



EUROPEAN CENTRAL BANK

EUROSYSTEM

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PRESS RELEASE

BIANNUAL INFORMATION ON EURO BANKNOTE COUNTERFEITING

In the second half of 2012 a total of 280,000 counterfeit euro banknotes were withdrawn from circulation. This means that the overall quantity of counterfeits withdrawn from circulation in 2012 was 12.4% lower compared with the figures for 2011. At the same time, there was an increase of 11.6% as regards the quantity recovered in the second half of 2012 compared with the previous six months.

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

Period	2009/2	2010/1	2010/2	2011/1	2011/2	2012/1	2012/2
Number of counterfeits	447,000	387,000	364,000	296,000	310,000	251,000	280,000

When compared with the number of genuine euro banknotes in circulation (on average 14.9 billion during the second 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The table below provides a percentage breakdown, by denomination, of the total number of counterfeits withdrawn from circulation in the second half of 2012.

Denomination	€5	€10	€20	€50	€100	€200	€500

Percentage breakdown	0.5%	1.5%	42.5%	40.0%	13.0%	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 remained the same and the share of counterfeit €50 banknotes increased. The two most counterfeited denominations together accounted for 82.5% of the total during the second half of 2012. The €100 banknote is the third most counterfeited denomination, accounting for 13.0% 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 2012 were found in euro area countries, with only around 2% 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.

The President of the ECB today unveiled the new “Europa series” €5 banknote. The banknotes of the Europa series will be introduced gradually over the coming years, starting with the new €5 banknote on 2 May 2013. The Europa series will include improved security features that take into account advances in banknote security and technology to make euro banknotes more secure and more durable. Further information on the Europa series €5 banknote is available at www.newfaceoftheeuro.eu.

European Central Bank

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