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PRESS RELEASE

More counterfeits in second half of 2014 but overall number remains very low

- 507,000 counterfeit euro banknotes were withdrawn from circulation in the second half of 2014.
- 86% of the counterfeits are €20 and €50 banknotes.
- All euro banknotes can be easily verified using the “feel, look and tilt” method.
- Euro banknotes continue to be a trusted and safe means of payment.

In the second half of 2014 a total of 507,000 counterfeit euro banknotes were withdrawn from circulation – 44% up on the figure for the same period in 2013. The number of counterfeits, however, remains very low in comparison with the increasing number of genuine banknotes in circulation (over 16 billion during the second half of 2014).

The half-yearly trend is shown below:

Period	2011/2	2012/1	2012/2	2013/1	2013/2	2014/1	2014/2
Number of counterfeits	310,000	251,000	280,000	317,000	353,000	331,000	507,000

Ever since the first euro series was issued, the Eurosystem – i.e. the European Central Bank (ECB) and the national central banks of the euro area – has urged people to stay vigilant when receiving banknotes. Genuine banknotes 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 you receive a suspect banknote, you should compare it directly with one you know is genuine. If your suspicions are confirmed, you should contact either the police or – depending on national practice – the respective national central 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 to maintain public confidence in the currency.

A breakdown, by denomination, of the total number of counterfeits withdrawn from circulation in the second half of 2014 is provided below.

Denomination	€5	€10	€20	€50	€100	€200	€500
Percentage breakdown	1.0%	3.0%	60.0%	26.0%	8.0%	1.5%	0.5%

During that period:

- the €20 and €50 continued to be the most counterfeited banknotes. The proportion of counterfeit €20 notes increased and that of counterfeit €50 notes decreased. Together, they accounted for 86% of the counterfeits;
- most (97.5%) of the counterfeits were found in euro area countries. Only around 2% were found in EU Member States outside the euro area and less than 0.5% were found in other parts of the world.

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. Banknote equipment manufacturers and suppliers will continue to receive support from the Eurosystem in adapting their machines and authentication devices to the new banknotes. If their equipment is still unable to accept the new Europa series banknotes, operators/owners should contact their suppliers or manufacturers without delay.

Further information on euro banknotes is available at www.ecb.europa.eu/euro and www.new-euro-banknotes.eu.

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