



Brussels, 30.1.2024  
C(2024) 474 final

ANNEX – PART 2/2

**ANNEX**

*to the*

**COMMISSION DECISION**

**on the financing of the Pericles IV programme and the adoption of the annual work programme for 2024**



Subject: **Update of the Pericles IV strategy: priority action points**

This paper updates the previous Pericles Strategy<sup>1</sup> and describes the priority action points of the Pericles implementation for the upcoming year. It is presented to the Euro Counterfeiting Experts Group (ECEG)<sup>2</sup> and will be annexed to the 2024 Annual Work Programme for the Pericles IV programme.

These priorities can be adapted in case of upcoming unexpected new threats in relation to the protection of the euro which require activities financed under the Annual Work Programme for 2024.

The actions which the Pericles programme will focus on 2024 are the following<sup>3</sup>:

a. Supporting activities aimed at improving cooperation among those Member States which are particularly affected by the production and distribution of counterfeits

Within the European Union (EU), Italy has dismantled the highest number of dangerous print shops and illegal mints in Europe since 2002, confirming Italy's status as the most affected Member State in terms of the production of counterfeit euros<sup>4</sup>. The Italian police forces completely dismantled two organised crime groups by January 2023. These groups were disseminating via various online platforms counterfeits assumed to originate in Italy. In the second case, they also succeeded in dismantling an illegal mint<sup>5</sup>. It is estimated that more than 40% of counterfeit euro banknotes in circulation continue to be produced in the area of Naples (common classes denominated "Napoli group")<sup>6</sup>. There are more and more online channels used for distributing counterfeit euro banknotes and coins supplied from the Napoli region.

In 2022, France, Italy, Germany and Spain together were subject to the largest distribution of counterfeit euro banknotes removed from circulation<sup>7</sup>, accounting for 75.7% of the total. In

---

<sup>1</sup> Ares(2022)8487165 endorsed in the ECEG of 15 November 2022.

<sup>2</sup> In line with Article 4 of Regulation (EU) 2021/840 of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing the "Pericles IV" programme.

<sup>3</sup> The priorities of the "Pericles IV" programme have been endorsed by the Euro Counterfeiting Experts Group (ECEG), as provided for by Council Regulation (EC) 1338/2001 of 28 June 2001.

<sup>4</sup> Information received during Euro Counterfeiting Expert Group (ECEG) meetings indicating that 76 illegal mints and print shops were dismantled from 2002 to 2018.

<sup>5</sup> Source: Europol

<sup>6</sup> Information received during Euro Counterfeiting Expert Group (ECEG) meetings.

<sup>7</sup> Information received from the ECB.

2022, Germany was the country with the highest number of detected counterfeit euro coins. The counterfeits seized in Germany together with those seized in Greece, Italy and Spain accounted for 61% of the total counterfeits seized in 2022.

*Implementation:*

*Actions focusing on cooperation between France, Germany, Spain and Italy, such as workshops and staff exchanges targeting both production and distribution.*

*Actions focused on countering counterfeit coin distribution in Germany, Greece, Italy and Spain.*

b. Fostering cooperation with authorities of third countries where there is suspicion, or evidence of, counterfeit euro production

*China*

Chinese counterfeiters continue to represent a threat relating to the production of raw materials for banknote counterfeits as well as for coin counterfeits. The number of counterfeits seized in and before circulation having a deceptive hologram (the majority of which has been confirmed to be originating from China) increased from 22 000 in 2013 to 100 000 in 2021<sup>8</sup>, representing 16.9% of the total. The Chinese origin of these holograms have been confirmed by a number of successful police operations conducted in EU Member States<sup>9</sup>. In April 2021, the German customs seized 1.032 holograms for various denominations of the euro banknotes stocked in a shipment coming from China<sup>10</sup>.

For 2023, China continued to represent the main resource country for materials (mainly fake holograms, special paper & inks and other security features) for currency counterfeiting – particularly for counterfeit euros. Altered-design counterfeit banknotes, some of them also presumed to be originated in China (such as movie money or prop copy), are available on the open web.

---

<sup>8</sup> Information received during Euro Counterfeiting Expert Group (ECEG) meetings: already in 2009, the Spanish Police carried out a successful operation involving holograms produced in China and used on counterfeit euro notes; counterfeit holograms for banknotes appeared on sale on the Chinese "alibaba" website.

