



**PRESS CONFERENCE ON THE OCCASION OF
THE UNVEILING OF THE EURO BANKNOTES AND
THEIR SECURITY FEATURES**

the **EURO. OUR** *money*

*Introductory remarks
on the euro banknotes and their security features*

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Thank you, President, and good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen,

It is a unique honour to address you, and, through you, the 300 million citizens of the euro area and many others in the rest of the world who will be seeing the euro banknotes today for the very first time in their complete design.

Allow me to start by recalling that the whole process of designing and preparing the cash changeover has been carried out over the last six years. Furthermore, I should also under-line at the outset of my introduction that a key role in this last stage of the preparation and indeed during the cash changeover itself is going to be played by the European public at large. The introduction of the euro banknotes and coins requires both a receptive and positive attitude on the part of the general public and its full co-operation: all European citizens, without exception, will be able to co-operate in this final exciting challenge. The success of the final euro cash changeover will be everyone's success.

The process of selecting a suitable design for the euro banknotes already began in 1995 when the European Monetary Institute selected two themes for the euro banknotes series: "Ages and styles of Europe" and the "abstract/modern" theme, as it was called. A design competition was launched in February 1996 and the winning designs were made public in December 1996. The winning concept illustrates the styles of seven periods of Europe's cultural history through elements of its architecture, and symbolises the spirit of openness and co-operation in Europe.

You may be wondering why we waited until today to provide final details on the appearance of each euro banknote. The main reason for choosing this point in time is that, following the design phase, a range of innovative security features were incorporated into the design of the euro banknotes. For obvious security reasons we did not want to reveal them too early. Furthermore, we believe that the information campaign will be more effective and the resources allocated more productive if the communication to the public is concentrated in the last few months of this year.



Our euro banknotes are produced in accordance with state-of-the-art security standards and combine many of the highly effective security features already used in the national banknotes of the euro area Member States with a number of additional features specifically used for the euro.

The security features provide **all persons handling cash**, including the general public, with the means to carry out a rapid, easy, and effective **examination** of the euro banknotes. Special attention has also been given to the needs of the **blind and partially sighted** in order to help them handle euro banknotes with confidence. In this respect, it can be said that the most convenient features for these groups are also the most appropriate for the rest of the public. The seven euro banknotes differ in size and predominant colour, and the value of the banknote is printed in large, bold numbers. The aim of these differences is to make it easy to distinguish between the different banknote denominations.

In a moment you will hear how we can **all** familiarise ourselves with the security features of the euro banknotes. There are three simple steps, which include **feeling the banknote, looking at it directly** and **tilting** it to check the security features. The importance of the security features should not be underestimated. An acute awareness of these features will make it easier for each of us to recognise genuine euro banknotes.

Today and over the coming months we invite you to **look** at these security features. On 1 January 2002, when you receive your first euro banknotes, you will also be able to **feel** and **tilt** them in order to check their authenticity. **FEEL, LOOK, and TILT**: these three simple tests will allow us to authenticate the euro banknotes.

In order to illustrate these three tests we will now see a video on how to examine them by feeling, looking, and tilting. Let's have a look.