

## Mining, nature protection and numismatics in present Slovakia

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### ABSTRACT

Commemorative and collector coins devoted to national parks of Slovakia bring our approach to nature and landscape protection closer to us and to other countries of the European Union, especially the countries of the Eurozone. And simultaneously, the artistic and workmanship quality of our artists and coinmakers please numismatists and collectors here and abroad. The mentioned facts arise from historical development of our country and traditions of mining, coin making and from symbiosis of people and nature.

**Keywords:** national park, Slovakia, nature protection, numismatics

### INTRODUCTION

Apart from agriculture, mining was the most typical economic activity in Slovakia in the far and near past. Thanks to noble metals mining, a mint was established in Kremnica (Kremnitz) in 1328. Later, it became world-known thanks to its golden ducats. Its good name is widespread at home and also worldwide due to its circulation, memorial and collectors coins and medals even nowadays.

Ore mining reached an impressive technological and technical level of natural wealth utilisation of the European importance already during Austro-Hungarian Empire. An evidence of this importance is the Mining Academy (later re-named to Mining and Forestry Academy), established by a decree of Emperor Maria Theresa in 1762. Because historical mining needed a lot of wood for its activity, the protection and even cultivation of forests became an important activity, too. It is clear that our ancestors were aware of this fact and demonstrated it on a cultivated approach to the nature already in 18<sup>th</sup> century. On the one side, due to economic activities natural environment was destroyed, on the other side, it was

cultivated. Surroundings of Banská Štiavnica (Schemnitz) are a very good example of this approach - the town itself with technical monuments of mining and surrounding nature was enlisted in the List of World Cultural Heritage of UNESCO in 1993.

### NATIONAL PARKS OF SLOVAKIA

For better understanding of relations between mining, minting and nature protection, it is necessary to know at least a brief historical development of Slovakia and history of national parks establishment in the world and in our homeland (Slavkovský, 2000). Such approach enables the understanding of evolution of Slovakia and the Slovaks, and also their traditional relations to mining, minting and mediates also new trends of national parks and the over-all nature protection. Not only Slovak historians, but also Slovak politicians, economists and even citizens of Slovakia are aware of it. Slovakia is a good example, that despite of long-lasting intensive mining activities, we have also saved protected areas, which are of great importance for nature-based tourism and

particularly for spreading of geotourism into abandoned mining areas.

A considerable amount of attention is devoted to publicity and advertising of Slovakia in developing of tourism, and recently also in developing of geotourism. Books, booklets, maps, Internet and TV clips should be mentioned as an example. Last but not least, Central Bank of the Slovak Republic (Národná banka Slovenska – NBS) also contributes to advertising of nature beauty and nature protection by issuing commemorative and collectors coins. And our paper is devoted especially to this topic – the coins depicting national parks in Slovakia.

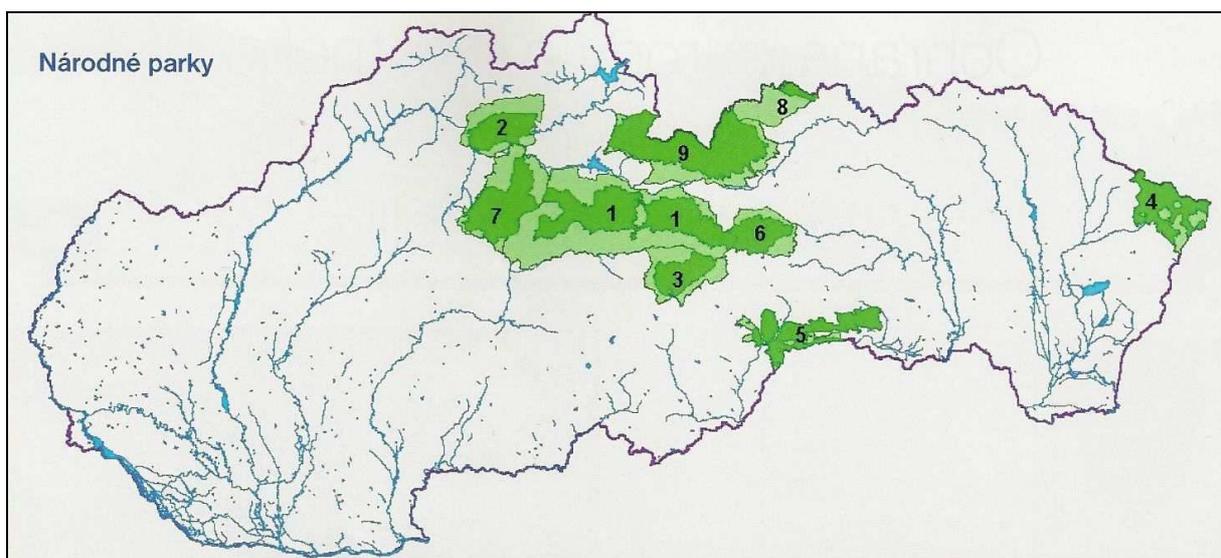
The first national park in the territory of Slovakia - Tatra National Park (TANAP) was declared according to the Legal Act No. 11 of the Slovak National Council. The Legal Act No. 1 “On nature protection by the state” was declared in 1955. On basis of this Act, 4 National Parks (NP), 16 Protected Landscape Area (PLA) and also 899 small-sized natural protected areas (National Natural Reserve - NNR, Natural Reserve – NR) were stepwise declared in following years (Janota, Tesák and Voločšuk, 1984). Gradually bettered the state of nature protection legislation in the following years. Nowadays, there are nine national parks in Slovakia (Fig. 1).

