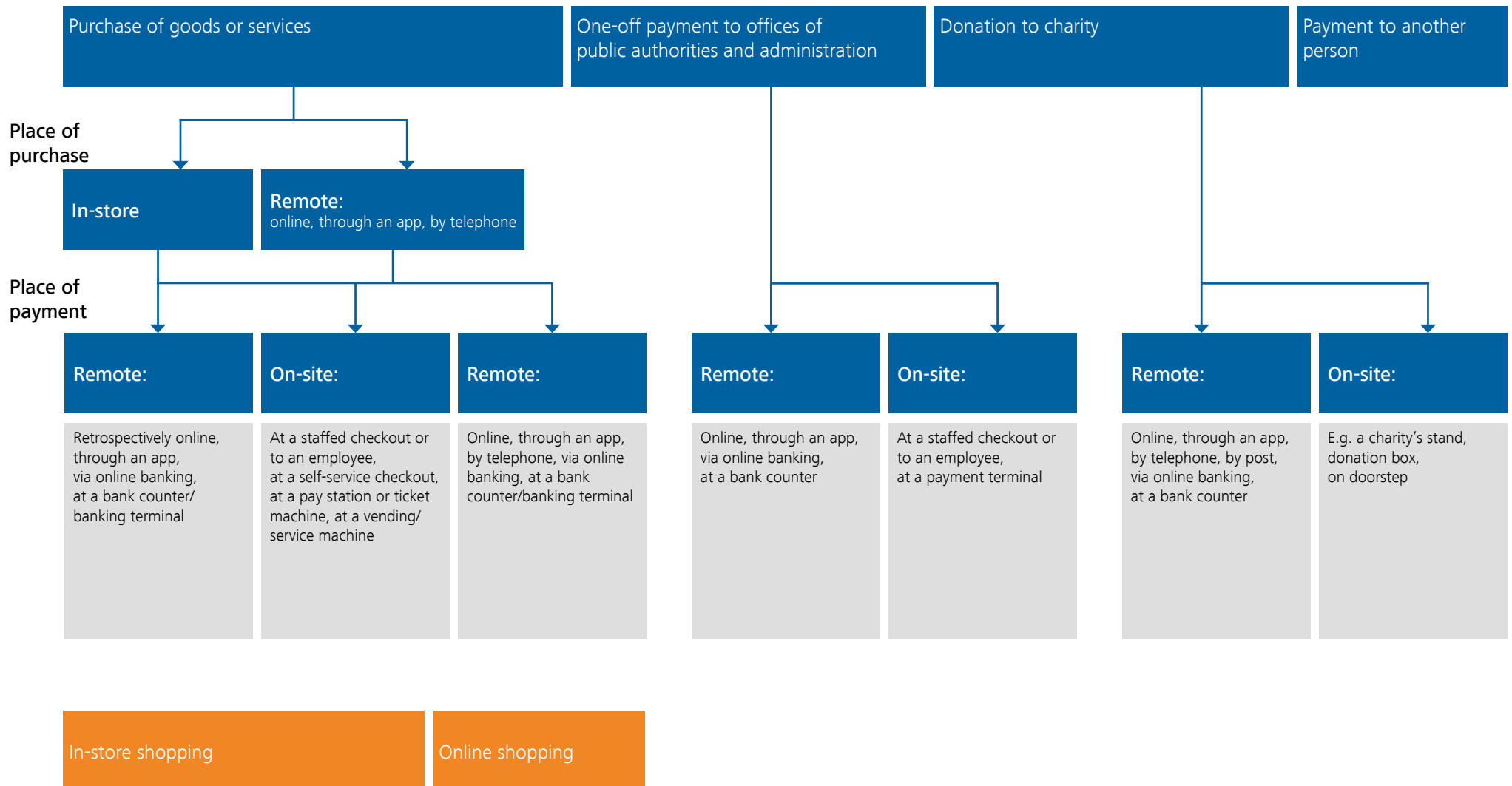
Question: "How often do you make purchases online? Please count both purchases made using an app and using a website."  
Deutsche Bundesbank

The majority of the payment transactions recorded relate to in-store purchases of goods and services (81% of transactions and 66% of turnover). Figure 4.1.1 shows the breakdown of the recorded expenditure by payment type as measured by the number of transactions (left) and turnover (right). Online purchases account for the second largest

<sup>13</sup> For more information on the payments diary methodology, see Annex 2.

## Overview of expenditure

### Reason for payment

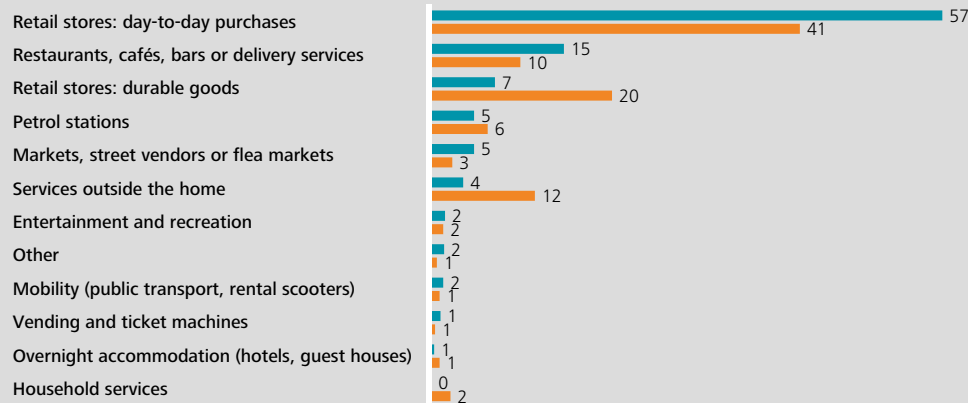


### Physical locations for purchasing goods and services

Fig. 4.1.3

%, as reported in payments diary

■ Number of transactions ■ Turnover



Basis: In-store purchases of goods and services (n=15,072, total value: €538,772).  
Deutsche Bundesbank

share of expenditure (13% of transactions and 27% of turnover).<sup>14</sup> Payments to individuals (4% of transactions and 6% of turnover), along with donations to charitable causes and payments to public authorities (1% of transactions and turnover, respectively) were made much less frequently.

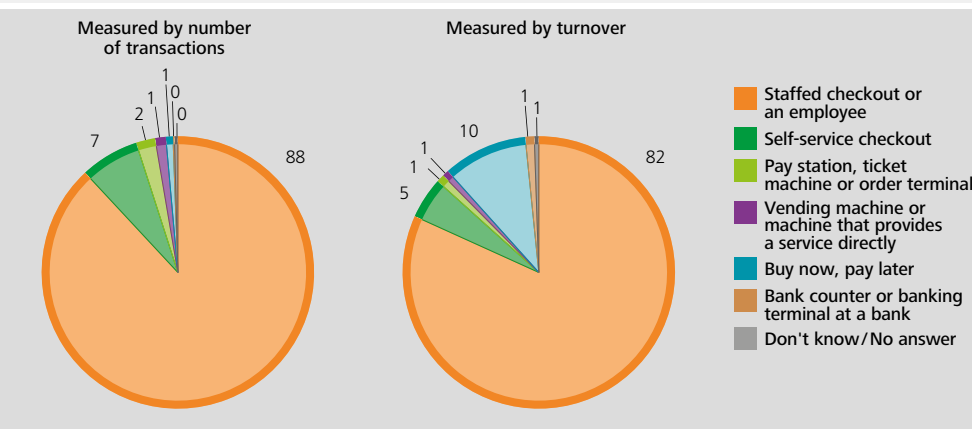
**Purchasing or ordering goods and services online has become a routine practice for many people.** 72% of respondents shop online or using an app at least once a month. This is a noticeable increase on 2023 (up 7 percentage points). By contrast, only 9% of respondents stated that they never make online purchases or do not use the internet, representing a decline of 5 percentage points (see Figure 4.1.2).

**Looking more closely at in-store purchases of goods and services, most payment transactions were for day-to-day retail purchases (see Figure 4.1.3).** These sorts of stores accounted for 57% of transactions and 41% of turnover. Payment transactions at restaurants, cafés, bars or for delivery services, at retailers of durable goods, at petrol stations and at markets are likewise frequent. Besides retail stores for day-to-day purchases, retail stores for durable goods and services outside the home are among the most important places of payment in terms of turnover.

### Payment situation when making in-store purchases

Fig. 4.1.4

%, as reported in payments diary



Basis: In-store purchases of goods and services (n=15,072, total value: €538,772).  
Deutsche Bundesbank

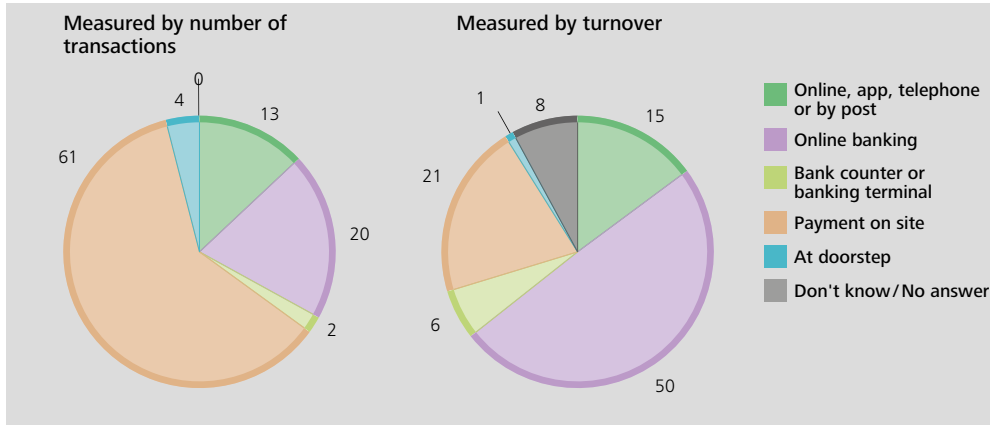
**The majority of payments for purchases at physical locations were made at a staffed checkout or with employees (88%) (see Figure 4.1.4).** Respondents used a self-service checkout for 7% of their transactions. Even less common were payments made at pay and ticket machines (2%), automated vending and service machines (1%) or retroactively on the internet, an app, via online banking or on site at a bank (1%). However, when measured by turnover, the significance of remote payments becomes higher (11%). The shares of other places of payment become correspondingly lower.

<sup>14</sup> In-store purchase refers to all transactions where a purchase took place at a physical location, irrespective of where and when payment was carried out (e.g. purchase and payment directly in a supermarket or purchase in a furniture store paid for retroactively using online banking). Added to this are all transactions in which the purchase or binding order was carried out remotely on the internet, through an app or over the telephone, but the payment was made at a physical location (e.g. ordering food deliveries by app and paying at the door or ordering a photo book online and paying in-store). By contrast, online purchases include all transactions in which goods and services were purchased remotely on the internet, through an app or over the telephone, and also paid for remotely, i.e. on the internet, through an app, via online banking, at bank counters or credit transfer terminals (e.g. purchase and payment of a bus ticket in an app or purchase of goods online and payment by credit transfer).

### Payment situation when making donations

Fig. 4.1.5

%, as reported in payments diary



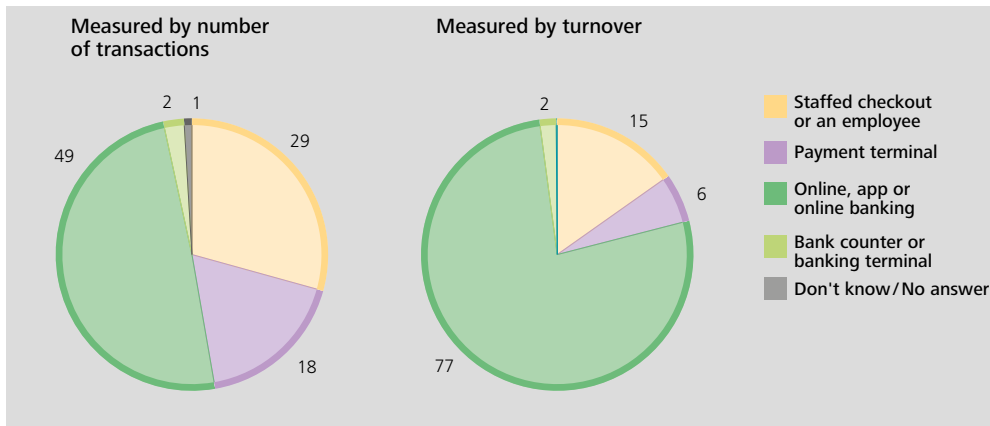
Basis: Donations (n=177, total value: €4,617).  
Deutsche Bundesbank

**Most of the donations to charitable causes and payments to the offices of public authorities and administrations were paid remotely.** More than two-thirds of the value of the donations recorded relates to payments made online, through an app, over the telephone, by post, via online banking or at bank counters (see the right-hand panel of Figure 4.1.5). However, in terms of the number of transactions, 65% of donations are made on site, such as at a charity stand, donation box or at the front door. In the case of payments to public authorities, at 79%, the share of turnover paid remotely is even higher (see Figure 4.1.6). In terms of number of transactions, remote payments account for just over half of the total here. While 29% of payment transactions are carried out at a staffed checkout or with an employee of the public authority, 18% are made at a self-service payment terminal.

### Payment situation when making payments to public authorities

Fig. 4.1.6

%, as reported in payments diary



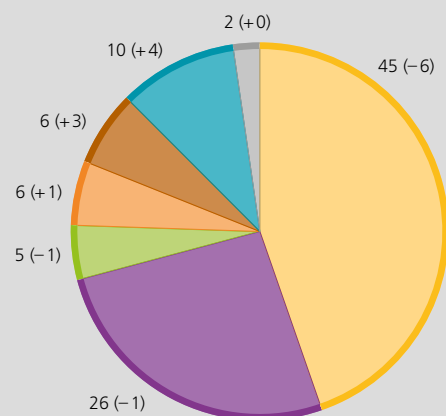
Basis: Payments to public authorities (n=131, total value: €9,517).  
Deutsche Bundesbank

## Use of payment instruments

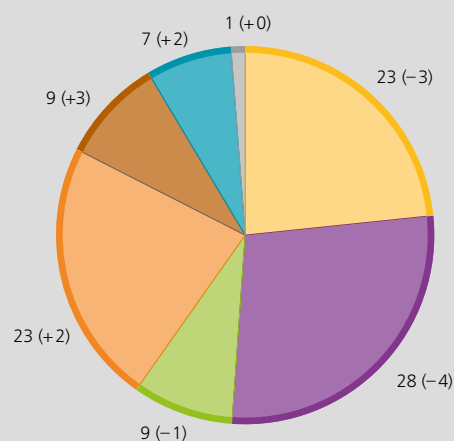
Fig. 4.2.1

% (change from 2023 in percentage points), as reported in payments diary

### Measured by number of transactions



### Measured by turnover



Basis: All transactions (n=18,497, total value: €822,538).  
Deutsche Bundesbank

## 4.2 Overall payment behaviour

The diaries indicate how many purchases are made using a specific means of payment and the value of these purchases. The top half of Figure 4.2.1 and Table 4.2.1 show the share of all transactions recorded in the diaries that are paid for using cash, cards or other means of payment (percentage of transactions). The bottom half of Figure 4.2.1 and Table 4.2.2 show the share of total expenditure relating to individual means of payment (percentage of turnover).

Although the use of cash and payment cards remains very widespread, their significance is declining both in terms of transactions and turnover. Measured by the number of transactions, cash continues to be the most widely used means of payment (45%). That said, its share has taken another noticeable dip (down 6 percentage points), meaning that it now accounts for less than half of all transactions for the first time. In terms of turnover, cash accounts for 23%.

This means that, for the first time, cashless payments are more common than those made using banknotes and coins. Debit cards are by far the most frequently used means of cashless payment (26%). Credit cards account for 5% of payments. This means that both card types have each fallen by 1 percentage point in terms of transactions. As in 2023, debit cards are the most important means of payment in terms of turnover. However, their share has fallen noticeably by 4 percentage points to 28%.

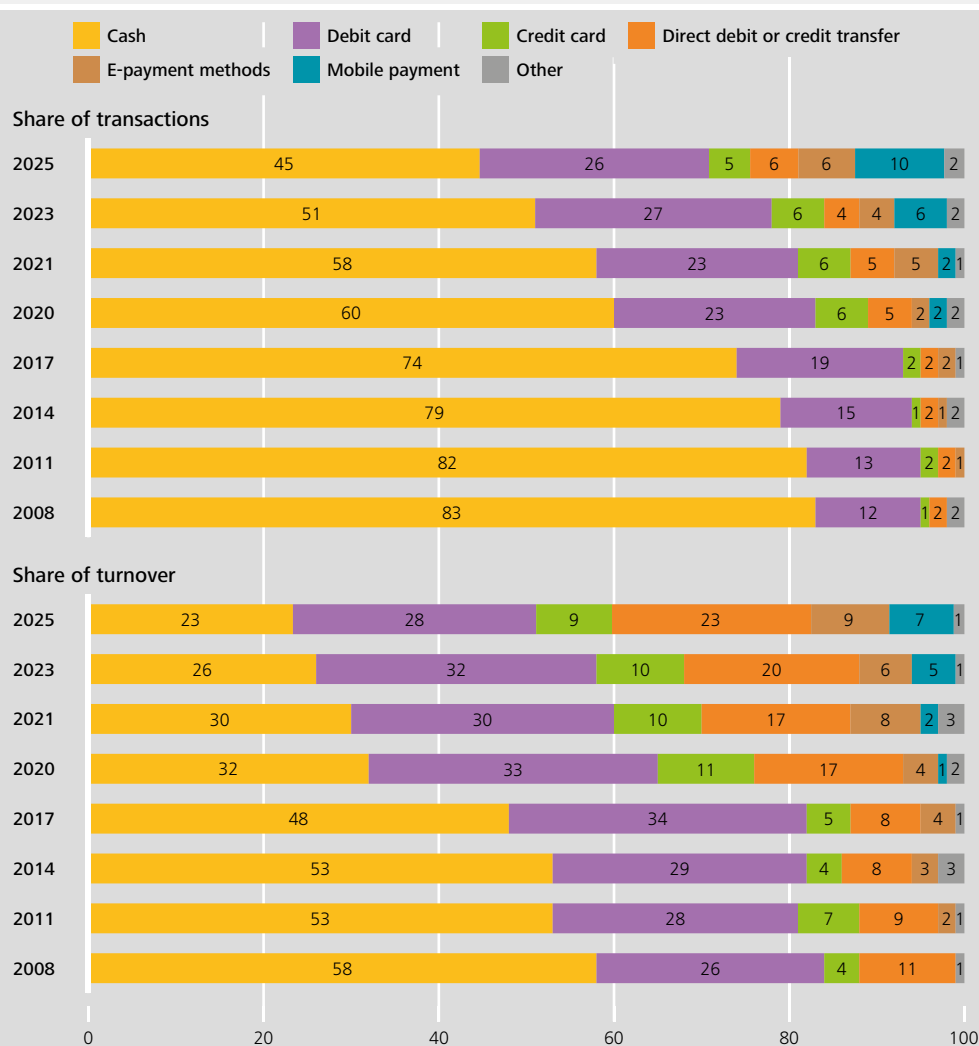
The girocard is by far the most frequently used physical<sup>15</sup> debit card. This card alone accounted for 20% of transactions and 22% of turnover. This is followed by Visa Debit and Mastercard Debit cards, accounting for 4% and 1% of transactions, respectively. The shares of cards in the payments recorded therefore roughly reflect the distribution of card ownership. Comparative figures for previous years are not available because the 2025 survey was the first to distinguish between different debit card networks. The shares reported do

<sup>15</sup> "Physical debit cards" in this context means the use of cards that does not involve a mobile wallet, such as Apple Pay or Google Pay. In other words, the physical card was used to make payments at the POS or the card identification numbers were used in e-commerce.

## Use of payment instruments over time

Fig. 4.2.2

%, as reported in payments diary



Basis: All transactions in the payments diaries. Note: Surveys were not conducted in the years 2009, 2010, 2012, 2013, 2015, 2016, 2018, 2022 and 2024.

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not include payments made using virtual cards stored in mobile wallets such as Apple Pay and Google Pay. This explains the discrepancy compared with the market shares reported systematically by the card networks.

**The share of mobile payment methods has increased noticeably and has almost doubled compared with the previous study.** For instance, mobile payments were used in 10% of payment transactions (compared with 6% in 2023). Consequently, while mobile payments are far less widespread than cash and conventional debit cards, they are used more frequently than credit cards, direct debit, credit transfers and e-payment methods.

**The share of transactions and turnover attributable to means of payment primarily used for remote payments has also grown strongly.** These include e-payment methods, which increased their share in the number and value of transactions by 3 percentage points in each case. The share of turnover accounted for by direct debit and credit transfers rose by 2 percentage points and now stands at 23% owing to the high average amounts associated with these payment methods.

**Paypal is the most widely used mobile and e-payment method, accounting for 7% of transactions and 9% of total recorded turnover.** Apple Pay, payment apps provided by banks and savings banks, along with Google Pay and Klarna, lag behind by a considerable margin – especially in terms of the value of payments made. This makes Paypal the third most frequently used payment method for day-to-day purchases, after cash and girocard.

## Share of payment instruments by number of transactions

Tab. 4.2.1

% as reported in payments diary

| Payment instrument                               | Percentage |      |      |      |      |
|--------------------------------------------------|------------|------|------|------|------|
|                                                  | 2025       | 2023 | 2021 | 2020 | 2017 |
| Cash payment                                     | 44.7       | 50.5 | 57.8 | 60.1 | 74.3 |
| Card payments                                    |            |      |      |      |      |
| Debit card                                       | 26.2       | 27.5 | 22.6 | 23.1 | 18.9 |
| Girocard                                         | 20.1       |      |      |      |      |
| Visa Debit                                       | 4.2        |      |      |      |      |
| Mastercard Debit                                 | 1.4        |      |      |      |      |
| Debit card. not at POS                           | 0.5        |      |      |      |      |
| Credit card (incl. prepaid)                      | 4.7        | 5.7  | 6.2  | 6.0  | 1.6  |
| Other card                                       | 1.5        | 1.6  | 1.0  | 1.2  | 0.3  |
| Other cashless payments                          |            |      |      |      |      |
| Credit transfer                                  | 2.9        | 2.2  | 2.5  | 2.4  | 1.3  |
| of which instant credit transfers                | 0.8        |      |      |      |      |
| Direct debit                                     | 2.6        | 2.1  | 1.9  | 2.2  | 0.6  |
| E-payment methods                                | 6.5        | 3.5  | 5.0  | 2.0  | 1.9  |
| Mobile payment methods                           | 10.2       | 6.2  | 2.1  | 2.0  | 0.1  |
| Other/Payment instrument not stated              | 0.8        | 0.6  | 1.0  | 1.0  | 1.0  |
| E-payment and mobile payment methods by provider |            |      |      |      |      |
| Paypal                                           | 6.8        |      |      |      |      |
| Apple Pay                                        | 5.3        |      |      |      |      |
| Bank's payment app                               | 2.1        |      |      |      |      |
| Google Pay                                       | 1.8        |      |      |      |      |
| Klarna                                           | 0.4        |      |      |      |      |
| Other                                            | 0.2        |      |      |      |      |
| Total                                            | 100        | 100  | 100  | 100  | 100  |

Basis: All transactions from the payments diaries.

