

## Swiss Central Bank Defends Use of High-Denomination Banknotes

‘Reports about the death of cash are not just exaggerated—they are unfounded’



A picture of Swiss 1,000-franc notes. The Swiss central bank defended the use of high-denomination bank notes, with a top official saying they are “a considerable benefit” to the public. *PHOTO: RUBEN SPRICH/REUTERS*

By  
**BRIAN BLACKSTONE**

Updated Feb. 27, 2017 12:31 p.m. ET

[5 COMMENTS](#)

ZURICH—A top official at the Swiss National Bank on Monday defended the use of high-denomination bank notes, saying they are “a considerable benefit” to the public.

“As the supplier of Swiss franc bank notes, the SNB thus takes the view that the reports about the death of cash are not just exaggerated—they are unfounded. The SNB has no plans

whatsoever to do away with cash,” said SNB Vice Chairman Fritz Zurbrügg in prepared remarks to a conference in Basel, Switzerland.

Other jurisdictions have taken steps to reduce the use of large bank notes.

In the eurozone, the European Central Bank said last year that it would stop producing €500 notes, though they would remain legal tender. India said in November that it would replace its largest bank notes with new ones to thwart counterfeiting and corruption.

*‘Reports about the death of cash are not just exaggerated—they are unfounded.’*  
—SNB Vice Chairman Fritz Zurbrügg

Even in the U.S., there have been calls to stop printing large notes.

But in Switzerland, whose 1,000 franc note (\$993) is one of the highest denominations in the world, use of cash remains popular. The value of 1,000 franc notes in circulation rose 7% in 2016 from the previous year to CHF48.3 billion.

“Our experience with issuance and return of 1000-franc notes indicates that they are regularly used in payment transactions,” Mr. Zurbrügg said.

**Write to** Brian Blackstone at [brian.blackstone@wsj.com](mailto:brian.blackstone@wsj.com)

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/swiss-central-bank-defends-use-of-high-denomination-banknotes-1488198606>