

11 December 2020

Decisions taken by the Governing Council of the ECB (in addition to decisions setting interest rates)

December 2020

Monetary policy

Recalibration of monetary policy instruments

On 10 December 2020 the Governing Council decided on recalibrating the ECB's monetary policy instruments to contribute to preserving favourable financing conditions over the pandemic period, thereby supporting the flow of credit to all sectors of the economy, underpinning economic activity and safeguarding medium-term price stability. More detailed information on decisions can be found in the related press releases available on the ECB's website.

Market operations

Enhancement of communication framework for euro liquidity lines

On 3 December 2020 the Governing Council approved an enhanced communication framework for euro liquidity lines provided by the Eurosystem. The existing general information on euro liquidity lines will be consolidated and published in a dedicated subsection on the ECB's website with a view to enhancing transparency, consistency and ease of access to the relevant details. The new subsection will feature a brief introduction on the rationale for euro liquidity lines and the framework under which they are provided. It will also include different operational elements that are already available to the public, as well as the aggregated outstanding drawings under all lines, which will be released on a weekly basis.

Further expansion of additional credit claim frameworks in response to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic

On 27 November 2020 the Governing Council approved requests from two national central banks (NCBs) to create new temporary additional credit claim (ACC) frameworks and also approved changes to the existing ACC frameworks of six other NCBs. The ACC frameworks were introduced in 2011 to allow Eurosystem NCBs to temporarily accept as collateral certain credit claims that are not compliant with the eligibility rules and/or credit quality standards established in the current monetary policy implementation framework. The package of collateral easing measures adopted by the Governing Council on 7 April 2020

made it possible to expand these frameworks further. The acceptance of new or expanded ACC frameworks is subject to prior approval by the Governing Council. More detailed information on the ACC frameworks is available on the ECB's website.

Market infrastructure and payments

Public consultation on revisions to ECB legal acts on oversight requirements for systemically important payment systems

On 26 November 2020 the Governing Council approved the launch of a one-month public consultation on revisions to ECB legal acts related to the oversight of systemically important payment systems (SIPS). The proposed amendments aim at clarifying the criteria for determining the competent authority for domestic (i.e. non-pan-European) SIPSs and pan-European SIPSs, introducing a phasing-out period prior to reclassifying a SIPS as a non-SIPS and enhancing the criteria for determining systemic importance in the light of fast-moving technology trends and changing consumer preferences. Comments to the public consultation can be submitted via the ECB's website until 8 January 2021.

Developments related to the Eurosystem's retail payments strategy

The Governing Council recently approved an update to the Eurosystem's retail payments strategy. The aim is to ensure that the provision of state-of-the-art payment services is tailored to the needs of European stakeholders and that European retail payment solutions are safe and efficient for society as a whole.

The primary goal of the strategy is to underpin the development of a pan-European solution for payments at the point of interaction. It also targets the full deployment of instant payments, to be offered to all citizens and businesses in Europe under attractive conditions. Moreover, the Eurosystem will extend its work on improving cross-border payments beyond the euro area and the EU, thereby helping European businesses and citizens to make and receive payments overseas. Finally, the Eurosystem will extend its active support for innovation, digitalisation and the establishment of an innovative European ecosystem for payments, including support for European fintechs.

In parallel, the Eurosystem is intensifying its work on the potential issuance of a digital euro. This does not, however, imply any intention to crowd out the private sector's role in providing payment services. Moreover, supervised private intermediaries would be best placed to provide front-end solutions and ancillary services and to build new business models based on a digital euro, should such a construct be introduced.

Advice on legislation

ECB Opinion on amendments to the Law on Parliament in Sweden

On 30 November 2020 the Governing Council adopted Opinion CON/2020/30 at the request of the Swedish Parliament.

ECB Opinion on exchange rate matters relating to the CFA franc and the Comorian franc

On 1 December 2020 the Governing Council adopted Opinion CON/2020/31 at the request of the Council of the European Union.

Statistics

Report on the confidentiality of individual statistical information collected by the European System of Central Banks

On 20 November 2020 the Governing Council took note of the report, covering the period from July 2018 to December 2019, on the confidentiality of the individual statistical information collected by the ECB, assisted by the national central banks (NCBs). The document concludes that there were two cases in the period under review that needed further investigation. Although there was no impact in either case, as a follow-up to the investigation, processes were further improved. The summary of the report is available on the ECB's website and on the websites of the NCBs that have also chosen to publish it.

Amendment to regulation on money market statistical reporting

On 26 November 2020 the Governing Council adopted Regulation ECB/2020/58 amending Regulation (EU) 1333/2014 (ECB/2014/48) concerning statistics on the money markets (the MMSR Regulation). The amending legal act aims at ensuring the continued reporting of daily statistical information relating to money market instruments with respect to the reporting agents' branches located in the United Kingdom after the end of the transition period on 31 December 2020 provided for in the Agreement on the withdrawal of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland from the European Union and the European Atomic Energy Community. The amended regulation is available on EUR-Lex.

Amendment to regulation on payments statistics

On 1 December 2020 the Governing Council adopted Regulation ECB/2020/59 amending Regulation (EU) 1409/2013 (ECB/2013/43) on payments statistics and authorised the publication of the related feedback statement summarising the results of the public consultation on this amending Regulation. The amending legal act introduces new statistical reporting requirements to reflect developments in the area of payments that have taken place since 2013, while also addressing a need for additional payments statistics in order to ensure that the ECB effectively performs its oversight tasks. Both documents will soon be available on the ECB's website.

Banknotes

Study on the payment attitudes of consumers in the euro area

On 27 November 2020 the Governing Council took note of a report prepared by the Banknote Committee (BANCO) and the Market Infrastructure and Payments Committee (MIPC) of the Eurosystem/ESCB on the results of the Study on the payment attitudes of consumers in the euro area (SPACE). The study, conducted in 2019, assesses consumers' use of cash and non-cash payment instruments at the level of each participating euro area country and for the euro area as a whole and compares them, to the extent possible, with an earlier ECB study conducted in 2016 on the use of cash by households in the euro area. SPACE covers purchases by individuals at the physical point of sale (POS) and person-to-person (P2P) payments, as well as payments made remotely (i.e. for online shopping, telephone and mail orders, bill payments and recurring payments). SPACE also explores the factors influencing individuals' payment attitudes and behaviour. In view of the ongoing changes in the payments sector, and in order to continue monitoring the developments of payment behaviour in the euro area, the Governing Council decided to

conduct payment behaviour studies biennially, with the aim of publishing the next report by the end of 2022. The SPACE study is available on the ECB's website.

Banking supervision

Guide on climate-related and environmental risks and report on institutions' climate-related and environmental risk disclosures

On 26 November 2020 the Governing Council did not object to a proposal by the Supervisory Board to publish the ECB guide on climate-related and environmental risks, following a public consultation, and an ECB report on institutions' climate-related and environmental risk disclosures. The guide explains how the ECB expects banks to prudently manage and transparently disclose climate-related and environmental risks under current prudential rules. In turn, the report shows that banks are lagging behind and need to make significant efforts to better support their disclosure statements with relevant quantitative and qualitative information. Both documents are available on the ECB's banking supervision website.