

Government
of the Slovak Republic



NÁRODNÁ BANKA SLOVENSKA

Communication strategy on euro introduction in Slovakia

October 2007

This document was prepared by the Communication Working Committee, led by the National Bank of Slovakia. It was approved by the Národná banka Slovenska on October 10, 2007 and the Government of the Slovak Republic on October 17, 2007.

Table of Contents

1. Executive summary	3
2. Main frameworks of the euro changeover in the Slovak Republic	4
3. Organization and financing of the information campaign	6
3.1. Organization	6
3.2. Financing	7
4. Objectives and Principles of the Campaign	7
5. Main messages	8
6. Target groups	9
7. State of public opinion and feedback	10
8. Instruments and distribution channels	12
9. Confidence building measures	13
10. Timing	14
10.1. Already completed activities	17
11. Logo and slogan	18
11.1. Common signing	19
12. Partners and multipliers	19
13. Specific strategies for vulnerable groups and other special audiences	20
13.1. National minorities	20
13.2. Blind and partially sighted	21
13.3. Deaf	22
13.4. Elderly	22
13.5. Children and students	22
13.6. Mentally handicapped	22
13.7. Socially excluded	23
13.8. Institutionalized	23
13.9. SMEs	23
14. Action plan	24
14.1. Year 2007 and first half of 2008	24
14.2. Year 2009	25
Annex: Institutions represented in the Communication Working Committee	26

1. Executive summary

The euro introduction in Slovakia is planned for the year 2009. The euro will be adopted in Slovakia with the big bang scenario, similarly to other new EU Member States. The National Coordinator of the euro introduction process is the Minister of Finance.

Prior to the euro changeover an extensive information campaign will take place, in order to inform of the euro changeover as many citizens as possible in time and to the sufficient extent. The coordinator of communication activities is the Communication Working Committee, led by the Národná banka Slovenska. Individual communication activities will be performed by the NBS, the Ministry of Finance of the Slovak Republic, the Government of the Slovak Republic, and other public administration bodies. The Government of the Slovak Republic has earmarked 110 mil. SKK to finance the campaign, and the NBS has allocated 70 mil. SKK for the period from the end of 2007 to the first quarter of 2009.

The main objective of the information campaign is to inform the citizens of Slovakia in time and in a due manner of the euro changeover, in particular of practical issues. Information should reach all citizens without having to search actively for it. The main campaign messages will be information on the conversion exchange rate, the value of the new currency, the method of cash exchange, dual circulation, the appearance and security features of euro banknotes and coins, and consumer protection against unreasonable increase in prices.

The main target group is the general public – all citizens of the Slovak Republic. However, special attention will be paid to other target groups, which have either difficult access to information, or need specific information. Among these groups are children and young people, pensioners, the handicapped, persons living alone and national minorities. Other groups that need a significantly broader scope of information include small and medium sized enterprises and public administration bodies, mainly the municipalities. It is assumed that large businesses and central government bodies are able to acquire all necessary information without an external assistance.

The citizens of Slovakia belong to the biggest optimists among the new Member States in respect of the euro introduction. Also the knowledge of the basic facts is on a good level. With approaching date of the euro changeover, however, both the demand for information and the need to increase citizens knowledge increases.

As the information campaign on the euro introduction must reach a wide spectrum of target groups, it will be necessary to use a wide scale of tools and information channels. For the overwhelming majority of citizens, television will be the main information channel, however, all mass media will be used, i.e. TV, the radio, the press and the internet. Mainly the public media will be active in spreading information on the euro in various documentary and information programs. In order to ensure as wide distribution of information as possible, it will be necessary to use also sufficient extent of paid advertising in the media. At least one printed information material and a euro converter will be delivered to every household. A specialised website will be established in order to inform on the euro introduction. Moreover, a toll-free telephone line will be set up for questions on the euro introduction. One hundred days before the euro introduction a series of events will be organised for the general public on the euro issues. Other tools that will be used include mainly printed materials (leaflets, posters, booklets), audio visual materials (CD, DVD), outdoor advertising, specialised conferences and seminars.

The information campaign will follow up with already running communication activities, and it will gradually get stronger in the course of 2008. The main part of campaign can not start before the second half of 2008, because the conversion exchange rate will be set and the EU Council will adopt the final decision on the euro introduction in Slovakia only in July 2008. Only after this date the media advertising campaign or printing and distribution of

information materials for households can start. The campaign will fade away also at the beginning of 2009, when the euro will have been already adopted – it may be necessary, e.g. to point out the value of new euro money, or to repeat the dates for the exchange of Slovak koruna for the euro.

All activities of the campaign will use a single logo and slogan, in order to mutually strengthen information from various channels. Any activities in which third parties will participate will be branded also with their logo (e.g. significant support is expected from the European Commission or from the European Central Bank).

Several partners will participate in information activities, without which the public institutions themselves would not be able to execute an optimum campaign. The partners of the campaign will include: the European Commission and the ECB, banks, businesses mainly in the retail sector, municipalities, NGOs and consumer protection associations. The campaign will also rely on multipliers – persons which are able to further disseminate information in their surroundings. They include journalists, social workers, teachers, children or clergymen.

This communication strategy on the euro introduction in Slovakia was prepared by the Communication Working Committee, which was established by the Národná banka Slovenska. A list of institutions that are represented in the Committee is given in an annex. The strategy was consulted with the representatives of the European Commission. It was also discussed with the representatives of minority and vulnerable groups of citizens, specifically with the Slovak Blind and Partially Sighted Union, the Slovak Deaf Association, the Slovak Union of Pensioners, the Head Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic, and the Society of Friends of Children in Foster Homes.

2. Main framework of the euro changeover in the Slovak Republic

The Slovak Republic intends to adopt euro in 2009. This effort is based on (1) a strong conviction that the common European currency will be a net benefit for the country and (2) good prospects to meet the Maastricht criteria by the end of 2007.

The strategy of adopting the euro as soon as the Maastricht criteria can be met was adopted by the government on July 16, 2003, when the government together with the Národná banka Slovenska concluded that the benefits of euro introduction clearly outweigh the disadvantages. The target date for euro introduction – January 1, 2009 – was selected by the government on September 8, 2004 in a Specification of the Strategy for Adopting the Euro in the Slovak Republic.

The main principles of the euro changeover in Slovakia were defined in the National Euro Changeover Plan, adopted by the government on July 6, 2005. The Changeover Plan was updated on March 21, 2007. Further updates are foreseen as the euro introduction date approaches.

