

Jean-Claude Trichet: Euro Star Event to raise public awareness and facilitate changeover to the euro in Estonia

Speech by Mr Jean-Claude Trichet, President of the European Central Bank, at the Euro Star Event at the Bank of Estonia, Tallinn, 19 September 2010.

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Dear Governor Lipstok,
Ladies and gentlemen,

The introduction of the euro is a historic moment for any EU Member State, and the euro itself is also a historic achievement for Europe. Indeed, the euro is one of the most tangible signs of the cohesion and mutual trust, among Europe's citizens. Since its introduction back in 1999, the depth of feeling generated by the euro has been remarkable. A lot of the attention gained by the euro has been directed not only at the currency itself, but rather at the underlying strategic vision, of which it has become the symbol. The forthcoming enlargement of the euro area to include Estonia demonstrates that the euro area is not a "closed shop". Its doors are open to the EU Member State that fulfils the necessary preconditions in a sustainable manner.

1 January 2011 will become a landmark in the history of Estonia, reflecting the long and challenging process of economic and monetary integration that has enabled Estonia to join the euro area.

The euro banknotes and coins are now an important and natural part of our daily lives. And this will soon be the case for the people of Estonia.

In preparing for the changeover, we have enjoyed excellent cooperation with Eesti Pank and the Estonian Government, working very closely also with the European Commission. And this, I am sure, will make the introduction of the euro in Estonia a success.

Today, Eesti Pank and the European Central Bank are launching the Euro Campaign Estonia 2011, an extensive media campaign to help the people of Estonia to become acquainted with the euro banknotes and coins, the security features of the banknotes and the changeover modalities. The campaign comprises TV advertisements, print publications, public relations activities, interactive applications for the internet and special support for the media.

In total, we have four TV spots that will be aired from November 2010 to mid-January 2011, and these form the backbone of our communications activities for the general public.

The first TV spot sets the mood of the campaign and familiarises viewers with the appearance of the euro banknotes and shows the gates and bridges featured on the banknotes. The gates symbolise the spirit of openness and cooperation in Europe. The bridges represent the very close relationship and cooperation between the people of Europe and between Europe and the rest of the world.

The other three spots are shorter and focus on the security features of the euro banknotes, in particular, the "feel-look-tilt" technique that people can easily use to check the authenticity of our banknotes.

And I am pleased to be able to show you the four TV spots for the first time. Action!

Dear Governor Lipstok,
Ladies and gentlemen,

It is an honour for me to be here tonight to present you with the Euro Star. Since the inception of the Euro notes and coins, this unique memento has been a gift signifying a warm welcome to the "Eurosysteem family". In a way, the very idea of the Euro Star reminds me of

your Kõpu Lighthouse, the world's oldest functioning lighthouse built in 1531. Like a bright star, this lighthouse has safely guided the merchant fleets bringing prosperity to Estonia. I believe that, in its own way, the euro will serve as a similar beacon. It, therefore, gives me great pleasure to present the Euro Star to Governor Lipstok as a symbol of Eesti Pank joining the Eurosystem on 1 January 2011.

We all very much look forward to welcoming Estonia to the euro area. Tere tulemast, Eesti!
[Welcome Estonia!]