Protection of the euro against counterfeiting, Pericles programme 2002-2013: extension to the non-participating Member States

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Opinion of the European Central Bank: on 12 June 2006, the European Central Bank (ECB) received requests from the Council of the European Union for opinions on two proposed measures: a proposal for a Council decision amending and extending Decision 2001/923/EC establishing an exchange, assistance and training programme for the protection of the euro against counterfeiting (the 'Pericles' programme) (see **CNS/2006/0078**); a proposal for a Council decision extending to the non-participating Member States the application of Council Decision amending and extending Decision 2001/923/EC establishing an exchange, assistance and training programme for the protection of the euro against counterfeiting (the 'Pericles' programme)).

The ECB has two specific observations on the proposed legislation, in line with some of the observations made in Opinion CON/2005/22 of 21 June 2005 regarding the extension of the temporal and material scope of the Pericles programme.

It is important for Community legislation to ensure that the extension of the Pericles programme is adequately linked to the timing of :

- the introduction of the euro in the new Member States;

- the issue of the second series of euro banknotes.

The ECB confirms that an extension to 31 December 2013 would provide for such an adequate link.

In order to avoid overlaps and ensure consistency and complementarity of actions under the Pericles programme, and to take advantage of the ECB's expertise in the field, it would be beneficial for the Commission, the ECB and Europol to jointly examine initiatives to be funded under the Pericles programme, and for the selection decision to require the consultation and due consideration of the views of the two latter bodies, within the framework of the Steering Group they already established with the aim of developing a common strategy against counterfeiting of the euro.