



EUROPEAN CENTRAL BANK

EUROSYSTEM

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PRESS RELEASE

BIANNUAL INFORMATION ON EURO BANKNOTE COUNTERFEITING

In the first half of 2013 a total of 317,000 counterfeit euro banknotes were withdrawn from circulation. Thus the quantity of counterfeits withdrawn from circulation from January to June 2013 was 26.3% higher than the quantity withdrawn during the same period in 2012, and 13.2% higher than the quantity recovered in the six months prior to January 2013.

The table below indicates the half-yearly trend in the number of counterfeits recovered.

Period	2010/1	2010/2	2011/1	2011/2	2012/1	2012/2	2013/1
Number of counterfeits	387,000	364,000	296,000	310,000	251,000	280,000	317,000

The following table provides a percentage breakdown, by denomination, of the total number of counterfeits withdrawn from circulation in the first half of 2013.

Denomination	€5	€10	€20	€50	€100	€200	€500
Percentage breakdown	0.3%	2.6%	38.0%	44.1%	12.4%	2.0%	0.6%

The €20 and €50 denominations continue to be the most counterfeited. During the past six months the share of counterfeit €20 banknotes has decreased and the share of counterfeit €50 banknotes has slightly increased. These two denominations together accounted for 82.1% of the total during the first half of 2013. The €100 banknote, which is the third most counterfeited denomination, lagged some way behind, accounting for 12.4% of the total. The share of the other denominations (€5, €10, €200 and €500) remains very low.

The majority (98.5%) of counterfeits recovered in the first half of 2013 were found in euro area countries, with only around 1.2% being found in EU Member States outside the euro area and 0.3% being found in other parts of the world.

While there has been an increase in counterfeits discovered in the first half of 2013, the number of counterfeits recovered in 2012 was particularly low and the latest figure is comparable with levels seen in previous years. When compared with the number of genuine euro banknotes in

circulation (on average 15.1 billion during the first half of 2013), the proportion of counterfeits remains very low.

The risk of receiving a counterfeit is very low, however, the public should always be alert to the possibility of fraud, especially in the case of the three most counterfeited denominations, the €20, €50 and €100, and 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 vigilant when receiving banknotes 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. There is a wealth of information on the websites of the ECB and the national central banks about the security features of the banknotes and how to check their authenticity.

The Eurosystem continues to invest 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 counterfeits and remove them from circulation.

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