



Report by the Motifs Advisory Group

January 2025

Motifs Advisory Group

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Executive summary

The Motifs Advisory Group (MAG) is an independent and multidisciplinary group established by the European Central Bank (ECB) in January 2024. Its purpose is to propose stories and motifs to illustrate the two themes selected for future euro banknotes by the Governing Council in November 2023, namely, “European culture” and “Rivers and birds”.

For both themes, the group aimed to propose motifs that would be acceptable throughout the euro area and easy for people to relate to. The group also sought a balance between motifs that are widely recognised by the public and motifs that are lesser known but have important historical relevance, especially those related to individuals, art, buildings and places. Throughout the process, the MAG members rose to the challenge of representing all euro area countries and identifying motifs that European citizens from different backgrounds would find acceptable and relatable.

The MAG has now completed its work and proposes four stories (two for “European culture” and two for “Rivers and birds”) as suitable options for the design contest.¹ For the “European culture” theme, the MAG selected as suitable options the stories “Shared cultural spaces” and “Women as protagonists of European culture”, and for the “Rivers and birds” theme, the MAG selected “Nature as culture” and “Resilience in diversity”.

For one of the “European culture” stories (namely, “Shared cultural spaces”), three illustration options are proposed. The key elements of all the proposals are summarised below: for each proposal, there is a description of the story and associated motifs, as well as how the story unfolds across the series and on the front and reverse sides of the banknotes. More details on these proposals are provided in Annex 1. Annex 2 includes other stories and motifs that were discussed by the group but not selected for proposal.

Initial checks to identify any potential reputational risk or controversy associated with the proposals were conducted and enabled the group to finalise the current shortlist of stories and motifs. These checks are not yet exhaustive and conclusive, however. Before the launch of the design contest, the risks and rights related to the use of one individual story and associated motifs need to be further assessed.

¹ The stories are presented in alphabetical order throughout the document.

European culture

Shared cultural spaces

Story

People in Europe have been sharing their creativity, knowledge and skills for centuries, building our collective European culture. Schools, universities, libraries, theatres, stadiums, public squares and museums are spaces in which people participate in the circulation of culture and experience some of the most significant moments in their lives. It is in these places that we develop a sense of continuity and community that connects us to the past and inspires our vision of the future.

Three options are proposed to illustrate the story “Shared cultural spaces”. For each option, Annex 1 provides detail on how the story unfolds across the series and on the front and reverse sides of the banknotes.

Motifs

Option 1 – Existing buildings and spaces

The front of the banknotes will show contemporary buildings or spaces where shared cultural activities take place, as well as people involved in these activities. The reverse will show historical buildings or spaces of the same type as those shown on the front.

Option 2 – Activities and spaces

The front of the banknotes will show typical shared cultural activities and people involved in these activities. The scenes are contemporary, the spaces and people imaginary. The reverse will show historic buildings and cultural spaces where these activities take place.

Option 3 – Activities and paintings

As for option 2, the front of the banknotes will show typical shared cultural activities and people involved in these activities. The scenes are contemporary, the spaces and people imaginary. The reverse will show paintings, or details from paintings, that represent the same type of activity and space as those shown on the front. The paintings, ranging in date from the Renaissance to the late 19th century, have been chosen for their subject-matter and are not used in chronological order.

Benefits and risks

The chosen motifs represent some of the most common spaces where European culture is expressed and exchanged. The motifs connect the present with the past, and tradition with contemporary culture. The challenge was to find motifs that are

sufficiently representative in terms of gender and geographical diversity, but that are also well known and accessible to the public.

Women as protagonists in European culture

Story

Throughout the ages, social restrictions and gender biases have prevented women from playing the role they could and should play in European culture and science. Despite these constraints, many brilliant women have managed to break through the barriers and become luminaries of creativity and invention. In celebrating six remarkable figures and their achievements, we highlight Europe's shared cultural heritage and illustrate its values of equality and inclusion.

Motifs

The front of the banknotes will show portraits of some of the most relevant women who have contributed to European science and culture. On the reverse, examples of their achievements and work will be shown.

Benefits and risks

The story is simple and easy to understand. The personalities proposed and their actions and achievements support most of the fundamental rights of the European Union (EU). The story spans several centuries and underlines European women's role in science and culture, which spreads far beyond Europe. It also sends a message as to where Europe stands with regard to the position of women. On the other hand, the exclusion of men might be interpreted by some as a sign of gender discrimination.

Rivers and birds

Nature as culture

Story

Europe's artistic imagination and scientific ingenuity are inextricably interwoven with the richness and diversity of its ecology. The banknotes depict rivers and birds – natural forces that are always on the move – as they have been imagined through the ages of Europe's ever-changing cultures. The visual style of each note takes its cue from the artistic and cultural modes of the successive ages of our shared history. Europe's nature and culture appear as the dual faces of a single, vibrant, ever-renewing energy, pulsing from the distant past into a sustainable future.

Motifs

The motifs on the front of the banknotes show representations of birds in their river habitats inspired by the artistic modes of the respective ages. The river habitats follow different stages of the river, from source to sea. On the reverse, there are objects and artefacts from different periods, represented in styles inspired by the contemporary art of that time. The images are not literal; rather, they take the visual languages of the periods in question as a source of inspiration.

Benefits and risks

The motifs bring together the two aspects that emerged from the public surveys as most appealing to the European public: nature and culture. The challenge was to play with different visual styles while retaining the feeling of a coherent series and keeping the focus on a clear storyline.

Resilience in diversity

Story

Rivers and birds know no borders. They flow freely across Europe.

Europe is a political and cultural ecosystem in which the strength of the whole derives from the richness, fluidity and variety of its different parts. We are resilient because we share an abundant multiplicity of cultures, ideas and histories. Each one helps to sustain all the others. It is the same with our natural ecosystems. Rivers and birds are always moving and adapting. They take on a dazzling range of forms. On the banknotes, they remind us that in order to sustain life, we must nurture its diversity.

Motifs

The motifs follow the different stages of the river, from source to sea. The front depicts the diversity of birds across their river habitats. The reverse shows how each stage of the river supports a different aspect of human life. It is the diversity of these European landscapes that enables human resilience in the face of profound environmental challenges.

Benefits and risks

The motifs are relatable, featuring species, landscapes and activities that most people can recognise and understand. Being nationally neutral, they are also relatable for a large proportion of countries and people of many backgrounds. They are also important representations of European environmental legislation, such as the Water Framework Directive and the Birds Directive. The challenge will be to communicate

the value nature brings to people, such as water supply, recreation and agriculture, in a clear way while at the same time highlighting the need for sustainability.

1 Introduction

On 6 December 2021 the ECB announced the launch of the process for developing new themes and designs for future euro banknotes.² On 29 November 2023 it was decided to move to the next phase of the re-design process, with the following two themes:

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.

Rivers and birds: Rivers and birds recognise no borders, symbolising freedom and unity amongst Europeans and our connection to nature. Europe boasts a wide variety of rivers and birds that inspire us and remind us of our responsibility to protect the environment.

On the same date, the ECB decided to establish the Motifs Advisory Group (MAG), tasked with proposing one or more stories and associated motifs for each theme. Once the final motifs have been chosen, a design competition will be launched based on this selection.

The ECB Governing Council is expected to decide on the design for future euro banknotes in 2026, taking into consideration the public's preferences on a shortlist of designs.

² [ECB to redesign euro banknotes by 2024](#), Press Release, 6 December 2021.

2 Establishment of the Motifs Advisory Group

The Motifs Advisory Group (MAG) was set up in January 2024 to develop and propose motifs for the two themes, “European culture” and “Rivers and birds”.

The MAG brought together an independent and varied mix of experts from diverse fields such as archaeology, architecture, art history, biodiversity, ecology, environmental studies, geography, history, literature, musicology and ornithology. The experts were selected by the ECB, based also on nominations by the National Central Banks, and in consultation with the Cultural Policy unit of the European Commission’s Directorate-General for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport and Directorate-General for Environment.

In addition to ensuring a wide range of relevant expertise, the ECB endeavoured to create a group that is as diverse as possible, representing different regions in Europe, different genders and, in so far as possible, different age groups.

