Euro banknotes and coins: characteristics and use
Euro banknotes and coins are legal tender in euro area countries: Germany, Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Spain, Estonia, Finland, France (except New Caledonia, French Polynesia, and Wallis and Futuna, which still use the CFP franc), Greece, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, and the Principality of Monaco, the Vatican City and the Republic of San Marino.

1| SEVEN CHARACTERISTICS FOR ALL BANKNOTES

1|1 Seven denominations from €5 to €500

In keeping with the needs and customs of Europeans, Eurosystem central banks issue seven denominations from €5 to €500. The €5, the €10, the €20 and, since 4 April 2017, the €50 are available in two formats: the first series of banknotes which were issued on 1 January 2002, and the second series which was launched on 2 May 2013 for the €5, on 23 September 2014 for the €10, on 25 November 2015 for the €20, and since 4 April 2017 for the €50.

The €50 banknote, the fourth denomination in the new series, has therefore been in circulation since 4 April 2017. There will not be a second series of the €500 banknote, whose production has already been stopped, and whose issuance will cease as of end-2018.

1|2 Seven different sizes

Euro banknotes have different sizes to make them easy to recognise, particularly for the blind and visually impaired. For the €5 to €100 banknotes, the size increases by five millimetres widthwise and by six or seven millimetres lengthwise. The €100, €200 and €500 banknotes are the same width, but vary in length.

1|3 Seven different colours

Each denomination in both series of euro banknotes has a dominant colour which enables it to be easily differentiated from the other denominations.

The colour spectrum is based on the colours of the rainbow.

The €10, €20 and €50 notes are red, blue and orange respectively, while the €100, €200 and €500 are coloured green, yellow and purple. The most widely used banknote, the €5, has a grey colour scheme as this does not show the dirt as much.

The colours will remain the same for the second series of euro banknotes.

1|4 The map of Europe

The map of Europe which appears on the reverse side of the banknotes was recreated using satellite photographs. The map extends beyond the borders of Europe as it also covers a part of North Africa and Asia Minor. It fits
Euro banknotes and coins: characteristics and use

into a box delimited by the Azores and the Canaries in one corner and the Northern tip of Finland beyond the Arctic Circle in the opposite corner.

A small box located at the right of the word ЕПΩ represents France’s overseas departments (Martinique, Guadeloupe, Guyana and Reunion). The new series banknotes also feature Cyprus and Malta, which joined the European Union in 2004.

1|5 The stars of the European flag

The front of the banknotes features the blue European flag with its circle of 12 stars representing the union between European nations. The number of stars remains constant, as the figure 12 is taken to symbolise perfection and harmony (e.g. the 12 months of the year, the 12 traditional constellations of the zodiac, etc.).

1|6 Inscriptions

A small amount of text appears on ECB banknotes in order to avoid translation problems and keep the banknote simple. The face value of each banknote is written several times on both the front and the back of the banknotes, and in large print on the front to help the visually impaired. The name of the currency also appears on both sides of the banknotes, written in the Latin (EURO) and Greek (ΕΠΩ) alphabets and, for the Europa series of euro banknotes, in the Cyrillic alphabet, to mark the integration of Bulgaria into the EU in 2007.

The initials of the European Central Bank appear on the front of the notes written in all European languages (BCE, ECB, ЕЦБ, EZB, EKP, EKT, EKB, BCE and EBC), and preceded by the symbol © for copyright (some of these initials only appear on the Europa series of banknotes due to the extension of the euro area since the launch of the first series). The signature of the President of the ECB is also featured on the banknotes.

1|7 Bridges and gateways

As in the first series, the new Europa series of banknotes will show architectural styles from seven periods in Europe’s cultural history, but will not show any existing monuments or bridges. The styles are as follows:

- €5: Classical
- €10: Romanesque
- €20: Gothic
- €50: Renaissance
- €100: Baroque and Rococo
- €200: 19th century iron and glass architecture
- €500: Modern 20th century architecture

A gateway (or a doorway) in the architectural style of the corresponding period appears on the front of the banknotes. It symbolises Europe’s openness to the rest of the world.

