

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0465/05
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to the Commission

Subject: Counterfeit euros

Although the euro was originally presented to the public as a fiduciary currency 100% impossible to forge, there are now an average of 50 000 counterfeit banknotes in circulation per month.

Last year nearly 600 000 forged banknotes were seized, twice as many as in 2003 and representing a value of more than EUR 30 billion, the equivalent - to make the figure easier to grasp - of one third of the budgetary expenditure of the Union of 25 Member States!

Despite the reassurances given, this already strong trend does not seem likely to be reversed. On the contrary, we are witnessing an acceleration and, according to experts, the amount seized represents only 20% of the counterfeit money actually injected into the economy by forgers and mafia-type networks.

In view of this worrying situation, does the Commission intend to consult with the European Central Bank as a matter of urgency, with a view to examining the possibility of issuing more secure euro banknotes?

What steps would then be taken to help European citizens (especially the elderly and the disabled) to familiarise themselves with the new notes?