Motifs Advisory Group members

- Emanuel Buttigieg, Associate Professor in Early Modern History, University of Malta
- Ángeles Caso, writer and art historian specialising in gender cultural history
- Ivan Čanjevac, Associate Professor, Department of Geography, Faculty of Science, University of Zagreb
- Benjamin Chavardès, Associate Professor, École nationale supérieure d’architecture de Lyon
- Marzia Faietti, Professor, Department of the Arts, University of Bologna, former Director of Prints and Drawings Department, Gallerie degli Uffizi, Florence
- Wolfgang Fiedler, Researcher and Group Leader, Max Planck Institute of Animal Behaviour, Radolfzell
- Eneken Laanes, Professor of Comparative Literature, Tallinn University
- Demetrios Michaelides, Emeritus Professor of Classical Archaeology, University of Cyprus
- Fintan O’Toole, columnist, writer and former Professor of Irish Letters, Princeton University
- Henrique Pereira, Professor of Biodiversity Conservation, iDiv, Martin Luther University Halle-Wittenberg and CIBIO/Biopolis, University of Porto, Portugal

- Théodora Psychoyou, Professor of musicology, Director of the Institut de recherche en Musicologie (IreMus) and the Collegium Musicæ institute, Sorbonne University
- Corinna Unger, Professor of Global and Colonial History, European University Institute
- Louise Vet, Emeritus Professor in Evolutionary Ecology, Wageningen University and the Netherlands Institute of Ecology (NIOO-KNAW)

To ensure effective work and preparation, two sub-groups were created, one for “European culture” and one for “Rivers and birds”. The cultural and communication dimensions were considered from the start of the process and members with specific expertise were involved in both sub-groups, with the ECB providing support. More details on each individual member are provided in Annex 3³.

³ Withdrawn from the group: Anne Kumpula, Professor of Environmental Law, University of Turku

3 The work of the Motifs Advisory Group

Between 30 January 2024 and 11 July 2024, the Group held seven meetings in physical and virtual format. Throughout this period the whole group worked together to ensure alignment and foster exchange, but the two sub-groups also worked independently and held meetings in sub-group format.

To facilitate the group's work, at the outset the members received general information on banknote design and production as well as on the current euro banknotes re-design process. Additional background information was also provided during a visit to the Banca d'Italia's printing works. The group was also informed about re-design projects at other central banks. The MAG also received the results of the public surveys on the theme of the future euro banknotes ([Qualitative study on new themes for euro banknotes](#) and [Report on public preferences for new euro banknote themes](#)) and [the Theme Advisory Group report](#). The discussions were enriched by input gathered from students of some of the MAG members, as well as by feedback from a media expert on the possible perception of some of the stories by a younger audience.

Initially, each member of the MAG was asked to prepare a proposal including a draft story and associated motifs. These proposals were the starting point of the group's work and included a) a story and associated motifs; b) explanations on how the story would be applied across the whole series of banknotes and on each side of a given denomination; c) the results of the assessment of each story and motifs against the set criteria; and d) any other relevant information.

4 Assessment criteria

The MAG applied five criteria for the assessment of the individual motif proposals. All stories and motifs were assessed against these criteria. The Group also used these criteria to agree on which stories and motifs should not be brought forward in the selection process.

- **Relatability**

The motifs should be widely relatable to European citizens and should speak to people of all ages and backgrounds, conveying positive feelings and sentiments.

- **Acceptability**

The motifs should be widely accepted among people living throughout the European Union. They should be inspiring and bring European citizens together.

- **Diversity**

The motifs should reflect diversity. Diversity should be interpreted in a broad way (depending on the theme, diversity could be understood to encompass nationality and countries, gender, age and so on.).

- **Timeliness**

The motifs should be inspirational and relatable to the European citizens of today and tomorrow, but can include historical motifs.

- **Cultural dimension**

The motifs should depict European culture in a broad and diverse manner.

Where portraits of Europeans were proposed, the following additional criteria were considered:

- Any person selected to represent the theme must have been born in Europe or have European nationality.
- Their work must demonstrate outstanding achievement.
- They must be deceased for at least 20 years.
- They must have a lasting legacy and their achievements must be considered acceptable, widely appreciated and such that the people of Europe can relate to them.

5 Assessment process and considerations

The MAG continually reassessed the stories and motifs during the group discussions. If a story and its associated motifs were not considered to fulfil one or more of the set criteria, it was not considered further. The group delivered 11 proposals that were tested against the assessment criteria. In addition to considering each motif separately, the group also concentrated on making sure that the motif proposals for the entire banknote series fit together and told a cohesive story.

Both sub-groups faced the challenge of creating easily relatable proposals that would speak to all European citizens. During the meetings, the MAG members discussed each proposal thoroughly and challenged each other's proposals to make sure that they fit the criteria. After the initial proposals, and once the stories had been developed further, the group proposed additional motifs for each story and, in some cases, came up with alternative motifs for each denomination.

In the case of "European culture", the personalities, activities, artwork, buildings and architectural sites proposed were assessed against the criteria mentioned in Chapter 4. The group paid particular attention to ensuring that the motifs would be as recognisable as possible, as well as diverse in terms of geographical distribution and gender. The group acknowledged early on the complexity of representing European culture on six banknotes while trying to be as representative as possible of all euro area countries. Critical assessments were carried out thoroughly by the group in order to minimise any potential controversies or risks, especially those related to individuals. The group also tried to find a balance between motifs that were easily recognisable by the public and those that were lesser known but that had significant cultural or historical relevance. The group discussed whether some lesser-known motifs could be proposed with the specific purpose of making these motifs better known to the European public. Some of the stories would naturally tend to be more accessible than others.

The MAG members agreed that stories and motifs that drew too specifically on any one national culture should be avoided, and that it was important to find stories and motifs that most people in Europe could relate to. It was felt that motifs proposed should address and confront the gender biases inherent in many representations of Europe's past. There was a strong overall preference for imagery that could connect the banknotes to a Europe represented by human cultural activity and experience, and human interaction with nature. The MAG members proposed motifs that could convey shared European values and resonate strongly with European citizens. Equally, members were aware of the need for the banknotes to be relevant and recognisable to those who will use them in the coming decades.

In the case of "Rivers and birds", after defining the stages of a river (river or sea landscapes), the group made thoroughly assessed each proposed bird species. The group considered each species' habitat and how it fits together with the stages of the river, their visual attractiveness, migratory status, Europeanness (i.e. occurrence in multiple European countries) and whether the EU laws and measures taken to protect

them have had an effect on their populations. They also discussed and conducted background checks on how each bird species is perceived in different parts of Europe (positive/negative) and what kind of folkloristic characteristics it has been assigned. Lastly, the group wanted to make sure that each bird would be depicted in its natural habitat for each denomination.

During the group's discussions, the MAG members considered how to capture European values in the motif proposals for all six banknote denominations. This took different forms in the discussion, ranging from an emphasis on EU values to EU institutions, key figures in the history of the EU and EU symbols. In the case of "Rivers and birds", the group also considered how EU environmental legislation has impacted the different bird species and their habitats. Most proposals developed by the group drew inspiration from its perception of European ideals, taking into account how the proposals might foster better understanding of European Union values today and link Europe's shared past to its common future.

6 Outcome of the work

The Group considered a total of eleven stories: eight for “European culture” and three for “Rivers and birds” (presented in alphabetical order in Annexes 1 and 2). The stories evolved from an initial suggestion by individual group members, taking into consideration other members’ comments and suggestions. As a result, some of the initial ideas were abandoned and new ones introduced. Some ideas were merged, and others were explored and further developed into final proposals.

As a result of the group’s work, four stories are proposed altogether: two for the “European culture” theme and two for the “Rivers and birds” theme. For one of the two stories proposed for “European culture” (“Shared cultural spaces”), three different options for motifs are suggested.

6.1 European culture

The sub-group worked on a total of eight stories for the “European culture” theme. Some of these stories evolved considerably throughout the process, while others were discontinued, as they were considered either inadequate or too complex to be represented on the banknotes.

For each of the stories, the members considered one or more specific sets of motifs. When more than one set of motifs were proposed, the sub-groups discussed the different options and agreed to move forward with one consolidated list of motifs. For one story, the group proposed three possible sets of motifs.

