



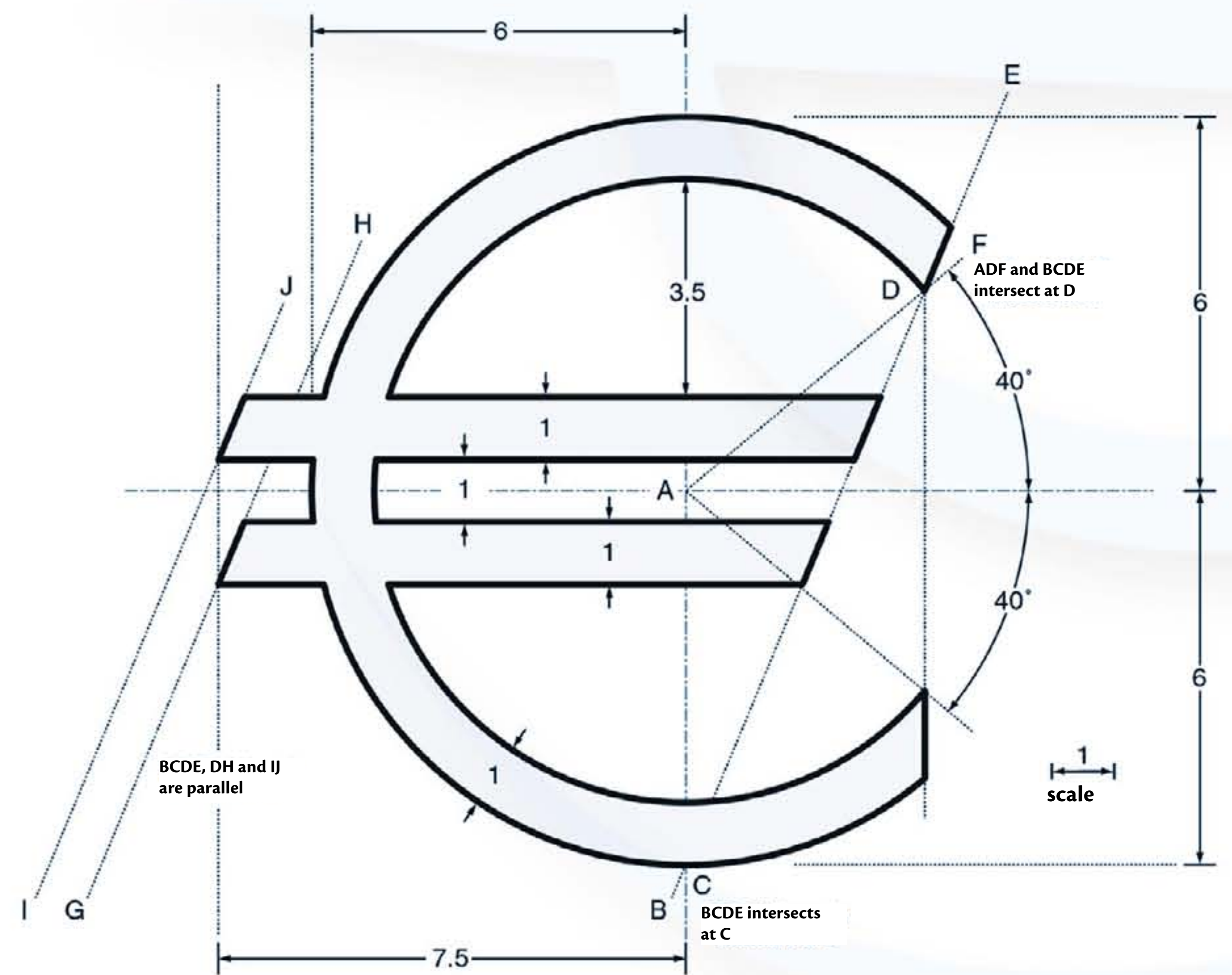
A symbol for the European currency

The euro symbol was created by the European Commission. The design had to satisfy three simple criteria:

- to be a highly **recognisable** symbol of Europe,
- to have a **visual link with existing well-known currency symbols**, and
- to be **aesthetically pleasing** and **easy to write** by hand.

Some thirty drafts were drawn up internally. Of these, ten were put to the test of approval by the general public. Two designs emerged from the survey well ahead of the rest. It was from these two that the President of the Commission at the time, Jacques Santer, and the European Commissioner with responsibility for the euro, Yves-Thibault de Silguy, made their final choice.

Jacques Santer and Yves-Thibault de Silguy



Euro symbol: geometric construction

The final choice, the symbol €, was inspired by the letter epsilon, harking back to classical times and the cradle of European civilisation. The symbol also refers to the first letter of the word “Europe”. The two parallel lines indicate the stability of the euro, as they do in the symbol of the dollar and the yen.

