

When it was found that the abandoned mine workings had become a wintering site for bats, the Dubník mines were categorised on 21 August 1964 as a conservation habitat. By Decree of the Ministry of Environment of the Slovak Republic No 293/1996 Coll. they were recategorised as a conservation area. Since 2004 the Dubník mines have also been classified as a site of European importance for nature conservation.

*The largest above-ground mine site in the Libanka area*



*Historic photos from the heyday of the Opal Mines*



## Coin details

*Denomination:* €20

*Material:* Ag 925/1000, Cu 75/1000

*Weight:* 33.63 g

*Diameter:* 40 mm

*Edge inscription:* OSOBITOSTI PRÍRODY SLOVENSKA  
(SPECIAL FEATURES OF SLOVAK NATURE)

*Mintage:* limited to a maximum of 10,000 coins in brilliant  
uncirculated and proof quality

*Designer:* Mária Poldaufová

*Engraver:* Dalibor Schmidt

*Producer:* Mincovňa Kremnica / Kremnica Mint

The obverse of the coin portrays the historic Isabella's necklace decorated with Dubník opals, accompanied in the background with the silhouette of a bat, for which the Dubník mines are an important wintering site. The bottom part of the coin bears the national emblem of the Slovak Republic and above it the year of issue, 2014. The name of the state SLOVENSKO is inscribed on the left side of the coin.

The reverse of the coin features the silhouette of a bat in the mine's interior. The bottom portrays the entrance to the "Jozef" tunnel which is characteristic for the Dubník mines. The upper part bears the inscriptions NÁLEZISKO OPÁLOV ("opal field") and DUBNÍCKE BANE ("Dubník mines"). Stylised initials of the coin designer Mária Poldaufová, MP, and the Kremnica Mint mark are located at the bottom edge of the coin.



Published by: © Národná banka Slovenska, June 2014  
Photo: Jozef Kotulič, Ivan Kopor, Libanka Opal Mines,  
Alena Bachingerová and Progress Promotion

<http://www.nbs.sk/en/banknotes-and-coins/euro-coins/collector-coins>



# Conservation Area of the Dubník Opal Mines

## Silver Collector Coin



**Unique deposits of precious opal are found at Dubník in eastern Slovakia, in the northern part of Slanské vrchy Hills, around thirty kilometres from the town of Prešov. From a global perspective, the Dubník opal mines are of exceptional importance. Until the discovery of opal fields in Mexico and Australia in the 19th century, Dubník was the only site of opal mining in the world. The current mining in Australia is comparable to that at Dubník 150 years ago, in the times when precious opal mining at Dubník was at its peak.**

The history of Dubník opal mining stretches back to ancient times, according to some sources, to the period of the Roman Empire. The first written mention of precious opal mining dates from 14 May 1597, and is contained in a permit to search for opal, issued by the Emperor Rudolf II for Albert Magnus from Wroclaw. Opal mining boomed over the years of 1845 to 1880, when the mines were leased to the Goldschmidt family of Vienna. However, the largest precious opal to come from the Dubník mines was found in 1775 at the surface. It weighed 607 grams and was named Harlequin for its beautiful and especial iridescence. It is held at the Natural History Museum in Vienna.



*Opal from the Dubník mines*



*The necklace of Isabel*

Of the several types of opal that exist, the most precious opal is that which differs from other opals in its opalescence – the aesthetically valued play of various different colours. Many precious opals from Dubník and the jewels set with them are part of collections held by leading



*Harlequin opal stone*

European and world museums. One of the oldest opal jewels is contained in the “Isabella’s necklace”, received by Isabella Jagiellon in 1539 on the occasion of her wedding to John Zápolya, the King of Hungary. It is made of gold and decorated with sixteen irregularly brushed precious Dubník opals. The necklace is a part of the collection of the National Museum in Budapest.

Opal mining at Dubník ended in 1922. Efforts are currently being made to reopen the mines despite the failed previous attempts.

Libanka is the main deposit of precious opal. It comprises several smaller mining fields strewn with a unique labyrinth of tunnels stretching for 20 km. They spread over 15 storeys, some of which are flooded and others are decorated with ice. The mine workings have become a shelter for many small animals and even some larger mammals. However, the most dominant are the bats, which occupy virtually the whole underground space. It is estimated that from one to three thousand bats winter in the area, with sixteen species having been identified. The Dubník mines are the prime known wintering site for Geoffroy’s bat in Slovakia. The most abundant species in the conservation habitat is the lesser horseshoe bat.

*Important wintering place for bats in Slovakia*

