

EURO NOTES TO GET A MAKEOVER: ECB UNVEILS THEMES FOR FUTURE BANKNOTES

Public input, culture, nature, and accessibility at the core of redesign

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The European Central Bank (ECB) has unveiled a shortlist of themes and motifs for a potential future generation of euro banknotes that embrace enhanced security, accessibility and sustainability features. The initiative, driven by rapid technological developments and efforts to address counterfeiting attempts and the environmental impact, is set to culminate in the selection of final designs in 2026.

The ECB, in cooperation with national central banks across the euro area, has reaffirmed its responsibility to ensure that euro banknotes remain both secure and innovative. In addition to staying ahead of counterfeiters, the redesign project is aimed at making banknotes more environmentally and user-friendly, particularly for vulnerable groups such as the visually impaired.

In November 2023, the ECB's Governing Council announced two potential themes for the new notes: "European culture" and "Rivers and birds." The selection followed a broad consultation process that included public surveys and expert input from across the euro area. According to the ECB President, the chosen themes "share a common thread of connecting Europe and Europeans," and align with the bank's goal of making euro banknotes more relatable to people with diverse backgrounds.

Shortlisted Motifs Revealed

As of January 2025, the ECB has refined the proposed themes into two detailed concepts:

1. European Culture: Shared Cultural Spaces

This theme will celebrate Europe's rich cultural heritage through notable figures and shared public spaces. Banknotes will feature iconic personalities, namely:

- €5: Maria Callas (singer)
- €10: Ludwig van Beethoven (composer)
- €20: Marie Curie (chemist and physicist)
- €50: Miguel de Cervantes (author)
- €100: Leonardo da Vinci (polymath)
- €200: Bertha von Suttner (Nobel Peace Prize laureate)

The reverse sides of the notes will depict scenes of cultural engagement, including street performances, song festivals, schools, libraries, street art, and tree-covered public squares where communities gather.

2. Rivers and Birds: Resilience in Diversity

Highlighting Europe's natural ecosystems, this theme will feature rivers and bird species that symbolize environmental resilience and biodiversity. The front sides will include:

- A kingfisher at a waterfall
- A white stork flying over a river valley
- A wallcreeper near a mountain landscape

The reverse sides will portray significant European institutions, such as the European Parliament and the Court of Justice of the European Union, reflecting the unity and governance of Europe.

What's Next?

A design competition will be launched, inviting artists and designers from across the European Union to bring these themes to life. The shortlisted designs will be presented to the public in 2026, with all euro area citizens given the opportunity to express their preferences. The ECB will then make its final decision on the new banknote series later that year.

With this initiative, the ECB is not only reinforcing security and functionality but also celebrating the shared identity, natural beauty, and cultural wealth of Europe.

For more information, please visit:

<https://www.ecb.europa.eu/press/pr/date/2025/html/ecb.pr250715~39f757470b.en.html>