The official abbreviation for the euro is EUR.





Two sides of a coin – designing the European side

The euro coins are produced by the euro area countries themselves, unlike the banknotes which are printed by the ECB. At the informal ECOFIN Council in Verona in spring 1996, the governments decided that one side of the euro coins would have a European design and the other a national design. They entrusted the European Commission with the task of selecting the common side and left Member States free to choose the national side.

Luc Luycx of the Royal Belgium Mint, designer of the common side of the euro coins



Coin plasters

For the European side of the coins, a graphics competition was organised during 1996 in all the Member States apart from Denmark. The candidates had to propose a complete series of coins, with a choice of one of the following three themes:

- “architectural and ornamental style”,
- “aims and ideals of the European union” and
- “European personalities”.

On 13 March 1997, a European panel selected nine out of the thirty-six series received from the Member States. These were tested in an EU-wide opinion poll. The series which came first in the opinion poll was later chosen by the EU’s finance ministers (the ECOFIN Council), and confirmed by the Heads of State and Government at the European Council of Amsterdam. It was created by Luc Luycx, a graphic designer at the Belgian Royal Mint.

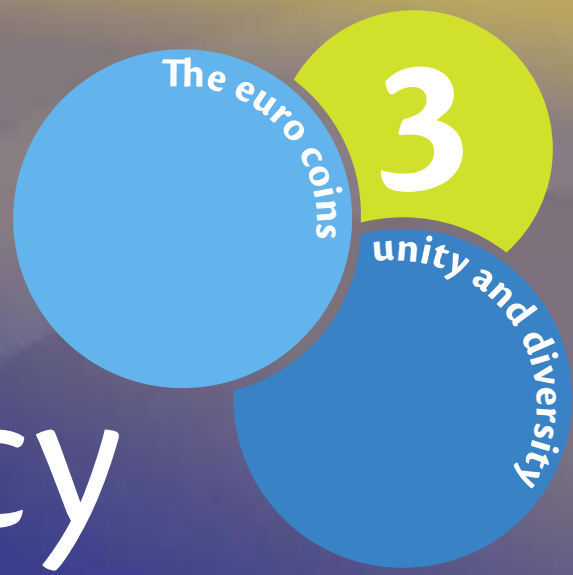


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What the coins have in common

The original design of the common European side of the euro coins shows variations of the map of the European Union against a background of parallel lines linking the 12 stars of the European Union flag. The 1, 2 and 5 cent coins show Europe's place in the world and the 10, 20 and 50 cent coins symbolise the Union as a group of nations. A united Europe without frontiers is depicted on the 1 and 2 euro coins.

At the end of 1997, the designer made complex modifications to the coins, to take account of various requests made by the Member States to **improve the quality of their geographical representation**: Luxembourg was not visible on the 1 and 2 euro coins, nor was Portugal on the 2 euro coin, Denmark was surprised that the Island of Fyn was attached to the continent on certain coins, Greece considered the outline of the Peloponnesian coasts on the 10, 20 and 50 cent coins to be inaccurate and wished to have Crete depicted on the 1 and 2 euro coins, Sweden wished to include the island of Gotland, Finland the island of Åland and the United Kingdom the Hebrides, the shape of Germany was wrong on the 10, 20 and 50 cent coins, the border was missing between the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland and between Spain and Portugal and the Spanish wished the Canaries to be shown on the 1 and 2 euro coins. The requests were met, with the caveat that only islands of over 2500 km² and archipelagos of over 5000 km² would be included.



2002

2007



In June 2005, the ECOFIN ministers decided that the common side should be further modified, because the original design of the common side of the bi-colour coins (1 and 2 euro) and the Nordic gold coins (10, 20 and 50 cent) depicted the European Union prior to its enlargement in 2004.

The coins issued from 2007 show the whole continent of Europe rather than the old depiction of the EU prior to its 2004 enlargement.

The new common sides are applied to coins issued from 2007 onwards, which means that the Member States adopting the euro from 2007, starting with Slovenia, have only issued euro coins with the new common sides. The switch to the new common sides was completed by end of 2008.

Differences between the old and new common sides of the euro coins.



One currency, many designs

Each country used its own selection procedure for the design of the national side of the coins. The choice of design was left open provided it included the twelve stars symbolising the Union and the date of minting.

The designs vary from simply depicting the same design on all coins (e.g. Belgium) **to a different design for every coin** (e.g. Italy). In countries that are monarchies, the national side usually features a portrait of the monarch, often in a design carried over from the former currency. Other countries often feature more stylised motifs such as national monuments or symbols.

