

Cryptocurrencies: Curiosity and confusion among consumers

What used to be considered futuristic money is starting to feel more real for consumers. That's just one of the findings from the latest ING International Survey, which you can download [here](#)



Curious about crypto

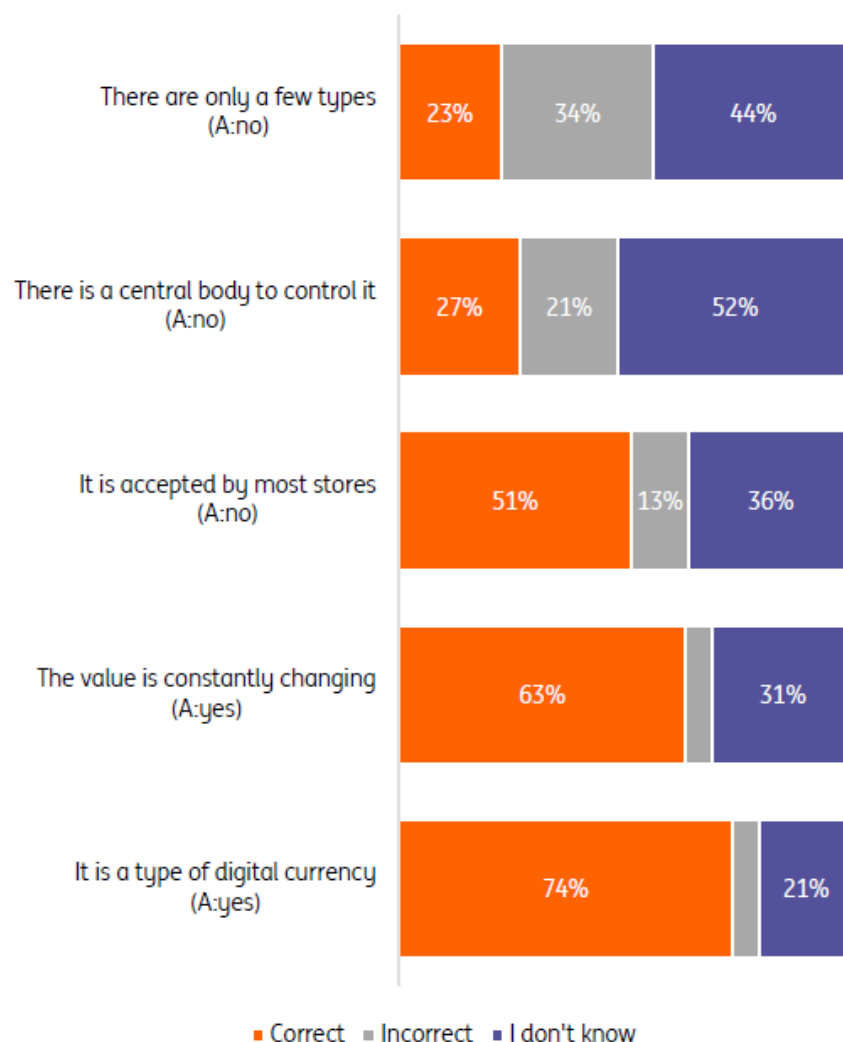
Consumer knowledge about digital currencies is limited and cash is still king. But many people still hold a positive view about the future of cryptocurrency and are curious about its possibilities.

The seventh ING International Survey on new technologies found that 82% of European respondents knew at least a little about cryptocurrency (identifying at least one out of five true or false statements correctly). Among this group, opinions are divided, as four in ten (41%) had high expectations for it, in contrast to one-in-four (23%) with low expectations.

A third of this group (32%) agree that crypto is the future of online spending and a quarter (27%) say they are open to receiving new cryptocurrency offerings from brands and bodies they are familiar with, agreeing that banks should offer current accounts in crypto.

'Is this a feature of cryptocurrencies, such as Bitcoin or Ethereum?' (European respondents only)

(European respondents only)



Sample size: 12,813

Our survey on consumer attitudes towards cryptocurrencies comes amid the impending launch of Facebook's digital currency, [Libra](#), and an announcement from the People's Bank of [China](#) that it's close to rolling out its own cryptocurrency. These two large-scale developments suggest digital currencies may be inching towards the mainstream.