Based on all considerations, the following two stories are proposed. These proposals have been shortlisted by the group as those that best represent the theme. The data sheets are provided in Annex 1.

From an early stage, the idea of shared cultural spaces found a strong consensus among the group. The story spotlights the sharing and exchange of human creations, knowledge and skills on which our shared European culture is built. These activities take place in spaces that are familiar to all – schools and universities, libraries, theatres, stadiums, public squares and museums. Owing to the richness and potential of the story, the group decided to translate it into three different options, as follows:

- **Option 1** – The front of the banknotes will show contemporary buildings or spaces where shared cultural activities take place, as well as people involved in these activities. The reverse will show historical buildings or spaces of the same type as those shown on the front.
- **Option 2** – The front of the banknotes will show typical shared cultural activities and people involved in them. The scenes are contemporary, the spaces and people imaginary. The reverse will show historic buildings and cultural spaces where these activities take place.

- **Option 3** – As for option 2, the front of the banknotes will show typical shared cultural activities and people involved in them. The scenes are contemporary, the spaces and people imaginary. The reverse will show paintings or details of paintings that represent the same type of activity and space as shown on the front. The paintings selected date from the Renaissance to the late 19th century, but are not used in chronological order.

For all three options, a wide variety of motifs were considered throughout the discussions.

While a fourth option combining abstract activities on the front and famous European personalities on the reverse was considered, the complexity of this proposal led the group to disregard it as a potential option.

Women as protagonists in European culture. The story focuses on the importance of European women who, over the centuries, have been silenced, overshadowed or forgotten. While this story does not fulfil the criterion of gender diversity, the group believes that the story is nonetheless strong, because its focus is on making women visible and celebrating their achievements, reawakening the memory of their vital contributions to European culture and science.

In addition to the two stories proposed, the following six were developed and discussed. However, for a number of reasons (see below), the members decided not to shortlist them. The data sheets for these are provided in Annex 2.

Europe as messenger of peace. Although the group initially felt that the story had great potential, the members eventually agreed that, while the message was important and powerful, it would be too complex to convey the deep cultural and ethical significance of the story on six banknotes and to remain neutral on political circumstances.

European children's stories as shared cultural heritage. This story was based on an earlier idea of European stories that cross borders. While the motifs proposed would have been accessible and easily recognisable by the public, the group concluded that the values and morals of many of these stories could be contested in today's society.

European passions and pursuits. While some of the motifs suggested would have been accessible and recognisable to the public, the group agreed that it would be difficult to shape the motifs into a coherent story with a strong enough impact and a clear emotional appeal.

European public squares. The group decided that this story would not be developed further, but that it would be integrated into the "Shared cultural spaces" story, owing to its similarities and the overlapping of some of the motifs proposed.

The inhabited waters of Europe (water spirits across Europe). This story had also evolved from the original idea of "European stories that cross borders" based on stories from European folklore. While this story would overcome the difficulty of representing national diversity, the motifs proposed presented other challenges, such

as the fact that the characters were all female, and that some carried negative connotations while others were not particularly well known. It was finally decided that owing to the prominence of the natural elements in the story, the idea would be shared with the “Rivers and birds” sub-group to provide inspiration for their work.

Plurality of people and ideas. The story aimed to shine a spotlight on Europeans who have accomplished important social and cultural achievements and helped to overcome societal taboos, thereby enriching European culture. However, the lesser-known individuals and partially controversial aspects of their lives and work might have made them too difficult for the public to accept, recognise and identify with. It was proposed that some of the individuals originally proposed for this theme could be considered for inclusion in the story “Women as protagonists in European culture”.

6.2 Rivers and birds

The sub-group started working to propose stories for the theme, and as a result proposed three possible stories: “Circularity”, “European values – connectedness and free movement” and a third one with the aim to create a link between nature and culture, called “Nature as culture – culture as nature”. Each story was supported by a range of different ideas which helped the group put together proposals for the motifs.

With “**Circularity**”, the group wanted to express the seasonality of nature and the significance of water as the basis for life, and to show that rivers are the veins and arteries of Europe. They also wanted to highlight the connection between rivers and birds.

The second story, “**European values – connectedness and free movement**” was created to depict the European story of migration and movement. By showing that we are diverse and similar at the same time, the story adheres to the EU motto, “United in diversity”.

The third story, “**Nature as culture – culture as nature**”, was originally created around mythology and folklore associated with nature (with an emphasis on rivers and birds) and aims to represent European cultural landscapes, among other ideas.

The group prepared proposals for the three stories, and the members analysed and compared the proposals. The group found that the stories had some overlapping elements, but that they approached the theme in three different ways. After some discussion, the members agreed on a set of motifs that could be used for each of the stories. The members agreed to choose a bird species for each denomination and depict the European river network with six stages of a river (spring, mountain stream, confined river valley, meander in an unconfined river valley, river mouth and seacoast), one stage of a river for each denomination. The group agreed that on the front side of each banknote there should be a bird species that fits the stage of the river, i.e. the birds should be depicted in their natural river/seacoast habitats. This would leave room for other types of motifs to be featured on the reverse side of the banknotes.

The group defined criteria according to which the proposed bird species would be selected. The criteria considered each bird's habitat, migratory status, visual attractiveness, whether it can be considered European or not (i.e. its occurrence in multiple European countries), and if EU laws and measures taken to protect the bird species in question have had an effect on its population.

The group also considered different ways of representing European rivers. There was a discussion as to whether specific rivers and landscapes should be featured, but the group faced the difficulty of not being able to represent all the euro area countries, including the islands. This idea was therefore put aside. Another proposal was to represent the map of Europe together with its network of rivers. In the end, the group agreed on the idea of depicting rivers with the six different stages of a river and decided to move on with that. The six stages of the river would be typified representations rather than actual European landscapes.

The group also discussed which additional motifs could be included on the reverse side of the note if the rivers and birds were to be depicted together on the front. The ideas ranged from folkloric figures, such as water deities, to historical artefacts related to water, such as fishing nets and ancient pottery. The proposals also included motifs depicting how water sustains human life and moves and connects people and goods, such as water mills and cargo vessels. The group also wanted to depict the recreational aspect of nature by proposing motifs such as a hiker on a river trail.

In addition to the different motifs, the group also decided to propose combining the map of Europe, which will be featured on the future euro banknotes series as a common element in all denominations, with a depiction of the migratory birds' flyways and/or the river network of Europe.

Once all this information had been gathered, the group reviewed the stories and found that two of them had several similarities and could be merged. Following this decision, a new story called "Circulation and movement" was created, based on the previous version of "Circularity". In addition, the title of the story related to culture was shortened to "Nature as culture". In addition to these updated stories the group decided to create a new story around diversity and to name it "Resilience in diversity".

After these changes and updates the group prepared motif proposals for the three stories and presented them to their fellow MAG members in the other sub-group in order to hear their views. In the end, with the comments received, and after some reflection within the sub-group, the group decided to abandon "Circulation and movement" (discontinued, see Annex 2) because it did not sufficiently contrast with "Resilience in diversity", and moved on with two stories:

"Nature as culture" (shortlisted, see Annex 1), introducing a cultural aspect, with rivers and birds represented using different artistic styles.

"Resilience in diversity" (shortlisted, see Annex 1) representing the values inherent in nature and the connection between people and nature.

These were the group's final two proposals for the "Rivers and birds" theme and are included in this report.

Annex 1: Shortlisted stories and motifs

The following section of the report lists in alphabetical order the motif proposals that were proposed, for each theme, to the ECB Governing Council.

European culture

Shared cultural spaces

Story

Generation after generation, people in Europe have been sharing their creativity, knowledge and skills, building our collective European culture. Throughout the centuries, we have designed spaces that allow us to participate in the circulation of culture, wisdom and beauty, and to celebrate those things. Europeans all recognise the spaces in which we share cultural experiences with others. Schools and universities, libraries, theatres, stadiums, public squares and museums mean passion, emotion and passing culture down through the generations. In these places people can experience some of the most moving moments in their lives. It is here that we develop a sense of continuity and community, helping us see that we belong to something greater than ourselves. They connect us to the past, are our refuge in the present and inspire our visions of the future.

