

Jean-Claude Trichet: Cultural days of the ECB – Netherlands 2010 – interview in special edition of *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*

Interview with Mr Jean-Claude Trichet, President of the European Central Bank, in special edition of *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (FAZ), published on 10 October 2010.

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1. What do you spontaneously associate with Dutch culture?

Was verbinden Sie spontan mit der niederländischen Kultur?

For me, Dutch culture is impregnated with the openness and modernism that derive from the Netherlands' history and that characterise Dutch society in so many respects. Pushing boundaries and exploring new avenues are key components of Dutch society and culture. And these elements very often find their strongest expression in the field of the arts. Modern dance, architecture, design, literature and cinematographic production are just some of the many artistic disciplines in which Dutch creativity excels. I am particularly happy that all these disciplines – together also with high-profile musical and theatrical performances – are central to this year's programme of the Cultural Days of the ECB, which has been developed in close cooperation with De Nederlandsche Bank. And, of course, one cannot talk about Dutch culture without recalling the significance of the Dutch Golden Age in European history and arts.

2. What role do the arts and culture play for your personal “well-being”?

Welche Rolle spielen Kunst und Kultur für Ihr persönliches Wohlbefinden?

Arts and culture are fundamental in understanding our roots and history, but they are even more important in helping us to deepen our knowledge and understanding of each other. In our increasingly complex and rapidly changing world, such understanding is essential if we are to address global challenges efficiently. And I find it fascinating to see how much new technologies have facilitated our access to the world's immense cultural and artistic heritage.

On a more personal note, I have always had a very strong interest in poetry and literature, and I am also very fond of music and stage performances, such as dance, opera and theatre.

3. What are you especially looking forward to this year?

Worauf freuen Sie sich in diesem Jahr besonders?

Each edition of the Cultural Days of the ECB is unique and has its own spirit. It is the sheer variety of events that always amazes me. And it is a repeated pleasure every year to discover new talents and welcome renowned artists to Frankfurt. I would like to pay tribute here to my predecessor, Willem Duisenberg, who was the initiator of our Cultural Days programme.

I very much look forward to all of the 22 events that reflect the many facets of Dutch culture. I am also particularly delighted that, for the first time in the history of the Cultural Days, the City of Frankfurt has made it possible for us to hold an event at the Frankfurter Paulskirche and so, on 30 October, the brass and string ensemble of the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra will perform at this prestigious and venerable venue. We are extremely grateful to the City of Frankfurt for this honour, all the more so as this concert will also be a charity event.

4. In your opinion, what defines Europeans?

Was macht Ihrer Meinung nach den Europäer aus?

Europeans share a common history, with extraordinary successes, enormous challenges over time and dramas. Europeans have decided to share a common destiny – based on profound friendship, peace and prosperity – which has guided European integration for the past 60 years. We at the ECB are proud to be responsible for delivering price stability to our 330 million fellow citizens in the euro area and to contribute to the prosperity of the European Union as a whole. Faced with serious global challenges, we Europeans can only succeed and progress if we are united, in line with the European ideal and its leitmotif of “unity in diversity”. Raising awareness of the cultural diversity of the European Union and fostering unity is what we aim to achieve through the Cultural Days of the ECB.