But while change is afoot, it's unlikely we'll be choosing between cash and crypto at the checkout anytime soon. The local supermarket doesn't accept Bitcoin for bread. And for now, cryptocurrencies remain a speculative and volatile investment option.

Whether we are on the cusp of drastic change or transitioning into a more gradual period of cryptocurrency adoption, we thought this would be a timely opportunity to assess what consumers-as future potential users of digital currencies- think about it.

Do we consider cryptocurrencies too futuristic to warrant our attention? Are we excited about the future use of decentralised forms of money? And what can this tell us about how the future will evolve?

Here are the findings of our survey in detail.

1 Cryptocurrency knowledge is limited

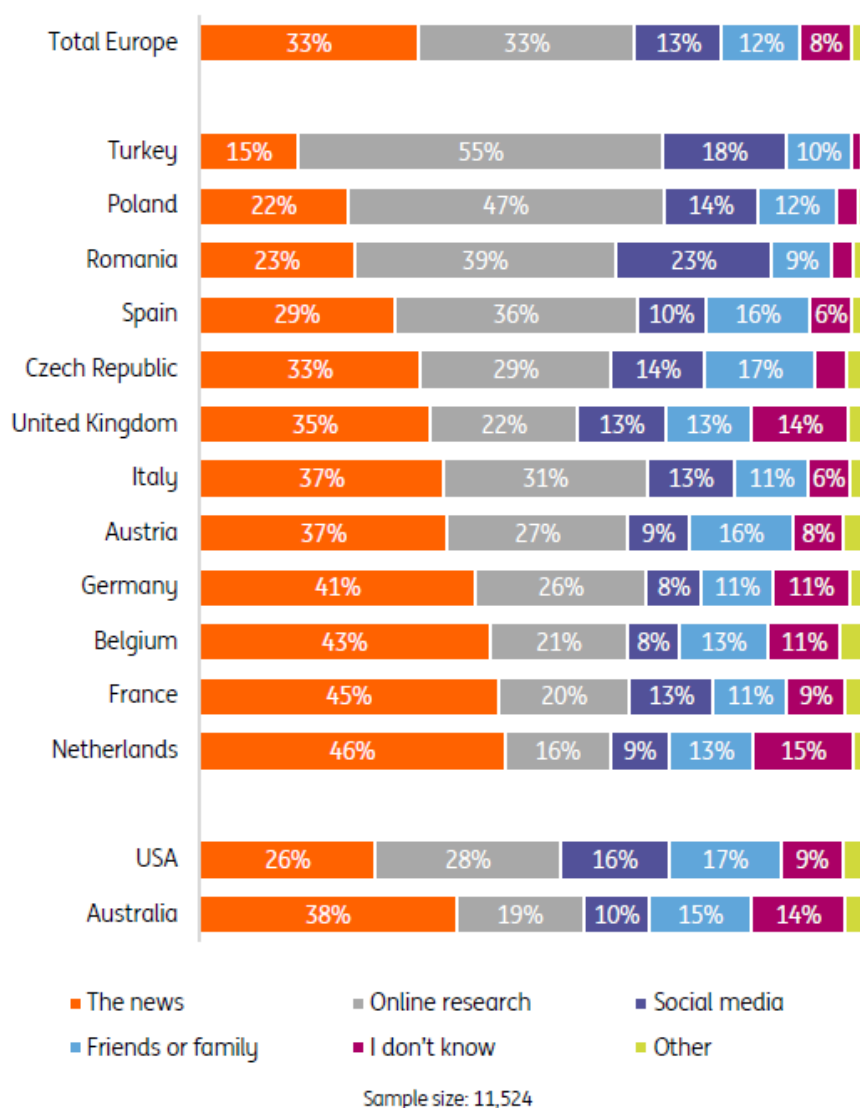
While most of us now know something about cryptocurrencies, many of the details are still a little sketchy. We aren't clamouring to understand the details of how cryptocurrencies work, or even what they are.

Whether we would be more inclined to embrace digital currencies if they proved relevant and useful to our everyday financial lives is open for discussion. We find that more knowledge about the workings of crypto doesn't necessarily lead to positive expectations of how they will be used in the future. Indeed, it was the groups with a lower level of knowledge who tended to be more open to future adoption. This highlights that the 'crypto curious' aren't necessarily convinced of the benefits right now.

