

Communications

P.O. Box, CH-8022 Zurich
Telephone +41 44 631 31 11
Fax +41 44 631 39 10

Berne, 2 February 2005

National Bank prepares new banknote series

"Switzerland open to the world" as the basic theme

The preliminary work for the development of a new banknote series for Switzerland has entered a new phase. As part of a competition for ideas, the Swiss National Bank has invited twelve graphic designers to submit their proposals for the design of a new series by 31 October 2005. A jury chaired by Jean-Christophe Ammann, an art historian, exhibition organiser and former director of the Museum of Modern Art in Frankfurt/Main, Germany, will assess the drafts and award prizes. At the end of November 2005, the drafts will be presented in a public exhibition.

The basic theme of the new series is "Switzerland open to the world". Switzerland is to be represented as an entirety, as a country open to the rest of the world and also as a meeting place for the world. The focus should not be on any individuals, inventions or achievements. Much rather, a basic attitude and its manifestations should be conveyed: Switzerland as a platform for dialogue, progress, humanitarian commitment, exciting experiences, creativity and the search for practical approaches to solutions within organisations. It is envisaged that these topics will be dealt with through the lens of economics, education, research and development, human rights, tourism and recreation, culture and, lastly, sports. Six topics have to be depicted, namely the activities of *negotiating and exchanging, teaching and researching, helping and mediating, enjoying and relaxing, creating and designing, and deciding and implementing*. Each of these topics will be assigned to one denomination of the new banknote series. The National Bank has decided that the new banknote series – unlike the current and previous series – will not depict any famous personalities on the individual denominations.

The current banknote denominations of CHF 10, 20, 50, 100, 200 and 1,000 and the familiar colours of the individual denominations will remain unchanged. However, the format of the banknotes will once again be slightly reduced: in particular, the gradation of length will be considerably smaller. This will optimise the general proportions, and the banknotes will even better satisfy the current and future requirements with regard to machine processing. In addition, costs can be cut at the production, packaging, storage and transportation stages.

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The National Bank considers the development of new banknotes as a precautionary measure. It is taking this step in view of the development of new technologies and the typically high demands on the design quality of Swiss banknotes. Both aspects necessitate an adequate preparation period. Whereas the corresponding work can be halted at any time, it is impossible to initiate it or catch up on it within a short period. Should Switzerland decide to join the European Union (EU) at some point in the future, this would most probably entail the adoption of the euro, i.e. Swiss banknotes might become obsolete. At the moment, it is still uncertain, though, if or when such an accession scenario will become a reality. The National Bank's decision must, therefore, in no case be mistaken for a statement on its European policy.

Press release