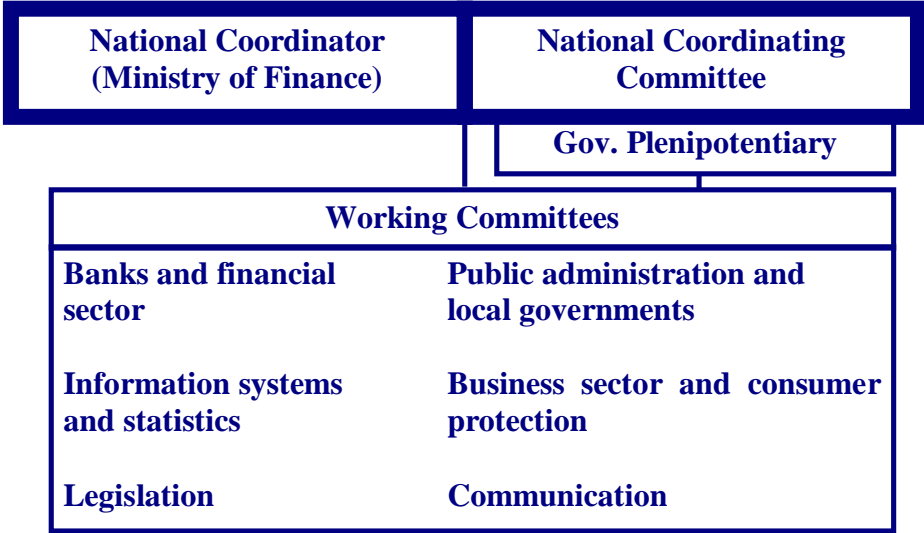
Slovakia intends to introduce euro in a big-bang scenario. The euro will become legal tender both in the scriptural and cash form on the same date. This and other main principles of the changeover were selected with two objectives: (1) to ensure a smooth changeover and (2) to minimize the changeover costs.

After the euro is introduced, it will still be possible to pay with Slovak banknotes and coins until January 16 – during a dual circulation period. Slovak banknotes will be exchanged for euro without charge in banks until the end of 2009 and in the NBS without any time limit. Coins will be exchanged in banks until July 2009 and in NBS for 5 years.

Dual display of prices will be mandatory starting 30 days after the convergence rate is set. It will remain mandatory for one year after euro introduction.

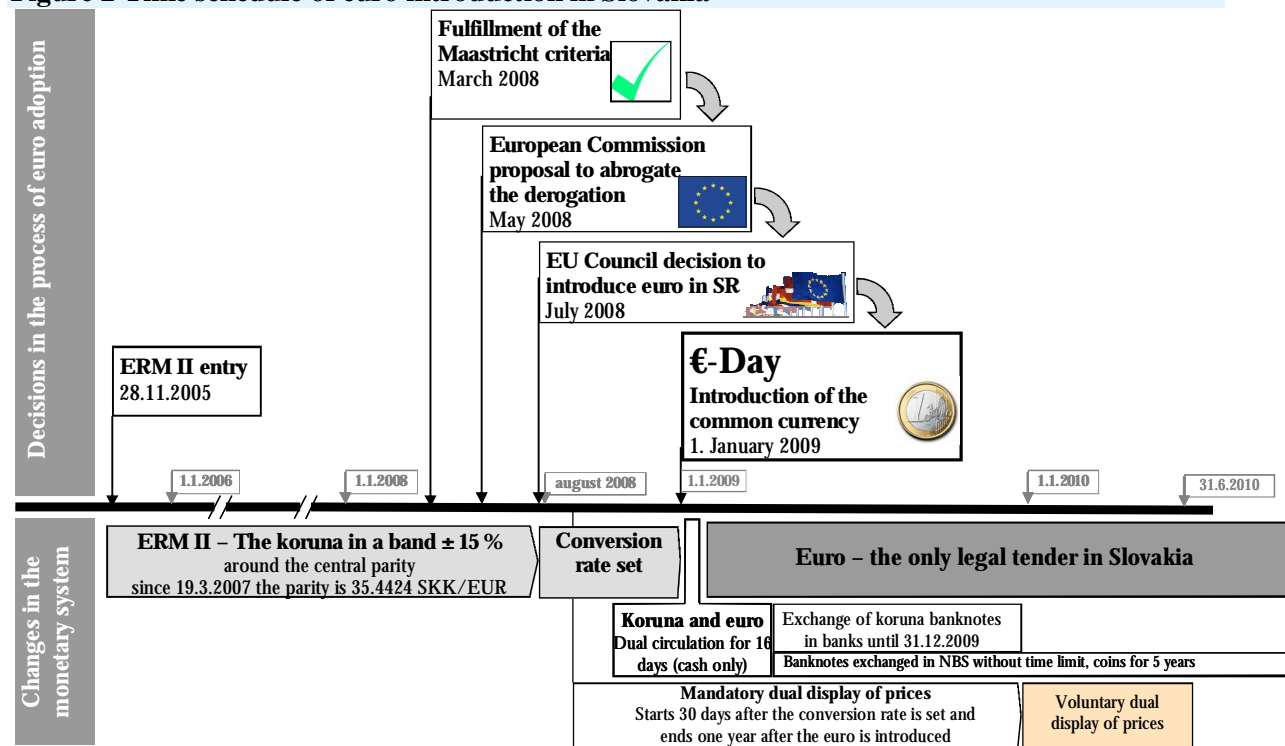
The government has designated the Minister of Finance to be the National Coordinator for Euro Changeover. It has also established a National Coordination Committee (NCC) to be the supreme coordination body for the changeover. The NCC is composed of relevant ministers and representatives of the private sector and local governments. In 2006, to intensify the preparation for the euro changeover and to better coordinate the preparations the government has appointed a Government Plenipotentiary for Euro Introduction. His main tasks are to coordinate the preparatory activities, communicate with domestic and international institutions and also give recommendations to the NCC or the government. At a working level six committees were established, which are responsible for solving individual issues in their respective areas of competence (Figure 1).

Figure 1 Institutional Framework for Euro Introduction



Source: National Euro Changeover Plan for the Slovak Republic.

Figure 2 Time schedule of euro introduction in Slovakia



Source: Národná banka Slovenska

3. Organization and financing of the information campaign

3.1. Organization

The coordinator of the communication activities is the Communication Working Committee headed by the Národná banka Slovenska (see Annex for a composition of the Committee). The Committee cooperates intensively with the Ministry of Finance as the National Coordinator and the Government Plenipotentiary for Euro Introduction.

The Communication Working Committee collaborates and consults with enterprises, the public media, the Slovak Banking Association, municipalities, as well as with non-governmental organisations. Businesses and non-governmental organisations have an opportunity to cooperate in the communication within the Euro-Partnership framework. In line with the recommendations of European institutions, the Národná banka Slovenska will set up adequate personal capacities for successful euro introduction.

The main part of the communication campaign should be performed by a professional communication agency on the basis of successful completion of a public procurement process. Public procurement is executed by the Ministry of Finance. The work of the communication agency will be supervised by a steering committee composed of the representatives of the Ministry of Finance and the Národná banka Slovenska. Should it not be possible to select the communication agency in time, given the uncertainty in the public procurement process, a part of activities will have to be executed directly by the Národná banka Slovenska or by the Ministry of Finance of the Slovak Republic.

After having prepared the basic criteria for the selection of the communication agency and this communication strategy, the role of the Communication Working Committee will switch to coordination activities among its members, to the exchange of information and

recommendations of its individual members with regard to the execution of their activities. The management and responsibility for individual activities will be taken by the Národná banka Slovenska, the Ministry of Finance and other institutions, which will execute these activities. Parts of communication strategy that will not be executed by the agency will be executed directly by the Národná banka Slovenska and by the Ministry of Finance (orientation mainly to vulnerable groups), by the Government Office (telephone information line, national minorities), and by relevant Ministries (more details in the action plan).

