

ISSUE 47 - October 2025

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# F EPA NEWS



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## IMPRESSUM

FEPA News is the journal of the Federation of European Philatelic Associations. It is produced by the Board of the FEPA to facilitate the sharing of information among FEPA Members and to maintain a record of their philatelic activities. The editor is the FEPA President, Bill Hedley, with assistance from other members of the FEPA Board. The Board relies on contributions from its Members and friends and offers sincere thanks to all who have contributed to this issue.

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## CONTENTS

Letter from the President	7
<b>News from FEPA</b>	
News from the FEPA Board	9
Dr Alan Huggins MBE RDP (1936–2025): FEPA's First President	10
New FEPA Jurors	10
Record of the FEPA Congress 2025	11
<b>Exhibition News</b>	
EuroPhilEx Birmingham 2025	15
BERNABA 2025 in Bern, 14 <sup>th</sup> -17 <sup>th</sup> May 2025	20
Liberec 2025	21
NORDIA 2025 12 <sup>th</sup> -14 <sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 2025	24
<b>Forthcoming Exhibitions</b>	
Exhibitions in Serbia are thriving!	28
SRBIJAFILA XVI: 7 <sup>th</sup> -11 <sup>th</sup> October 2026	29
BELGRADE 2027 GENERAL WORLD EXHIBITION - FIP PATRONAGE	30
APATIN 2025: ON-LINE PHILATELIC EXHIBITION 15 <sup>th</sup> December 2025 – 15 <sup>th</sup> January 2026	31
EXFILNA 2025	33
TimFilEx 2025: Timișora: 14 <sup>th</sup> -16 <sup>th</sup> November 2025	34
BALKANFILA - 60 Years Old and Looking Forward	40
<b>FEPA Exhibiting</b>	
A Fresh Approach to the Evaluation of Philatelic Literature	42
Modern Philately	45
<b>Developments in Philately</b>	
The Fascinating History of Maximum Cards	52
Philately in the Digital Social Media Age	56
What's Next for Stamp Exhibitions?	58
It is About the Leadership	59
Philatelic Societies Collaborate at GASS	63
How can we support young people in stamp collecting and exhibiting?	64
The Future of Philately – A Call to Arms	66
Correos España begins a comprehensive study to analyse philatelic trends.	68
<b>The World of Research</b>	
Messengers of the University of Paris and their Contribution to Communications across Europe in the late Middle Ages	69
Deutscher Altbriefsammler-Verein	72
CITIZEN HISTORY BOVINO	74
Launching an International Journal of Postal History Today: "A crazy Idea or a Reasoned Challenge?"	75
Use a Video Spectral Comparator for Forensic Philately	78
<b>FEPA Family and FEPA Board</b>	
FEPA Family	80
FEPA Board	83
<b>Events Calendar</b>	84

*Advertisers: Macao (2), Croatia (30), Correos (57), Christoph Gärtner Auctions (83), Postiljonen (84)*

On the Front Cover: FEPA promotes innovation and cooperation.

# BRIEF GUIDE TO FEPA NEWS ISSUE 47

<b>Pages</b>	<b>Contents</b>
7-14	FEPA. Latest news from the FEPA Board and FEPA Congress.
15-24	RECENT EUROPEAN EXHIBITIONS. Reports from EuroPhilEx, BERNABA, Liberec, NORDIA.
26-38	FORTHCOMING EXHIBITIONS. Information on events planned between October 2025 and October 2027.
40-41	BALKANFILA. The story of the oldest regional organisation in Europe on its 60th birthday, and a description of its future plans.
42-44	PHILATELIC LITERATURE. Giancarlo Morolli outlines essential changes that are needed to stimulate and improve exhibiting and judging of this vital component of philately.
45-50	MODERN PHILATELY. Svetislav Jelić (Serbia) describes this new class and illustrates how it is developing by showing several examples of recent exhibits.
52-55	MAXIMAPHILY. Boštjan Petauer (Slovenia) reviews the early development of Maxi cards from their first appearance in Germany in 1872.
56-57	PHILATELY, SOCIAL MEDIA AND EXHIBITING. Lars Engelbrecht reviews the results of the FEPA consultations with Members in early 2025 on how social media could be used to benefit philately and looks forward to the second round of consultations in late 2025 on the future of exhibiting.
59-62	LEADERSHIP IN PHILATELY. Jonas Hällström argues that leadership is essential if organisations are to survive and prosper and looks back to the early days of philately for examples of effective leaders who mapped the future.
63	COLLABORATION BETWEEN PHILATELIC ORGANISATIONS. Harold Krische (Canada) describes the progress that philatelic societies in the USA and Canada are making towards embracing change through collaboration.
64-65	CRISIS IN YOUTH PHILATELY. Vojtech Jankovič (Slovakia) argues that Youth Philately is disappearing from exhibitions and that urgent action is needed to counter this trend. He proposes that a discussion about the future should be started urgently.
66-67	FUTURE OF PHILATELY. Chris McDonagh (Ireland) makes some brisk recommendations on the future priorities for philatelic organisations, including the urgent need to present a better image to the wider world. FESOFI (Spain) also reports on a study they are conducting into trends in philately.
69-71	UNIVERSITY OF PARIS MESSENGERS IN THE LATE MIDDLE AGES. Martina Hacke (Independent Researcher) describes the development of this messenger service which was a vital precursor to the first royal postal service in France.
72-73	DEUTSCHER ALTBRIEF-SAMMLER VEREIN. Thomas Hoepfner reviews the origins and development of one of the leading European organisations for philatelic research, which also organises the annual Postgeschichte-Live competition at Ulm.
74	PHILATELY AND LOCAL HISTORY. Marcus Occhipinti (Italy) describes how philately has made a vital contribution to a local history project in the town of Bovino.
75-77	POST HORN. Claudio Manzati describes the origins and development of the POST HORN Journal.
78-79	DETECTING FORGERIES. Paul Leonard (UK) illustrates how the use of the latest spectrometry has helped philatelic experts to detect clever forgeries.
80-84	FEPA DATA. Up to date information on Who is Who and what is happening in FEPA.

