

We are delighted to announce that our design entry for the redesign of the future Euro banknotes has been selected as one of the ten winners in the European Central Bank's (ECB) design competition. This means our series on the theme of „Rivers and Birds“ is now among the designs under consideration for the future banknotes.

Gisela Goppel worked on the design as lead designer and illustrator, and Florian Toperngpong as concept developer and graphic designer. The public is now warmly invited to name their favourites on the ECB's website. Based on this, the final series will be selected in 2027, which will then form the basis for the new euro banknote series.

Design Concept

The motifs of the series show European birds and their natural habitats along flowing waters on the front, and buildings of the most important European institutions on the back. The rivers and birds serve as a metaphor for nature, freedom, and boundlessness among Europeans, while the buildings symbolise the foundations and values of the European Union.

Our aim was to connect these two visual worlds with a coherent narrative: starting from the stages of a river, we distilled graphic metaphors representing the different qualities of water and linked them to the European institutions depicted on the respective backs of the notes.

For example, the water droplets on the €10 note cast ripples over wide surfaces — impulses that continuously change the water. Similarly, the role of the European Commission, depicted on the back, is to propose new legislative drafts to the European Parliament. It continuously delivers concrete impulses, thereby shaping the character of the European Union.

It was important to us not to use AI. Especially a currency like the euro must build complete trust with its users, even on a subconscious level, and so it only made sense to us that all content was created by hand and is therefore traceable. The foundations are analogue watercolour drawings of birds, landscapes, buildings, and abstract elements, which were scanned and composed on the computer into digital collages, some consisting of over 80 layers.

Taking part in the competition was both a great honour and a joy for us. Through our work on this visual narrative, we were able to contribute to the European idea, which has so positively shaped our lives and the lives of so many people in Europe.