On French, Spanish, Belgian, Finnish and Dutch coins, the year featured on the coins can date back to 1999, when the currency was formally established. These countries traditionally put on the coin the year when it was minted rather than the year in which it was put into circulation.

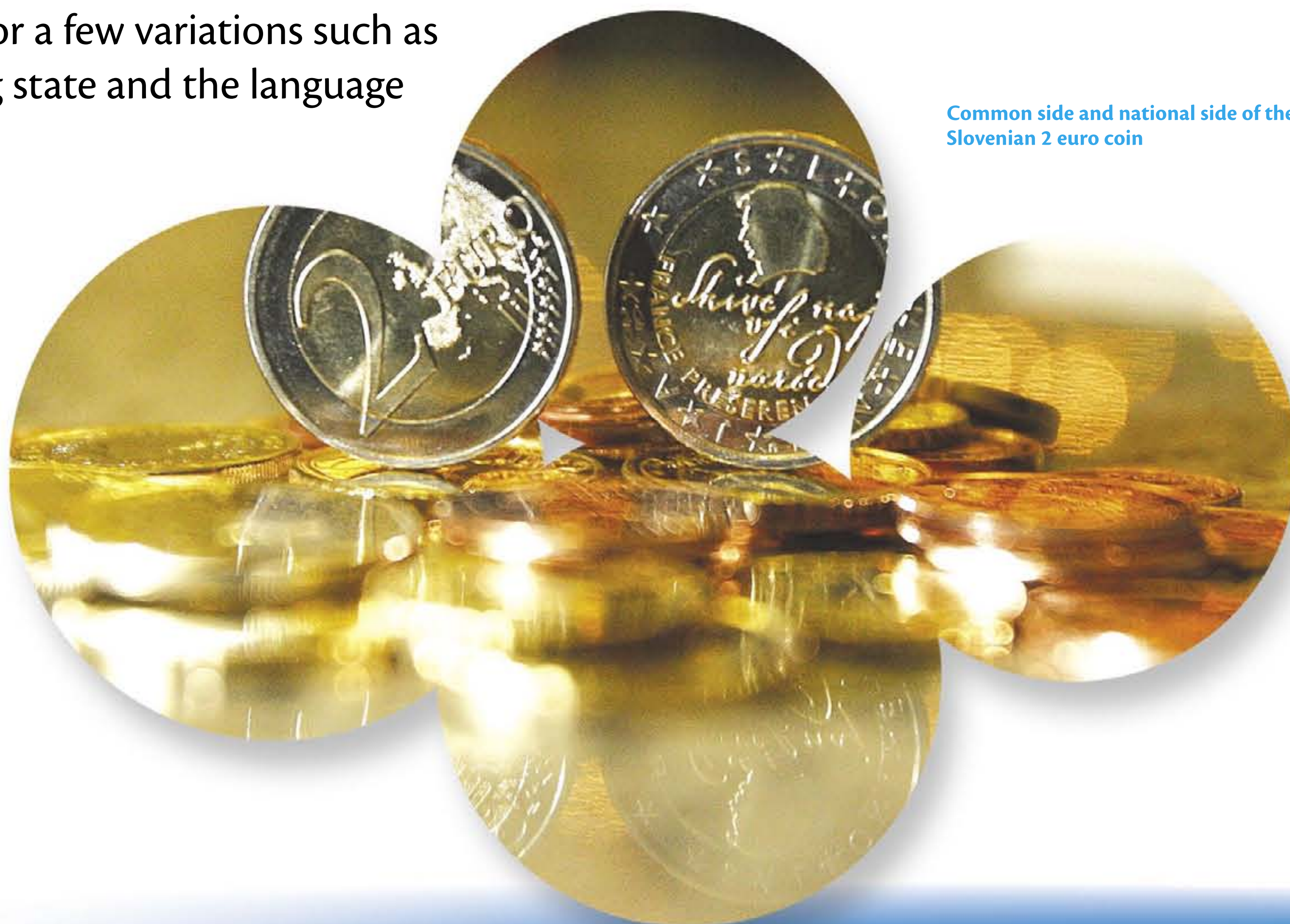
Member States are currently not allowed to change their national sides. This moratorium (“freeze”) is in force until the end of 2015. A decision whether to prolong the moratorium or not will be taken before its expiry. There are some exceptions to the moratorium. If the head of state of a country depicted on a coin changes, coins with a new design may be minted. Also, Member States are allowed to produce a limited amount of 2 euro commemorative coins to celebrate noteworthy events or dates with a special design on the national side. In 2007 a joint 2 euro commemorative coin was issued by all Member States of the euro area, commemorating the 50th anniversary of the signature of the Treaty of Rome. A second EU-wide commemorative coin marking the first 10 years of EMU with a symbol chosen by EU citizens is circulating since January 2009. These are the only euro coins on which the national side is the same for all issuing states (except for a few variations such as the name of the issuing state and the language used).