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## Share of payment instruments by turnover

Tab. 4.2.2

% as reported in payments diary

| Payment instrument                               | Percentage |      |      |      |      |
|--------------------------------------------------|------------|------|------|------|------|
|                                                  | 2025       | 2023 | 2021 | 2020 | 2017 |
| Cash payment                                     | 23.3       | 25.9 | 29.9 | 31.9 | 47.6 |
| Card payments                                    |            |      |      |      |      |
| Debit card                                       | 27.8       | 32.1 | 29.9 | 32.8 | 34.9 |
| Girocard                                         | 21.9       |      |      |      |      |
| Visa Debit                                       | 3.4        |      |      |      |      |
| Mastercard Debit                                 | 1.9        |      |      |      |      |
| Debit card. not at POS                           | 0.6        |      |      |      |      |
| Credit card (incl. prepaid)                      | 8.7        | 9.7  | 10.4 | 10.8 | 4.6  |
| Other card                                       | 0.3        | 0.4  | 0.3  | 0.7  | 0.1  |
| Other cashless payments                          |            |      |      |      |      |
| Credit transfer                                  | 18.5       | 17.0 | 15.0 | 13.7 | 5.6  |
| of which instant credit transfers                | 6.6        |      |      |      |      |
| Direct debit                                     | 4.3        | 3.5  | 3.7  | 3.5  | 2.4  |
| E-payment methods                                | 8.9        | 5.7  | 7.7  | 4.1  | 3.7  |
| Mobile payment methods                           | 7.4        | 5.0  | 1.6  | 1.5  | 0.0  |
| Other/Payment instrument not stated              | 0.9        | 0.6  | 1.6  | 1.1  | 1.1  |
| E-payment and mobile payment methods by provider |            |      |      |      |      |
| Paypal                                           | 9.0        |      |      |      |      |
| Apple Pay                                        | 3.5        |      |      |      |      |
| Bank's payment app                               | 1.6        |      |      |      |      |
| Google Pay                                       | 1.2        |      |      |      |      |
| Klarna                                           | 0.7        |      |      |      |      |
| Other                                            | 0.3        |      |      |      |      |
| Total                                            | 100        | 100  | 100  | 100  | 100  |

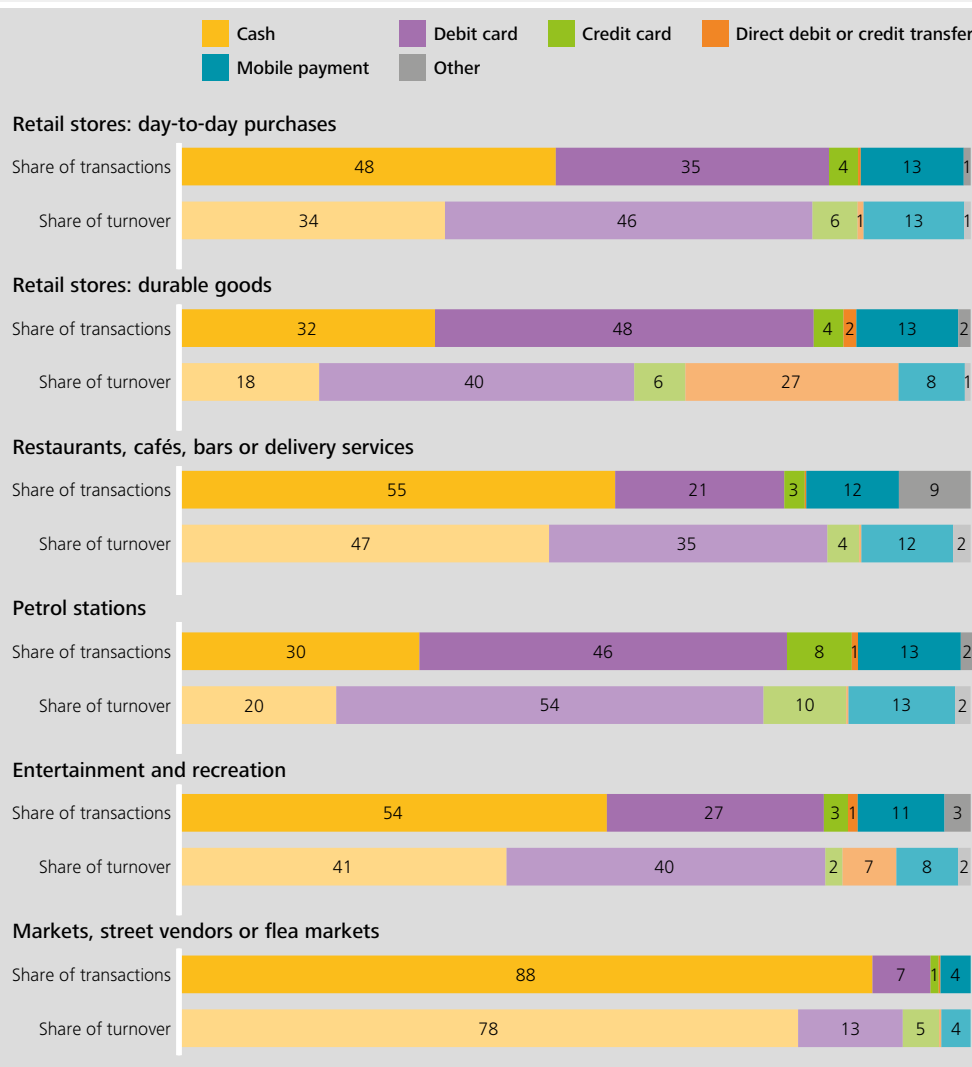
Basis: All transactions from the payments diaries.

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### Use of payment instruments by purchase locations

Fig. 4.3.1

%, as reported in payments diary



Basis: In-store purchases of goods and services.  
Deutsche Bundesbank

## 4.3 Payment behaviour when making purchases at physical locations

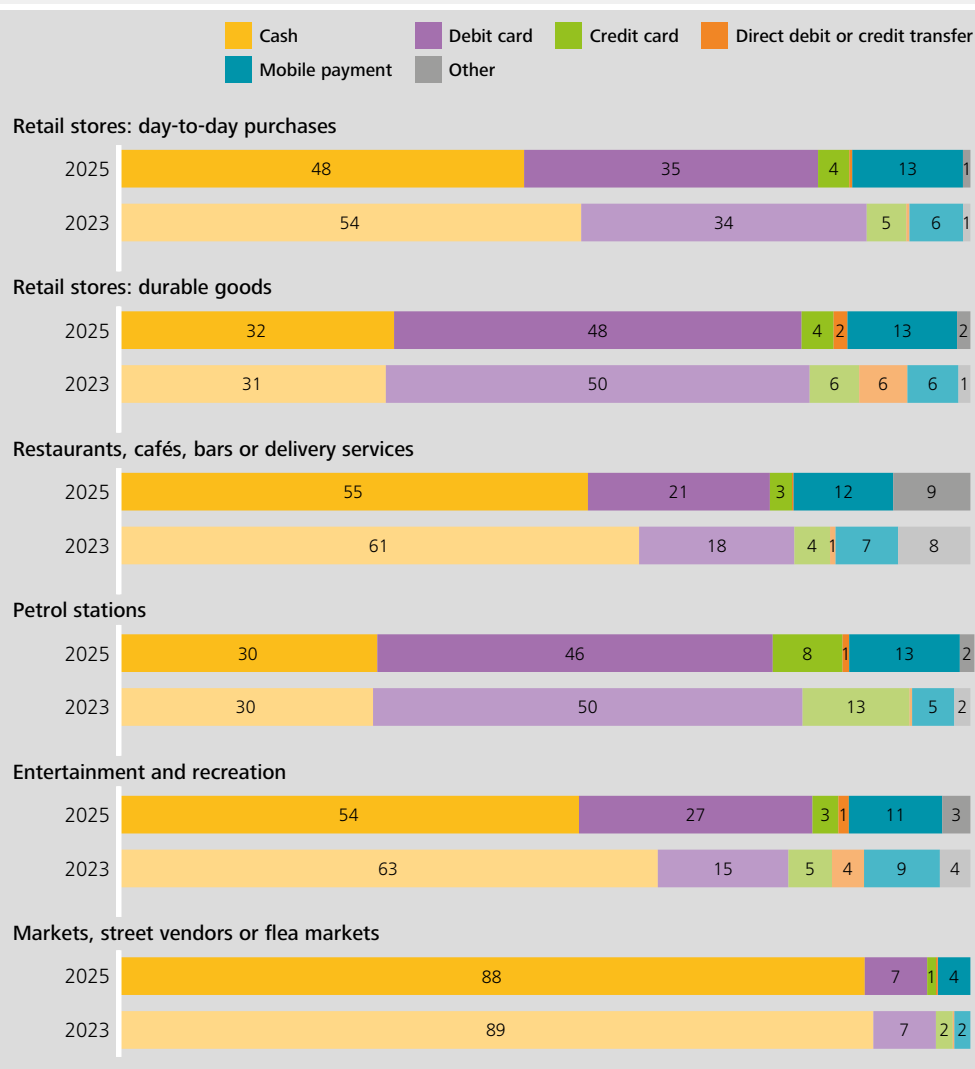
**Payment behaviour varies greatly depending on the place of payment.** Figure 4.3.1 shows the share of transactions (upper bar) and share of turnover (lower bar) for each means of payment in purchases made in-store, broken down by place of purchase. The use of cash is still above average for day-to-day retail purchases, at restaurants, cafés and bars, and for tickets, admission fees and charges for recreational activities. Nine out of ten transactions and just under 80% of turnover at markets, flea markets and street stalls involve cash. One reason for this is that the average spend at these locations is relatively low. Added to this is the fact that it is still not always possible to make cashless payments in restaurants, cafés and bars, for recreational activities and at markets (see Chapter 5.1). By contrast, less than one-third of purchases are paid for in cash when it comes to retail stores for durable goods and petrol stations. The combination of very high acceptance rates for cashless payments and, on average, high transaction amounts is likely to be the key factor in this context.

**Debit cards are by far the most widely used form of cashless payment at petrol stations and retailers of durable goods.** In terms of turnover, this also applies to retail stores for day-to-day purchases. Debit cards are also the most frequently used form of cashless payment at other purchase locations. However, mobile payments have, in some cases, significantly caught up with debit cards since the last survey in 2023. It is worth noting that debit cards are used primarily for larger amounts, whereas mobile payment methods are used in equal measure irrespective of the transaction amount (see Chapter 4.4). Direct debit and credit transfers are used in the retail sector for durable goods for more than one-quarter of sales, compared with 7% for entertainment and recreation. This reflects the fact that some of these purchases, especially those involving higher transaction amounts, are paid for remotely afterwards. At the other places of payment, direct debit and credit transfers are irrelevant in terms of transactions and turnover.

## Use of payment instruments by purchase locations over time

Fig. 4.3.2

Percentage of transactions, as reported in payments diary



Basis: In-store purchases of goods and services.  
Deutsche Bundesbank

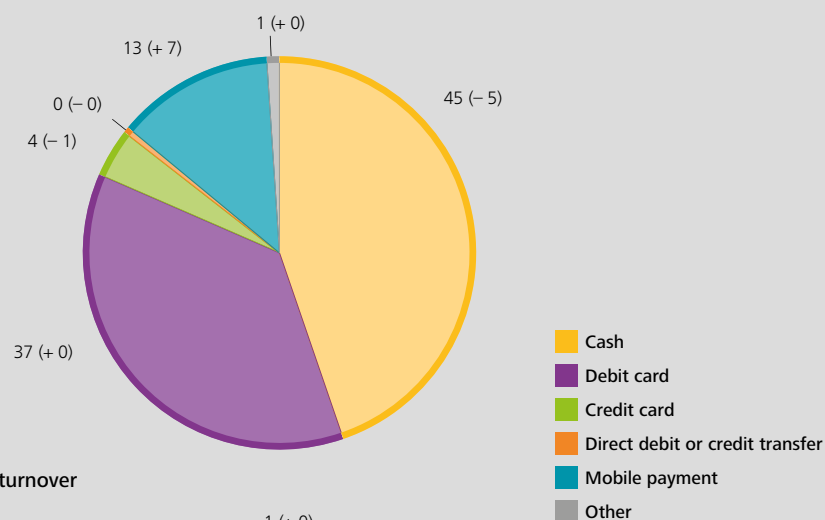
The decline in the use of cash compared with 2023 is particularly evident in day-to-day retail purchases, restaurants, cafés and bars, and entertainment and recreation (see Figure 4.3.2). One common factor across these places is that they have an above-average share of cash payments. In retail stores, the widespread adoption of self-service checkouts may have accelerated the use of cashless means of payment (see the info box entitled “Cash acceptance at self-service checkouts”). However, the share of cash transactions at petrol stations and retailers of durable goods is at the same low level as in 2023. By contrast, payments at markets and street stalls continue to be predominantly cash-based. Mobile payments are on the rise at all places of payment. By contrast, the share of credit card payments is falling across all locations. Debit cards have the potential to increase their share of the total number of transactions, especially in places where the use of cash is declining significantly. By contrast, where the share of cash payments remains relatively constant, debit cards lose ground to mobile payment methods.

#### Use of payment instruments in bricks-and-mortar retail stores (POS)

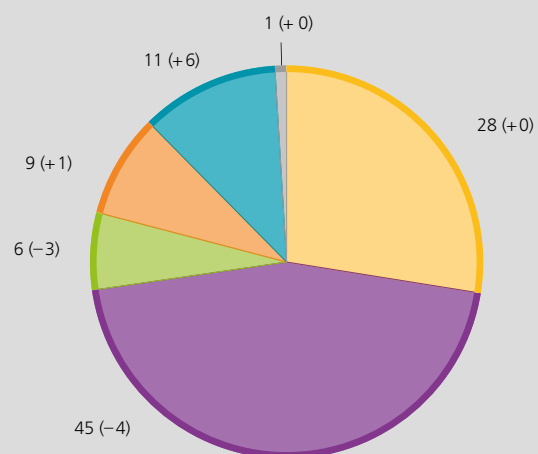
Fig. 4.4.1

% (change from 2023 in percentage points), as reported in payments diary

##### Measured by number of transactions



##### Measured by turnover



Basis: Transactions at retail stores and petrol stations (n = 10,394, total value: €364,468).  
Deutsche Bundesbank

## 4.4 Payment behaviour in bricks-and-mortar retail stores (POS)

The bricks-and-mortar retail sector, i.e. all retail stores and petrol stations, provides a particularly informative picture in terms of assessing payment behaviour in a physical setting. These places of payment have the highest acceptance rates for cash and cashless means of payment (see also Chapter 5.1). This means that the payment behaviour observed in these locations is essentially driven by consumer preferences and is not limited by a lack of acceptance on the part of retailers. Moreover, this area accounts for 56% of all transactions recorded and 44% of turnover.

In bricks-and-mortar retail, cash remains the most commonly used means of payment, while physical debit cards account for the largest share of turnover (see Figure 4.4.1). Compared with 2023, the share of cash transactions has fallen significantly by 5 percentage points to 45%. As in 2023, the share of turnover is 28%. The situation is different in the case of debit cards, which have remained unchanged at 37% of transactions since 2023, but have fallen noticeably by 4 percentage points in terms of turnover. The significance of physical credit cards is also on the decline, especially with regard to turnover.

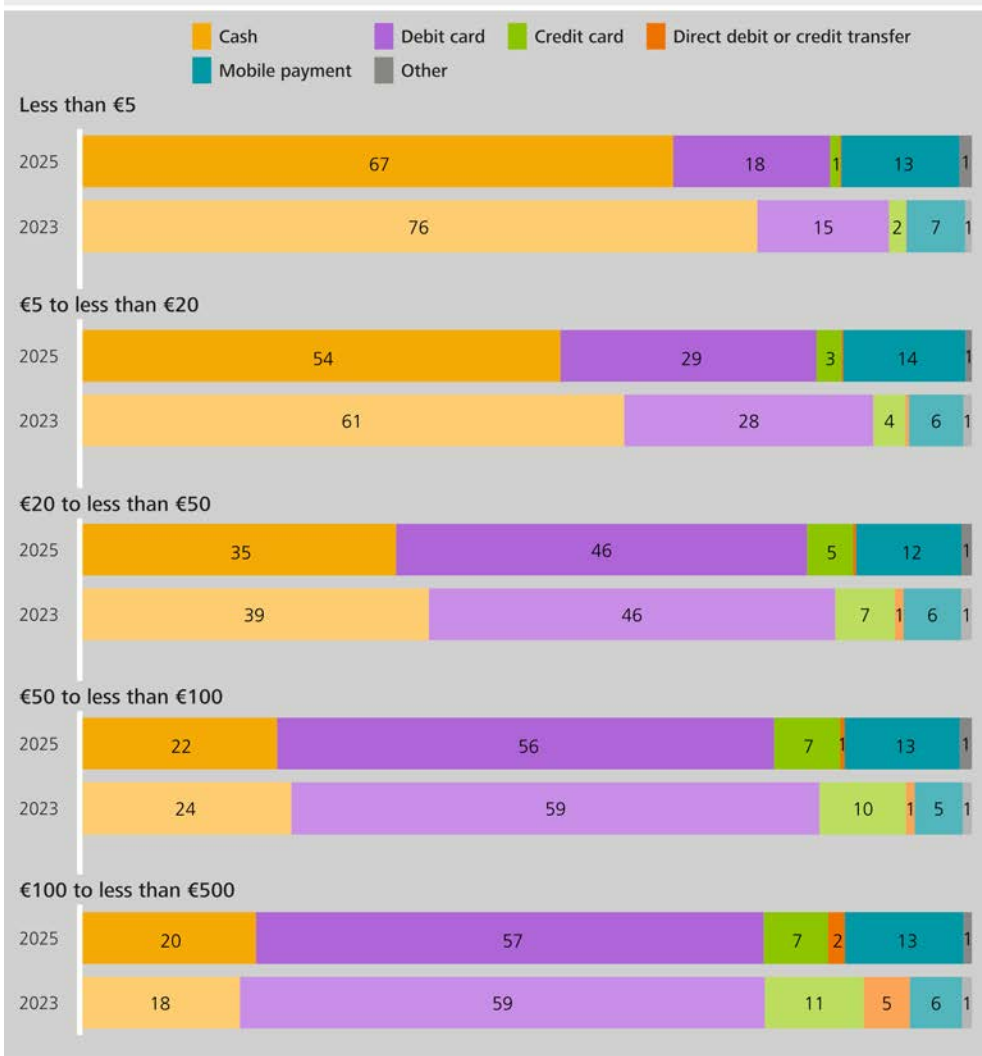
By contrast, mobile payment methods are growing rapidly, roughly doubling their share of payments in bricks-and-mortar retail, both in terms of value and transaction volume. With an increase to 13% of transactions (up 7 percentage points) and 11% of turnover (up 6 percentage points), they are growing more strongly than in the period between 2021 and 2023. However, due to the larger base, the rate of growth works out slightly lower considering that their share has increased threefold between 2021 and 2023.

Just over half of mobile payments in bricks-and-mortar retail stores are made using Apple Pay (7%). This is followed by payment apps provided by banks (3%) and Google Pay (2%). Paypal still plays a minor role, accounting for just under 1% of payments at the point of sale. Looking instead at the payment cards stored in mobile wallets, girocard and Visa Debit cards are the clear frontrunners, with each making up one-third of mobile transactions. Credit cards account for just under 20% of all mobile payments.

### Use of payment instruments in bricks-and-mortar retail stores by transaction amount

Fig.4.4.2

Percentage of transactions, as reported in payments diary



Basis: Transactions at retail stores and petrol stations (2025: n=10,394; 2023: n=9,499).

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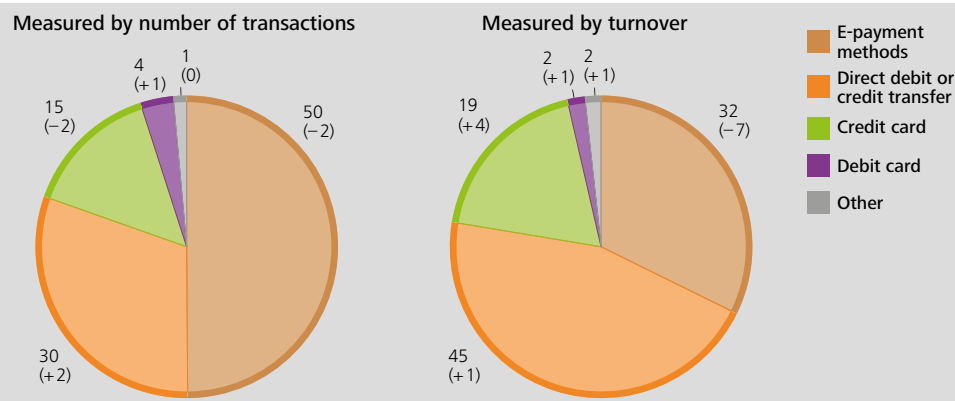
**Cash is being used less frequently for low-value payments than previously.** As Figure 4.4.2 shows, cash is still used for two-thirds of all payments under €5 and more than half of payments between €5 and €20, although a lot less frequently than in 2023. In the case of these transaction amounts, debit cards have benefited marginally from the decline in cash use. A closer look reveals that, for purchases of up to around €15, cash is used more frequently than cashless payment methods. In the case of amounts over €50, more than half of transactions are paid for using debit cards, although this trend is down slightly on 2023. By contrast, cash appears to be stabilising at a low yet still significant share of around 20% when it comes to these transaction amounts.

**Mobile payment methods are now used more frequently across all transaction amounts.** Unlike cash, which is predominantly used for small amounts, and debit and credit cards, which tend to be used for higher-priced purchases, when it comes to mobile payments, there is no clear correlation with the amount paid. Across all amount categories, the share of payments made using mobile devices has roughly doubled since 2023 and now stands at between 12% and 14%.

