



EUROPEAN CENTRAL BANK

EUROSYSTEM

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PRESS RELEASE

BIANNUAL INFORMATION ON EURO BANKNOTE COUNTERFEITS - NUMBER OF COUNTERFEITS REMAINS LOW

- 331,000 counterfeit euro banknotes were withdrawn from circulation in the first half of 2014 – a very small proportion of the total number of genuine banknotes in circulation.
- 81% of the counterfeits are €20 and €50 banknotes.
- Euro banknotes can be easily verified using the “feel, look and tilt” method.
- They remain a trusted and safe means of payment.

In the first half of 2014 a total of 331,000 counterfeit euro banknotes were withdrawn from circulation, 6.2% down on the figure for the second half of 2013. Overall, the number of counterfeits remained very low compared with the number of genuine banknotes in circulation during that period – over 16 billion.

The half-yearly figures since 2011 are shown below:

Period	2011/1	2011/2	2012/1	2012/2	2013/1	2013/2	2014/1
Number of counterfeits	296,000	310,000	251,000	280,000	317,000	353,000	331,000

Despite these low numbers, 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 pay attention to the notes they receive. Genuine notes 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.

A breakdown, by denomination, of the counterfeits withdrawn from circulation in the first half of 2014 is provided below, together with information on their location.

Denomination	€5	€10	€20	€50	€100	€200	€500
Percentage breakdown	1.2%	4.6%	46.5%	34.7%	10.9%	1.3%	0.8%

- The €20 and €50 continued to be the most counterfeited banknotes. They accounted for 81% of the counterfeits, a slight increase over the previous half-year.
- 98% of the counterfeits were found in euro area countries, 1.9% were found in EU Member States outside the euro area and 0.1% were found in other parts of the world.

The Eurosystem has a duty to safeguard the integrity of euro banknotes, so it offers guidance on how to distinguish between genuine and counterfeit notes, and helps professional cash handlers ensure that banknote handling and processing machines can reliably identify and withdraw counterfeits from circulation. The Eurosystem draws on improvements in banknote technology: the Europa series it is introducing will help maintain public confidence in the banknotes and offer renewed protection against counterfeiting, as the notes will be even more secure and durable. The new €10 will be issued on 23 September 2014.

For media inquiries, please contact Elodie 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>

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