<sup>9</sup> Information received from Europol concerning successful police actions include: Operation Chimera (Germany, July 2021): On 08 April 2021, during a random check performed by German Customs, a postal shipment with 1.032 holograms were seized which could have been used for the production of counterfeit money with a total value of at least 38.800 euro. According to the findings of NAC Germany, the seized holograms are similar to the holograms used for the production of counterfeit euro banknotes of several different indicatives. The source of two such indicatives was identified by the German authorities, in a recent operation, Operation Chimera. On 14 July 2021, a digital print shop has been dismantled with a high amount of holograms found.; operation Tulipa (January 2019, Netherlands) led to the dismantlement of an illegal print shop and the seizure of sheets containing emulations of series €50 banknotes and special paper imported from China used by the perpetrators to produce such counterfeit euro notes; Operation Deep Money (2019, Portugal) led to a seizure of sheets imported from China containing emulations of series A €50 banknotes used by the perpetrators to produce counterfeit euro notes. On 12 July 2022 and 27 January 2023, two distinct illegal printshops have been dismantled in The Netherlands. In both cases the raw materials (holograms, soecial inks and papers), were ordered from China.

<sup>10</sup> Source: Europol

In particular, Chinese criminality is also directly involved in the production of ‘movie money products’, with stakeholders consulted for the movie money/prop copy study undertaken in 2023 confirming that individuals located in China are the main producers of these products. Since all movie money (the type of altered design banknotes that show the words “movie money” or related ‘disclaimers’) found in circulation in the EU is made with the same template and technique, stakeholders believe the notes are produced by one group or a small number of collaborating groups. Europol initially became aware of the scale of the issue following several big customs seizures which revealed a Chinese origin. One interviewee also described that this can be traced by placing orders on Alibaba to detect vendors who declare parcels as coming from China. However, information on the origin of the parcels has not been verified with the respective Chinese authorities. In operations based in China, production is taking place at the “industrial level”, which is problematic as creating the infrastructure for one factory can facilitate further production.

China is also the source of counterfeit euro coins, demonstrated by seizures in December 2014<sup>11</sup>, June 2017<sup>12</sup> and February and April 2022<sup>13</sup>. The economic and demographic size of China as well as the proven contacts between Chinese nationals and organised crime in the EU increase the risks of currency counterfeiting and it can thus be expected that there will be more cases with operational links to China. There is a need to re-establish and reinforce cooperation following a decline due to the Covid-19 pandemic, which should also include the organisation of awareness raising actions with Chinese competent authorities. This builds on the experience gained from the first EU-China platform meeting/workshop held in 2017 and subsequent EU-China cooperation meetings held in Beijing in 2019 between the European Institutions and the Chinese national competent authorities.

### *Colombia and Peru*

Outside the EU, traditionally the highest quality and largest quantity of counterfeit euros are produced in Colombia and Peru. Successful operations in Colombia<sup>14</sup> and Peru<sup>15</sup> - as well as the recent arrest of counterfeiters from Colombia setting up an illegal printing operation in the Canary Islands, Spain<sup>16</sup> - point to the necessity of maintaining strong cooperation between

---

<sup>11</sup> Europol (2015). *Report on Euro Counterfeiting 2014*. 306.000 coins produced in China were seized by the Italian authorities in the port of Naples.

<sup>12</sup> Information received during the Euro Counterfeiting Expert Group (ECEG) meeting of 16 March 2017: Almost 55.000 euro in counterfeit 2 euro coins from China was seized in Prato, Italy.

<sup>13</sup> Information received by the CNAC-EL: in February and April 2022 a total of about 60.000 counterfeit euro coins were seized inside a container coming from China at the Piraeus port of Greece.

<sup>14</sup> E.g. information received from Europol, that the Colombian National Police, supported by the Spanish BIBE and the Colombian armed forces, conducted a successful raid of a clandestine print shop on 24 April 2019. Nearly 300 million face-value counterfeit pesos were seized. The production of counterfeit euros was only in an incipient phase, therefore only try-outs for €50 and €100 were found.

<sup>15</sup> E.g. information received from Europol, that the Peruvian authorities conducted a raid on 2 September 2020 in Lima, Peru (Operation Sol) in which a clandestine print shop was dismantled and three suspects were arrested, including one of the most notorious counterfeiters in South America. Approximately 100,000 euros (in €100 counterfeit notes) were seized, along with USD 300,000 and 50,000 Peruvian soles.