## Use of payment instruments online

Fig. 4.5.1

Percentage of transactions, (change from 2023 in percentage points), as reported in payments diary



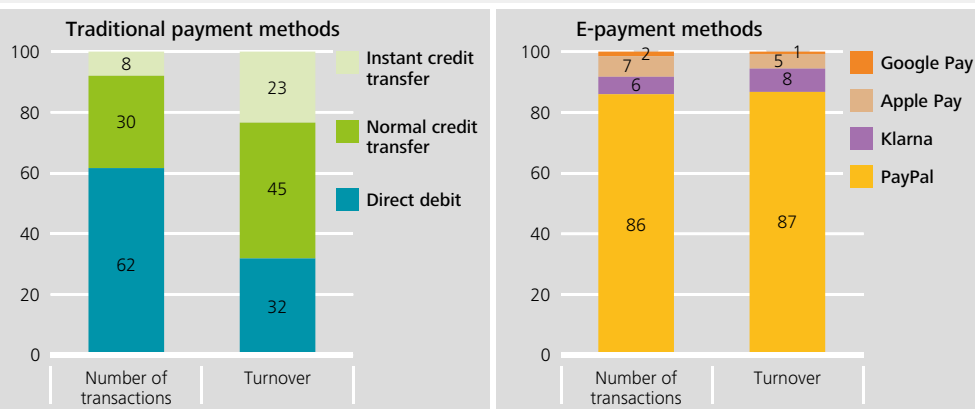
Basis: Online transactions (n=1,055, total value: €97,675). Figures in brackets reflect the change from 2023: may fail to sum to 100 due to rounding.

Deutsche Bundesbank

## Use of payment instruments online

Fig. 4.5.2

%, as recorded in payments diary



Basis: Online transactions using traditional means of payment (n=704, total value: €100,075) or e-payment methods (n=1,152, total value: €71,292). May fail to sum to 100 due to rounding.

Deutsche Bundesbank

## 4.5 Payment behaviour online

Accounting for 50% of all payment transactions, e-payment methods remain the most widely used means of payment for purchases made (see Figure 4.5.1). This is followed by direct debit and credit transfers (30%) and credit cards (15%). Despite the growing prevalence of Mastercard Debit and Visa Debit cards, which can otherwise typically be used for online payment, their use in shopping online remains relatively low (4%) and their share of transactions has remained broadly unchanged since 2023. A different picture emerges with regard to turnover. E-payment methods have lost 7 percentage points here, while credit cards are gaining in significance. At 45%, direct debit and credit transfers account for the largest share of turnover in online retail.

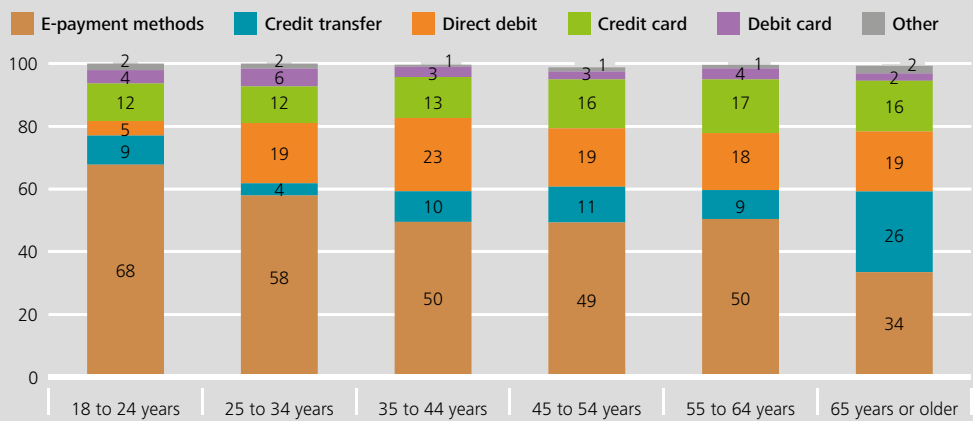
**Paypal is the most widely used e-payment method.** Looking at the individual means of payment classed as e-payment methods, Paypal is the market leader with a market share of around 86%. Whilst Apple Pay ranks second in terms of transaction volume (7%), the payment service Klarna is more significant in terms of turnover (see the right-hand side of Figure 4.5.2). In the case of traditional means of payment, direct debit is used much more frequently than credit transfers. Traditional credit transfers account for a larger share of turnover. Instant credit transfers are also becoming increasingly widespread in online retail. They can speed up the checkout process because the merchant is credited with the amount almost instantly.

**E-payment methods are used particularly frequently by younger people (see Figure 4.5.3).** Those aged 18 to 25 use e-payment methods for just under 70% of their online payment transactions. Although this decreases somewhat as respondents get older, e-payment methods are the most widely used payment method in each age group considered, except for those aged 65 and over. Other means of payment, such as direct debit and credit transfer, are used more frequently as people get older.

### Preferred means of payment online by age

Fig. 4.5.3

Percentage of transactions, as recorded in payment diary



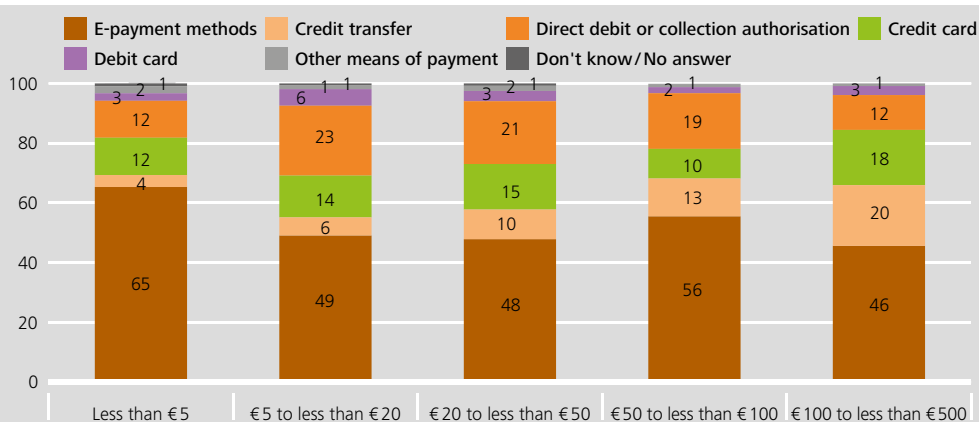
Basis: Online transactions (n=1,055). May fail to sum to 100 due to rounding.  
Deutsche Bundesbank

Unlike other payment methods, where no clear correlation with the amount is apparent, credit transfers tend to be used more frequently for higher amounts, (see Figure 4.5.4). This indicates that, unlike in the case of bricks-and-mortar retail, there is no clear trend indicating that a particular means of payment is used more frequently for larger or smaller amounts. The only exception is credit transfers, where frequency of use increases in line with the amount. No other means of payment exhibits a correlation between the amount spent and the frequency of its use online. E-payment methods are the most widely used option across all transaction amounts, especially for very small amounts

### Preferred means of payment online by transaction size

Fig. 4.5.4

Percentage of transactions, as recorded in payments diary

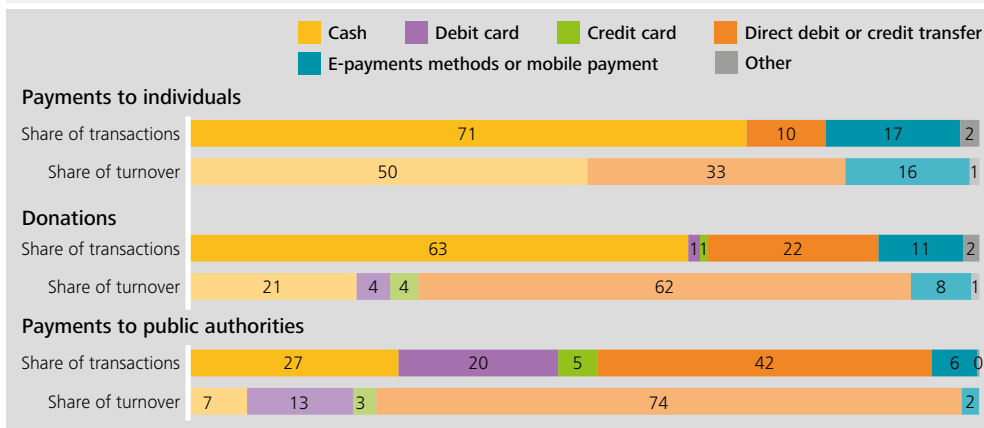


Basis: Online transactions (n=1,055). May fail to sum to 100 due to rounding.  
Deutsche Bundesbank

### Use of payment instruments by payment type

Fig. 4.6.1

%, as recorded in payments diary



Basis: Payments to individuals, public authorities, and donations.  
Deutsche Bundesbank

## 4.6 Payment behaviour in other payment situations

**Cash remains the most frequently used means of payment in transactions between private individuals.** It is used in 71% of payments and accounts for 50% of turnover (see Figure 4.6.1). This is followed by e-payment methods and mobile payments, which make up 17% of transactions and 16% of turnover. Within this category, the vast majority of payments are made via Paypal. Other modes of payment, including crypto-assets, play an insignificant role. Although credit transfers account for 10% of transactions, at 33%, they make a significant contribution to the total value of payments. Credit transfers are more likely to be used than cash payments as the amount increases, whereas the share of e-payment methods and mobile payment methods remains broadly constant across all amount categories.

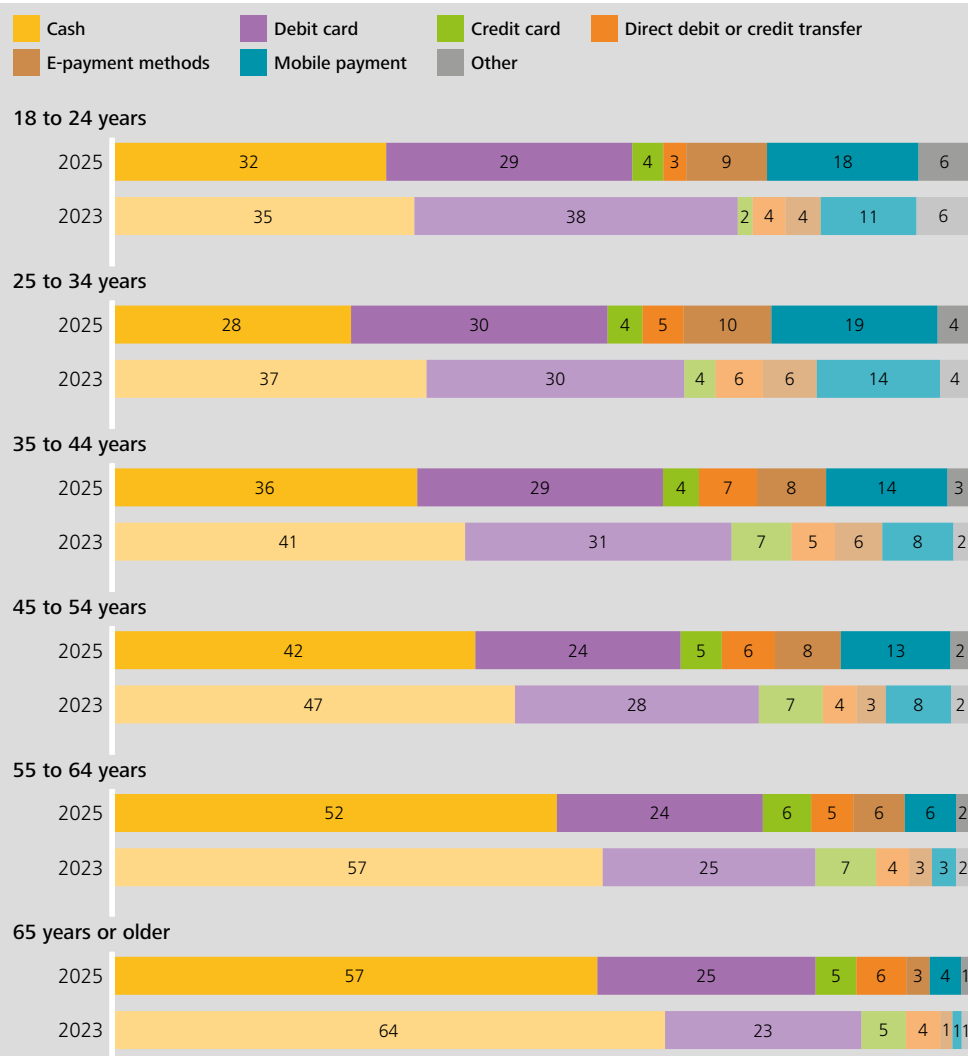
**In the case of donations and payments to charitable causes, cash, direct debit and credit transfers are the most frequently used means of payment.** At 63%, cash accounts for the majority of all transactions. This is followed by direct debit and credit transfers, which together account for 22% of payments and e-payment methods and mobile methods, which account for 11%. These payments are mainly carried out via Paypal. In terms of turnover, the ratio between cash and credit transfers is reversed: direct debit and credit transfers account for 62% of turnover. The means of payment used clearly reflects the payment situation (see Chapter 4.1): donations made on site are almost exclusively in cash, and account for almost two-thirds of these transactions. However, the majority of turnover in this category is attributable to remote payments, made online, through an app, over the telephone, by post, via online banking or at bank counters. In these situations, direct debit or credit transfers are the preferred means of payment.

**Payments to offices of public authorities and administrations are predominantly made via direct debit or credit transfer (42% of transactions and 74% of turnover).** This high share of turnover is due to the significance of payment, accounting for 27% of transactions, followed by debit cards at 20%. Credit cards and mobile or e-payment methods, by contrast, are used relatively infrequently, accounting for 5% and 6% of transactions, respectively.

## Use of payment instruments by age group

Fig. 4.7.1

Percentage of transactions, as reported in payments diary



Basis: All transactions (2025: n=18,497, total value: €822,538; 2023: n=15,500, total value: €667,297).

Deutsche Bundesbank

## 4.7 Payment behaviour by population group

There has been a decline in the use of cash across all age groups since 2023. This trend has been particularly pronounced among those aged 25 to 34, who were already making few cash payments in 2023, and among those aged 65 and over, who continue to be the demographic that most frequently pays in cash (see Figure 4.7.1). By contrast, the decline in the use of cash was moderate in the youngest age group, aged 18 to 24. In almost all age groups, the use of (physical) debit cards stagnated or declined, with the largest decline being recorded among those aged 18 to 24. Age-related differences in the use of debit cards are now barely discernible; even among respondents aged 65 and over, debit cards account for just under one-quarter of all payments made.

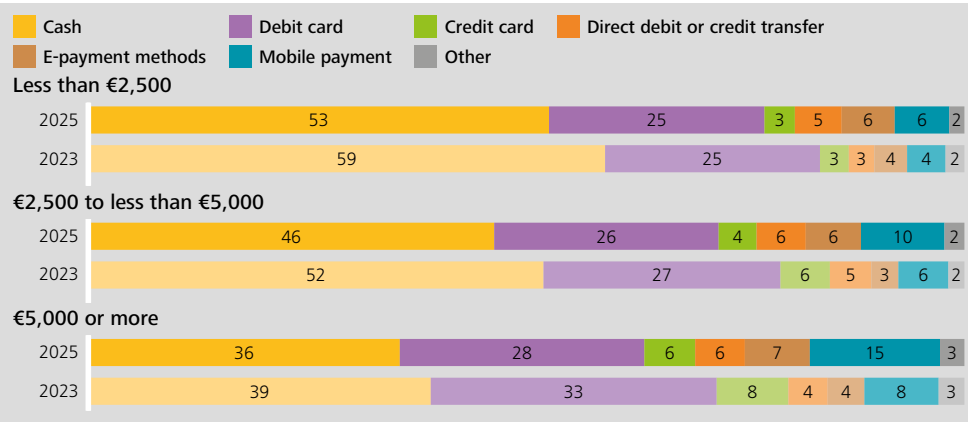
The use of mobile payments and e-payment methods has increased across all age groups. Nevertheless, the differences in usage between younger and older people have become even more pronounced since the last survey. Those aged 25 to 34 make the most use of these payment methods, conducting 19% of transactions via mobile payment and 10% via an e-payment method. Among those aged 65 or older, however, mobile payments account for just 4% of transactions, whilst e-payment methods also play a minor role, accounting for 3%.

There continue to be significant differences in payment behaviour across income groups, too. For example, people with a monthly net household income of less than €2,500 use cash for more than half (53%) of their payments, while people with an income of €5,000 or more use cash for just over one-third (36%, see Figure 4.7.2). By contrast, people in the highest income group are twice as likely to pay by credit card and three times as likely to use mobile payment methods as those in the lowest income group. However, the trend towards cashless and, in particular, mobile payments can be seen across all income groups.

### Use of payment instruments by income

Fig. 4.7.2

%, as reported in payments diary

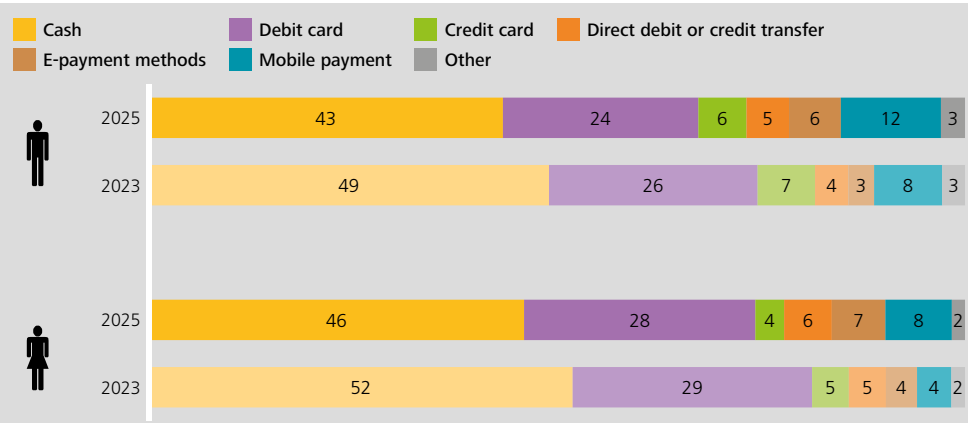


Basis: All transactions (2025: n = 18,497, total value: €822,538; 2023: n = 15,500, total value: €667,297).  
Deutsche Bundesbank

### Use of payment instruments by gender

Fig. 4.7.3

Percentage of transactions, as reported in payments diary



Basis: All transactions (2025: n = 18,497, total value: €822,538; 2023: n = 15,500, total value: €667,297).  
Deutsche Bundesbank

**Women use cash and debit cards slightly more frequently than men.** That said, comparable trends have been observed in the development of payment behaviour since 2023 (see Figure 4.7.3). There has been a 6-percentage-point decline in the use of cash among both men and women, while mobile and e-payment methods are gaining significantly in importance. The moderate gender differences already evident in 2023 have persisted: women pay in cash around 3 percentage points more frequently and use debit cards around 4 percentage points more frequently than men. Men, however, are more likely to use credit cards or their smartphones to pay.

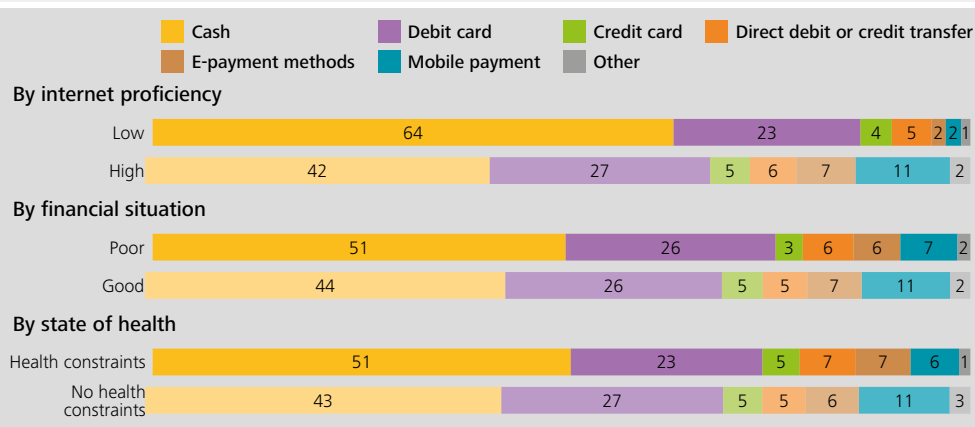
**The use of cash is higher than average among certain groups in society (see Figure 4.7.4).** Respondents with health issues and those who describe their financial situation as poor continue to cover more than half of their spending with cash. In the case of people who, based on their own assessment, are not very proficient users of the internet, the share of cash transactions is almost two-thirds. Debit cards are the most frequently used cashless means of payment in the three groups mentioned above. In fact, it is used just as frequently by respondents with poor financial circumstances as by those with no financial problems. Respondents with health issues or financial difficulties use mobile payment methods less frequently, yet they use e-payment methods or credit transfers/direct debit just as frequently, or even more frequently, than those who do not have these issues. By contrast, mobile and e-payment methods have virtually no relevance for respondents who rate their internet proficiency as being not very good or poor.

**People living in urban centres pay in cash significantly less frequently and use mobile payment methods more frequently than those living in rural areas or on the outskirts of urban areas (see Figure 4.7.5).** The differences observed may be due, amongst other things, to age-related and income-related factors, or to variations in the range of shopping and payment options available. While the payment behaviour of people living in rural and urban areas was more similar in 2023, the current survey reveals greater differences.

