



EUROPEAN CENTRAL BANK

EUROSYSTEM

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PRESS RELEASE

BIANNUAL INFORMATION ON EURO BANKNOTE COUNTERFEITING

In the second half of 2010 a total of 364,102 counterfeit euro banknotes were withdrawn from circulation. This is a decrease of 5.9% on the quantity recovered in the previous six months. The table below indicates the half-yearly trend in the number of counterfeits recovered.

Period	2007/2	2008/1	2008/2	2009/1	2009/2	2010/1	2010/2
Number of counterfeits	296,000	312,000	354,000	413,000	447,000	387,000	364,000

When compared with the increasing number of genuine euro banknotes in circulation (on average 13.6 billion during the second half of 2010), the proportion of counterfeits remains very low.

Nevertheless, the Eurosystem - i.e. the European Central Bank (ECB) and the 17 national central banks of the euro area - continues to advise the public to remain alert with regard to the banknotes received in cash transactions. Genuine banknotes can be easily recognised using the simple "FEEL-LOOK-TILT" test described on the euro pages of the ECB's website and the websites of the Eurosystem national central banks. In case of doubt, however, a suspect banknote should be compared directly with one that is known to be genuine. Anyone who suspects that they may have received a counterfeit should contact either the police or – where national practice allows – the relevant national central bank.

The table below provides a percentage breakdown, by denomination, of the total number of counterfeits withdrawn from circulation in the second half of 2010.

Denomination	€5	€10	€20	€50	€100	€200	€500
Percentage breakdown	0.5%	1.5%	38.0%	43.5%	13.5%	1.5%	1.5%

The €20 and €50 denominations continue to be the most counterfeited. During the past six months, the share of counterfeit €20 banknotes decreased and the share of €50

banknotes increased. The two most counterfeited denominations together accounted for 81.5% of the total during the second half of 2010. The €100 banknote is the third most counterfeited denomination at 13.5% of the total. The share of the other denominations (€5, €10, €200 and €500) is very low.

The majority (97%) of counterfeits recovered in the second half of 2010 were found in euro area countries, with only around 1.5% being found in EU Member States outside the euro area and 1.5% being found in other parts of the world.

The Eurosystem invests considerable effort in ensuring that the public is well informed about how to recognise a counterfeit banknote and, for professional cash-handlers, that banknote-handling and processing machines can reliably identify and withdraw counterfeits from circulation.

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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