RECOGNISING THE COINS

The authenticity of euro coins can be tested easily.

- On real coins, the coin image is clearly raised and outlined
- Real coins have a distinctive edge with varying corrugation.
- False coins often differ in colour from real coins. Counterfeited coins tend to stain after a short time because the coating wears off and the base material shows.
- Due to a special security material the middle part of the 1 and 2 euro coins is magnetic. The outer part of 1 and 2 euro coins as well as of 10, 20 and 50 cent coins is not magnetic. 1, 2 and 5 cent coins, which are made of copper coated steel, are magnetic.



Common side and national side of the Slovenian 2 euro coin



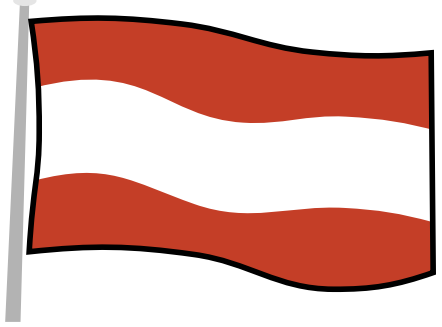
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Austria



The 2 euro coin shows the portrait of Bertha von Suttner, Austrian winner of the Nobel Peace Prize in 1905.

Edge lettering on the 2 euro coin: 2 EURO ***, repeated four times, alternately upright and inverted.

The 1 euro coin shows the portrait and signature of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart.



The yellow coins show works of architecture in Vienna: the Secession exhibition building (50 cent), the Belvedere Palace and its wrought iron gate (20 cent) and the spires of St Stephen's Cathedral (10 cent).



The red coins show alpine flowers: the primula (5 cent), the edelweiss (2 cent) and the gentian (1 cent).



Austria also issued commemorative circulation coins in 2005 and 2007.

Belgium



All coins show the effigy of His Majesty Albert II, King of the Belgians.

Edge lettering on the 2 euro coin: 2**, repeated six times, alternately upright and inverted.



Belgium also issued commemorative circulation coins in 2005, 2006, 2007 and 2008.



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Cyprus



The 1 and 2 euro coins depict the Idol of Pomos, a crossshaped idol dating back to the Cypriot chalcolithic period (3000 B.C.), found in Pomos, a village in the district of Paphos. It is a characteristic example of prehistoric art in Cyprus, representing the island's antiquity, culture and civilization.

Edge lettering on the 2 euro coin: 2 EURO ***, repeated four times, alternately upright and inverted.

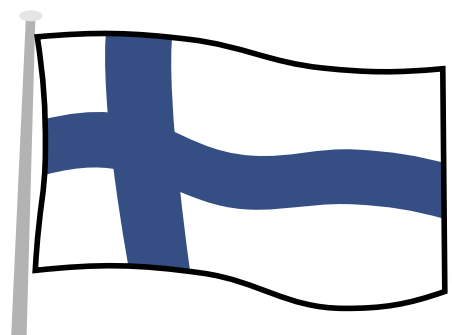


The yellow coins show the Kyrenia ship of 4th Century B.C., representing Cyprus's history and its character as an island as well as its importance in trade.



The red coins show the Mouflon, the most characteristic species of fauna in Cyprus, representing the island's nature and wildlife.

Finland



The 2 euro coin depicts cloudberry flowers from Lapland.

Edge lettering on the 2 euro coin: "SUOMI FINLAND ** *", where ** * stands for three lion heads.

The 1 euro coin depicts two swans flying over a Finnish landscape with lakes.



The red and the yellow coins show the Finnish heraldic lion with a sword.

Finland also issued commemorative circulation coins in 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007 and 2008.





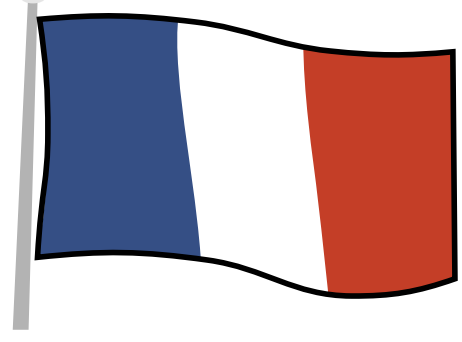
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France



The bicolour coins depict a tree (representing growth and stability) in the hexagon (France).
Edge lettering on the 2 euro coin: 2**, repeated six times, alternately upright and inverted.