These findings are consistent with how people say they learn about cryptocurrencies. Many appear to build their knowledge of cryptocurrencies passively, that is through the news (33%) and social media (13%). There are clear differences in the approach across countries however, suggesting that for some, interest may be influenced by the local context.

Overall adoption will only occur if these currencies prove to be relevant to everyday financial lives, trustworthy and obviously useful. Indeed, it's not *how much* we know about cryptocurrencies but *how useful* they are, that will drive adoption.

Where have you learned most of what you know about cryptocurrency?

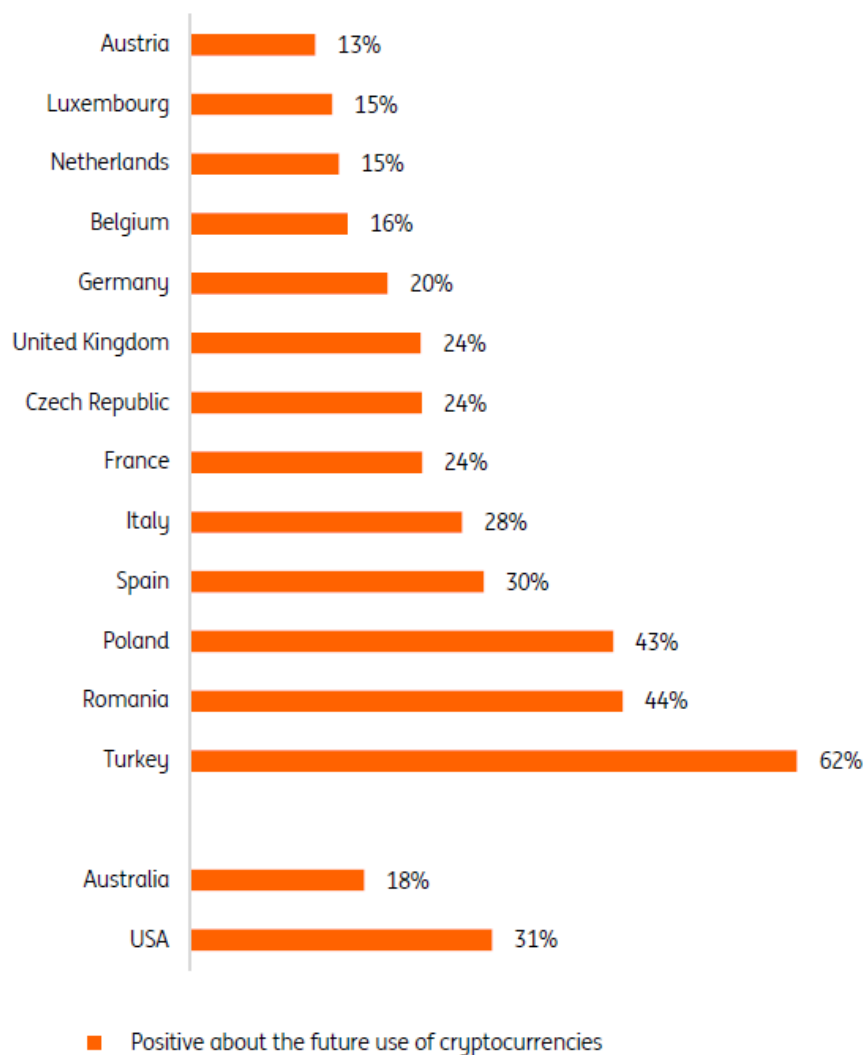


2 A crypto type already exists

Some people are already quite positive about the future use of cryptocurrencies. We see this in optimistic responses to questions such as - are cryptocurrencies the future of spending online? Would someone who bought cryptocurrency a year ago be happy now? And will the value of cryptocurrencies increase in the next 12 months?

As perhaps expected, these people make up a minority of the population in all but one of the 15 countries we surveyed. So, while it's a small group, it does exist in all countries. And it shares similar characteristics. These people are generally open to and trusting of new technologies. For example, they are more likely to consider different recommendations with ease when managing their money.

