

Jean-Claude Trichet: The handing over of the building permit for the new European Central Bank premises by the City of Frankfurt

Introductory statement by Mr Jean-Claude Trichet, President of the European Central Bank, at the press conference, Frankfurt, 6 May 2008.

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Sehr geehrte Frau Oberbürgermeisterin Roth,
sehr geehrte Damen und Herren,

ich freue mich sehr, dass Sie, Frau Oberbürgermeisterin, mir heute persönlich die Baugenehmigung für unseren Neubau auf dem Gelände der ehemaligen Großmarkthalle überreichen. Für die EZB ist es ein besonderer Tag – die Erteilung der Baugenehmigung ist einer der wichtigsten Meilensteine auf dem Weg zur Errichtung des neuen Sitzes der Europäischen Zentralbank.

This building permit provides us with formal approval for our architectural plans. We can now start implementing these plans, which have been under development for the past two years during the planning phase. The ECB sincerely welcomes the issuing of the permit, as it represents the culmination of all the hard work that has been done up to this point.

We are very excited about the upcoming phase, that is, the start of the main construction work. As stimulating as the previous design phases were, they cannot possibly compare to the next stage, in which we will see the new ECB premises rise from the ground.

I would like to take a moment now to reiterate some of the key features of our future premises.

Let me start with the preservation of the *Großmarkthalle*. This important consideration has played a key role throughout the different stages of the project. At the ECB, we take particular pride in the fact that our efforts will enable this remarkable building – designed by the architect Martin Elsässer – to be preserved. In the course of the construction process, the concrete structure of the hall and the brick facades will be entirely renovated, while of course due attention will be paid to the guidelines of the monument preservation authorities. Over the past two years preservation experts have spent literally thousands of hours assessing the exact state of the building's structure and the best methods to use for its preservation. The *Großmarkthalle* will not only be revitalised; it will also be fully integrated into our new premises. The combination of old and new, the former market hall and the new office towers, will create a unique building that will be easily recognisable not only in Frankfurt, but all over Europe and beyond.

Another important element of our new building's design is energy efficiency. The environmental design of the new premises is based on the EU Directive on the Energy Performance of Buildings. Our target for energy usage will be lower than the current German standards. Regenerative energies will be incorporated into the design wherever possible.

Last, but not least, I would like to say a few words about the landscape design of the new premises. On completion, the landscaping will substantially increase the amount of green space in the area. Close cooperation with the city authorities has enabled an integrated design on the eastern boundary of the site, which means that the city's green belt (*Frankfurter GrünGürtel*) can be extended from the *Ruhrorter Werft* on the river out towards the *Ostpark*.

The site of the new ECB premises will be secured in line with the security requirements of a modern central bank. Our security concept foresees physical components which will be integrated into the modulated landscape design and will not impair the view of the building. In

this way, the *Großmarkthalle* will remain visible to its neighbours and those visiting the Ostend area.

Let me now turn to the next steps to be taken in the construction of the new premises.

As you know, we are currently carrying out the preliminary construction work, having received the required permit in February. In this context, the following work is currently being undertaken:

- Excavation work has begun for the basement of the office towers and the underground staff car park in the south of the site.
- The remaining ramp in the old railway delivery area and the two four-storey annex buildings at both ends of the *Großmarkthalle* are being removed. You may have noticed that the bricks that made up the external facade of the annex buildings are being removed by hand, one by one, since some of them will be reused for the renovation of the facade of the hall.

If all goes well, the ECB will announce the general contractor which will carry out the main construction work for the new premises in autumn of this year. The company is currently being selected within the framework of a Europe-wide tender procedure.

In January 2009, following the construction of the basement slab, the foundation stone is scheduled to be laid. (Frau Roth – we hope you will have some space for us in your diary?) At the same time, the renovation of the *Großmarkthalle* will get under way. If all goes as planned, we expect the building work to last around three years, with the building complex being finalised by the end of 2011.

I would like to finish my introductory remarks by expressing my gratitude to the various authorities involved in this project. In particular, I would like to thank Frau Roth and all the staff of the Frankfurt city planning department for their commitment and efficient collaboration in this project, especially during the application process for this building permit. I can only agree with what was mentioned a moment ago: that the guidelines we received were precise and timely and the communication with the relevant authorities was very well organised.

The speed with which our application was handled is further testimony to the excellent collaboration between our New ECB Premises project team and the city authorities.

I thank you for your attention and am now at your disposal for questions.