

PRESS RELEASE

2 April 2015

3rd International Conference on the Protection of the Euro against Counterfeiting

The European Central Bank, Europol and the European Commission jointly organised the 3rd International Conference on the Protection of the Euro against Counterfeiting. The conference was held at the ECB's new headquarters in Frankfurt am Main from 24 to 27 March 2015 and was the first event of its kind to be held here.

In keeping with the objectives and achievements of the earlier conferences in 2007 and 2011, the aim of this event was to further develop methods of collaboration between the law enforcement, judicial and banking authorities. To that end, the conference served as a forum for presenting and discussing new initiatives on the protection of euro banknotes and coins against counterfeiting.

Participants were welcomed by Mr Yves Mersch, Member of the Executive Board of the European Central Bank, Mr Rob Wainwright, Director of Europol, and Mr Jose Eduardo Leandro, Director, Resources and Communications of the European Commission's Directorate-General for Economic and Financial Affairs (DG ECFIN). Plenary sessions were chaired by Mr Ton Roos, Director Banknotes, European Central Bank, and Mr Michael Rauschenbach, Head of Business Area Serious Organised Crime, Europol, and Mr Johan Khouw, Head of Unit R6, at DG ECFIN. Workshops were facilitated by experts from the three organising institutions with assistance from the Royal Dutch Mint and De Nederlandsche Bank. In all, over 170 delegates from 47 countries attended.

Since the introduction of euro banknotes and coins in 2002, the number of banknotes in circulation has risen to over 17.5 billion, with a face value in excess of €1 trillion. This makes the euro an attractive target for counterfeiters both within and beyond the European Union and, as such, the need to combat counterfeiting in a pre-emptive and proactive way is self-evident.

Of particular interest and importance on this occasion were the challenges posed by rapidly emerging technologies in the field of the graphic arts and the increasing online availability of materials that can be used for counterfeiting. Accordingly, the conclusions reiterated the need for permanent vigilance, continuous monitoring of emerging threats, increased cooperation with source countries and ongoing training for law enforcement and retail personnel.

The Chairman of the final plenary session, Mr Johan Khouw, announced that the European Commission was planning to host the 4th conference, at a date still to be decided.

The conference was co-financed by the European Central Bank, Europol and the European Commission, via the Pericles Programme.

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