



EUROPEAN CENTRAL BANK

EUROSYSTEM

PRESS RELEASE

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Euro banknote counterfeiting remained low in first half of 2018

- 301,000 counterfeit euro banknotes were withdrawn from circulation in the first half of 2018
- Around 83% of those 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Some 301,000 counterfeit euro banknotes were withdrawn from circulation in the first half of 2018, a decrease of 17.1% when compared with the second half of 2017 and 9.1% less than in the first half of 2017. The likelihood of receiving a counterfeit is very small indeed. The number of counterfeits remains very low compared with the number of genuine banknotes in circulation, which has risen steadily, at rates in excess of GDP growth, since they were introduced. In 2017, for instance, the number and value of [euro banknotes in circulation](#) grew by around 5.9% and 4.0% respectively. There are now well over 21 billion euro banknotes in circulation, with a total value of more than €1.1 trillion.

The half-yearly trend is shown below:

Period	H1 2015	H2 2015	H1 2016	H2 2016	H1 2017	H2 2017	H1 2018
Number of counterfeits	454,000	445,000	331,000	353,000	331,000	363,000	301,000

Breakdown by denomination:

Denomination	€5	€10	€20	€50	€100	€200	€500
Percentage breakdown	1.2%	1.9%	23.8%	59.3%	10.9%	0.8%	2.1%

In the first half of 2018:

- The €20 and €50 notes continued to be the most counterfeited banknotes. Together, they accounted for around 83% of all counterfeits.

- Most counterfeits (88.8%) were found in euro area countries. Around 10.3% were found in EU Member States outside the euro area and 0.9% were found in other parts of the world.

Check your banknotes!

Ever since the first series of euro banknotes was issued, the Eurosystem – i.e. the European Central Bank (ECB) and the 19 national central banks of the euro area – has encouraged people to be vigilant when receiving banknotes. You can check your notes by using the simple “feel, look and tilt” method described in the “The €uro” section of the ECB’s website and on the websites of the national central banks. If you receive a suspect banknote, compare it directly with one you know to be genuine. If your suspicions are confirmed, please contact the police or – depending on national practice – your national central bank or your own bank. The Eurosystem supports the law enforcement agencies in their fight against currency counterfeiting.

The Eurosystem communicates in various ways to help people distinguish between genuine and counterfeit notes, as well as to help professional cash handlers ensure that banknote-handling and processing machines can reliably identify counterfeits and withdraw them from circulation.

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

In the first half of 2019, the Eurosystem plans to issue simultaneously the new €100 and €200 banknotes, the last two denominations of the Europa series. The Eurosystem will conduct an information campaign to tell the public and professional cash handlers about the introduction of these new banknotes, both of which have a number of new security features. Banknote equipment manufacturers and other suppliers will continue to receive support from the Eurosystem in adapting their machines and authentication devices to the new banknotes.

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