



EUROPEAN CENTRAL BANK

EUROSYSTEM

13 January 2014

PRESS RELEASE

MORE COUNTERFEITS IN SECOND HALF OF 2013 BUT OVERALL NUMBER REMAINS VERY LOW

- 353,000 counterfeit euro banknotes were withdrawn from circulation in the second half of 2013. This figure is very small considering that there are over 15 billion genuine banknotes in circulation at any one time.
- Over 75% of the counterfeits are €20 and €50 banknotes. The number of €10 counterfeits increased, but only represented 6.3% of the total.
- To stay ahead of counterfeiters, the Eurosystem is today unveiling a new, upgraded €10, the second banknote in the Europa series.
- Any euro banknotes can be easily verified using the “feel, look and tilt” method.
- The euro banknotes remain a trusted and safe means of payment.

In the second half of 2013 a total of 353,000 counterfeit euro banknotes were withdrawn from circulation – 11.4% up on the figure for the first half-year. The number of counterfeits, however, remains very low in comparison with the number of genuine banknotes in circulation during that period (over 15 billion).

The half-yearly trend is shown below:

Period	2010/2	2011/1	2011/2	2012/1	2012/2	2013/1	2013/2
Number of counterfeits	364,000	296,000	310,000	251,000	280,000	317,000	353,000

Despite this small number, the members of the Eurosystem – i.e. the European Central Bank (ECB) and the 18 national central banks of the euro area – advise people to stay vigilant when receiving banknotes. Genuine banknotes can be easily recognised using the simple “feel, look and tilt” method described on the euro pages of the ECB’s website and the websites of the Eurosystem national central banks. If a person receives a suspect banknote, he/she should compare it directly with one that is known to be genuine. If those suspicions are confirmed, the person should contact either the police or – depending on national practice – the respective 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The table below provides a percentage breakdown, by denomination, of the total number of counterfeits withdrawn from circulation in the second half of 2013.

Denomination	€5	€10	€20	€50	€100	€200	€500
Percentage breakdown	0.4%	6.3%	43.0%	35.0%	12.9%	1.4%	1.0%

During that period:

- the €20 and €50 continued to be the most counterfeited banknotes. The proportion of counterfeit €20 notes increased and that of counterfeit €50 notes decreased. Together, they accounted for 78% of the counterfeits;
- the number of €10 counterfeits rose, but this denomination still only comprised 6.3% of the total; and
- most (98.0%) of the counterfeits were found in euro area countries. Only around 1.5% were found in EU Member States outside the euro area and 0.5% were found in other parts of the world.

The Eurosystem communicates in various ways to help the public distinguish between genuine and counterfeit notes, and to help professional cash handlers ensure that banknote-handling and processing machines can reliably identify and withdraw counterfeits from circulation. The Eurosystem has a duty to safeguard the integrity of the euro banknotes and to draw on improvements in banknote technology. The Europa series it is introducing will contribute to maintaining public confidence in the currency. The new series will offer optimal protection against counterfeiting, as the banknotes will be even more secure and durable.

Yves Mersch, member of the ECB's Executive Board, today unveiled the new Europa series €10 banknote, which follows the new €5 banknote, issued on 2 May 2013. The other banknotes in this series will be introduced gradually over the coming years.

For media inquiries, please contact Elodie Lafitte Nowodazkij, tel.: +49 69 1344 7390.

European Central Bank

Directorate General Communications and Language Services, 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>

Reproduction is permitted provided that the source is acknowledged.