<sup>16</sup> Information received from Europol: Spain has recently identified a migration of counterfeiters from Cali, Colombia to the Canary Islands, Spain. These criminals, with an extensive experience and criminal records in currency counterfeiting, traveled to Gran Canaria with the

EU Member States, the European Institutions and both Colombian and Peruvian national authorities respectively. In fact, these successful cases would not have been possible without the strong cooperation of the involved authorities and the links that had previously been established between them (a link supported by previous Pericles-actions). This cooperation is essential in the combat against potential threats to the euro in the South American region.

*Implementation:*

*Actions such as staff exchanges and trainings aimed at complementing the EU-China platform in supporting and developing close cooperation with the relevant Chinese authorities, especially concerning illegal holograms, counterfeit coins, and altered design banknotes like movie money.*

*Staff exchanges, technical/tactical trainings and networking events involving Colombian and Peruvian competent national authorities, aimed at reinforcing their capacities.*

c. Maintaining an efficient framework for the protection of the euro in South Eastern Europe

This area is one of the most sensitive regions in Europe with respect to euro counterfeiting. Because of their strategic geographical position close to the euro area, all countries in this region can be considered as both transit areas and potential production sites.

Montenegro and Kosovo UNSCR 1244<sup>17</sup> use the euro as their only official currency. The Commission has concluded Administrative Cooperation Agreements with Türkiye, Serbia, North Macedonia, Kosovo UNSCR 1244, Albania and Montenegro in order to foster cooperation. Albania has established a structure of well-organised competent national authorities.

A high number of counterfeit euro coins are distributed in or from Kosovo UNSCR 1244. The Commission, through the European Technical and Scientific Centre (ETSC), monitors the overall situation in the Western Balkans in general and in particular in Kosovo where recently an increased number of counterfeit euro coins have also been detected. The ETSC saw tangible evidence of the current situation during a workshop that EU LEX organised at its premises in Pristina on 20 and 21 September 2023<sup>18</sup>. On that occasion the ETSC provided also technical assistance on-the-spot to the Kosovo Agency on Forensics for classifying

---

intention of setting up a new illegal production facility for producing counterfeit euro banknotes, with the intent to distribute these false notes both in Canary Islands and continental Spain. A significant amount of equipment and 'raw material' were found during the house searches (printers, printer cartridges, testing machinery, guillotines, inks, paper, etc.). Samples of €20 and €50 were found and seized.

<sup>17</sup> This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/kosovo-so-awash-with-fake-euro-coins-they-are-accepted-payment-2023-09-21>

backlogs of counterfeit euro coins confirming that the large majority of them belong to common class 2E72.

Further technical assistance is certainly needed to the Kosovo national authorities dealing with currency counterfeiting to increase their detection capacity to identify counterfeit euro coins. At the same time, it is essential to boost internal coordination among Kosovo institutions to establish an effective legal framework aligned with Euro Area standards. On the investigative side, a prominent coordination role is needed to enhance the efforts of Law Enforcement Agencies operating in the area.

Türkiye is a potential place of transit and production of counterfeit currency<sup>19</sup>, including counterfeit coins and altered design banknotes<sup>20</sup>. In April 2022, Istanbul Provincial Gendarmerie Command teams caught red-handed a person preparing to produce counterfeit euro coins in Başahşehir. During the search at the warehouse, the Gendarmerie teams seized ten thousand counterfeit 2 euro coins, sixteen thousand ready to mint metalling rings and cores and a hydraulic press machine. In the technical examination after the operation, it was determined that the seized fake coins were produced by electrolysis in order to pass through gambling machines and cigarette vending machines abroad.

As for altered design banknotes, the 2023 Commission study on movie money/prop copy confirms that Türkiye is named as a source country, mainly manufacturing the altered design banknotes marked with ‘Gecersizdir’, which translates to ‘not valid’ (but may not be understandable as such to non-Turkish speaking populations).

The centralisation of information in the country as well as the cooperation among competent national authorities and with European authorities still leave room for improvement. Further actions involving the Turkish authorities are needed as a follow-up to succesful actions carried out in 2015, with a particular focus on reinforcing cooperation with specialised law enforcement authorities.

Moreover, organised crime in Bulgaria continues to represent a threat due to its involvement in the production of high quality counterfeit euro banknotes<sup>21</sup> and involvement in criminal networks, operating both domestically<sup>22</sup> and in other countries in the region. This threat to the euro in South Eastern Europe is also demonstrated by the continuous successful police

---

<sup>19</sup> There are indications that counterfeit euros and USDs are supplied from Türkiye. One important seizure of the Turkish authorities confirms that, see <https://tpworld.com/70448606/turkish-services-seize-record-usd-1-bn-in-counterfeit-money>

<sup>20</sup> In 2022, based on open sources information one illegal mint counterfeiting euro coins in Türkiye were dismantled. Furthermore, from open sources it is confirmed that at the beginning of April 2021, Kosovo Police arrested 4 Turkish criminals and 2 Kosovo Albanian criminals in Prizren after they received a parcel from Türkiye. The parcel, which was collected at the local Post Office, contained 375,000 euros in allegedly counterfeit 50 and 100 euro banknotes.

