

More counterfeit notes, fewer counterfeit coins

Trend decline in counterfeit notes in second half of 2010

In 2010, the Bundesbank detected approximately 60,000 counterfeit euro banknotes. This means that the number of counterfeits rose by 14 percent on the year. In purely statistical terms this means seven (2009: six) counterfeit notes for every 10,000 inhabitants. The losses incurred as a result of counterfeit money rose from €3.1 million to €3.4 million year-on-year.

The overall rise in 2010 is due chiefly to developments in the first six months. In the second half of 2010, by contrast, 26,298 counterfeit euro notes were registered, or around 22 per cent fewer than in the first half (33,654 counterfeit notes).

“Although the rise in counterfeit euro notes in 2010 is unfortunate, Germany is still doing well by European standards”, stressed Helmut Rittgen, head of the Bundesbank’s Cash Department. “The trend decline in the second half of the year is, in my view, an encouraging sign”, Rittgen continued.

The distribution of counterfeits across the denominations in 2010 was as follows.

Note	€5	€10	€20	€50	€100	€200	€500	Total
No	375	789	12,798	35,113	8,921	1,700	256	59,952
%	1%	1%	21%	59%	15%	3%	0%	

The incidence of counterfeit €50 notes rose particularly sharply in 2010. The number of counterfeits of other denominations declined, however.

“At our training courses, we show that counterfeit euro notes can be detected quickly and securely. Our courses, which are free of charge and are aimed

particularly at the retail trade and banks, were met with keen interest again in 2010", according to Rittgen.

Recognising counterfeit banknotes

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

Checks should always include several of the security features, as a banknote can be identified as authentic only by examining a combination of the various features.

- For example, raised print on the front of the banknotes ("BCE ECB EZB EKT EKP" on the top edge) can be identified by touch.
- The watermark becomes visible in the unprinted area when the banknote is held against the light.
- The hologram images change when the banknote is tilted.
- On the back of the banknote, the glossy-stripe (denominations up to €20) or the colour-changing number (denominations from €50 upwards) can be checked by tilting the banknote.

When checking a suspect banknote, it is advisable to compare it with one that is known to be genuine, for example a banknote withdrawn from an ATM.

Checking banknotes using a magnifying glass, a counterfeit detector marker or an ultraviolet lamp does not always produce a clear test result. It is therefore better to combine use of these tools with a check of the other security features.

Fewer counterfeit coins

In 2010, approximately 67,400 counterfeit coins were detected in German payments. In the previous year, this figure had stood at around 78,500. Annually, there are around eight counterfeit coins per 10,000 inhabitants in Germany.

Counterfeits were identified in only the three highest denominations and were distributed in 2010 as follows.

Coins	50 cent	€1	€2	Total
No	2,974	9,692	54,741	67,407
%	4	14	81	

At around 33,900, the number of counterfeit coins was only marginally higher in the second half of 2010 than in the first (33,500 counterfeit coins).

Check coins for authenticity

Counterfeit euro coins can usually be distinguished from genuine coins only after a very thorough visual check. 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 compared to genuine coins.
- The edge inscriptions of genuine €2 coins are sharp. Those on counterfeit coins are frequently incomplete or irregular.
- Genuine €1 and €2 coins are only slightly magnetic. They remain attracted to magnets 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 magnets.

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 at
<http://www.bundesbank.de/hv/hv.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*) can be ordered from the Bundesbank free of charge. Up-to-date information on this subject may be found at the Bundesbank's website (http://www.bundesbank.de/bargeld/bargeld_falschgeld.en.php) the European Central Bank's website (<http://www.ecb.europa.eu/euro/banknotes/security/html/index.en.html>) or the German police force's website (<http://www.polizei-beratung.de/themen-und-tipps/betrug/falschgeld/tipps.html>, <http://www.sicherheitsmerkmale.polizei-beratung.de/20/index.htm>) (available in German only).

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