



COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

Brussels, 19.12.2008
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COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION

of 19.12.2008

**on common guidelines for
the national sides and the issuance of euro coins intended for circulation**

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(Only the Dutch, English, Finnish, French, German, Greek, Italian, Maltese, Portuguese, Spanish, Slovenian and Swedish texts are authentic)

THE COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES,

Having regard to the Treaty establishing the European Community, and in particular Article 211 thereof,

Whereas:

- (1) According to Article 106(2) of the Treaty, Member States may issue coins subject to approval by the European Central Bank of the volume of the issue.
- (2) In accordance with the second sentence of Article 106(2) of the Treaty, the Council has adopted harmonising measures in this field, by way of Council Regulation (EC) No 975/98 of 3 May 1998 on denominations and technical specifications of euro coins intended for circulation¹.
- (3) According to Article 11 of Council Regulation (EC) No 974/98 of 3 May 1998 on the introduction of the euro², coins denominated in euro and cent and complying with the denominations and technical specifications should have the status of legal tender in all 'participating Member States' as defined in that Regulation.
- (4) According to common practice among participating Member States, euro coins intended for circulation, including commemorative coins intended for circulation, should be put into circulation at face value. This does not exclude, however, that a minor proportion of the total value of issued coins is sold at a higher price if produced with a special quality or presented in special packaging.
- (5) Euro coins not only circulate in the issuing Member State but in the whole euro area and even beyond. In this context, a clear indication of the issuing Member State should be put on the national side of the euro coin in order to allow interested coin users to easily identify the issuing Member State.
- (6) Euro coins have a common European side and a distinctive national side. The common European sides of the euro coins bear both the name of the single currency and the denomination of the coin. The national side should neither repeat the name of the single currency nor the denomination of the coin.
- (7) The designs on the national sides of the euro coins are decided by each participating Member State, but should be fully surrounded by the 12 stars of the European flag.

¹ OJ L 139, 11.5.1998, p. 6.

² OJ L 139, 11.5.1998, p. 1.

- (8) Common rules should be followed by the participating Member States as regards changes to the national side of the euro coins. The designs used for the national sides of regular euro coins intended for circulation should in principle not be modified, except if the Head of State referred to on a coin changes.
- (9) Commemorative coins are specific coins intended for circulation where the regular national design is replaced by a different national design in order to commemorate a specific subject. The 2-euro coin constitutes the most suitable denomination for this purpose, principally because of the large diameter of the coin and its technical characteristics offering adequate protection against counterfeiting.
- (10) Issues of commemorative euro coins intended for circulation should only commemorate subjects of major national or European relevance, since such coins are intended for circulation throughout the euro-area. Less important subjects should rather be celebrated by way of issuing euro collector coins, which are not intended for circulation and which must be easily distinguishable from euro coins intended for circulation. Commemorative coins collectively issued by all participating Member States should be reserved for subjects of the highest European relevance.
- (11) The issuing limit of one commemorative euro coin intended for circulation per issuing Member State per year has worked well and should remain in place together with the additional possibility for a collective issue of a commemorative euro coin intended for circulation by all participating Member States. Moreover, Member States may issue a commemorative euro coin intended for circulation in the case of a temporary vacancy or a provisional occupation of the function of Head of State.
- (12) It is necessary to establish certain volume limits for commemorative coins intended for circulation in order to ensure that such coins remain a small percentage of the total number of the 2-euro coins in circulation. At the same time, these volume limits should allow for the issuance of a sufficient volume of coins to ensure that commemorative coins can circulate effectively.
- (13) As the euro coins circulate throughout the euro area, their national design features are a matter of common interest. Issuing Member States should inform each other about new national sides well in advance of the planned issue date. To this effect, issuing Member States should forward their draft euro coin designs to the Commission, which will verify the compliance with this Recommendation.
- (14) The Member States have been consulted on the guidelines set out in this Recommendation, in order to take account of their different national practices and preferences in this area.
- (15) The Community has concluded Monetary Agreements with the Principality of Monaco, the Republic of San Marino and the Vatican City State, allowing them to issue certain quantities of euro coins. The common guidelines should also be applicable to the coins intended for circulation issued by those States.
- (16) A review of this Recommendation should be prepared before the end of 2015, in order to determine whether the guidelines need to be modified.
- (17) This Recommendation should replace the Commission Recommendation of 29 September 2003 on a common practice for changes to the design of national obverse

sides of euro circulation coins³ and the Commission recommendation of 3 June 2005 on common guidelines for the national sides of euro circulation coins⁴,

HEREBY RECOMMENDS:

1. Putting euro coins into circulation

Euro coins intended for circulation should be put into circulation at face value. This does not exclude that a minor proportion of issued euro coins is sold at a higher price, if justified by reasons such as special quality or packaging.