Generated index of positive attitudes towards cryptocurrencies



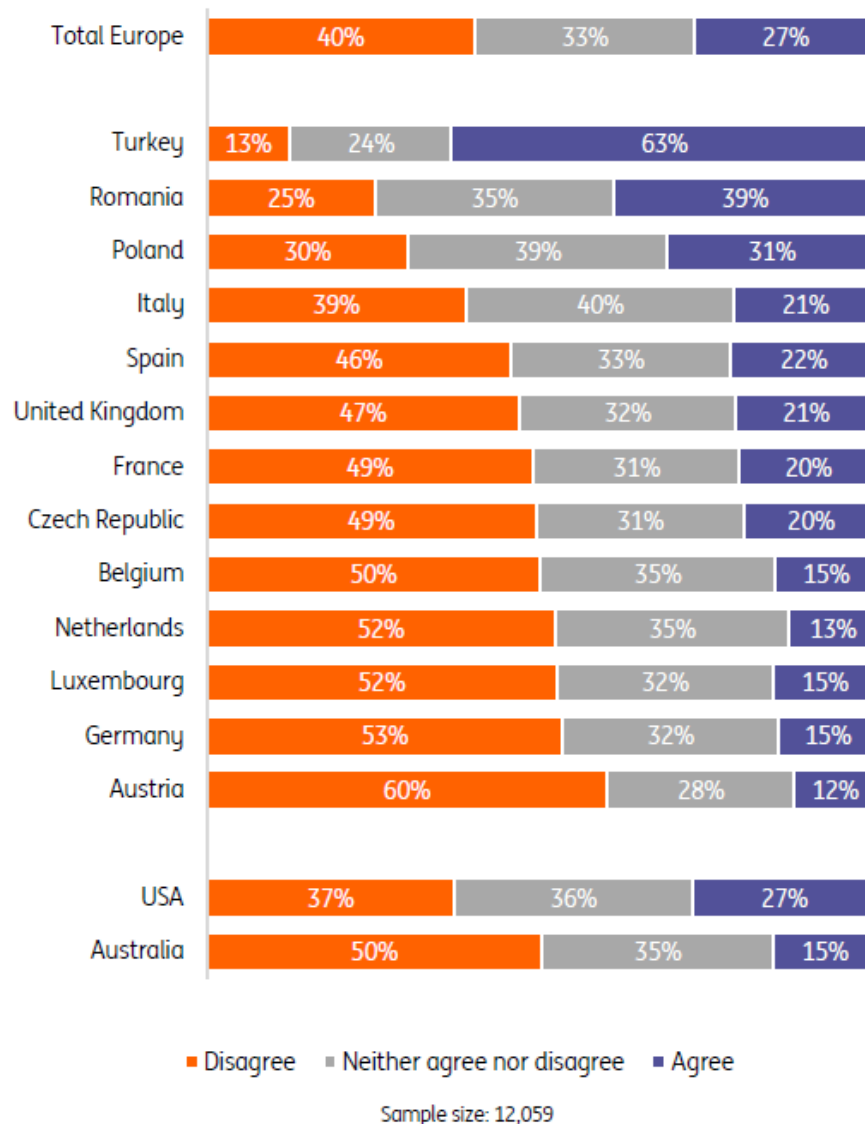
Sample size: 12,059

3 Preference for the gradual introduction of new forms of currency

Technologies that have been around longer, and are more familiar, are more likely to be rated as secure by consumers. A quarter (27%) also say they are open to having new financial products that utilise cryptocurrencies and that are offered by familiar financial service providers such as their main bank.

Trust of the familiar is a consistent finding within our surveys and suggests that combining the processes and providers that we are already accustomed to with new currency might be most palatable for consumers, compared to a drastic shift. Some form of digital currency or cryptocurrency hybrid may therefore be what naturally develops next.