### Use of payment instruments by societal group

Fig. 4.7.4

Percentage of transactions, as reported in payments diary

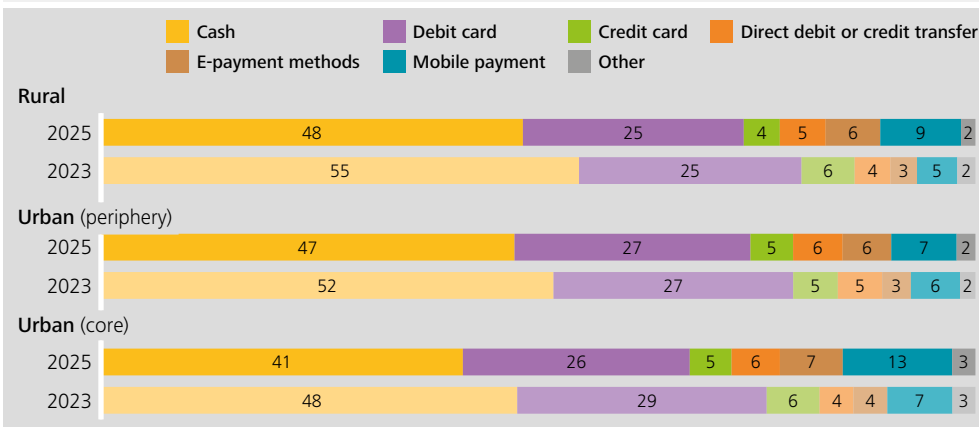


Basis: All transactions (2025: n=18,497, total value: €822,538).  
Deutsche Bundesbank

### Use of payment instruments by where respondents live

Fig. 4.7.5

%, as reported in payments diary

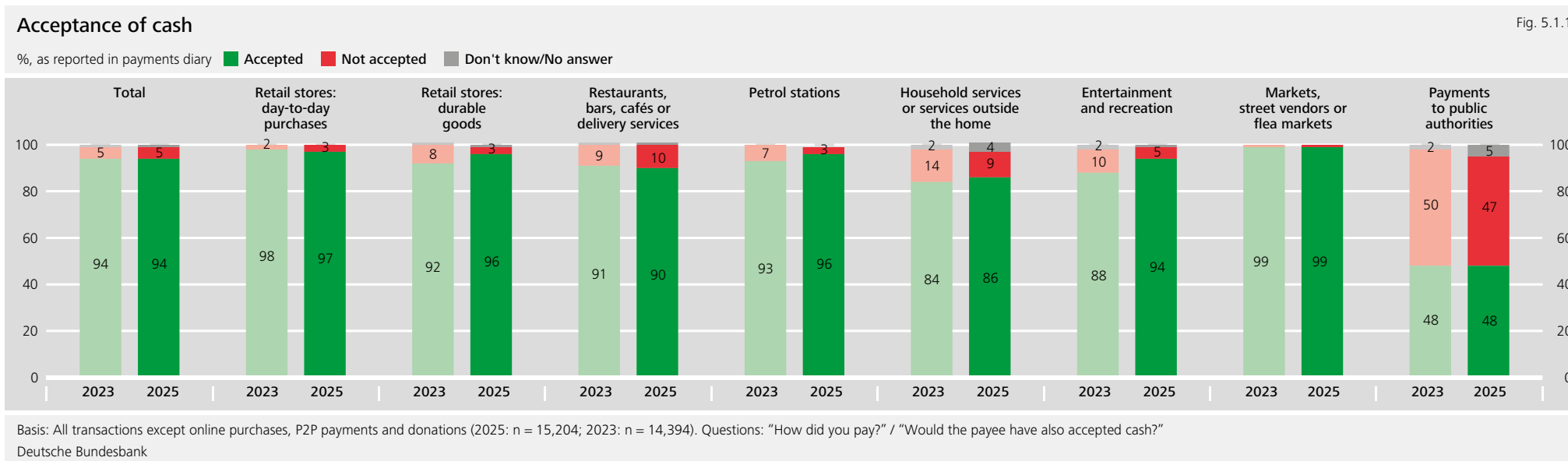


Basis: All transactions (2025: n=18,497, total value: €822,538; 2023: n=15,500, total value: €667,297).  
Deutsche Bundesbank

## 5 Current developments in the payments space

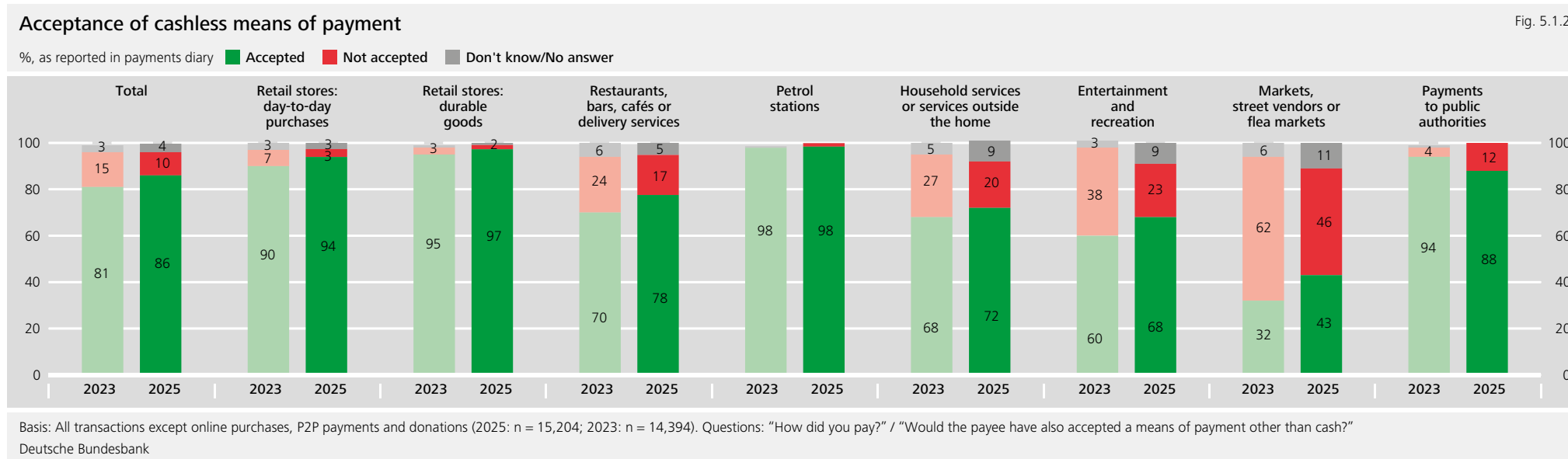
### 5.1 Means of payment and their acceptance

**Cash is accepted almost everywhere for purchases made in-store.** As in the last study carried out in 2023, respondents had the option to use cash for 94% of their in-person purchases (see Figure 5.1.1). With regard to the individual payment locations, too, there have been only minor changes in the rate of acceptance. Cash is most frequently accepted for day-to-day retail purchases at markets, flea markets and street stalls, as well as petrol stations and in bricks-and-mortar retail. In this context, the increasingly widespread use of self-service checkouts without a cash payment facility (see the info box entitled “Cash acceptance at self-service checkouts”) has no bearing on the perceived acceptance of cash in bricks-and-mortar retail. Acceptance rates are slightly lower in the services sector (including transport services) and at restaurants, cafés and bars.



As in the previous survey, the acceptance of cash for one-off payments to offices of public authorities or administrations is 48%. However, the majority of these are remote payments (e.g. payment of a parking or speeding ticket via credit transfer). If only those transactions that occurred on site at a public authority (such as paying to have an ID card issued) are considered, the acceptance rate for cash is 88%. This means that cash is accepted less frequently by public administration offices than in retail. A similar picture emerged in a recent study published by the Bundesbank on the acceptance of cash in Germany,<sup>16</sup> whereby, test buyers attempted to make cash payments at a total of 30 public authorities in Germany. In eight out of 30 cases, it was not possible to pay in cash. However, given the overall small number of cases involving payments to public authorities, both in the test purchases and payment diaries, the acceptance rates calculated are subject to uncertainty.

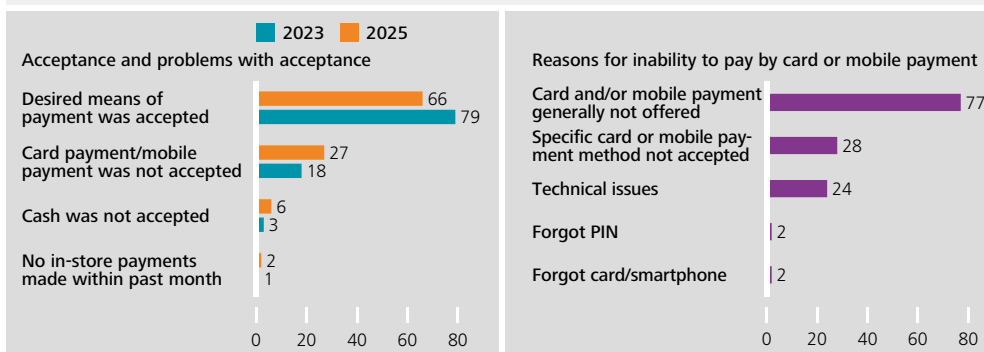
<sup>16</sup> See Deutsche Bundesbank (2025): Cash acceptance in Germany | Bundesbank publications <https://publikationen.bundesbank.de/publikationen-en/reports-studies/monthly-reports/monthly-report-december-2025-972374?article=cash-acceptance-in-germany--972378>



## Acceptance of means of payment

Fig. 5.1.3

%, as reported by respondents, multiple answers possible



Basis: Respondents in subgroup A (n=2,004). May fail to sum to 100 due to rounding. Question: "Regarding the in-store payments that you have made within the past month, were you always able to pay with your desired means of payment?"

Deutsche Bundesbank

Basis: Respondents in subgroup A who wanted to make a card or mobile payment but were unable to do so (n=538). Question: "Why were you unable to pay using a card or mobile means of payment? Which of the following statements applies to you?"

**Acceptance of cashless means of payment for in-store purchases has continued to rise (see Figure 5.1.2).** In 86% of the cases considered, the payee accepted or would have accepted a cashless means of payment. Two years ago, this figure was 81%; in 2021, it was just 61%. Cashless payments are now almost always possible for those shopping at retail stores for day-to-day purchases and retailers of durable goods. In 2023, this was already the case at petrol stations. There has been an increase in acceptance at restaurants, cafés and bars, as well (up 8 percentage points on 2023). This also applies to services and entertainment and recreation, although the acceptance of cashless means of payment is growing at a slower rate than previously. At these places of payment, cash quite often continues to be the only form of payment accepted. At 43%, acceptance of cashless payments is particularly low at markets, flea markets and street stalls. This is simultaneously where the largest increase compared with 2023 has been recorded.

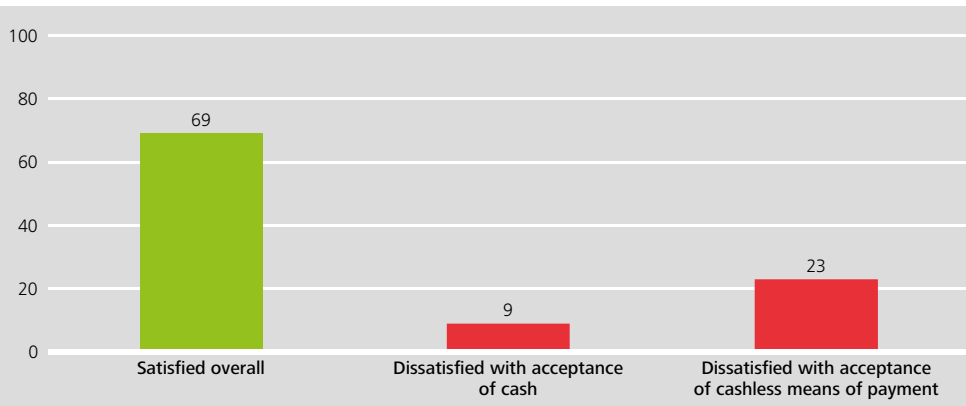
**Although an increasing number of retailers now accept both cash and cashless means of payment, respondents report more frequently than in 2023 that they have not always been able to pay according to their preference.** For instance, over a quarter of those surveyed said that they had been unable to pay with their card or smartphone on at least one occasion in the preceding month. In 2023, this figure was only 18%. In 2025, 6% of respondents experienced problems when paying in cash (up 3 percentage points). Two-thirds of participants were able to use their preferred means of payment at all times (see the left-hand panel of Figure 5.1.3).

**The discrepancy between the measured and perceived levels of acceptance could also indicate that a growing section of the general population expects to be able to choose freely between cash and cashless means of payment at any time.** The share of respondents who clearly prefer cashless payments has risen noticeably since the last study. As a result, situations in which there is a clear preference for cashless means of payments are occurring more frequently than before. Nevertheless, there are still many areas where cashless payments are not accepted across the board. At the same time, the share of those who have no clear preference between cash and cashless means of payment has declined. In addition, expectations are likely to have changed: given that the acceptance of cashless payments has increased overall and many people have become accustomed to paying mostly without cash, any deviation from this expectation will be perceived more strongly. Therefore, the results suggest that an increasing number of respondents prefer a particular means of payment and, at the same time, expect it to be accepted in as many payment situations as possible.

### Satisfaction with options for payment

Fig. 5.1.4

%, as reported by respondents



Basis: Respondents in subgroup B (n=2,061). Question: "Overall, how satisfied are you with the payment options in Germany, i.e. how widely cash, smartphones or cards are accepted when paying in shops?"

Deutsche Bundesbank

Lack of acceptance by retailers is by far the most frequently cited reason why customers have been unable to make cashless payments as they had intended (see the right-hand panel of Figure 5.1.3). When asked why they were unable to pay by card or mobile device, just under eight out of ten of those affected stated that the payee generally did not offer any cashless payment method (77%). In just over one-quarter of cases, payment faltered because a specific cashless payment method was not accepted. Technical problems were a factor for around one-quarter of respondents. However, barriers generated by the users themselves, such as forgotten PINs, cards or smartphones, were rarely mentioned.

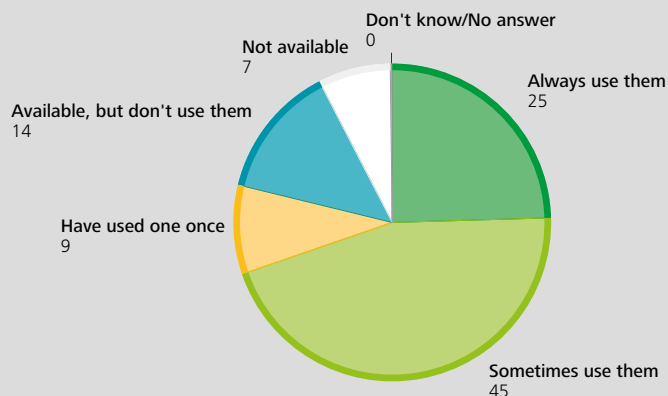
Respondents increasingly report problems with the acceptance of cash at restaurants, cafés and bars, and when paying for parking and recreational activities. To obtain a meaningful picture of the barriers to paying in cash, participants were asked whether, in the preceding twelve months, they had been in a situation in which they had wanted to pay in cash but it had not been accepted. 21% of respondents said yes. These individuals were then asked to indicate, via an open-ended follow-up question, the places of payment where they had encountered these problems and how they had responded. In addition to the payment locations and situations mentioned above, restaurants, parking and recreational activities were also mentioned in isolated cases as well as bakeries and cafés, vending machines, newspaper kiosks, fast-food snack outlets and transport services. In more than two-thirds of these cases, respondents switched to a cashless means of payment when they could not pay in cash. 16% abandoned the transaction, while 9% had to rely on other people to provide assistance. Almost none of the respondents were in a position or willing to insist on paying in cash.

Even though the vast majority are satisfied with the payment options available in Germany, complete freedom of choice is not yet a reality. Almost 70% of respondents state that they are satisfied with the payment options currently available (see Figure 5.1.4). By contrast, just under one-quarter is dissatisfied with the acceptance of cashless means of payment. Even in respect of cash, which, as a legal tender, should be generally accepted, 9% expressed dissatisfaction. Many respondents therefore believe there is still room for improvement when it comes to the acceptance of cash and cashless means of payment.

### Use of self-service checkouts

Fig. 5.1.5

%, as reported by respondents

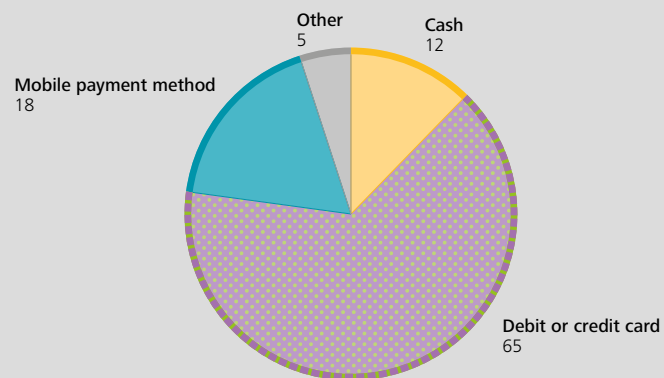


Basis: All respondents in subgroup B (n=2,061). May fail to sum to 100 due to rounding. Questions: "Do any of the shops you normally use already have self-service checkouts?", "Have you ever used a self-service checkout?"  
Deutsche Bundesbank

### Means of payment typically selected at self-service checkouts

Fig. 5.1.6

%, as reported by respondents



Basis: Respondents in subgroup B who have used a self-service checkout at least once before (n=1,625). Question: "What means of payment do you typically use at these self-service checkouts?"  
Deutsche Bundesbank

**Satisfaction with payment options correlates with payment behaviour and preferences, as well as the means of payment people own.** Younger people, people with a preference for cashless payments, Visa Debit and Mastercard Debit card holders and people who have used mobile payments before are much more frequently dissatisfied with the acceptance of cashless means of payment. However, respondents with a preference for cash and people for whom using cash is particularly important tend to express dissatisfaction with the acceptance of cash more frequently. This also applies to people who would face major difficulties without cash and those whose financial circumstances are more precarious.

### Cash acceptance at self-service checkouts

**The number of stores with self-checkout systems (SCOs) in Germany's retail sector more than doubled between 2023 and 2025.** These self-service checkout systems allow customers to scan and pay for their purchases independently. Today, around one in ten retail outlets has a self-service checkout, and one in every 18 checkouts is a self-checkout system. The majority of these checkouts can be found in grocery stores, drugstores and DIY stores.<sup>17</sup>

**SCOs enable retailers to save on personnel costs, whereas from the customer's point of view they have both advantages and disadvantages.** It eliminates the tedious task of unpacking and repacking items, and queues at self-service checkouts are often shorter. However, scanning items oneself may take longer than when this is carried out by experienced store staff, and it is not always possible to pay with cash.

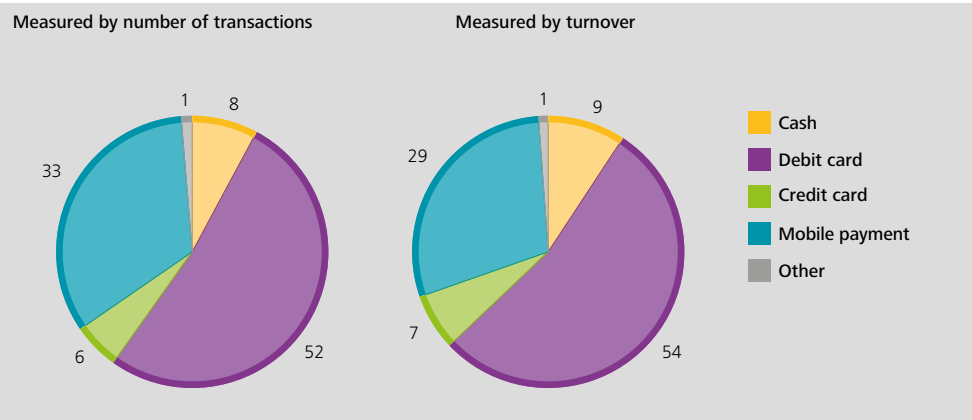
**When installing new SCOs, businesses tend to opt out of cash payment modules in order to save on capital expenditure.** This has led to a significant decline in the share of cash payment options at self-service checkouts. At present, self-service cash payments can be made at around 50% of DIY stores and 30% of grocery stores

<sup>17</sup> See <https://www.self-checkout-initiative.de/markterhebung-2025>.

### Use of payment instruments at self-service checkouts

Fig. 5.1.7

%, as reported in payments diary



Basis: Transactions at retail stores and petrol stations carried out at self-service checkouts (n=922, total value: €24,535).  
Deutsche Bundesbank

### Option to pay with cash at self-service checkouts

Fig. 5.1.8

%, as reported by respondents



Basis: Respondents in subgroup B who have used a self-service checkout at least once and provided a valid response for the means of payment used (n = 1,618). Question: "Can you also pay with cash at these self-service checkouts?"  
Deutsche Bundesbank

equipped with SCOs. In drugstores, cashless payments are the only form of payment accepted at self-service checkouts. Looking at the market overall, customers can only pay for their purchases in cash without assistance in 23% of stores with SCOs.<sup>18</sup>

**Respondents in the payment behaviour study also make purchases at SCO stations.** Approximately 25% state that they use these systems all the time, 45% use them occasionally, and 9% had tried them at least once (see Figure 5.1.5). 7% state that SCOs are not available in the stores where they shop, while 14% state they do not use these checkouts even when available. According to the diaries, around 9% of transactions in retail outlets (including petrol stations) were made at SCOs, representing around 7% of expenditure.

**Cashless means of payment dominate when paying at SCOs.** When asked about their payment habits at self-service checkouts, 65% of users say they use payment cards and 18% state that they use mobile means of payment. By contrast, only 12% name cash as their primary payment method (see Figure 5.1.6). As a complement to this, Figure 5.1.7 shows payment behaviour at SCO stations in retail stores, as recorded in the diaries. Consistent with the responses given in the interviews, 57% of transactions were carried out using cards (predominantly debit cards), 33% using a smartphone and a mere 8% using cash.

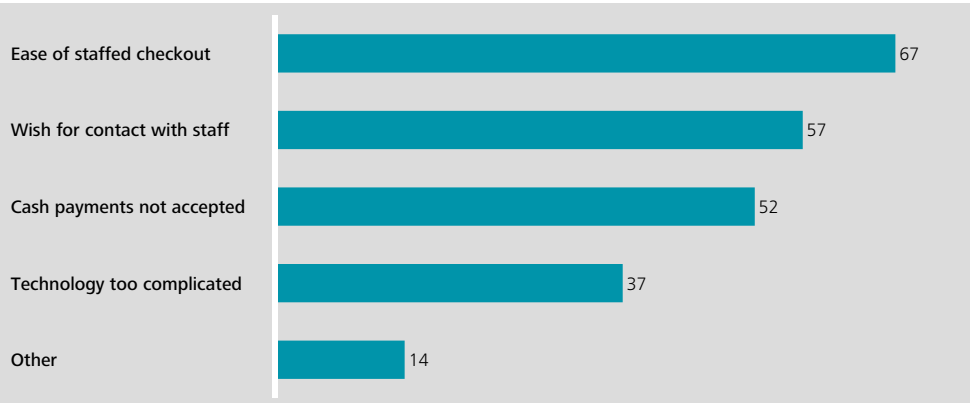
**The low rate of cash payments at SCOs is in part due to the fact that cash is not always accepted.** For example, the majority of SCO users state that they are usually unable to pay with cash (57%) (see Figure 5.1.8). People who generally prefer to pay with cash are therefore frequently forced to use cashless means of payment at SCO stations. More specifically, 55% of people who generally prefer cash report that they use cashless means of payment instead of cash at self-service checkouts.