The yellow coins show a re-design of the sower, a traditional feature on French coins and stamps since 1898.



The red coins show a new portrait of Marianne, the personification of the French Republic.



France also issued a commemorative circulation coin in 2007 and 2008.

Germany



The bicolour coins show the federal eagle, symbol of German sovereignty.
Edge lettering on the 2 euro coin: "EINIGKEIT UND RECHT UND FREIHEIT", (unity, law and freedom) and the design of the federal eagle.



The yellow coins show the Brandenburg Gate in Berlin.



The red coins show the German oak twig.



Germany also issued commemorative circulation coins in 2006, 2007 and 2008.



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Greece



The 2 euro coin depicts the young princess Europa being abducted by Zeus in the shape of a bull.
 Edge lettering on the 2 euro coin: "ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΔΗΜΟΚΡΑΤΙΑ *" (HELLENIC REPUBLIC *)
 The 1 euro coin reproduces the ancient 4-drachma coin with the Athenian owl (a coin within a coin).



The yellow coins depicts three statesmen: Rigas Velestinlis (1757-1798), Ioannis Capodistrias (1776-1831) and Eleftherios Venizelos (1864-1936).

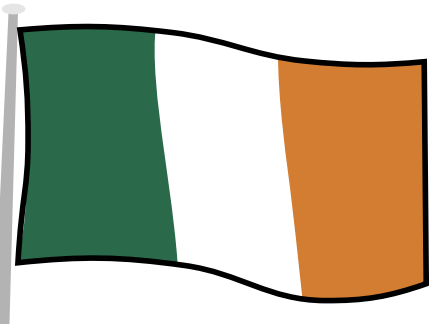


The red coins show three ships: the ancient trireme, the 19th century dromon and the modern tanker.



Greece also issued commemorative circulation coins in 2004 and 2007.

Ireland



All coins show the Irish harp (first represented on a coin in Ireland in 1536).
 Edge lettering on the 2 euro coin: 2**, repeated six times, alternately upright and inverted.



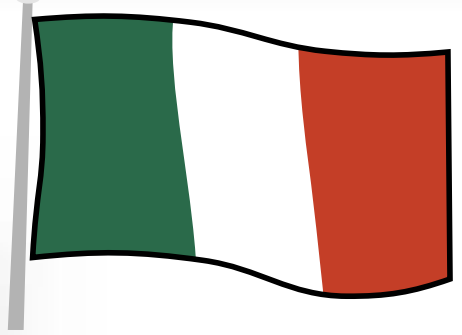
Ireland also issued a commemorative circulation coin in 2007.





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Italy



2 euro: portrait of Dante by Raphaël
Edge lettering on the 2 euro coin:
2**, repeated six times, alternately
upright and inverted.
1 euro: the Vitruvian Man by
Leonardo Da Vinci.



50 cent: Michelangelo's paving
of Piazza del Campidoglio with
the equestrian statue of Marcus
Aurelius.
20 cent: a sculpture by
Umberto Boccioni (1882-1916).
10 cent: a detail from Botticelli's
Birth of Venus.

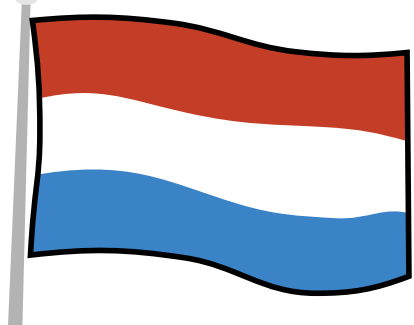


5 cent: the Coliseum in Rome.
2 cent: the Mole Antonelliana
in Turin.
1 cent: the Castel del Monte,
near Bari.



Italy also issued commemorative
circulation coins in 2004, 2005, 2006,
2007 and 2008.

Luxembourg



All coins show the effigy of His Royal Highness the Grand
Duke Henri in three different styles:
classical style on the red coins, traditional linear style on
the yellow coins, and new linear style on the bicolour
coins.

Edge lettering on the 2 euro coin: 2**, repeated six times,
alternately upright and inverted.

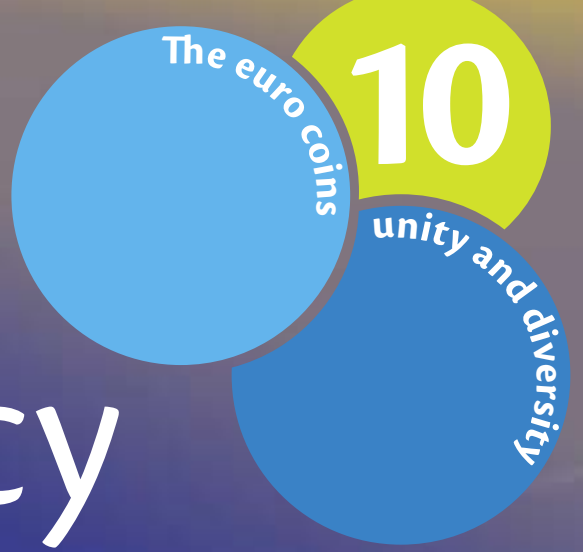


Luxembourg also issued
commemorative circulation coins in
2004, 2005, 2006, 2007 and 2008.

