

PRESS RELEASE



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Political decisions needed urgently so that everyone can pay

Strengthen the position of cash in legislation, prepare the legislation for an e-krona and increase financial and digital inclusion. This is according to the consultation response that the Riksbank is submitting today to the Payment Inquiry's report on state payments. The Riksbank considers that the state, including the Riksbank, should have a more active role in the payment system, and that several of the Inquiry's proposals need to be tightened and clarified.

The Riksbank's task is to contribute to a stable and efficient financial system. This means, among other things, ensuring that the public can make payments both in normal times as well as in peacetime crisis situations and elevated preparedness. The state needs to ensure that the payment market is efficient, secure and accessible in the long term.

"Firstly, the position of cash needs to be strengthened so that consumers can use cash for payments. Secondly, more consumers and businesses need access to payment accounts. Everyone who needs to pay must also be able to pay," says Governor Erik Thedéen.

Strengthen the position of cash in legislation

The Riksbank considers that legislation on cash needs to be tightened up immediately. Cash is needed to avoid people suffering digital and financial exclusion. Cash is also important for Sweden's preparedness. If electricity and telecommunications were eliminated, cash would initially be the only viable means of payment. Retailers would therefore be obliged to accept cash as payment for essential goods, such as pharmacy goods, fuel, food and drink. Exceptions can be made, for example, for smaller businesses. In addition, banks should be obliged to accept consumer cash deposits.



Increase inclusion – everyone should be able to pay

More people need to be able to make payments. One way to increase financial and digital inclusion in the payment market is for more consumers and companies to have access to payment accounts. In addition, the Riksbank considers that banks must offer payment services that work for consumers who have difficulties using digital services, such as over-the-counter payments and postal giro payments.

Prepare legislation for an e-krona

Digitalisation will continue in Sweden and abroad, which will require new payment solutions. A state central bank digital currency, a so-called e-krona, could be an important complement to cash in the payment market.

The Riksbank considers that legislative work on a possible e-krona needs to begin now. In June 2023, the European Commission presented a bill on a digital euro. The European Central Bank has now decided to proceed with its preparations, which hastens the need for Swedish legislation for a possible issuance of an e-krona. It is important that the lead time is not too long if the Riksdag decides that the Riksbank should issue an e-krona.

“We need to prepare ourselves for future. The rapid transformation and digitalisation of the payment market - with new players, new technologies and changing payment habits - requires central banks to adapt the services they offer and transform their systems. An e-krona could be part of the future payment market, for instance in light of the ongoing work on a digital euro,” says Erik Thedéen.

The Riksbank considers that the Swedish payment market needs to be modernised in other areas as well. To avoid losing momentum, it is important that Sweden follows international developments and adapts its legislation to enable, for example, instant cross-border payments in Swedish kronor. This will enable the public to receive and make payments more quickly and efficiently in their daily lives.