<sup>18</sup> See <https://www.self-checkout-initiative.de/markterhebung-2025>

### Reasons for not using self-service checkouts

Fig. 5.1.9

%, as reported by respondents, multiple answers possible



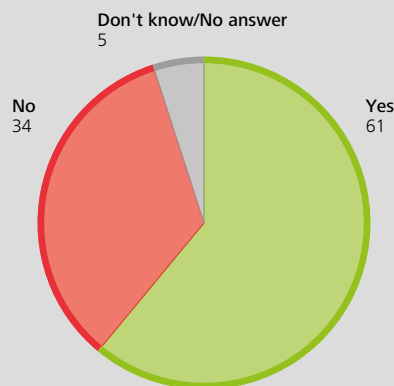
Basis: Respondents in subgroup B who have access to self-service checkouts but do not use them (n = 280). Question: "Why don't you use the self-service checkouts?"

Deutsche Bundesbank

### Desire to pay with cash at self-service checkouts

Fig. 5.1.10

%, as reported by respondents



Basis: Respondents in subgroup B who have access to self-service checkouts when shopping (n = 1,908). Question: "Would you like to see that there is always at least one self-service checkout where you can pay with cash?"

Deutsche Bundesbank

**The inability to pay in cash also represents a barrier to the use of SCOs.** Aside from factors such as convenience and the lack of social interaction, more than half of non-users criticise the fact that they are not able to pay in cash at these checkouts (see Figure 5.1.9). Overall, around 61% of all respondents would like to see at least one SCO that accepts cash (see Figure 5.1.10).

## Cash and its acceptance on public transport

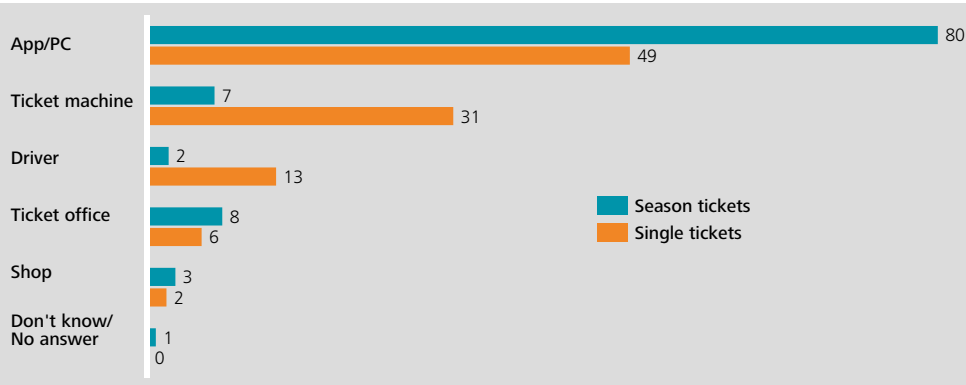
**Most tickets for travel on public transport are nowadays purchased online.** Of those who participated in the payment behaviour study, 66% used public transport last year. 45% used season tickets (such as the Deutschlandticket), whereas 68% purchased single tickets either exclusively or in addition to season tickets. Users mostly purchased season tickets online (80%), whereas single tickets continued to be bought on site by approximately half of those surveyed (31% from ticket machines, 13% from drivers, 6% from ticket offices and 2% in shops; see Figure 5.1.11).

**Although it is no longer possible to buy tickets with cash everywhere, there is still a demand for this option.** When tickets are purchased online, payments are inevitably cashless via the payment method saved in customer accounts. By contrast, those who purchase tickets on site still mostly use cash. Overall, around one-third of passengers purchasing single tickets state that they usually pay for them in cash (see Figure 5.1.12). However, it is no longer possible to use cash to buy tickets on site at all locations. For example, around 12% of passengers purchasing single tickets and 27% of season ticket holders report that they are unable to use cash to buy their tickets on site (see Chart 5.1.13). Respondents express little support for the move by many transport companies to phase out on-site cash payment options. Only 15% are in favour of this trend, 27% are indifferent to it and 56% oppose it (see Chart 5.1.14).

### Places where tickets for public transport are bought

Fig. 5.1.11

%, as reported by respondents



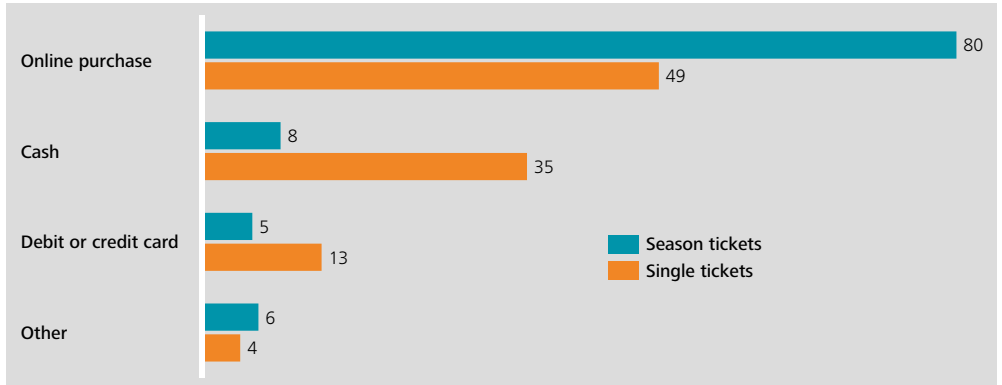
Basis: Respondents in subgroup B who purchase single tickets (n=904) and/or season tickets (n=430). Questions: "Where do you normally buy your regional train or bus tickets for individual journeys (e.g. single ticket, day ticket, short-trip ticket)?" / "(You indicated that you use season tickets.) Where do you obtain these season tickets?"

Deutsche Bundesbank

### Means of payment when buying tickets for public transport

Fig. 5.1.12

%, as reported by respondents



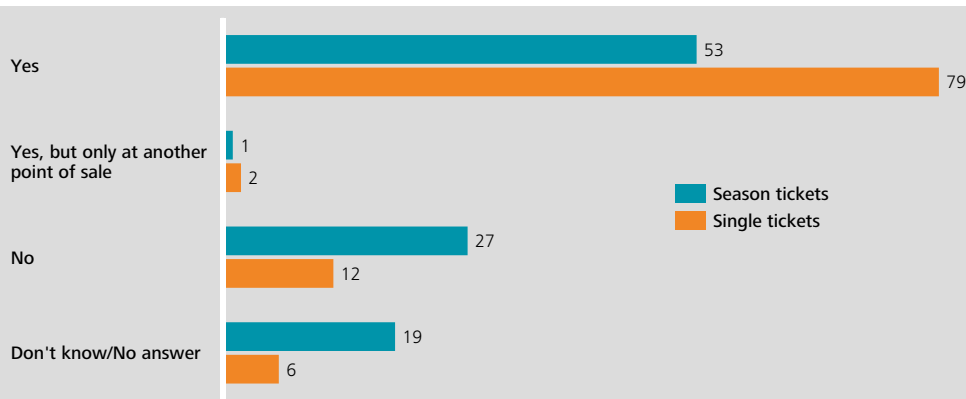
Basis: Respondents in subgroup B who purchase single tickets (n = 904) and/or season tickets (n = 430). Questions: "When buying regional train or bus tickets for individual journeys (e.g. single ticket, day ticket, short-trip ticket), how do you normally pay?" / "(You indicated that you use season tickets.) How do you normally pay?"

Deutsche Bundesbank

### Acceptance of cash when buying tickets for public transport

Fig. 5.1.13

%, as reported by respondents



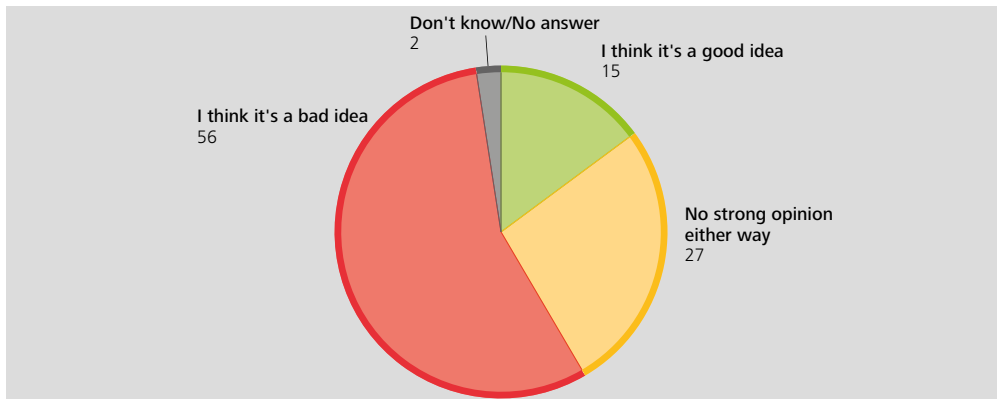
Basis: Respondents in subgroup B who purchase single tickets (n = 904) and/or season tickets (n = 430). Questions: "Do you also have the option of using cash to purchase tickets for individual journeys/season tickets?"

Deutsche Bundesbank

### Opinion on ticket sales becoming exclusively cashless

Fig. 5.1.14

%, as reported by respondents



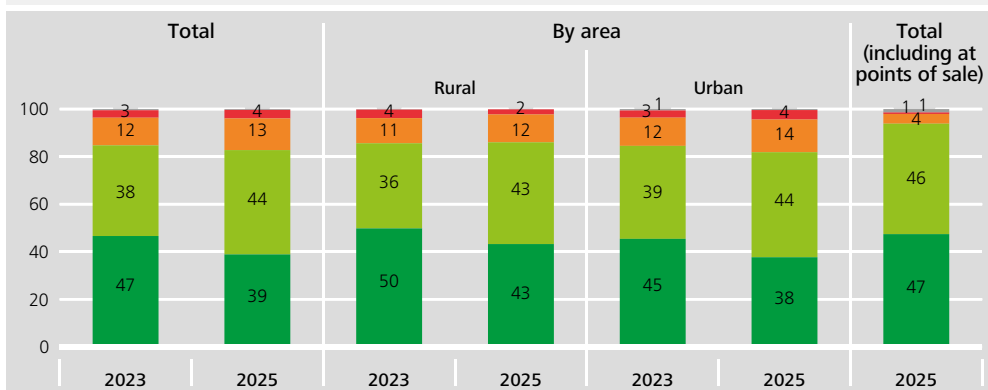
Basis: All respondents in subgroup B (n=2,061). Question: "Some transport companies are planning to stop accepting cash when tickets are purchased from the driver or ticket machine. What do you think about this?"

Deutsche Bundesbank

## Access to ATMs and bank counters

Fig. 5.2.1

%, as reported by respondents



Basis: Respondents in subgroup C who use ATMs (and/or bank counters), or who have at least attempted to do so within the last 12 months (2025: n=1,982; 2023: n=2,832). Question: "When you want to withdraw cash at an ATM or the bank, how easy or difficult do you usually find it to get there?"

Deutsche Bundesbank

## 5.2 Cash supply

The majority of those who participated in the payment behaviour study feel that they are well supplied with cash. When asked how easy or difficult it is for them to get to an ATM, 39% of respondents report that it is "very easy", 44% "fairly easy", 13% "fairly difficult" and only 4% "very difficult" (see the left-hand panel of Figure 5.2.1).

However, this assessment has deteriorated compared with 2023. The share of respondents who find getting to an ATM very easy has fallen by 8 percentage points, whereas the shares of all other categories have increased.

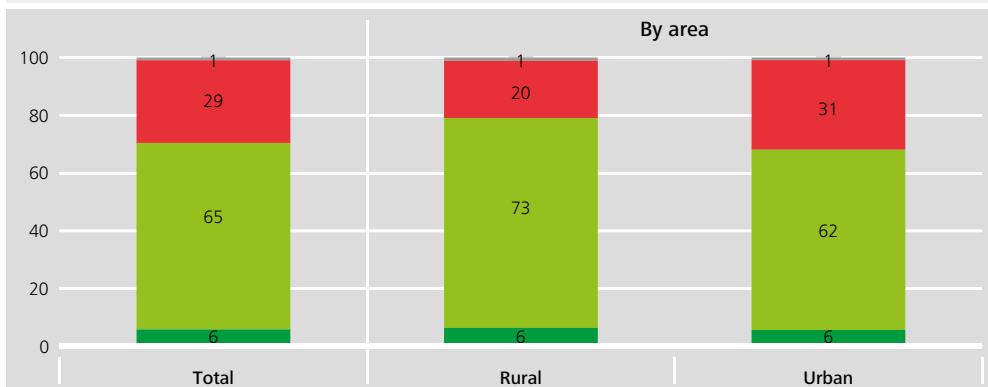
One reason for the perceived deterioration in access to cash withdrawal points could be the reduction in the number of ATMs and bank counters. Whereas there were 51,825 ATMs in Germany at the beginning of 2023, this had fallen to 49,459 by the beginning of 2025. The number of bank branches dropped from 20,446 to 19,238 in the same period.<sup>19</sup>

However, changes in payment behaviour may also have contributed to this more negative assessment. As there is no need to replenish cash supplies when using electronic means of payment, the effort involved in procuring cash may be perceived as becoming increasingly difficult. In order to better distinguish between this convenience effect and the actual decline in opportunities to withdraw access to cash, participants were also asked directly whether and how the effort involved in going to an ATM had changed over the past two years. On balance, 29% reported greater effort, 65% reported the same level of effort, and 6% reported less effort than two years ago (see Figure 5.2.2). These results suggest that accessing cash has indeed deteriorated for some respondents.

## Changes in access to ATMs and bank counters over the past two years

Fig. 5.2.2

%, as reported by respondents



Basis: Respondents in subgroup C who use ATMs, or who have at least attempted to do so within the last 12 months (n=1,982). Question: "And how has this [effort involved in getting to an ATM or bank counter] changed for you over the last two years?"

Deutsche Bundesbank

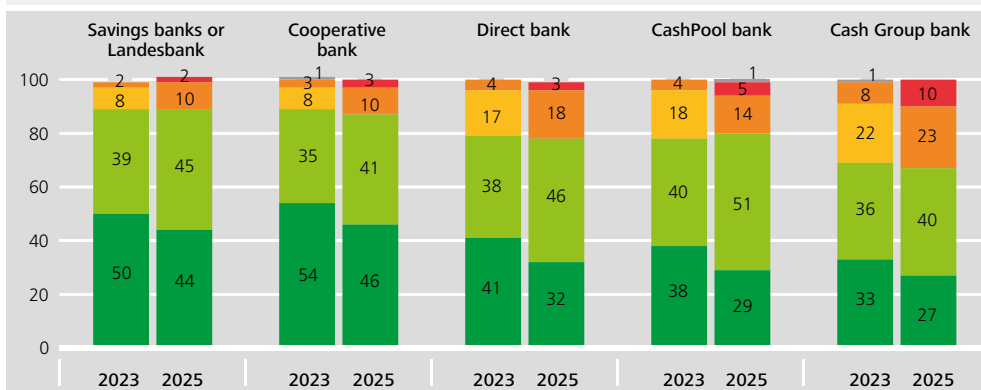
<sup>19</sup> See official statistics: <https://www.bundesbank.de/resource/blob/949972/d48d516df4089e798195c6c1bde9799e/472863F073F-071307366337C94F8C870/bankstellenstatistik-2024-data.pdf> and [https://www.bundesbank.de/dynamic/action/de/statistiken/zeitreihen-datenbanken/zeitreihen-datenbank/723452/723452?tsId=BBZVS12.H.ZVIN.DE.2221.1.PN&statisticType=BBK\\_ITS&tsTab=0&dateSelect=2025](https://www.bundesbank.de/dynamic/action/de/statistiken/zeitreihen-datenbanken/zeitreihen-datenbank/723452/723452?tsId=BBZVS12.H.ZVIN.DE.2221.1.PN&statisticType=BBK_ITS&tsTab=0&dateSelect=2025).

### Access to ATMs and bank counters by group of institutions

Fig. 5.2.3

%, as reported by respondents

Very easy Fairly easy Fairly difficult Very difficult Don't know/No answer



Basis: Respondents in subgroup C who use ATMs (and/or bank counters), or who have at least attempted to do so within the last 12 months (2025: n = 1,982; 2023: n = 2,832). Question: "When you want to withdraw cash at an ATM or the bank, how easy or difficult do you usually find it to get there?"

Deutsche Bundesbank

The effort involved in getting to an ATM depends on the bank with which the respondents hold their current account. Customers of savings banks, a Landesbank or one of the cooperative banks report the least effort on average. By contrast, customers of CashPool, Cash-Group and direct banks report difficulties more frequently. This may indicate a correlation between the size of a banking group's ATM network and customer satisfaction with cash withdrawal facilities because savings banks and the cooperative banks operate the largest ATM networks in Germany. Across all banks, customers generally describe accessing ATMs as having become more difficult on average (see Figure 5.2.3).

On average, respondents from rural areas find it easier to access an ATM than those living in urban areas (see the middle panel of Figure 5.2.1). One possible explanation for this could be that those living in rural areas are accustomed to travelling further distances for their daily errands. The perceived effort required has increased more significantly in urban areas, too. It is possible that relatively larger numbers of people in urban areas have been affected by the reduction of the cash infrastructure than in rural areas.

The respondents' assessment of their cash withdrawal options is more positive when, in addition to bank-based facilities, they also take cash withdrawal options at supermarket checkouts into account. In this case, only 5% report that it is "fairly difficult" or "very difficult", whereas 47% even describe access to cash as "very easy" (see the right-hand panel of Figure 5.2.1).

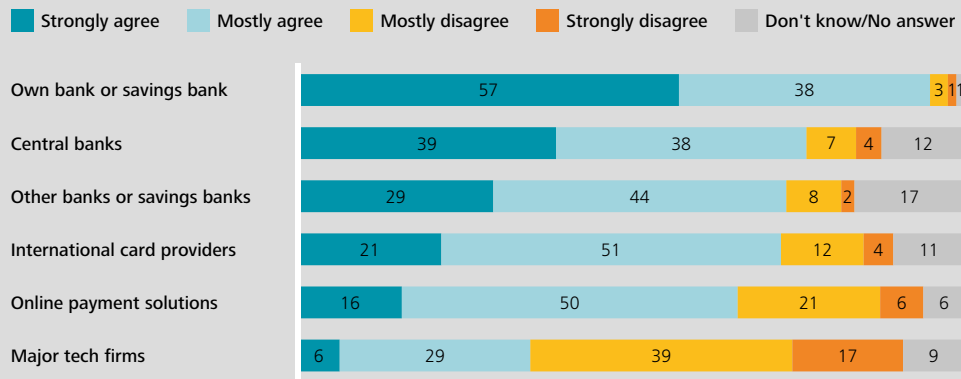
Only a few respondents are affected by withdrawal fees. A mere 13% state they have to pay fees at their main ATM.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>20</sup> Detailed findings on ATM charges and other aspects regarding access to cash will be published separately

### Responsible handling of payment data

Fig. 5.3.1

%, as reported by respondents



Basis: Respondents in subgroup A (n=2,004). Question: "I am now going to name various institutions. Do you believe that they handle your payment data responsibly?"

Deutsche Bundesbank

## 5.3 Selected aspects of cashless payments

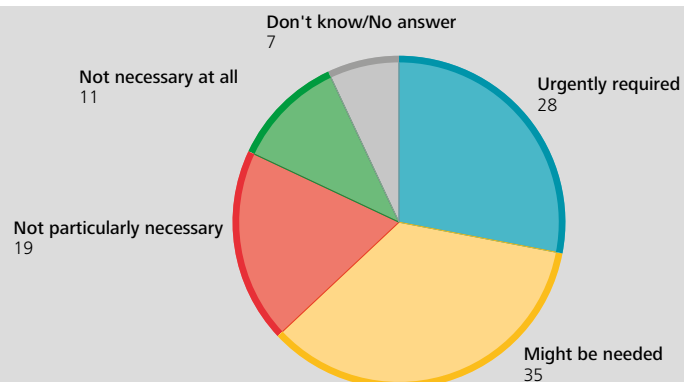
**In terms of how their payment data is treated, respondents most often trust their bank or savings bank.** The highest level of trust is placed in their own principal bank or savings bank. In this case, 95% of respondents "strongly" or "mostly" agree with the statement that their bank or savings bank handles their payment data responsibly. A vast majority of respondents also regard banks and savings banks other than their own as trustworthy (see Figure 5.3.1).

**The least amount of trust is placed in major tech firms.** Only a very small percentage of respondents have full trust in these companies, whereas just under two out of ten people explicitly believe that they do not handle payment data responsibly. People are less sceptical when it comes to international card providers and online payment solutions, the majority of which are deemed to handle payment data in a trustworthy manner. However, compared with banks, savings banks and central banks, the share of those who are fully convinced that they handle payment data responsibly is significantly lower. On balance, this shows that conventional banks and savings banks enjoy a clear lead in terms of trust.

### Need for European autonomy in payments

Fig. 5.3.2

%, as reported by respondents



Basis: All respondents in subgroup A (n = 2,004). Question: "Non-European providers such as PayPal, Visa or Mastercard dominate the range of payment instruments in the euro area. With this in mind, do you think the euro area needs to become more independent in the area of payments and increasingly move towards a European solution?"

Deutsche Bundesbank

Central banks such as the Bundesbank and the European Central Bank also enjoy a **high level of trust**. In Europe, central banks are only indirectly involved in card-based payment transactions via their payment infrastructures. They usually do not come into direct contact with end-consumers. Generally speaking, the majority of respondents believe that central banks handle data in a very responsible manner. Just under eight out of ten respondents "strongly" or "mostly" agree that central banks such as the Bundesbank and the European Central Bank handle payment data responsibly.

A clear majority of respondents believe that action is needed to ensure **greater independence and sovereignty with regard to payments in Europe**. Geopolitical developments in recent years have led to intensified debate around Europe's structural dependencies in key economic sectors. At the heart of the debate is the question of how Europe's resilience and capacity to act as a centre of economic activity can be strengthened through greater strategic autonomy.

**One area of particular relevance in the debate is cashless payments.** In particular, dependencies exist when making payments at the POS in other European countries and when paying for purchases online as these types of payments frequently rely on the infrastructure of non-European payment service providers, or because individual non-European providers have considerable market power (see also Chapter 4.2). Consequently, questions relating to payment transactions are not only a matter of efficiency and convenience, but increasingly also of economic and political sovereignty.

Against this backdrop, participants were asked to what extent they considered **greater independence for the euro area in respect of payment systems to be necessary, and whether greater emphasis should be placed on a European solution**. Overall, 28% rate this as "urgently required" and a further 35% feel it "might be needed", whereas just under three out of ten respondents do not consider it to be urgent (see Figure 5.3.2). The digital euro (see the info box entitled "The digital euro") and a pan-European private sector payment app, such as Wero, could be used as potential ways to strengthen European sovereignty with regard to payments. Chapter 6.2 discusses how the results of the study are embedded in current market developments.