A bridge appears on the reverse side of the banknotes, symbolising the ties that unite Europeans.

The articles of the French Criminal Code concerning counterfeiting no longer appear on the banknotes. Counterfeiters are nonetheless still liable to sanctions. (See later.)

2| First-series banknotes have eight security features

Euro banknotes from the first series have eight security features to make them easy to recognise.

To check the authenticity of banknotes, the simple ‘Feel-Look-Tilt’ method can be used:

- Feel,
- Look,
- Tilt.

2|1 Feel

The paper

The banknote paper consists of pure cotton. The different stages of its production give it a crisp and firm texture.

Raised print

The special printing makes the ink on the front of the banknote feel raised. This can be felt by running your finger over it or scratching it gently with your nail. The initials of the European Central Bank are particularly raised.
2|2 Look

The watermark

The watermark is produced by varying the thickness of the paper. It shows the architectural design and the value of the banknote.

Against the light, the transition between light and dark parts is smooth. Put the banknote on a dark surface, and the light areas become darker. This effect is very easy to see in the value watermark.

The security thread

The security thread is embedded in the banknote paper. Hold the banknote against the light – the thread will appear as a dark stripe. The word “EURO” and the value of the banknote appear in alternation on the stripe, written in tiny letters.

See-through number

Incomplete marks printed in one of the top corners of the banknote, on both sides, combine perfectly to form the value numeral. You can see this when holding the banknote against the light.

2|3 Tilt

Hologram stripe/Hologram patch

On the front, the hologram is in the form of a stripe for the €5, €10 and €20 banknotes and a patch for the €50, €100, €200 and €500 banknotes. For the hologram stripe, tilt the banknote – the hologram image will change between the value and the “€” symbol or the ring of stars, all on a rainbow-coloured background. At the edges, tiny letters show the value. For the hologram patch, tilt the banknote – the hologram image will change between the value and a window or doorway. In the background, you can see rainbow-coloured concentric circles of tiny letters moving from the centre to the edges of the patch.

The glossy stripe and colour-shifting ink

Tilt the €5, €10 and €20 banknotes and a gold-coloured stripe will appear on the reverse side. It shows the value and the € symbol.

Tilt the €50, €100, €200 and €500 banknotes and the value numeral on the back of the banknotes on the right will change colour from purple to olive-green or brown.

3| New features of the second series

3|1 Raised print

On the front, there is a series of short raised lines on the left and right edges. The architectural motif, the lettering and the large value numeral also feel thicker. This raised print is designed to make the notes easier to recognise for the blind and visually impaired.

3|2 The watermark

When the banknote is held against the light, a faint image becomes visible showing a portrait of the princess Europa, the value of the banknote and a window.

3|3 The portrait window

When the €20 and €50 banknotes are held against the light, the window near the top of the hologram becomes transparent and reveals a portrait of Europa on both sides of the banknote. When the banknote is tilted, the window also shows rainbow-coloured lines around the value numeral on the front of the banknote. On the back of the banknote, rainbow-coloured value numerals appear in the window.

3|4 Portrait hologram

On the €5 and €10 banknotes of the Europa series, the silvery stripe on the right bears a portrait of Europa, along with a window and the value of the banknote. On the €20 and €50 banknotes of the Europa series, the hologram shows the value of the banknote, a portrait of Europa, the architectural motif and the euro symbol (€).

3|5 Emerald number

When the banknote is tilted, the shiny number in the bottom left corner displays an effect of the light that moves up and down.
The number also changes colour from emerald green to deep blue.

## 4 Euro coins

While the ECB has the exclusive right to authorize the issue of euro banknotes, which are put into circulation by national central banks, responsibility for euro coins lies entirely with the European Commission and with the Member States participating in the euro (i.e. with their respective state treasury departments).

