

18 November 2011

PRESS RELEASE

CLOSING OF THE CULTURAL DAYS OF THE EUROPEAN CENTRAL BANK – ITALY 2011

Yesterday evening a grand closing concert by the Orchestra Sinfonica di Milano Giuseppe Verdi, conducted by Xian Zhang, at the Schauspielhaus Frankfurt brought the curtain down on the Cultural Days of the European Central Bank (ECB) – Italy 2011.

Organised in cooperation with the Banca d'Italia, this year's Cultural Days were held under the joint patronage of Jean-Claude Trichet, the outgoing President of the ECB, and his successor, Mario Draghi, in his former capacity as Governor of the Banca d'Italia. Italian art and culture were celebrated between 19 October and 17 November at well-known cultural locations in Frankfurt am Main through a wide variety of outstanding events, ranging from classical concerts, a jazz evening, literary events and films to dance performances, art lectures and exhibitions, and children's events.

For the second year running a charity concert was organised by the ECB, in cooperation with the City of Frankfurt, as part of the Cultural Days. This was held at the Frankfurter Paulskirche on 11 November. Following the concert a total of €7,000 was donated to the "SoFa-Tandem" project run by the Frankfurt-based organisation MUKIVA Kinder- und Familienzentrum e.V. This project aims to bring together people from different cultures and backgrounds, allowing them to share knowledge and skills as a form of reciprocal and mutual assistance.

We would like to thank all the artists and performers who took part in these events, as well as the City of Frankfurt and all our partners and sponsors for their dedication and support in organising the Cultural Days.

"Raising awareness about the cultural wealth within Europe, thereby fostering understanding and unity among Europeans, has been the cornerstone of the Cultural Days since their inception. The firm belief that culture acts as a unifying force is at the heart of our cultural commitment," says Mario Draghi.

Having celebrated the art and culture of Portugal (2003), Poland (2004), Hungary (2005), Austria (2006), Greece (2007), all EU Member States (2008), Romania (2009), the Netherlands (2010) and this year Italy, the country to be featured in 2012 will be France. Next year will see the Cultural Days taking place for the tenth time. The grand opening event will be held on 17 October 2012.

Detailed information about the Cultural Days of the ECB – France 2012, which will be organised in cooperation with the Banque de France, will be posted on the ECB's website nearer the time.

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