## PRESIDENT'S LETTER

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Dear Philatelic Friends,

Welcome to the 47th issue of FEPA NEWS, the first to be published on-line only. With apologies to everyone who preferred to read the Journal in print, the Board was faced with large increases in printing and distribution costs and had to make the difficult decision to go on-line to balance its finances. The change will help to secure FEPA's future, ensuring that it can continue to promote philately to new generations of collectors.

There is little doubt that the task of promoting philately will be more necessary than ever in years to come. Modes of communication have changed beyond all recognition and it is not difficult to imagine a future in which the urge to collect stamps, that started when they first appeared and has been so beneficial to so many people ever since, disappears in favour of some new collectible. We also have to face perennial public scepticism about the value of philately, summed up recently by an extremely distinguished gentleman aged 105 who, when asked on television how he had lived for so long, said he had been advised that 'Philately will get you nowhere'. Unfortunately, he did not add that he had ignored this advice!

FEPA will do what it can to promote philately as a fascinating and easily-accessible route to learning, recreation and personal well-being and we have been delighted to hear about the considerable steps our Members are taking, reported later in this Journal, to use on-line tools for this purpose. This requires continuity in planning and delivery for all our projects, including FEPA NEWS, and after six years and twelve issues I have decided it is time to hand over the editorship so that the Journal can carry on without interruption for the foreseeable future. I am pleased to announce that Claudio Manzati, elected to the Board at the Birmingham Congress and very experienced in producing philatelic journals, will take over as Editor after this issue.

I hope you will enjoy FEPA NEWS. Please continue to give it – and FEPA - your invaluable support.

BILL HEDLEY

## LETTRE DU PRÉSIDENT

---

Chers Amis Philatéliques,

Bienvenues dans le 47ème numéro de FEPA NEWS, le premier à être publié uniquement en ligne. Avec toutes nos excuses à tous ceux qui préféreraient lire le Journal en version imprimée, le Conseil d'administration devant les fortes augmentations des coûts d'impression et de distribution a dû prendre la difficile décision d'aller en ligne afin d'équilibrer ses finances. Le changement aidera à assurer l'avenir de la FEPA, en veillant à ce qu'elle puisse continuer à promouvoir la philatélie auprès des nouvelles générations de collectionneurs.

Il ne fait aucun doute que la tâche de promouvoir la philatélie sera plus nécessaire que jamais dans les années à venir. Les modes de communication ont changé au-delà de tout ce que nous connaissions et il n'est pas difficile d'imaginer un avenir dans lequel l'envie de collectionner les timbres, qui a commencé quand ils sont apparus et a été si bénéfique pour tant de gens depuis, disparaît au profit de nouveaux objets de collection. Nous devons également faire face à un scepticisme constant du public quant à la valeur de la philatélie, résumé récemment par un éminent monsieur âgé de 105 ans qui, lorsqu'on lui a demandé à la télévision comment il avait vécu si longtemps, a dit qu'il l'avait été conseillé que « La philatélie ne vous mènera nulle part ». Malheureusement, il n'a pas ajouté qu'il avait ignoré ce conseil !

La FEPA fera tout son possible pour promouvoir la philatélie comme étant une voie fascinante et facilement accessible vers l'apprentissage, la détente et le bien-être personnel et nous avons été ravis d'apprendre que les mesures considérables, rapportées plus avant dans ce Journal, que nos membres prennent pour utiliser des outils en ligne à cette fin. Cela nécessite une continuité dans la planification et la livraison de tous nos projets, y compris FEPA NEWS, et après six ans et douze numéros, j'ai décidé qu'il était temps de céder la direction du Journal afin que celui-ci puisse continuer sans interruption dans un avenir proche. J'ai le plaisir d'annoncer que Claudio Manzati, élu au Conseil d'administration lors du Congrès de Birmingham, très expérimenté dans la production de revues philatéliques, prendra la relève en tant que rédacteur en chef après ce numéro.

J'espère que vous apprécierez FEPA NEWS. Veuillez continuer à lui donner – et à la FEPA - votre soutien inestimable.

BILL HEDLEY

## OFFENER BRIEF DES PRÄSIDENTEN

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Liebe Freunde der Philatelie

Willkommen zur 47. Ausgabe der FEPA News, die erste, die digital erscheinen wird. Wir entschuldigen uns bei allen, die die Zeitschrift lieber in gedruckter Form gelesen haben, aber der Vorstand war angesichts stark gestiegener Kosten für Druck und Versand zu der schwierigen Entscheidung für eine digitale Ausgabe gezwungen, um die Finanzen auszugleichen. Die Änderung wird helfen, die Zukunft der FEPA zu sichern und es ihr zu ermöglichen, weiterhin Philatelie neuen Generationen von Sammlern näherzubringen.

Es gibt kaum Zweifel, dass die Förderung der Philatelie in den kommenden Jahren wichtiger denn je wird. Die Arten der Kommunikation haben sich drastisch verändert, und es ist nicht schwer, sich eine Zukunft vorzustellen, in der der Drang zum Sammeln von Briefmarken, das mit deren erster Herausgabe begann und von dem seitdem viele Menschen profitiert haben, zugunsten neuer Sammlerstücke verschwinden wird. Wir müssen uns auch der anhaltenden Skepsis zum Wert der Philatelie stellen, was kürzlich von einem sehr distinguierten 105 Jahre alten Herrn auf den Punkt gebracht wurde, als er im Fernsehen gefragt wurde, wie er es geschafft hat, so lange zu leben, darauf antwortete, dass er den Rat erhalten hatte, dass „Philatelie zu nichts führt“. Unglücklicherweise hat er nicht gesagt, dass er diesen Rat ignoriert hat!