### 4.1 Coins in circulation

Euro coins come in eight different denominations: 1, 2, 5, 10, 20 and 50 cents, €1 and €2. Unlike banknotes, which are absolutely identical throughout the euro area, European coins have a common side and a national side.

They may be used in all countries participating in the Monetary Union; they are legal tender throughout the euro area.

**Markedly different colours and features**

The eight denominations are different sizes and have different features to make them easy to recognise:

- the €1 and €2 coins are two-coloured;
- the 10, 20 and 50 cent coins are yellow;
- the 1, 2 and 5 cent coins are a copper red colour.

The edge finishing of the coins differs according to their face value. Two consecutive coins never have the same edge finishing.

**Common sides**

To make them easy to recognise, euro coins all have one common side which is the same regardless of the country of issuance, and which bears the face value.

The first three coins (1, 2 and 5 cent) feature Europe in relation to Africa and Asia on a globe. The 10, 20 and 50 cent coins and the €1 and €2 coins feature an integrated Europe, before its expansion in 2004.

**A national side, with country-specific designs**

Euro coins are issued by the 19 Member States which made up the euro area on 1 January 2014, as well as by the Vatican City, San Marino and Monaco.

Each country can choose its own design for the national side of its coins, provided it includes the 12 stars of the European flag and the year of issue.

The French sides all display the letters “RF” standing for République Française (French Republic) and the 12 stars of Europe. The 1, 2 and 5 cent coins bear the image of Marianne, which is a symbol of France and Republican values.

The 10, 20 and 50 cent coins represent the Sower, which embodies France’s place in the European integration process. A tree, symbolising life, growth and continuity, appears on the €1 and €2 coins.

**€2 commemorative coins**

Each participating Member State is entitled to issue a €2 commemorative coin twice a year. The design of these coins must be validated by the European Commission and

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**The design of the euro coins**

At the informal ECOFIN meeting held in Verona in Italy on 12-13 April 1996, the European Heads of State decided that the front side of the euro coins would be common to all euro area countries and that the reverse side would display country-specific designs. A European-wide competition was then organised to select the designs for the European side of the coins. The winning designs were produced by Luc Luycx, designer at the Royal Belgian Mint.

The selection procedures for the national sides differed from country to country. In Italy, the designs were chosen by RAI television viewers. In monarchies, it was decided to feature the effigy of the monarchs. In France, a jury chaired by the Minister of the Economy and Finance chose the national sides on 21 April 1997.
by the other European Union Member States. Exceptionally, a country may be authorised to issue a third coin to commemorate an event of Europe-wide relevance. These commemorative coins are legal tender throughout the euro area and can be used in the same way as any other euro coin.

4|2 Collector coins

Participating Member States may issue collector coins that are not intended for circulation. They are only legal tender in the issuing Member State and have different face values and technical features from those of the coins described in this explainer. In France, the Monnaie de Paris (the national mint) has issued a collector series entitled “Gold and Silver Euros”, comprising ten different denominations: €5, €10, €15, €25, €50, €100, €250, €500, €1000 and €5000. They can be purchased from national post office branches or by subscription, and come in special packaging with a certificate of authenticity. They are not intended for use as a means of payment, and are generally acquired as an investment. However, owners can exchange them for regular coins at the Banque de France, at the counters of the Paris cash centre (39 rue Croix-des-Petits-Champs).

5| RULES GOVERNING THE USE OF BANKNOTES AND COINS

5|1 The obligation to accept euro banknotes and coins as legal tender

The notion of legal tender

The legal tender status of euro banknotes and coins is laid down by the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union. A number of basic elements on the legal tender of euro banknotes and coins are contained in EC Regulation 974/98 of 3 May 1998 on the introduction of the euro. Moreover, on 22 March 2010, the European Commission adopted a recommendation clarifying the scope and effects of legal tender of banknotes, which sets out the following ten guiding principles:

