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## **Emphase Ltd to design new banknote series**

The SNB exhibits all 12 concepts from the design competition

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Ladies and gentlemen

Sébastien Kraenzlin and I welcome you to the Swiss National Bank's news conference today.

A year and a half ago, the SNB announced that it was developing a new banknote series – its tenth. The SNB then held a competition to identify the most suitable candidates to carry out the design.

## **Winner of design competition**

It is a great pleasure for us to present the winner of the competition to you today. It is Emphase Ltd. Their submission, Concept J, was created under the direction of Fabienne Kilchör and Sébastien Fasel. The concept prevailed over high-quality designs presented by other competitors. Concept J by Emphase Ltd was the only submission to be placed in the top three designs in both the public survey and the evaluation by an external advisory board.

Fabienne Kilchör and Sébastien Fasel have convincingly conveyed the theme of the new banknote series, 'Switzerland and its altitudes', set by the SNB. Their concept depicts the six altitudes – the lowlands, the Central Plateau, the Jura, the alpine foothills, the Alps and the High Alps – according to the specifications, and shows how people live together with nature in the different altitudinal zones: On the front of the different denominations, plants native to the relevant altitude are shown to scale. On the back, typical landscapes and buildings form habitats for humans and animals. Modes of transport connect Switzerland's diverse regions and ensure symbolic continuity across the denominations. Additional elements invite exploration of our country. Graphically, Concept J impresses with its distinctive imagery, the balanced interplay of its components, and its high design density. Technically, the concept is particularly well suited to the banknote development process.

## **Overview of design competition**

Any designer working in Switzerland could apply to take part in the competition. More than 300 applications were received, from which the SNB selected the 12 best. The quality of previous work, artistic creativity and technical competence were all key criteria in the selection process. The designers admitted to the competition were able to prepare their concepts from February until the end of July 2025.

The SNB subsequently published the concepts submitted and conducted a public survey. The public thus had the opportunity to evaluate the concepts and to express their opinion. At the same time, an advisory board of external experts conducted an evaluation. Equal consideration was given to the opinion of the public and the evaluation of the advisory board in the decision. The six best concepts progressed to the second phase of the competition, during which the designers introduced themselves to the SNB and the advisory board, presented their concepts and put forward their financial proposals.

## **Public survey**

Banknotes play an important role in everyday life, first and foremost, of course, when they are used for payment purposes. However, our banknotes are also a calling card for Switzerland and they form a link between the SNB and the public. While security and convenience have top priority, the banknotes also need to be aesthetically appealing. This is why we were particularly keen to factor the views of the public into the evaluation of the concepts. To this end, we conducted a public survey between 13 August and 7 September 2025. To our delight, more than 100,000 people took part in the survey. In addition to the evaluation of the concepts, we received valuable feedback from the public on the banknote designs, both via the survey and from spontaneous reactions. Participation by the Swiss public was balanced with respect to the various language regions, as well as to gender and age. We will take this design feedback into account in the banknote development process.

The survey revealed that the public favoured Concepts K (1st place), B (2nd place) and J (3rd place).

## **Evaluation by advisory board**

In parallel with the public survey, six people from the fields of culture, graphic design and printing, philosophy, communications and banknote development evaluated the banknote concepts. They assessed them in terms of creativity, design quality and the extent to which they conveyed the theme set by the SNB. The advisory board's evaluation took place independently of the public survey, and the survey results were not known to the advisory board.

The advisory board favoured Concepts H (1st place), J (2nd place) and L (3rd place).

The advisory board noted that Concept J by Emphase Ltd, with its depiction of native plants, insects and architectural elements, conveys the theme of 'Switzerland and its altitudes' in a distinctive way. Both the design and the typography in the concept are very precise and intricate. It is thus particularly well suited to the banknote development process. The concept has been carefully thought through and all of the design elements are closely coordinated. With its precision and craftsmanship, this concept impressively articulates the diversity and quality of Switzerland.

## **Result of design competition**

Emphase Ltd also performed very well in the second phase of the competition, which involved exploring possible cooperation, as well as examining the designer's financial proposal and their willingness to develop their concept.

In summary, Emphase Ltd stood out in terms of the technical competence and artistic creativity of their work as well as from a commercial and organisational perspective; they achieved the best overall result. As set out in the Competition Regulations, the results of both

the first and the second phases of the competition counted towards the final result in the proportions 60% to 40% respectively.

Maxitype Sàrl took second place with Concept L, and Norr Design AG third place with Concept B.

The SNB made CHF 60,000 in prize money available for the three best competition entries. The advisory board has decided to award CHF 10,000 for the first prize, and CHF 25,000 each for the second and third prizes. This distribution takes into account the fact that the winner will be commissioned to design the new banknote series.

## **Exhibition**

This competition was only possible thanks to the commitment of many participants. We would like to thank the public for their keen interest and the advisory board for its valuable support.

The SNB would also like to thank all participants for submitting their creative and high-quality designs. As a token of its appreciation, the SNB will be exhibiting all 12 designs submitted by the designers in the SNB Forum at Fraumünsterstrasse 8 in Zurich.

The exhibition will be open to the public daily from tomorrow, 5 March, until 15 March, from 9.30 am to 4.30 pm.

## **Closing remarks**

The content, graphics and technical security of the concept will be developed further in the coming months. The ultimate design of the banknotes may differ significantly from the concept submitted to the competition. The Bank Council is responsible for taking the final decision on the design of the banknotes. The SNB expects the new banknotes to be issued at the beginning of the 2030s, at the earliest.

Ladies and gentlemen, there is still a long way to go before we can hold the new banknotes in our hands. Anticipation remains high. The SNB is convinced that cash will continue to play an important role as a payment method and store of value in the future. Ongoing development of security technology and banknote redesign are therefore crucial. Ensuring the supply and distribution of cash is also part of the SNB's mandate. The SNB will continue to inform the public about the progress of this project.

Thank you for your attention.