2. Identification of the issuing Member State

The national sides of all denominations of the euro coins intended for circulation should bear an indication of the issuing Member State by means of the Member State's name or an abbreviation of it.

3. Absence of the currency name and denomination

1. The national side of the euro coins intended for circulation should not repeat any indication of the denomination, or any parts thereof, of the coin, neither should it repeat the name of the single currency or of its subdivision, unless such indication stems from the use of a different alphabet.

2. The edge lettering of the 2-euro coin could bear an indication of the denomination, provided that only the figure '2' or the term 'euro' or both are used.

4. Design of the national sides

The national side of the euro coins intended for circulation should bear the 12 European stars that should fully surround the national design, including the year mark and the indication of the issuing Member State's name. The European stars should be depicted as on the European flag.

5. Changes to the national sides of regular euro coins intended for circulation

Without prejudice to point 6, the designs used for the national sides of the euro coins intended for circulation denominated in euro or in cent should not be modified, except in cases where the Head of State referred to on a coin changes. Issuing Member States should, however, be allowed to update the design of euro coins depicting the Head of State every fifteen years in order to take account of a change in the appearance of the Head of State. Issuing Member States should also be allowed to update their national sides of euro coins in order to fully comply with this Recommendation.

A temporary vacancy or the provisional occupation of the function of Head of State should not give the right to change the national sides of the regular euro coins intended for circulation.

6. Issuance of commemorative euro coins intended for circulation

1. Issues of commemorative euro coins intended for circulation showing a different national design from that of the regular euro coins intended for circulation should only commemorate subjects of major national or European relevance. Commemorative euro coins intended for circulation collectively issued by all participating Member States as defined in Article 1 of Regulation (EC) No 974/98 (hereafter the 'participating Member States') should only

³ OJ L 264, 15.10.2003, p. 38.

⁴ OJ L 186, 18.07.2005, p.1.

commemorate subjects of the highest European relevance and their issuance should be endorsed by the Council.

2. The issuance of commemorative euro coins intended for circulation should comply with the following rules:

- (a) the number of issues should be limited to one per issuing Member State per year, except in cases where:
 - (i) commemorative euro coins intended for circulation are collectively issued by all participating Member States;
 - (ii) a possible commemorative euro coin intended for circulation is issued at the occasion of a temporary vacancy or a provisional occupation of the function of Head of State.
- (b) the 2-euro coin should be the sole denomination used for such issues;
- (c) the total number of coins put into circulation for each individual issue should not exceed the higher of the following two ceilings:
 - (i) 0,1% of the total number of 2-euro coins brought into circulation by all participating Member States up to the beginning of the year preceding the year of issuance of the commemorative coin; this ceiling may be raised to 2,0% of the total circulation of 2-euro coins of all participating Member States if a global and highly symbolic subject is commemorated, in which case the issuing Member State should refrain from launching another commemorative circulation coin issue using the raised ceiling during the subsequent four years and should set out the reasons for choosing the raised ceiling when providing information as provided for in point 7;
 - (ii) 5,0% of the total number of 2-euro coins brought into circulation by the issuing Member State concerned up to the beginning of the year preceding the year of issuance of the commemorative coin.
- (d) the edge lettering on commemorative euro coins intended for circulation should be the same as on regular euro coins intended for circulation.

7. Information procedure and publication of future changes

Member States should inform each other on the draft designs of new national sides of euro coins, including the edge letterings, and of the volume of issuance before they formally approve these designs. To this effect, new draft designs of euro coins should be forwarded by the issuing Member State to the Commission, as a rule, at least six months before the planned issue date. The Commission should verify compliance with the guidelines of this Recommendation and inform the other Member States without delay via the Economic and Financial Committee's relevant subcommittee. If and when the Commission considers that the guidelines of the present Recommendation are not respected, the relevant subcommittee of the Economic and Financial Committee should decide whether to approve the design.

The relevant subcommittee of the Economic and Financial Committee should approve the designs of commemorative euro coins intended for circulation collectively issued by all participating Member States.

All relevant information on new national euro coin designs will be published in the *Official Journal of the European Union*.

8. Scope of the recommended practices

This Recommendation should apply to national sides and edge letterings of both regular and commemorative euro coins intended for circulation. It should not apply to the national sides and edge letterings of both regular and commemorative euro coins intended for circulation which have been first issued or approved according to the agreed information procedure prior to the adoption of this Recommendation.

9. Repealing of previous recommendations

Recommendations 2003/734/EC and 2005/491/EC are hereby repealed.

10. Addressees

This Recommendation is addressed to all participating Member States.

Done at Brussels, 19.12.2008.

For the Commission
Joaquín ALMUNIA
Member of the Commission