On the international level, the Národná banka Slovenska and the Ministry of Finance will collaborate with:

- The European Commission (specifically, the Directorate General for Economic and Financial Affairs, and with the Representation of the European Commission in the Slovak Republic) – in order to capitalize on the expertise and experience of the Commission in the preparation of the communication strategy and implementation of certain tools and the partnership programme of cooperation for the coordination of communication activities within the PRINCE programme, including the cofinancing of selected individual communication projects and free utilisation of audio-visual and printed materials,
- European Central Bank – in particular in the form of intensive consultation in the preparation and realization of the information campaign and also via the free use of relevant printed and audio-visual materials, containing primarily information on the designs of euro banknotes and coins, their security features as well as on procedures in checking the authenticity of money in cash handling,
- Oesterreichische Nationalbank in a Twinning-Partnership program – in the form of consultations and obtaining experience from the Oesterreichische Nationalbank information campaign in introducing the euro in Austria in 1999-2002.
- Banka Slovenije and other institutions of Slovenia on the basis of formal and informal consultations in order to use their experience in the information campaign on the euro introduction in Slovenia.

The printed and audio-visual materials prepared by the ECB and the European Commission will be distributed free of charge by an intermediary addressing individual target groups (schools, towns and municipalities, handicapped citizens) and will be used intensively in the information campaign.

3.2. Financing

In March 2007 the government and the Národná banka Slovenska decided to allocate 180 million SKK for the communication campaign for years 2007-2009. This budget is based on the estimated costs of the planned activities and is also broadly in line with the past experience – on average euro communication expenses in euro area countries were 1 euro per person.

The costs will be shared between the government budget and the Národná banka Slovenska in the proportion of 60:40. The Ministry of Finance and the NBS have concluded an agreement specifying details of the financing mechanism in May 2007.

4. Objectives and Principles of the Campaign

The main objective of the information campaign will be to contribute to smooth euro changeover in Slovakia. **Every citizen should be informed in time, to a sufficient extent, and in an appropriate form** of all matters of concern to her related to the euro introduction.

The information campaign will not be persuasive, but rather informative and educational. Since the messages must reach the whole population, they must remain simple and attractive.

The material content of the campaign will comprise mainly of practical issues and advice related to the changeover, to the common currency. The information campaign must be convincing, business-like, highly professional and credible, without any hidden meanings and hidden appeals. The information campaign will respond flexibly to the results of public opinion surveys to best service the needs of the people to be informed.

The campaign aims to be efficient in the sense of providing the maximum extent of information, given the budget. Therefore, the potential of individual target groups to disseminate information to other groups will be used intensively. The communication strategy must also take into account that absolute certainty about euro introduction and crucial information – such as the conversion rate – will only be available when the EU Council makes the decision on accepting Slovakia into the euro area. The most intensive part of the campaign will be conducted after this decision is taken – probably less than 6 months before the euro introduction date.

The information campaign will be managed so that the addressees do not have to actively look for the information connected with the euro changeover, but so that they receive it via appropriate communication channels in their homes, schools, workplaces, etc. Additional information will be available to the persons who are willing to take active steps – free telephone line and a website.

The primary addressee of the campaign will be the population as a whole and also its individual target groups. Increased attention will be paid to potentially sensitive groups (senior citizens, children, handicapped persons, persons living alone and national minorities) and also sole traders, small and medium sized enterprises, particularly in economically weaker regions of Slovakia. A significant role in the information campaign towards citizens will be played by towns and municipalities as intermediaries of practical information from central bodies towards the final addressee. Small towns and municipalities in particular will, besides disseminating general information, provide citizens also with specific information of a local nature (opening hours of local banks, post offices, etc).

Large businesses and general government institutions will be provided with clear and timely information, but these institutions will not be a direct target group of the information campaign. These entities have sufficient sources and instruments to provide their employees, clients and partners with sufficient information.

It should be noted that the Communication Working Committee is responsible for delivering the respective information to the public, but it does not create the information. Therefore, the Communication Working Committee must be in close contact with the National Coordination Committee, with other Working Committees, primarily the Working Committee for the Non-Financial Sector and Consumer Protection.

5. Main messages

The most important message of the campaign will be the information that the euro will be introduced in the SR on January 1, 2009 (€Day) and that all residents in the SR, all entities and institutions located in the SR and all the systems must at this day be prepared for using the euro in cash and non-cash payments.

Based on the National Euro Changeover Plan for the Slovak Republic, the main messages are defined as follows:

- Practical guidance for the euro changeover (handling cash and bank accounts during dual circulation, exchange of Slovak koruna for euro, withdrawing euros from ATMs, etc.).
- Conversion rate and the value of the new currency; mechanism for recalculating prices, wages, pensions and the other incomes, expenditures and liabilities from koruna to euro.

- Key dates in plans of euro introduction (start and end of dual display of prices, dual circulation period, important deadlines for cash exchange).
- Dual circulation; explanation that although koruna banknotes and coins in the cash system of payments will from the moment of adopting the euro become a denomination of the euro, throughout the period of dual circulation cash payments will be accepted without limitation as the legal tender. Gradually, however, they will be withdrawn from circulation. Following the end of the dual circulation it will be possible to exchange koruna banknotes and coins for euro only in banks.
- Recommended actions and procedures during currency changeover.
- Dual display of prices and other consumer rights related to euro introduction; explaining there should be no fears of price growth, above usual inflation, caused by the euro changeover.
- Tools to prevent price abuses and unjustified price increases during the changeover (above the dual display of prices) – including ethical code for euro introduction, monitoring of prices by the authorities (Slovak Trade Inspection) and activities by consumer protection groups (e.g. price watch, naming and shaming).
- Recognition and security features of euro banknotes and coins, distinguishing them from counterfeits; explaining that euro banknotes are the same in all euro area countries and that euro coins with different national sides are equally valid in all euro area countries.
- The fact that koruna in the non-cash system of payments will cease to exist on January 1, 2009.
- Direction to other information sources which can be useful in answering and solving specific questions and problems.
- Information about the Economic and Monetary Union, about euro introduction benefits, about importance and functions of the European Central Bank.

The intensity of the individual messages will vary in time as the campaign proceeds and it will also vary across individual target groups. The campaign will start with more general messages (key dates, information about the euro and euro area, responses to fears about price increases and consumer protection issues) and move towards specific issues (dual display of prices, conversion rate, dual circulation, cash exchange, conversion of accounts, appearance and security features of banknotes and coins, recommended actions). The proportion of individual messages in the overall mix will evolve according to the needs of the target groups, reacting especially to public opinion surveys, feedback on a telephone info line and website.

6. Target groups

The main part of the information campaign will be directed at general public – Slovak inhabitants. Special attention will be devoted to sensitive groups (the elderly citizens, children and young people, physically handicapped – e.g. visually impaired, persons living alone, social and national minority groups) and less economically developed regions of Slovakia. Moreover, small and medium sized entrepreneurs and sole traders cannot be forgotten as a specific target group.