## The digital euro

**The digital euro would be the next step in the evolution of euro cash in an increasingly digital world.** It would have the status of legal tender alongside cash and should therefore, in principle, be accepted everywhere. As an “all-in-one” solution, it could be used for person-to-person payments, in bricks-and-mortar retail, online and for payments to government bodies across the entire euro area – including offline, i.e. without the need for an internet connection. It would also strengthen the strategic autonomy of the European payments system by reducing Europe’s dependence on non-European providers, while simultaneously enhancing its efficiency and resilience. In short: the aim of the digital euro is not to reinvent payments, but to make them simpler, more reliable and more harmonised across Europe – and to provide an additional public option for digital payments.<sup>21</sup>

**In June 2023, the European Commission presented the Single Currency Package, which is intended to establish the legislative basis for a possible digital euro while simultaneously strengthening the role of physical cash.** The draft regulation now needs to be adopted by European legislators. Starting in the third quarter of 2027, a pilot exercise is also planned to test initial technical functionalities, initially within a small, closed group – together with a number of national central banks and selected partner banks. Assuming that the legal basis is created during the course of 2026, the digital euro could potentially be issued from 2029 onwards.

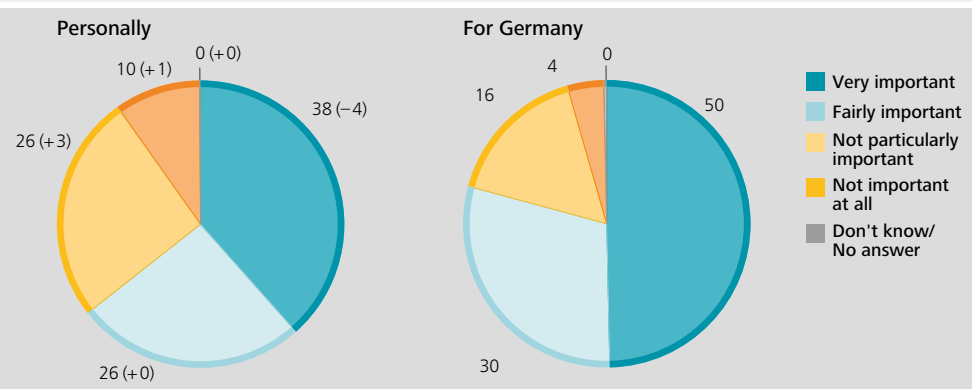
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<sup>21</sup> For more information on the digital euro, see [Digital euro | Deutsche Bundesbank](#).

## Importance of cash

Fig. 6.1.1

%, (change from 2023 in percentage points), as reported by respondents



Basis: All respondents in subgroups B and C (n = 4,066). Question: "How important is it for you personally to have the option of using cash?"  
Basis: All respondents in subgroup B (n = 2,061). Question: "Irrespective of your personal preferences, do you think it is important for Germany to retain the option of paying with cash?"  
Deutsche Bundesbank

## 6 Conclusion and outlook

### 6.1 The future of cash

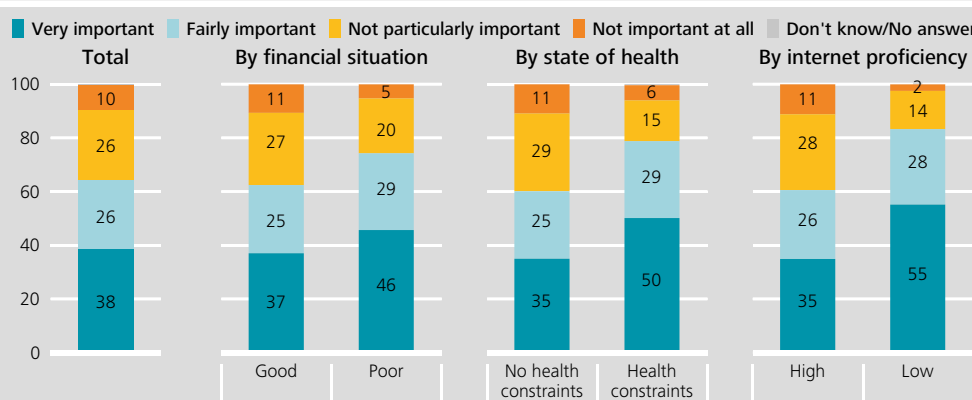
There has been an ongoing decline in the use of cash as a means of payment in Germany. The range of digital payment options is increasing, and more and more people feel comfortable using them. In addition, the payment function on smartphones means it is no longer necessary to carry around a wallet as such. Given this situation, participants were asked whether they thought cash would still be necessary in the future.

64% of respondents replied that the option of using cash is important or even very important to them. This figure has fallen somewhat compared with 2023 (minus 4 percentage points), but is still relatively high given the declining use of cash (see the left-hand side of Figure 6.1.1). In addition, there are still certain groups of the population that are particularly dependent on the use of cash. For example, people in a weak financial position, those with health constraints and individuals who are not very proficient users of the internet are much more likely to say that cash is important to them. Bucking the general trend, cash has also not become less important to these groups (see Figure 6.1.2).

## Importance of using cash by societal group

Fig. 6.1.2

%, as reported by respondents



Basis: All respondents in subgroups B and C (n = 4,066). Question: "How important is it for you personally to have the option of using cash?"  
Deutsche Bundesbank

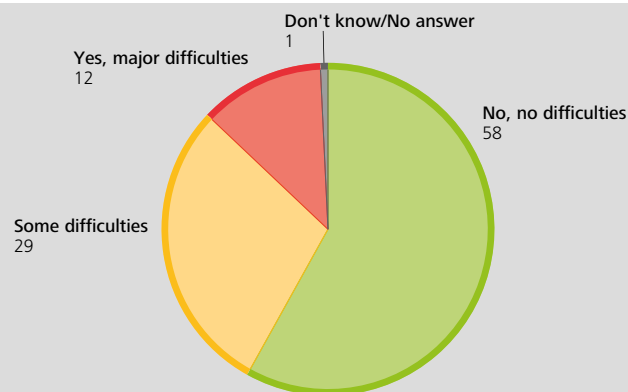
In addition, 12% of respondents said that they would have great difficulty completing their day-to-day activities without cash (see Figure 6.1.3). Another 29% said this was at least partly true. The link with the socio-demographic factors described above can be seen here, too. People who are afraid they will run into difficulties without cash are more likely than average to have financial problems, health constraints and low digital literacy. Cash thus plays a key role in helping socially disadvantaged groups participate in the economy and make payments.

As well as ensuring financial participation, cash plays other important roles in an economy. It serves as an analogue fallback solution whenever technical infrastructures go down, provides a crisis-proof way of storing assets and helps to limit dependencies on non-European payment service providers.

### Difficulties without cash

Fig. 6.1.3

%, as reported by respondents



Basis: Respondents in subgroup B (n = 2,061). Question: "If cash no longer existed, would you have difficulties going shopping and going about other day-to-day business?"

Deutsche Bundesbank

**Respondents in the payment behaviour study consider preserving cash to be very important for society.** Irrespective of their personal preferences, 80% believe it is important that it remains possible to pay with cash in Germany (see the right-hand side of Figure 6.1.1). This is much higher than the figure for the personal perspective (64%) and could reflect people's awareness of current societal developments, technological dependencies and geo-political circumstances.

**There is similarly strong agreement that the option of paying with cash should be safeguarded.** Overall, 68% of respondents agree that it should always be possible to pay with cash when making payments at physical locations. A further 18% think this is right in the case of essential goods and services, at least. Just 13% of respondents believe there is no need for the option to pay with cash (see Figure 6.1.4).

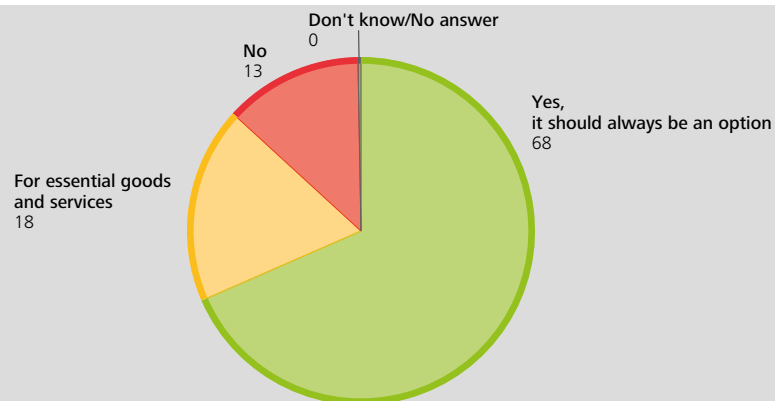
**To preserve cash as a universal means of payment, it must be easily accessible to the general public on the one hand and be widely accepted in the retail sector on the other.** The study shows that both these requirements are currently met in Germany, but that there have been signs of deterioration. The thinning out of the ATM network, the increasing use of automated cashier systems with no cash payment option and the refusal of cash payments on public transport are noteworthy developments here.

**Through their cash strategy, the Bundesbank and the Eurosystem aim to ensure that cash remains available to consumers in the euro area in the future.** An important step along the way is the European Commission's proposal for a regulation on euro cash as legal tender, which aims to safeguard the role of cash in the euro area. In addition, the Bundesbank is making its own efforts, focusing especially on improving efficiency in the national cash cycle. For example, the National Cash Forum, a body set up by the Bundesbank to facilitate communication between stakeholders in the cash cycle, called for a rounding rule that would make the handling of low-denomination coins more efficient. By building four new branches, the Bundesbank is also making a long-term investment in an efficient and future-proof branch network so that it can continue to make cash, its core product, available to the public in the future. However, the Bundesbank can only strengthen the availability and acceptance of cash by working in partnership with others. To ensure that cash continues to play a role in the future, ongoing support from cash handlers and policymakers is needed, too.

### Maintaining the option to pay with cash

Fig. 6.1.4

%, as reported by respondents



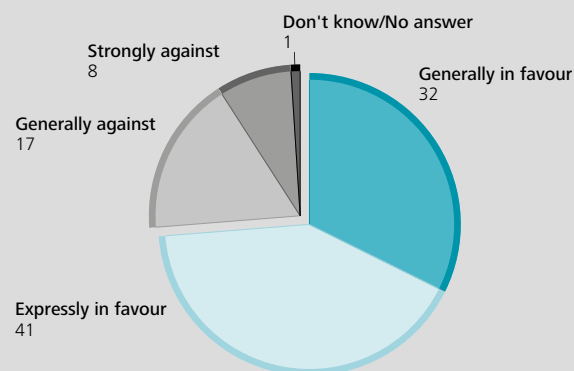
Basis: Respondents in subgroup B (n = 2,061). Question: "Should it always be possible to pay with cash when making payments at physical locations?"

Deutsche Bundesbank

### Should there be a general obligation to accept cashless means of payment?

Fig. 6.2.1

%, as reported by respondents, single response question



Basis: n = 4,048. May fail to sum to 100 due to rounding.  
Deutsche Bundesbank

## 6.2 The future of cashless payments

**Both acceptance and use of cashless means of payment are steadily increasing.** While growing acceptance at everyday points of sale is encouraging the use of cashless means of payment, greater demand for and the usage of these payment instruments is, in turn, also making payment recipients more willing to offer suitable cashless payment options. Acceptance and use rose particularly sharply in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic. But there are still a relatively large number of payment situations in which people cannot pay the way they want to – cash or cashless – as their preferred payment option is not offered. This happens most often with cashless payment instruments (see Chapter 5.1). Many respondents therefore believe there is still room for improvement in the acceptance of cash and cashless means of payment. The topic has already made it onto the political agenda and is being actively promoted by the current Federal Government<sup>22</sup> and the European Commission.<sup>23</sup> The Bundesbank is also committed to people's freedom to pay as they choose.

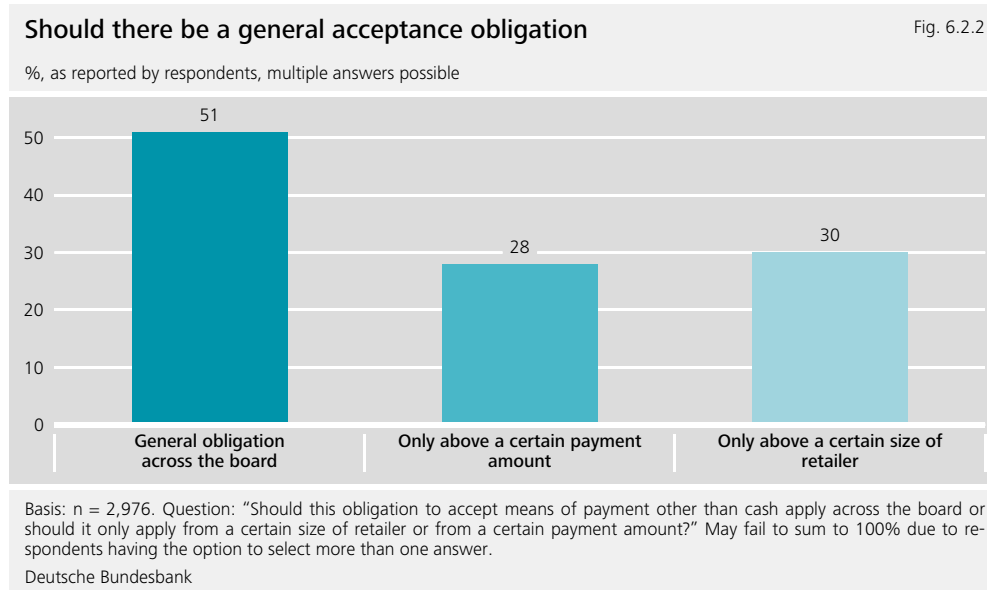
**A potential obligation to accept cashless means of payment could mean they become even more widespread in the future.** The Federal Government's current coalition agreement stipulates that, in future, a digital payment option should always be provided alongside cash.<sup>24</sup> In light of this initiative, the Bundesbank conducted another representative survey in June 2025 to ask respondents what they thought about a potential obligation to accept cashless means of payment (see Figure 6.2.1).<sup>25</sup>

<sup>22</sup> See Federal Government Coalition Agreement of 5 May 2025, [Koalitionsvertrag 2025 | Bundesregierung](#).

<sup>23</sup> On 28 June 2023, the European Commission presented two regulation proposals to both ensure the broad acceptance of cash and lay the groundwork for a possible new digital euro (see the [Single Currency Package](#)).

<sup>24</sup> In terms of a possible obligation to accept cashless means of payment, it should be noted that, as per the principle of freedom of contract, customers and businesses are free to mutually agree on payment methods. Exactly how the acceptance of cashless instruments could be legally mandated currently remains unclear.

<sup>25</sup> As part of the Bundesbank's monthly online surveys (Bundesbank Online Panel – Households), 4,048 individuals were polled on the acceptance of cashless means of payment in June 2025. See [Clear majority in favour of mandatory cashless payment acceptance | Deutsche Bundesbank](#).



**Just under three-quarters of respondents supported the idea of a general obligation for retailers to accept cashless means of payment in future.** 41% of respondents were strongly in favour of mandating cashless payment acceptance, and 32% were somewhat in favour. By contrast, 17% said they somewhat opposed it, and 8% said to strongly oppose such an obligation. Studies on the costs of payment instruments in retail show that smaller businesses tend to face higher costs for accepting and processing payments. Of those who supported the idea, 30% were in favour of a graduated acceptance obligation that would apply only to retailers larger than a certain size. Around half the respondents were in favour of a general acceptance obligation applying across the board (see Figure 6.2.2).

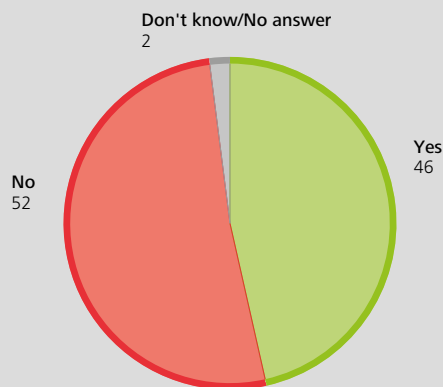
**Classic payment methods such as credit transfers, direct debits and card payments still account for the vast majority of payments.** Looking at card payments, girocard, the joint debit card system provided by German banks and savings banks, is the most widely used. Debit cards are well established among practically all groups of the population, with older people and vulnerable groups also using them regularly. Debit cards have maintained their market share gains which were made during the coronavirus pandemic.

**Innovation is a key factor in the increasing use of cashless means of payment.** Technological developments have been a significant factor in the growth of cashless means of payment over the last few years. For example, due to the contactless function of payment cards it is often no longer necessary to enter a PIN and the payment process works much more frictionless; this has probably made card payments easier for certain groups in society. In future, the increasing prevalence of self-service checkouts could further boost the growth of cashless payments because they do not generally offer customers the option to pay in cash (see the info box entitled "Cash acceptance at self-service checkouts"). In addition, current developments show rapid growth in the use of mobile payments and e-payment methods, especially among younger people and higher income groups. This area is expected to become even more important in the future. First, use by "early adopters" is now being followed by more widespread use. Second, technical innovations are enhancing the user experience (convenience factors). One example is the authorisation of card payments using biometric data such as facial or fingerprint recognition. In some cases, this comes at the expense of physical credit cards, which are losing shares across all payment locations and transaction amount brackets. However, virtual payment cards – both credit and debit cards – form the basis for many mobile payment methods.

### Awareness of the digital euro

Fig. 6.2.3

%, as reported by respondents



Basis: Respondents in subgroup B (n = 2,061). Question: "Have you ever heard or read about the digital euro?"  
Deutsche Bundesbank

**For mobile payments by smartphone as well as for e-payment methods, non-European companies are widely used in Germany.** The most widely used mobile payment method is Apple Pay, the most common credit and debit cards in respondents' mobile wallets are from Visa and Mastercard; and with respect to using of e-payment methods, Paypal is leading. The continuing growth of these types of payments may lead to increasing dependencies on non-European providers in the payments sector. Another potential problem here is that people tend to put less confidence in these providers' when handling payment data compared to traditional and European players such as banks and savings banks (see Chapter 5.3). As card-based wallets originally designed for use at the POS are becoming increasingly accepted in e-commerce, and original e-payment methods are also being used more frequently at the POS, the lines between these markets are becoming increasingly blurred. As a result, competition seems to be intensifying.

**Sovereignty in European payments continues to gain importance.** This is due to the tense geopolitical environment in which economic dependencies are increasingly being used as a means of exerting pressure. Alternative European payment methods such as Wero and, in future, the digital euro, are being established and could lead to shifting market shares in favour of European providers in the next few years.

**Respondents are open to European alternatives.** The results of the survey show that most participants express the desire for European autonomy. At the same time, they have a high level of trust in the central banks as well as (principal) banks and savings banks (see Chapter 5.3). This means there may be market potential for European solutions such as Wero and the digital euro.

**Awareness surrounding the digital euro is satisfactory.** Although the project is still at a fairly early stage, just under half of the respondents had already heard of the digital euro. This relatively high figure is probably mainly due to the broad public debate about the digital euro. Looking at age and income groups (see Figure 6.2.3), it is primarily respondents from younger and higher-income brackets who have heard of the digital euro.

**Acceptance of European solutions will depend on several factors.** Given that data protection – something which many respondents cited as a major factor – has become more important and in light of the lack of trust in non-European providers (see Figure 5.3.1), European

alternatives could have a clear competitive edge. However, this competitive advantage alone will probably not be enough to achieve significant market shares. Additional factors such as a high level of user-friendliness and broad acceptance by retailers are needed, as the results of the present study also show that a very large number of people stick to certain means of payment out of habit (see Figures 3.2.2 and 3.2.3). Network effects stemming from the digital euro as a result of a requirement for retailers to accept it and in the case of Wero as a result of the large number of participating banks will probably have a positive impact. These network effects could be further amplified if both solutions are combined, for example by integrating the digital euro into the Wero wallet. Habitual factors also play a major role in the acceptance of new means of payment. New payment methods need to provide clear added value in terms of simplicity, convenience and acceptance such that users of other payment methods consider switching over to them.

**The Bundesbank, the European Central Bank and the other Eurosystem central banks are working to create greater European autonomy in payments, while at the same time giving people freedom of choice.** The Eurosystem's comprehensive cashless payments strategy<sup>26</sup> therefore aims not only to develop the digital euro but also to support European payment methods such as Wero and to encourage the spread of instant credit transfers. Not only are they fast and efficient, but they are settled via European infrastructures. It will be those making the payments who will have the final say, however, because it is still the explicit objective of the Bundesbank and the Eurosystem to safeguard people's freedom to choose their preferred payment solution.