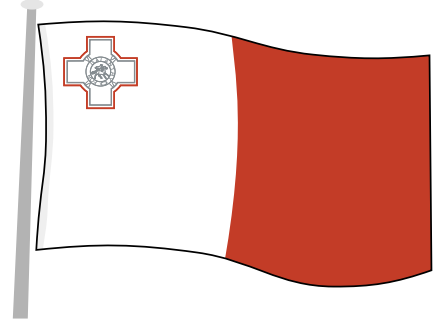


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Malta

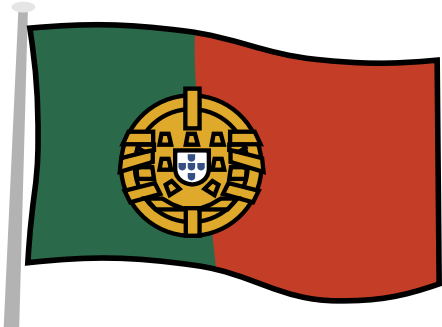


In the 1 and 2 euro coins, the inner circle of the coin depicts the eight-pointed Maltese cross, on a background of vertical stripes. All Maltese euro coins have the name of the country 'MALTA' and the year mark engraved. Moreover the twelve stars of the European flag are positioned on the outer ring of each coin.

The yellow coins show the centre of the coin depicts the emblem of Malta.

The red coins show the altar at the prehistoric temple of Imnajdra.

Portugal

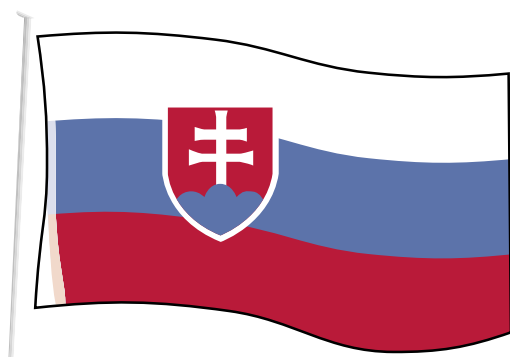


All the coins show three royal seals of the first king of Portugal, Dom Alfonso Henriques. The seals (dating back to 1134, 1142 and 1144 respectively on the red, yellow and bicolour coins) are encircled by castles and coats of arms. Edge lettering on the 2 euro coin: five coats of arms and seven castles equally spaced.

Portugal also issued a commemorative circulation coin in 2007 and 2008.



Slovakia



The €1 and €2 coins depict a double cross on three hills (the Tatra, the Mátra and the Fatra) which are part of the Slovak coat of arms and have been a symbol of the Slovak nation since the 16th century. The motif appears against a background of stylized rocks, expressing the stability and strength of the state. It was designed by sculptor Ivan Řehák.

The 10-, 20- and 50-cent coins depict the Bratislava Castle, a massive rectangular building standing above the Danube whose origins date back to the 9th century. The castle is one of the most famous Slovak monuments and is an important cultural symbol. The design was created by Ján Černaj and Pavol Károly.

The 1-, 2- and 5-cent coins feature Kriváň Peak in the High Tatras, another important symbol for the Slovak nation and its independence. They were designed by Drahomír Zobek.



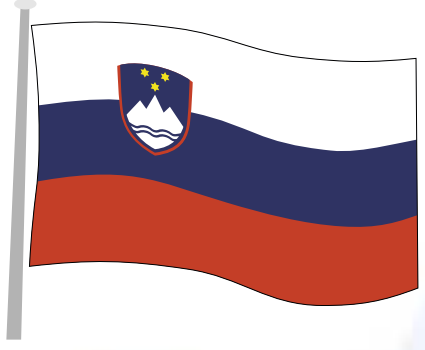
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Slovenia



The 2 euro coin shows the profile of France Prešeren, Slovenia's greatest poet, with a verse in his handwriting. Edge lettering on the 2 euro coin: SLOVENIJA, followed by an engraved dot. The 1 euro coin shows the bust of Primož Trubar, author of the first Slovenian printed book (1550).



