



## THE TENTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC ON COMMEMORATIVE COINS

The independent Slovak Republic originated ten years ago on 1st January 1993. From the first days of its existence, it was necessary to solve complex economic problems, accelerate the building of the system of economic and political institutions and anchor the new state on the international scene. Today we can state that the Slovak Republic has relatively successfully become involved in international cooperation. In the year of its origin, it already became a member of the United Nations and Council of Europe and signed an agreement on association with the European communities. Slovakia became a member of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development in 2000. The results of the September 2002 elections created conditions for continuing reforms and continuity in foreign policy orientation.

This was reflected in the facts that in November 2002 Slovakia was invited to join NATO at the Prague summit and in December 2002 at Copenhagen she received the offer of membership of the European Union. Thus, new prospects for Slovakia in a united Europe have opened.

On the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the independent Slovak Republic, the National Bank of Slovakia has prepared two interesting commemorative coins with untraditional square shapes.

### Commemorative bi-metal 10,000 Sk coin

The National Bank of Slovakia declared an anonymous public competition for the design of a commemorative bi-metal coin. In March 2002, an expert commission assessed 17 designs submitted by 16 artists. It awarded first prize to the design by the academic sculptor Ľudmila Cvengrošová, which was evaluated as the highest quality and most balanced. The commission recommended implementation of it. The connection between the designs of the obverse and reverse, making sensitive use of the colour effects of the bi-metal coin, was especially appreciated. The artist chose a figural element for the obverse, with the head of a young girl on the palladium blank in the centre and the name of the state in a circle on the gold plate. The central motif is supplemented by the state shield, the date 2003 and ornaments in the form of lime leaves placed in



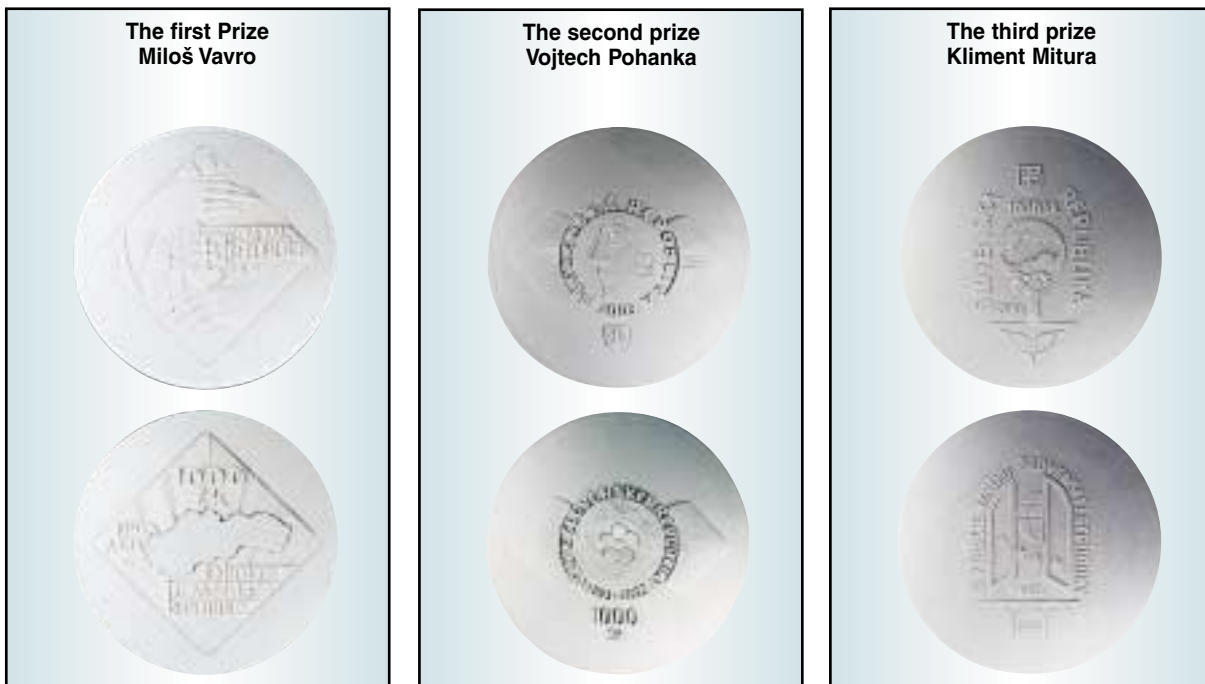
the corners of the coin. The compositional principles of the obverse are repeated on the reverse. The artist originally proposed the motif of hands with a boat for the palladium plate. The expert commission suggested that it should be replaced with another design more typical for the Slovak Republic. The artist chose the motif of Bratislava Castle as a generally recognized symbol of the capital of Slovakia. Around it on the gold plate is the circular inscription „10 ROKOV SLOVENSKEJ REPUBLIKY“ (10 years of the Slovak Republic). The composition is supplemented with an outline map of Slovakia, the presidential standard and a lime twig. Second and third prizes were not awarded in the competition.