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<sup>26</sup> See [https://www.ecb.europa.eu/pub/pdf/other/ecb\\_eurosystemcomprehensivepaymentsstrategy202603.en.pdf](https://www.ecb.europa.eu/pub/pdf/other/ecb_eurosystemcomprehensivepaymentsstrategy202603.en.pdf)

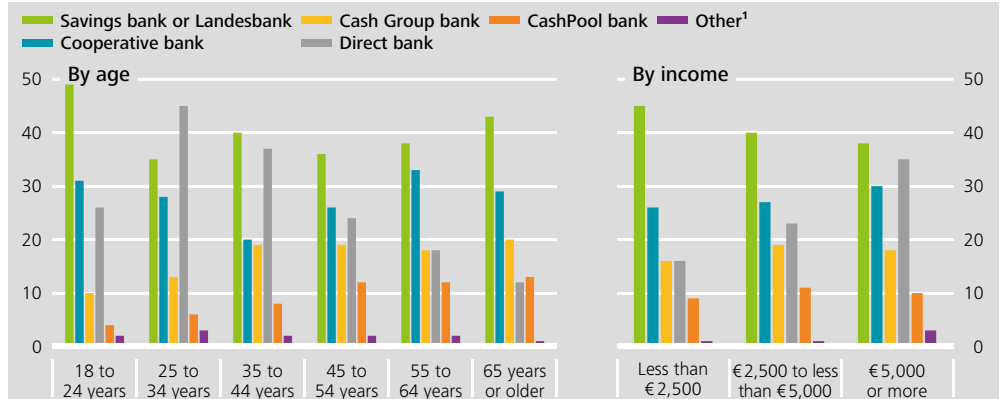
## Annex

### Annex 1: Supplementary graphics

Distribution of current accounts by group of institutions

Fig. A.2.1.2

%, as reported by respondents, multiple answers possible



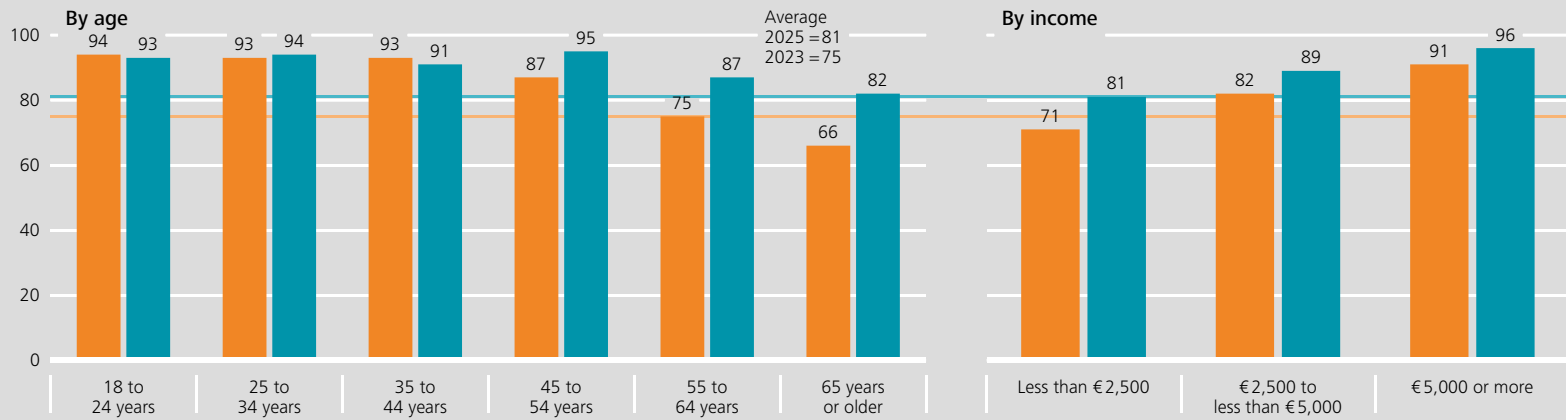
Basis: All respondents with a current account (n=5,663). Question: "Where is this current account or where are these current accounts held?" <sup>1</sup> Including "Don't know/No answer".

Deutsche Bundesbank

### Use of online banking by age and income

Fig. A.2.1.3

%, as reported by respondents 2023 (n=5,359) 2025 (n=1,900)



Basis: Respondents with access to a current account who have used the internet in the last three months. Question: "Do you use online banking?"  
Deutsche Bundesbank

### Online banking method by age, income and group of institutions

Fig. A.2.1.4

%, as reported by respondents, multiple answers possible Website of bank where account is held App of bank where account is held Other online banking app

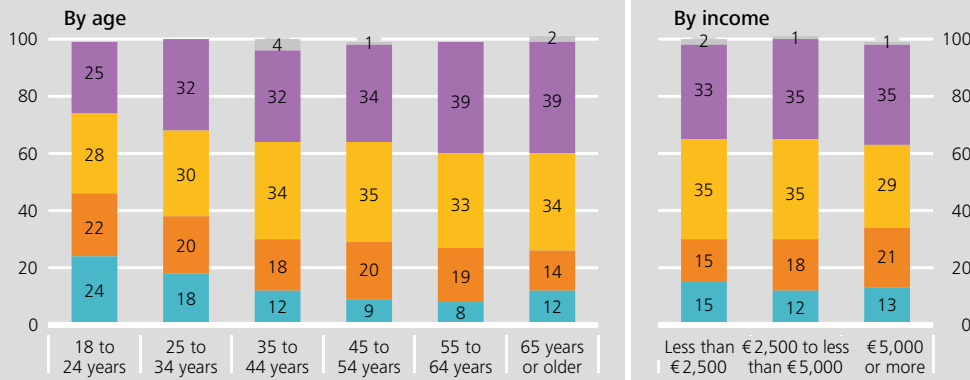


Basis: Respondents in subgroup A who use online banking (n = 1,689). Question: "How do you conduct your banking? Do you use your bank's online banking website, your bank's online banking app or an online banking app not operated by your bank?"  
Deutsche Bundesbank

### Use of instant credit transfers by age and income

Fig. A.2.1.5

%, as reported by respondents



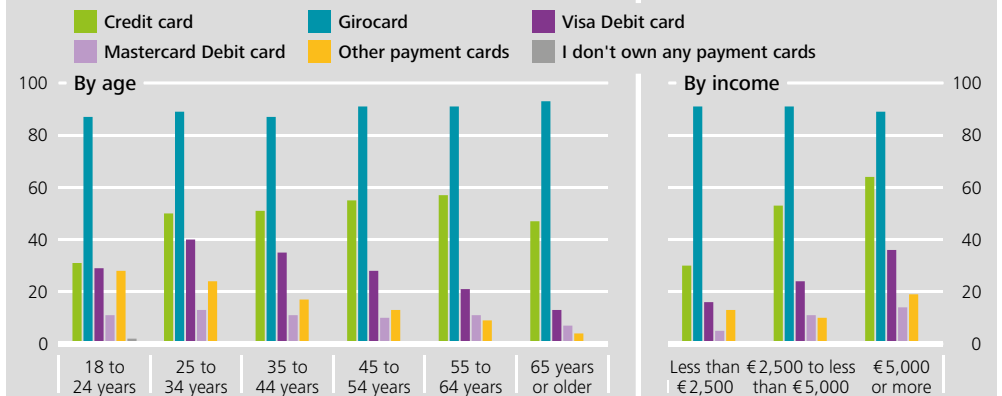
Basis: Respondents in subgroup A who hold a current account or have access to a partner's current account and who also use online banking (n = 1,689). Question: "At present, how often do you consciously use instant credit transfers when you transfer money?" May fail to sum to 100 due to rounding.

Deutsche Bundesbank

### Payment card ownership by population group

Fig. A.2.3.2

%, as reported by respondents, multiple answers possible



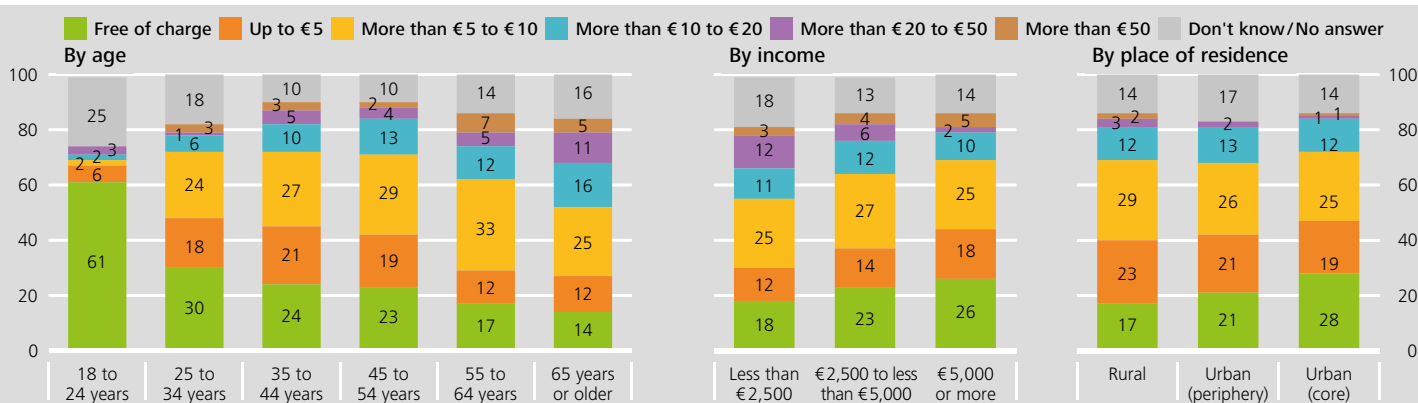
Basis: All respondents (n = 6,070). Question: "I will now name various kinds of payment card. Which of these cards do you own (physical or virtual)?"

Deutsche Bundesbank

### Current account costs by age, income and place of residence

Fig. A.2.1.6

%, as reported by respondents



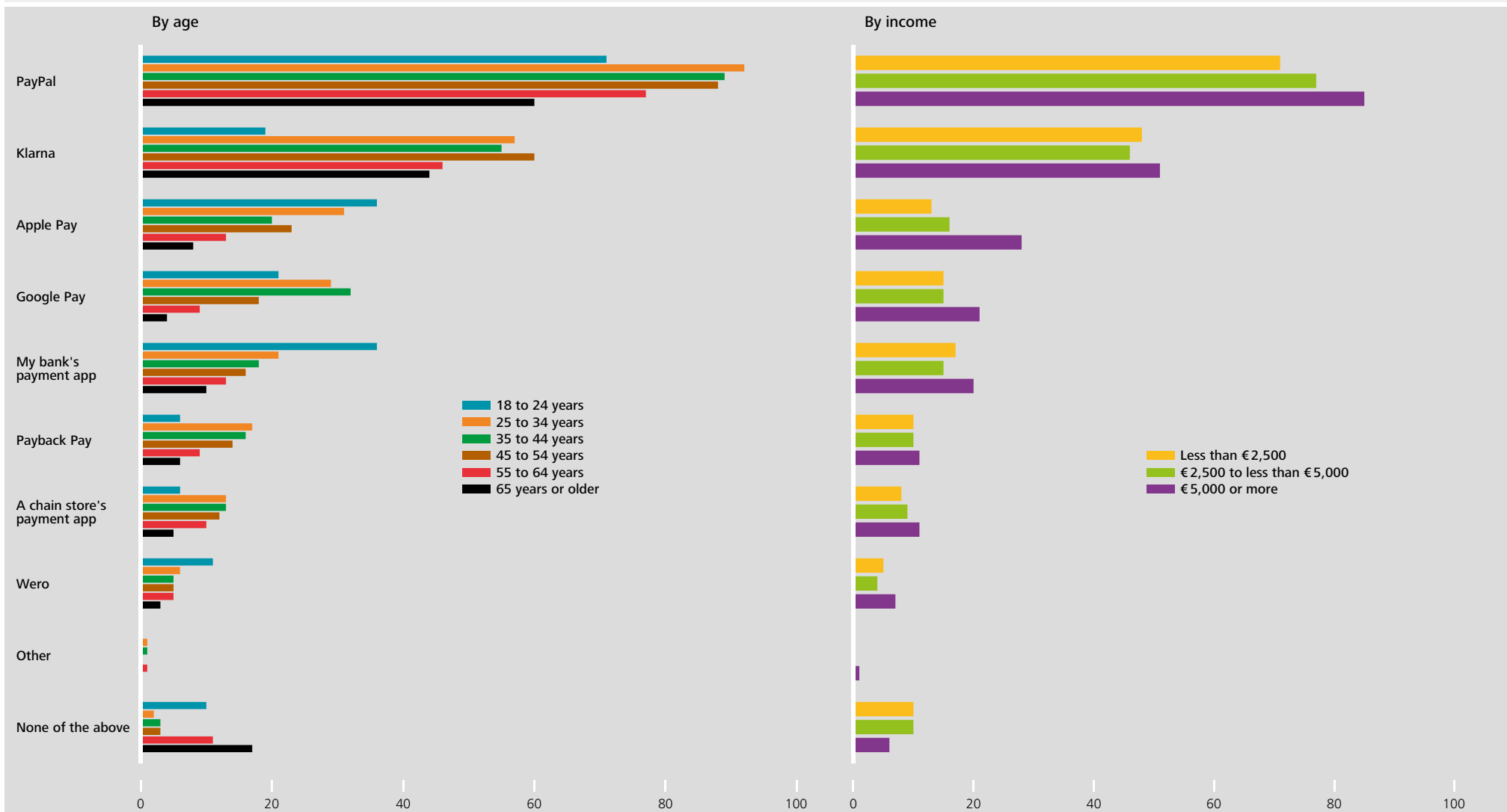
Basis: Respondents in subgroup A who hold one or more current accounts (n = 1,957). Question: "How much do you pay for your main current account per month?" May fail to sum to 100 due to rounding.

Deutsche Bundesbank

## Ownership of e-payment instruments by population group

Fig. A.2.4.1

%, as reported by respondents, multiple answers possible



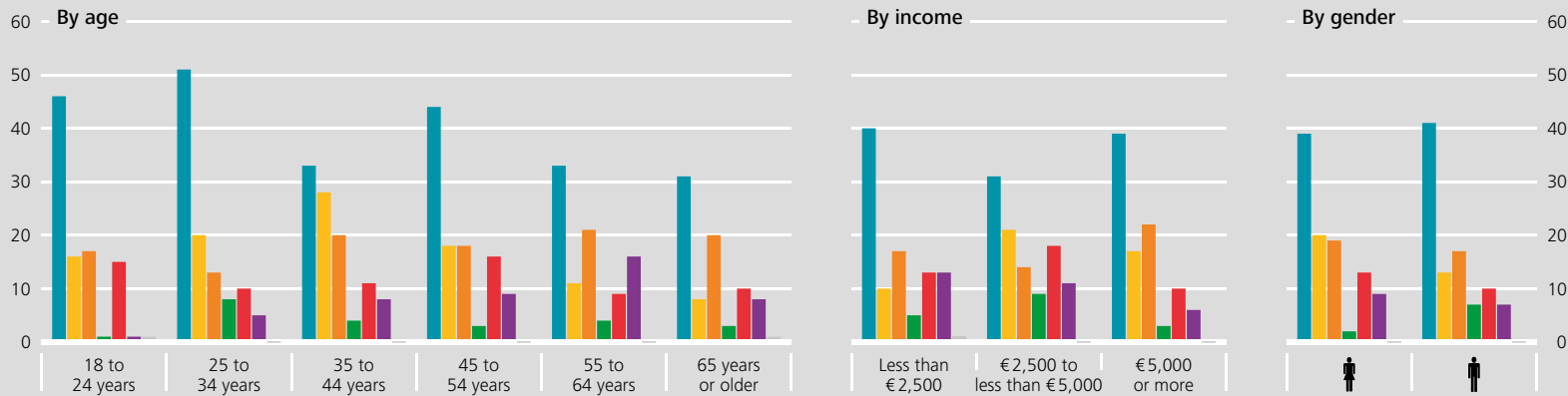
Basis: Respondents in subgroup A who use the internet and can access a current account (n=1,906). Question: "Which of the following payment methods have you ever tried or at least set up to use?"

### Usual use of mobile payment methods at the POS by population group

Fig. A.2.4.2

%, as reported by respondents, multiple answers possible

Apple Pay My bank's payment app Google Pay Payback Pay PayPal Chain store app Other



Basis: Respondents in subgroup A who have paid at least once at the POS with their smartphone (n = 661). Question: "Which payment method do you usually use when paying with a smartphone, smart-watch or fitness wristband at the point of sale?"

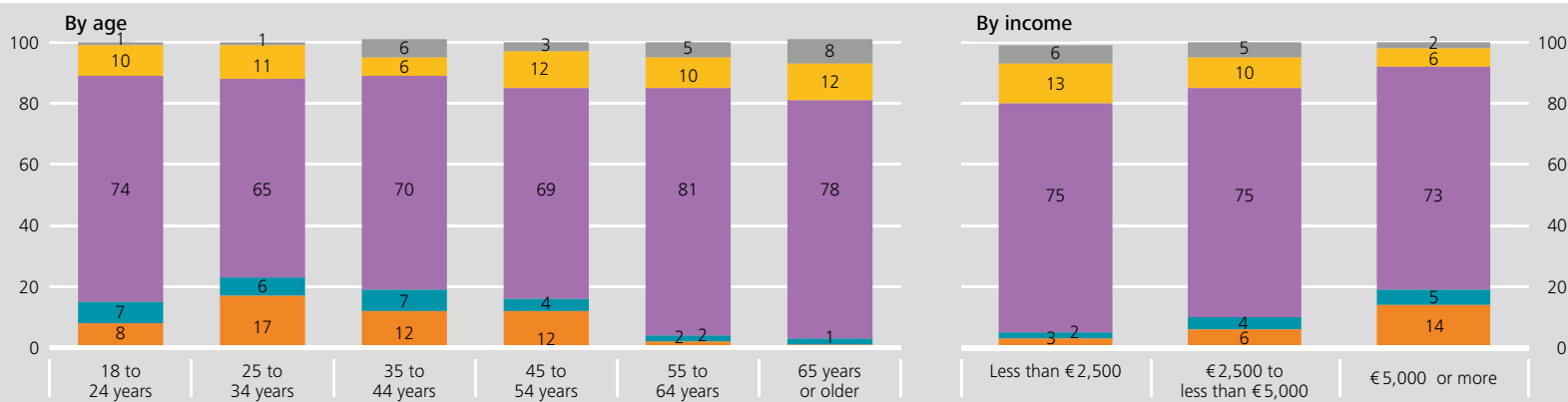
Deutsche Bundesbank

### Potential purchase and use of crypto-tokens by age and income

Fig. A.2.4.3

%, as reported by respondents

Already bought / paid with them Purchase/use planned Purchase/use not planned Never heard of crypto-tokens Don't know/No answer

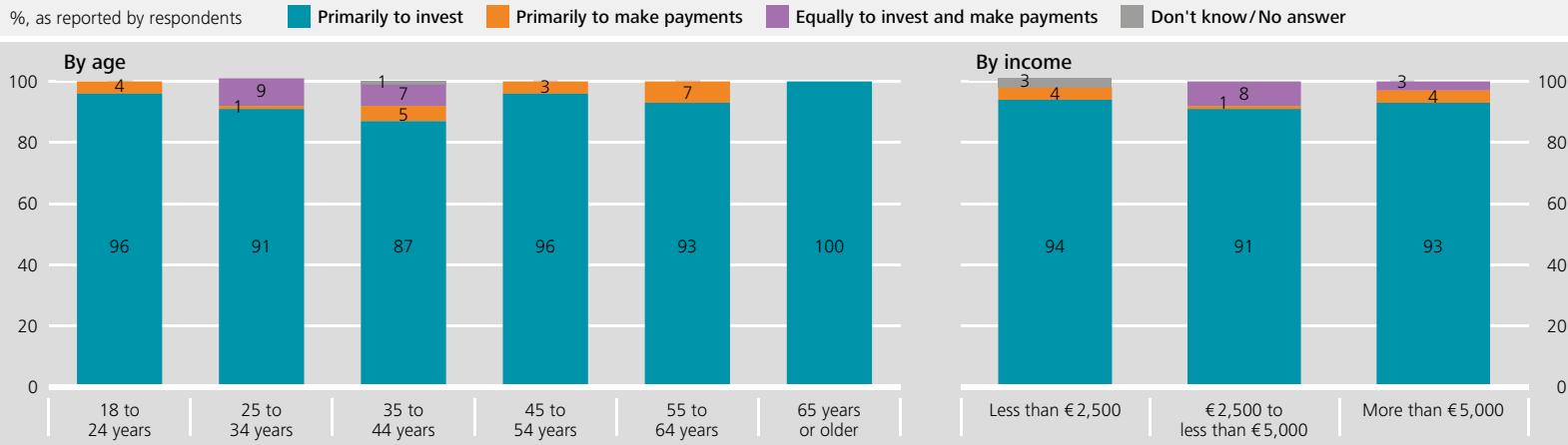


Basis: All respondents in subgroup A (n = 2,004). Question: "Crypto-tokens such as Bitcoin have attracted regular attention over the past few years. Which of the following statements applies to you personally?" May fail to sum to 100 due to rounding.

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### Main use of crypto-tokens by population group

Fig. A.2.4.4

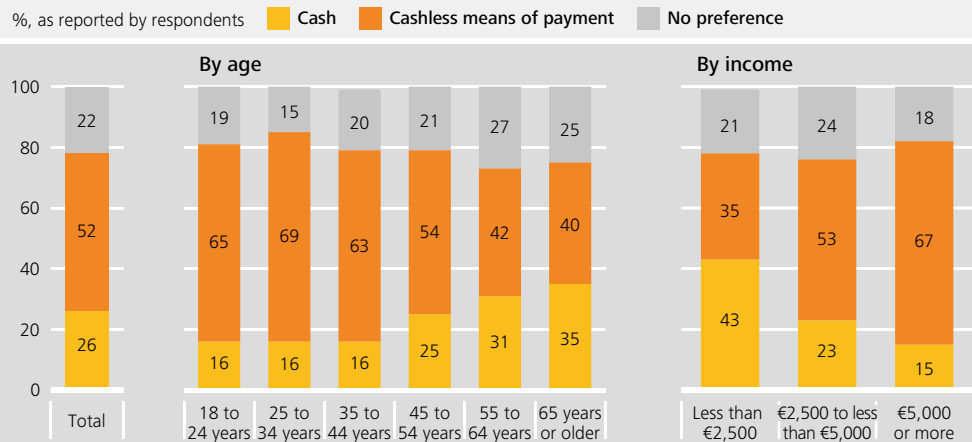


Basis: Respondents in subgroup A who have purchased or paid with crypto-tokens before (n = 139). Question: "You said you have purchased or paid with crypto-tokens before. What was your main use for these crypto-tokens?" May fail to sum to 100 due to rounding.

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### Preferred means of payment by population group

Fig. A.3.1.1a



Basis: All respondents (n=6,070). Question: "If you were offered a choice of payment methods in-store, which would you prefer?"

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## Preferences for cashless payments by age and income

Fig. A.3.1.1b

%, as reported by respondents

■ Girocard 
 ■ Debit card from Visa or Mastercard 
 ■ Credit card 
 ■ Mobile payment method 
 ■ I never pay using cashless methods 
 ■ Don't know/ No answer



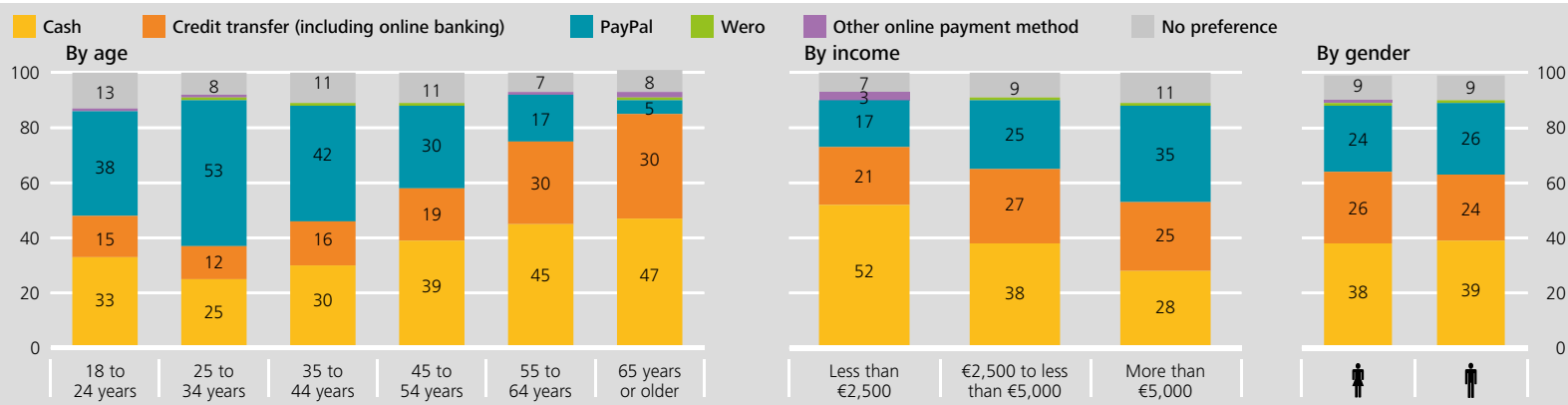
Basis: All respondents in subgroups A and C (n=4,009). Question: "Which of these cashless payment methods do you prefer?"