<sup>21</sup> E.g. Europol press release of March 2021 that, on 15 March 2021, the Bulgarian NCO dismantled another illegal printshop, this time it being an operation from an University in Sofia.

<sup>22</sup> Information provided by Europol on two recent cases in Bulgaria: On 14 August 2020, The Bulgarian police arrested twelve individuals that were part of a distribution network of high quality counterfeit €200 banknotes (Operation Struma). Over 610 counterfeit banknotes were seized and the criminal network operating in Sofia and Sandanski have been disrupted. On 7 December 2019, the Bulgarian authorities arrested an individual suspected for currency counterfeiting criminal activities. During a search of the suspected address, a total of 26600 euro in face value (counterfeit €100 banknotes) were seized.

operations taking place, including in neighboring countries<sup>23</sup>. There is an added value to ensuring the sustainability of the results in the fight against counterfeiting, through the organisation of actions that build on previous Pericles actions organised by Croatia, Bulgaria, Romania and the Commission. With regard to Croatia and Bulgaria, support for their respective competent authorities will acquire a higher urgency in the coming years because these Member States have joined the ERM II in July 2020, Croatia joined the euro on 1/1/2023 and Bulgaria has expressed its intention to join the euro in 2025.

*Implementation:*

*Purchase of equipment for specialised investigative groups in South Eastern Europe.*

*Networking actions aimed at reinforcing regional cooperation among all South Eastern European countries and establishment of a framework for the protection of the euro similar to the one already in place within the EU.*

*Reinforcing cooperation with specialised law enforcement authorities in Türkiye, with a particular focus on counterfeit euro coins and altered design banknotes.*

*Support to South Eastern European Member States for developing further activities in the area like multilateral conferences/workshops and staff exchanges, guaranteeing sustainability in the fight against counterfeiting.*

*Support to Bulgarian and Croatian authorities to further improve the protection of the euro against counterfeiting.*

#### d. Topical developments

##### I. *Distribution of counterfeits and high quality components on the internet/darknet*

In response to the increasingly effective and coordinated efforts to dismantle traditional counterfeit distribution networks, criminals are resorting to more innovative ways of selling their counterfeits. This is particularly the case on the darknet and on the open internet. On the darknet, advertisements have been found for both high quality components and materials of euro banknotes and coins, as well as complete euro counterfeits<sup>24</sup>. According to Europol<sup>25</sup> and the Dutch National Police, The Netherlands is a relevant focus-country in terms of its role as a significant ‘hub’ for the distribution

---

<sup>23</sup> E.g. Europol: on 27 January 2021, three different illegal printshops were dismantled in Bulgaria, Romania and Serbia (operation Sportisti – Bulgaria, Operation Golden Deer – Romania and Operation Jozsef – Serbia).

<sup>24</sup> Europol (25 September 2018). *Darknet euro counterfeiter arrested in Poland*. Press release.

<sup>25</sup> Dismantled prints in NL in the last years:

OP TULIPA – 29.01.2019

OP DESWAEN – 06.12.2019 – Rip-deal

OP HYPERION – 21.01.2020

OP FAKE – 25.02.2020

OP 03Counter – 22.11.2021

OP ZEEWIND – 12.07.2022

All cases except Deswaen were involving the online distribution of the notes, with raw materials used being most likely imported from China.

of counterfeits and high quality components purchased on the darknet. Moreover, a print shop was dismantled in Belgium in July 2020 with Dutch nationals counterfeiting and operating the online accounts, and another Dutch printshop was dismantled in 2023<sup>26</sup>. The Netherlands has been experiencing a development of so-called rip-deals, in which the €200 denomination reached market shares unseen in the past, triggered by altered design notes which were used in large quantities for such deals<sup>27</sup>.

## *II. Increase cooperation with customs and judiciary with a specific focus on countering 'movie money' and 'prop copy' products (including altered design notes)*

A further threat is the availability of 'movie money' and 'prop copy' products on the open internet. These products, being unlawful reproductions of euro banknotes – despite having a disclaimer on the product – have in numerous cases been accepted as genuine euro banknotes by the general public and retail community. Approximately 30% of all counterfeits removed from circulation are of this variety. It is therefore vital to coordinate a unified response to this threat, which requires cooperation at both European and international levels. The relatively easy access to these products and the relative percentage of these notes in circulation points to the now persistent nature of this problem.

