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**The Payments Group Holding –
Activation of The Payments Group's e-money license by the MFSA and
groundbreaking cooperation with a leading mobile payment system**

- The Payments Group (TPG) launches strategic cooperation with Bluecode
- Milestone for The Payments Group
- Significant contribution to a sovereign European payment infrastructure

Frankfurt/Main, 24 July 2025 – The Malta Financial Services Authority (MFSA) has activated the license of the e-money institution Calida Financial Ltd. (Calida). The Payments Group Holding (PGH), a holding company based in Frankfurt am Main that was founded in 2012 and renamed in August 2024, agreed in August 2024 to acquire four cooperating FinTech and PayTech companies, together The Payments Group (TPG), including Calida. This transaction is still subject to various conditions precedent.

Calida, an internet payment service provider based in Malta, received an e-money license from the Malta Financial Services Authority (MFSA) in August 2024. After successfully fulfilling all mobilization requirements, the license has now been activated. It entitles Calida to offer innovative e-money products and services throughout Europe, including the opening of payment transaction accounts for private customers.

Calida has prepared for this milestone with foresight and intensity. Working closely with other companies in the TPG Group – Funanga AG, TWBS Ltd. and Surfer Rosa Ltd. – and based on concrete market demand, the company will now introduce a range of tailor-made turnkey solutions for end customers and online retailers.

This primarily involves cooperation with Bluecode, a leading European mobile payment service with around 160 million acceptance points. Bluecode works with international networks such as Alipay+ and Discover Global Network and is a member of the European Mobile Payment Systems Association (EMPSA), which also includes providers such as Swish, Twint, and Vipps. This allows end customers to pay almost anywhere in the world with the Bluecode app.

TPG is now the first e-money issuer to become an integral part of the Bluecode payment system. The prepaid solution enables people whose banks are not directly connected to Bluecode to also make payments via the Bluecode app. This means that the popular prepaid-based mobile payment solution is now available to all residents across the European Economic Area (EEA) for the first time. It is a wholly European made payment service designed specifically for the EEA as an alternative to the dominant US payment and credit card systems. It thus also fulfills a key aspect of the European

Union's digital and economic sovereignty. In both European politics and the European economy the demand for proprietary European payment methods is growing louder.

"This is a milestone for The Payments Group," says Christoph Gerlinger, CEO of The Payments Group Holding.

"With our e-money-based prepaid service within the Bluecode system, we are sending a clear signal for a sovereign European payment infrastructure. We are creating a powerful alternative to established credit card solutions and banking products – independent, compliant with data protection regulations, and consumer-friendly. We are offering millions of people a fast, secure and transparent way to pay – with full cost control," explains Jens Bader, CEO of The Payments Group.

TPG has seamlessly integrated its new prepaid payment service into the Bluecode app. Its activation takes just a few minutes, and can be conveniently funded via SEPA transfer, credit or debit card, and other country-specific payment methods. Users benefit from a secure solution with high data protection standards and full spending control – a true European mobile payment alternative for everyone.

"Thanks to the infrastructure provided by Calida, users enjoy easy access without complex credit checks or hidden fees," explains Jens Bader, CEO of The Payments Group. "They also benefit from Bluecode's interoperability with global payment systems such as Alipay+, which offers a broad, international acceptance network – especially in Southeast Asia, where mobile payment solutions have long defined the standard and traditional payment methods such as cash now play only a minor role."

The offering is complemented by digital value-added services, customer loyalty programs, and personalized offers directly in the Bluecode app.

About The Payments Group Holding

The Payments Group Holding (PGH) is a holding company and venture capital provider based in Frankfurt am Main founded in 2012 and renamed in August 2024.

In August 2024, PGH signed a share purchase agreement for the acquisition of four PayTech companies, which is expected to close in summer 2025 subject to certain conditions precedent. After closing of the transaction, PGH will form a group of four operating PayTech companies:

Funanga AG, Campamocha Ltd with its 100%-owned subsidiaries TBWS Ltd and Calida Financial Ltd as well as Surfer Rosa Ltd form a fast-growing, vertically integrated e-Money PayTech group of companies - The Payments Group (TPG). TPG provides proprietary closed and open (branded and white-labelled) prepaid payment services to hundreds of online merchants worldwide. The synergy between these companies positions TPG as the future market leader in embedded financial products and prepaid solutions. Calida Financial Ltd. is the regulated company within TPG, having received an e-money license from the Malta Financial Services Authority (MFSA) in August 2024. This license entitles Calida Financial Ltd. to offer innovative e-money services and products across Europe.

TPG employs over 50 people and operates globally. TPG's customers make use of more than 550,000 POS cash payment points and the global online prepaid card network to process cash and cashless online payments.

Furthermore, PGH operates an AI-focused company builder called 'Softmax AI' together with AI experts via its future 25% stake in German AI Projects GmbH. In addition, The Payments Group Holding holds from its history as a leading German venture capital provider under the German Startups Group brand a heritage VC-portfolio of minority stakes in partly promising German startups via its wholly owned subsidiary German Startups Group VC GmbH.

More information: www.tpgholding.com.

About The Payments Group

The Payments Group (TPG) is a dynamically growing, vertically integrated e-money fintech company. TPG provides closed and open loop branded and white-labelled prepaid (e-money) payment services to hundreds of online merchants worldwide. The company provides a scalable fintech platform. This platform enables online merchants to access previously untapped cash and prepaid markets and embedded financial products, expanding their Total Addressable Market and increasing their revenues. TPG operates internationally and works with a number of global leading online merchants across various industries. TPG customers can use more than 550,000 point of sale cash payment stations and a global online prepaid card network to process cash and cashless online payments. TPG employs more than 50 people worldwide.

More information: www.payments-group.com

About Bluecode

Bluecode is a European payment system that enables cashless payments via mobile phone. The system uses a one-time payment token, represented as either a barcode or QR code, which can be scanned or transmitted via NFC (Near Field Communication). Bluecode is either directly linked to the user's bank account or used as a prepaid solution. Accepted by a wide network of merchants, Bluecode is accessible through apps from banks, merchants, and other providers, as well as through the Bluecode app. Furthermore, Bluecode can be linked to customer loyalty programs. Bluecode collaborates with international networks such as Alipay+, Discover® Global Network, and EMPSA (European Mobile Payment Systems Association) to support global payment interoperability. Consequently, Bluecode is accepted worldwide.

More information: www.bluecode.com

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