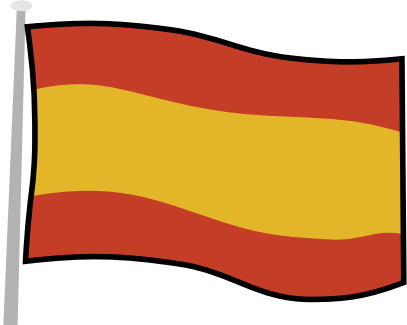
The yellow coins show Mount Triglav, Slovenia's highest mountain (50 cents), two playing Lipizzaner horses (20 cents) and Jože Plečnik's unrealised "Cathedral of Freedom" design for the Slovenian Parliament (10 cents). The red coins show a man sowing stars (5 cents), the ancient Sovereign Enthronement Stone (2 cents) and a stork (1 cent).



Slovenia also issued a commemorative circulation coin in 2007 and 2008.



Spain



The bicolour coins show a portrait of His Majesty King Juan Carlos I. Edge lettering on the 2 euro coin: 2**, repeated six times, alternately upright and inverted.



The yellow coins show the bust of Miguel de Cervantes with a quill symbolising literature.

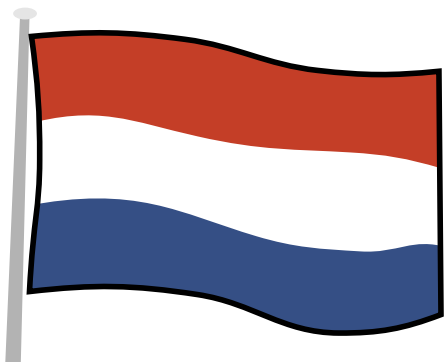


The red coins show the cathedral of Santiago de Compostela.



Spain also issued commemorative circulation coins in 2005 and 2007.

The Netherlands



All the coins show the portrait of Her Majesty the Queen, with the words: "Beatrix Koningin der Nederlanden" (Beatrix Queen of the Netherlands).

Edge lettering on the 2 euro coin: GOD * ZIJ * MET * ONS * (God be with us).



The Netherlands also issued a commemorative circulation coin in 2007.



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Possible future

Member States of the euro area

Estonia

The design depicts the map of Estonia in outline and the name of the country in Estonian ("Eesti").

Design of the national side: Design selected and published in December 2004.

Number of different coin designs: One.



Lithuania

Euro coins issued by Lithuania will bear the Lithuanian national emblem, "Vytis" (the Knight), as chosen by a majority of the Lithuanians who voted in a public opinion survey conducted by the Bank of Lithuania, which then issued tender for the design of plaster models for the national side of euro coins.

On 24 February 2005 the Board of the Bank of Lithuania approved three plaster models by Mr Zukauskas to be used for the national side of euro coins: one for the 1 and 2 euro coins; one for the 10, 20 and 50 euro cent coins; and a third for the 1, 2 and 5 euro cent coins. The Vytis will be surrounded by 12 stars: against the background of vertical lines on 1 and 2 euro coins; against horizontal lines on the 10, 20 and 50 euro cent coins; and on a plain background on the 1, 2 and 5 euro cent coins.

Design of the national side: Approved.

Number of different coin designs: Three.





Special cases

Monaco, San Marino, Vatican City

Introduction

These three sovereign micro-states have never really had their own currency. Before the changeover to the euro Monaco used the French franc and the Vatican City and San Marino used the Italian lira. They did not issue banknotes, but minted their own franc and lira coins, with designs differing from those of the French and Italian coins, but identical technical characteristics. The Monégasque coins had the status of legal tender only within the territory of the principality, but they circulated in limited quantities outside Monaco. Vatican City and San Marino coins were legal tender throughout Italy.

When the franc and the lira were replaced by the euro in France and Italy, **Monaco, the Vatican City and San Marino also adopted the euro, although they do not form part of the euro area.** They have a formal arrangement with the European Community to mint their own euro coins within given limits. These euro coins are legal tender throughout the euro area, like all other euro coins, but they are produced in proportionately smaller numbers, commensurate with the micro-states' small size and population.

Monaco



Monaco has issued two different series of euro coins, one in 2002 and one in 2006.

The 2002 series features the effigy of His Highness Prince Rainier III on the €2 coin, and the effigies of Prince Rainier III and his son Prince Albert II on the €1 coin. The 10, 20, and 50-cent coins reproduce the seal of the Prince of Monaco, and the 1, 2, and 5-cent coins show the coat of arms of the Sovereign Princes of Monaco.

Following the death of its Head of State, Prince Rainier III, Monaco issued a new series of euro coins in 2006. The portrait of His Highness Prince Albert II features on the €2 and €1 coins, and his monogram is depicted in the 10, 20, and 50-cent coins. As in the 2002 series, the 1, 2, and 5-cent coins show the coat of arms of the Sovereign Princes of Monaco.