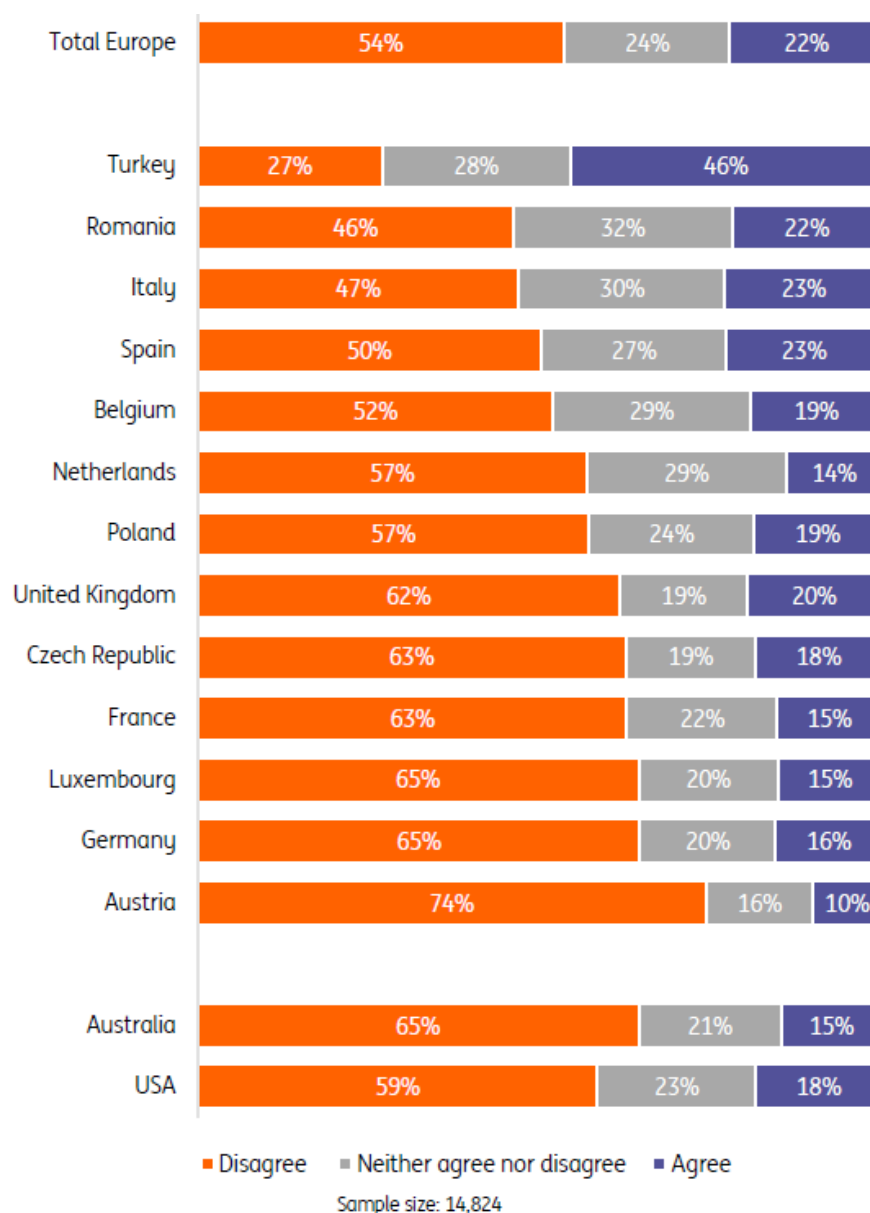
Do you agree or disagree with the following statement: Banks should offer current accounts in cryptocurrency such as Bitcoin



4 Crypto won't necessarily replace more established payment methods

Indeed, cash appears to retain high every-day value. Therefore, if we are to move towards the use of digital currencies and cryptocurrencies, diversification of the different payment and investment suppliers we use is likely to occur in the short-term. This might mean that while an increased variety of choices is available to us, we choose what's relevant to the type of transaction we are making and to our preferences. As people are given more options, this could result in increased accessibility within the financial ecosystem.

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement; 'I would prefer it if cash no longer existed'



So, would you use Bitcoin to buy a cup of coffee? Probably not. And given how volatile it is, I'd suggest you don't. But, do you think you'd benefit from being able to send small amounts of money to different countries almost instantaneously and with only a small cost?

There are potential benefits of new forms of currency, which is why they are sparking the interest of regulators, the traditional financial sector, fintechs and consumers.

Many regulatory and operational questions do remain unanswered however, and this uncertainty is reflected in the large numbers of people sitting on the fence when we ask them about the future value of cryptocurrencies, whether crypto accounts from banks are a good idea, and even what's the main source of their crypto knowledge. Many say they simply don't know.

