

Euro: protection against counterfeiting for countries that have adopted or not adopted the euro

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PURPOSE : to present a proposal for a Council Regulation on the protection of the euro against counterfeiting. **CONTENT** : this proposal is based on the third sentence of Article 123(4) and Article 308 of the EC Treaty. It covers three main subjects: - the processing of technical information on counterfeiting; - the processing of operational and strategic data; - cooperation and mutual assistance. This regulation should in due course be amplified by an extension to Europol's mandate to cover more specific aspects of the protection of the euro and by such other adjustments are found to be necessary, including clarification of the procedures to be complied with for Europol participation in joint investigations. With regard to the technical data, this shall be gathered and indexed by the relevant national authorities and notified to the European Central Bank for storage and processing. The ECB shall also be responsible for gathering technical information relating to counterfeit euro notes and coins from non-member countries. The relevant national authorities and the Commission and Europol, in their respective areas of responsibility, shall have direct access to the technical data held by the European Central Bank. In relation to operational and strategic data, the Member States shall ensure that a Unit to combat euro counterfeiting is set up by Europol and managed as a Europol administrative entity. The Unit shall manage a system for the exchange, gathering and analysis of operational and strategic information within the Europol information system. Finally, Member States shall ensure that, at the request of the requesting national authority, the requested national authority transmits to the requesting authority, with copy in appropriate cases to the Unit, all such information as may be of assistance to it in preventing, detecting and combating euro counterfeiting.