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PRESS RELEASE

BIANNUAL INFORMATION ON EURO BANKNOTE COUNTERFEITING

Decline in euro banknote counterfeits in first half of 2015 – overall number remains very low

- 454,000 counterfeit euro banknotes were withdrawn from circulation in the first half of 2015.

- 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In the first half of 2015 a total of 454,000 counterfeit euro banknotes were withdrawn from circulation –10.5% down on the figure for the second half of 2014, but still higher than in the first half of 2014. The number of counterfeits continues to remain very low in comparison with the increasing number of genuine banknotes in circulation (over 17 billion during the first half of 2015).

The half-yearly trend is shown below:

Period	2012/1	2012/2	2013/1	2013/2	2014/1	2014/2	2015/1
Number of counterfeits	251,000	280,000	317,000	353,000	331,000	507,000	454,000

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 can 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 is designed to make the banknotes even more secure and to help maintain public confidence in the currency.

A breakdown, by denomination, of the total number of counterfeits withdrawn from circulation in the first half of 2015 is provided below.

Denomination	€5	€10	€20	€50	€100	€200	€500
Percentage breakdown	1.5%	2.4%	54.7%	31.3%	8.5%	1.1%	0.5%

During that period:

- the €20 and €50 continued to be the most counterfeited banknotes. Compared with the figures reported for the second half of 2014, the proportion of counterfeit €20 notes decreased slightly and that of counterfeit €50 notes increased. Together, they accounted for 86% of the counterfeits;

- most (97.9%) of the counterfeits were found in euro area countries. Only around 1.6% 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 Europa series banknotes. If their equipment is still unable to accept these banknotes, operators/owners should contact their suppliers or manufacturers without delay.

The new €20 banknote will be issued as from 25 November 2015.

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

For media inquiries, please contact Rocío González, tel.: +49 69 1344 6451.

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