The Commission Study on movie money, prop copy and other altered design banknotes undertaken in 2023 underlines the need to enhance cooperation between customs agencies and other law enforcement and central banks at the Member State level. The idea is that this will build intelligence to increase recognition of shipments of altered design banknotes in the future, thus improving the ability of customs officers to seize shipments of altered design banknotes at the border.

The study also emphasises the need for awareness raising among the judiciary. The low quality and limited perceived deceptiveness of altered design banknotes, coupled with the lack of awareness of the extent and nature of the phenomenon among prosecutors and judges, has resulted in few cases involving altered design banknotes being successfully prosecuted. Nevertheless, this is cause for concern given that the public and businesses experience serious financial harms as a result of this phenomenon Which undermines trust in the integrity of the euro. Therefore, the lack of awareness among the judiciary in the EU Member States could potentially be improved through meetings and conferences organised by the European institutions and/or competent authorities of the Member States about the scale and nature of the phenomenon in the EU. Such events may include information sharing on the scale and nature of the phenomenon in the EU as well as the provision of clear guidance on how the existing legal framework on currency counterfeiting applies to altered design banknotes.

---

<sup>26</sup> See <https://www.om.nl/actueel/nieuws/2023/02/01/hagenaar-produceerde-acht-ton-aan-valse-bankbiljetten>.

<sup>27</sup> As reported by the ECB.



*III. Euro coins: Fight against high quality classes of counterfeits, implementation of Regulation (EU) No 1210/2010 and handling of euro coins unfit for circulation.*

High quality counterfeit coins, which imitate the electro-magnetic properties of genuine euro coins, are highly deceptive for coin-processing machines. Therefore, advanced technical investigation and laboratory research are needed to respond effectively to current and emerging threats. Enhanced security features for euro coins are therefore needed to better protect coins against high quality counterfeits. Studies of new security features which may be used to counter the technological advances of counterfeiters are a prudent measure against future threats. Furthermore, as a result of the diversification in the use of coin processing machines by financial intermediaries, technical developments within the coin-processing machine (CPM) industry are increasing. In the framework of the implementation of Regulation (EU) No 1210/2010 and in view of anticipating new potential threats, a reinforced dialogue with the private sector (e.g. coin-processing machines manufacturers, cash-in-transit companies) focused on research and development is needed to keep the detection capacity of the CPM constantly up to date.

*Implementation:*

*Workshops on how to effectively investigate threats posed by the darknet/internet, including the interception of distribution channels.*

*Conferences, trainings and high level workshops aimed at raising awareness on movie money, prop copy and altered design banknotes, particularly amongst customs and judiciary, which includes information sharing on the scale and nature of the phenomenon in the EU as well as the provision of clear guidance on how the existing legal framework on currency counterfeiting applies to altered design banknotes.*

*Workshops, staff exchanges and studies to share best practices on the detection and classification of high quality counterfeit coins.*

**Attachments:**

- Status of counterfeiting in the EU
- Methodology and patterns of intervention for implementing the Pericles IV programme in 2021