FEPA wird alles tun, um Philatelie als einen faszinierenden und leicht zugänglichen Weg zum Lernen, zur Freizeitbeschäftigung und zum persönlichen Wohlbefinden zu fördern, wobei wir mit Freude von wesentlichen Bemühungen unserer Mitglieder gehört haben, Online Werkzeuge zu diesem Zweck zu nutzen, worüber später in dieser Zeitschrift berichtet wird. Dieses erfordert Kontinuität in der Planung und Ausführung aller unserer Projekte, einschließlich der FEPA NEWS, und nach sechs Jahren und zwölf Ausgaben habe ich entschieden, dass es Zeit ist, die Rolle des Herausgebers zu übergeben, so dass die Zeitschrift ohne Unterbrechung auf absehbare Zeit fortgesetzt werden kann. Es freut mich bekanntzugeben, dass Claudio Manzati, der beim Kongress in Birmingham in den Vorstand gewählt wurde und Erfahrung in der Produktion von philatelistischen Zeitschriften hat, nach dieser Ausgabe als Herausgeber übernehmen wird.

Ich hoffe, dass Ihnen die FEPA NEWS gefällt. Bitte geben Sie ihr - und der FEPA - Ihre unschätzbare Unterstützung.

BILL HEDLEY

## CARTA DEL PRESIDENTE

---

Estimados amigos filatélicos:

Bienvenidos al número 47 de FEPA NEWS, el primero que se publica exclusivamente on line. Con disculpas a quienes prefirieron leer la revista impresa, la Junta Directiva se enfrentó a un fuerte aumento en los costos de impresión y distribución, y tuvo que tomar la difícil decisión de publicarla on line para equilibrar sus finanzas. Este cambio contribuirá a asegurar el futuro de FEPA, garantizando que pueda seguir promoviendo la filatelia entre las nuevas generaciones de coleccionistas.

Sin duda, la labor de promover la filatelia será más necesaria que nunca en los próximos años. Los modos de comunicación han cambiado drásticamente y no es difícil imaginar un futuro en el que el afán por coleccionar sellos, que surgió cuando aparecieron por primera vez y que ha sido tan beneficioso para tanta gente desde entonces, desaparezca en favor de algún nuevo objeto de colección. También debemos enfrentarnos al perenne escepticismo público sobre el valor de la filatelia, resumido recientemente por un distinguido caballero de 105 años que, al ser preguntado en televisión cómo había vivido durante tanto tiempo, dijo que le habían aconsejado que «la filatelia no te llevará a ninguna parte». Desafortunadamente, no añadió que había ignorado este consejo.

FEPA hará todo lo posible para promover la filatelia como una vía fascinante y de fácil acceso para el aprendizaje, la diversión y el bienestar personal, y nos complace conocer las importantes medidas que están adoptando nuestros miembros, de las que informaremos más adelante en esta revista, para utilizar herramientas on line con este fin. Esto requiere continuidad en la planificación y la ejecución de todos nuestros proyectos, incluyendo FEPA NEWS, y tras seis años y doce números, he decidido que ha llegado el momento de ceder la dirección editorial para que la revista pueda continuar sin interrupciones en el futuro previsible. Me complace anunciar que Claudio Manzati, elegido miembro de la Junta Directiva en el Congreso de Birmingham y con amplia experiencia en la producción de revistas filatélicas, asumirá el cargo de editor después de este número.

Espero que disfruten de FEPA NEWS. Por favor, sigan brindándole a la FEPA su inestimable apoyo.

BILL HEDLEY

# News from the FEPA Board



## **Bill Hedley writes:**

Many regular readers will have noticed that the interval since the January issue of FEPA NEWS has been longer than usual. This is because we have taken advantage of the change to on-line publication to move the schedule for twice-yearly publication of FEPA NEWS from Winter-Summer to Spring-Autumn. I am pleased to confirm that the normal pattern of publishing two issues each year will continue on this new schedule.

Since January 2025 the Board has held five meetings by video conference and organised the FEPA Congress at EuroPhilEx 2025 in Birmingham in May. It also held a very successful meeting with the FIP Board in Birmingham at which a wide range of topics was discussed. Unfortunately it was not possible to deal with the application for FEPA membership from the Philately Union of Azerbaijan at the Birmingham Congress as representatives of the Philately Union were unable to attend on this occasion.

The Board has continued to push ahead with its four main tasks, shown in the box on the right. Central to its activities has been a very successful programme of meetings with members to discuss how social media can best be used to promote philately to new generations of collectors. A full report on this has been published on the FEPA website together with a summary in this issue of FEPA NEWS. Following up this success a further series of meetings will be held in October 2025 on the future of exhibitions.

Improvements in the sharing of information are underway, with further development of the FEPA website and social media pages. Looking at information sharing from a different angle, we are also investigating how seminar and other learning material can be shared more widely.

On the support FEPA can give to exhibitions, we will shortly begin consultations with Members on additional options to enhance the current package of Recognition and Patronage. On awards, we are also asking Members to nominate candidates for FEPA Awards with a view to announcing winners early in 2026.

Four members of the Board were elected / re-elected at the Congress. The new Board is as follows:

President	Bill Hedley
Vice-President	Lars Engelbrecht
Secretary General	Igor Pirc
Treasurer	Lars Jorgensen
Directors	Thomas Höpfner Costas Chazapis Claudio Manzati

The Board thanks the Organisers of EuroPhilEx 2025 for providing excellent facilities for the Congress. It also offers thanks to Fredi Kunz of Austria who stepped down as Auditor at this year's Congress after four years, and to Pieter Verbakel of The Netherlands who has kindly agreed to succeed Fredi in this role.