## NATIONAL PARKS, NATURE PROTECTION AND NUMISMATICS

From 1<sup>st</sup> January 1993 (the date of declaration of the Slovak Republic), to the 31<sup>st</sup> December 2008 (date of Slovak crown currency leaving), 74 commemorative coins, among them 7 devoted to propagation of nature protection, were minted along with circulation currency in Kremnica State Mint. At that time, the State Bank policy was changed – commemorative coins could not longer be used as means of payment. It concerned especially coins of “proof” version, because these were minted only for collectors’ purposes. Price of these coins corresponds with purpose of their emission. Such kind of coins was after the adoption of Euro currency in Slovakia named “collectors’ (or numismatic) coins“.

7 commemorative coins with denomination of 500 Sk (Slovak crowns) were altogether minted stepwise from the 1955 up to 2008 by the National Bank of Slovakia, namely:

- 1995 Slovak Paradise NP (Nr.6)
- 1997 Pieniny NP (Nr. 8)
- 1999 Tatra NP (Nr. 9)
- 2001 Malá Fatra NP (Nr.2)
- 2005 Slovak Karst NP (Nr. 5)



**Fig. 1** Map of Slovakia with depiction of NP territories (numbered according to following review of commemorative numismatic coins minted by National Bank of Slovakia).

- 2006 Muránska planina NP (Nr.3)
- 2008 Nízke Tatry NP (Nr. 1).

After adoption of Euro currency, the denomination of commemorative numismatic coins was changed to 20 € in the order :

- 2009 Veľká Fatra NP (Nr.7)
- 2010 Poloniny NP (Nr. 4).

6 authors, namely: I. Svitana, P. Kovačovský, M. Poldaufová, K. Ličko and R. Lugár created graphic design of minted commemorative coins. These artists co-operated also with State Mint studio engravers during execution of their work. This co-operation is the guarantee of high quality of these commemorative numismatic coins – their high artistic and technological rank is typical for and guaranteed by Kremnica State Mint.

The first silver coin devoted to nature protection minted in the 1994 was 500 Sk denomination and depicted was Slovak Paradise NP (see Fig. 2).



Fig. 2 Obverse and reverse of the Slovak Paradise NP silver collectors' coin

The author of coin design is Mgr. Art. Patrik Kovačovský, coin producer is the Kremnica Mint. Basic parameters of coin are as follows: weight 33,63 g, diameter 40 mm, material Ag 925/1000 Cu 75/1000.

In 1999 silver commemorative coin with denomination of 500 Sk was minted on the 50-th anniversary of Tatra NP declaration (see Fig. 4).

The author of coin design is Dipl. Ing. Milan Virčík, coin producer is the Kremnica Mint. Basic parameters of coin are as follows: weight 33,63 g, diameter 40 mm, material Ag 925/1000 Cu 75/1000.

Commemorative silver coin with denomination of 500 Sk devoted to the nature and landscape protection – Malá Fatra NP, was minted by NBS in 2001 (see. Fig. 5).

