



As soon as possible (obtaining a residence permit), it is important to open a bank account. Many approaches depend on it.

The status conditions to open an account and management fees associated with them vary from one bank to another. So I make inquiries before selecting the bank which I will trust. I also find out information on offered services, particularly on the number of available agencies and on the self banks that allow me to access online services.



Account statements

Every time I make a transaction (e.g. pay a bill), I can print it to keep its track. I can also regularly print my account statements in a self bank: this is a list of all movements of my account. In some banks, I can have them sent to my home.

It is very important to keep my account statements in a ring binder.

Some administrative procedures may require producing them.



The bank card

This card comes with a secret code that I have to memorize and dial to secure each transaction. It must also be signed. The card allows me to withdraw money from the bank, to make all transactions on the line proposed by a self bank and pay for goods or services at shops equipped with apparatus "bancontact" (these shops display the logo Bancontact / Mister Cash).

In case my card is lost or stolen I immediately notify the "CARD STOP" 070/344.344 This service works 24h/24h and takes care to block the card if necessary. Then I report the loss or theft at a police station and ask my bank for a new card.





To pay for my purchases with my card:

- I introduce the card chip down into the payment device.
- I compose my secret code and press OK.
- I get the card back and the merchant gives me a ticket printed by the device.

The secret code

I must remember it and especially avoid keeping it in writing in my wallet.

Many people use their date of birth as a secret code. Caution, if I lose my wallet, a malicious person can easily identify my birth date on my identity card. It is best to choose, for example, the PIN for my GSM.

Caution, if I make a mistake in my secret code 3 times, the card is blocked! I must then ask the bank to release it.



The bills



A bill is a detailed note in which appears my name, the amount to pay, the account number into which I have to deposit money and the payment deadline. It may be used to pay for goods or services: rent, electricity, water, insurance, contributions, hospital bills, school fees...



To pay a bill, I can be asked to fill out a money order or a bank transfer. This one can be in paper form (I fill it out and bring it to the bank) or computerized form (I encode it myself in a self bank).

The paper transfer must always be signed and dated. I fill the boxes: amount to be paid, signature, date, beneficiary account (to which I deposit the money), name and address of the beneficiary, principal account (mine), name and address of the customer (me) , communication (I indicate what I pay).



The transfer consists of two superimposed layers. I gently separate the two layers: I bring the first to my bank that will take responsibility to make the payment and I keep the copy as a record of my payment.

WRITING MUST BE LEGIBLE AND WHITHOUT CROSSING-OUTS.



I can also make a computer transfer myself in a SELF BANK. I put my bank card in the device and I select the service "transfers" in the main menu. I fill out the online transfer.



To make an international transfer, I have to use the IBAN code. This is the INTERNATIONAL reference of account numbers. It begins with the IBAN then the country letters (e.g. BE for Belgium or FR for France), then a number connected to a bank, then the number of my bank account. I find this IBAN number on my bank card and / or my account statements.

Beware of credits !



Many proposals to purchase on credit or borrow some cash are on the market. They can serve on a one-off basis to spread a payment. However, the risk of over indebtedness must be taken seriously. It is a real social scourge.

The borrowed money is not free: most loans involve an important interest rate that you will have to assume.

As the emphasized saying goes, "borrowing money costs money, too"!