

WRITTEN QUESTION E-3213/01

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to the Commission

Subject: The implication for money-laundering of the new EUR 500 note

Bearing in mind that only two EU Member states (Germany and Holland) use banknotes of comparable value to the EUR 500 note that will enter circulation in January 2002 and that the Deutschmark has for some years been the banknote of choice for criminals across large parts of Europe, can the Commission say why it believes there is any need for a note – already dubbed the 'gangster's note' – of such a high denomination, whether police forces were consulted before the decision was made to issue it and whether the Commission would be prepared to recommend the note be withdrawn if, following its introduction, Europol or Interpol were to conclude that it significantly assisted organised criminals in carrying-out their activities, including the purchase of large quantities of drugs or nuclear material?

Can the Commission indicate whether it would have been possible to generate sufficient liquidity within the Eurozone by January, 2002 had the decision been taken to make the EUR 200 note the largest banknote to be issued?