

## **PROVISION OF PAYMENT SERVICES**

*RELATED PROVISION: ARTICLE 5b(2) OF COUNCIL REGULATION 833/2014  
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS – AS OF 13 MARCH 2026*

### **1. What services are prohibited by Article 5b(2) of Regulation (EU) No 833/2014, and who is affected?**

*Last update: 13 March 2026*

Article 5b(2), as amended by Regulation (EU) 2025/2033 (part of the 19<sup>th</sup> sanctions package), prohibits the provision of crypto-asset services and certain payment and e-money services to Russian nationals, natural persons residing in Russia and legal persons, entities or bodies established in Russia. The prohibitions are limited to the specific services listed in points (a), (b) and (c):

- crypto-asset services (point (a))

For details on measures concerning crypto-assets, please check the dedicated FAQ;

- the issuing of payment instruments, acquiring of payment transactions, and provision of payment initiation services (point (b))

In Article 4 of Directive (EU) 2015/2366 (PSD2), the services under point (b) are defined as follows, respectively:

“(45) ‘issuing of payment instruments’ means a payment service by a payment service provider contracting to provide a payer with a payment instrument to initiate and process the payer’s payment transactions;”

“(44) ‘acquiring of payment transactions’ means a payment service provided by a payment service provider contracting with a payee to accept and process payment transactions, which results in a transfer of funds to the payee;”

“(15) ‘payment initiation service’ means a service to initiate a payment order at the request of the payment service user with respect to a payment account held at another payment service provider;”

- the issuing of electronic money (point (c))

In Article 2 of Directive 2009/110/EC (EMD2), electronic money is defined as follows:

“2. ‘electronic money’ means electronically, including magnetically, stored monetary value as represented by a claim on the issuer which is issued on receipt of funds for the purpose of making payment transactions as defined in point 5 of Article 4 of Directive

2007/64/EC, and which is accepted by a natural or legal person other than the electronic money issuer;”

## **2. Who is exempted from Article 5b(2)?**

*Last update: 13 March 2026*

According to Article 5b(3), the prohibitions in Article 5b(2) do not apply to:

- nationals of Member States, EEA countries or Switzerland;
- natural persons with a temporary or permanent residence permit in the EU, EEA or Switzerland.

Holders of long-stay Type D visas who have completed the registration formalities in the place where they reside are typically considered legally resident under national residence rules and are thus covered by the exemption in Article 5b(3). Examples include long-stay visas for student, employment, humanitarian and family reunification purposes, depending on national law.

## **3. Do the prohibitions in Article 5b(2) cover non-Russian entities owned or controlled by Russian persons?**

*Last update: 13 March 2026*

No, the prohibitions cover Russian nationals, natural persons residing in Russia and legal persons established in Russia. Services may continue to be provided to entities legally established in the EU or third countries, even if they are owned or controlled by Russian persons, unless these are being used as a conduit to circumvent sanctions. See also Question 4.

## **4. What constitutes indirect provision of services under Article 5b(2)?**

*Last update: 13 March 2026*

Indirect provision may occur when a prohibited service is channelled through intermediaries, third-country entities or contractual arrangements designed to circumvent sanctions. All sanctions prohibitions must be read in conjunction with Article 12 of Regulation (EU) No 833/2014, which prohibits to participate knowingly and intentionally in activities the object or effect of which is to circumvent prohibitions in the Regulation.

Financial institutions should take reasonable steps to identify and mitigate circumvention risks.

## **5. Does Article 5b(2) require payment service providers (PSPs) to close accounts or terminate existing contracts with Russian or Russia-based clients? What happens when a client enters the scope (e.g. a Russian national who is no longer legally resident in the EU)?**

*Last update: 13 March 2026*

No, Article 5b(2) does not require EU operators to close accounts or terminate existing contractual relationships. PSPs may maintain existing accounts and continue offering non-prohibited services. However, the prohibitions in Article 5b(2) apply to both new and existing customers. PSPs must therefore immediately discontinue the specific services prohibited under Article 5b(2) for any customer who falls within scope, including those who were already customers before the measure entered into force or who subsequently become in scope (for example, when a Russian national ceases to be legally resident in the EU; in this scenario, PSPs must act as soon as they become aware of the change in the customer's status). This applies both to new contracts and to the continued provision of prohibited services under existing contracts.

**6. What sanctions-compliance responsibilities do payment service providers (PSPs) have under Article 5b(2)?**

*Last update: 13 March 2026*

All PSPs are responsible for ensuring that they do not provide the prohibited services to persons falling within the scope of Article 5b(2).

