



EUROPEAN CENTRAL BANK

EUROSYSTEM

**ECB-PUBLIC**

*COURTESY TRANSLATION*

Mario DRAGHI  
President

Mr Fabio De Masi  
Member of the European Parliament  
European Parliament  
60, rue Wiertz  
B-1047 Brussels

Frankfurt, 18 April 2016

L/MD/16/186

**Re: Your letter (QZ-022)**

Honourable Member of the European Parliament, dear Mr De Masi,

Thank you for your letter, which was passed on to me by Mr Roberto Gualtieri, Chairman of the Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs, accompanied by a cover letter dated 10 March 2016.

On 1 February 2016, during the European Parliament's plenary debate on the European Central Bank (ECB) Annual Report 2014, I informed the Members of the European Parliament that the ECB is currently considering the possibility of ending the issuance of €500 banknotes, in the light of a pervasive and increasing conviction in public opinion that high-denomination banknotes are more and more used for criminal purposes. This discussion is not linked in any way to the monetary policy considerations of the ECB's Governing Council. It is also completely unrelated to another discussion, taking place outside the ECB, about limiting, or even abolishing, the use of cash payments. Let me highlight the fact that cash is the only form of legal tender within the euro area, and it complements other payment instruments. It offers, and will continue to offer, specific advantages, such as allowing debts to be settled immediately without the need for an assessment of counterparty creditworthiness or the use of any technical infrastructure.

Yours sincerely,  
[signed]

Mario Draghi

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