

D) OTHER ACTIVITIES

D1) CASHIER SERVICES

Three tendencies characterise the developments of the fiduciary money processing:

- the introduction of new technology, which has a negative impact on staff number. Modern machines of small, medium and large size were established in the NCBs by the way of the introduction of the euro. The same tendency was confirmed within the NCBs not participating in the Eurosystem but to a lesser extent. These machines count and sort automatically the banknotes and separate them into used banknotes owed to be destroyed, counterfeit banknotes and good quality banknotes that are launched again in circulation. Modern machines sort also automatically coins while other machines destroy coins withdrawn definitively from the circulation
- a centralisation tendency regarding counting and sorting. This procedure is gradually concentrated in one or in a few sorting and destruction centers situated in large cities. Sometimes this practice ends in closing down small branches and agencies or in transforming them into representation offices. This is the case in Belgium, United Kingdom, Germany, Scandinavian countries, the Netherlands, Portugal and partially in France and Greece
- an increasing intervention of commercial banks and cash- in-transit companies of the private sector in storage, sorting and transport of banknotes. This is the case in Denmark, Scandinavian countries, United Kingdom and many other European countries. The Deutsche Bundesbank took a decision to transfer by 50% to private companies the counting and sorting of banknotes while the Nederlandsche Bank as from the beginning of 2008 transferred to private companies the overwhelming majority of the same activity.
- There are, however, central banks, which have developed their cashier service on behalf of the banking sector as it was the case of the National Bank of Belgium and the Bank of Greece and many other NCBs that operate currency centers. They offer quality services to banks and credit institutions.

D2) BANKER TO THE GOVERNMENT

The majority of NCBs render services to the government of their country and to public entities: management of current accounts, settlement facilities, management of public debt, issuance and reimbursement of State securities and coupons, circulation and sorting of coins for the account of Ministry of Finance, cashier and securities services to regional public authorities and to public enterprises and organisations, operation of payments, foreign exchange transactions on behalf of the State and public entities, State securities custody.

However, there are cases in which NCBs lost the management of the State debt that was transferred to an autonomous agency supervised by the Ministry of Finance. We detect this negative development in the United Kingdom with the Debt Management Office (DMO), in Iceland with the Debt Management Agency and in Portugal with the Debt Management Office. In Greece also a DMO was established but the Bank of Greece continues to provide payment services for servicing the public debt.

Among remarkable services rendered to the State and the public entities by the NCBs we distinguish:

■ **Bank of Greece:** the Electronic Secondary Securities Market, which processes state securities, the management of a part of reserves of the social security funds and of the Hellenic Deposit Guarantee Fund.

■ **Bulgarian National Bank:** Electronic Secondary state Securities Market.

■ **De Nederlandsche Bank:** Export and Import Credit Guarantees: contribution in the reinsurance of risks of foreign exchange payments, consultative services to the Ministry of Finance for the management of this fund.

■ **National Bank of Belgium:** management of the Securities Regulation Fund that intervenes in the State securities secondary market.

■ **Bank of Norway:** management of investments of the State Petroleum Fund on behalf of the Ministry of Finance and of the State Petroleum Insurance Fund on behalf of the Ministry of Petroleum and Industry.

■ **Bank of Italy:** cashier services for the tax agencies of the Ministry of Finance and through the UIC surveillance against the usury.

The article 104 of the Treaty prohibits to the NCBs to grant overdraft facilities or any other type of credits to the U.E. institutions, to central governments and other public authorities.

D3) SERVICES RENDERED TO BANKS

We have already seen the services rendered to banks by the NCBs within their role as bankers to the banking system. We insist, here, on various central data offices, which inform commercial banks and other credit institutions on the clients overburdened with debts and on the default payments:

■ **Central risks data offices** which centralise the total volume of credits provided by banks and specialised credit institutions to private individuals or enterprises: National Bank of Belgium, Bank of Italy, Deutsche Bundesbank, Bank of Portugal, Czech National Bank, Bank of Latvia, National Bank of Romania, Bulgarian National Bank and National Bank of Serbia.

■ **National Central Credit Offices** which record the arrears of the individuals' payments: Bank of France, National Bank of Romania, National Bank of Belgium and National Bank of Romania.

■ **Central Cheque Database** and National Database on Irregular Cheques: Bank of France, Bank of Portugal, Central Bank of Cyprus.

■ **Enterprises' Banking Data Bank:** Bank of France (FIBEN), National Bank of Serbia.

D4) SERVICES RENDERED TO INDIVIDUALS AND COMMERCIAL

ACTIVITIES

We find the following general important services rendered to individuals:

■ **Complaints Service** that examines the complaints of clients vis-a-vis the banks: Bank of Spain.

■ **Payment Arrears Central Data Office** that registers the arrears of individuals: Bank of France, National Bank of Belgium, National Bank of Romania.

■ **Secretariat for the Household Debt Commissions:** Bank of France.

■ Data banks for the protection of consumers: **Info banque** in the Bank of France and for macro-economic and banking data: **Belgostat** in the National Bank of Belgium.

There are yet in some NCBs **commercial activities:**

■Purchase and sale of foreign exchange and foreign banknotes: Bank of Greece, Bank of Italy, National Bank of Poland, Tzeck National Bank, Bank of Latvia, National Bank of Romania, Bulgarian National Bank and Central Bank of Montenegro.

■Documentary credits and encashments of values: Bank of Greece, National Bank of Serbia, Central Bank of Malta.

■Sale of commemorative coins: almost in the majority of NCBs.

■Hiring of safes and to a lesser extent deposit and securities accounts: partially by the Bank of France.

D5) SERVICES RENDERED TO ENTERPRISES

We distinguish the services rendered to the public enterprises and organisations already mentioned in Chapter D2 and those rendered to private enter enterprises for which we notice the following:

■**Central balance - sheet data offices** which analyse, on the basis of balance-sheets and annual accounts, the economic and financial situation of enterprises and present researches by activity sector: National Bank of Belgium, Bank of France, Bank of Spain, Bank of Portugal and for internal purposes only Deutsche Bundesbank and Bank of Greece.

The BACH database (Bank for the Accounts of Companies Harmonised), managed by the Directorate General II of the European Commission, contains economic and financial information, aggregated by fields of economic activity and issued by companies in 12 Member States of the E.U (Germany, Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Finland, Spain, Netherlands, Italy, Portugal, United Kingdom, and Sweden), the United States and Japan.

■ Credit rating of enterprises: Bank of France, Deutsche Bundesbank, Bank of Spain and National Bank of Austria.

■ Instruments of analysis and help to the financial diagnosis of enterprises: valuation GEODE, SEF, ANVAR in the Bank of France.

■ Technical advice within the framework of different procedures regarding primes attribution by local or regional collectivities: Bank of France.

D6) STATISTICS - STUDIES – CONJUNCTURE SURVEYS

It is the privileged field for NCBs that have efficient and well documented statistics and research departments.

■All NCBs collect, analyse and publish banking, monetary, foreign exchange, financial and economic statistics. They draw also the balance of payments of the country with the exception of the Bank of England and some NCBs of the Scandinavian countries.

■All NCBs carry out researches rather of an economic nature but also make financial and banking studies and analyse the Treasury budget and finances.

■Some NCBs carry out and publish regional conjuncture surveys as it is the case of Bank of England, Bank of France, National Bank of Belgium, Bank of Italy, Bank of Greece, Swiss National Bank.