- The legal tender of euro banknotes and coins should imply: mandatory acceptance; acceptance at full face value; and power to discharge from payment obligations.
- The acceptance of euro banknotes and coins as means of payments in retail transactions should be the rule. A refusal thereof should be possible only if grounded on reasons related to the “good faith principle” (for example if the retailer does not have enough change).
- The acceptance of high denomination banknotes should also be the rule.
- No surcharges should be imposed on payments with euro banknotes and coins.
- Member States should avoid adopting new rules for rounding prices to the nearest 5 cents.
- Member States should take all measures deemed appropriate to prevent euro collector coins from being used as means of payments.
- Stained banknotes should be returned to national central banks as they might be the product of a theft.
- Member States should neither prohibit nor penalise the total destruction of small quantities of euro banknotes or coins by individuals.
- The mutilation of euro banknotes and coins for artistic purposes should be tolerated.
- The competence to destroy fi euro coins should not belong to national authorities in isolation anymore.

In practice, however, the scope and effects of the legal tender status of euro banknotes and coins are still governed by national law.

In France, the majority of the rules relating to euros were already applicable to the old franc banknotes and coins, and are largely set out in the national Monetary and Financial Code.

**Article 106 of the Treaty on European Union**

“1° The ECB shall have the exclusive right to authorise the issue of banknotes within the Community. The ECB and the national central banks may issue such notes. The banknotes issued by the ECB and the national central banks shall be the only such notes to have the status of legal tender within the Community.”
The protection of legal tender is guaranteed by Article R642-3 of the French Criminal Code: “Refusing to accept banknotes and coins that have legal tender in France at the value at which they are in circulation is punishable by a fine applicable to class two offences.”

The legal tender status and exchange of first-series euro banknotes following the issuance of the Europa series

The Europa series banknotes issued from 2013 onwards will initially circulate in parallel with the first series as legal tender. The first series will gradually be withdrawn from circulation and the date on which it ceases to be legal tender will be announced well in advance.

After this date, it will not be possible to use first-series banknotes as legal tender, although they will be exchangeable for an unlimited period at the Banque de France and at Eurosystem NCBs.

The obligation to accept banknotes and coins is subject to a certain number of conditions:

• Only euro banknotes and coins have legal tender status in euro area countries; foreign banknotes and coins (dollar, yen, pound sterling, etc.) and euro collector coins issued in a country other than France are not legal tender in France. However, French retailers are entitled, exceptionally, to accept foreign banknotes offered as payment by a non-resident at their own risk. Manual exchange activities are regulated.

• Banknotes and coins used for payment must be in good condition, pursuant to the principle of “the right incorporated in the means of payment”. If a banknote is mutilated or damaged, a retailer is entitled to refuse it because its value is unclear. However, in most cases, these banknotes may be exchanged free of charge and under the same conditions at all Eurosystem central banks (ECB decision 2013/10 – see Appendix 1).

Thus, banknotes of which only a small part is missing can be exchanged immediately and free of charge at some counters of the Banque de France and La Poste (see lists of cash centres and counters on the Banque de France’s website: https://www.banque-france.fr/en/banknotes/how-recognise-and-use-euro-banknotes-and-coins/where-can-i-exchange-banknote-what-do-i-do-if-i-suspect-banknote-counterfeit).

In the case of burned or badly damaged banknotes, an expert assessment may be required. The banknotes will only be reimbursed following this assessment (see also paragraph 5.3).

• There is no obligation to accept more than 50 coins for any single payment (Article R112-2 of the Monetary and Financial Code). This limit does not apply to cash payments made at Treasury counters; however, since 1 January, the latter may not exceed EUR 300.

• Cash transactions must not exceed certain limits. The legal thresholds are set out in Articles L112-6 and following, and in Article D112-3 of the Monetary and Financial Code.


  – EUR 1,000: maximum cash payments by individuals resident in France for tax purposes, or for a professional activity.

  – EUR 15,000: maximum cash payments by non-residents, provided the payment is not for professional purposes.

