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Luxembourg, 29 January 2021

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European Commission
[redacted]
Teamleader ECFIN.DDG1.C.5
Euro protection and euro cash
B- 1040 BRUSSELS

Re: your email dated 15 January 2021 concerning 2 euro commemorative coins issued by Luxembourg

Dear [redacted]

Thank you very much for submitting the comments of one [redacted] citizen who is a keen observer and user of euro coins.

Since 2003 the BCL has been in charge of the production of Luxembourg euro coins and numismatics. In this capacity, the BCL has set itself the objective of contributing as its level to increase the security of the euro coins it issues by promoting the use of innovative minting techniques and security features, thus contributing to the industrialisation of security features developed by the R&D departments of the different Mints selected.

Furthermore, Luxembourg euro coins are very much in demand among euro coin collectors and "counterfeit" or fraudulent sets of coins are offered to the collectors. The BCL has committed itself to high quality numismatic products and to safeguarding the authenticity of the coins and sets it issues, thereby preserving the interests of its collectors.

Mint marks

Since 2004, the BCL issues euro coins, including the 2 euro commemorative coins, in three different minting qualities: circulation, Brilliant Uncirculated and Proof qualities.

[redacted] Thus the mint marks contribute to increase the counterfeit resilience, especially by allowing the easy distinction between the different minting qualities, which are relevant for the different target groups of coin users and collectors.

Furthermore, due to the increasing number of requests received by phone or by email from euro coin users and collectors on the minting quality of the coin in their possession and on how to differentiate the three minting qualities used, the BCL has decided to apply as of 2017 extremely small mint marks which are slightly different for each minting quality. Thus during a conversation or chat with a collector, these mint marks allow us to precisely identify the minting qualities without having to ask the euro coin user or collector to send in his/her coin.

Consequently, as the mint marks are so small that they can hardly be recognized by naked eyes, we would like to stress that applying the mint marks on the coins does neither result in different variants, nor does it introduce different designs, but it contributes to strengthening the fight against counterfeiting and fraud just as the use of other distinctive marks by other Member States allow to distinguish and identify the producing Mint.

Innovative minting techniques and security features

Furthermore, the use of different minting techniques to produce one and the same design of a coin also contributes to increasing the fight against euro counterfeiting as does the use of innovative security features. [redacted] This technology is not easily available to potential and occasional counterfeiters. Moreover this technique is very costly, thus rendering counterfeiting of coins more difficult and less profitable. Taking into account the cost of this minting technique, the Bank reserves this security feature for its high end coins.

In addition, as the Luxembourg designs have to bear the effigy of our Grand-Duke, which is very often extremely difficult to "correctly" represent on a coin while using the traditional relief minting technique, the [redacted] coins do always represent adequately the expression of the effigy of a person, which is sometimes nearly impossible for the modelling of the relief minting technique.

However, as there are also coin collectors asking for a "traditional appearance" of the coin designs, the use of the traditional relief minting technique is also required.

As a conclusion, we would like to underline that the differentiation by minting quality and the combined use of traditional and innovative minting techniques for the production of euro coins is in line with the design approved by the European Council and results in contributing to the demand of euro coin collectors for improved counterfeit resilience and easier counterfeit identification. Furthermore this approach also promotes innovation within euro coin production in the European Union.

Hoping these explanations are useful to answering the questions of the European citizens and coin users, we remain

Yours faithfully,

BANQUE CENTRALE DU LUXEMBOURG

< signed > [redacted]

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