Explanation / introduction of options

Three options are proposed to illustrate the “Shared cultural spaces” story. These options focus on how the story unfolds across the series and on the front and reverse sides of the banknotes.

Option 1 – Existing buildings and spaces

The front of the banknotes will show contemporary buildings or spaces where shared cultural activities take place, as well as people involved in these activities. The reverse will show historical buildings or spaces of the same type as those shown on the front.

Motifs

Sports and games	
€5 front Estádio Municipal de Braga, Braga, Portugal. External view preferred.	€5 reverse Stadium of Delphi, Delphi, Greece.
Performing arts	
€10 front Berliner Philharmonic, Berlin, Germany. Internal view preferred.	€10 reverse Teatro alla Scala, Milan, Italy. Internal view preferred.
Universities and schools	
€20 front Delft University of Technology, Delft, the Netherlands. External view preferred.	€20 reverse University of Tartu, Tartu, Estonia. External view preferred.
Libraries	
€50 front Library at the University of Cyprus, Nicosia, Cyprus. Internal view preferred.	€50 reverse Library at Trinity College, Dublin, Ireland. Internal view preferred.
Museums and exhibitions	
€100 front National museum of Roman art, Mérida, Spain. Internal view preferred.	€100 reverse Louvre Museum, Paris, France. Internal view preferred.
Public squares	
€200 front Diocletian's Palace, Split, Croatia. External view preferred.	€200 reverse Grand-Place, Brussels, Belgium.

Option 2 – Activities and spaces

The front of the banknotes will show typical shared cultural activities and people involved in them. The scenes are contemporary, the spaces and people imaginary.

The reverse of the banknotes will show historic buildings and cultural spaces where these activities take place.

The designer will be requested to ensure that the people represented show as much diversity as possible.

Motifs

Sports and games

€5 front

A modern football pitch with a trainer and some children (boys and girls) playing a match.

€5 reverse

Estádio Municipal de Braga, Braga, Portugal. External view preferred.

Performing arts

€10 front

A square or a skate park surrounded by modern buildings, showing older children and teenagers doing street dance.

€10 reverse

Musikverein, Vienna, Austria. Internal view preferred.

Universities and schools

€20 front

A modern school or university with a female teacher giving a lesson. Young adults attend and take notes on their computers. There are some notebooks and books lying on the tables.

€20 reverse

University of Bologna, Italy; Internal view (preferred) of the Archiginnasio, Aula Magna or Palazzo Poggi.

Libraries

€50 front

A modern library with some adults reading papers and digital books. A little boy and a girl on tiptoes in front of a bookcase, trying to reach a book.

€50 reverse

Library at Trinity College, Dublin, Ireland. Internal view preferred.

Museums and exhibitions

€100 front

Adults and children admiring some examples of street art, contemporary art, etc.

€100 reverse

Louvre Museum, Paris, France. Internal view preferred.

Public squares

€200 front

A tree-covered modern square with older people and children talking, walking, playing, etc.

€200 reverse

Tallinn Town Hall Square, Tallinn, Estonia.

Option 3 – Activities and paintings

As for option 2, the front of the banknotes will show typical shared cultural activities and people involved in these activities. The scenes are contemporary, the spaces and people imaginary.

The designer will be requested to ensure that the people represented show as much diversity as possible.

The reverse of the banknotes will show paintings or details of paintings that represent the same type of activity and space as those shown on the front. The paintings selected date from the Renaissance to the late 19th century, but are not used in chronological order.

Motifs

Sports and games	
€5 front	€5 reverse
A modern football pitch with a trainer and some children (boys and girls) playing a match.	<i>Three Sisters Playing Chess (1555)</i> Sofonisba Anguissola
Performing arts	
€10 front	€10 reverse
A square or a skate park surrounded by modern buildings, showing older children and teenagers doing street dance.	<i>Die Musik (1895)</i> Gustav Klimt
Universities and schools	
€20 front	€20 reverse
A modern school or university with a female teacher giving a lesson. Young adults attend and take notes on their computers. There are some notebooks and books lying on the tables.	<i>School of Athens (1508-1511)</i> , Raffaello Sanzio da Urbino
Libraries	
€50 front	€50 reverse
A modern library with some adults reading paper and digital books. A little boy and a girl on tiptoes in front of a bookcase, trying to reach a book.	<i>The Librarian (1566)</i> , Giuseppe Arcimboldo
Museums and exhibitions	
€100 front	€100 reverse
Adults and children admiring some examples of street art, contemporary art, etc.	<i>La salle des saisons au musée du Louvre (1802)</i> , Hubert Robert
Public squares	
€200 front	€200 reverse
A tree-covered modern square or outdoor space with people and children talking, walking, playing, etc.	<i>Un Dimanche à la Grande Jatte (1884)</i> , Georges Seurat

Women as protagonists in European culture

Story

Throughout the ages, social restrictions and gender biases have prevented women from playing the role they could and should play in European culture and science, or have concealed their role and achievements. Despite these constraints, many women have managed to break the barriers and become luminaries of European civilisation. Now that the role of women has taken a new and positive turn, we want to remember and celebrate some of these pioneers and give them the recognition they deserve. What these women have done transcends national barriers and has contributed to European and world culture in general. Through these important figures and their achievements, the theme highlights our common European cultural heritage and sends an eloquent message to the world as to where Europe stands with regard to a number of European values.

Motifs

The front of the banknotes will portray some of these remarkable women. The reverse will show some of their achievements and examples of their work.

The personalities are listed in chronological order across the denominations from lowest to highest; this order should be maintained to avoid precedence of one personality or one country over another. One exception is made for the last two denominations, where Marie Curie (1867-1934) follows Eileen Gray (1878-1976), who lived more recently, given Curie's importance.

<p>€5 front</p> <p>Sappho, c. 630 - c. 570 BC</p> <p>Lyric poet</p>	<p>€5 reverse</p> <p>Papyrus fragment or ostrakon (broken piece of pottery) preserving lines of her poetry.</p> <p>Alternative proposals:</p> <p>Depiction of Muse or lyre player on ancient Greek pottery.</p> <p>Any work of art inspired by Sappho, e.g. Auguste Rodin's sculpture.</p>
<p>€10 front</p> <p>Hildegard von Bingen, c. 1098 -1179</p> <p>Writer, composer, philosopher</p>	<p>€10 reverse</p> <p>One or more of the incredible visions from the <i>Liber divinorum operum</i> (<i>The Book of Divine Works</i>).</p> <p>Alternative proposal:</p> <p>A page or a few bars from any manuscript preserving von Bingen's musical compositions.</p>
<p>€20 front</p> <p>Artemisia Gentileschi, 1593 - c. 1656</p> <p>Baroque painter</p>	<p>€20 reverse</p> <p><i>Allegory of painting. Self-portrait.</i></p> <p>Alternative proposals:</p> <p>Any of Gentileschi's paintings or detail of those paintings.</p> <p>A painter's palette and brushes.</p>
<p>€50 front</p> <p>Maria Sibylla Merian, 1647-1717</p> <p>Naturalist and scientific illustrator</p>	<p>€50 reverse</p> <p>Any of the magnificent illustrations of her scientific observations.</p>
<p>€100 front</p> <p>Eileen Gray, 1878-1976</p> <p>Architect and furniture designer</p>	<p>€100 reverse</p> <p>A depiction of Gray's modernist villa "E-1027".</p>
<p>€200 front</p> <p>Marie Curie, 1867-1934</p> <p>Physicist and chemist</p>	<p>€200 reverse</p> <p>Atomic structure of Polonium.</p> <p>Alternative proposals:</p> <p>Atomic structure of Radium</p> <p>Marie Curie with glass flasks and tubes</p>

Rivers and birds

Nature as culture

Story

Europe's artistic imagination and scientific ingenuity are inextricably interwoven with the richness and diversity of its ecology. Our sense of belonging is deeply embedded in the landscapes and the ecosystems we inhabit. They shape us and we shape them. Culture springs from nature and in turn human creativity flows back into the living world.

Rivers and birds are not bound by borders and categories. Their dynamic flows and flights have long inspired ways of thinking, making and connecting that bring together the practical and commercial aspects of human society with the sense of wonder that gives meaning to our collective lives.