These limits do not apply to the following:

• individuals who have no other means of payment or who do not have a deposit account;

• payments between individuals which are not for professional purposes.

Specific regulations apply to certain cash transactions:

• Physical transportation of cash (Article L152-1 of the Monetary and Financial Code): individuals transporting cash to or from countries outside France (including European Union and euro area countries) other than through a banking institution are required to clear these transactions through customs for
amounts equal to or exceeding EUR 10,000. This threshold applies in particular to cash transfers.

- **Anti-money laundering and terrorism financing regulations** (Book V, Title VI of the *Monetary and Financial Code*): clients of financial institutions carrying out cash transactions (manual exchange, exchange of banknotes, etc.) must provide proof of identity in accordance with the provisions of the *Monetary and Financial Code* on exchange transactions.

The buyer or debtor must pay the exact amount if asked by the seller or creditor (Article L112-5 of the *Monetary and Financial Code*); the seller may therefore refuse a cash payment in euros if he/she does not have sufficient change or if the face value of the banknote tendered is disproportionate compared to the amount owed.

Banknotes and coins may not be sent by post and the transportation of large amounts of cash is regulated (a cash-in-transit company must be used for amounts over EUR 30,000).

The seller is entitled to ask the client to give his/her identity if the banknote does not appear genuine.

**5|2 Obligations concerning counterfeit and suspect euro banknotes and coins**

Article L162-2 of the *Monetary and Financial Code* states that any person receiving counterfeit or forged banknotes is required to hand them in or have them handed in to the Banque de France.

This obligation also applies to counterfeit coins, which must be handed in to the Monnaie de Paris.

Since only genuine banknotes and coins are considered legal tender, retailers are only obliged to accept banknotes and coins as legal tender if they are authentic. Retailers therefore have the right to refuse payment made with banknotes and coins that appear to be counterfeit.

If the banknotes or coins presented to them are in a state that prevents them from determining whether or not they are genuine, they are entitled to refuse them.

If, after accepting a banknote or coin, they realise that it is fake, they are not entitled to put it back into circulation (Article 442-7 of the French *Criminal Code*). Banknotes must be returned to the Banque de France and coins to the Monnaie de Paris (Article L162-2 of the *Monetary and Financial Code*). If these banknotes/coins are genuine, they will be exchanged free of charge. If they are false, they will be kept by the Banque de France or the Monnaie de Paris in exchange for a receipt; the corresponding loss can be deducted from accounting income, and the receipt provided by the Banque de France or the Monnaie de Paris is then used as a tax receipt.

**5|3 Exchange or reimbursement of banknotes by the Banque de France**

Damaged banknotes (soiled, partially destroyed) may be, after examination by Banque de France branches with cash activities:

- exchanged immediately, if the amount of the transaction is less than EUR 800;
- or reimbursed by transfer, for amounts over EUR 800.

They may also be collected for reimbursement by transfer after examination by the Banque de France, at some counters of the Banque de France and La Poste (see lists of cash centres and counters on the Banque de France's website – link on page 7).

In the case of burned or badly damaged banknotes, an expert examination may be required. The banknotes will only be reimbursed following this examination.

**6| Rules governing the counterfeiting and reproduction of banknotes and coins**

**Article L123-1 of the Monetary and Financial Code**

For violations committed in France: “Banknotes and coins enjoy the protection afforded to intellectual work by Articles L122-4 and L335-2 of the French *Intellectual Property Code*. The issuing authorities are invested with the copyright.”
Counterfeiting and imitating banknotes is prohibited by the French Criminal Code.

However, using the design on the banknotes for illustration purposes is authorised, provided that the reproduction is not likely to be confused with a genuine banknote, under the conditions laid down by the ECB.

6|1 Counterfeiting (or forging)

Counterfeiting (French or foreign) banknotes and coins is subject to the relevant criminal penalties. Reproducing identical banknotes for fun or out of curiosity may be liable to this penalty, as it is presumed that the intention is to produce counterfeit banknotes. In addition, the reproduction does not have to be perfect to be a punishable offence; reproducing banknotes even with minor changes is still a criminal offence.