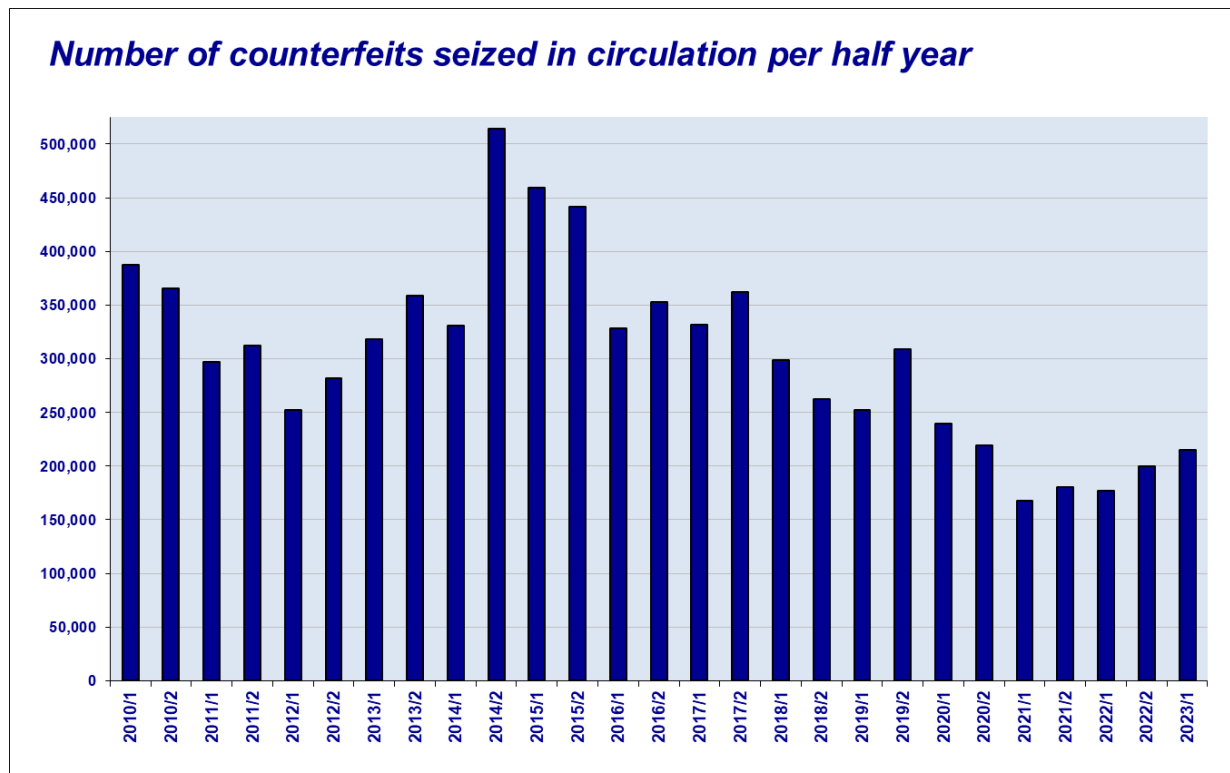
## ATTACHMENT 1

### Subject: Status of counterfeiting in the EU

Counterfeiting still continues to represent a serious threat to the euro. The level of counterfeit banknotes and coins detected, the presence of high quality counterfeits, the increasing availability of technology and the interest shown by organised crime groups outside the EU suggest that the criminal offences related to counterfeiting will rise considerably unless competent authorities maintain or increase their current efforts against innovative forms of euro counterfeiting.

Circa 376,000 counterfeit euro banknotes were withdrawn from circulation in 2022, an increase of about 8.4% when compared with 2021 when the proportion of counterfeits was at its lowest since the euro was introduced<sup>28</sup>.

**Chart 1: Counterfeit euro banknotes detected in circulation (source: ECB)**



The €20 and €50 notes continued to be the most counterfeited banknotes, jointly accounting for slightly below two thirds of the total percentage of all counterfeits notes.

The quality of coin counterfeits continued to improve in 2022. New common classes were created covering "high quality" counterfeits. Several actions were carried out by the Commission

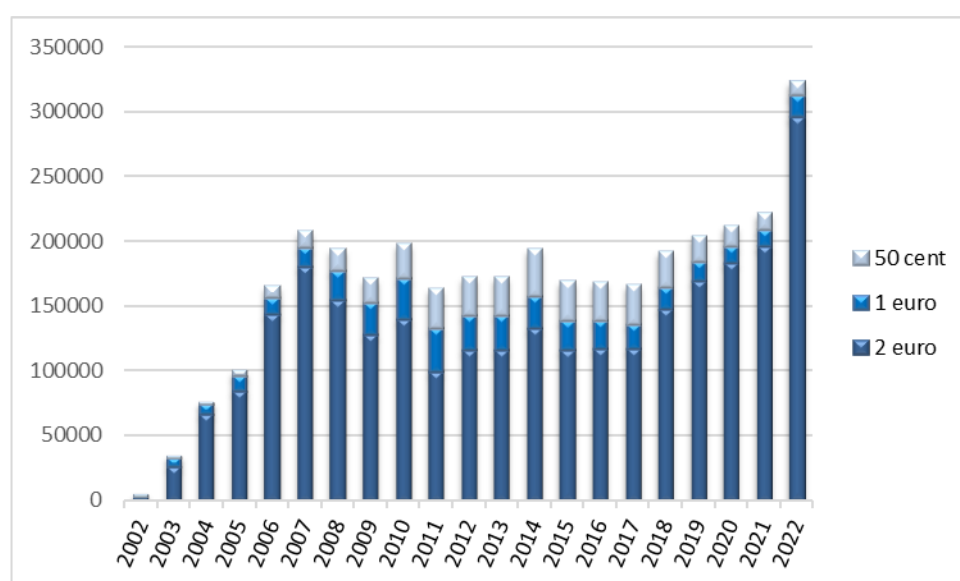
<sup>28</sup> ECB Press Release of 30 January 2023. Available at <https://www.ecb.europa.eu/press/pr/date/2023/html/ecb.pr230130~98bc45a802.en.html>

to define the extent of the problem and to improve detection of these high quality counterfeits by coin-processing machines.