In this set of motifs, the images of rivers and birds are inspired by the ever-changing and creative ways in which Europeans have responded to them across our shared history. We move through space by showing the six stages of a river and the birds that thrive in the different ecosystems. We move through time by having the visual style of each note take its cue from the artistic and cultural modes of successive ages of European history.

Taken together, the six banknotes represent Europe's nature and culture as the dual faces of a single, vibrant, ever-renewing energy, pulsing from the distant past into a sustainable future.

Motifs

The motifs on the front of the banknotes show representations of birds in their habitats inspired by the artistic modes of the respective age. On the reverse side there are objects and artefacts from different ages, represented in styles inspired by the art of those times. The images are not literal; rather, they take the visual languages of the periods in question as a source of inspiration – a point of departure, not arrival.

Period of European culture: pre-classical antiquity	
€5 front Representation of a spring and a Wallcreeper in a style inspired by ancient art.	€5 reverse Inspired by ancient pottery vessels imprinted with a pattern of spirals representing waves, like those found throughout pre-classical antiquity.
Period of European culture: Graeco-Roman	
€10 front Representation of a Kingfisher and mountain stream as imagined in classical art.	€10 reverse Inspired by classical fountains and (humorous) waterspouts, such as those depicted in mosaics from Pompeii and surviving spouts in classical cities.
Period of European culture: medieval and early modern (up to the 17th century)	
€20 front A representation of a Bee-eater in a confined river valley as imagined through medieval art and printing.	€20 reverse Inspired by medieval manuscripts and their playful and fantastical images of birds, alongside examples from the printing press, creating an interesting interplay between the two media.
Period of European culture: 18th century to mid-19th century	
€50 front Representation of a White Stork and a series of bends in a river (a meander) as imagined or depicted in the style of 18th century scientific topography.	€50 reverse Inspired by scientific taxonomy and naturalistic observations of birds.
Period of European culture: 19th century to mid-20th century	
€100 front Representation of a river mouth and an Avocet sweeping over the surface of a mud flat as imagined in the style of Romanticism.	€100 reverse Inspired by representations of a harbour, steamboats, riverscapes and the human activities that go on in such places.
Period of European culture: contemporary/the future	
€200 front Representation of an Osprey and a seacoast as imagined through contemporary/futuristic style.	€200 reverse Waves as metaphors for the digital and quantum universes inspired by postmodern art, visually linking back to the spiral patterns of antiquity.

Resilience in diversity

Story

Rivers and birds know no borders. They flow freely across Europe.

Diversity, connectedness and free movement are crucial values for the people of Europe. As in nature, they make our systems resilient and give us the capacity to adapt to new circumstances. This resilience is urgently needed in our dynamic and fast-changing world. In their great variety of forms, rivers and birds remind us that

Europe is a cultural ecosystem in which the strength of the whole derives from the richness and variety of the parts.

We draw multiple benefits from resilient ecosystems, from having clean water to drink, to the inspiration and joy we obtain from Europe's biodiversity. We must protect all the elements that nourish our life and that of the planet. In recognition of this, two of the most important pieces of EU environmental legislation, the Birds Directive and the Water Framework Directive, have enabled the protection of those environmental values across Member States.

The six banknotes show the six stages in the life of a river, from the tiny spring to the vast seas, and the birds that have adapted to those riverscapes and seascapes. These images show how one element – water – takes on many different forms in a wide variety of landscapes while retaining its essence. They also depict how people make use of and benefit from nature. And they showcase the wonderful range of forms birds take on, while being instantly recognisable to all of us.

Diversity does not dissolve Europe: it holds it together and gives it the strength to adapt to the challenges of the future.

Motifs

The motifs follow the different stages of the river, from source to sea. The front of the banknotes depicts the diversity of birds across their river habitats. The birds were chosen based on their visual attractiveness, migratory status, Europeanness (i.e. their occurrence in multiple European countries) and whether the EU laws and measures taken to protect the bird species have had an effect on their populations. The reverse side shows how each stage of the river supports a different aspect of human life, with each image representing a different way in which water brings value. It is the diversity of these European landscapes that enables human resilience in the face of profound environmental challenges.

<p>€5 front</p> <p>Wallcreeper next to a mountain landscape (small mountain lake, mountain spring, steep slopes, small headwater streams).</p>	<p>€5 reverse</p> <p>Mountain spring – water supply</p> <p>Water is life. Clean, unpolluted drinking water flowing from a spring into cupped hands.</p>
<p>€10 front</p> <p>Kingfisher in a waterfall or run pool (upper course river landscape).</p>	<p>€10 reverse</p> <p>Waterfall – inspiration</p> <p>A person admiring a waterfall, drawing inspiration from it.</p>
<p>€20 front</p> <p>Bee-eater colony in a sand wall at the side of a large, confined river valley.</p>	<p>€20 reverse</p> <p>Confined river valley – food production</p> <p>Grapes being picked in a vineyard alongside a river.</p>
<p>€50 front</p> <p>White Stork flying over a meandering river in an unconfined river valley.</p>	<p>€50 reverse</p> <p>Meandering river</p> <p>Flood control – “space for the river”</p> <p>A landscape where a river can meander and is surrounded by wetlands that buffer a town from flooding.</p>
<p>€100 front</p> <p>Avocet sweeping over the surface of a mud flat.</p>	<p>€100 reverse</p> <p>River mouth – transportation</p> <p>People on a ferry crossing a river mouth.</p>
<p>€200 front</p> <p>Osprey flying along the coast with a big fish in its claws.</p>	<p>€200 reverse</p> <p>Seascape – recreation</p> <p>People playing on the beach.</p>

Annex 2: Discontinued stories and motifs

The discontinued stories and motifs have not been fully finalized and background checked.

European culture

Europe as a messenger of peace on the world stage

Story

The construction of peace is a prerequisite for a community capable of guaranteeing not only the security of individuals, but also of the urban fabric, individual monuments, nature and every form of civil life. Throughout modern and contemporary history, Europeans have been seeking ways to achieve this. Europe experienced shattering historical tragedies before attaining stable peace for several decades after the Second World War. Today, at a time when global conflicts have spilled over into European territory, EU countries have the task of preserving the memories and defending and sharing with others the achievements made in the search for common prosperity, the promotion of the arts, the protection of the natural environment and education for peace. Europe can draw inspiration from its history and its diverse cultures to promote peace in the world. The choice of images is purely indicative and is intended to stimulate a collective discussion on the theme and the possibilities of representing it as clearly as possible.

Motifs

€5 banknote

Peace: mythological and allegorical representations in art (the "Golden Age" of Lorenzo the Magnificent in Florence).

€5 front

Sandro Botticelli (Florence 1445-1510), *Venus and Mars* (1482-1483), London, National Gallery

or

Piero di Cosimo (Florence 1462-1522), *Venus, Mars and Cupid*, c. 1490, Berlin, Gemäldegalerie.

€5 reverse

Sandro Botticelli, *Pallas as Minerva Pacifica* (1480s or 1490s), Florence, Gallerie degli Uffizi, Gabinetto dei Disegni e delle Stampe.

€10 banknote

Peace: the appeal of the humanists and the visual manifestos of artists to reject war and to achieve universal dialogue and philosophical peace (modern age, on the eve of the Lutheran reform).

€10 front

Erasmus of Rotterdam (Rotterdam 1466-Basel 1536), author of *Dulce bellum inexpertis* (1517).

€10 reverse

Raffaello Sanzio (Urbino 1483-Rome 1520), *The School of Athens* (c. 1510), Vatican City, Musei Vaticani, Stanza della Segnatura.

€20 banknote

Peace: peace education in schools and the role of schools in promoting peace (20th century).

€20 front

Maria Montessori (Chiaravalle 1870-Noordwijk 1952), author of *Education and Peace* (Educazione e pace, 1933).

€20 reverse

Felice Casorati (Novara 1883-Turin 1963), *The Scholars* (1927-1928), Palermo, Civica Galleria d'Arte Moderna Empedocle Restivo.

