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## PRESS RELEASE

### BIANNUAL INFORMATION ON EURO BANKNOTE COUNTERFEITING

In the first half of 2012 a total of 251,000 counterfeit euro banknotes were withdrawn from circulation. This means that the overall quantity of counterfeits withdrawn from circulation from January to June 2012 was 15.2% lower compared with the figures for the same period in 2011. At the same time, there was a decrease of 19.0% as regards the quantity recovered in the first half of 2012 compared with the previous six months.

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

Period	2009/1	2009/2	2010/1	2010/2	2011/1	2011/2	2012/1
Number of counterfeits	413,000	447,000	387,000	364,000	296,000	310,000	251,000

When compared with the number of genuine euro banknotes in circulation (on average 14.6 billion during the first half of 2012), 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The table below provides a percentage breakdown, by denomination, of the total number of counterfeits withdrawn from circulation in the first half of 2012.

Denomination	€5	€10	€20	€50	€100	€200	€500
Percentage breakdown	0.5%	2.5%	42.5%	34.5%	17.0%	2.5%	0.5%

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 counterfeit €50 banknotes slightly increased. The two most counterfeited denominations together accounted for 77.0% of the total during the first half of 2012. The €100 banknote is the third most counterfeited denomination, accounting for 17.0% 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 first half of 2012 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.

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