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PRESS RELEASE

2ND INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON THE PROTECTION OF THE EURO AGAINST COUNTERFEITING

The European Commission/OLAF, the European Central Bank and Europol jointly organised the 2nd International Conference of the Euro against counterfeiting (2011 Euro Conference).

The Conference was hosted at Europol's new headquarters in The Hague from 23 to 25 November 2011 with the aim of deepening existing knowledge and exploring new ways of collaboration between law enforcement, judicial and banking authorities. 12 workshops were conducted, oriented to law enforcement, legal, judicial and technical issues relating to the protection of the euro against counterfeiting.

Nearly 10 years after euro coins and banknotes entered into circulation, the euro has established its global presence and is regarded as a stable and secure world currency. Following this positive development the euro has also become attractive for criminal groups involved in counterfeiting, both inside and outside the European Union.

“The importance of the protection of the euro cannot be overestimated. It's a joint responsibility of the EU Member States and the European Union institutions, and it can only be dealt with effectively if there is effective cooperation at an international level. - this is why we are pleased to host this conference.” said Europol's Deputy Director, Michel Quillé.

170 participants from 44 countries and 8 international organisations attended the Conference. The attending experts and specialists discussed, among other topics, international cooperation, legislation, training and technical issues.

Conclusions reached at the Conference focussed on the successful protection of the euro against counterfeiting as well as the need to maintain vigilance against continuously emerging threats from highly sophisticated criminals. Among the conclusions was also a wish for the harmonisation of penal procedures in and outside the EU, in particular with respect to the possible use of investigative tools such as undercover agents, controlled deliveries and fictitious purchases.

The Director General of OLAF, Mr Giovanni Kessler, underlined the success of the European framework for the protection of the euro and the smooth ongoing cooperation among institutions and national authorities in this field. He also highlighted the fact that the European Commission/OLAF will continue to support the protection of the euro by promoting relevant legislation and supporting adequate training.

In underlining the European Central Bank's commitment to maintaining the security and integrity of the euro, the Director Banknotes, Mr Ton Roos called on all participants to ensure the full implementation of the conference conclusions.

The conference was co-financed by Europol, the European Central Bank, and the European Commission, via the Pericles Programme.

European Central Bank

Directorate Communications / Press and Information Division

Kaiserstrasse 29, D-60311 Frankfurt am Main

Tel.: +49 69 1344 7455, Fax: + 49 69 1344 7404

Internet: <http://www.ecb.europa.eu>

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