the EURO.
OUR money
The name of the European currency was adopted by the European Council at its meeting in Madrid on 15 and 16 December 1995.

EURO AREA
The euro area encompasses the Member States of the European Union which have adopted the euro and in which a single monetary policy is conducted under the responsibility of the decision-making bodies of the European Central Bank. Since 1 January 2001 the euro area has comprised Belgium, Germany, Greece, Spain, France, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Austria, Portugal and Finland.

EURO GLOSSARY
On 1 January 2002 the euro banknotes and coins were successfully introduced and became legal tender in the 12 countries of the euro area. This was the final step in a process which was started formally in 1991 and led to the signing of the Maastricht Treaty in 1992. The completion of the cash changeover was a unique event, directly affecting the lives of over 300 million people in the euro area. This brochure on “the EURO. OUR money” should be a helpful guide to our new currency. It gives information about the design and security features of the seven banknotes and eight coins. The banknotes are the same in all 12 countries, but the coins each have a common side and a national side. All euro banknotes and coins can be used anywhere in the euro area and Europe is already reaping the benefits.

A NEW CURRENCY FOR EUROPE
EURO SYMBOL – €
The graphic symbol for the euro was inspired by the Greek letter epsilon and refers to the first letter of the word “Europe”. The parallel lines represent the stability of the euro. The official abbreviation for the euro, which has been registered with the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) and is used for business, financial and commercial purposes, is “EUR”.

EUROPEAN CENTRAL BANK
The European Central Bank (ECB) was established on 1 June 1998 and is located in Frankfurt am Main, Germany. The ECB ensures that the tasks conferred upon the Eurosystem and the European System of Central Banks (ESCB) are carried out either by the ECB itself or by the national central banks, as laid down in the Statute of the ESCB.

In February 1996 the European Monetary Institute, the forerunner of the European Central Bank, launched a competition in which banknote designers nominated by the national central banks of the European Union were asked to sketch a series of seven banknotes (€5, €10, €20, €50, €100, €200 and €500) using one or both of the following themes: “Ages and styles of Europe” and an abstract or modern design.

In December 1996 the Council of the European Monetary Institute selected the winning designs on the basis of a public survey and a recommendation made by an expert panel. The winning designs were produced by Mr. Robert Kalina of the Oesterreichische Nationalbank and were inspired by the theme “Ages and styles of Europe”.

Of course, banknotes have to be more than just attractive pieces of paper. Security features had to be incorporated into the designs to ensure that the banknotes could be easily recognised as genuine by the general public, bank cashiers and banknote-accepting machines. Pilot series were printed and analysed before production could start on a large scale.

In spring 1999 the Governing Council of the European Central Bank approved the final technical specifications. The initial supply of some 15 billion euro banknotes was produced in 15 printing works across the European Union. The national central bank of each Member State was responsible for deciding where to print its initial supply of euro banknotes.

Well-defined inspection and quality control procedures ensure that all banknotes are identical and comply with the technical specifications. This means that any euro banknote can be used in all banknote-accepting and dispensing machines throughout the euro area.
The executive board comprises the president, the vice-president and four other members appointed by common accord of the heads of state or government of the member states of the European Union which have adopted the euro.

The governing council comprises all the members of the executive board and the governors of all the national central banks of the member states of the European Union which have adopted the euro.

The general council comprises the president, the vice-president and the governors of the national central banks of all 15 member states of the European Union.

The euro banknotes depict the architectural styles of seven periods in Europe’s cultural history – classical, Romanesque, Gothic, renaissance, baroque and rococo, the age of iron and glass architecture, and modern 20th century architecture – and show three main architectural elements: windows, gateways and bridges.

The windows and gateways on the front of each banknote symbolise the spirit of openness and cooperation in Europe. The 12 stars of the European Union are also featured to represent the dynamism and harmony of contemporary Europe.

These design elements are complemented on the reverse of each banknote, which features a bridge typical of the respective age of European cultural development. These bridges range from early constructions to the sophisticated suspension bridges of the modern era and are used as a metaphor for communication among the people of Europe and between Europe and the rest of the world.