The number of counterfeit coins detected in circulation and received by the Coin National Analysis Centres (CNACs) in 2022 increased by 46.18% compared to 2021. The number of detected counterfeit coins now exceeds 322 074 pieces per year (2 euro, 1 euro and 50 cent denominations represent respectively 91.4%, 5.4% and 3.2%). The overall value of counterfeit coins detected in circulation in 2022 was EUR 611 323, which is much higher than in 2021.

The 2 euro coin remains by far the most counterfeited denomination, constituting 96.31% of the total in terms of value (up from 95.40% in 2021). In 2022 counterfeits of the 1 euro denomination became the second most common (5.4% of the total) overtaking the 50 cent denomination.

**Chart 2: Counterfeit euro coins detected in circulation (Source: ETSC)**



In 2022, law enforcement measures resulted in the identification of ten clandestine print shops and one mint, together with raw materials, tools and machinery used by counterfeiters for the forgery of euro and the seizure of almost €38 million face value in counterfeit euro banknotes.

Ten of these facilities were detected within the EU. These shops were located in France, Germany (4), Hungary, Italy (mint), Romania, Spain and The Netherlands, and one illegal print shop in Serbia. One of these printing facilities (Spain) had offset as the main production method used, while six were using inkjet (France, Germany (2), Hungary, Romania and The Netherlands).

With respect to the criminal phenomenon of counterfeiting, it is the long-term view of Europol, national experts and the Directorate-General for Economic and Financial Affairs (DG ECFIN) that there is a growing interest in euro counterfeiting of organised crime groups located outside the EU.

The European Financial and Economic Crime Threat Assessment (EFECTA – Europol 2023) confirms the above mentioned findings. Counterfeit euro banknotes distributed in the EU are primarily produced in various Member States of the EU. Raw materials, such as holograms, paper, and special inks, often come from Asia are purchased via e-commerce platforms and shipped in parcels and envelopes. Offset and digital printing remain major production methods for counterfeit banknotes. Illegal print shops are set up at various locations, including private premises and living spaces. Production methods and materials change depending on the type of counterfeit currency. In some cases, criminal actors split the production and storage of counterfeits between different places and in smaller quantities, to minimise the risk of loss in case of arrest and seizures.

According also to EFECTA, the criminal networks involved in currency counterfeiting originate from both EU and non-EU countries. Criminal networks active in this crime area show a high level of technical expertise and internal organisation, with different affiliates in charge of supplying equipment, production and printing, handling contact with potential markets and distribution, and as currency counterfeiters – the latter requiring more experience. Criminal networks maintain secrecy among affiliates, for instance regarding the identity of the members in charge of printing. There are opportunity-driven connections between criminal networks, mainly for the supply of raw materials, and sometimes for the distribution to certain markets across borders.

## ATTACHMENT 2

Subject: **Methodology and patterns of intervention for implementing the Pericles IV programme in 2024**

### **1. Methodology**

The strategy for implementing the Pericles programme has traditionally been based on the deliberations of the Commission's Euro Counterfeiting Experts' Group (ECEG)<sup>29</sup>, bringing together experts from all relevant disciplines and Member States, as well as Europol, Interpol and the European Central Bank (ECB). The discussions are generally based on notes prepared by the Directorate-General for Economic and Financial Affairs (DG ECFIN) and bilateral preparations with potential Pericles beneficiaries. Discussions focus on defining the specific needs for training and technical assistance, as well as the geographical areas where action needs to be taken. This ensures the efficient implementation of the Pericles programme in the Member States most affected by euro counterfeiting and the active support and involvement of other Member States.