It is therefore strictly forbidden to photocopy or print digitised banknotes, even if the security features are neither reproduced nor imitated.

According to Article 442-2 of the French Criminal Code, merely holding or circulating counterfeit banknotes is punishable by the law.

6|2 Imitation

Producing and distributing any objects, printouts or forms, imitating French or foreign legal tender banknotes (or coins) is also prohibited by the French Criminal Code, even if the objective is not to produce counterfeits. It is thus prohibited to produce printouts which resemble banknotes because they are liable to fraudulent use or could be mistakenly accepted as payment.

6|3 Reproduction

Using the graphics and designs on the euro banknotes is permitted as long as it does not contribute to the crime of counterfeiting or the offence of imitation. However, they must be used with extreme care; as a rule, reproduction of all or part of a banknote is deemed unlawful if the public is liable to confuse it with a genuine banknote.

The ECB has drawn up a set of rules on this issue.

Article 2 of Decision ECB/2013/10 of 19 April 2013 (published in the Official Journal of the European Union on 30 April 2013) on the denominations, specifications, reproduction, exchange and withdrawal of euro banknotes gives the following examples of legal reproduction:

- One-sided reproductions of a euro banknote, provided that the size of the reproduction is at least 125% of both the length and width or at most 75% of both the length and width of the respective euro banknote.

- Two-sided reproductions of a euro banknote, provided that the size of the reproduction is at least 200% of both the length and the width or at most 50% of both the length and width of the banknote.

- Reproductions of individual design elements of a euro banknote, provided that such a design element is not depicted on a background resembling a banknote.

- One-sided reproductions depicting a part of the front side or reverse side of a euro banknote, provided that such a part is smaller than one third of the original front side or reverse side of the banknote.

- Reproductions made of a material clearly different from banknote paper.

- Reproductions on websites with the word “SPECIMEN” printed across them and resolution not exceeding 72 dots per inch (dpi).

This list is not exhaustive. Upon receiving a written request, the ECB and the NCBs may confirm that a reproduction is lawful insofar as it cannot be mistaken by the general public for a genuine euro banknote. If the reproduction is produced solely for use in France, requests must be submitted to the Banque de France. If the reproduction is produced in more than one Member State, these requests should be submitted to the ECB.

The rules regarding the reproduction of euro banknotes also apply to euro banknotes that have been withdrawn from circulation or are no longer legal tender.

In order to ensure the effectiveness of the reproduction rules laid down by the ECB, banknotes are protected by copyright law, the violation of which constitutes an offence in France.
Article 442-1 of the Criminal Code

“The counterfeiting or forging of banknotes and coins that have legal tender status in France or issued by authorised foreign or international institutions is liable to thirty years imprisonment and a fine of EUR 450,000. [...] The first two paragraphs of Article 132-23 concerning the period of unconditional imprisonment are applicable to the offences referred to in this article.”

Article 442-3 of the Criminal Code

“The counterfeiting or forging of French or foreign banknotes and coins which are no longer legal tender or authorised is liable to five years imprisonment and a fine of EUR 75,000.”

Article 442-6 of the Criminal Code

“Producing, selling, and distributing any objects, printed material or forms that resemble the banknotes and coins referred to in Article 442-1 such that they could lead to acceptance in the place of the imitated currency units, is liable to one year imprisonment and a fine of EUR 15,000.”

Article 442-7 of the Criminal Code

“Any person who, having received forged or counterfeited money referred to under Article 442-1 believing them to be genuine, returns them to circulation after discovering their falsity is liable to a fine of EUR 7,500.”

Article R642-4 of the French Criminal Code

“Anyone using banknotes and coins that have legal tender status in France or are issued by authorised foreign or international institutions for advertising purposes is liable to the fine applicable to second-class offences. Furthermore, the object used to commit the offence, or intended to be used to commit the offence, or that resulting from the offence, will be confiscated from persons who are guilty of such infringements [...]”

