

Press release

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ECB surveys Europeans on new themes for euro banknotes

- Europeans invited to express preferences on shortlisted themes in public survey open until 31 August 2023
- ECB's Governing Council expected to choose future theme by 2024, and final designs in 2026

The European Central Bank (ECB) is asking European citizens about their views on the proposed themes for the [next series of euro banknotes](#). From 10 July until 31 August 2023 everybody in the euro area can respond to a [survey](#) on the ECB's website. In addition, to ensure opinions from across the euro area are equally represented, the ECB has contracted an independent research company to ask a representative sample of people in the euro area the same questions as those in its own survey.

ECB President Christine Lagarde invites everybody to participate in the survey. She said "There is a strong link between our single currency and our shared European identity, and our new series of banknotes should emphasise this. We want Europeans to identify with the design of euro banknotes, which is why they will play an active role in selecting the new theme."

Developing our future euro banknotes

"We are working on a new series of high-tech banknotes with a view to preventing counterfeiting and reducing environmental impact," said Executive Board member Fabio Panetta. "We are committed to cash and to ensuring that paying with public money is always an option."

It is the duty of the ECB and the euro area national central banks to ensure euro banknotes remain an innovative, secure and efficient means of payment. Developing new series of banknotes is a standard practice for all central banks. In a world where reproduction technologies are rapidly evolving and where counterfeiters can easily access information and materials, it is necessary to issue new banknotes on a regular basis. Beyond security considerations, the ECB is committed to reducing the environmental impact of euro banknotes throughout their life cycle, while also making them more

relatable and inclusive for Europeans of all ages and backgrounds, including vulnerable groups such as people with visual impairment.

Shortlisted themes for future banknotes

The seven themes shortlisted by the ECB's Governing Council are listed below.¹

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.

¹ The themes appear here in alphabetical order and do not reflect an order of preference within the shortlist.

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.

The shortlist of themes takes into account the suggestions made by a multidisciplinary advisory group, with members from all euro area countries.

Timeline for the new designs

The outcome of the surveys will be used by the ECB to select the theme for the next generation of banknotes by 2024. After that a design competition will take place. European citizens will again have the chance to express their preferences on the design options resulting from that competition. The ECB is expected to take the decision on the future design, and on when to produce and issue the new banknotes, in 2026.

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