**Sharing Information**  
**Promoting Innovation**  
**and Cooperation**  
**Supporting Exhibitions**  
**Rewarding**  
**Achievements**



*The new FEPA Board following the Congress in Birmingham.*

## Dr Alan Huggins MBE RDP (1936–2025): FEPA's First President

### *Bill Hedley writes:*

Dr Alan Huggins, who died on 27th May 2025, was a giant of philately with many outstanding achievements to his name as a collector, exhibitor, judge, writer, organiser, curator and leader and he will be sorely missed.

Among his greatest achievements in the philatelic sphere was the seminal contribution he made to the establishment of FEPA as a means of promoting closer cooperation between national philatelic organisations in Europe. Between HAFNIA 1987 when the idea was first discussed and the Sofia exhibition in 1989 when FEPA held its first Congress, he played a major role in formulating Statutes and persuading national philatelic associations to join the new organisation.

He then became FEPA's first President and continued to serve in this position until 1993 when he was appointed to be the first Honorary President of FEPA. He continued to take an interest in FEPA, attending the 25th Anniversary Congress in Lugano in 2014 and contributing to FEPA NEWS as recently as July 2020.



We send our condolences to his family along with our deepest gratitude for his far-sighted contributions from which we continue to benefit today.

**RIP**

-----

## New FEPA Jurors

FEPA offers warm congratulations to the following jurors, who passed their apprenticeship in the Birmingham EuroPhilEx FEPA exhibition, and now are FEPA jurors in their respective classes:



***Rui Matos Alves, Portugal  
Traditional Philately***



***Vladimir Milić, Serbia  
Traditional Philately***

FEPA maintains a list of qualified jurors for FEPA exhibitions which is used to help form juries according to the FEPA FREGEX. It is available to view online at [www.fepanews.com](http://www.fepanews.com). We recognise that it is important for newly accredited jurors to have the opportunity to participate on juries quickly, and we have this firmly in mind during discussions between the FEPA consultant and the organising committee.

We encourage national accredited jurors who are interested in an international judging career to apply for apprenticeship at future FEPA exhibitions. The application form is available at [www.fepanews.com](http://www.fepanews.com).

# Record of the FEPA Congress 2025

*Held in Concourse Room 20, the National Exhibition Centre, Birmingham, UK on 11th May 2025*



## 1. Welcome

The Congress opened at 10.30am when the President of FEPA, Bill Hedley, welcomed everyone present, including delegates, observers and guests. He then introduced the FIP President Prakob Chirakiti, who attended the Congress as a guest. Prakob greeted everyone present, thanked FEPA for its hard work in promoting philately over the past year in Europe, and congratulated the organisers for the success of EuroPhilEx. He added that there had been a fruitful discussion between the FIP and FEPA Boards during the exhibition in which ideas had been exchanged on the future of philately, the role of social media in promoting philately to new generations of collectors, and the need for more exhibitors from Europe. Special emphasis had been placed on the need to attract new jurors and to organise more exhibitions in Europe. Finally, he thanked the FEPA Vice-President Giancarlo Morolli, who was completing his term on the FEPA Board at this Congress, for the enormous contribution he had made to philately over many years.

## 2. Roll Call and choice of Tellers

The Secretary made a roll call of all members. 36 were represented (32 by delegates and four by proxies). Accordingly, there was a quorum and all decisions of the Congress were valid. Julije Maras and Vojtech Janković were appointed as tellers.

Delegates present or represented were as follows:

Country	Delegate	Country	Delegate
ARMENIA	Suren Simonyan	LUXEMBOURG	Lars Böttger
AUSTRIA	Proxy to Slovenia	N. MACEDONIA	Proxy to Croatia
BELGIUM	Lars Jørgensen	MOLDOVA	Andrei Adam
BULGARIA	Boncho Bonev	MONACO	Jean Voruz
CROATIA	Julije Maras	MONTENEGRO	Proxy to Romania
CYPRUS	Costas Athanasiou	NETHERLANDS	Pieter M. Verbakel
CZECH Rep.	Jiří Kraus	NORWAY	Øistein Bøe
DENMARK	Lars Engelbrecht	POLAND	Bogdan Pelc
EGYPT	Hani Salam	PORTUGAL	Rui Alves
FRANCE	Bernard Jimenez	ROMANIA	Ion Chirescu
GERMANY	Frank Blechschmidt	SERBIA	Vladimir Milić
GREECE	Costas Chazapis	SLOVAKIA	Vojtech Janković
HUNGARY	Richárd Gáll	SLOVENIA	Peter Suhadolc
ISRAEL	Les Glassman	SPAIN	Alfredo Miguel Martinez
ITALY	Bruno Crevato-Selvaggi	SWITZERLAND	Jean-Marc Seydoux
LEBANON	Bernardo Longo	SWEDEN	Jan Berg
LIECHTENSTEIN	Helmut Führer	TURKEY	Mehmet Akan
ALBANIA	Proxy to Italy	UK	Simon Richards

## 3. Presentation of FEPA Gold Pin

The President presented the FEPA gold pin to three Presidents of FEPA Members who had not previously received it (Hani Salam, Lars Böttger, John Davies).

#### 4. Presentation of FEPA Awards

The President presented a number of awards made in recognition of outstanding service:

##### FEPA Medals

- The FEPA Medal for exceptional service to organised philately for 2024: Bruno Crevato-Selvaggi RDP (Italy).
- The FEPA Medal for exceptional support to organised philately for 2024: Myrsini Vardopoulou (Greece). (accepted in Ms Vardopoulou's absence by Peter Suhadolc, President of the AEP).
- The FEPA Medal for exceptional philatelic study and research for 2024: Mehmet Akan (Turkey).