- **general public** - the main addressee of the campaign; the greatest share of communication activities will be aimed at this target group,
- **children, school-aged youth** – besides information aimed at the general public children will be provided with information tailored and prepared for their age, eventually also the potential of this group to further disseminate the information especially to their relatives may be used (grandparents, relatives and friends in their homes, in regions),

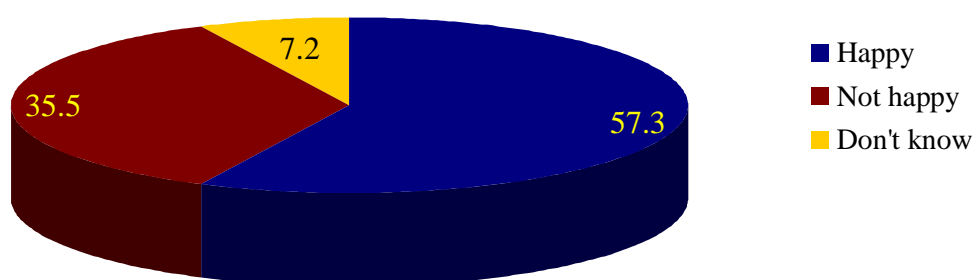
- **secondary schools and university students** – this target group will be addressed both as an addressee and also as an intermediary of information to other groups of the population – in particular family members (grandparents, relatives and friends in their homes and in regions),
- **sensitive groups (elderly persons, handicapped persons, persons living alone)** - besides information intended for the general public, specific instruments and communication channels will be necessary for informing this group,
- **ethnic minorities** - information in the minority’s language (language variations of the most important information materials in Hungarian, Romany, Ukrainian, Ruthenian, German and Polish).
- **sole traders, small and medium sized enterprises** - besides information intended for the general public, specific information relating to their economic activities (changes in accounting, software, rules for the dual display of prices and consumer protection ...) will be addressed in a targeted manner at this group. This target group will at the same time be another disseminator of information to their clients and business partners in the sphere of their operations. The information to this target group should help them adapt to the euro as simply and efficiently as possible.
- **government and municipality officials** – representatives of public administration will be informed about the details of the changeover, so that they can prepare their institutions for the euro. Furthermore, especially municipalities will be an important multiplier, having local information about needs of vulnerable groups in their area.

7. State of public opinion and feedback

The inhabitants of Slovakia are among the most optimistic among the new EU member states when asked about the euro. Over 57 % of Slovak inhabitants are looking forward to the euro introduction. According to Eurobarometer the public support for euro is now the highest since 2004, when the survey series started.

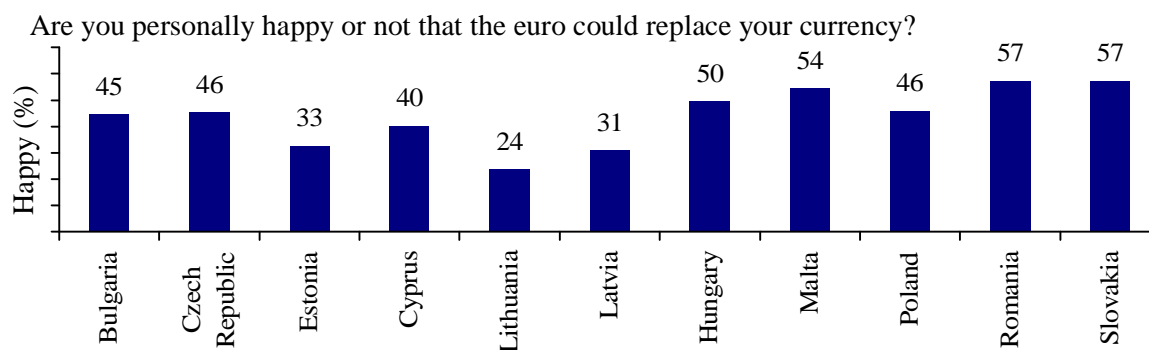
Figure 3 Support for euro introduction in Slovakia

Are you personally happy or not that the euro could replace Slovak koruna?



Source: Eurobarometer, April 2007.

Figure 4 Are people happy that euro will replace their national currency?

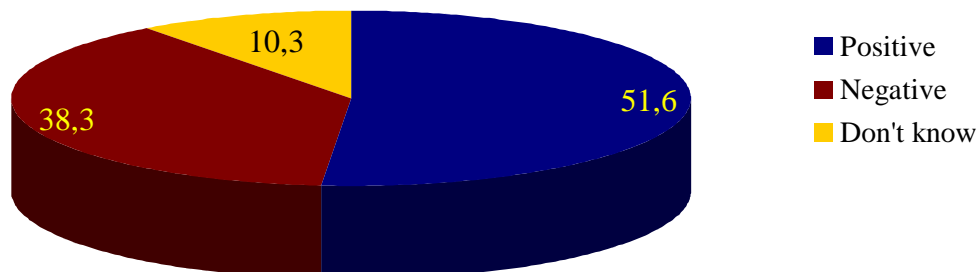


Source: Eurobarometer, April 2007.

Similarly to the support for the euro introduction, 54% of population thinks that euro introduction will be beneficial for the country. The score is slightly lower – 51% – when asked whether euro will be beneficial at a personal level. However, other surveys are less optimistic – for example a survey by the Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic from May 2007 indicates that only 31% of the population think that euro will be beneficial for them, while 43% have an opposite opinion. People with lower incomes or education, or from smaller cities and villages, and senior citizens seem to be more skeptical about euro introduction.

Figure 5 Consequences of euro introduction at the personal level

For you personally, will it be positive or negative if the euro would be introduced?



Source: Eurobarometer, April 2007.

Based on Eurobarometer results, Slovak citizens are relatively well informed about the euro. Compared with other new member states they score above average in questions on the size of the European Union, freedom to choose whether euro should be adopted, design of euro banknotes and coins. 80 % of the population know the date of euro introduction – comparable with the situation in Cyprus or Malta one year ago. Slovakia is in a slightly worse position in the knowledge and use of euro cash. (This is probably due to historical reasons – because of relatively stable domestic currency there was never any significant use of foreign currency in domestic transactions. Slovakia also borders mostly with non-euro area countries.)

Consistent with the knowledge of the facts are also the feelings of the population – about half of the population feels it is sufficiently well informed about the euro. However, as the euro introduction date approaches, the demand to be informed is increasing (e.g. answering a question “When would you like to be informed about the introduction of the euro in Slovakia?” the proportion of answers “As soon as possible” increased from 38% in the autumn of 2006 to 42% in the spring of 2007).

Although having generally positive attitudes towards the euro, Slovaks are worried that euro introduction will increase prices and that prices may not be converted correctly (79% think euro will lead to higher prices and 71% are afraid of abuses and cheating on prices during conversion). On the other hand, the positive implications of the euro are perceived more strongly in Slovakia than in most other new member states.

The progress of the information campaign will be continuously monitored in regular opinion polls. The campaign will react flexibly to the results of the polls and adjust messages and information channels as needed.

The management of the campaign will rely mostly on official opinion polls. At least four polls will be conducted in 2008 by the Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic. These polls will be also used to evaluate the performance of the information campaign. A final poll will be run in early 2009 – after the euro is introduced. All the opinion polls will be based on questions that will be tested in advance, at least by the first quarter of 2008. Additional questions can be included during the campaign. It is also expected that at least two Eurobarometer surveys will become available by the end of 2008.