Prints, films and other electronic files should be destroyed after use in order to prevent any misuse.

In accordance with the law, the name and address of the printer must appear on the document. In addition, using banknotes and coins as advertising material is prohibited.

Note

The complete text of Decision ECB/2013/10 concerning the reproduction of euro banknotes can be found on the ECB’s website: www.ecb.int
**APPENDIX 1**

**Article 3 of the European Central Bank’s Decision of 19 April 2013 (ECB/2013/10) on the denominations, specifications, reproduction, exchange and withdrawal of euro banknotes**

1. **NCBs** [National Central Banks] shall, upon request, and under the conditions laid down in paragraph 2, exchange mutilated or damaged genuine legal tender euro banknotes in the following cases:

   - when more than 50% of the euro banknote is presented; or
   - when 50% or less of the euro banknote is presented if the applicant proves that the missing parts have been destroyed.

2. Further to paragraph 1, the following additional conditions apply to the exchange of mutilated or damaged legal tender euro banknotes:

   - where doubt exists as to the applicant’s legal title to the euro banknotes: identification shall be provided by the applicant, as well as proof that the applicant is the owner or otherwise authorised applicant;
   - where doubt exists as to the authenticity of the euro banknotes: identification shall be provided by the applicant;
   - where ink-stained, contaminated or impregnated genuine euro banknotes are presented: a written explanation as to the kind of stain, contamination or impregnation shall be provided by the applicant;
   - where the genuine euro banknotes have been damaged by anti-theft devices: a written statement on the cause of neutralisation shall be provided by the applicant;
   - where the genuine euro banknotes have been damaged by anti-theft devices in connection with an attempted or actual robbery, theft, or other criminal activity: the banknotes shall be exchanged only at the request of the owner or otherwise authorised applicant who is the victim of the attempted or actual criminal activity leading to the damage to the banknotes;
   - where the genuine euro banknotes have been damaged by anti-theft devices and they are presented by institutions and economic agents referred to in Article 6(1) of Regulation (EC) No. 1338/2001: a written statement on the cause of neutralisation, the reference and characteristics of the anti-theft device, details of the party presenting the damaged banknotes and the date of presentation thereof shall be provided by those institutions and economic agents;
   - where the genuine euro banknotes have been damaged in bulk due to the activation of anti-theft devices: to the extent possible and if required by NCBs, they shall be presented in sets of 100 euro banknotes, provided that the amount of euro banknotes presented is sufficient to form such sets;
   - where institutions and economic agents referred to in Article 6(1) of Regulation (EC) No. 1338/2001 present for exchange, in one or more transactions, damaged genuine euro banknotes with a value of at least EUR 7,500: documentation on the origin of the banknotes and identification of the customer or, where applicable, of the beneficial owner as defined in Directive 2005/60/EC, shall be provided by those institutions and economic agents. This
obligation shall also apply in the event of doubt regarding whether the threshold value of EUR 7,500 is reached. The rules laid down in this paragraph shall be without prejudice to any stricter identification and reporting requirements adopted by Member States in transposing Directive 2005/60/EC.

3) Notwithstanding the above:

- where NCBs know or have sufficient reason to believe that the genuine euro banknotes have been intentionally damaged, they shall refuse to exchange and shall withhold the euro banknotes, in order to avoid the return of such euro banknotes into circulation or to prevent the applicant from presenting them to another NCB for exchange. However, they will exchange the damaged genuine euro banknotes if they either know or have sufficient reason to believe that applicants are bona fide or if applicants can prove that they are bona fide. Euro banknotes which are damaged to a minor degree, e.g. by having annotations, numbers or brief sentences placed on them, will in principle not be considered to be intentionally damaged euro banknotes;