In both series, the edge lettering on the €2 coin is '2**', repeated six times, alternately upright and inverted.

San Marino

The San Marino coins depict the Government building (Palazzo Pubblico) on the 2 euro coin; the Republic's official coat of arms on the 1 euro coin; the three towers Guaita, Cesta and Montale on the 50 cent coin, Saint Marinus (San Marino), based on a canvas of the Guercino school, on the 20 cent coin, the Basilica of San Marino on the 10 cent coin, and the third tower, the San Marino Statue of Liberty and the first tower respectively on the 1, 2 and 5 cent coins.



Vatican City



There are three different series of euro coins from the Vatican City in circulation.

All denominations of the first series, issued between 2002 and 2005, show the effigy of His Holiness Pope John Paul II, who died in April 2005. During the interregnum period, before the nomination of his successor, a second series known as 'sede vacante' was issued, showing the coat of arms of the Cardinal Chamberlain, the interim Head of State.

The third series of Vatican euro coins was first issued in April 2006, and features the portrait of the new Head of State, His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI.

In all series, the edge lettering on the €2 coin is '2*', repeated six times, alternately upright and inverted.



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Commemorative coins

Introduction

Each euro country can issue a 2 euro commemorative coin once a year. These coins have the same features and properties and the same common side as normal 2 euro coins. What makes them different is their commemorative design on the national side. Only the 2 euro denomination can be used for commemorative coins. They are legal tender throughout the euro area, which means they can be used and must be accepted just like any other euro coin.

2004



Finland: enlargement of the EU by 10 new Member States



Greece: 2004 Athens Olympic Games



Italy: Fifth decade of the World Food Programme



Luxembourg: effigy and monogram of Grand Duke Henri



San Marino: Bartolomeo Borghesi (historian, numismatist)



Vatican City: 75th anniversary of the founding of the Vatican City State 2005

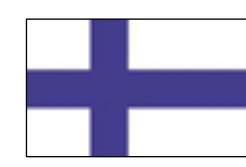
2005



Austria: 50th anniversary of the Austrian State Treaty



Belgium: Belgium-Luxembourg Economic Union



Finland: 60th anniversary of the establishment of the United Nations and 50th anniversary of Finland's membership thereof



Italy: 1st anniversary of the signing of the European Constitution



Luxembourg: 50th birthday of Grand Duke Henri, 5th anniversary of his accession to the throne and 100th anniversary of the death of Grand Duke Adolphe



San Marino: World Year of Physics 2005



Spain: 4th centenary of the first edition of Miguel de Cervantes' „Don Quixote de La Mancha“



Vatican City: 20th World Youth Day held in Cologne in August 2005

2006



Belgium: Atomium



Finland: Centenary of the introduction of universal and equal suffrage



Germany: Holstentor in Lübeck, Schleswig-Holstein (first coin in the Bundesländer series)



Italy: XX Winter Olympic Games – Turin 2006



Luxembourg: 25th birthday of Grand Duke Guillaume, heir to the throne



San Marino: 500th anniversary of Christopher Columbus' death



Vatican City: 500th anniversary of the Swiss Guard



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Commemorative coins

2007

Special commemorative coin issued by all Member States with the same design, which – exceptionally – was issued in addition to another commemorative coin in 2007: 50th anniversary of the signature of the Treaty of Rome



 Austria



 Belgium



 Germany



 Finland



 France



 Greece




 Ireland



 Italy



 Luxembourg



 Portugal



 Slovenia



 Spain



 The Netherlands



 Finland: 90th anniversary of Finland's independence



 Germany: Mecklenburg-Vorpommern



 Luxembourg: The Grand-Ducal Palace



 Monaco: 25th anniversary of the death of Princess Grace




 Portugal: Portuguese Presidency of the European Union



 San Marino: Bicentenary of the birth of Giuseppe Garibaldi



 Vatican: 80th birthday of His Holiness Benedictus XVI

2008



 Belgium



 Finland



 France



 Germany



 Italy



 Luxembourg



 Portugal



 San Marino



 Slovenia



 Vatican City

2009



Special commemorative coin on the 10th anniversary of Economic and Monetary Union issued by all euro area members.

This coin is circulating since January 2009 to celebrate the 10 years of Economic and Monetary Union. It features a symbol chosen by EU citizens via an online poll in which 150,000 participated. The design, done by a sculptor at the Bank of Greece, symbolises that the euro is the latest step in the long history of trade, from pre-historic barter – evoked by the deliberately primitive design – to Economic and Monetary Union.