

Fewer incidences of counterfeits in the first half of 2008

Slight decline in counterfeit banknotes

In the first half of 2008, the Bundesbank detected 19,913 counterfeit euro banknotes in German payment transactions, which constitutes a decline of around 3% in comparison with the second half of 2007. The loss arising from these counterfeits is approximately €1.8 million. The distribution of counterfeits across the denominations was as follows.

Notes	€5	€10	€20	€50	€100	€200	€500	Total
Number	232	344	3,439	6,103	5,532	4,173	90	19,913
%	1	2	17	31	28	21	0	100

The €50 banknote remains the most frequently counterfeited denomination in Germany despite a further decline. Overall, the distribution of counterfeits across €20, €50, €100 and €200 denominations is more even than in earlier periods.

According to Dr Hans Reckers, the Executive Board member responsible for cash, "The general public can continue to place its trust in our currency in the future. With an overall annual incidence of approximately five counterfeit banknotes per 10,000 inhabitants, Germany is still well below the euro-area average". Dr Reckers calls on banks and the wholesale and retail trade to take advantage of the Bundesbank's training courses on identifying counterfeits. A detailed knowledge of the security features protects cashiers, in particular, from being deceived by counterfeit money.

Recognising counterfeit banknotes

Banknotes should be checked carefully at all times as counterfeit money is not eligible for reimbursement.

A number of security features should always be checked as the authenticity of the banknotes can be verified only through a combination of the various features.

- For example, embossed parts of the printed image on the front of the banknotes (“BCE ECB EZB EKT EKP” on the top edge) can be identified by touch.
- The watermark can be recognised in the unprinted area by holding the banknote up to the light.
- The hologram image changes when the banknote is tilted.
- On the back of the banknote the iridescent stripe (denominations up to €20) or the shifting colours of the right-hand denomination value (denominations from €50 upwards) can be checked by tilting the banknote.

All counterfeits that have appeared until now can be identified unambiguously. It is advisable when checking a suspect banknote to compare it with one that is known to be genuine.

Checking banknotes using magnifying glasses, counterfeit detector markers and ultraviolet lamps does not always produce a clear test result. It is therefore better to use these tools in combination with a check of the other security features.

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Somewhat fewer counterfeit coins too

In the first half of 2008, the Bundesbank detected 41,264 counterfeit euro coins in German payment transactions, which constitutes a decrease of approximately 2% in comparison with the second half of 2007. Annually, there are around 10 counterfeit coins per 10,000 inhabitants in Germany.

The distribution of counterfeits across the denominations was as follows.

Coins	50 cents	€1	€2	Total
Number	750	5,486	35,028	41,264
%	2	13	85	100

The total volume of counterfeit coins has hardly changed. However, the percentage of counterfeit €1 coins rose from 7% to 13%. In spite of this increase, the €2 coin was still by far the most frequently counterfeited (85%).

Checking coins for authenticity

Counterfeit euro coins can usually be distinguished from genuine coins only after a very thorough visual inspection. The following pointers can make it easier to identify genuine coins.

- On genuine euro coins, the motif stands out clearly from the background of the coin. By contrast, the image on counterfeit coins often appears blurred, and the surface of the coins is uneven.
- Counterfeits generally have a slightly different colour from genuine coins.
- The edge inscriptions of genuine €2 coins are sharp. Those on counterfeit coins are frequently incomplete or irregular.

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- Genuine €1 and €2 coins are only slightly magnetic. They remain attracted to the magnet but can be removed again with a minimum of effort. Counterfeit coins, on the other hand, are usually either non-magnetic or are strongly attracted to the magnet.

Counterfeit prevention

Through its branch network, the Bundesbank offers training courses for the banking industry, retail traders and any other interested parties free of charge. Participants are given typical counterfeits to test using the “feel, look and tilt” method. Contact details for the branches may be found under http://www.bundesbank.de/hv/hv_filialen.en.php.

In addition, information (in the form of brochures, CD-ROMs and posters) and a new interactive learning programme entitled “Detecting Counterfeits” (*Falschgeld erkennen* – available in German only) can be ordered from the Bundesbank. Information on this subject may be found on the Bundesbank’s website (http://www.bundesbank.de/bargeld/bargeld_falschgeld.en.php), the European Central Bank’s website (<http://www.ecb.int/bc/euro/banknotes/security/html/index.en.html>) or the German police force’s website (http://www.polizei.propk.de/vorbeugung/betrug/faelschung_von_geld_und_werzeichen/) (available in German only) and is updated regularly.

To ensure that important information concerning people who pass counterfeit banknotes and coins is not lost, the Bundesbank advises you to notify the police of counterfeit banknotes and coins and to hand these in to them immediately.