With regard to the execution of payment transactions, according to recital 19 of Regulation (EU) 2025/2033, primary responsibility for sanctions compliance with regard to contracts related to prohibited services lies with the account-servicing payment service provider (ASPSP). Payment initiation service providers (PISPs) are not expected to carry out full screening of individual payment transactions at the moment of executing the initiation. The obligation under Article 5b(2) for both PISPs and acquirers of payment transactions is limited to ensuring that they do not provide the prohibited services. This is without prejudice to other compliance responsibilities PSPs may have under other EU sanction regulations.

**7. Does the prohibition in Article 5b(2)(b) cover the use or servicing of existing payment instruments such as debit cards, credit cards or payment cards via e-wallets?**

*Last update: 13 March 2026*

No, the measure does not prohibit the continued use of, or provision of non-prohibited services for, existing payment instruments (e.g. cards). EU operators are not required to cancel or freeze existing payment instruments.

Article 5b(2)(b) concerns the issuing of new payment instruments to Russian nationals or natural persons residing in Russia, or to legal persons, entities or bodies established in Russia. This includes the renewal or re-issuing of existing payment instruments (i.e. issued before entry into force).

If the execution of a payment transaction using such an instrument requires a service that is itself prohibited (e.g. acquiring of payment transactions), then the transaction should be blocked, not because the instrument is invalid, but because the underlying service enabling it is prohibited.

For instance, transactions processed via digital wallets or tokenised platforms typically involve acquiring services. In that context, the prohibition is on the acquirer.

**8. When a new payment instrument is issued under the exception referred to in 5b(3), must a customer's residence permit be valid for the entire validity period of the instrument, or is it sufficient for the residence permit to be valid on the day the new instrument is issued?**

*Last update: 13 March 2026*

The residence permit must be valid for the entire validity of the instrument.

**9. Does Article 5b(2)(b) prohibit access to online or mobile banking services?**

*Last update: 13 March 2026*

No, Article 5c(1a) of Regulation 833/2014 contains an exemption for the provision of personalised security credentials necessary to access an existing account. Access to online or mobile banking can therefore continue.

**10. Does Article 5b(2)(b) prohibit direct bank transfers and cash withdrawals?**

*Last update: 13 March 2026*

No, Article 5b(2)(b) targets specific payment services (issuing instruments, acquiring, initiating), not all payments services as defined in Article 1, point (zi) of Regulation (EU) 833/2014. Prohibited payment services are specifically those referred to in points 5 and 7 of Annex I to Directive (EU) 2015/2366 (PSD2), not other payment services listed under that Annex. This is without prejudice to other compliance responsibilities PSPs may have under other EU sanction regulations.

**11. Does Article 5b(2)(b) prohibit issuing additional cards in the name of Russian nationals or residents (e.g. family members or employees)?**

*Last update: 13 March 2026*

Yes, the prohibition on the issuing of payment instruments covers any natural person in whose name a payment card is issued, even if that natural person is an additional cardholder and not the primary account holder. Therefore, if the additional card is issued in the name of a Russian national or a natural person residing in Russia, its issuance (including renewal or replacement) is prohibited under Article 5b(2)(b), regardless of whether the underlying account holder is an EU-based individual or company.

The provision of non-prohibited services through an existing additional card is not prohibited.

Where relevant, derogations in Article 5c may apply, for example for basic needs.

**12. Does Article 5b(2)(b) prohibit issuing commercial cards personalised for Russian**

### **nationals or residents?**

*Last update: 13 March 2026*

Yes, Article 5b(2)(b) prohibits the issuing (including renewal or replacement) of a payment instrument to, or personalised for, any natural person who falls within scope, even if the underlying contract is with a legal person established in the EU.

The provision of non-prohibited services through an existing commercial card is not prohibited.

‘Commercial card’ means any card-based payment instrument issued to undertakings or public sector entities or self-employed natural persons which is limited in use for business expenses where the payments made with such cards are charged directly to the account of the undertaking or public sector entity or self-employed natural person.

Where relevant, derogations in Article 5c may apply, notably those for legitimate cross-border trade and the exclusive use of subsidiaries in Russia.

### **13. Is redirection of a user to their own bank’s interface to initiate a payment (so called ‘bank-link’) prohibited under Article 5b(2)(b)?**

*Last update: 13 March 2026*

The redirection of a user to their own bank’s interface to initiate a payment is not considered a payment initiation service under Article 4(15) of Directive 2015/2366 (PSD2), provided that:

- the user is redirected to their own bank’s secure interface without third party participation;
- the user initiates the payment directly within their bank;
- no third-party PSP (e.g. licensed PISP) initiates the payment on behalf of the user.

However, if a third-party PSP initiates the payment (e.g. via open banking APIs), this does qualify as a payment initiation service and is prohibited when provided to Russian nationals, residents or entities falling under Article 5b(2). As regards obligations of PISPs and ASPSPs in this context, please see answer to question 6.