



Some shortlisted design proposals

Source: © European Central Bank

ECB reinvites citizens to help shape the next euro banknotes

The European Central Bank (ECB) has unveiled shortlisted design proposals for the next series of euro banknotes and launched a public survey inviting people across Europe to share their views.

The proposals are based on two themes, “European culture” and “Rivers and birds”. They were selected following an EU-wide design competition that attracted more than 1,200 applications. Twenty-five graphic designers were invited to develop proposals, with an independent jury of experts subsequently selecting the ten finalists.

The online public survey is open until 21 September 2026 and allows participants to provide feedback on all ten shortlisted designs. A separate survey containing the same questions will also be carried out by an independent research company among a representative sample of euro area citizens.

The ECB Governing Council is expected to select the final design proposal around the end of 2026. Its decision will take into account the conclusions of the design jury, a technical assessment and the results of both surveys. The ECB will publish a report on the consultation results once the final design concept has been selected.

The chosen design will then undergo further development and testing before production begins. The new banknotes are expected to enter

circulation in subsequent years, while existing euro banknotes will retain their value and continue to circulate alongside the new series.

The new banknotes will feature improved security and accessibility elements, including features intended to make them easier to authenticate and use for visually impaired people. The ECB also aims to improve their durability and reduce their environmental footprint through more sustainable materials and production processes.

Cash is an indispensable means of payment and a key security-printing product manufactured by our industry. Its production relies on highly specialised printing expertise, secure materials, advanced technologies and sophisticated anti-counterfeiting solutions. The redesign therefore highlights the essential contribution of the security-printing sector to maintaining trusted, accessible and resilient public money across Europe.

At Intergraf Currency+Identity in Copenhagen in October this year Doris Schneeberger from the ECB will speak about this next generation of banknotes in a panel together with the Swiss National Bank and the US Federal Reserve.



PPWR: Intergraf supports printers and calls for clarity on communication items

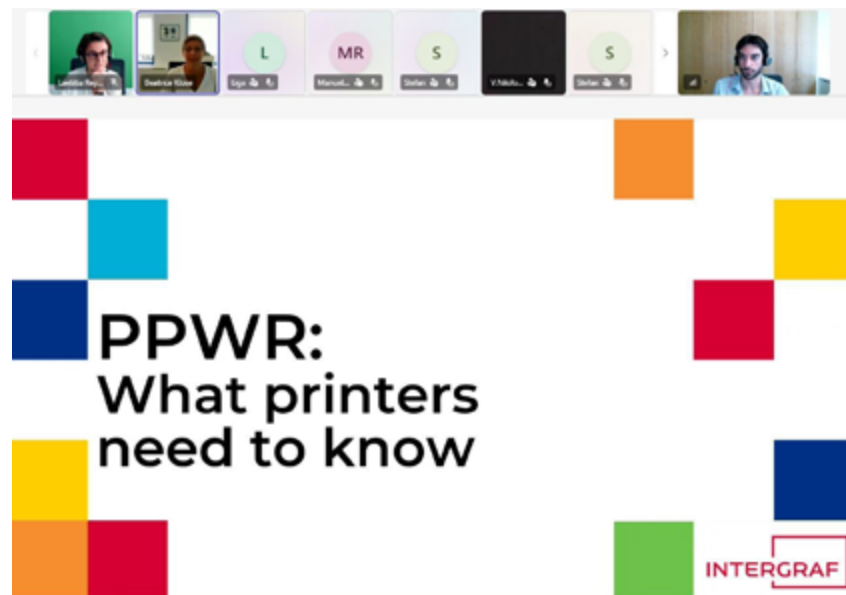
The Packaging and Packaging Waste Regulation (PPWR) will become applicable from 12 August 2026, introducing new requirements for businesses across the packaging value chain.

Printers may be affected in several different capacities. They can be suppliers of printed packaging or packaging components, but they are also users of sales, transport and e-commerce packaging in their own operations. Some printers may additionally have obligations as importers or producers under Extended Producer Responsibility schemes. Non-EU companies may also be affected when supplying packaging to EU customers or placing packaged printed products on the EU market.

To help the sector prepare, Intergraf organised the webinar “PPWR: What printers need to know” on 28 July. Intergraf presented the principal roles, responsibilities and compliance requirements for printers, including eco-design, labelling, technical documentation, declarations of conformity, substances of concern and EPR registration.

The webinar also addressed practical questions concerning branded and unbranded packaging, micro-enterprises, non-EU suppliers, PFAS and heavy metals, transitional arrangements and packaging produced before the Regulation’s application date.

Intergraf has developed a guidance document and six practical templates to help printers identify their role under the PPWR and comply with the relevant requirements. These resources are available exclusively to Intergraf members.



At the same time, Intergraf has joined a coalition of European industry organisations calling on the European Commission to clarify whether correspondence envelopes and other communication items fall within the scope of the PPWR.

The Joint Industry Statement, initiated and coordinated by FEPE, is supported by organisations representing the paper, envelope, printing, postal, mailing, direct marketing and publishing value chains. The signatories include FEPE, PostEurop, CEPI, Intergraf, CITPA and the Keep Me Posted EU initiative.

The coalition warns that significant legal uncertainty remains regarding requirements such as declarations of conformity, technical documentation and the responsibilities of different actors in the communication value chain.

The statement argues that correspondence envelopes are primarily designed to transmit letters, invoices, statements, administrative documents, direct mail and other information. Their principal purpose is communication, rather than containing, protecting or presenting a product.

The signatories also point to the long-established distinction between communications and goods in European and international postal frameworks.