€50 banknote

Peace: the role of the philosophers and the effects of good government. The contemporary period is represented by the two philosophers, chosen alternately or together, while the image of the fresco by Ambrogio Lorenzetti – *The Effects of Good Government* (1338-1339) Siena, Palazzo Pubblico, Sala della Pace – is taken as an emblematic and atemporal reference to the prosperity and respect for urban planning and territory that result from good government and the maintenance of peace.

€50 front

Immanuel Kant (Königsberg 1724-1804), author of *On Perpetual Peace. A philosophical design (Zum ewigen Frieden. Ein philosophischer Entwurf*, 1795)

or

Norberto Bobbio (Turin 1909-2004), author of *The Problem of War and the Ways of Peace* (Il problema della guerra e le vie della pace, 1979).

€50 reverse

Ambrogio Lorenzetti (documented in Siena between 1319 and 1348), *The Effects of Good Government* (1338-1339), Siena, Palazzo Pubblico, Sala della Pace.

€100 and €200 banknotes

Peace: two twentieth-century Nobel Peace Prize winners: Nathan Söderblom (1930) for the €100 and Bertha von Suttner (1905) for the €200.

In both cases, the artistic images on the reverse are not related in time to the figure on the front, but are more generally emblematic of the theme. The first work – Felice Giani, *Triumph of Peace* (1812), Rome, Palazzo del Quirinale, Sala della Pace – underlines the need for peace, which is seen as an essential condition for the development of art and culture; the second – Francesco Salviati, *Allegory of Peace Burning Arms* (1543-1545), Florence, Palazzo Vecchio, Sala delle Udienze – is intended to allude to Cosimo I de' Medici's desire for peace.

€100 front

Nathan Söderblom (Trönö 1866-Uppsala 1931), winner of the Nobel Peace Prize in 1930.

€100 reverse

Felice Giani (San Sebastiano Curone 1758-Rome 1823), *Triumph of Peace* (1812), Rome, Palazzo del Quirinale, Sala della Pace.

€200 front

Bertha von Suttner (Prague 1843-Vienna 1914), *Lay Down Your Arms* (Die Waffen nieder!, 1889), winner of the Nobel Peace Prize in 1905.

€200 reverse

Francesco Salviati (Florence 1510- Rome 1563), *Allegory of Peace Burning Arms* (1543-1545), Florence, Palazzo Vecchio, Sala delle Udienze.

European children's stories as shared heritage

Story

Europe is united by children's stories that have crossed national borders and have been read by many generations of European citizens. Humans are a storytelling species. From early childhood children listen, watch and read stories to make sense of the world and to learn how to understand and treat other human beings, animals and the environment. The pictures accompanying these stories capture the imaginations of young people and shape their values. The stories we learn to love as children do not come only from our immediate cultural environment or national literature, but also from other regions and cultures in Europe. Many stories written in one European language have been translated into others, forming a shared cultural heritage. That cultural heritage appeals to many of us in a way that is mysterious and timeless, yet also immediate and engaging.

Motifs

The motifs represent iconic children's stories from European folklore and literature. These stories have been read by different generations of Europeans and have come to represent values that are important to us as individuals and societies.

On the front, the main character of the story is represented. The chosen characters are iconic figures who are also easy to identify visually. On the reverse, one or more motifs from the story highlight the moral of the story and the values it represents.

In the design, the historical/iconic illustrations can also serve to highlight the work of the illustrators of these stories, which has greatly influenced their popularity.

<p>€5 front</p> <p>Image of Little Red Riding Hood</p> <p>This is one of the most famous fairy tales originating from European folklore, and is best known in its modern Brothers Grimm version.</p>	<p>€5 reverse</p> <p>Image of the defeated wolf</p> <p>Moral and values</p> <p>The Brothers Grimm version highlights the value of obedience. Little Red Riding Hood meets the wolf because she fails to heed her mother's warning not to leave the path when going to visit her grandmother.</p> <p>The scholars of folklore have also read the story as a rite of passage for girls and women – the experience of becoming an adult.</p>
<p>€10 front</p> <p>Image of Beauty and the Beast</p> <p>Gabrielle-Suzanne Barbot de Villeneuve's story (1740) is about falling in love with somebody who is different (in this case beastly) and being rewarded for it.</p> <p>The story has been considered to be inspired by the myth of Psyche and Cupid and has its own version in every region of Europe.</p>	<p>€10 reverse</p> <p>Image of the rose</p> <p>The rose is taken by Beauty's father from the Beast's garden, with the promise that Beauty will come to live with the Beast. The motif drives the story forward.</p> <p>Moral and values</p> <p>The story represents love and compassion for somebody who is different. The motif of the animal husband reverberates with contemporary discourses of posthumanism.</p>
<p>€20 front</p> <p>Image of Pinocchio</p> <p>Carlo Collodi's story (1883) of the wooden puppet who, through a series of adventures, learns the values of being a good human and is eventually turned into a real boy.</p>	<p>€20 reverse</p> <p>Image of the ABC book</p> <p>The motif represents the story of Pinocchio, through which he learns the values of a being good human.</p> <p>Moral and values</p> <p>ABC books represent the importance of education: at the beginning of the story, instead of going to school Pinocchio sells the ABC book his father had bought him (paid for by his father by selling his own coat) to buy a ticket to the puppet theatre; at the end of the story he repurchases the book to learn how to read, write and count and be able to take care of his elderly father.</p>
<p>€50 front</p> <p>Image of Moomin family (Moominpappa, Moominmamma and Moomintroll)</p> <p>These characters were created by Finnish writer Tove Jansson in her long series of Moomin books (1945-1993). There is no one main protagonist in the series. Rather, the stories are best represented by the family. Historically, the most frequently translated story is <i>The Magician's Hat</i> (the English translation of the original Swedish title).</p>	<p>€50 reverse</p> <p>Any image of the original edition of <i>The Magician's Hat</i>.</p> <p>Moral and values</p> <p>The stories represent a bohemian family that lives close to nature and embraces the individuality of its members and rather eccentric friends. The stories explore tolerance and the strong ties of human lives.</p> <p>The story of <i>The Magician's Hat</i> centres around a hat that grants the wishes of others, but not of its owner.</p>
<p>€100 front</p> <p>Image of Wiplala and the cat</p> <p>The central character of Annie M.G. Schmidt book "<i>Wiplala</i>" (1957) is a roughly 10 cm tall man, Wiplala, who leaves his home country as he is not good at "tinkling", something that everybody at home can master. He accidentally tinkles the family of Bloms into being as tall as himself and is unable to turn them back to normal again.</p>	<p>€100 reverse</p> <p>Image of the miniature Bloms family in the world of everyday objects.</p> <p>Moral and values</p> <p>In being turned into miniature versions of themselves, the Bloms family learns to see the world from an entirely different perspective, and still thrive in it.</p>
<p>€200 front</p> <p>Image of Tintin and his dog Milou</p> <p>Reporter and adventurer Tintin is the main character of one of the</p>	<p>€200 reverse</p>

European passions and pursuits

Story

Throughout history, certain passions and pursuits have been important for people in Europe – love and beauty, creativity, freedom and civil liberties, unity in diversity, human dignity and care. These passions and pursuits have all found expression in European culture. European sculptures, among other art forms, have crystallised these values and given them an iconic tangible form that is familiar to everybody in Europe. In their physical form, these sculptures express the aesthetics and technical culture of the age in which they were made and carry the traces of the places in Europe where they were crafted.

Motifs

The motifs include famous sculptures from the different ages of European culture. They have been chosen to represent the varied passions and pursuits that have been important to people in Europe.

As the motifs on the front represent different artistic styles and ages, the reverse designs could be more abstract and modern, to avoid the banknotes looking too “historical”.