The author of coin design is Mgr. Art. Patrik Kovačovský, the engraver of coin is Dalibor Schmidt. Coin producer is the Kremnica Mint, basic parameters of coin are as follows: weight 33,63 g, diameter 40 mm, material Ag 925/1000 Cu 75/1000.



Fig. 3 Obverse and reverse of the Pieniny NP silver collectors' coin



**Fig. 4** Obverse and reverse of the Tatra NP silver commemorative coin



**Fig. 5** Obverse and reverse of the Malá Fatra NP silver commemorative coin

Silver commemorative coin with denomination of 500 Sk devoted to nature and landscape protection - Slovak Karst NP was minted by NBS in 2005 (see Fig. 6). The author of coin design is Mária

Poldaufová. Coin producer is Bižutérie Czech Mint in Jablonec nad Nisou, gravers of this coin are Libuše Franckeová and Ivan Eyman. Basic parameters of coin are as follows: weight 33,63 g, diameter 40 mm, material Ag 925/1000 Cu 75/1000.



**Fig. 6** Obverse and reverse of the Slovak Karst NP silver commemorative coin

Silver commemorative coin with denomination of 500 Sk devoted to nature and landscape protection - Muránska planina NP was minted by NBS in 2006 (see Fig. 7).

The author of coin design is Karol Ličko, the engraver of coin is Dalibor Schmidt. Coin producer is the Kremnica Mint, basic parameters of coin are as follows: weight 33,63 g, diameter 40 mm, material Ag 925/1000 Cu 75/1000.

Silver commemorative coin with denomination of 500 Sk devoted to nature and landscape protection - Low Tatra NP was minted by NBS in 2008 (see Fig. 8).

The author of coin design is Karol Ličko, the engraver of coin is Dalibor Schmidt. Coin producer is the Kremnica Mint, basic parameters of coin are as follows: weight 33,63 g, diameter 40 mm, material Ag 925/1000 Cu 75/1000.



**Fig. 7** Obverse and reverse of the Muránska planina NP silver commemorative coin



**Fig. 8** Obverse and reverse of the Low Tatra NP silver commemorative coin

Silver collectors' (numismatic) coin with denomination of 20 € devoted to nature and landscape protection - Veľká Fatra NP was minted by NBS in 2009 (see Fig. 9).



**Fig. 9** Obverse and reverse of the Veľká Fatra NP silver collectors' coin

The author of coin design is Roman Lugár, the graver of coin is Dalibor Schmidt. Coin producer is the Kremnica Mint, basic parameters of coin are as follows: weight 33,63 g, diameter 40 mm, material Ag 925/1000 Cu 75/1000.

Silver numismatic coin with denomination of 20 € devoted to nature and landscape protection - Veľká Fatra NP was minted by NBS according to its minting plan in September 2010 (see Fig. 10).

The author of coin design is Karol Ličko, the engraver of coin is Dalibor Schmidt. Coin producer is the Kremnica Mint, basic parameters of coin are as follows: weight 33,63 g, diameter 40 mm, material Ag 925/1000 Cu 75/1000.

Poloniny NP is situated in the Eastern Slovakia, in the place, where borders of three counties – Slovakia, Poland and Ukraine meet. This national park is named after high-elevation meadows on the main ridges of Bukovské vrchy Mts. – poloninas. Poloniny NP was declared on 1-st October 1997 (former part of Eastern Carpathians PLA). Area of the NP reaches 29 805 ha and protective zone area is 10 973 ha. Greatest complex of primeval forests in Slovakia is situated in this NP.



**Fig. 10** Obverse and reverse of the Poloniny NP silver collectors' coin

## CONCLUSION

Slovak commemorative and collectors' coins, devoted to national parks in Slovakia acquaint citizens of Slovakia, European Union and especially Euro-zone countries approach of the Slovak government and

also citizens to the nature and landscape protection. Artistic and technical quality of these coins please collectioners home and abroad, it also helps to promote Slovakia and its national parks – in this way also helps to develop tourism and geotourism. We assume, that Slovakia could serve as an exaple also for many developed countries of the world. Novadays, mankind should nowadays utilise nature more rationally – not deteriorate but protect the environment, because it is for our and our descendant' benefit, to preserve it for dignified life for next generations.

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