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Actas de la VIII reunión del Comité Internacional de Museos Monetarios y Bancarios (ICOMON) = Proceedings of the 8th Meeting of the International Committee of Money and Banking Museums (ICOMON), Barcelona, 2001.

*ICOMON. - Barcelona : Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya, 2003.
pp.112-115*

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EUROMINT: MEDIEVAL AND EARLY MODERN EUROPEAN MINTS ITINERARY. A BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT*

Maria Amelia Almeida
Paper Money Museum, Porto

I am in charge of a cultural foundation, Fundação António Cupertino de Miranda, which is located in Porto, Portugal (fig. 1-2). In the headquarters of the Foundation you can find the Paper Money Museum. For the Museum, social inclusion, culture and learning are the bases on which its mission and projects are grounded.

The Paper Money Museum is involved in a European project called 'Euromint'. This is the subject of my lecture today. I am here to present this project (fig. 3).

Description of the Project

Euromint is a project financed by the European Community through the programme Ecos-Ouverture. It began in December 1999 and it will end in December 2002.

This project involves three international partners from: Porto (Portugal), Segovia (Spain) and Kutna Hora (Czech Republic). These three regions have some common characteristics: they have important heritage values on the former mint buildings that are placed in urban areas, which form part of the UNESCO World Heritage.

These cities' interest in the project is due to the fact that they all preserve the premises of past Mints that are being re-evaluated through the creation or renovation of museum-like spaces. The creation of the European Mints itinerary will allow future visitors to understand the relation between these three ancient mints in the context of common European monetary history.

The idea is to create an Itinerary for Medieval and Early Modern European Mints until the end of 2002. Awareness of a common European history and the promotion of cultural tourism, together with the production of a developed programme for the educational area, are the main motivations of the partners involved in this project.

The work programme is organised in 4 Work Areas:

- 1 Inventory and Creation of a Web Site;
- 2 Heritage Management and Public Display;
- 3 Itinerary products and Promotion;
- 4 Young Public Education and Promotion.

At the same time, several products and services are being created to promote and divulge the itinerary as a whole, such as:

- A. *Brochure*. A multilingual brochure is being prepared to introduce the project. This will explain and present the whole project in its different areas.
- B. *Guidebook*. This will present the itinerary and is meant to be used as a pocket guidebook. It will give information about mints' buildings spread across Europe. This book collects information, like the name, location and a short story about the buildings (background, what can be seen nowadays, iconography data). This will promote the itinerary and can be used as a tourist guide too. All this information will allow the construction of a database, which will permit further development of information. At this moment, all information, which will allow us to enrich the inventory, is precious. So, everyone working in this numismatic area and willing to co-operate is welcome. The contact is: Dr. Paulo Dordio Gomes, e-mail: pdordio@mail.telepac.pt
- C. *Website*. All this information will also be available on the Internet. A website with information on the European mints itinerary is one of the goals of the project and it will show the virtual itinerary of the medieval and modern mints. The website should enable virtual visits to the places.
- D. *Young Euromint* (fig. 4). A very, very important area is meant to the young public. And here I must speak about education, the educational role played by the Museum and about its consequences - I am now speaking about education and culture as a power of development and as a means of constructing multiculturalism within Europe.

Education has been traditionally a task performed by schools and families. But today this concept has changed and we all know that it must be a lifelong process. Michael Oakeshott says that learning is "acquiring the ability to feel and think" and here is why the role of the museum is so important.

Why? Because the museum can teach in a very different way to schools. The museum overcomes language and time barriers. The Museum can tell stories, explain ways of living, ideas and values of former times. The museum calls on emotions, recalls memories and moves students to be creative. So, the importance of museums in the XXI century is to make the relationship between education and culture more dynamic and closer, in order to contribute to a larger social cohesion. The awareness of these needs made the education area very important within the project. It has been developed in order to create:

- D.1. *Educational Kit*. This will be tested in schools and in the Paper Money Museum in Porto, as well as in Segovia and Kutna Hora. This kit has a CD-Rom, which will give children (from 5 to 14 years) all

the information in a funny and didactic way. This is also a tool for teachers, to be used in classes. But it is more than this. Children will have much fun playing a game in which they have to manage a mint house, they will laugh with a lot of curiosities related to money, they will have songs, they will have recipes from the different countries and finally they will learn, about the European countries - location, area, population, capital and other important cities, currency, official languages and typical dishes. And as we never forget that now is the time to learn about Europe, they will get all the information about the symbols of Europe - the flag, the hymn, the Europe day - and about the institutions - the European Council, the Commission and so many others - and, of course, the European money the "Euro."

D.2. *Workshop*. Still in this educational area, we will produce a workshop in which children will produce the sequence of the operations needed to produce a coin.

D.3. *International Contest*. We will organise an international contest with paintings from all the children who have worked in Porto, in Segovia and in Kutna Hora. The best three of each country will travel from Porto to Segovia and Kutna Hora and vice-versa, showing their work in a small exhibition.

E. *International Congress*. The results of the Euromint project will be presented and evaluated in a final action, which is an international congress which will be held in November 2002, in Porto, in Foundation Antonio Cupertino de Miranda.

Relevance of the Project

- The fact that three countries (three towns) in Europe have developed and are working together in a multi-disciplinary project. We hope that this inter-regional co-operation will be an example within the European space, which will produce future activities and new projects.
- The production of a project in the numismatic area, which will create a European itinerary of mints.
- This project will direct attention towards money as a sign of people interchanging and specially as an instrument of European strength.
- The richness of this project, which involves research, cultural tourism and educational aims.

Euromint is a project of cultural and social intervention, which will show that there is a common history in Europe, which can be told through the story of the mint houses.

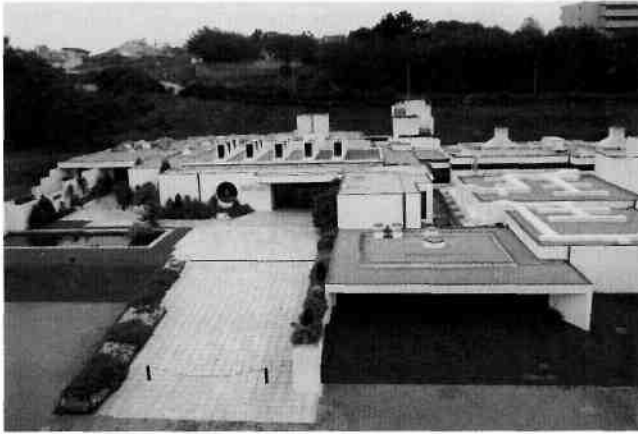


Figure 1. Foundation António Cupertino de Miranda, external view.



Figure 2. Foundation António Cupertino de Miranda, aerial view.



Figure 3. Euromint logo.



Figure 4. Young Euromint.