##### Other FEPA Awards

- A special presentation was made to the Chairman of the EuroPhilEx Organising Committee, Jon Aitchison, for his outstanding contribution to European philately.
- A Certificate of Appreciation for the outstanding philatelic achievements of the late Franco Rigo was presented to members of his family who were present. The President expressed his personal appreciation of Franco Rigo's exceptional contributions to philately, especially related to Venice, and his gratitude for being able to make this presentation to his family in person.
- Finally, the President presented a special plate to Giancarlo Morolli RDP to mark his retirement from the Board after 16 years of service. He thanked Giancarlo for his endless enthusiasm, wise advice and unflagging willingness to take the lead on difficult projects. He was a true friend of philately and the Board was delighted to offer this award on behalf of FEPA as a small token of its gratitude for his service.

#### 5. Approval of the Record of the 2024 FEPA Congress.

The record of the 2024 FEPA Congress, held in Copenhagen, Denmark on 19th October 2024, was approved.

#### 6. Receipt of reports of FEPA Board Members

The annual reports of FEPA Board members were received with approval.

#### 7. Approval of FEPA financial statements for 2024 and the Auditor's report

The Treasurer introduced his Statement on FEPA's financial position as at 31st December 2024 and the Auditor's report. Both reports were approved.

#### 8. Election of Vice-President, Treasurer and Two Directors

The President explained that the mandates of the Vice-President, Treasurer and two Directors had expired. One nomination had been received for the position of Vice-President and one for that of Treasurer. There were four candidates for the two Director positions. The Board invited the candidates to introduce themselves briefly:

Lars Engelbrecht, candidate for Vice-President,

Lars Jørgensen, candidate for Treasurer,

Thomas Höpfner, Claudio Manzati, Francisc Ambrus, and Jiří Kraus, candidates for Director.

The voting procedure (vote(s) to be given by ballot, or abstention) was explained before ballot papers were distributed to the delegates by roll call. Completed ballots were collected, also by roll call. The votes were then counted by the tellers and Vojtech Janković reported the results which were as follows:

Vice-President:	Lars Engelbrecht	34 votes, 2 abstentions	Elected
Treasurer:	Lars Jørgensen	32 votes, 2 abstentions	Elected
Directors:	Thomas Höpfner	18 votes	Elected
	Claudio Manzati	18 votes	Elected
	Jiří Kraus	16 votes	Not elected
	Francisc Ambrus	13 votes	Not elected

The President thanked all the candidates for putting themselves forward to serve the cause of promoting philately in Europe and congratulated those who had been successful. He invited the newly-elected member, Claudio Manzati, to join the Board.

## 9. Appointment of Auditor

The Congress agreed to appoint Pieter Verbakel from the Netherlands as Auditor for the next four years. The President thanked Mr Verbakel for agreeing to take on this essential position.

## 10. Presentation by the President

Noting that a relatively short time had passed since the Copenhagen Congress when he had last outlined the Board's priority plans, the President said that he wanted to focus on the promotion of philately, which lay at the heart of FEPA's raison d'être and its plans. He proceeded to give a short presentation (*available to view at [www.fepanews.com](http://www.fepanews.com)*).

Promoting philately includes raising awareness of opportunities and benefits philately can offer to collectors and wider social groups. This includes encouraging people to take part in groups, both traditional and on-line.

As recent FEPA research has confirmed, membership of traditional organisations is falling and on-line philatelists are often not members of societies, nor participate in exhibitions. Nevertheless, they are collectors!

Regulations exist to support competitive exhibitions, but many collectors want to go their own way. We should give more recognition to this range of preferences. There is no one right way to collect; it can be a hobby for some, but a route for serious research for others. We should recognise and value all of these different approaches.

We should also move out of our safety zone and invest more effort in persuading the wider world that philately is a worthwhile activity that can be rewarding and bring benefits. This includes paying more attention to building links with other, non-philatelic groups including academics, and other interest groups whose research overlaps with philately and postal history. Philately is not well understood in the wider world, and consequently it does not always have a well-respected image. Improving the perception of philately should be a high priority for organisations who are trying to promote philately. Publicising a wide range of good stories, especially where they show how philately can connect with and enhance wider enquiries, is a top priority and social media platforms have a part to play, especially in reaching younger generations.

As the Birmingham exhibition had shown once again, we have a lot to celebrate but the world was changing fast and we, together with our Members, must have a clear view of where our priorities lie and implement new approaches accordingly.

## 11. Report by the Treasurer on the financial forecast for 2025 and budget for 2026

The Treasurer said that FEPA would continue to give high priority to efficient management of its financial resources for the benefit of its Members. The increase in membership fee revenue approved at the Copenhagen Congress, along with the decision to publish FEPA NEWS on-line only, would help the organisation to continue its activities within a broadly balanced budget.

Revenue from advertising was expected to be stable, with a slight increase expected from offering additional advertising options on the website. On the other hand some expenditure would be incurred on upgrading the website to enable FEPA to continue to improve the services it offers.

## 12. Closer cooperation among Members in helping philatelic organisations to adapt to change.

Lars Engelbrecht gave a presentation on the project 'Effective Social Media Strategies and Activities for Philatelic Federations and Societies', on which a report had been circulated to delegates at the Congress.

The aim, agreed at the Copenhagen Congress, was to share experiences with social media to date and to develop the best way to use it in future. In February, all Members were invited to participate in small discussion groups on Zoom. In addition to Presidents, one other participant was invited, preferably with experience using social media. So, in March 2025 six one and a half hour sessions were held on Zoom, each of which involved around 5 Members. Overall, 26 Member Federations took part. It turned out that all Members already had experience of using social media, each in their own way. All were provided in advance with the purpose and goal of the meetings and discussion points. It was pleasing to report that several Members also provided written information in return.