Our survey captures attitudes at a single moment in time. And attitudes can change very quickly. Especially if we are to experience incremental and therefore familiar changes, a perception of social acceptance and benefit that cannot be found elsewhere. This a hot topic, developing as we speak.

So, as for whether crypto is on its way to becoming the new cash; we see uptake of all options continuing, as they are proven relevant and useful. Diversification is therefore more likely.... at least for now.

Read the full ING International Survey report [here](#).

Author

Amrita Naik Nimbalkar

Junior Economist, Global Macro

amrita.naik.nimbalkar@ing.com

Mateusz Sutowicz

Senior Economist, Poland

mateusz.sutowicz@ing.pl

Alissa Lefebvre

Economist

alissa.lefebvre@ing.com

Deepali Bhargava

Regional Head of Research, Asia-Pacific

Deepali.Bhargava@ing.com

Ruben Dewitte

Economist

+32495364780

ruben.dewitte@ing.com

Kinga Havasi

Economic research trainee

kinga.havasi@ing.com

Marten van Garderen

Consumer Economist, Netherlands

marten.van.garderen@ing.com

David Havrlant

Chief Economist, Czech Republic

420 770 321 486

david.havrlant@ing.com

Sander Burgers

Senior Economist, Dutch Housing
sander.burgers@ing.com

Lynn Song
Chief Economist, Greater China
lynn.song@asia.ing.com

Michiel Tukker
Senior European Rates Strategist
michiel.tukker@ing.com

Michal Rubaszek
Senior Economist, Poland
michal.rubaszek@ing.pl

This is a test author

Stefan Posea
Economist, Romania
tiberiu-stefan.posea@ing.com

Marine Leleux
Sector Strategist, Financials
marine.leleux2@ing.com

Jesse Norcross
Senior Sector Strategist, Real Estate
jesse.norcross@ing.com

Teise Stellema
Research Assistant, Energy Transition
teise.stellema@ing.com

Diederik Stadig
Sector Economist, TMT & Healthcare
diederik.stadig@ing.com

Diogo Gouveia
Sector Economist
diogo.duarte.vieira.de.gouveia@ing.com

Marine Leleux
Sector Strategist, Financials
marine.leleux2@ing.com

Ewa Manthey
Commodities Strategist

ewa.manthey@ing.com

ING Analysts

James Wilson

EM Sovereign Strategist

James.wilson@ing.com

Sophie Smith

Digital Editor

sophie.smith@ing.com

Frantisek Taborsky

EMEA FX & FI Strategist

frantisek.taborsky@ing.com

Adam Antoniak

Senior Economist, Poland

adam.antoniak@ing.pl

Min Joo Kang

Senior Economist, South Korea and Japan

min.joo.kang@asia.ing.com

Coco Zhang

ESG Research

coco.zhang@ing.com

Jan Frederik Slijkerman

Senior Sector Strategist, TMT

jan.frederik.slijkerman@ing.com

Katinka Jongkind

Senior Economist, Services and Leisure

Katinka.Jongkind@ing.com

Marina Le Blanc

Sector Strategist, Financials

Marina.Le.Blanc@ing.com

Samuel Abettan

Junior Economist

samuel.abettan@ing.com

Franziska Biehl

Senior Economist, Germany

Franziska.Marie.Biehl@ing.de

Rebecca Byrne

Senior Editor and Supervisory Analyst

rebecca.byrne@ing.com

Mirjam Bani

Sector Economist, Commercial Real Estate & Public Sector (Netherlands)