The coin is square with dimensions of 29.5 x 29.5 mm. It consists of

a basic gold plate with a palladium blank 11 mm in diameter in the centre. The weight parameters of the coin were determined so that the content of precious metals in the coin would be fractions of a troy ounce. The gold blank is 900/1000 fine gold alloyed with 75 parts of silver and 25 of copper. It weighs 17.280 g of which 15.552 g is fine gold, that is half an ounce. The palladium blank is made of pure metal and weighs 1.555 g, that is 1/20 of an ounce.

When preparing the technical specifications of the coin, special attention was devoted to the question of the form of the edge of the coin. It was finally produced with interrupted milling, with three milled fields alternating with two plain parts. The corners of the coin are plain and rounded. This form of edge significantly increased the technical difficulty of producing the coins, but also raised their protection against counterfeiting, which also needs to be taken into account in the production of coins with a relatively high face value.

The Kremnica Mint, which struck the coins, already has some experience of striking various jettons and medals of square shape, but has never in its history struck a square coin before. In comparison with the striking of jettons and medals, the striking of a coin is substantially more complicated, especially with regard to the need to observe the intended dimensions of the coin, its thickness and weight in the framework of the permitted tolerances. In comparison with striking a coin of the normal round shape, striking



of a square coin has various specific features resulting from the behaviour of the material of the coin when it is struck by the striking machine and the enormous pressure makes the metal „flow“ to all sides more or less equally. This is satisfactory in the case of a round coin, but in a square coin, the metal must go further into the corners than to the middle of the sides. This causes a problem with sufficient definition of the corners. Further increasing the pressure helps to solve this problem, but also presses material into the places with the shortest distance from the centre of the coin, that is the central parts of the sides. This was one of the problems the mint had to solve in the process of preparing for striking. Another complex problem was preparation of the basic tools and dies of a special shape. Production of the so-called „circle“, which had a square shape in this case, was especially technically demanding. A substantial increase in the difficulty of production was also caused by the interrupted milling of the edge of the coin, which made more precise production of the „circle“ and the dies necessary.

Apart from the fact that the mint struck a square coin for the first time, it is worth mentioning that a bi-metal coin was also struck for the first time. The design is substantially different to that of the one-sided three-metal 5000 Sk coin from 2001. Palladium was also used as a metal of coinage for the first time. All these factors increased the difficulty of preparing to strike the coins, since the mint had no experience of striking palladium. In comparison with the one-sided three-metal coin, another method of locking together the plates had to be used. In spite of the high technical demands, the coins were successfully struck. They were produced only in the special so-called proof quality, in the quantity of 6000 pieces and were issued on 16th December 2002.

#### Commemorative silver 1000 Sk coin

The competition to design the commemorative silver 1000 Sk coin was judged in April 2002. There were 22 designs from 15 artists. The academic sculptor Miloš Vavro was the winner. The expert commission especially liked his design for the obverse, which has a state shield in the centre surrounded by the protective gesture of a hand with a lime twig. The central motif on the reverse is a silhouette of the map of Slovakia with a lime leaf and spreading rays below. The commission also appreciated the interestingly designed writing on a ribbon.

The design of academic sculptor Vojtech Pohanka gained the second prize. The commission emphasized the lyrical expression, inventiveness and purity of the symbolism and the high quality of the relief work. The third prize was awarded to PhDr. Kliment Mitura, whose design showed a rational composition of the two sides using motifs characteristic of the Slovak Republic and its orientation towards European and world integration structures.

The commemorative 1000 Sk coin is square with rounded corners, it has dimensions of 43.6 x 43.6 mm and a weight of 62.207 g, which represents two troy ounces of silver. Its edge is interrupted milled. The rounded corners are plain. The coin was struck from silver with a fineness of 999/1000 at the Kremnica Mint, in the quantity of 10,000 pieces all in a proof quality. Additional production up to a limit of 12,000 pieces will depend on interest from collectors and the general public.

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