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**ECB-PUBLIC**

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**ECB surveys the public on themes for future euro banknotes**

Dear Chair, dear Irene,

The ECB is working on a new series of high-tech banknotes with a view to increase their resilience to counterfeiting and to reduce the environmental impact of their production. The project reflects the Eurosystem's commitment to cash and to ensuring that European consumers will always have the option of paying with public money. It also reflects the objectives set out in the Eurosystem's Cash 2030 strategy, adopted in September 2020. This aims to ensure the availability of euro cash, support access to cash services for everyone, make sure that cash is accepted everywhere, develop innovative and secure euro banknotes, and keep banknotes safe and sustainable.<sup>1</sup>

As euro banknotes are one of the most tangible symbols of European integration – fostering a sense of shared identity and belonging to a common project – the ECB wants to make the design of the next series of euro banknotes more relatable. For this reason, as communicated when the project was announced<sup>2</sup>, we are seeking to engage with our fellow Europeans throughout the process, to make sure their views and opinions are reflected in the new design.

The process to develop new themes and a design for future euro banknotes started in 2021, with the creation

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.ecb.europa.eu/euro/cash\\_strategy/html/index.en.html](https://www.ecb.europa.eu/euro/cash_strategy/html/index.en.html)

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.ecb.europa.eu/press/pr/date/2021/html/ecb.pr211206-a9e0ba2198.en.html>

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of focus groups of citizens from across the euro area. These groups were tasked with gathering opinions on the current banknotes and ideas on possible future themes. Following this, a multidisciplinary advisory group – with members from all euro area countries – submitted a proposal for themes to the Governing Council, based on the input from the focus groups. The Governing Council subsequently agreed on a shortlist of seven themes. The annex to this letter contains the seven themes, as well as short storylines for each of them.

We are now taking the next step in the process and inviting the public to express its preferences on the seven themes by taking part in a survey on our website. Starting on 10 July, at 11:00 CET, and finishing on 31 August 2023, all European citizens can answer a set of questions on the seven shortlisted themes.<sup>3</sup> At the same time, to ensure that opinions from across the euro area are represented equally, an independent research company contracted by the ECB will be putting the same questions as those in the ECB's survey to a representative sample of people. The outcome of our surveys will be used by the ECB to choose the theme for the next series of banknotes by the end of 2023. We will then run a design competition, and the public will again have the chance to express its preferences on the shortlisted design options. The Governing Council is expected to announce its decision on the design of the next series of euro banknotes in 2026, before deciding on when to produce and issue the new banknotes.

We encourage everyone interested in shaping the design of the next series of euro banknotes to participate and express their preferences by taking part in the survey.

Yours sincerely,

[Signed]

Fabio Panetta

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<sup>3</sup> The survey on themes for the next series of euro banknotes is available on our website via the following link: <https://epsilon.escb.eu/limesurvey3/486783>

## **Annex 1 – Shortlisted themes for the next series of banknotes**

- **Birds: free, resilient, inspiring**

Birds know nothing of national borders and symbolise freedom of movement. Their nests remind us of our own desire to build places and societies that nurture and protect the future.

They remind us that we share our continent with all the lifeforms that sustain our common existence.

- **European culture**

Europe's rich cultural heritage and dynamic cultural and creative sectors strengthen the European identity, forging a shared sense of belonging. Culture promotes common values, inclusion and dialogue in Europe and across the globe. It brings people together.

- **European values mirrored in nature**

Europe is a living place, but also an idea. The European Union is an organisation, but also a set of values. The theme highlights the role of European values (human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and human rights) as the building blocks of Europe and links these values to our respect for nature and the preservation of the environment.

- **The future is yours**

The ideas and innovations that will shape the future of Europe lie deep within every European. The images created for this theme represent the bearers of the collective imagination through which people will create this shared future. This theme signifies the boundless potential of Europeans.

- **Hands: together we build Europe**

Hands are familiar to all of us but no two pairs are the same. Hands built Europe, its physical infrastructure, its artistic heritage and its achievements. Hands build, weave, heal, teach, connect and guide us. Hands tell stories of labour, age and relationships, of heritage, history, and culture. This theme celebrates the hands that have built Europe and continue to do so every day.

- **Our Europe, ourselves**

We grow up as individuals but also as part of a community, through our relationships with one another. We have our own stories and identities, but we also share a common identity as Europeans. This theme evokes the freedom, values and openness of people in Europe.

- **Rivers: the waters of life in Europe**

Europe's rivers cross borders. They connect us to each other and to nature. They represent the ebb and flow of a dynamic, ever-changing continent. They nurture us and remind us of the deep sources of our common life, and we must nurture them in turn.