There are several other feedback mechanisms that will be used throughout the information campaign. The direct demand for information will be measured by statistics on the telephone line, and by responses on the euro website. Another tool is media monitoring, which is being performed by the NBS and also other institutions.

Besides the opinion polls and other feedback mechanisms, which will indicate the demand (need) for individual messages, the campaign must also react to the supply of the information – new decisions, laws, progress in practical preparations and so on. This information will come mainly from the National Coordination Committee, other working committees, updates of the National Euro Changeover Plan, decisions of the government and the EU Council.

8. Instruments and distribution channels

Since the objective of the information campaign is to reach all the Slovak population, a broad range of instruments and information channels needs to be employed. Most people expect to receive information from television, press, banks and the central bank. Specific instruments need to be used for vulnerable groups that do not have access to some of the traditional information channels.

It is foreseen that these instruments will be used via:

- **Information in the media** - information will be provided as news reports and longer informational and educational formats. All types of media will be used – television, radio and press (especially Slovak Television and Slovak Radio) – broadly in line with their current market shares, taking into account also their ability and experience in reaching vulnerable target groups. The flow of information through the media will be supported by strong public relations management, regular press releases, press conferences, seminars and educational activities for journalists and by direct appearances of representatives of the changeover bodies in the media (discussions, interviews, articles). Public media will prepare a broad range of informational and educational formats to address all audiences.
- **Advertising in the media** – to guarantee that some messages are distributed without distortions and that the extent of information is sufficiently broad it will be necessary to use paid space in printed and electronic media.
- **Direct mail** – information package for every household. This will contain a brochure describing the changeover process, the most important dates, conversion rules and consumer protection issues. Another part of the package will be a euro converter. The information brochure will be available also in the languages of the most important

national minorities (Hungarian and Roma) and also in audio form for the visually impaired. Detailed information on euro banknotes and coins and their security features may constitute a second direct mail to all households, sent by the European Central Bank and Národná banka Slovenska.

- **Website** – a specialized website devoted to the euro introduction containing all available information and links to other sources. This page will be linked to from the websites of all central government bodies and, at their discretion, also websites of other organizations and institutions whose activities are affected by the euro changeover,
- **Printed materials** – leaflets, brochures, posters. General interest posters will be distributed to banks, retail outlets, municipalities, schools, transportation nodes and other points with high public visibility. Leaflets and brochures will be distributed either via partners or at public events. Specialized printed materials will be prepared to match the needs of specific vulnerable groups (e.g. large print for weak-sighted or easy to read leaflet(s) for mentally handicapped). Equally, it is expected that retail chains, banks and other private sector players will distribute leaflets with information specific for their organisation or sector.
- **Audio-visual and multimedia materials** - cassettes, CD-ROMs, DVDs for specific vulnerable groups (CD or an audio tape for visually impaired, DVD or a video tape for deaf).
- **Outdoor advertising** – billboards, central mega-billboard on the NBS building, buses and trains and other forms.
- **Free telephone line** – will provide callers with all necessary information on the euro introduction. The existing info line of the Government Office of the SR, which at present is devoted to European integration issues, will serve for this purpose (0800 103 104).
- **Euro day** – a nationwide event for the general public (public events, concerts, happenings, open days, in all regional capitals and in other large towns, or municipalities) at the beginning of the most intensive part of the information campaign – 100 days before the introduction of the euro (Instead of Wednesday September 24 2008 the event will take place on the nearest Saturday of 27 September 2008),
- **Promotional materials** with the euro introduction motif – rulers, key-chains, conversion cards, tokens, calendars, sweets.
- **Professional conferences, lectures, training, sessions, seminars.**
- **Other tools** – if new tools emerge before the Euro introduction, they will be used equally for the information campaign.

9. Confidence building measures

The main concern of the population is that euro introduction can be misused by some businesses and lead to price increases, mainly due to significant rounding up of prices in euro. 71% of Slovak citizens are afraid of abuses and cheating on prices during the changeover. This issue is also prominent in other new member states. Perception of price increases was one of the negative sides of euro changeover in 2002. The impression of the consumers that prices have increased a lot was most prominent in countries where the inhabitants were less informed about the euro or where the changeover did not go entirely smoothly. Besides lower acceptance of the euro perceived inflation often has negative macroeconomic effects: lower consumption, wage pressures on inflation and higher inflation expectations.

The NBS and the government will support private sector in measures to improve consumer confidence. On one hand existing Ethical code for euro introduction will be promoted both

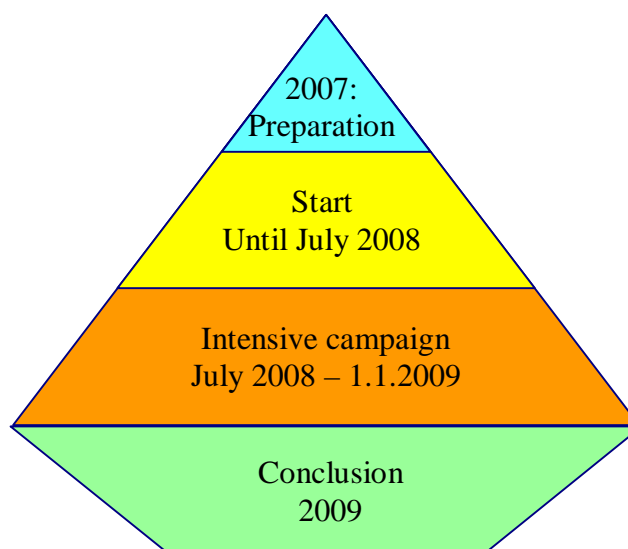
among businesses (and municipalities) and among the consumers. Especially small businesses need to be invited to subscribe to the Ethical code. On the other hand consumer protection groups will be invited to join forces and monitor the retailers, reporting on price abuses or other violations of the Ethical code. Should such a scheme be set up, it needs to be publicized to the consumers (see also the Main messages section) and also to the business sector.

Finally, the Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic will monitor price developments very frequently in the changeover period and publish the results immediately. Thus the population will receive professional and timely information about price evolution of a narrower consumption basket, what should suppress rumours and negative perception about price increases due to the conversion.

10. Timing

The distribution of information must reflect its availability, the interests of the audience and also the risks on the way to euro introduction. Some information would be welcomed by the public, but it is not available yet – the prime example here is the conversion rate, which is expected to be set in July 2008. Since the final decision on whether Slovakia will be accepted into the euro area is not expected before July 2008, the most intensive communication campaign cannot start before this date. Otherwise the public may be confused about the (un)certainly of the target date. Even though the intensive part of the campaign will start in July 2008, most of the preparations must be completed before this date. The extent of activities and the typical instruments are elaborated in more detail in Figure 6 and text below. Information for some target groups (SMEs and the Roma minority) or for multipliers must be delivered in earlier stages.

