

Protection of the euro against counterfeiting, Pericles programme 2002-2005

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This is an Opinion of the European Central Bank (ECB) on a Council proposal to establish the Pericles programme. This is a training, exchange and assistance programme for the protection of the euro against counterfeiting. In general, the ECB welcomes the initiative. It emphasises the need to avoid duplication or overlap with other Community programmes or with those established under Title VI of the Treaty on European Union. Proper coordination with projects of Europol and the ECB is also essential. The ECB recommends a coordinated approach between Europol, the Commission and the ECB in establishing the content, target groups and methodology of the Pericles programme. The contents of the programme appear to be very broad. Such an approach might lack consistency. Collectively, the various initiatives may fail to raise standards at Community level. This is particularly true in view of the diversity of the target groups addressed by the programme and its limited financial funds. The ECB feels it should be involved in the evaluation of the programme's effectiveness, when the Council comes to decide whether the programme should be continued. Finally, the ECB takes note that the proposal will be extended to non-euro Member States.