



EUROPEAN CENTRAL BANK

EUROSYSTEM

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PRESS RELEASE

BIANNUAL INFORMATION ON EURO BANKNOTE COUNTERFEITING

In the second half of 2011 a total of 310,000 counterfeit euro banknotes were withdrawn from circulation. This means that the overall quantity of counterfeits withdrawn from circulation in 2011 was 19.3% lower compared with the figures for 2010. At the same time, there was an increase of 4.7% as regards the quantity recovered in the second half of 2011 compared with the previous six months.

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

Period	2008/2	2009/1	2009/2	2010/1	2010/2	2011/1	2011/2
Number of counterfeits	354,000	413,000	447,000	387,000	364,000	296,000	310,000

When compared with the number of genuine euro banknotes in circulation (on average 14.4 billion during the second half of 2011), 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The table below provides a percentage breakdown, by denomination, of the total number of counterfeits withdrawn from circulation in the second half of 2011.

Denomination	€5	€10	€20	€50	€100	€200	€500
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Percentage breakdown	0.5%	1.0%	47.5%	32.5%	16.0%	2.0%	0.5%
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The €20 and €50 denominations continue to be the most counterfeited. During the past six months, the share of counterfeit €20 banknotes increased and the share of counterfeit €50 banknotes decreased. The two most counterfeited denominations together accounted for 80.0% of the total during the second half of 2011. The €100 banknote is the third most counterfeited denomination, accounting for 16.0% of the total. The share of the other denominations (€5, €10, €200 and €500) is very low.

The majority (97.5%) of counterfeits recovered in the second half of 2011 were found in euro area countries, with only around 2.0% being found in EU Member States outside the euro area and 0.5% 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

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