

PRESS RELEASE

Banks: information campaign on payment cards was launched on the web

There are 67 million cards in Italy. On the www.ilverovantaggio.com website, users can find tips for using payment cards safely, useful information, and an interactive journey to become acquainted with “plastic money”. The initiative is part of the widespread campaign promoted by PagoBANCOMAT and Visa.

The www.ilverovantaggio.com website was created to give advice and inform private citizens and consumers on the advantages of using payment cards as an alternative to cash, in other words convenience, safety, and improved accounting management. Online, users can now find advice for using “plastic money” in complete safety; a *glossary* that provides useful information, and an interactive journey to learn everything one needs to know about payment cards. The initiative is part of the widespread campaign promoted by PagoBANCOMAT and Visa. The following is a list of the tips for the correct and safe use of payment cards, now also available online.

Tips for using cards safely

When you receive your card:

- Immediately sign the back of your card (when specified) to protect yourself against the risk of forgery, learn your security code (PIN) by heart, and never keep it in the same place as your card;
- If you are the one to choose your PIN code or you decide to change it, avoid easily identifiable codes (for example your date of birth);
- When you enter your PIN code, be wary that no ill-intentioned person is watching you.

At home:

- Keep all receipts and check your monthly statement for any unauthorized payments;
- If you identify an incorrect amount or a transaction that you did not perform, contact your bank;
- Always bring with you the emergency numbers to call in the event of your card being stolen or lost.

When you are using your card:

- When you make a purchase, always check the amount before you enter the PIN code or sign the receipt of your card;
- Make sure that the shop-keeper returns your card with the payment receipt;
- Never lose sight of your card at the moment of payment.

Lost or stolen cards:

- Immediately call the national or international emergency number to block your card without delay;
- File a complaint with the competent authorities and inform your bank so as to open a refund procedure.

Italian cardholders

At present, there are over 67 million bankcards in Italy – 12% more than in 2006, and over twice as many as in 1998, when “plastic cards” amounted to 28 million. Of these, 29 million are debit cards, approximately 30 million are credit cards, and 3.3 million are prepaid cards. One out of two Italian consumers carries one or more payment cards in their wallet. As a matter of fact,

cardholders number over 23.5 million, which is equal to 48% of the national population. In particular, over 23 million Italian consumers hold a debit card and approximately 9 million hold at least one credit card.

More cards and less cash

Notwithstanding the ever-increasing distribution and use of cards, Italy is still behind the rest of Europe with respect to electronic payments. Each Italian consumer performs an average of 21.6 transactions per year using payment cards, which is less than half the European average of 50.5 transactions. PagoBANCOMAT and Visa launched the widespread communications and information campaign “Add value to your cards” (“Fai valere le tue carte”), which is currently being publicized in major daily papers, radio and national TV, as well as in shopping malls and bank branches, and will end in the spring.

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