

Dutch banks join forces to combat money laundering

ENGLISH

Five Dutch banks (ABN AMRO, ING, Rabobank, Triodos Bank and de Volksbank) have taken an important step towards cooperation in the fight against money laundering. The ambition is to set up an organisation that will monitor payment transactions: Transaction Monitoring Netherlands (TMNL). Together with the Dutch Banking Association (NVB), in the next six months the banks will study whether this is feasible given the technical and legal challenges involved. Other banks will be able to join this initiative at a later stage.

Nederlands

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It is estimated that 16 billion euros of criminal money is circulating in the Netherlands, most of which is connected to the drugs trade. This is therefore a serious social problem. 'The banks see it as an important public duty to help solve this problem. They want to rid their systems of criminality and are investing heavily in this,' says NVB chair Chris Buijink.

In their gate-keeping role, Dutch banks have an important function in protecting the integrity of the Dutch financial system. In this context, the banks are continually monitoring customer transactions with the aim of combating money laundering and the financing of terrorism.

In the new plans, the banks are specifically looking for cooperation with the Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU), the Public Prosecution Service, FIOD and for example ministries. Last year, the banks reported 68,000 unusual transactions to the FIU. 15,000 of these transactions were described by the FIU as suspicious. The five banks involved handle 9.8 billion payment transactions every year, amounting to 27 million transactions every day.

The banks are determined not to cooperate in money laundering in any way whatsoever.

As part of their social responsibility, the banks are actively working on improving the effectiveness of their transaction monitoring in order to significantly increase the return from identification, detection, prosecution and conviction of criminal conduct. The combining of transactions effected by the various banks is expected to make it easier to spot flows of criminal funds.

The fight against money laundering and the financing of terrorism is a major priority for the banks. An estimated 5,500 to 6,000 bank employees in the Netherlands are currently working directly and full-time on this problem. In fact, this is an item of attention for every bank employee and the issue is also actively being addressed by banks at international level.

Apart from the banks taking responsibility themselves, effectively dealing with money laundering requires a national (chain) approach. The banks' initiative directly follows the Money Laundering Action Plan presented by Ministers Hoekstra (Finance) and Grapperhaus (Justice and Security) in July. The banks are actively supporting this plan. This initiative is an important next step in joining together to combat serious financial criminality.

Source: www.nvb.nl