

4 THE SLOVENIAN CASH CHANGEOVER

On 1 January 2007 euro banknotes and coins were put into circulation in Slovenia. After a dual circulation period of two weeks, they had fully replaced the Slovenian tolar banknotes and coins.

In preparation for this event, the Governing Council on 14 July 2006 adopted a guideline on certain preparations for the euro cash changeover and on frontloading and sub-frontloading of euro banknotes and coins outside the euro area.¹⁶ This guideline, which largely mirrors the legal framework adopted for the cash changeover in 2002, formed the basis for Banka Slovenije's national cash changeover framework.

Banka Slovenije established the legal framework for parties involved in the frontloading and sub-frontloading of euro banknotes and coins in Slovenia. Procedures and methods were also put in place for the exchange of tolar banknotes and coins for euro banknotes and coins, and the conditions for transport, storage, security, the provision of collateral and statistical monitoring were set out.

To prepare for the cash changeover, as well as to cover the estimated national demand for the whole of 2007, the Eurosystem provided Banka Slovenije with a total of 94.5 million euro banknotes, with a face value of €2,175 million, from its stocks. For geographical and logistical reasons, the Oesterreichische Nationalbank performed the physical delivery on behalf of the Eurosystem. Following a public tender, Slovenia's euro coins were produced by Mint of Finland. A total of 296.3 million euro coins were minted, with a face value of €104 million.

Banka Slovenije began frontloading euro coins to credit institutions on 25 September 2006 and euro banknotes on 29 November 2006. Sub-frontloading, i.e. the delivery of euro banknotes and coins to professional third parties (such as retailers and the cash-operated machine industry) by credit institutions, took place in the course of December. In parallel, 150,000 euro coin starter kits for retailers, each worth

€201, and 450,000 euro coin kits for private households, each worth €12.52, were prepared in order to ensure the widespread distribution of coins before the launch. By the end of 2006 Banka Slovenije had frontloaded to banks 100% of the euro banknotes and coins needed for the cash changeover, paving the way for a smooth and rapid changeover.

Another factor contributing to the efficiency of the cash changeover was the quick conversion of automated teller machines (ATMs) and point-of-sale (POS) terminals: all publicly accessible ATMs and all POS terminals were converted on the first day of the changeover. The conversion of vending machines was completed within 15 days.

Article 52 of the Statute of the ESCB requires the Governing Council to take the necessary measures to ensure that banknotes denominated in currencies which are irrevocably fixed to the euro be exchanged by the euro area NCBs at par value. In line with this requirement, and following the adoption on 24 July 2006 of Guideline ECB/2006/10 on the exchange of banknotes after the irrevocable fixing of exchange rates in connection with the introduction of the euro¹⁷, the euro area NCBs ensured that, for the first two months of 2007, banknotes denominated in tolar, up to a value of €1,000 for any one party/transaction on a given day, could be exchanged for euro at par value in at least one location in their respective countries. Banka Slovenije will redeem tolar banknotes for an unlimited period and tolar coins for ten years.

THE INFORMATION CAMPAIGN ON THE INTRODUCTION OF THE EURO

In 2006 the ECB, in cooperation with Banka Slovenije, organised an information campaign in preparation for the introduction of the euro in Slovenia on 1 January 2007. The objective of

¹⁶ OJ L 207, 28.7.2006, p. 39.

¹⁷ OJ L 215, 5.8.2006, p. 44.

the information campaign was to familiarise cash handlers and the general public with the visual appearance and security features of the euro banknotes and coins, as well as the cash changeover procedures. As part of the campaign, more than 700,000 information leaflets produced by the ECB on the euro banknotes and coins, together with a calculator provided by Banka Slovenije, were sent to Slovenian households. Posters and a credit card-sized leaflet depicting the security features of the euro banknotes were distributed, as were guides for people who regularly handle cash at work. Furthermore, the Slovenian business community was provided with first-hand information on the visual appearance and security features of the euro banknotes and coins to be used in its own information material. A two-day seminar for representatives of the Slovenian media was held at the ECB and provided in-depth information about the organisation, responsibilities and activities of the ECB and the Eurosystem. Subsequently, a “€ Conference Slovenia 2007” was organised by Banka Slovenije in cooperation with the ECB in order to provide a forum to exchange experiences and foster dialogue on the economic impact of the euro introduction and on the cash changeover. The conference, which was held on 15 January 2007, was attended by representatives from the business community, public authorities and the media.