

## The Vatican no longer accepts credit cards

Jan. 4, 2013

[https://lesmoutonsenrages-fr.translate.google.com/2013/01/04/le-vatican-naccepte-plus-les-cartes-de-credit/?\\_x\\_tr\\_sl=auto&\\_x\\_tr\\_tl=en&\\_x\\_tr\\_hl=en-US&\\_x\\_tr\\_pto=wapp](https://lesmoutonsenrages-fr.translate.google.com/2013/01/04/le-vatican-naccepte-plus-les-cartes-de-credit/?_x_tr_sl=auto&_x_tr_tl=en&_x_tr_hl=en-US&_x_tr_pto=wapp)

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Since January 1 · the Bank of Italy has requested the deactivation of the Vatican's payment terminals.

Since January 1 · the information has appeared on [the home page of the official website of the Vatican Museums](#) : "We regret to inform our visitors that, for reasons beyond the management of the Museums, it is no longer possible to make payments to the Vatican Museums by electronic means".

The information was confirmed the same day by a note from the economic services of the Governorate of Vatican City State. In 2011, the five million visitors to these museums spent 91.3 million euros there, a figure up 10% compared to 2010.

This deactivation of electronic terminals, requested by the Bank of Italy, also affects all stores operating in the territory of the smallest state in the world. Very popular with the few thousand privileged people who have access to them (5,500 employees and retirees of the City and their families, members of the diplomatic corps accredited to the Holy See, and 813 Vatican citizens), the gas stations, pharmacy, supermarket, philatelic and numismatic shops, not to mention the prestigious shop that has been established for several years in the old station, all offer duty-free products.

In recent months, while the liter of super unleaded in Italy exceeded two euros, holders of the Vatican card thus benefited from a reduction of fifty centimes per litre. Likewise, the pharmacy offers drugs that are difficult to access in Italy. However, this measure of limitation of electronic payments should not affect the level of exchanges too much, the Italians being, for a long time, accustomed to cash payments.

### **“A problem in the process of being solved”**

The electronic payment systems installed within the Vatican are managed by Deutsche Bank Italia, a subject of Italian law. The latter, having failed to request the necessary authorization from the Bank of Italy, requested the deactivation of the entire system. The Bank of Italy considers the territory of the Vatican as extra-community, subject to particular standards of vigilance regarding the fight against recycling. Consequently, only bank cards issued by the IOR (Institute for the Works of Religion), the "Vatican bank", can be used within the precincts of the City. Cards issued by Italian banks are no longer accepted. The existence of a kind of "free zone" within the Vatican would thus be viewed with suspicion by the Bank of Italy.

Fr. Federico Lombardi, director of the Press Office of the Holy See, confirmed this information, explaining that it is “a problem in the process of being resolved”. “Contacts with various providers being in progress, he specified, this interruption should be of short duration. » Behind this technical question appears the file relating to the compliance of the finances of the Vatican, a sovereign State, with international regulations in terms of recycling and the fight against money laundering. Shortly before [Christmas](#) , responding to a question from a parliamentarian, the Undersecretary of the Treasury of the Monti government, Vieri Ceriani, had confirmed the "extra-community nature of the IOR", "which is not authorized to exercise its activities on Italian territory".

In fact, the Italian State thus distanced itself from the financial functioning of the Vatican. But the latter, for several months, has taken care to change its financial legislation to comply with the standards in force within the Council of Europe. [The latter specified, in July 2012](#) , following the inspection mission of the Moneyval committee that “the Holy See had come a long way in a short time”. A high-level international expert, René Bruehlhart, [has been recruited by the Vatican for this purpose](#) .

**Source:** [The Cross](#)