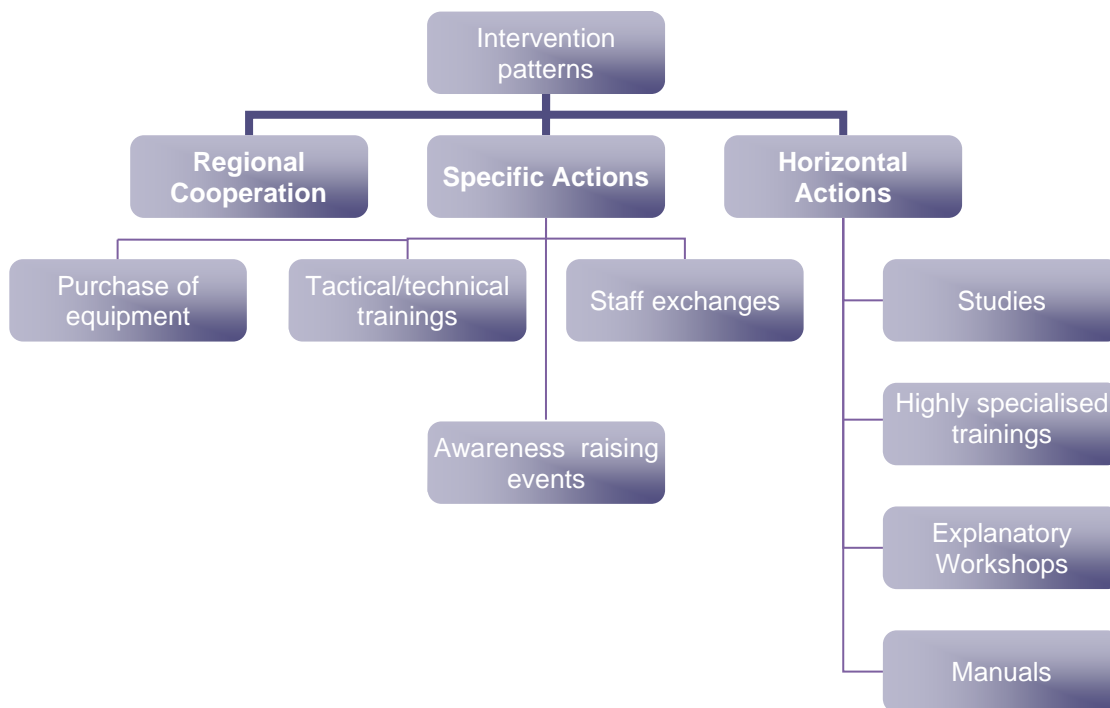
With respect to areas outside the EU, priorities are also defined on the basis of discussions in the ECEG, taking into account risk assessments carried out by Interpol and by Europol, as well as specific initiatives of Member States or the Commission/DG ECFIN. Additionally, the Commission/DG ECFIN establishes bilateral contacts with competent authorities in the areas/countries determined, with a view to specifying the type (conference/seminar, workshop, staff exchange, study) or domain (law enforcement, judicial, financial, technical) of training and technical assistance. In all cases, the general lines and each of the individual projects proposed are described in detail and discussed at the ECEG.

When it occurs that relevant priorities are not sufficiently covered by actions proposed by Member States, the Commission/DG ECFIN organises complementary actions on its own initiative based on priorities identified together with the experts and available budget.

---

<sup>29</sup> In line with Article 4 of Regulation (EU) 2021/840 of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing the "Pericles IV" programme.

## 2. Intervention patterns



Mid-term priorities are implemented as follows:

### Regional cooperation

Regional cooperation covers sensitive regions of the world (e.g. Latin America and South East Europe) and consists of:

- One yearly seminar/conference bringing together the key experts of the region from police, judicial and financial staff;
- Various specific actions involving two or more countries in the area and organised by Member States or by the Commission/DG ECFIN.

### Specific actions

These actions are aimed at increasing the level of protection of the euro in specific countries by targeting definite categories of professionals (e.g. judicial, police, customs or financial staff). Specific actions fall under four categories:

- Technical and tactical trainings (mainly addressed to investigators or cashiers, these are practical workshops on how to recognise suspect euro coins and banknotes);
- Staff exchanges (these actions have the main goal of exchanging know-how and increasing the creation of homogeneous framework for protecting the euro against counterfeiting);

- Purchase of equipment (technical equipment to be used by specialised anti-counterfeiting authorities from the most sensitive third countries in order to protect the euro against counterfeiting);
- Awareness-raising events (multidisciplinary seminars and conferences mainly addressed to medium-high level staff from ministries and competent authorities with the aim to create favourable conditions to further develop co-operation for the protection of the euro against counterfeiting).

### **Horizontal actions**

Horizontal activities contribute to the overall protection of the euro. These include studies, highly specialised trainings, explanatory workshops and manuals.