



EUROPEAN CENTRAL BANK

EUROSYSTEM

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PRESS RELEASE

EURO BANKNOTE COUNTERFEITING DECLINES IN FIRST HALF OF 2016

- 331,000 counterfeit euro banknotes were withdrawn from circulation in the first half of 2016
- Around 80% of the counterfeits were €20 and €50 banknotes
- All euro banknotes can be verified using the “feel, look and tilt” method
- Euro banknotes continue to be a trusted and safe means of payment

Some 331,000 counterfeit euro banknotes were withdrawn from circulation in the first half of 2016, 25% fewer than in the second half of 2015, the European Central Bank (ECB) announced today. The number of counterfeits remains very low in comparison with the increasing number of genuine banknotes in circulation (over 18.5 billion during the first half of 2016).

The half-yearly trend is shown below:

Period	2013/1	2013/2	2014/1	2014/2	2015/1	2015/2	2016/1
Number of counterfeits	317,000	353,000	331,000	507,000	454,000	445,000	331,000

Ever since the first euro series was issued, the Eurosystem – i.e. the ECB and the 19 national central banks of the euro area – has urged people to stay vigilant when receiving banknotes. Genuine banknotes can be 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.

The Eurosystem communicates in various ways to help people 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.

If you receive a suspect banknote, you should compare it directly with one you know is genuine. If your suspicions are confirmed, you should contact the police or – depending on national practice – the respective national central bank or your own bank. The Eurosystem supports the law enforcement agencies in their fight against currency counterfeiting.

The Eurosystem has a duty to safeguard the integrity of the euro banknotes and continue improving banknote technology. The Europa series will make the banknotes even more secure and help maintain public confidence in the currency.

A breakdown, by denomination, of the total number of counterfeit notes withdrawn from circulation in the first half of 2016 is provided below.

Denomination	€5	€10	€20	€50	€100	€200	€500
Percentage breakdown	1.1%	4.8%	31.6%	48.2%	11.1%	2.0%	1.2%

During that period:

- the €20 and €50 notes continued to be the most counterfeited banknotes. Compared with the figures for the second half of 2015, the proportion of counterfeit €20 notes decreased and that of counterfeit €50 notes increased. Together, they accounted for 79.8% of the counterfeits;
- most (97.6%) of the counterfeits were found in euro area countries. Only around 1.7% were found in EU Member States outside the euro area and less than 0.7% were found in other parts of the world.

The new €50 banknote, with its innovative security features, will be launched on 4 April 2017. Banknote equipment manufacturers and other suppliers will continue to receive support from the Eurosystem in adapting their machines and authentication devices to the new banknote. If their equipment is still unable to accept this banknote, operators/owners should contact their suppliers or manufacturers without delay.

For media queries, please contact Eva Taylor, tel.: +49 69 1344 7162, or Eszter Miltényi-Torstensson, tel.: +49 69 1344 8034.

European Central Bank

Directorate General Communications, Global Media Relations Division

Sonnemannstrasse 20, 60314 Frankfurt am Main, Germany

Tel.: +49 69 1344 7455, E-mail: media@ecb.europa.eu

Website: www.ecb.europa.eu

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