

PRESS RELEASE

200 years of astronomy. 50 years of geography. One coin.

Federal Public Service Finance presents Belgian 2-euro coin to mark 50th anniversary of National Geographic Institute and 200th anniversary of Royal Observatory of Belgium

Brussels, 25 September 2026 – Press release.

To mark the 50th anniversary of the National Geographical Institute (NGI) and the 200th anniversary of the Royal Observatory of Belgium, the FPS Finance, through the Royal Mint of Belgium, has issued a special Belgian 2-euro coin. At the Royal Observatory of Belgium in Uccle, Mint Master Giovanni Van de Velde officially unveiled the unique coin today and presented the first copies to Jan Jambon, Minister of Finances, and Vanessa Matz, Minister of Scientific Policy.

In addition to the two ministers, the Director General of the Observatory, Mr Ronald Van der Linden, as well as the Administrator General of the NGI, Ms Ingrid Vanden Berghe, and a representative of the Minister of Defence, the supervising minister of the NGI, were each presented with a copy of this tribute to the two institutions. The 2-euro commemorative coin, which depicts the anniversary of both scientific organisations in a special way, is available exclusively from the Royal Mint of Belgium.

Jan Jambon, Minister of Finance: *'For 200 years, the Royal Observatory has been looking up at the sky, and for 50 years, the National Geographical Institute has been mapping the landscape beneath our feet with ever-greater accuracy. But the work of these two scientific institutions goes far beyond stars and maps. Their knowledge and expertise help us to better understand societal challenges and to find solutions. Science that constantly evolves and serves our society is celebrated by the Royal Mint with a special commemorative coin.'*

Vanessa Matz, Minister of Public Modernisation, with responsibility for Science Policy: *'An anniversary such as this is an opportunity both to look back on the progress we have made and to look ahead to what remains to be discovered. For two centuries, the Royal Observatory of Belgium and its scientists have been contributing to a better understanding of the Earth, the Sun and the universe, while putting their knowledge at the service of society. From climate change to space exploration: their work helps us to better understand the changes that lie ahead and, above all, to prepare for them more effectively. That is also what we are celebrating on the occasion of the Observatory's 200th anniversary: a science policy that takes a long-term view and uses knowledge as a lever to prepare for the future.'*

Pillars of Belgium's scientific heritage

The Royal Observatory of Belgium was founded 200 years ago, on 8 June 1826, when King William I signed the founding charter of what was then known as the 'Brussels Observatory'. The National Geographic Institute (NGI), created by Act of 8 June 1976, is the continuation of a rich military, scientific and industrial tradition that dates back to Belgium's independence.

Since their establishment, both institutions have undergone an impressive development. Drawing on their own expertise, they have been contributing to Belgium's scientific development for generations and have built up a



significant legacy in the process. Their social and scientific significance therefore extends beyond their own field of expertise. Thus, their activities are not limited solely to mapping our country and the universe but also address the most pressing societal challenges. An important reason for the Federal Public Service Finance to honour the National Geographic Institute and the Royal Observatory with a 2-euro coin.

Ronald Van der Linden, Director General of the Observatory: *'The issue of this coin is a special tribute to 200 years of scientific excellence. It reminds us of a rich history, but above all it directs our gaze towards the future. The Royal Observatory of Belgium will continue to perform cutting-edge international research and contribute to our understanding of the world and the universe in the decades to come.'*

Ingrid Vanden Berghe, Administrator General of the NGI: *"Deeply rooted in history. Younger than ever. Ready for the future." That is the theme of our anniversary year, and it sums up perfectly what the NGI stands for today. Innovation has been in our Institute's DNA ever since its inception. By further developing our services, making geographical data more accessible and constantly incorporating new knowledge and ideas, we remain ready to meet the challenges of the next 50 years.'*

A coin with a story

The design of the Belgian 2-euro coin beautifully brings these two anniversaries together. In the centre is a figure of a child standing on a map – a reference to the Geographical Institute. The child points upwards, where the universe unfolds, in reference to the Royal Observatory. The image illustrates the importance of both institutions, particularly with a view to the future. After all, scientific progress never stands still. The names of both Belgian institutions are written in English around the image.

Below the image are the country code BE, the Mint Master's mark (an Erlenmeyer flask with an aster) and the mint mark of the Royal Dutch Mint, which is responsible for production (the Rod of Mercury).

Three versions, available immediately

The Belgian 2-euro commemorative coin is available in three versions:

- Brilliant Uncirculated (BU)
- Proof quality
- Reverse-Proof quality

The BU coin is packaged in an original coin card, entirely dedicated to the 50th anniversary of the National Geographic Institute and the 200th anniversary of the Royal Observatory of Belgium, and is available in two language versions. The Proof and Reverse-Proof editions are presented in a luxury case. The mintage is limited to a maximum of 125,000 BU coins, 4,000 Proof coins and 3,500 Reverse-Proof coins. All coins are legal tender in all Eurozone countries but are not put into circulation.

Order

All versions are available from today via www.herdenkingsmunten.be.

About the NGI

The National Geographic Institute (NGI) is the national geographic information agency under the supervisory authority of the Minister of Defence. The NGI produces, manages and disseminates accurate geographic reference data and, as a federal geo-broker, facilitates innovative solutions that make geographic information accessible and usable by government agencies, the Ministry of Defence, emergency services, businesses and citizens.



Press contact

Communications Service of the NGI: comcel@ngi.be

Babs Carpentier (NL): 0478 52 86 70 and Sandrine D'Hoedt (FR): 0471 44 12 98