The other main design features of the banknotes are:

- the name of the currency – euro – in both the Latin (EURO) and the Greek (EYP€) alphabet;
- the initials of the European Central Bank in the five linguistic variants – BCE, ECB, EZB, EKT and EKP – covering the 11 official Community languages and
- the signature of the President of the European Central Bank.

Volumes of euro banknotes and coins produced for the cash changeover:

- around 15 billion euro banknotes with a value of €533 billion, enough to cover 15,000 football pitches and
- around 52 billion euro coins with a value of more than €15 billion, equivalent to 9,000 lorries loads.
ECONOMIC AND MONETARY UNION

The Treaty establishing the European Community sets out the process of achieving Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) in the European Union in three stages. Stage One of EMU started on 1 July 1990 and ended on 31 December 1993. It mainly involved the dismantling of all internal barriers to the free movement of capital within the European Union. Stage Two of EMU began on 1 January 1994 and provided for, among other things, the establishment of the European Monetary Institute (the forerunner of the European Central Bank), the prohibition of public sector financing by the national central banks and the avoidance of excessive deficits in public finances. Stage Three started on 1 January 1999 with the transfer of monetary competence to the Eurosystem and the introduction of the euro.

EURO GLOSSARY

The national central banks of the euro area use high-speed sorting machines to check that euro banknotes returned to them via credit institutions are genuine and in a satisfactory condition. Fit banknotes are reissued and unfit* banknotes are destroyed. The average life cycle of a euro banknote is assumed to be one year for the widely used low-denomination banknotes and several years for high-denomination banknotes. Changes in demand for certain denominations and the replacement of unfit banknotes mean that the economy needs a continuous supply of new banknotes.

Production has now been pooled between the national central banks of the euro area in order to produce these relatively small volumes (compared with the initial supply) efficiently and to better monitor the quality. Each printing works has been commissioned by the national central banks to produce only one or two of the seven banknote denominations, thus helping the European Central Bank to ensure effective quality control. The banknotes are subsequently exchanged between the issuing central banks.

The European Central Bank monitors the stocks and flows of euro banknotes and coins on the basis of data collected by the national central banks. Potential shortages of banknotes in one country can be compensated easily with surplus stocks from a national central bank in another country. Any major shifts in demand for banknotes can be accommodated by a common strategic reserve.

* The national central banks of the euro area will exchange mutilated or damaged euro banknotes on presentation of:

- more than 50% of the banknote;
- 50% or less of the banknote provided that the applicant proves the missing parts have been destroyed.

Intentionally mutilated or damaged banknotes will not be redeemed.
Various security features have been incorporated into the euro banknotes to help people recognise a genuine banknote at a glance. The euro banknotes are printed on pure cotton paper, which gives them a unique feel. Several parts on the front are printed in relief so that the banknotes can also be identified by touch.

Other security features can be seen by holding the banknotes up to the light or by tilting them. Two of the security features on the €50, €100, €200 and €500 banknotes are different to those on the lower-value banknotes, adding further to their security.

HELP FOR THE BLIND AND PARTIALLY SIGHTED

Some 2% of the current population of the euro area have a significant visual disability. The European Blind Union was consulted extensively during the design phase of the euro banknotes to ensure that the needs of blind and partially sighted people were adequately catered for. Besides, design features useful for people with partial sight are often helpful to fully sighted people as well.

The different sizes of the seven euro banknotes help blind people to distinguish between them. Several design elements on the front of the banknotes are printed in relief, using deep engraving and a special printing method known as intaglio. In addition, tactile marks are printed along the edges of the €200 and €500 banknotes. For the partially sighted, different dominant colours for each denomination and large numerals in bold print allow the banknotes to be recognised more easily.

EUROSYSTEM

The Eurosystem comprises the European Central Bank (ECB) and the national central banks of the Member States of the European Union which have adopted the euro. The Eurosystem is governed by the Governing Council and the Executive Board of the ECB and has been conducting the single monetary policy for the euro area since 1 January 1999. Its primary objective is to maintain price stability.

