

# Cross-border bank transfers

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EP and Council delegations were ECU 2500 short of reaching a compromise on the difficult question of cross-border transfers. The two sides could not reach agreement on the amount of the refund in cases of default (where the amount transferred does not reach the addressee). The EP delegation had proposed a compromise whereby the amount would be raised to ECU 15 000 (at second reading the EP had approved a sum of ECU 20 000). However, the Council delegation was unable to go above ECU 12 500. This is not a minor point, as the rapporteur, Karla PEIJS pointed out, if an SME asks a bank to make a cross-border transfer, in cases of default the whole risk should not be borne by the customer. Two other points were crucially important for the EP: the scope of the Directive and its implementation by the Member States. As regards the scope of the Directive, the EP delegation managed to persuade Council of the virtues of an ECU 50,000 maximum as against the ECU 30,000 laid down in the Common position. However, the final agreement will depend on the decision on the amount of the refund guarantee. As for the date of implementation, Parliament's delegation accepted the Council's common position, i.e. 30 months after the Directive's entry into force (instead of the 18 months which Parliament wanted) in return for a Council declaration that the Member States would do everything possible to ensure that the Directive was implemented by 1 January 1999 at the latest.