<p>€5 front</p> <p>The <i>Venus de Milo</i>, symbolising love and passion.</p>	<p>€5 reverse</p> <p>An abstract image symbolising love and beauty, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – the abstract pattern of the grain of marble (the material the <i>Venus de Milo</i> is made from), or – a decorative image created by using a fragment of the same sculpture.
<p>€10 front</p> <p><i>David</i> (by Michelangelo), symbolises freedom and civil liberties (the defence of civil liberties in the 1494 constitution of the independent city-state of the Republic of Florence, which was threatened by rival states and the Medici family themselves).</p>	<p>€10 reverse</p> <p>An abstract image symbolising civil liberties and freedom.</p>
<p>€20 front</p> <p><i>The Thinker</i> (Auguste Rodin) symbolises creativity, philosophy and poetry (the inspiration for the sculpture came from Dante's <i>The Divine Comedy</i>).</p>	<p>€20 reverse</p> <p>An abstract image symbolising intellectual and creative pursuits.</p>
<p>€50 front</p> <p><i>Unique Forms of Continuity in Space</i> (Boccioni)</p>	<p>€50 reverse</p> <p>An abstract image of innovation and modernisation.</p>
<p>€100 front</p> <p>The Sibelius monument (Passio Musicae, Eila Hiltunen)</p> <p>The Sibelius monument, which represents the musical instrument the organ, can be used to symbolise unity in diversity, as it consists of a large number of pipes through which musical harmony is created.</p>	<p>€10 reverse</p> <p>An abstract image of unity in diversity (organ music).</p>
<p>€200 front</p> <p>Maman (the giant spider sculpted by Louise Bourgeois) symbolises dignity and care.</p>	<p>€200 reverse</p> <p>An abstract image of human dignity, care and dedication.</p>

European public squares

Story

The European Union is a shared space. Like a public square, it is a gathering place open to all. It's a place of visibility through co-presence, a place of interaction, contact and encounter, of creation and exchange. It's a space for free and critical thought.

These six banknotes map Europe through the meeting places that are its public squares. The common good is as much a heritage, a space, a value and an objective as it is a challenge and a condition for continuing to build a shared future.

Motifs

On the front, the motif is a European square or public space. Each space is symbolic of a type of collective activity that takes place there: a space for philosophical exchange, a commercial space, a place of mobility, a cultural space, a political space and a place for socialising. Every space is occupied and appropriated by people.

On the reverse, a work of art illustrates the different collective activities carried out in public squares and spaces across Europe.

€5 front <i>The School of Athens</i> by Raphael	€5 reverse The agora in Athens.
€10 front Farmers	€10 reverse The Markt (Bruges) with the market taking place.
€20 front Fishermen	€20 reverse A port on the Baltic Sea.
€50 front A writer	€50 reverse The Cours d'honneur (open air theatre) of the Palais des Papes in Avignon during the city's festival.
€100 front <i>Liberty Leading the People</i> by Eugène Delacroix	€100 reverse Square of a former Eastern Bloc country with a protest march.
€200 front Football players	€200 reverse A park

The inhabited waters of Europe: water sprites across Europe

Story

European mythology is strongly inspired by observations and interpretations of nature. Since ancient times, European people have imagined any body of water, whether in the form of the sea, lakes, springs or rivers, as being inhabited by nymphs and sprites. This is the way Europeans have imagined and tried to make sense of their relationship with nature – a fascination comprising an element of awe. The names and specific nature of these spirits may vary from area to area within Europe, but the feelings inspired by water are common to all. In some cases, even the names of the spirits are common to all. European art (music, painting, sculpture etc.) has always been inspired by nature, and this connection is particularly prominent in mythical depictions of water. Furthermore, various plants and animals have been named after these water spirits, a fact that forms a further bridge between nature, culture and science.

Motifs

On the front of the banknotes, the story is represented by the general association of water with a variety of nymphs and sprites (often with common characteristics) throughout European mythology and folklore (both ancient and more recent).

On the reverse, flora and fauna that have been named after these creatures could be shown.

<p>€5 front</p> <p>Naiads (fresh-water nymphs)</p>	<p>€5 reverse</p> <p>Insect: Naiads: Nymphs of aquatic insects, as in the Odonata, Ephemeroptera and Plecoptera orders (dragonflies, mayflies etc.).</p> <p>Plant: Najas minor, European Naida or Brittle Naid (aka Brittle Waternymph).</p>
<p>€10 front</p> <p>Nereids (salt-water and fresh-water nymphs)</p>	<p>€10 reverse</p> <p>Plant: Nerine lilies or Sarracenia x 'Nereid'.</p>
<p>€20 front</p> <p>Gorgons / Medusa</p>	<p>€20 reverse</p> <p>Insect: Lycaena gorgon (Gorgon copper) butterfly.</p> <p>Plant: Euphorbia caput-medusae or Euryale ferox Gorgon plant.</p>
<p>€50 front</p> <p>Mermaid / Melusine</p>	<p>€50 reverse</p> <p>Plant: Proserpinaca palustris or pectinata = Mermaid plant or combed mermaid plant, or Rose Melusina</p> <p>Butterfly: Parantica melusine.</p>
<p>€100 front</p> <p>Undine / Rusalka</p>	<p>€100 reverse</p> <p>Plant: Salvia microphylla 'Delice Ondine' or Cattleja percivaliana 'Ondine' / 'Undine'.</p> <p>Plant: Philadelphus 'Rusalka' = mock orange 'Rusalka' or Chlorophyte: Rusalka fusiformis.</p>
<p>€200 front</p> <p>Siren / Lorelei</p>	<p>€200 reverse</p> <p>Animal: Sirenidae – aquatic salamanders known as "sirens".</p> <p>Plants: Paeonia Lorelei, Echeveria siren or Achillea millefolium Song Siren 'Layla'.</p>

Plurality of ideas and people

Story

Europe's past, present, and future is immensely rich because of its plurality. European culture, in turn, has been shaped by the activities of individuals and social groups from a variety of backgrounds, many of whom have been forgotten over time or written out of history. The banknotes highlight people whose work has contributed to shaping European society in the modern period. It presents individuals who, against many obstacles, helped to overcome taboos and limitations that effectively marginalised individuals and social groups. In doing so, they opened the doors to a more pluralistic, democratic and inclusive European culture. Their influence was not confined to a specific region, empire or nation state but was genuinely European in nature, in many cases connecting Europe with other parts of the world. Their achievements and

contributions deserve to be acknowledged and celebrated. Importantly, they can serve as inspiration for younger generations to overcome limitations and boundaries and work towards plurality in society and culture.

Motifs

The front of the banknotes will show some of the lesser-known individuals whose work has contributed to shaping European society.

The reverse of the banknotes will show abstract images connected to the work, achievements and contributions of these individuals.

<p>€5 front</p> <p>Maria Montessori, 1870-1952; medical doctor, pedagogue, philosopher</p> <p>or</p> <p>Pulmu Helena Kekkonen, 1926-2014; peace activist and pioneer of peace education.</p>	<p>€5 reverse</p> <p>Children playing.</p>
<p>€10 front</p> <p>Anita Augspurg, 1857-1943; actress, photographer, lawyer</p> <p>or</p> <p>Rosa Manus, 1881-1942; internationally active feminist and pacifist.</p>	<p>€10 reverse</p> <p>Young women in a university lecture hall.</p>
<p>€20 front</p> <p>Magnus Hirschfeld, 1868-1935; medical doctor and sexologist</p> <p>or</p> <p>Franca Ongaro Basaglia, 1928-2005; psychiatrist and politician.</p>	<p>€20 reverse</p> <p>Rainbow families at a European get-together (picnic scene or the like).</p>
<p>€50 front</p> <p>Nadia Boulanger, 1887-1979; musician, conductor, musical pedagogue</p> <p>or</p> <p>Roger Casement, 1864-1916; journalist and humanitarian activist.</p>	<p>€50 reverse</p> <p>Young people making music.</p>
<p>€100 front</p> <p>Eileen Gray, 1878-1976; modernist furniture designer and architect</p> <p>or</p> <p>Charlotte Perriand, 1903-1999; architect and designer.</p>	<p>€100 reverse</p> <p>A group of students (women and men, ethnically diverse) in an architecture studio.</p>
<p>€200 front</p> <p>Louis Braille, 1809-1852; educator and inventor of reading and writing system for visually impaired people</p> <p>or</p> <p>Rita Levi-Montalcini, 1909-2021; biologist.</p>	<p>€200 reverse</p> <p>People of all abilities (i.e. with and without disabilities) working together.</p>

Rivers and birds

Circulation and movement

Story

The European Union is all about circulation: of people, of goods and services, of ideas, images and inspirations. The motifs on the banknotes express these themes of circulation and connection through the tangible but mysterious life of rivers and birds – both forces that are simultaneously constant and always in motion.

