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Emirates Moves Toward Crypto Payments in Landmark Agreement with Crypto.com

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Emirates Airline has signed a preliminary agreement with cryptocurrency platform Crypto.com to explore integrating digital currency payments into its booking system, potentially making it one of the first major global airlines to accept crypto. The move marks a significant step toward modernizing payments in the aviation industry and aligning with Dubai’s broader vision of becoming a global hub for digital finance.

The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), signed in Dubai, aims to enable customers to use popular cryptocurrencies like Bitcoin, Ethereum, and Crypto.com's native CRO token for ticket purchases and other services. Emirates plans to implement the system by late 2025 or early 2026. The integration will be done via Crypto.com Pay, a secure crypto payment solution that instantly converts crypto into local currency.

Adnan Kazim, Emirates' Deputy President and Chief Commercial Officer, and Mohammed Al Hakim, President of Crypto.com's UAE operations, signed the agreement in the presence of Sheikh Ahmed bin Saeed Al Maktoum, Chairman and Chief Executive of Emirates Airline and Group.

"Our goal is to stay ahead of the curve and offer our customers innovative ways to interact with us," said Kazim. "The integration of digital currencies is part of our broader digital transformation agenda."

The airline emphasized that it will not hold or invest in cryptocurrencies directly. All transactions will be settled in UAE Dirhams (AED) through instant conversion, ensuring protection against volatility and full regulatory compliance. The rollout is expected to begin with pilot markets before expanding globally.

This initiative is in line with Dubai's commitment to expanding the use of digital assets. The city has already made significant strides through its Virtual Assets Regulatory Authority (VARA) and has become home to hundreds of blockchain and crypto firms operating in zones like the Dubai Multi Commodities Centre (DMCC).

Crypto.com echoed the significance of the deal. "Partnering with a global brand like Emirates marks a milestone in the mainstream adoption of crypto," said Al Hakim.

The Emirates-Crypto.com partnership is expected to open additional marketing and loyalty opportunities and could influence other global carriers to consider similar digital currency options.