EUROPEAN SYSTEM OF CENTRAL BANKS

The European System of Central Banks (ESCB) is composed of the European Central Bank (ECB) and the national central banks of all 15 Member States of the European Union. In other words, it includes, in addition to the members of the Eurosystem, the national central banks of the Member States which have not adopted the euro. The ESCB is governed by the Executive Board, the Governing Council and the General Council of the ECB.

EURO GLOSSARY
The eight euro coins – 1, 2, 5, 10, 20 and 50 cent, €1 and €2 – can be easily distinguished as they vary in design, size and colour. One euro is made up of 100 cent.

The high-value coins – €1 and €2 – are bi-coloured (silver and yellow). The middle-value coins – 10, 20 and 50 cent – are yellow, and the low-value coins – 1, 2 and 5 cent – are copper-coloured. The common sides of the euro coins show three different outlines of the European Union set amid its 12 stars.

While all eight coins have identical common sides, the other sides are country-specific and have different designs for each of the 12 countries of the euro area. Euro coins can be used anywhere in the euro area, regardless of their national sides.

Particular care has been taken with the security features of the high-value euro coins (€1 and €2), including the use of special magnetic properties. The production process involves using the very latest technology to make the coins difficult to counterfeit. This is also achieved by the lettering around the edge of the €2 coin, which varies between countries. Several innovative features have been included in all coins to help users, particularly blind and partially sighted people, to recognise the different denominations. For instance, each consecutive coin in the series has a different edge.

The design of the eight euro coins was chosen in 1997 from a selection submitted from all the countries of the European Union. The designs for the common sides of the coins were produced by Mr. Luc Luycx of the Royal Belgian Mint and reflect the unity of the European Union. Production of the initial supply of 52 billion coins started in May 1998.

Sixteen mints throughout the European Union produce the coins. A detailed quality management system, in which the European Central Bank acts as an independent assessor, ensures that euro coins are interchangeable throughout the euro area and conform to the standards necessary for their use in vending machines.
The national sides of the Euro coins

BELGIUM
The national side of all Belgian euro coins shows King Albert II and his monogram – a capital “A” underneath a crown – set among the 12 stars of the European Union.

GERMANY
The €1 and €2 coins feature the federal eagle, the traditional symbol of German sovereignty. The Brandenburg Gate, symbolising the division and unification of Germany, appears on the 10, 20 and 50 cent coins. The 1, 2 and 5 cent coins feature an oak twig reminiscent of the design on the old German pfennig coins.

FRANCE
The €1 and €2 coins show a portrait of the radical pacifist Bertha von Suttner, as a symbol of Austria’s efforts over many decades to support the cause of peace. Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, the famous Austrian composer, is depicted on the €1 coin. The Secession Building in Vienna on the 50 cent coin illustrates the birth of art nouveau in Austria. The Belvedere Palace, which adorns the 20 cent coin, is one of the most beautiful baroque palaces in Austria. The 10 cent coin shows St. Stephen’s Cathedral, one of the jewels of Viennese Gothic art. The 1, 2 and 5 cent coins show a gentian flower, an edelweiss and an Alpine primrose respectively.

IRELAND
All the Irish coins have the same national side showing a harp, a traditional symbol of Ireland. The word “Ireland” is shown in Irish (Eire).

ITALY
The €2 coin shows a scene from a Spartan mosaic depicting the abduction of Europa – from whom our continent takes its name – by Zeus, who has taken the form of a bull. The €1 coin shows an owl, a design taken from an ancient Athenian 4 drachma coin (6th century BC). Eleftherios Venizelos (1864–1936), one of Greece’s most famous political figures, is shown on the 50 cent coin. The 20 cent coin commemorates Ioannis Capodistrias (1776–1831), a leading politician who laid the groundwork for the evolution of modern Greece. Rigas Feress-Velestinlis (1757–1798), a leading figure of the Greek Enlightenment, is featured on the 10 cent coin. Rigas Feress also features on the 5 cent coin. The 20 cent coin carries the image of the famous statue of Constantine XI Floridabundance, the last Byzantine emperor of Constantinople, at the moment of his death in 1453. The 1 cent coin features the statue of the 2nd century BC deity Themis, the embodiment of justice. The 5 cent coin shows the prow of an ancient trireme. The 10 cent coin depicts the 2nd century BC general Scipio Africanus. By contrast, the 20 cent coin features a garlic bulb, the national emblem of Greece.