The FEPA report was created as a reference for optimal use of social media, both in the work of Members and of individual societies. Consequently, all Members were asked to forward it - in printed or digital form - to their societies with recommendations.

The video meetings proved very productive, and we were grateful to all who participated. The Board was planning to hold another series of sessions in October 2025. These will be dedicated to all aspects of planning, organisation, financing, and volunteering of philatelic exhibitions, including virtual. All Members will be invited to participate.

In the subsequent discussion Vojtech Janković thanked FEPA for producing the report and confirmed that he was ready to participate in the future. Lars Engelbrecht confirmed that FEPA was willing to share Members' experiences and noted that the FEPA website already had links to YouTube channels promoting philately.

John Davies reported that the ABPS was developing a template for local society websites.

### **13. Presentation by Giancarlo Morolli on proposals for revising the regulations and guidelines for evaluating philatelic literature exhibits.**

Giancarlo Morolli began by responding to everyone who had congratulated him for his service in FEPA. He said that he would continue working for the benefit of philately in the future and wished his successor and the FEPA Board the best success in their future work.

He then presented the work already done and the plans for new Regulations and Guidelines for Philatelic Literature - a project for the future. The existing FIP guidelines and regulations had rapidly become obsolete, due in part to the dramatic development of published matter. Digital publishing was evolving quickly, with many editors and the continuous appearance of new formats: YouTube, blogs, podcasts (and what tomorrow?). Furthermore, due to the low frequency of national Literature exhibitions and the growing diversity of professional and non-professional media, jurors do not have sufficient opportunities to adapt to new media.

FEPA felt the need to define clear criteria, according to the principles-based approach, for coping with the evolution of digital technologies and explaining how to award points based on such principles. Much work had already been done, from collecting published contributions to in-depth panel discussions, further assessment of its feedback, and a common plan with FIP. In the autumn the proposal will be prepared and made available to the FIP Philatelic Literature Commission and submitted to the FIP Board for consideration at its meeting in Macau. The FEPA Board had asked Giancarlo to lead the project until its conclusion. Both the FIP President and the Director in charge of philatelic literature had expressed their appreciation during talks in Birmingham.

In conclusion, he pointed out that international exhibitions should become a place to present philatelic publications to the worldwide philatelic community. Collecting interests and publications have no territorial boundaries.

### **14. Consideration of motions from Members**

No motions had been received.

The President informed Congress that the FEPA Board had received a request for Patronage from the organiser of the European Championship of Thematic Philately (ECTP), which will be held in Bern, Switzerland, in 2027. Jean-Marc Seydoux provided a more detailed exposition and said that a seminar for Thematic jurors would be offered. The President thanked him for this information and invited Congress to give approval in principle to a grant of Patronage for this exhibition, subject to agreement being reached between the Board and the Organisers on details. Congress agreed to this proposal.

### **15. Date and venue for the 2026 FEPA Congress**

FEPA has received two invitations to host the 2026 Congress.

The first was from Croatia. Julije Maras outlined the proposal, which is to hold the Congress in the coastal town of Poreč during the Alpe Adria exhibition in April 2026. He explained that Poreč is a Mediterranean tourist town, 80 km from Trieste, 170 km from Ljubljana and 200 km from Zagreb, offering all kinds of services.

The second was from Italy. Bruno Crevato Selvaggi proposed to hold the Congress in Verona in November 2026 to coincide with a specialised Philatelic Literature exhibition (still subject to confirmation).

The President thanked both Federations for their support and said that the Board would make a decision on the venue for the 2026 Congress as soon as possible.

Bringing the Congress to a close, the President thanked the delegates for attending the Congress and for their support and contributions. He wished them a safe journey home.

The Congress concluded at 12.35 p.m.

# EuroPhilEx Birmingham 2025

## 7<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> May 2025

### *Lars Jorgensen writes:*

On 7<sup>th</sup> May 2025, after years of preparation, the tireless Jon Aitchison, Chairman of the exhibition, and his team could finally welcome collectors, exhibitors, dealers, auctioneers, postal authorities and stamp enthusiasts from all over Europe and beyond to Birmingham and EuroPhilEx.



This was the second occasion when the UK has held a European exhibition with FEPA Patronage and FIP Recognition at the halfway point between its decennial World exhibitions and for the first time in recent history it was held outside the London area. The National Exhibition Centre (NEC) near Birmingham was chosen because of the facilities it offered and its easy access by rail and air.

The NEC is immense and Hall 9 provided an excellent space for the exhibition. The NEC hall certainly has many advantages compared to the Business Design Centre in London, which has hosted international exhibitions in recent years.

The NEC hall consists of one open space on one level, it is big and allows generous space between exhibition frames which were laid out in a simple continuous manner. Consequently, there was no need for 'change over' of frames half-way through the exhibition. There was also more space for dealers and postal administrations both in terms of numbers and the size of the individual stands. The hall is easily accessible for vehicles delivering frames, stand-units and other materials, and there are no access limitations at weekends.

EuroPhilEx visitors were welcomed at an information stand that offered a smile and answers to all possible and sometimes impossible questions. Passing through two aisles of dealer stands the space opened up with exhibition frames occupying the left side of the hall and dealers the right-hand side. A number of dealers were in regular stands with name, promotional material etc. while other dealers had chosen a simple table with a couple of chairs. Apparently the two types of dealer facilities attracted buyers/visitors in equal numbers.

Towards the back of the dealers' area, walls had been erected to create two meeting rooms for meeting activities. Every day of the exhibition there was a full agenda of society meetings and presentations including two well-visited FEPA seminars. Paul Leonard spoke about 'Assisting Expert Committees through the use of forensic philately', and Richard Morel addressed the topic of 'How non-philatelic archives can be used to support philatelic research'.