Figure 6 Phases of communication campaign



Preparation stage

2007

- preparation of the campaign
- selection of the communication agency
- conclusion of a partnership agreement with the European Commission
- own activities of the NBS and government departments aimed at small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs)
- launch of the website euromena.sk

- contacts with editors and media directors inviting their cooperation, eventually asking for nomination of journalists who will be taking part in the process
- preparation of PR strategy
- organization of regular press conferences
- organization of seminars for SMEs and journalists in each region
- articles and interviews in the press, electronic media (euro is coming, there is no reason to be worried, main elements of the changeover, wider awareness of euro and euro area, etc.)
- a pilot (benchmark) opinion poll before the start of the information campaign
- training of info - line operators
- start of educational and informational activities towards the Roma minority
- start of preparation of campaign multipliers, training of cashiers etc.
- distribution of NBS, ECB and EC printed materials (leaflets, brochures), mainly to SMEs and schools

1st Quarter of 2008

Objectives:

- orientation towards the new currency – information for the general public about the main elements of euro introduction (big bang, currency changeover details, conversion of accounts and prices)
- intensive communication with enterprises, mainly in retail trade and services, including appeal to adopt Ethical code
- inform the enterprises that they will be obliged to use dual display of prices

Instruments:

- public promotion of a free telephone line on euro changeover
- briefings and educational activities for journalists (to continue until December 2008)
- organization of regular press conferences (to continue until March 2009)
- PR articles and interviews in press and discussions in electronic media (until March 2009)
- regular publications of press releases (until March 2009)
- opinion polls – at least quarterly during 2008, a final poll to be held in the first quarter of 2009
- educational activities in schools – "Euro to schools" project

2nd Quarter 2008

Objectives:

- campaign intensification
- preparing the public for dual display of prices
- communication of main themes – Ethical code, and euro introduction does not lead to price increases, Convergence reports
- more intensive communication with non-profit organizations, especially regarding vulnerable target groups
- education of journalists, school teachers, professional public
- start of more intensive communication with the senior citizens target group
- information in schools and starting of school competitions

Instruments:

- seminars and workshops for journalists and professional public (until December 2008)
- presentations for teachers in schools (until November 2008), church representatives, social workers
- presentations in retirement homes, foster homes, institutions for long-term patients, prisons; preparation of printed and other documents for this target group (until the end of November 2008)
- presentations and workshops at trade fairs, mainly for the professional public (until November 2008)
- briefings and training for journalists (until November 2008)
- seminars and meetings with non-profit organizations (until the end of December 2008)

July – August 2008*Objectives:*

- expanding communication themes: conversion rate, explaining dual display of prices, appeals to deposit cash in banks, familiarization with the new currency – its visual and security features
- using summer period for easier and more comfortable way of communication
- preparation for the final part of campaign (production of items that depend on the conversion rate or on the final decision on euro introduction in Slovakia)

Instruments:

- intensive PR and media activities
- start of paid advertising, mainly in print media, utilizing less expensive time of the year
- production of promotional items

September – December 2008*Objectives:*

- most intensive campaign
- intensive advertising campaign – media, press, direct marketing
- organization of events
- informing the target groups about currency changeover and dual circulation, about conversion of accounts, salaries and pensions, functioning of ATMs
- intensive approach to vulnerable groups and national minorities

Instruments:

- open door day at the Národná banka Slovenska – oriented to euro
- organization of major Euro conference – September or early October 2008
- euro day – events for general public at the start of the most intensive part of the information campaign – 100 days before euro introduction – Saturday September 27
- placement of the central mega-billboard on the NBS building – around September 27
- road show – several buses or trucks to visit towns and villages that were not able to participate in the euro day, the buses / trucks will also serve as an outdoor advertising tool (will continue travelling around Slovakia until the end of 2008)

- visits of Slovak journalists abroad and into the regions (September–November 2008)
- visits of foreign journalists in Slovakia (September 2008)
- presentations / information stands in shopping centres and information panels or posters in smaller retail units
- TV advertisements in nation-wide channels and in regional stations – in three waves
- radio advertisements – in six waves
- advertisements in newspapers and magazines
- billboard campaign
- outdoor advertisement in mass transportation (buses and trains), concentrated in the country
- direct mail – information material for every household, including euro converter (September–October 2008)
- information materials in Hungarian and Roma languages
- aid for visually impaired
- production and distribution of an audio media for visually impaired
- production and distribution of a video media for deaf
- presentations before Christmas holidays – December 2008
- New Year's countdown – 31.12.2008

1st Quarter 2009

Objectives:

- ascertaining the smooth process of euro changeover
- solving ad hoc problems – e.g. rare cases of unjustified price increases, inflation perception, value of the new currency – „each cent counts“
- adequate reaction against false and misleading information and misunderstandings
- monitoring of public experience after euro introduction
- evaluation of the information campaign

Instruments:

- press news and press conferences (January to March 2009)
- monitoring of false and misleading information and reaction of media to such news (January to March 2009)
- media campaign to continue if necessary (to support dual circulation, react to problems, etc.)
- final public opinion survey

10.1. *Already completed activities*

- Selection of the national sides of Slovak euro coins – in November 2005 the NBS organized a public opinion poll on the motifs for Slovak euro coins. Over 140 000 votes were received via telephone, short messages or internet. The NBS then selected the three most popular designs for the future coins.
- Exhibition "Euro Coin Genesis" was presented in 2005 in several Slovak cities.
- The NBS dedicated its Open door day in 2006 to the euro.
- Educational activities – hundreds of presentations given by NBS or government officials, mostly directed to enterprises.

- Tens of press releases and press conferences (e.g. a series of Summer Fridays on Euro in 2007)
- Travelling exhibition "Slovak sides of euro coins" was presented in 8 cities in 2006.

Figure 7 National sides of Slovak euro coins



1 and 2 euro
Double cross on three hills



10, 20 and 50 cents
Bratislava Castle



1, 2 and 5 cents
Kriváň

Source: Národná banka Slovenska.

11. Logo and slogan

To unite all the parts of the campaign and create synergies between different instruments the campaign will use one logo and slogan. The Communication Working Committee is of the opinion that using two or more logos would create confusion and decrease effectiveness of the campaign. Slovak information campaign will tentatively use the common logo and slogan developed by the European Central Bank, which exists in all official languages of the EU. The Slovak version of the logo is displayed in Figure 8.

The communication working committee will consider whether an own logo and slogan for the national campaign should be developed.

In addition to using a common logo and slogan, all advertisements and printed materials will use the same visual identity (common look). The use of the logo developed by the ECB will be in accordance with the rules set by the ECB.

Figure 8 Logo and slogan “Euro OUR money”



Source: European Central Bank.

11.1. Double signing

In addition to common logo, all activities or products developed with the help of other party will be co-signed with its logo, if requested. This will be applied especially to the European Commission, which is expected to support the information campaign in Slovakia significantly.

12. Partners and multipliers

Several partners are expected to contribute to the information campaign. They will contribute their expertise and experience, unique distribution channels, and also reflect their specific needs for communicating certain issues.

Partners of the campaign include:

- Professional communication agency – no public institution in Slovakia has either experience or expertise to manage such a large information project as is the euro campaign. Therefore, it is necessary to use the services of a professional agency which will help specify details of PR strategy, produce promotional materials, prepare creative parts of the campaign (TV and radio spots, billboards, graphical design of printed materials), devise media plan and media mix and implement the advertising campaign.
- European institutions – the European Commission and the ECB – their experience with the changeover in other euro area countries and the publications and audio-visual materials they offer are indispensable. In addition, it is foreseen that the European Commission will either implement its own communication activities in Slovakia or contribute to some of centralized activities (or both) via Strategic partnership and/or Grant agreement.
- Banks – are very important distribution channels for information. They are also considered by the population to be one of the most preferred and most trusted sources of information. Moreover, banks have their own responsibilities towards their customers and will need to deliver specific information on the functioning of the banking sector in the first days of January 2009, conversion of ATMs and POSs.

