payware - Press backgrounder

Press-kit fact sheet. Usable as stand-alone collateral or as sales enablement. The text is public-facing, with the same distribution-safety properties as a press release: every claim is fact-checked, defensible, and ready for publication.

In brief: what is payware?

payware is the specialized transaction-resolution network for instant account-to-account payments. The process for merchants is maximally streamlined - a single registration is all that is required.

When a customer initiates a payment, their payment institution sends an automatic query to payware for the transaction details (merchant name, amount, currency, and the optimal merchant account). Once resolved, the transfer is executed directly account-to-account through the financial institution's own channels.

Key features of the infrastructure:

- **Full neutrality:** payware functions like a DNS network, but for payment operations.
- **No fund custody:** The platform never holds or operates on money flows.
- **No authentication:** payware does not identify or authenticate end customers.
- **No competition:** The network does not compete with the institutions that connect to it.
- **Technological independence:** payware is not an open-banking operator and does not function under PSD2.

One transaction - seven ways to start it

Every payment in the system is a single, secure transaction. The only thing that varies is how the customer chooses to start it. Because the same transaction ID works across all seven methods, merchants and brands can accept payments from contexts that were never a point of sale (POS).

- **QR code:** Scannable code that carries the transaction. Any printed or digital surface becomes a checkout: a poster, a shelf edge, an invoice, a TV frame.
- **NFC:** Tap to pay (contactless). The merchant's existing counter hardware accepts direct bank payments without a card terminal.
- **BLE (Bluetooth):** Proximity broadcast of the transaction. The data reaches the customer's phone automatically; the customer approves the payment on their own screen, enabling fast queue-free payment in venues and transit without dedicated card infrastructure.
- **Soundbite:** Audio-initiated payment with active opt-in. A radio spot, podcast, or TV ad becomes a direct point of sale - the listener chooses to act on it in the moment.
- **Barcode:** Scannable on existing POS scanners. The fiscal device already on the counter becomes a smart payment-receiving device through a simple software update, no hardware swap.
- **Link:** Clickable URL. Any text message, email, or social post becomes a checkout; remote and cross-border sales without a payment-page build.
- **Text:** 10-character string. Ideal for B2B (machine-to-machine) integrations and custom software; payment inside automated flows that have no traditional user interface (UI) at all.

Important note on Soundbite, stated precisely because it is the one most easily misunderstood: Soundbite requires explicit, active opt-in from the user. The device does not passively listen to the environment. The customer chooses to listen and pay. This is a deliberate security-architecture property, not a technological limitation.

The proof: no new hardware

The clearest demonstration that this is infrastructure, not a product rollout: any existing fiscal cash register already on a merchant's counter can become a smart payment-receiving device through software alone.

- No POS terminal swap.
- No new contracts with card acquirers.

- No capital expenditure (CapEx) for the merchant.

The device the merchant already owns acquires entirely new capabilities. This is why integration through established point-of-sale software (POS systems) matters more than signing any single merchant. The capability arrives where the business already is - in the software it already uses every day.

New business models beyond the limits of card rails

These are not roadmap items but realities that flow directly from payware's initiation methods:

Broadcast and audio as a direct sales channel: Historically, radio and TV advertisers paid for attention and hoped it would convert elsewhere. With Soundbite, the ad itself carries the payment the listener can complete in the moment. Media spend and the point of sale collapse into one action.

Print and outdoor as a point of sale: Billboards, magazine pages, product labels, and packaging surfaces can carry a QR-resolvable transaction. Physical media that could only ever advertise can now transact.

Zero-infrastructure merchant onboarding: A merchant with no card terminal, no e-commerce build, and no acquirer relationship can accept payment using a phone, a printed code, or the POS software it already licenses. The cost floor for accepting digital payment drops practically to zero.

Embedded and machine-initiated payment: Because the transaction reduces to a short resolvable string, payment can sit inside flows with no payment UI at all - an API exchange, an IoT device, an automated reorder. Payment becomes a function call.

Channel-agnostic conversion: The same transaction can be presented as a link in a message, a QR on a screen, a tap at the counter, or a sound in a broadcast, and resolve identically. A brand designs the offer once and accepts payment everywhere it reaches a customer.

Transaction economics: In each of these models the merchant economics are the same: a flat 0.50% transaction fee, no card network in the flow, settlement on instant rails, and the customer's bank retaining authentication and the customer relationship.

Market indicators in numbers

- More than 90,000 point-of-sale endpoints (POS) are connected to the payware network in Bulgaria.
- Bulgaria has been an official eurozone member since January 2026.
- Major expansion is underway across the European Economic Area (EEA), in line with the geographic coverage of the SEPA Instant scheme.

Growth strategy: how the network expands

Four roles define how payware reaches the merchant. Three of them integrate once; the end merchant, in most cases, does not integrate at all. This is the structural reason a young network can reach scale without a merchant-facing sales force.

Payment institutions (banks): Integrate to payware to resolve and settle transactions. A single integration gives a bank access to payments from every merchant on the network. There are no bilateral bank-to-merchant agreements - connectivity is provided centrally by payware.

Payment institution integration partners (PIIPs): Technical providers that connect to payware once and serve as a secure communication channel for one or more partner banks. A PIIP transmits sealed transaction messages on each institution's behalf but never holds funds, never identifies customers, and never settles. Each connected bank retains its direct contractual relationship with payware; the PIIP acts solely as a technical pipe, not as the principal. This is the institutional equivalent of the ISV channel described below.

Point-of-sale software vendors and e-commerce platforms (ISVs): Integrate payware to expose the capability natively to their existing customers. The entire customer base inherits payment functionality automatically through a routine software update. This has been the primary engine behind merchant adoption in Bulgaria.

Merchants: In most cases, run no integration project of their own. They receive payware as a pre-built feature inside the POS system, ERP, online store, or accounting software they already use. The cost floor for accepting digital payment drops to zero because the integration was never the merchant's project.

Positioning and the role of the bank

payware is not a disintermediation play - it does not attempt to remove or replace banks. On the contrary, the customer's payment institution remains the principal actor: it authenticates the user, holds the funds, and executes the transfer through its own systems. payware only resolves and routes the transaction.

In this way, the bank keeps the direct relationship with its customer, the security perimeter, and a transaction-linked revenue line. Stated plainly: the banking app becomes the digital checkout for every commerce channel the network supports.

Regulatory status and compliance

payware operates as an ICT third-party service provider under standard commercial contracts with banks, payment institutions, and software vendors.

The platform's architecture and governance are fully aligned with the European Digital Operational Resilience Act (DORA). payware is not an open-banking provider, does not operate under PSD2, and does not require PSD2 access; institutional relationships are governed by ordinary commercial agreements.

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