

News conference on new banknotes

Berne, 6 April 2016
Andréa M. Maechler

Introductory remarks by Andréa M. Maechler

Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. I would also like to welcome you to our news conference.

In my remarks, I will be providing more detail on the banknote security features and our information campaign. Security features have to meet two criteria: they must make life extremely difficult for anyone trying to counterfeit a banknote, and they must make it as easy as possible for members of the public to check whether their notes are genuine. The needs of checking and sorting machines must also be taken into account – in other words, the notes have to be machine-readable.

We have integrated a total of 15 security features into the front and back faces of our new banknotes. To ensure continuity across the entire series, all of these features are located in the same place on all denominations and are the same size. Some – such as the watermark, the microtext and the microperforation – are familiar from the current banknote series; others – such as the transparent elements, the security strip and the shimmering globe – are new. Overall, it is the combination of an innovative substrate, complex security features and sophisticated design that characterise this high-quality new banknote series and make it difficult to counterfeit. We have chosen five key security features to illustrate how the general public can check whether their notes are genuine. These five features are also at the heart of our information campaign.

I would now like to show you two of these five features in more detail, as they illustrate perfectly how the general public can check whether their notes are genuine. Let's start with the globe test. On the front of the note is a depiction of a globe. If you tilt the note from left to right, a golden arc moves across the globe. Now hold the note in front of you and tilt it backwards: the colour of the globe changes.

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Next we have the security strip test. The strip is also on the front of the note, in the bottom half. If you tilt the note from left to right, red and green numbers appear on four lines. As the note tilts back and forth, the numbers on these lines move in opposite directions. Hold the note in front of you: in silver, you will see a map of Switzerland, the Alps, the names of the main four-thousand-metre peaks in the Swiss Alps and the number 50. Now slowly tilt the note backwards: the outline of Switzerland and the Swiss Alps appear in rainbow colours. In addition to this, little shining Swiss crosses are visible inside the number 50.

Another important consideration for us was to meet the needs of visually impaired people, and we therefore involved the Swiss Federation of the Blind and Visually Impaired at an early stage. This resulted in new tactile elements for the visually impaired, consisting of a series of short, raised lines along the notes' long edges. By running their fingers over the lines, the visually impaired can tell the denominations apart. The 10-franc note has one set of lines on each edge; the 1000-franc note, six sets of lines. On the 50-franc note, there are three sets of these tactile lines.

It is crucial that the general public quickly learn to recognise the new note, familiarise themselves with its characteristics and learn how to check its authenticity. Our information campaign uses both traditional and more modern communication channels. The following information material is available from today: the banknote brochure, which you can find in your media pack, contains specific information on the 50-franc note, but also more general information on the themes of each note and the characteristics of the entire banknote series. The credit card-sized folding booklet – also in your media pack – contains general information and details of the five main security features. These two print media are available in all four national languages plus English, and can be obtained directly from the SNB. They will also be on display, or available on request, at some banks and post office counters.

In addition, we have produced a series of short films on the design elements, the security features, the life cycle of a Swiss banknote, substrate production at Landqart and printing at Orell Füssli. These will be published in the course of the day, after which they can be accessed via our website.

The website also contains all the information on the new banknote series, from the graphic design and security concept through to the life cycle of a note with the various stages of development, production and circulation. You can also download the brochures I have just mentioned, together with a special flyer for the visually impaired and a number of photos.

After the notes are issued on 12 April 2016, other communication channels will come into play. There will be a TV advert, detailing the five main security features. In addition, there will be a nationwide poster campaign to help the general public familiarise themselves with the new banknotes. The posters will also be displayed in Liechtenstein, which uses the Swiss franc as legal tender.

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An augmented reality app for smartphones will also be available soon. This will not have authenticity checking capabilities, but it provides a light-hearted look at the main security features and interesting details on some of the design elements.

In your media packs, you will find some of the information I have described, as well as a USB stick with images of the new note and the production process.

I now invite you to get to know the 50-franc note, our new take on a Swiss original.