

Official Journal

of the European Union

L 186

Volume 48

18 July 2005

English edition

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COMMISSION

COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION

of 3 June 2005

on common guidelines for the national sides of euro circulation coins

(notified under document number C(2005) 1648)

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

(2005/491/EC)

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) The Council has, in accordance with the second sentence of Article 106(2) of the Treaty, 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 circulation ⁽¹⁾.

(3) According to Article 11 of Council Regulation (EC) No 974/98 of 3 May 1998 on the introduction of the euro ⁽²⁾, 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. Since being brought into circulation on 1 January 2002, these coins have circulated throughout the whole euro area.

(4) The informal Ecofin Council of Verona agreed in April 1996 that euro coins should have a common European reverse side and a distinctive national obverse side. The common designs for the different denominations were chosen by the Heads of State or Government of the Member States at the European Council in Amsterdam in December 1997, following a competition organised by the Commission. The designs on the national sides of the euro coins are decided by each Member State.

(5) The Council agreed on 8 December 2003 that the moratorium on issues of commemorative coins intended for circulation, which was established by the Ecofin Council on 23 November 1998, should be lifted. From 2004 onwards, and subject to certain limitations, Member States are allowed, in order to commemorate a specific event or personality, to issue commemorative euro circulation coins bearing a national design which is different from the normal euro circulation coin design in line with the Commission Recommendation 2003/734/EC of 29 September 2003 on a common practice for changes to the design of national obverse sides of euro circulation coins ⁽³⁾. Moreover, the Council agreed that a change to the standard national side is possible if the Head of State depicted on a coin changes, while the moratorium for changes to the national sides on other grounds could be reconsidered by the end of 2008.

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 139, 11.5.1998, p. 6. Regulation as amended by Regulation (EC) No 423/1999 (OJ L 52, 27.2.1999, p. 2).

⁽²⁾ OJ L 139, 11.5.1998, p. 1. Regulation as amended by Regulation (EC) No 2596/2000 (OJ L 300, 29.11.2000, p. 2).

⁽³⁾ OJ L 264, 15.10.2003, p. 38.

- (6) Following the enlargement of the European Union in May 2004, several of the recently acceded Member States have started to prepare themselves for the adoption of the euro. The selection of the national sides of their euro coins forms part of these preparations.
- (7) In view of the increasing number of different national sides, the common guidelines for the selection of the national sides of both normal circulation coins and commemorative circulation coins put forward in the present Recommendation will strengthen the overall coherence of the euro coinage system.
- (8) Euro coins not only circulate in the country of issue but in the whole euro area and even beyond. As a consequence, the proportion of coins in circulation not bearing the national side is increasing in each of the euro area countries. In this context, a clear indication of the issuing country should be put on the national side in order to allow interested coin users to easily identify the country of origin.
- (9) 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. The edge lettering of the 2-euro coin can provide an indication of the denomination provided only the figure '2' and/or the term 'euro' are used, in accordance with existing practices in most Member States.
- (10) As the euro coins circulate throughout the euro area their national design features are to some extent a matter of common interest. Member States should inform each other about new national sides prior to the final decision. To this effect, Member States should forward their new euro coin designs (including the edge lettering of 2-euro coin) to the Commission for further distribution. This will be managed in such a way as to avoid any undue delay.
- (11) 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.
- (12) 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 circulation coins. The common guidelines should also be applicable to the circulation coins issued by those States,

HEREBY RECOMMENDS:

Article 1

Identification of the issuing Member State

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

Article 2

Absence of the currency name and denomination

- (a) The national side should not repeat any indication on 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.
- (b) The edge lettering of the 2-euro coin could bear an indication of the denomination, provided that only the figure '2' and/or the term 'euro' are used.

Article 3

Information procedure

Member States should inform each other on the design of new national sides, including the edge letterings, before they formally approve these designs. To this effect, new designs should be forwarded by the issuing Member State to the Commission which will without delay inform the other Member States via the Economic and Financial Committee's relevant subcommittee, as appropriate. All relevant information on new national coin designs will be published in the *Official Journal of the European Union*.

Article 4

Scope of the recommended practices

This Recommendation should apply to national sides and edge letterings of both normal and commemorative euro circulation coins. It should not apply to the national sides and edge letterings of both normal and commemorative euro circulation coins which have been first issued prior to the adoption of this Recommendation.

Article 5

Addressees

This Recommendation is addressed to all Member States as defined in Article 1 of Regulation (EC) No 974/98.

Done at Brussels, 3 June 2005.

For the Commission
Joaquín ALMUNIA
Member of the Commission