Water is life: without it we do not exist. It is always flowing. It takes different forms, from the tiny raindrop to the spring to the stream to the river, the delta, the sea and back again. Yet its essence remains the same.

The six banknotes show the six stages in the life of a river, from the tiny spring to the vast seas (and back again), and the birds that visit and inhabit those riverscapes and seascapes. The motifs convey the twin ideas of flow and flux on the one hand and continuity and reassurance on the other.

Birds also embody the circularity and fluidity of life. In their coming and going, they mark the turn of the seasons and remind us of the wonder of the natural world. If we sustain them, they sustain us.

Rivers and birds do not recognise borders. Rivers and seas are our first roads. They have always been Europe's veins and arteries, carrying travellers, trade, adventure and exchange. Through them, Europe's history flows into its future. And birds have also long been images of freedom and aspiration, of escape from tyranny and of the joy of the imagination.

Motifs

The front of the banknotes depicts birds in their habitats. The reverse shows human activity connected to movement and water.

€5 front Spring/rain: rocky landscape, high mountains where water begins its flow, from rainwater and snow melt. Here we find the mythical and visually highly attractive Wallcreeper, adapted to climbing on vertical rock, also spectacular in flight.	€5 reverse Mountain spring Water is life, without it we do not exist. Clean, unpolluted drinking water flowing from a spring, in cupped hands or an ordinary household water tap, open, with running drinking water.
€10 front Mountainous stream: landscape of small "veinlike" streams, zoomed out. A beautiful Kingfisher diving into a small stream or, alternatively, several birds from different species adapted to this habitat shown together (European Dipper, Grey Wagtail, Little Ringed Plover).	€10 reverse Fast-flowing mountainous streams attract sport lovers who are challenged by the dynamic power of the water. A suitable motif could be a kayaker in the torrents, for example.
€20 front	€20 reverse

<p>River in a valley: large river alongside a shore or road. Here we can show a diversity of birds, in or out of the river, especially the visually very attractive European Bee-eater, the very European Red Kite and the Collared Sand Martin.</p>	
<p>€50 front</p> <p>Lower course, meander/lake: wide meandering river flowing into a lake. This environment often includes wet woodlands. Here it's possible to show a diversity of birds together. Favourites are the Black Stork, the better known White Stork and the Marsh Harrier. Other contenders are the European Nightjar and Mute Swan.</p>	<p>€50 reverse</p> <p>Throughout Europe, people are attracted to these bird-rich habitats for recreation. Sailing boats or canoes are the most sustainable leisure boats, so let's picture these.</p>
<p>€100 front</p> <p>River mouth: this habitat is associated with terns (Sandwich Tern and Common Tern), which could be depicted flying over a large river. Other possibilities include the attractive Osprey with a fish in its claws, or the elegant Black-Winged Stilt foraging in the shallow parts of the river.</p>	<p>€100 reverse</p> <p>Large rivers separate land (but not birds!). Humans need to cross and can do so by ferries. Show a ferry in a human-shaped landscape.</p>
<p>€200 front</p> <p>Sea/coast: the final stage of the water's journey before it returns to the clouds. Circle closed.</p> <p>Seascape with large waves, storms and clouds: this is the habitat of the Northern Gannet but also of the Puffin, Avocet, Spoonbill, Black-Tailed Godwit and European Oystercatcher.</p>	<p>€200 reverse</p> <p>The wild ocean and storms attract young kite surfers, who conquer the waves with mind-blowing acrobatic moves!</p>

Annex 3: Members of the Motifs Advisory Group and ECB members

European culture sub-group (in alphabetical order)

Name	Expertise	Nat.	Description
Ángeles Caso	Communications	ES	Journalist, translator and writer Ángeles Caso has worked in cultural institutions such as the Prince of Asturias Foundation and the Feijoo Institute of 18th Century Studies at the University of Oviedo, as well as for different media outlets. She has written several books and articles and is a recipient of the Premio Planeta de Novela literary prize.
Benjamin Chavardès	Architecture, urban architecture	FR	Doctor of Architecture and Associate Assistant Professor in theory and practice at École nationale supérieure d'architecture de Lyon, Benjamin Chavardès is also Coordinator of the international scientific and educational network "Architecture Heritage and Creation". He has carried out research on postmodern architecture, built heritage intervention and sacred architecture.
Marzia Faietti	History, art history, European fine arts, contemporary arts	IT	As well as supervising the Education, Research and Development Department at the Uffizi Galleries, Marzia Faietti also teaches art criticism and history of drawing, engraving and graphics at the Catholic University of the Sacred Heart in Milan and the University of Bologna. She has served as President of the Italian CIHA Committee, Vice-President of the CIHA International Bureau and President of the Scientific Committee of the Magnani Foundation in Reggio Emilia.
Eneken Laanes	Comparative literature and cultural analysis	EE	Professor of Comparative Literature and Leader of the ERC project "Translating Memories: the Eastern European Past in the Global Arena" at Tallinn University, Eneken Laanes has held fellowships at Yale University (2013-2014) and Helsinki Collegium (2019). Her research encompasses cultural memory studies, comparative literature and various artistic media such as literature, film and art.
Demetrios Michaelides	European culture and archaeology, history	CY	Emeritus Professor of Classical Archaeology and Former Director of the Archaeological Research Unit of the University of Cyprus, Demetrios Michaelides is President Emeritus of the International Committee for the Conservation of Mosaics and Vice-President of the Association Internationale pour l'Etude de la Mosaïque antique. His research covers archaeology, art and history.
Théodora Psychoyou	Musicology, history of music	GR	Théodora Psychoyou is Professor in music and musicology at Sorbonne Université and statutory member of the Institut de recherche en musicologie. Her publications explore topics such as the relationship of music and science and the paradigm shifts of musical thought in the 17th century, and cultural music history in the Early Modern era.
Corinna Unger	History	DE	Professor of Global and Colonial History (19th and 20th centuries) at the European University Institute, Corinna has carried out research into the history of European science policy, history of development and decolonisation, environmental history and the history of agriculture and rurality.

MAG members – Rivers and birds sub-group (in alphabetical order)

Name	Expertise	Nat.	Description
Emanuel Buttigieg	European history and culture	MT	Emanuel Buttigieg is Associate Professor of Early Modern History at the University of Malta.
Ivan Čanjevac	Geography, hydrology, geomorphology	HR	Ivan Čanjevac is Associate Professor at the Department of Geography, Faculty of Science, University of Zagreb. From 2012 to 2019, he was Steering Committee member of the Commission for Water Sustainability of the International Geographic Union (IGU-UGI).
Wolfgang Fiedler	Animal behaviour, ornithology	DE	Group Leader at the Max Planck Institute of Animal Behaviour, Dr Wolfgang Fiedler has researched the animal phenology of bird migrations and the consequences associated with migratory behaviour for both the bird and its environment.
Fintan O'Toole	Communications	IE	Fintan O'Toole is an award-winning author, journalist, literary critic, historical writer and political commentator.
Henrique Pereira	Biodiversity, sustainability	PT	Henrique Pereira is Co-speaker of the German Centre for Integrative Biodiversity Research and Professor at the Martin Luther University of Halle-Wittenberg. He also serves as Invited Chair at CIBIO-Biopolis, University of Porto.
Louise Vet	Ecology, sustainability, biodiversity	NL	Former Director of the Netherlands Institute of Ecology (NIOO-KNAW) and Professor of Ecology at Wageningen University, Dr Louise Vet is an elected member of the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW) and Academia Europaea.

Notes: Anne Kumpula, Professor of Environmental Law, University of Turku, has withdrawn from the group.

ECB members

Name	Description
Doris Schneeberger	Chairperson, Directorate Banknotes
Ronnie Vincent	Secretary, Directorate Banknotes
Philippe Geoffroy	Chairperson of "European culture" MAG sub-group
Sarai Artiles	Secretary to "European culture" MAG sub-group
Paloma Varela	Chairperson of "Rivers and birds" MAG sub-group
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For specific terminology please refer to the [ECB glossary](#) (available in English only).

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