



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

PRESS RELEASE

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Counterfeit Euro coins decrease by 4% in 2013

The number of counterfeit euro coins removed from circulation in 2013 decreased by 4% compared to the year before. In 2013, national authorities in all Euro zone countries withdrew a total of 175 900 fake euro coins. With 16.8 billion genuine euro coins currently in circulation, the counterfeit ratio is 1 for every 100 000 genuine coins. While the absolute number of removed coins decreased for every single denomination, the 2 euro denomination remains by far the most affected by this criminal activity, representing 2 out of 3 counterfeit euro coins detected (67,6% of the total). The proportion of counterfeit 50 euro cent increased (16,7% of the total) and that of 1-euro coins decreased (15,6% of the total).

| Counterfeit euro coins detected in circulation, 2010 – 2013 | | | | |
|--|----------------|---------------|---------------|--------------|
| | 50-cent | 1-euro | 2-euro | Total |
| 2013 | 29 400 | 27 500 | 119 000 | 175 900 |
| 2012 | 31 000 | 32 000 | 121 000 | 184 000 |
| 2011 | 28 000 | 34 500 | 94 500 | 157 000 |
| 2010 | 24 900 | 30 800 | 130 300 | 186 000 |

Overall, preventive measures including legislation, technical analysis, law enforcement coordination and judicial cooperation have allowed Member States to make progress in removing counterfeit euro coins from circulation. However, current criminal rules need to be strengthened to improve the prevention, investigation and sanctioning of euro counterfeiting throughout the EU as Member States have diverging rules and levels of protection.

Against this background, the Commission adopted on 5 February 2013 a proposal for a directive setting minimum rules for sanctions (see [IP/13/88](#)). The directive will introduce efficient investigative tools and improve prevention by allowing the analysis of counterfeits by the competent authorities, to further enhance the protection of the euro and other currencies by criminal measures. The proposal is now being discussed by the Council and the European Parliament.

In addition, the Regulation on the authentication of euro coins of January 2012 is also a powerful instrument to protect the euro against counterfeiting. It sets out the rules for financial institutions to ensure that all euro coins that they put back into circulation are genuine.

Background

Under EU rules ([Regulation EC 1338/2001](#)), the Commission is responsible for the European Technical & Scientific Centre (ETSC). The ETSC analyses and classifies new stamped counterfeit euro coins. It is established in OLAF and uses the technical equipment and installations of the *Monnaie de Paris*.

The Commission also collaborates closely with the European Central Bank (ECB), Europol, Interpol and the competent national authorities. The European Central Bank is responsible for protecting against and analysing counterfeit euro banknotes. According to its [latest figures](#), around 670 000 notes were withdrawn from circulation in 2013..

Europol and Interpol support the Member States' law enforcement services in combating serious organised crime by facilitating the exchange of information and providing operational and strategic analysis.

The Commission is also responsible for implementing the "Pericles" programme which provides training and technical assistance for competent national authorities to enable them to further improve the protection of euro banknotes and coins against counterfeiting.

Under this programme, the Commission/OLAF carried out 13 projects in 2013, including conferences and seminars organised by either the Member States or the Commission/OLAF, in collaboration with Europol and the ECB. In order to continue supporting training and technical assistance in the period 2014-2020, the Commission presented a proposal for a Regulation of the EP and Council establishing an exchange, assistance and training programme for the protection of the euro against counterfeiting (the "Pericles 2020" programme) which succeed the previous Pericles Programme. The adoption of the new proposal is foreseen early 2014.

For more information on counterfeit coins:

http://ec.europa.eu/anti_fraud/euro-protection/euro-coins/

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