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## Typically preferred means of P2P payment by population group

Fig. A.3.1.3

%, as reported by respondents



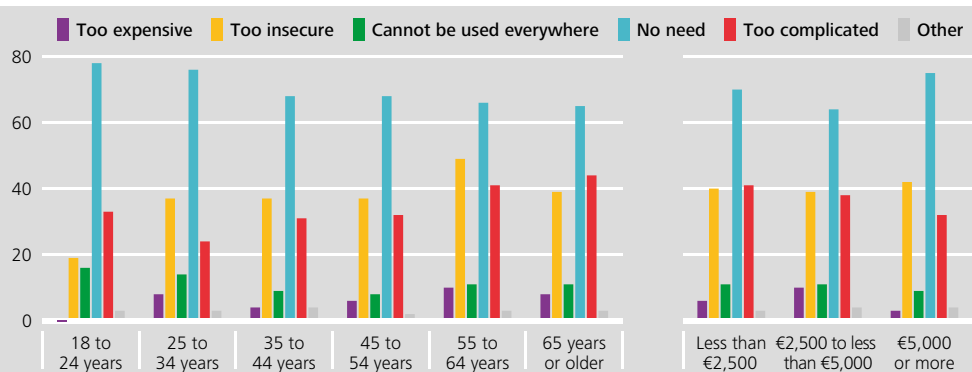
Basis: Respondents in subgroup A (n=2,004). May fail to sum to 100 due to rounding. Question: "Now imagine you want to give money to family, friends, or acquaintances. Which payment method would you rather use?"

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## Reasons for not using mobile payment methods at the point of sale by population group

Abb. A.3.2.1

%, as reported by respondents, multiple answers possible



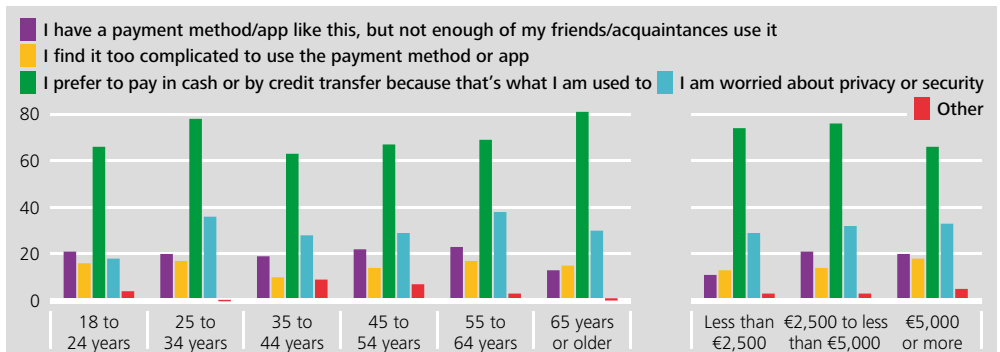
Basis: Respondents in subgroup A who have never paid using mobile payment methods at the point of sale before (n=679). Question: "Why have you not used any mobile payment methods at the point of sale in a store before?"

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## Reasons for not preferring to use digital payment methods by population group

Abb. A.3.2.2

%, as reported by respondents, multiple answers possible



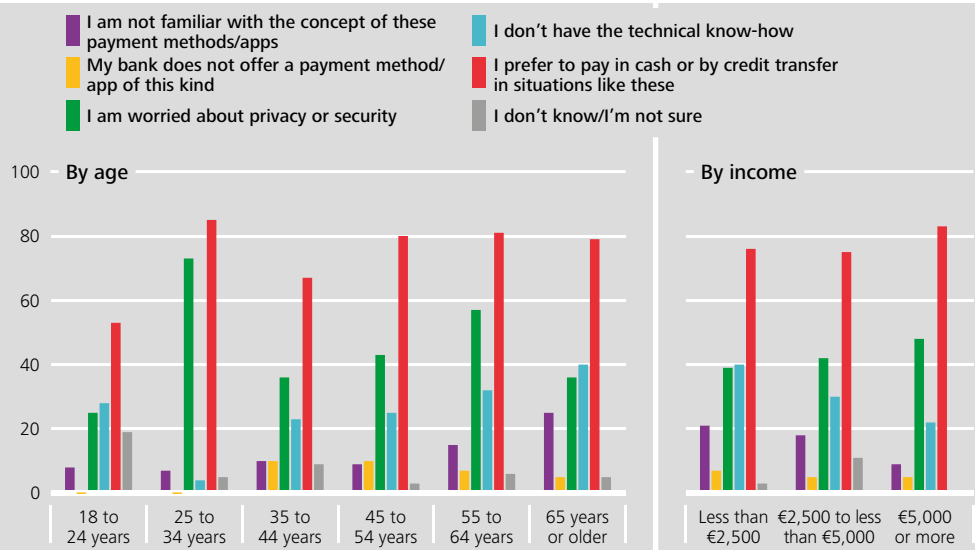
Basis: Respondents in subgroup A who have PayPal or Wero and chose cash, credit transfer, no preference or don't know for P2P payments (n = 961). Question: "What are the reasons you (prefer) not to use a digital payment method/app such as Wero or PayPal to make payments to other people?"

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### Reasons for not using digital payment methods/apps for P2P payments by population group

Fig. A.3.2.3

%, as reported by respondents, multiple answers possible



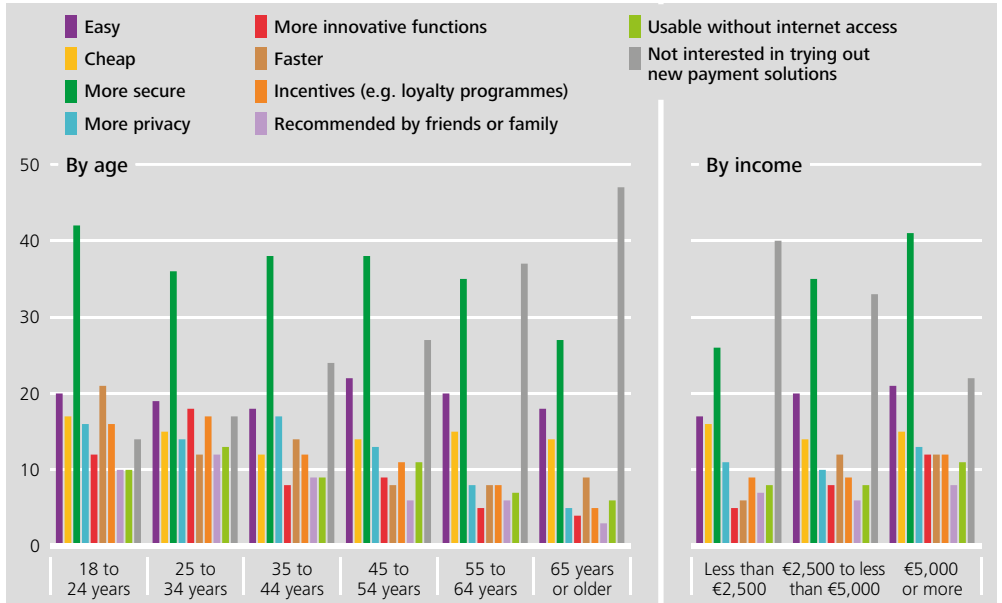
Basis: Respondents in subgroup A who have set up neither PayPal nor Wero (n = 408). Question: "You said that you do not have any digital payment methods/apps such as Wero or PayPal for making payments to other people. What are your reasons for not using a digital payment method/app?"

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### Reasons to try out new payment solutions by population group

Fig. A.3.2.4

%, as reported by respondents, multiple answers possible



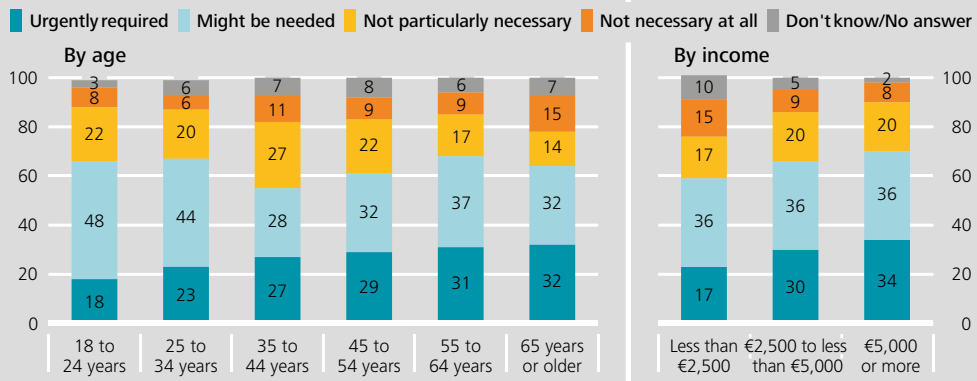
Basis: Respondents in subgroup A (n = 2,400). Question: "In your opinion, what are the two most important factors that would convince you to try out a new payment solution?"

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### Need for European autonomy in payments by population group

Fig. A.5.3.2

%, as reported by respondents



Basis: Respondents in subgroup A (n=2,004). Question: "Non-European providers such as PayPal, Visa or Mastercard dominate the range of payment instruments in the euro area. With this in mind, do you think the euro area needs to become more independent in the area of payments and increasingly move towards a European solution?"

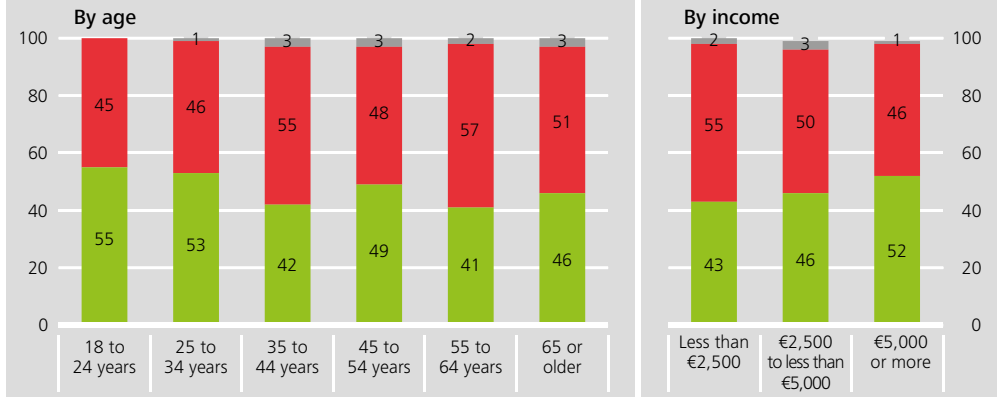
Deutsche Bundesbank

### Awareness of the digital euro by population group

Fig. A.6.2.3

%, as reported by respondents

Yes (green), No (red), Don't know/No answer (grey)



Basis: All respondents in subgroup B (n = 2,061). Question: "Have you ever heard or read about the digital euro?" May fail to sum to 100 due to rounding.

Deutsche Bundesbank

## Annex 2: Study design

**The current study marks a continuation of the Bundesbank's long-standing research on payment behaviour in Germany.** For this study, the market research institute forsa conducted a total of 6,070 full interviews (net sample) on behalf of the Bundesbank. The survey took place between 8 September and 2 December 2025, following on from the regular surveys on payment behaviour in Germany that have been conducted since 2008.<sup>27</sup> Half of the interviews were conducted over the phone (as a computer-assisted telephone interview, or CATI) and half were conducted online. By contrast, the previous two surveys in 2021 and 2023 were conducted entirely in the CATI format.<sup>28</sup> The Bundesbank's latest study is based on the methodology used in the 2020 interim survey on payment behaviour during the coronavirus pandemic, which already involved a combination of telephone and online interviews. The use of various contact channels enables different population groups to be reached, from the less internet-savvy to digitally oriented individuals.

**Participants provided information on the availability of payment instruments, their payment habits and their assessment of current issues relating to payment behaviour via a structured questionnaire in the interviews.** The average duration of a telephone interview was around 20 minutes. A total of three different questionnaires (A, B and C) covering specific topics were compiled for the survey. The questionnaires were randomly allocated to the respondents. Questionnaire A focused on cashless means of payment, questionnaire B focused on cash, while questionnaire C focused on attitudes towards payment methods and the availability of cash. The results of questionnaire C are outlined only briefly in this study because they will be published in separate publications.

**Following the interview, participants documented their day-to-day payment behaviour in a payments diary.** Over a period of three days, they reported all one-off payments that they actively initiated at a point of sale, online, between individuals, to public authorities and to charities. Examples include cash payments when shopping at a weekly market, online payments via Paypal, splitting a bill with friends via a payment app, card payments at a

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<sup>27</sup> See <https://www.bundesbank.de/en/publications/reports/studies/payment-behaviour-in-germany-738024> for more information on the survey.

<sup>28</sup> The data for 2008, 2011, 2014 and 2017 were gathered by means of computer-assisted personal interviews (CAPIs).

municipal administration office or credit transfers to charities. A common feature of all recorded transactions is that the respondents decide what means of payment to use depending on the situation. By contrast, regularly recurring payments involving a defined means of payment – such as the payment of rent by standing order, or direct debits for electricity and gas bills – are not taken into account when determining the population's preferred payment methods.

**Compared with the previous studies, the diaries were more user-friendly and incorporated additional features.** Besides the means of payment used, the amount and type of expenditure or transaction, respondents also recorded details of the payment situation for the first time. For in-store purchases, for example, participants stated whether they paid at a staffed check-out, at a self-service checkout, at a machine or retroactively by credit transfer. These details allow, amongst other things, nuanced analyses to be made on the acceptance of cash and cashless means of payment depending on the context.

**A total of 5,302 respondents provided payment diaries.** 94% of these respondents completed a diary for the entire three-day period, while the remainder kept records for only one or two days. Respondents received a compensatory payment of €15 for completing the diary for the full three days. They recorded their expenditure online via a PC, tablet or smartphone. At the end of the interview, participants received a personalised link to the online diary by email, SMS or verbally by telephone. Those who were unable or unwilling to keep an online diary had the option of providing details of their expenditure over the phone. 2% of the respondents who kept a diary used this option. To ensure that the payments recorded were evenly distributed over the days of the week, participants were randomly assigned a start day for recording their transactions.

**There was a particular focus on ensuring data quality in the payments diary.** Various measures were implemented at the survey process stage. Filter questions in the online diary prevented erroneous input. Automated queries were also triggered if, for example, noticeably large payment amounts were entered, or a payment card was selected that the respondent did not hold according to the interview. Once the data were collected, payments with incomplete information or multiple "Don't know" responses were removed from the raw dataset. Diaries with clusters of incomplete data were subject to an individual plausibility check. In two cases, this led to the diary being removed completely from the dataset. Noticeably large amounts

(outliers) were identified automatically and checked on an individual basis. No irregularities were detected. Nevertheless, three payments with amounts exceeding €10,000 were excluded from the analysis. This is because, as extreme outliers, they would have a disproportionate effect on the overall result. Payments made on days when the respondents were abroad were also excluded.

**The survey is representative of the German-speaking population aged 18 and over in the Federal Republic of Germany in terms of both the questionnaires and the diaries.** This is partly due to the predominant use of random sampling to select the respondents, and partly to the careful weighting of data. In this context, the CATI and online samples have to be considered as separate samples that were initially drawn and weighted independently of each other. The samples were subject to a further split based on questionnaires A, B and C. This method ensures that representative results can be obtained from each split. At the end of the survey, all samples were combined so that conclusions could be drawn on the German population aged 18 and over for all cases.

**Respondents surveyed by telephone were selected by applying a random sample approach using multivariate stratification.** This was based on the ADM telephone sampling system<sup>29</sup> (dual-frame approach) and birthday method.<sup>30</sup> Different selection probabilities stemming from the dual-frame approach were offset through design weighting. The CATI sample of each A, B or C split was then adjusted separately via structural weighting according to age, gender, level of education and region of the respondents to align with the official statistics. The structurally identical and weighted A, B and C samples can be combined to form an overall sample.

**The respondents surveyed online are members of a large online panel that is recruited offline only using representative telephone interviews.** This has a positive impact on data quality, as fake profiles, automatic bots and individuals who participate in surveys solely for financial reasons are prevented or excluded from taking part. Respondents were drawn from

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<sup>29</sup> As there is no complete list of private telephone numbers in the Federal Republic of Germany, participating survey institutions can use the ADM sampling system for telephone surveys. This makes it possible to draw, in principle, on all usable landline telephone numbers in Germany for survey activities. In addition, the dual-frame approach means that it is possible to include those who are only reachable via mobile telephone, too. Source: Arbeitsgemeinschaft ADM-Stichproben - ADM e.V. ([adm-ev.de](http://adm-ev.de)).

<sup>30</sup> Using the birthday method means that the household member who most recently had their birthday is selected to participate.

all panel members via quota sampling. The resulting samples for questionnaires A, B and C were weighted as representative of the population of internet users, with a structure derived from the weighted overall CATI sample. The frequency of internet use was another weighting variable in addition to age, gender, education and region.

**The CATI and online samples for each split were then combined to form an overall sample.** The share of respondents who do not use the internet had to be proportionalised for this purpose, as they were only surveyed using the CATI method. As a result, the overall sample was weighted by age, gender, level of education, region and frequency of internet use to make it representative of the population.

**The diary sub-sample requires additional weighting so that representative results can also be achieved for payment behaviour recorded in diaries.** This method is broadly in line with the approach used for the overall sample. First, the CATI and online samples for each split are weighted separately and then combined. However, an attrition analysis using a logistic model showed that the refusal of the diary was not random. It was possible to identify variables that have a significant influence on the drop-out process. Finally, a decision was made to additionally integrate two of these variables – preference for payment instruments and self-assessment of internet proficiency – into the structural weighting.

**All results presented in this study are based on weighted data.** The combined CATI and online samples formed the basis of the analyses at all times. Moreover, the largest possible sample was always used, i.e. an overall sample of all splits containing the question under analysis.

## Annex 3: Glossary

### ATM

Automated teller machine.

### Canteen or stadium card

Cards which are issued for a specific purpose in a distinct environment where they can be used. This includes cards for staff canteens.

### Cash-Group

Association of credit institutions that provide customers of the banks that are part of it with a network of free-to-use cash withdrawal points. See <https://www.cashgroup.de/> for a list of members.

### CashPool

Association of credit institutions that provide customers of the banks that are part of it with a network of free-to-use ATMs. See <https://www.cashpool.de/> for a list of members.

### Contactless card/contactless function

Payment card (debit or credit card) for which the data required to make a payment are transferred via NFC just by holding the card close to the card reader. A PIN may be requested for security purposes after a certain number of contactless payments or a certain turnover threshold has been reached. If the card is inserted during the next payment and the PIN is entered, this will reset the corresponding counter so that payment without a PIN is once again possible.

### Credit card

Payment card which normally involves an account being debited after a certain period of time has elapsed; if used several times, this entails either the deduction of a single amount or debiting in instalments. Payment to the retailer is guaranteed. Credit cards are marked with the word "credit".

### Credit transfer

Transfer of funds, initiated by the payer, to the payee's payment account.

### **Customer card with a payment function**

A customer card or reward card issued by a retailer that can be used to make payments. Payment itself is usually made at a later point in time, either by direct debit or charging the amount to a credit card.

### **Debit card**

Payment card linked to a current account that is debited immediately after payment. Payment to the retailer is guaranteed. Debit cards are marked with the word “debit”. These are primarily girocards, which are often still referred to as “EC cards”. Girocard is the debit card scheme operated by the German Banking Industry Committee, under which the card can be used at ATMs and POS terminals in Germany. For use abroad, co-badging with one of the debit card brands offered by international card systems (Maestro or V Pay, Mastercard Debit or Visa Debit) is generally required. For some time now, a number of payment service providers have also offered debit cards without a girocard function. They usually have a Visa or Mastercard debit function.

### **Direct debit**

Instruction given by the payee to debit the payer’s payment account, with the latter’s consent.

### **E-payment methods**

Methods based on credit transfers using the payer’s online banking setup (e.g. Klarna) and special, internet-based electronic payment methods, which enable the primary payment to be processed within a proprietary network (e.g. Paypal) and are linked to the payment account or a given payment card.

### **Instant credit transfer/instant payment**

Credit transfers that are settled around the clock within a matter of seconds.

### **Means of payment/payment instruments**

These include cash and all cashless payment methods (credit transfers, direct debits, card payments) as well as services based on them, such as e-payment and mobile payment methods.

### **Mobile payment methods/mobile payment**

These include payments made using a mobile phone, either in-store or not in-store, as well as using an app to send and receive money without entering an IBAN. The underlying transaction for a mobile payment is usually a credit transfer, direct debit or card payment.

### **Mobile wallet/digital wallet/e-wallet**

Digital equivalent of a wallet in an app on a smartphone or wearable. Payment cards, for example, can be added to such wallets.

### **Near field communication (NFC)**

Near field communication. This is a standard technology for the contactless transmission of data over a distance of a few centimetres.

### **Online banking**

Conducting banking transactions over the internet. Banks offer websites/portals and apps which customers can use to manage their current account online.

### **Peer-to-peer/person-to-person payments (P2P)**

Payments between individuals, such as between friends, acquaintances and within the family, for example.

### **SEPA**

The Single Euro Payments Area (SEPA) is an area in which cashless euro payments are governed by a set of uniform standards. In addition to all Member States of the European Union (EU), it also includes the states of the European Economic Area (EEA) – Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway – as well as Switzerland, Monaco, San Marino, Andorra, the Vatican City and the United Kingdom.

### **Wearable**

These include, for example, wristbands or watches equipped with smart technology. Some of these devices support NFC-enabled, contactless payments.

## Imprint

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