- where NCBs know or have sufficient reason to believe that a criminal offence has been committed they shall refuse to exchange the damaged genuine euro banknotes and shall withhold them, against acknowledgement of receipt, as evidence to be presented to the competent authorities to initiate or to support an ongoing criminal investigation. Unless otherwise decided by the competent authorities, the genuine euro banknotes shall at the end of the investigation qualify for exchange under the conditions laid down in paragraphs 1 and 2;

- where NCBs know or have sufficient reason to believe that the damaged genuine euro banknotes are contaminated such that they pose a risk to health and safety, they shall exchange the damaged genuine euro banknotes, if the applicant can provide a health and safety assessment by the competent authorities.
APPENDIX 2

Euro coins

1| Coins in circulation

Since 2002 all euro area coins have had a common reverse side...

...and a national side which is specific to the country of issuance.

French series

Germany Austria Belgium Cyprus Spain Estonia Finland Greece

Ireland Italy Lettonia Lituania Luxembourg Malta Netherlands Portugal

Slovakia Slovenia
2| Specific features of the €2 coin

Twice a year, euro area Member States can issue €2 coins with a different front side, to commemorate specific national events or events of relevance to Europe.

3| Examples of colector coins – France

These coins are not intended for circulation. They have a different face value to ordinary coins (€5, €10, €15, €25, €50, €100, €250, €500, €1000, €5000) and are usually made from silver or gold. They can only be exchanged, at their face value, at the counters of the Paris cash center of the Banque de France (39 rue Croix-des-Petits-Champs).
APPENDIX 3

The ‘Feel, Look and Tilt’ method

1| The first series: security features

3-step security check

1 Feel

Feel of the paper – The banknote is crisp and firm.
Raised print – The main image, the lettering and the large value numeral feel thicker.

2 Look

Watermark – Look at the banknote against the light and the main image and the value become visible. Put the banknote on a dark surface and the light areas become darker.
Security thread – Look at the banknote against the light. The security thread appears as a dark line.

3 Tilt

Hologram on the front of the €5, €10 and €20 banknotes – The value and the € symbol appear.
Glossy stripe on the back of the €5, €10 and €20 banknotes – A gold-coloured stripe appears showing the value and the € symbol.
Hologram on the front of the €50 banknote and higher – The value and a window or doorway appear.
Colour-changing number on the back of the €50 banknote and higher – The number changes colour from purple to olive green or brown.
The second series: security features

Easy to check and difficult to counterfeit

With their enhanced security features, the new €20 and €50 banknotes are even more resistant to counterfeiting, like the €5 banknotes since January 2013 and the €10 banknotes since 2014. And like the banknotes of the first series, they are easy to check. Just follow the ‘Feel, Look and Tilt’ method.

1 Feel

Feel of the paper – The banknote is crisp and firm.
Raised print – Feel the short raised lines on the left and right edges of the banknote. The main image, the lettering and the large value numeral also feel thicker.

2 Look

Portrait watermark – Look at the banknote against the light. A portrait of Europa, the value and a window become visible. Put the banknote on a dark surface and the light areas become darker.
Portrait window – Look at the €20 banknote against the light. The window near the top of the hologram becomes transparent and reveals a portrait of Europa on both sides of the banknote.
Security thread – Look at the banknote against the light. The security thread appears as a dark line.

3 Tilt

Emerald number – Tilt the banknote. An effect of the light moves up and down the number. It also changes colour from emerald green to deep blue.
Portrait hologram – Tilt the banknote – A portrait of Europa, a window and the value appear in the silvery stripe on the €5 and €10 banknotes. On the €20 banknotes, the hologram shows the value of the banknote, a portrait of Europa, the architectural motif and the euro symbol (€).
Portrait window – Tilt the €20 banknote. The window shows rainbow-coloured lines around the value numeral. On the back of the banknote, rainbow-coloured value numerals appear in the window.
Euro banknotes and coins:
characteristics and use
March 2017

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION ON BANKNOTES AND COINS

Please consult:
https://www.banque-france.fr/en/page-sommaire/design-and-manufacture-banknotes