EUROPEAN CENTRAL BANK

EUROSYSTEM

**Operations Managers Group**
Thursday, 25 June 2026
14:00 – 17:00 CET
MS Teams meeting

## Summary

### 1. Introduction

The OMG Chair, Isabel Soares, welcomed the meeting participants, and welcomed the new member Maria Dentamaro (Intesa Sanpaolo).

### 2. Distributed Ledger Technology (DLT)- Related Initiatives at FORGE

David Durouchoux (FORGE a subsidiary of Société Générale) presented how FORGE bridges traditional finance and blockchain technology through regulated digital asset solutions. He explained that FORGE operates within a strong compliance framework and focuses on bringing institutional standards to blockchain-based financial activities. The presentation highlighted FORGE's role in tokenisation, digital asset custody, settlement solutions, and the issuance and management of regulated digital assets, including stablecoins, all aligned with European regulatory requirements like MiCAR. David emphasized the need for reliable market infrastructure and discussed the evolution of crypto and tokenised markets, noting their accessibility and automation but also their fragmentation and inefficiency compared to traditional markets. He stressed the importance of Europe developing a robust digital finance ecosystem, including euro-denominated stablecoins, to stay globally competitive. David advocated for constructive engagement with blockchain technology within a clear and secure regulatory framework to drive innovation.

### 3. AIB Perspective on Green & Social Bond Programmes

Maddison Hampson (AIB) presented AIB's perspective on Green, Social, and Sustainability (GSS) Bonds. She explained that these are standard fixed-income instruments whose proceeds are allocated to projects with environmental or social benefits, such as renewable energy, green buildings, clean transportation, affordable housing, healthcare, education and SME lending in deprived areas. Since 2020, AIB has issued €8.2 billion of ESG-labelled bonds aligned with global standards like ICMA Principles and informed by evolving regulatory standards such as the EU Green Bond Standard. AIB's labelled bond programmes have supported measurable environmental and social outcomes.

These efforts reflect a wider AIB strategy aimed at supporting sustainability and social well-being, aligning with broader ESG objectives.

The presentation also distinguished use-of-proceeds bonds from Sustainability-Linked Bonds, where the bond's coupon may change depending on the issuer's performance against specific sustainability KPIs. Madison emphasised that credible GSS bond issuance requires robust governance, clear eligibility criteria, proceeds management, impact reporting, external review and ongoing transparency, ensuring investor confidence and accountability.

## 4. Consultation on Extending TARGET2 Operating Hours: Risks and Challenges

Eirini Katsalirou (ECB-Directorate General Market Infrastructure and Payments) presented the outcome of the Eurosystem public consultation on extending T2 operating hours. She explained that the main driver identified by market participants was liquidity management, particularly considering the growth of instant payments and future developments such as the digital euro and DLT-based settlement. Stakeholders generally supported a phased approach, starting with short-term measures such as improved automated liquidity transfers between CLM and TIPS, the remuneration of account balances, and potential weekend or TARGET-holiday liquidity-transfer windows in CLM. In the medium to long term, the Eurosystem is exploring options such as near 24/7 CLM availability, limited extensions to end-of-day cut-offs, and possible weekend access to collateral-management services through ECMS. The consultation found no immediate market need for major changes to cut-off times or value-dating rules, although limited adjustments may be considered if business needs evolve. Eirini also noted the importance of aligning T2, T2S and ECMS over time to avoid operational inefficiencies and market frictions. Survey participants highlighted concerns such as liquidity risk, operational resilience, reduced maintenance windows, cyber and fraud risks, and the costs of IT upgrades, automation, and additional staffing. Some institutions favoured broader extensions, while other banks were more cautious due to cost and risk factors. The Eurosystem will evaluate medium- and long-term measures, with further market consultation anticipated by late 2026 or early 2027.

## 5. Tour de Table

The OMG members shared their perspectives on DLT, Green and Social Bond Programmes and the extension of TARGET2 operating hours.

- **A. DLT**

OMG members noted that while DLT is under experimentation with limited live use, most initiatives remain at pilot or early production-trial stages rather than at scale. They emphasized

the importance of starting with a clear business case, focusing on use cases with tangible benefits, scaling gradually, and aligning with existing frameworks.

Governance, early stakeholder collaboration, and integration with legacy systems through hybrid architectures and interoperability were deemed crucial. Regulatory frameworks like MiCAR and central bank initiatives (e.g., Pontes and Appia) were identified as key to broader adoption despite uncertainties. Operational readiness, staff training, and blockchain-specific preparation were also highlighted, with members advocating for controlled pilot projects to enable gradual scaling. Overall, DLT is viewed as a potential business transformation reliant on market readiness, regulatory clarity, governance, and ecosystem collaboration.

- **B. Green & Social Bond Programmes**

OMG members reported that they primarily follow the ICMA Green and Social Bond Principles while progressively aligning with the stricter EU Green Bond Standard and Taxonomy, which emphasize transparency, external verification, and regulatory compliance. Operational processes for green and social bonds mirror those of conventional bonds but differ in governance, requiring upfront validation of eligible projects, tracking of proceeds, and enhanced reporting. Many banks have set up committees or frameworks to ensure ESG compliance and enhance investor confidence through transparent reporting. OMG members who adopted sustainable bonds have pioneered integrating evolving standards to diversify investor bases and enhance credibility, while others remain cautious about the EU Green Bond Standard, citing for example the need for a careful cost-benefit analysis. They agree that evolving standards are essential to addressing greenwashing, scaling efforts, and meeting growing investor expectations despite implementation challenges.

- **C. Extension of TARGET2 Operating Hours**

OMG members expressed mixed views on extending the end-of-day cut-off time and advancing the TARGET2 payments reopening time, citing both limited potential benefits and increased operational challenges. Some members support extending the cut-off time to improve liquidity management, settlement efficiency, and cross-border payment flows, though they stress the need for phased, market-wide implementation.

At the same time, many OMG members raised concerns about increased costs, staffing adjustments, risk reassessment, or technological and organizational constraints. On bringing forward the T2 reopening time for payments, many institutions saw limited or no immediate benefit, as they do not currently make significant use of the existing early-morning window and their payments activity typically starts later. Members stressed that changes to T2 operating hours should be market-wide, allow for adequate transition time, and maintain the overnight window for processing, maintenance, and contingency tasks.

## 6. AOB

The OMG Chair, Isabel Soares, announced the next OMG meeting, set for 24 September 2026 taking place in Frankfurt. She also updated members on an upcoming survey concerning the 2027 work programme and shared the Secretariat's new email address: OMG_Secretariat@ecb.europa.eu. Finally, she noted forthcoming changes in the Secretariat team, thanked departing colleagues for their contributions and welcomed a new colleague joining the team.