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Národná banka Slovenska complied with the principle of openness and transparency in communication by providing information on all decisions regarding the monetary policy, financial market supervision and other tasks of the central bank also in 2008. Nevertheless, this year was for Národná banka Slovenska extraordinarily important and strenuous with regard to communication activities mainly due to the euro introduction in the Slovak Republic.

In 2008, Národná banka Slovenska continued in standard informing on monetary developments in the SR and on decisions on key interest rates. Press conferences were held on a monthly basis with NBS top representatives presenting standpoints of the NBS Bank Board on monetary developments and also, voting of the Bank Board members in the case of changes made to the NBS interest rates. In addition, NBS published quarterly forecasts of expected developments in basic macroeconomic indicators in the Slovak economy.

Representatives of Národná banka Slovenska presented and explained current issues before parliamentary committees, at meetings with the professional community, and through articles and presentations in the media. NBS communication with the media intensified primarily in the second half of 2008 in connection with impacts of the global crisis on the economy and financial sector of the SR.

Národná banka Slovenska produced specialized publications that were providing information and analyses in the areas covered by main activities of the Bank. They included the Annual report, Financial Stability Report, Report on the Results of the Financial Sector Analysis, the Monetary Survey monthly bulletin and Medium-Term Forecasts. Apart from this, other analyses and research studies on monetary developments, the financial market and the effect of the euro introduction were published in electronic form.

Národná banka Slovenska as part of the European System of Central Banks (ESCB) was participating in joint communication activities within the ESCB. NBS representatives were regularly

attending meetings of the EUROSYSTEM/ESCB Communications Committee (ECCO) and its working groups for the euro cash communication, multilingual communication, Internet and websites of the central banks as well as the internal communication of the Eurosystem.

In line with the principles of the ESCB multilingual communication Národná banka Slovenska participated in preparation of the national language versions of the official ECB publications (four regular issues of the ECB Monthly Bulletin, special ECB Monthly Bulletin on the 10th anniversary of the ECB, the ECB Annual Report, the ECB Convergence Report and the publication entitled "The single monetary policy in the euro area: General documentation on Eurosystem monetary policy instruments and procedures".

Concerning its website, NBS accepted ESCB minimum standards for the Web and recommendations regarding navigation, content structure and accessibility of websites. In the field of Eurosystem internal communication, NBS made some information accessible for the use in company journals of the euro area central banks.

By means of electronic communication, NBS dealt with 2,519 messages and information requests. Under the law on free access to information, Národná banka Slovenska replied in writing to 154 requests.

EURO INTRODUCTION

The information campaign on the euro introduction in the SR, led by NBS, culminated in 2008. For the purpose of overseeing the nationwide communication activities, NBS established the Working Committee for Communication on the Euro Changeover which included representatives of central government bodies, the private sector, and public service media (for more information see chapter 9, Preparations for the euro introduction in the SR).

In cooperation with the Ministry of Finance NBS carried out seven waves of media campaign



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to enhance the awareness of the public on the euro. Also in cooperation with the Ministry euro starter kits with information brochures and euro calculators were delivered to all households in Slovakia. These activities were supported by the European Commission through several grants.

In the campaign NBS focused on vulnerable target groups which needed specific information or alternative forms of their dissemination. The target groups included mainly senior population, children, youth and national minorities – among them Romany and Hungarian, the blind and partially sighted, deaf, mentally handicapped, homeless, prisoners, abandoned children in youth homes, addicted, people in the crisis centres, and also small and medium-sized enterprises and municipality representatives. NBS created special aids and information materials for several of these groups such as a cash test for recognizing money, a talking card for blind people or DVD for the deaf, CD for Romanies etc.

The effectiveness of the campaign was regularly measured through public opinion surveys carried out by the Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic. In January 2009, 93% of Slovak residents surveyed expressed satisfaction with the information they had received about the euro, and, according to a Eurobarometer survey, one of the most trusted sources of information on this issue was Národná banka Slovenska.

Information was provided to a range of target groups through various channels. Among the most complex and used of these channels was the official website www.euromena.sk, which attracted almost 2.3 million visitors.

NBS created 39 information materials totalling 7,082,300 copies for the general public. Overall, NBS distributed more than 20 millions of different euro publications. Beside own materials of NBS the figure included also publications of the European Central Bank, European Commission and joint materials of NBS and the Ministry of Finance of the SR.

NBS staff participated in almost 300 seminars and training events on the euro including 48 lectures and seminars which took place in the NBS premises, mainly for teachers and students of primary and secondary schools. Travelling exhibi-

tion "Slovak Euro Coins" was installed in eight Slovak towns during 2008, attracting more than 28,000 visitors.