mirjam.bani@ing.com

Timothy Rahill

Credit Strategist

timothy.rahill@ing.com

Leszek Kasek

Senior Economist, Poland

leszek.kasek@ing.pl

Oleksiy Soroka, CFA

Senior High Yield Credit Strategist

oleksiy.soroka@ing.com

Antoine Bouvet

Head of European Rates Strategy

antoine.bouvet@ing.com

Jeroen van den Broek

Global Head of Sector Research

jeroen.van.den.broek@ing.com

Edse Dantuma

Senior Sector Economist, Industry and Healthcare

edse.dantuma@ing.com

Francesco Pesole

FX Strategist

francesco.pesole@ing.com

Rico Luman

Senior Sector Economist, Transport and Logistics

Rico.Luman@ing.com

Jurjen Witteveen

Sector Economist

jurjen.witteveen@ing.com

Dmitry Dolgin

Chief Economist, CIS

dmitry.dolgin@ing.de

Nicholas Mapa

Senior Economist, Philippines

nicholas.antonio.mapa@asia.ing.com

Egor Fedorov

Senior Credit Analyst

egor.fedorov@ing.com

Sebastian Franke

Consumer Economist

sebastian.franke@ing.de

Gerben Hieminga

Senior Sector Economist, Energy

gerben.hieminga@ing.com

Nadège Tillier

Head of Corporates Sector Strategy

nadege.tillier@ing.com

Charlotte de Montpellier

Senior Economist, France and Switzerland

charlotte.de.montpellier@ing.com

Laura Straeter

Behavioural Scientist

+31(0)611172684

laura.Straeter@ing.com

Valentin Tataru

Chief Economist, Romania

valentin.tataru@ing.com

James Smith

Developed Markets Economist, UK

james.smith@ing.com

Suvi Platerink Kosonen

Senior Sector Strategist, Financials

suvi.platerink-kosonen@ing.com

Thijs Geijer

Senior Sector Economist, Food & Agri

thijs.geijer@ing.com

Maurice van Sante

Senior Economist Construction & Team Lead Sectors

maurice.van.sante@ing.com

Marcel Klok

Senior Economist, Netherlands

marcel.klok@ing.com

Piotr Poplawski

Senior Economist, Poland

piotr.poplawski@ing.pl

Paolo Pizzoli

Senior Economist, Italy, Greece

paolo.pizzoli@ing.com

Marieke Blom

Chief Economist and Global Head of Research

marieke.blom@ing.com

Raoul Leering

Senior Macro Economist

raoul.leering@ing.com

Maarten Leen

Head of Global IFRS9 ME Scenarios

maarten.leen@ing.com

Maureen Schuller

Head of Financials Sector Strategy

Maureen.Schuller@ing.com

Warren Patterson

Head of Commodities Strategy

Warren.Patterson@asia.ing.com

Rafal Benecki

Chief Economist, Poland

rafal.benecki@ing.pl

Philippe Ledent

Senior Economist, Belgium, Luxembourg

philippe.ledent@ing.com

Peter Virovacz

Senior Economist, Hungary

peter.virovacz@ing.com

Inga Fechner

Senior Economist, Germany, Global Trade

inga.fechner@ing.de

Dimitry Fleming

Senior Data Analyst, Netherlands

Dimitry.Fleming@ing.com

Ciprian Dascalu

Chief Economist, Romania

+40 31 406 8990

ciprian.dascalu@ing.com

Muhammet Mercan

Chief Economist, Turkey

muhammet.mercan@ingbank.com.tr

Iris Pang

Chief Economist, Greater China

iris.pang@asia.ing.com

Sophie Freeman

Writer, Group Research

+44 20 7767 6209

Sophie.Freeman@uk.ing.com

Padhraic Garvey, CFA

Regional Head of Research, Americas

padhraic.garvey@ing.com

James Knightley

Chief International Economist, US

james.knightley@ing.com

Tim Condon

Asia Chief Economist

+65 6232-6020

Martin van Vliet

Senior Interest Rate Strategist

+31 20 563 8801

martin.van.vliet@ing.com

Karol Pogorzelski

Senior Economist, Poland

Karol.Pogorzelski@ing.pl

Carsten Brzeski

Global Head of Macro

carsten.brzeski@ing.de

Viraj Patel

Foreign Exchange Strategist

+44 20 7767 6405

viraj.patel@ing.com

Owen Thomas

Global Head of Editorial Content

+44 (0) 207 767 5331

owen.thomas@ing.com

Bert Colijn

Chief Economist, Netherlands

bert.colijn@ing.com

Peter Vanden Houte

Chief Economist, Belgium, Luxembourg, Eurozone

peter.vandenhoute@ing.com

Benjamin Schroeder

Senior Rates Strategist

benjamin.schroeder@ing.com

Chris Turner

Global Head of Markets and Regional Head of Research for UK & CEE

chris.turner@ing.com

Gustavo Rangel

Chief Economist, LATAM

+1 646 424 6464

gustavo.rangel@ing.com

Carlo Cocuzzo

Economist, Digital Finance

+44 20 7767 5306

carlo.cocuzzo@ing.com