- Retail outlets – concerning cash changeover the largest pressure will be on retailers, who will have to implement dual display of prices and contribute to cash exchange via dual circulation. Retailers and their Associations can help distribute information on conversion rate, euro banknotes and coins and the changeover rules, since people will be most interested in this kind of information when shopping.
- Municipalities – the public administrations in villages and small towns are very close to their citizens. They are in a good position to adjust the messages of the information campaign to local conditions (e.g. national minorities, the elderly, unemployed, people living in remote areas).
- NGOs sector – there are several charitable institutions or associations specializing in helping vulnerable groups – mainly the visually impaired, deaf, mentally handicapped, orphans, the elderly. They have the expertise to determine which messages are crucial for their target groups, which form is optimal, and often they can help with distribution of the information.
- Consumer organizations and consumer protection groups – can play an important role in alleviating the fears of price abuses by setting up mechanisms to check retailers and publicly criticize those that increase prices without justification. Consumers will be more confident if they know that an independent non-government body is guarding their interests.

Information about the euro changeover needs to reach 5 million people in Slovakia, many of whom have special needs. To reach all the people multipliers of information are necessary:

- Journalists – are the most important multipliers. They will collect information from the official changeover bodies (government plenipotentiary, Ministry of Finance, NBS, Communication Working Committee, euro website), experts, experiences of euro area countries, process it and transfer it to the population via mass media. A group of journalists will be invited to receive training on the changeover set-up and follow the process regularly.
- Social workers – people working with vulnerable groups will be indispensable to distribute information to these groups. Especially, community workers in the Roma community will be important.
- Teachers – can reach pupils in primary and secondary schools and interpret information about the euro changeover in a form that is most appropriate for the children.
- Children – are themselves a very good channel to transmit information to families or friends.
- Clergymen – can reach some elderly or socially disadvantaged people that do not come into regular contact with institutions other than the church. The churches also run many charities or shelters, and so have good access to some vulnerable groups.

13. Specific strategies for vulnerable groups and other special audiences

13.1. *National minorities*

The national minorities in Slovakia are as follows: Hungarian (9.7% of total population), Roma (officially 1.7%), Czech (0.8%), Ruthenian (0.4%) and Ukrainian (0.2%). Other minorities form together less than 0.5% of Slovak citizens. Since the Czech language is very similar to Slovak, the Czech minority should have no difficulties understanding the messages distributed to the public at large. Special attention needs to be paid to the Hungarian and

Roma minorities. When preparing supporting materials, proportional representation of national minorities will be taken into consideration.

The **Hungarian minority** is the largest one in Slovakia. To help them successfully change over to the euro they need to receive information in their own language. Since Hungarian is one of the official languages of the EU, information materials created by the European Commission or the ECB exist also in this language. Other printed materials, especially the information brochure to be distributed to every household, will be translated and produced also in Hungarian. They will be distributed to distribution points in areas where the minority lives – municipalities, schools or post offices. It is also expected that part of the advertising will be in Hungarian – in local radio, TVs or newspapers.

The most complicated issue will be the **Roma minority**. Although according to the population census there are only about 90 thousand Roma in Slovakia, it is estimated that the true figure is over 300 thousands. Over 160 thousand Romas live in segregated settlements (620 of them), often without basic infrastructure (access roads, electricity, running water). A very large part of the working-age population of these settlements is unemployed and with very limited education. These people need special attention not only as a national minority, but also as a socially excluded group.

To prepare a special approach to the Roma minority in segregated settlements the Communication Working Committee has set up a subcommittee for informing the Roma community. This subcommittee has concluded that information must be provided to this group much earlier than to the general public, use special information tools and channels, that it must contain an educational content and that it must be packaged as an attractive product. Some messages that must be delivered are almost unique (for example that to convert financial values from koruna to euro we need to divide by the conversion rate, not multiply) and some messages must be much stronger than for the general public (for example that euro coins have relatively high value, since currently Slovak coins are often ignored).

Although it is not envisaged to buy paid media space for the euro information campaign until the derogation is abrogated, an exception needs to be made in case of Roma population. Information and education activities (programme on Romany TV section in Slovak Television, Roma magazine in Slovak Radio, leaflets included in Romany newspaper, information for school children) need to start already in 2007. Simultaneously community workers must be trained. An extensive set of special instruments needs to be developed for 2008. Besides translating printed materials into Roma language these instruments are foreseen: touring Romany theatre performances, contests for children, touring festivals, and a Romany song about euro. The activities for the Roma community will be implemented by the government plenipotentiary for the Roma community, the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family and the Národná banka Slovenska.

13.2. *Blind and partially sighted*

There are approximately 6000 blind people in Slovakia. Because of their disability they need help especially to recognize banknotes and coins, and they need to receive information about the euro changeover in auditory form.

The Národná banka Slovenska will provide a cash test - tool for all blind people. It will be distributed by the Slovak Blind and Partially Sighted Union, which will also organize training sessions to use the tool.

Audio material, most likely a CD, will be produced for blind people. The information will be equivalent to the brochure which will be sent to all households. Also this CD will be distributed via the Blind Union. The audio files will be available for download on the euro webpage. The same information will also be available as a brochure in Braille, although only a small part of the blind people in Slovakia can read Braille.

Specific information will be provided through journals in Braille, large print, and audio recordings for blind and partially sighted citizens published by the Slovak Library for the Blind. It is also foreseen that the ECB will produce a talking card for visually impaired, which will help them recognize banknotes and their security features.

The website on euro introduction will be designed in compliance with –WEB accessibility specifications, so that it is available to the blind people.

13.3. Deaf

There are approximately 50 thousand people in Slovakia with partial or full deafness. They will not be able to take full advantage of information on TV, which is otherwise the main information channel. To alleviate this difficulty a part of the information and advertising spots will be translated into sign language. Furthermore, a DVD or a video tape will be produced, which will contain a dictionary of euro-related terms in sign language (some of the signs need to be developed).

The DVD will be produced and distributed by the Slovak Deaf Association. The Association will also use some of its workers, in all Slovak regions, who will distribute information on euro introduction to this target group.

There is also a TV programme on Slovak Television for the deaf, which will be used to spread information related to the euro.

13.4. Elderly

The elderly are the largest vulnerable group. There are over 800 thousand people aged over 60 in Slovakia. They are less well informed than the average population and they are more concerned about the risks of price abuses or lower value of savings and pensions.

Because of the stronger need to inform the elderly and also because it is sometimes harder to reach them, the information flows towards elderly need to be stronger.

The main partners in this area will be the Slovak Union of Pensioners, municipalities, the public media and Social Insurance Company. Information to the elderly will be transmitted via the magazine “Tretí vek“, which the Union distributes to all pensioner clubs and to elderly homes. In small villages it is possible to rely on direct contact among elderly citizens and municipalities.

13.5. Children and students

School children need to receive information appropriate to their age and abilities. The Ministry of Education is preparing a “Euro to schools” project, which will prepare pedagogical material and devote some teaching time in school curricula to the information about the euro changeover.

