

COMMEMORATIVE COINS FOR THE ACCESSION OF THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC TO THE EUROPEAN UNION

The first of May 2004 will bring the greatest enlargement of the European Union in its history. The present 15 member countries will be joined by ten new members: Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary, Malta, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia.

Accession to the European Union is an important milestone in the history of Slovakia. It fulfills one of the basic aims of Slovakia's long-term integration efforts proclaimed since its origin. The country will become part of the community of modern successful European states, based on the principles of freedom, democracy, respect for human rights and freedoms, with the basic aim of supporting sustainable and balanced economic and social progress.

1981, Spain and Portugal in 1986, and Finland, Austria and Sweden in 1995. The name European Union was adopted in February 1992, when the Treaty on European Union was signed in Maastricht. It became valid after ratification in November 1993.

On the occasion of the accession of the Slovak Republic to the European Union, the National Bank of Slovakia is preparing to issue two commemorative coins – a bimetal gold and palladium coin with an untraditional pentagonal shape and the face value of 10,000 Sk and a silver coin with the face value of 200 Sk.

Public anonymous competitions were announced in July 2003 to find artistic designs for the two commemorative coins. The theme of the accession of Slovakia to

The commemorative bimetal 10,000 Sk coin



The European Union is the result of the process of unification of Europe, which began after the Second World War. Its historical forerunners were the European Coal and Steel Community from 1951, the European Atomic Energy Community and the European Economic Community formed in 1957. The founding states of these communities – Belgium, France, Holland, Luxembourg, Germany and Italy – were successively joined by Denmark, Ireland and Great Britain in 1973, Greece in

the EU made high demands on artistic creativity. Only six artists participated in the competition for the bimetal coin, while nine proposed designs for the 200 crown coin. Both competitions were unsuccessful and none of the entries were awarded first, second or third prize or proposed for production. A second public anonymous competition to find a design for the 200 crown coin was announced. Since a longer time is required to prepare and strike a bimetal pentagon shaped coin than a stan-

dard circular coin, a narrower competition to find a design was organized. The ten most successful designers of Slovak commemorative coins were asked to participate. Their names and the numbers of designs for commemorative coins accepted from each were as follows: Mgr. art. Patrik Kovačovský (11), Ing. Milan Virčík (8), Miroslav Ronai (7), Štefan Novotný (4), akad. soch. Vojtech Pohanka (4), akad. soch. Imrich Svitana (3), akad. soch. Michal Gavula (2), Pavel Károly (2), Mária Poldaufová (2) and Ján Černaj (2, one of them still not issued). The participation of experienced medallists and coin designers allowed the setting of a much shorter deadline than in the case of a repeated public anonymous competition.

The commemorative silver 200 Sk coin



The commemorative bimetal 10,000 Sk coin

Nine of the ten invited artists participated in the narrower competition to design the coin, the only one missing was Ing. Milan Virčík. The competition was assessed by an expert commission in November 2003, and a combination of designs by two Kremnica medallists Štefan Novotný and Ján Černaj was recommended for production. The artistic design for the obverse by Štefan Novotný attracted the commission with its dynamic depiction of the motif. The state shield of the Slovak Republic is placed in the centre of the coin field, surrounded by the symbol of the EU – a circle of twelve stars. A second circle of ten stars representing the new member countries is added at the junction of the two metals. In the design for the reverse by Ján Černaj, the commission appreciated the well chosen design of the map of uniting Europe with the date of the accession of Slovakia to the European Union: 1st May 2004. The map, like the state shield on the obverse, is surrounded by a circle of twelve stars.

The coin is pentagonal with rounded sides, with a diameter of circumference 40 mm and weight of 24.8828 g. It is struck on a basic pentagonal plate of palladium with a circular gold plate 23 mm in diameter inserted in the centre. The material parameters were determined so that the contents of precious metals in the coin correspond to fractions of a troy ounce. The palladium and gold plates are made of pure metal and each has a weight of 12.4414 g, which is 2/5 of an ounce. The edge of the coin is smooth. The Kremnica Mint has struck 7,200 pieces, all of them proof quality.

The commemorative silver 200 Sk coin

The repeated public anonymous competition was assessed in December 2003. Eight artists entered eight works, which is a relatively low number, again confirming the complexity of depicting the given theme. The expert commission recommended production of the design of Mgr. art. Patrik Kovačovský, which was evaluated as the most appropriate and balanced. The design gained second prize in the competition. The artist placed the universally understandable symbol of a gate on both obverse and reverse. On the obverse, the gate is combined with a circle of twelve stars symbolizing the opened entrance to the EU, while on the reverse, an outline map of Slovakia is placed in the gate to symbolize the accession of Slovakia to the EU. The chosen motifs are harmoniously supplemented with appropriately selected and located writing.

Academic sculptor Vojtech Pohanka won third prize with a design placing the state shield of Slovakia surrounded by twelve stars in the centre of the obverse. The depiction of a young woman on the reverse is an allegory of the young Slovak Republic entering the EU. A first prize was not awarded in the competition.

The commemorative 200 Sk coin with a diameter of 34 mm and weight of 20 g is struck from silver with a fineness of 750/1000. A total of 14,800 pieces have been struck, 4,700 of proof quality. The edge bears the inscription „ROZŠÍRENIE EUROPSKEJ ÚNIE O DESAŤ KRAJIN“ (Enlargement of the European Union by ten countries“). The Bižuterie Czech Mint at Jablonec nad Nisou struck the coin.

Ing. Dagmar Flaché, Photo: Ing. Štefan Fröhlich