The NBS Bank Board approved the Memorandum of Understanding between the European Central Bank and Národná banka Slovenska on communication activities for euro introduction in Slovakia. The most important activities within the Memorandum included:

- Preparation of publications and information materials aimed at informing the general public, minorities and sensitive target groups about the euro introduction process in Slovakia and security features of the euro banknotes. Certain publications were at disposal in four language versions – Slovak, Hungarian, Romany and English.
- Direct mail of Národná banka Slovenska and the European Central Bank which included information leaflet and two conversion cards with description of security features of the 20 euro banknote. The direct mail was sent to 1,928 thousands of households in Slovakia.
- Preparation of the Slovakia Euro Changeover Conference which took place on 22 September 2008 in the premises of the Slovak Philharmonic in Bratislava. The Euro Conference was preceded by ceremonial unveiling of the mega board on the NBS building and opening of the Euro exhibition.
- Implementation of the programme Partnership in communication, supported by the European Central Bank, which was joined by 108 organisations – banks, ministries, large retail chains, travel agencies, and also by small companies, publishing houses, consumer associations, etc. Through this programme, the organisations obtained information materials of NBS and ECB or layouts for creation of own information material on the euro introduction.
- Organisation of seminar for journalists from the most important Slovak media in September 2008 in Frankfurt about functioning and decision-making of the European Central Bank and Eurosystem and about the aims of euro area monetary policy.

To mark the fixing of the conversion rate and official admission into the euro area Národná banka Slovenska prepared the exhibition "From the Koruna to the Euro", which was opened on 8 July 2008 in Brussels. The exhibition illustrated the



history of money on the territory of Slovakia and Slovak motifs on the euro coins to other euro area members.

Also the Open Day at the headquarters of Národná banka Slovenska, visited by almost 4,000 people, was in 2008 under the sign of the euro. One of the events mentioned was the “Euro in My Eyes” competition, which was entered by children and young people from across Slovakia.

NBS WEBSITE

The NBS website continued to be the most used and complex communication tool also in 2008. With regard to its information content, the website is intended not only for economists, but also for other target groups including the general public. As the Internet is increasingly being used among the general public, it is necessary to account for this trend also on websites, concerning both, the information content, and usability and accessibility. Therefore, in 2008, Národná banka Slovenska undertook a complex remake project of its website. The changes referred to the design, restructuring of the content and technological environment, and W3C standards implementation which increase accessibility of the web domains for the visually impaired. The new website was made available to the public on 1 January 2009.

BIATEC

The BIATEC journal also plays an important role in the area of public communication, being a respected platform for the presentation of specialist knowledge in banking, finance and economics. Its contributors and readers represent a balanced link between Národná banka Slovenska, the banking and financial sector, and the academic and educational sphere. The journal has become not only a communication tool of the central bank, but also its contribution to fulfilling the Lisbon Strategy objectives and creating a knowledge-based economy.

NBS LIBRARY

For the professional community, Národná banka Slovenska offers library and information services

based on a specialized collection of resources focused on monetary policy, the banking sector, and financial markets, as well as the law and legislation, computer technology and statistics. In 2008, the online library processed around 4,000 books, research reports, periodicals and articles. The central NBS library provides access to electronic information resources, both domestic and foreign, and conducts information searches with output provided mainly for NBS staff. General information about the central library is published on the NBS website. Members of the public may access any of the reference, bibliographical and search services by electronic mail. The public appreciate the high level of these services, which is reflected in the fact that the number of visits, as well as in-person borrowings, have been rising year after year. In 2008, the central library processed more than 1,500 search requests from both Slovakia and abroad and provided information on various aspects of economics, particularly in relation to the introduction of the euro in Slovakia.

MUSEUM OF COINS AND MEDALS IN KREMNICA

The Museum of Coins and Medals at Kremnica has been a part of Národná banka Slovenska since 1994, and administers an extensive collection covering the fields of numismatics, regional history and art. Part of the collection is presented to the public through the permanent exhibitions “Two Sides of Money – Money and Medals in the History of Slovakia” and “Routes of Collecting in 15th to 18th Century Art – the Town Castle”. For the latter exhibition, the museum received two major awards in 2008: *Museum of the Year*, conferred by the Slovak Ministry of Culture, the Union of Museums in Slovakia, and the Council of Slovak Galleries, and the *Annual Award* from the magazine *Pamiatky a múzeá (Monuments and Museums)* for the exceptional activities in the area of cultural heritage protection. Národná banka Slovenska was also awarded a commemorative silver medal for its contribution to the development of Kremnica town and the preservation of cultural heritage.

In addition to permanent exhibitions and the long-term art history exhibition, the museum provided for ten occasional exhibitions at its



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premises in 2008, including an exhibition within the series of international medal expositions of Visegrad Four countries: *"From the Danube, Vltava and Vistula – Medal Makers and Their Works"*. At the end of 2008, the Museum of Coins and Medals prepared a specialist exhibition entitled *"Currency Reforms, Partings, Separations, and Other Cataclysms in the 20th Century"*, focusing on the monetary upheavals in the 20th century in both Slovakia and the broader central and eastern European region.

The museum focused much of its activities on the organization of cultural and educational events designed for secondary schoolchildren and for the general public. For the third year in a row, the museum participated in the international museum project enabling public to visit the exhibitions until late at night under the heading "Night of Museums – Night of the Muses".

In 2008, the permanent and occasional exhibitions of the Museum of Coins and Medals at Kremnica attracted more than 44,000 visitors from Slovakia and abroad.