All textbooks and teaching materials are being reviewed and references to Slovak koruna will be replaced by references to euro in new versions of the textbooks.

School teachers are expected to act as multipliers for their pupils. It is envisaged that at least one representative from each school attends a seminar on euro changeover, where he/she receives information that will be transferred to other teachers and pupils.

In the end children are likely to act as secondary multipliers – they will share the information they learn in their homes and families.

13.6. Mentally handicapped

Mentally handicapped and other people with difficulties of understanding information will be helped mainly by the institutions they are being taken care of. Representatives of these institutions will be invited to take part in a training of multipliers.

An easy-to-read (understand) text will be prepared in cooperation with the Association of People with Mental Handicap.

13.7. *Socially excluded*

This group encompasses people living in remote areas, unemployed, homeless and people living alone, who do not come into regular contact with other people and may therefore not receive sufficient information about the euro changeover. Part of this group overlaps with other vulnerable groups, namely elderly and Roma in segregated settlements. To reach the rest of them local information is needed – where these people live and how to approach them. Therefore municipalities will be crucial in this area and employees of the local governments will act as multipliers for the socially excluded. It is also expected that churches will play a very positive role in helping this target group.

13.8. *Institutionalized*

This vulnerable group includes people in long-term medical care, prisoners, children in foster homes, shelters, social care homes and retirement homes. These people will be approached via the institutions they are in. Besides the elderly, which have already been mentioned, the organizations that are important here are the Society of Friends of Children in Foster Homes, the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family and the Ministry of Justice.

13.9. *SMEs*

SMEs stand out as an exceptional target group in the information campaign. The main target group – the general public, as well as most of the vulnerable groups, will receive the bulk of information about euro changeover in the second half of 2008. Entrepreneurs will have to be informed much earlier, because they have to make preparations in their firms. Also the scope of information is much larger.

Unlike large businesses, which are deemed to have sufficient capacity to collect all the required information themselves, there are and will be activities to help SMEs. Since 2005 the representatives of the Národná banka Slovenska, Ministry of Finance and the government plenipotentiary for euro have made hundreds of presentations and seminars for enterprises, where thousands of business representatives have been informed about the details of the changeover process.

Currently the Národná banka Slovenska is preparing a model training course for SMEs. This will be made available to private educational institutions and business chambers and associations, which are invited to prepare seminars or courses for their members. To further support these activities the NBS has prepared a brochure for SMEs, which will be updated in early 2008.

Information and communication activities towards SMEs will be provided by the National Agency for the SMEs, as the information and communication campaign relating to the SMEs fall under the competence of the Ministry of Economy of the Slovak Republic which has prepared “Draft program Information campaign for SMEs for the introduction of the single currency euro in the SR” for the period beginning from the first quarter of 2008.

14. Action plan

The action plan contains a list of activities with the dates of their implementation, responsible institution and estimated costs. At the present time it is possible to draw up the Action plan for the rest of the year 2007 and the first half of 2008. This Action plan will be regularly updated and amended by the Communication Working Committee. Plan for the second half of 2008 and 2009 is only indicative and will be considerably amended at the beginning of the year 2008.

14.1. Year 2007 and first half of 2008

2007

September

Training material for SMEs	NBS	-
Seminars for SMEs	NBS + business chambers / associations	-
Roma community – TV, newspaper add-in	NBS	1 mil. Sk
Roma community – subcommittee (meetings)	-	0,15 mil. Sk

November

Training of info line operators	NBS	-
---------------------------------	-----	---

December

Website	Ministry of Finance + NBS	5,4 mil.
Info line	Government Office	1,5 mil.
Benchmark opinion poll	Statistical Office of the SR	-

First half of 2008

January

PR activities	Agency/NBS/Ministry of Finance	7 mil. Sk
Public opinion surveys	Statistical Office of the SR	1 mil. Sk
Roma communities – information and educational campaign	Government Office, Ministry of Labour, NBS	7 mil. Sk
EC exhibition on Euro (Nitra?)	Ministry of Finance, EK	-
Training for teachers	Ministry of Education	-
Seminar for social workers	Ministry of Labour	-
Manual for municipalities, seminars and trainings for towns and municipalities	Association of Towns and Municipalities	-
<i>February</i>		
Action plan for the second half of 2008 and 2009	Communication Working Committee, NBS	-
<i>March</i>		
NBS traveling exhibition	NBS	-
Seminars / training for multipliers	NBS	1 mil. Sk
Euro to schools	Ministry of Education	2 mil. Sk
Seminars for journalists	NBS (July) EK (March, April) ECB (September)	-
Draft program “Information campaign for SMEs for the introduction of single currency euro in the SR”	Ministry of Economy	5.37 mil. Sk
Broadcasts in public media	Slovak Television, Slovak Radio	-

14.2. Preliminary plan for the second half of 2008 and 2009

July

Advertising in media (until the end of the year)	Agency	50-70 mil. Sk
--	--------	---------------

ECB exhibition (Bratislava)	NBS, ECB	-
-----------------------------	----------	---

Programs in public media	Slovak Television, Slovak Radio	-
--------------------------	---------------------------------	---

Information on social benefits conversion	Ministry of Labour	-
---	--------------------	---

August

Outdoor advertising	agency	5 mil. Sk
---------------------	--------	-----------

DVD for deaf	NBS	0,5 mil. Sk
--------------	-----	-------------

Promotional material	agency	1 mil. Sk
----------------------	--------	-----------

CD for the blind	agency	0,1 mil. Sk
------------------	--------	-------------

Distribution of ECB printed materials	NBS	0,5 mil. Sk
---------------------------------------	-----	-------------

September

Mega billboard on NBS building	agency	2 mil. Sk
--------------------------------	--------	-----------

Euro day	agency	10 mil. Sk
----------	--------	------------

Road show	agency	3 mil. Sk
-----------	--------	-----------

Printed materials	agency	1,2 mil. Sk
-------------------	--------	-------------

Direct mail to all households	agency	6 mil. Sk
-------------------------------	--------	-----------

Euro converters	agency	22 mil. Sk
-----------------	--------	------------

Cash test for visually impaired	NBS	0,5 mil. Sk
---------------------------------	-----	-------------

Major Euro Conference	NBS, Ministry of Finance, EK, ECB	-
-----------------------	-----------------------------------	---

Open door day in the NBS	NBS	-
--------------------------	-----	---

October

Seminars and trainings for the blind	NBS	0,5 mil. Sk
--------------------------------------	-----	-------------

November

ECB + NBS Leaflet to households	NBS	-
---------------------------------	-----	---

Year 2009

PR	NBS, Ministry of Finance	-
----	--------------------------	---

Public opinion survey	Statistical Office of the SR	-
-----------------------	------------------------------	---

Annex: Institutions represented in the Communication Working Committee

Národná banka Slovenska
Ministry of Finance of the Slovak Republic
Ministry of Economy of the Slovak Republic
Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic
Ministry of Justice of the Slovak Republic
Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic
Slovak Banking Association
Slovak Television
Slovak Radio
Government Office of the Slovak Republic
Representation of the European Commission in the Slovak Republic
Association of Towns and Municipalities
Association of Trade and Tourism