

PRESS RELEASE

Banks: ABI, robberies down by 23%

1,190 bank robberies occurred in the first semester of 2008, versus 1,548 in the previous year. Less money was stolen: 20.7 thousand euros on average per robbery. This is the overview provided by OSSIF, ABI's Security Research Center. Faissola stated: "Security is the banking sector's top priority. To fight the phenomenon of robberies we must reduce the amount of cash in circulation within and outside banks".

The number of bank robberies decreases and less money is stolen. In the first six months of 2008, in fact, 1,190 tellers were robbed versus 1,548 recorded in the same period in 2007, a 23% decrease. The so-called "risk index", i.e. the number of robberies occurring in Italy per 100 bank counters, was also down from 9.4 to 7.2, the lowest rate since 1998. Moreover, the amount of money stolen per robbery is decreasing and approximately averages 20.7 thousand euros, a slight decrease compared to 2007 (-0.4%) but one of the lowest levels in ten years. The total amount stolen also decreased: in the first six months of 2008, 24.6 million euros were stolen, 23.5% less than in the previous year (32.2 million).

These are the main results of the survey conducted by OSSIF, ABI's security research center, concerning the first semester of 2008. The survey was presented at a meeting held today in Rome with Roberto Maroni, the Italian Minister of the Interior. Security issues were at the center of debate – in which, in addition to Corrado Faissola, President of ABI, representatives from banks, institutions and public security forces also participated; specifically, among the issues addressed, prospects, scenarios and strategies aimed at ensuring that people, as well as the banking sector's customers and employees, are protected and safe.

"Security – said the President of ABI – is the top priority for Italian banks; they invest over 700 million euros per year to improve and enhance the security measures in place at the counter. To that end, a closer collaboration with institutions and public security forces is also generating good results, proven by the significant decrease in this phenomenon recorded in the first semester of this year. The problem regarding bank robberies – Faissola added – is strictly related to the fact that there is a significant amount of cash in circulation, as currently in Italy, which still lags behind other countries regarding the use of electronic payment instruments. Reducing cash in circulation means helping modernize the country as a whole and to increase overall security, not only in banks". The overview provided by ABI's research center is explained in greater detail below.

A map of robberies

In the first semester of 2008, the number of tellers that were robbed decreased in 13 regions out of 20, i.e. in the following regions: Lombardy (-8%, from 373 to 342), Lazio (-37.4%, from 179 to 112), Piedmont (-33.1%, from 121 to 81), Veneto (-13.8%, from 65 to 56), Emilia Romagna (-55.2%, from 201 to 90), Friuli Venezia Giulia (-7.5%, from 8 to 5), Liguria (-66.7%, from 51 to 17), Sardinia (-61.5%, from 13 to 5), Calabria (-69.6%, from 23 to 7), Sicily (-15.1%, from 166 to

141), Tuscany (-47.8%, from 113 to 59), Abruzzo (-18.4%, from 38 to 31) and Trentino Alto Adige (-22.2%, from 9 to 7). The most significant reduction was recorded in Calabria (-69.9%, from 23 to 7 robberies). The number of robberies in Marche (43) and in Valle d'Aosta was stable, and the latter, with only one robbery in first semester 2008 and 2007, is still the region with the lowest number of robberies. Molise (3 robberies in the first six months of 2008, only one in the same period in 2007) is also on the security "podium", then Friuli Venezia Giulia (5) and Sardinia (5) tie for third.

Negative figures, on the other hand, regard the following regions: Basilicata (with 8 robberies, up from 7), Campania (with 75, up from 54), Umbria (with 20, up from 13) and Puglia (with 87, up from 69).

Collaboration between banks and public security forces for customers' and employees' safety

Italian banks invest over 700 million euros per year to enhance their surveillance systems and to make their branches safer for their customers and employees. This is achieved by using increasingly effective and up-to-date security measures, by training their employees on the issue and providing their customers and employees with the necessary information on what to do before, during and after a bank robbery. To that aim, ABI has issued an "Anti-robbery guide" for bank employees, which provides them with instructions on how to behave while a robbery is in progress, as well as useful tips on preventing a robbery, also following advice provided by the Police and Carabinieri (Italian military police).

Nonetheless, there is a lot more that banks and public security forces can collaborate on besides that. The positive results achieved in the past few years are also due to a closer collaboration throughout Italy: the anti-crime agreement signed by ABI and police, aimed at fostering mutual collaboration, is already effective in 84 provinces. Moreover, a working group regarding bank security is in place; it was created in agreement with the Ministry of the Interior to improve crime prevention through an exchange of data and information on thefts and robberies on a continuous basis.

Rome, Palazzo Altieri, 4 December 2008