Money laundering: implementation of the directive 91/308/EEC. 2nd report

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Reporting on behalf of the Committee on the 2nd Commission Report on the implementation of the money laundering, Edward Newman (PES, UK) calls on the Commission to take further measures to crack down on those who try ta make black money white. The annual worldwide volume of laundered money is estimated at $ 500 billion. In his report, Mr Newman calls on the Commission to put forward a proposal for amending the money laundering directive in order to significantly extend its scope of application, in particular as concerns the groups of professions required to report suspicious transactions to the authorities. At present, only "credit institutions" and financial institutions are covered by the reporting obligation. As money launderers develop more sophisticated techniques, the Committee considers that all groups at risk of being involved in money laundering should be added to the scope of the Directive. Examples include realtors, art dealers, casinos, notaries, accountants, tax advisors and lawyers. For some groups, however, it may be necessary to develop a new set of rules to take into account of the fact that some professions are also subject to special rules on professional confidentiality. The Committee also considers that the directive needs to be updated in a number of other areas, in particular by including common rules for confiscation, freezing and seizure of assets, by widening the list of predicate offences, and buy introducing a threshold value of · 15 000 (all new accounts or transactions above that value will be subject to controls). The Commission is also urged to consider whether specific legislation is needed to tackle the use of electronic payment techniques and of the Internet for the purposes of money laundering. Special attention should also be given to the potential to launder money during the changeover from national currencies to the euro. In this context, the Committee calls on the Commission and the ECB to minimise the circulation of high denomination euro bills (in particular the · 500 bill). Finally, the Committee considers that the Directive must be applied also in those Member State territories where EC law does not apply, or does apply only to a limited extent.