On the second day societies were given the opportunity to promote their activities from temporary tables put up close to the exhibited collections. With varying degree of success society volunteers did their best to attract visitors' interest with their folders, journals and publications.

EuroPhilEx presented 304 competitive exhibits in all philatelic classes and 120 literature exhibits. It was busy days for the jury but the fact that the exhibition lasted five days as opposed to the usual four eased the pressure. EuroPhilEx had been able to accommodate all exhibitors who wanted to show their collections. Nonetheless the quality of the exhibits was remarkably high and no less than 43 large gold and 85 gold medals were awarded.

It was certainly a pleasure to peruse the varied exhibits. I think I picked up something from every exhibit that I saw: interesting new information, ideas on how to present a particular aspect or an area/topic that was outright unknown to me.

The Palmarès on Saturday evening was held in the ballroom of the Grand Hotel in central Birmingham. It provided a beautiful frame for about 250 well dressed individuals who had been fast enough to secure a ticket. Everybody was treated to a delicious three-course meal and the excitement of the announcement of the big prizes.

For the Grand Prix National there were five candidates. This is a high number, but more remarkable was the fact that all five collections were from different exhibition classes: traditional class, postal history, air mail, revenue class and open philately. This has never happened before in international philately and is not likely to be repeated any time soon!

When the jurors' votes were counted it was the traditional exhibit that came out on top as the winner: Stephen McGill with his 'Britain's Marvelous Machins'. A fantastic exhibit of a modern but complex and long-running stamp issue.

The winner of the Grand Prix International was found from among four candidates. The winners were Luis and Eduardo Barreiros with their superb study: 'Portuguese India – The Native Issues 1871-1888'.

Finally, the FEPA Grand Prix. Amongst 12 collections in the Grand Prix Class the field had been narrowed down to three and when the votes were counted the winner was Tom Komnaes with his breathtaking 'Norwegian Skilling Covers Domestic and Abroad'.

The following day many visitors rightly took the opportunity to have another look at the three winning exhibits as well as at the other Grand Prix candidate exhibits.

Many thanks to Jon Aitchison and his team for a well organised, friendly and successful exhibition.

## Souvenirs of EuroPhilEx 2025



*The day before opening, the 304 exhibits are being mounted in the frames. Here the Estonian Commissioner, Oliver Hanschmidt, is busy.*



*The first dealer's stand encountered was the Swedish auction house Postiljonen, manned by Lars-Olow Carlsson and Claes Arrrup.*



*Steve McGill receiving the Grand Prix National from the sponsor, Corinphila Auctioneers, represented by Managing Director, Jonas Hällström.*



*The Barreiros brothers receiving the Grand Prix International from the sponsor, Heinrich Köhler Auctioneers, represented by Managing Director, Tobias Huylmans.*



*Tom Komnaes receiving the FEPA Grand Prix from the sponsor, Global Philatelic Network, represented by Managing Director, Dieter Michelson.*



*The FEPA flag being transferred from EuroPhilEx to the next exhibition with FEPA Recognition, 'Liberec 2025' in the Czech Republic, during the Palmarès at the Grand Hotel, Birmingham.*

## Memorable Moments for FEPA at EuroPhilEx 2025



*Delegates gather for the 2025 FEPA Congress.*



*The President presents the FEPA Medal for Exceptional Service to Organised Philately 2024 to Bruno Crevato-Selvaggi RDP.*



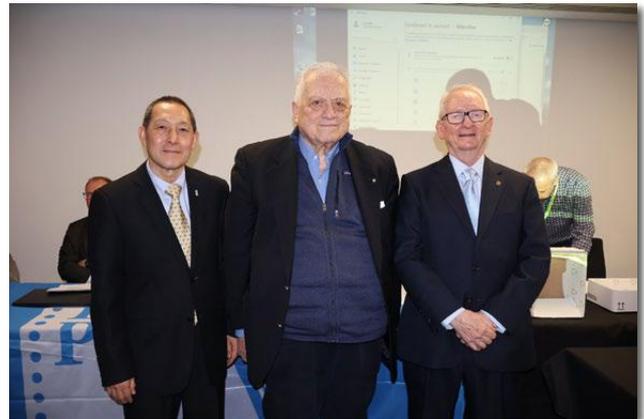
*The President presents the FEPA Medal for Exceptional Philatelic Study and Research 2024 to Mehmet Akan.*

*The President presents the FEPA Certificate of Appreciation to the family of the late Franco Rigo for his outstanding service to European philately.*





*The President presents a special memento to Giancarlo Morolli RDP for his outstanding service to FEPA on the occasion of his retirement from the Board.*



*Prakob Chirakiti, President of FIP and Bill Hedley, President of FEPA congratulate Giancarlo Morolli on his retirement.*



*Jon Aitchison, Chairman of the EuroPhilEx Committee, speaks at the Opening Ceremony.*



*The President presents the FEPA Certificate of Appreciation to Gerald Marriner, representing the Solihull Philatelic Society.*

*The President of the Académie Européenne de Philatelie, Peter Suhadolc, presents the medal of the European Philatelic Press Award 2024 at the EuroPhilEx Palmarès to the President for FEPA NEWS.*



# BERNABA 2025 in BERN, 14<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> May 2025

**Igor Pirc writes:**

BERNABA brought together the Swiss National Exhibition (NABA) and the exhibition of the Multilaterale regional group and has given the world of philately a new lease of life. Thanks to its interesting collections and supporting programme it attracted many visitors. A visit was enhanced by the presence of postal administrations, auctioneers, dealers, and various working groups. The Consilium Philatelia Helveticae also organised four well-attended seminars.

