
Information on the results of the anonymous public tender for the art design of the Slovak sides of euro coins

On 1 May 2004, the Slovak Republic became a member of the European Union, and it committed itself to enter the Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) and to introduce the single euro currency. Although the entry of Slovakia into the euro area was not scheduled until 1 January 2009, the Národná banka Slovenska (NBS) started to implement measures to facilitate the changeover to the single currency already in 2004.

In April 2004, the Bank Board of the NBS approved a document entitled "Process for preparation of Slovak sides of euro coins", specifying the method and time plan for the selection of themes and art designs of the Slovak sides of the euro coins. The Bank Board decided to announce an anonymous public tender for the art design of the Slovak sides of euro coins, comprising two rounds. The first round involved evaluation of coin design drawings, and plaster models created after the best drawings were assessed in the second round.

The aim of the tender was to obtain as many art designs as possible with a high standard in terms of both content and art, able of presenting the rich history and the exceptional cultural and natural wealth of Slovakia and, at the same time, understandable to not only Slovak citizens but also to populations of other European Union countries where the coins with Slovak sides should circulate as legal currency. The tender terms and conditions were approved by the Bank Board of NBS in June 2004, and the call for tenders was announced the next month.

Results of the first tender round

The closing date of the first tender round was 31 January 2005. 64 designs were entered for the tender, each of them containing drawings of all eight Slovak sides of the euro coins. In March 2005, the proposed designs were assessed by two advisory bodies - the Committee for Selection of Themes for Slovak Coins, Banknotes and Commemorative Coins and the Committee for the Assessment of Art Designs of Slovak Coins. Members of the Committees were, apart from representatives of the Národná banka Slovenska, experts from different scientific and cultural institutions of the Slovak Republic, including representatives of the artist and art theoretician community.

A total of 658 drawings of coins, including design alternatives, were assessed. It was a challenging task to select from the designs submitted those best suited to characterise the historical and cultural heritage present in the territory of Slovakia. The following 17 themes were ranked as most appropriate: the national emblem of the Slovak Republic; the double cross on three hills; the historical Biatec coin; the cross from Veľká Mača; the St. George Rotunda in Skalica; Bratislava Castle; St. Martin's Cathedral, in a composition with the Bratislava Castle; Devín Castle; an East Slovakia's wooden belfry; Spiš Castle; Kriváň Peak; the High Tatras; the Madonna; the Sitting Venus; and notable personalities: Saints Cyril and Methodius; Ľudovít Štúr and Milan Rastislav Štefánik. After the evaluation of artistic quality of the designs depicting the above motifs, recommendations of the two committees were discussed at a Meeting of Directors of NBS and a session of the Bank Board of NBS, which approved the results of the first tender round on 29 April 2005. 36 coin designs were passed for the second round. After the tender envelope opening procedure, it turned out that 56 authors were taking part in the contest. In May 2005, the Národná banka Slovenska called the 15 authors of the 36 selected drawings to submit plaster models of their coin designs for the second tender round.

Results of the second tender round

32 plaster models were submitted for the second tender round, which had its closing date on 30 September 2005; three of the models were rendered as alternative designs. The plaster models were again assessed by the both expert committees. The outcome of the assessment was a selection of twenty art designs boasting the best quality, out of which the Bank Board of NBS selected ten designs for a public survey. The purpose of the survey was to engage the public in the preparatory process for the introduction of the euro in the Slovak Republic and to allow them to select preferred coin designs from those proposed, and thus influence the future appearance of the euro coins. 140,653 votes were received in the survey, which ranked the design depicting a double cross on three hills the first, the Kriváň Peak the second, and the design with the Bratislava Castle the third.

Based on recommendations from the two expert advisory committees - the Committee for Selection of Themes for Slovak Coins, Banknotes and Commemorative Coins and the Committee for the Assessment of Art Designs of Slovak Coins, the Monetary Division of NBS submitted to the NBS Management for discussion a document proposing that each of the eight euro coins should feature a different design out of those published in the survey. Pursuant to a resolution adopted by the Meeting of Directors of NBS, some additional alternatives for the art design of the Slovak sides of euro coins were added to the said document, contemplating use of the designs ranked at the first three places in the survey, and use of only the winning design, for all eight euro coins. After the discussion of the tender results, the Bank Board of NBS decided that the three designs that had won the highest number of votes in the survey would be used for the Slovak sides of the euro coins.

The design approved for the coins with the highest denominations, i.e. 1 euro and 2 euro, was the survey's winning double cross on three hills, designed by academic sculptor Ivan Ľhák. The coins in nominal values of 10, 20 and 50 cent have been struck according to the art design depicting Bratislava Castle, created jointly by two artists - Ján Černaj and Pavol Károly. The lowest-denomination coins, i.e. one-, two- and five-cent coins, show the Tatra Mountains Kriváň Peak, the art design was created by the author Drahomir Zobek.

All three motifs are well-known symbols of Slovakia. Patriarchal cross in the middle of three mountain peaks is the coat of arms element of the national emblem as one of the state symbols of the Slovak Republic. Bratislava Castle is a characteristic and significant dominant feature of the capital of the Slovak Republic, Bratislava. Kriváň Peak symbolises protection of the Slovak nation's sovereignty and its historical territory, and it also represents the natural wealth of Slovakia.

Since the designs selected had been created by different designers, during the first half of 2006 they underwent certain modifications aimed at unification of their composition, particularly the lettering type and the layout. Also, the modified art designs displayed the same year - 2009, as the year of the adoption of the euro in the Slovak Republic. The national emblem was added to the design featuring Kriváň Peak.