A similar distinction was recently recognised by the European Commission in its interpretation of the EU Deforestation Regulation, under which correspondence is considered to serve a communication purpose rather than being placed on the market as a good.

The coalition is therefore calling for clear written guidance confirming that envelopes and similar items used to transmit correspondence, documents and information should not be treated as packaging under the PPWR.

Such clarification is needed to provide legal certainty, promote harmonised implementation across the EU and prevent unnecessary administrative burdens for businesses ahead of the first PPWR obligations becoming applicable.



German study confirms the continued strength of print

Print mailings continue to hold a strong position in Germany's evolving advertising market, according to the Dialogmarketing Monitor 2026, published by Deutsche Post in cooperation with Statista+. The [study](#) is based on interviews with more than 1,500 marketing decision-makers and a survey of 1,500 consumers.

Germany's net advertising market reached a record €45.3 billion in 2025, an increase of 2.7%. Dialog media accounted for €26.6 billion, or 59% of the total market, while spending on traditional advertising channels declined. Print mailings remained stable at €5.8 billion, making them the country's fourth-largest advertising medium after online marketing, print advertisements and television.

The findings demonstrate the particular ability of physical mail to attract attention and extend the reach of advertising messages. Among consumers who are open or neutral towards postal advertising, 87% look at addressed mailings, while 66% share them with other members of their household. Furthermore, 72% keep mailings somewhere visible, allowing the message to remain present for longer than many digital advertisements.

Print mailings are especially valued for customer retention. According to the study, 73% of companies using addressed mailings identify customer loyalty as their main objective, while 89% use them specifically to communicate with existing customers. Local offers, discount vouchers, coupons and product samples are among the formats that consumers find most attractive.

Artificial intelligence is also becoming increasingly important in postal advertising. Around 68% of surveyed companies already use AI or plan to introduce it, particularly for writing advertising copy and developing campaign concepts. However, consumers remain cautious: 82% expect AI-generated advertising to be clearly labelled, and 65% consider such content less trustworthy.

The results suggest that while digital channels and AI are reshaping advertising, physical mail continues to offer distinctive advantages through its visibility, tactile qualities and ability to reach more than one person within a household.



Cepi statistics warn of gradual erosion of Europe's paper industry

Cepi's 2025 [Key Statistics Report](#) warns that Europe's pulp and paper industry is facing a slow but sustained erosion of its industrial base, despite its strategic importance for the circular economy, climate objectives and European autonomy.

European paper and board production declined by 1.6% in 2025, reaching 77.4 million tonnes. Early figures for 2026 suggest that the downturn is continuing, with output falling by a further 2.4% in the first quarter compared with the same period in 2025.

The overall figures conceal significant differences between product categories. Packaging paper production remained broadly stable, although cartonboard output fell by 5.4%. Graphic paper production declined more sharply, by 7.3%. Even when graphic papers are excluded, European production remained 7% below the record levels reached in 2021.

Cepi attributes the pressure on the sector to intensifying global competition, geopolitical uncertainty and unequal market conditions. European producers have continued to lose production capacity, while imports reached a record 7.7% of EU consumption. Exports still account for more than one-fifth of European production, but the EU's positive trade balance weakened slightly in 2025.

These industrial challenges contrast with the sector's strong environmental performance. Specific CO₂ emissions were reduced by 10.2% in 2025, while the industry continued to operate one of the world's most effective paper recycling systems. A record 92% of the wood used by the sector, as well as almost all recovered paper, was sourced within Europe.

Cepi argues that the statistics demonstrate the need for urgent policy attention. Paper-based products remain essential for packaging, logistics, hygiene and fast-moving consumer goods, while the industry is also developing renewable, bio-based alternatives to fossil-intensive materials.

Without timely action to strengthen European competitiveness and prevent further capacity losses, Europe risks weakening a strategically important industrial sector and missing opportunities in emerging global bioeconomy markets, which could be worth €6.6 trillion by 2030.

GREEN
WASHING

New EU rules to tighten environmental claims in September

Under the [EmpCo Directive](#), new EU consumer-protection rules applying from 27 September 2026 will introduce stricter requirements for environmental claims used on packaging, labels, advertising and other commercial communications.

The rules form part of the EU's efforts to protect consumers from greenwashing and ensure that sustainability claims are clear, specific and supported by reliable evidence. Generic terms such as "green", "eco-friendly", "environmentally friendly" or "climate friendly" will be prohibited unless they can be backed by recognised environmental performance.

Claims that a product has a neutral, reduced or positive environmental impact based solely on carbon offsetting will also be banned. Companies will therefore need to assess carefully how they describe the environmental characteristics of their products and services.

The new requirements are relevant to printers producing consumer packaging, labels, catalogues, advertisements, direct mail and other promotional materials. Customers may need to revise existing artwork, replace unsupported terminology or provide more precise information to substantiate environmental statements.

Visual elements may also be taken into account. Symbols, colours, leaves, natural imagery and sustainability labels could be considered misleading when they create an unsupported impression of environmental benefit.

Printers and designers should therefore encourage customers to review environmental claims and artwork before approving materials for production, particularly where printed products will remain in circulation after the new rules begin to apply.

EVENTS

- [Intergraf Currency+Identity 2026](#) conference, 14-16 October 2026, Copenhagen, Denmark
- [World Print & Communication Congress](#), 18-21 August 2026, Seoul, Republic of Korea. Held alongside K-PRINT WEEK, the event brings together printing associations, industry leaders, technology providers and experts from around the world to explore the future of printing culture in the age of artificial intelligence.

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