LUXEMBOURG
The €2 coin shows a scene from a Spartan mosaic depicting the abduction of Europa – from whom our continent takes its name – by Zeus, who has taken the form of a bull. The €1 coin shows a portrait of the radical pacifist Bertha von Suttner, as a symbol of Austria’s efforts over many decades to support the cause of peace. Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, the famous Austrian composer, is depicted on the €1 coin. The Secession Building in Vienna on the 50 cent coin illustrates the birth of art nouveau in Austria. The Belvedere Palace, which adorns the 20 cent coin, is one of the most beautiful baroque palaces in Austria. The 10 cent coin shows St. Stephen’s Cathedral, one of the jewels of Viennese Gothic art. The 1, 2 and 5 cent coins show a gentian flower, an edelweiss and an Alpine primrose respectively.

MONACO
The €2 coin depicts HSH Prince Rainier III. A double portrait of HSH Prince Rainier III and HSH Hereditary Prince Albert appears on the €1 coin. The 10, 20 and 50 cent coins depict the Prince’s seal. The coat of arms of the Sovereign Princes of Monaco is shown on the 1, 2 and 5 cent coins.

SAN MARINO
The Government building (Palazzo Pubblico) is shown on the €2 coin. The Republic’s official coat of arms appears on the €1 coin. The 50 cent coin depicts the Republic’s three towers: Guasta, Cesta and Montale.

VATICAN CITY
The €2 coin shows the effigy of H Is Holiness Pope John Paul II, Sovereign of the State of Vatican City. The sovereign states of Monaco, San Marino and Vatican City have a formal arrangement with the European Community to mint their own coins. These coins are also legal tender throughout the euro area.

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The European Parliament consists of 626 directly elected representatives of the citizens of the Member States of the European Union. It plays a role in the European legislative process, although it has different prerogatives depending on the decision-making procedure used.

In matters concerning Economic and Monetary Union, the European Parliament has mainly consultative powers. In addition, the Treaty establishing the European Community lays down certain procedures to ensure the European Central Bank’s accountability to the European Parliament (presentation of its Annual Report, general debate on monetary policy, its President’s testimonies before the competent parliamentary committees).

The euro cash changeover started on 1 January 2002, and on 1 March 2002 the euro banknotes and coins became the sole legal tender throughout the euro area, although national banknotes and coins can still be exchanged at commercial and national central banks. Detailed information on the changeover can be found on the official euro website at www.euro.ecb.int.

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<td>unlimited</td>
<td>until 31 December 2004</td>
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<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
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<td>Greece</td>
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<td>Spain</td>
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<td>France</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ireland</td>
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<td>Italy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Luxembourg</td>
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<td>The Netherlands</td>
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<td>Austria</td>
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<td>Portugal</td>
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<td>Poland</td>
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DEN EUROPÆISKE CENTRALBANK
EUROPÄISCHE ZENTRALBANK
ΕΥΡΩΠΑΪΚΗ ΚΕΝΤΡΙΚΗ ΤΡΑΠΕΖΑ
EUROPEAN CENTRAL BANK
BANCO CENTRAL EUROPEO
BANQUE CENTRALE EUROPEENNE
AN BANC CÉANNAIS EORPACH
BANCA CENTRALE EUROPEA
EUROPESE CENTRALE BANK
BANCO CENTRAL EUROPEU
EUROOPAN KESKUSPANKKI
EUROPEÅISKA CENTRALBANKEN