The graphic designer Kimberly Senn contributed a set of four BERNABA official vignettes, representing:

- 175 years of federal postage stamps.
- BERNABA Day.
- Day of the Universal Postal Union.
- Multilaterale Day. (Right)

A collage competition was an exciting accompanying event. Creative young talents of all ages were able to showcase their skills and showcase their artistic visions. Youth philatelic groups, as well as daycare centres and schools from Basel to Ticino and from Lake Geneva to Chur, contributed 33 collages, each the size of a half frame. The results were as follows:

**1<sup>st</sup> prize:** Marita und Bianca, Gruppe Burgdorf: Wheat field and cypress trees

**2<sup>nd</sup> prize:** Samuel, Louis, Nino, Jugendgruppe Luzern: Rainbow fish

**3<sup>rd</sup> prize:** Louis, Jugendgruppe Luzern: Tornado

In the main exhibition 17 jurors, headed by Damian Läge, evaluated 178 exhibits and 28 literature entries. The major awards were as follows:

- The Multilaterale Grand Prix: Harald Lang (Austria) for ‘The One Penny and Two Pence Mulready’.
- The NABA Schweiz Grand Prix: Valesia Wallis for ‘Anfänge der Bundespost 1849–1863’.
- The NABA International GP: Luis Rocha of Portugal for ‘King Luís I Straight Label Issue 1870–1884’.
- The NABA Masterclass GP: Fritz Aebi of Mexico for ‘The Hidalgo in Profile Issue 1872–1874’.



*The Multilaterale Day vignette was designed to symbolise the shared values of participating countries:*

- 1: Slovenia | Switzerland - Lipizzaner in front of Mount Triglav | St. Bernard in front of the Matterhorn.
- 2: Luxembourg | Germany - Lion in front of the city | Golden eagle in Berlin.
- 3: Austria | UK - Eagle in front of Schönbrunn Palace | Royal Lion and Big Ben.
- 4: Liechtenstein | Netherlands – Kestrel and crown | Lion in front of tulip field and windmill.



*(Left) Harald Lang is presented with the Multilaterale Grand Prix by Antoine Clavel of Corinphila Auctions.*

*(Right) Collage on the theme of ‘Peace’.  
© Die Schweizerische Briefmarkenzeitung.*

*Multilaterale is a regional group of seven countries (Austria, Germany, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, The Netherlands, Slovenia, Switzerland) that has now become eight with the addition of Belgium. The next Multilaterale is likely to be in Ulm, Germany, in 2027.*



## Liberec 2025



### *Jiří Kraus writes:*

The National Stamp Exhibition Liberec 2025 with international participation was held successfully at MCU Koloseum in Liberec, Czech Republic, from the 19th - 22nd June 2025. It was held under the patronage of the Governor of the Liberec Region, Mr Martin Půta and the Mayor of Liberec, Mr Jaroslav Zámečník. The exhibition had FEPA Recognition and FIP sponsorship.

The exhibition drew considerable interest beyond the Czech borders. Among the distinguished guests were FEPA President Bill Hedley (UK) and FIP Director Peter Suhadolc (Slovenia).



***Cutting the tape at the Opening Ceremony.***



***The main exhibition hall.***

There was plenty for visitors to do. There was a sales exhibition, Expo, attended by Czech Post along with auction houses and other dealers. There was also an autograph session with Josef Dudek, author of the commemorative postage stamp sheet Historical Town Halls and Squares – Liberec, five thematic lectures, and eleven guided tours led by members of the Union of Czech Philatelists (SČF). Informal small-group tours also proved popular.



***Dealers in the Expo.***



***Designer Josef Dudek and Josef Chudoba,  
Chairman of the Liberec Club.***

In the exhibition a total of 163 exhibitors took part, displaying their exhibits on 486 frames at two levels. 116 exhibitors participated in the first level and 47 in the second, which was dedicated to novices. Additionally, 30 exhibits were presented in the literature category. Ten countries had exhibits in the frames - Armenia, the Czech Republic, Germany, Israel, Moldova, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia, the USA and the UK - and a further four - Canada, India, New Zealand and Ukraine - sent literature entries. Five exhibits achieved 95+ points, while another 26 scored above 90 points, including four first-time exhibitors.

- The national prize went to Marek Vrba for: ‘Czechoslovakia 1918–1939’.
- The international prize was awarded to William Barrell for: ‘Great Britain Postal Reform and Development of Penny Value 1810–1880’.
- The highest-rated exhibit in the literature category was Nick Kirke for: ‘New York City Foreign Mail 1845–1878’.

The full Palmares results are available on the official website: <https://www.liberec2025.cz/palmares-3/>

In addition to the exhibition there was a Court of Honour offering, among other things, 24 panels of selected exhibits from the OSFS group. Another 30 panels were devoted to specialised and promotional presentations of the SČF and KF 04-01 (Liberec) members.



*Bill Barrell with his award.*



*Nick Kirke receiving his award from Julius Cacka, chairman of the SČF.*



*The OSFS group displayed contextual exhibits on special wooden frames.*



*The second exhibition hall with Invited exhibits.*

The organisers estimated the total attendance at 4,000–5,000 visitors and were pleased that the exhibition received considerable media attention. It is estimated that the promotional campaign reached up to five million people through 32 media reports, major newspapers, online news outlets and Czech Radio broadcasts. A video posted on the Philacast YouTube channel received over 1,000 views.

The National Stamp Exhibition Liberec 2025 is proof of the Strength of Czech Philately

The Liberec 2025 exhibition demonstrated the Czech Republic’s capacity to host a significant European event. The highly-rated exhibits, excellent organisation, diverse supporting programme and positive public response proved that Czech philately is both well-developed and respected internationally.

## Souvenirs of Liberec 2025



*From left-Jiří Kraus with his wife; Bill Hedley; Zuzana Kunášková; Peter Suhadolc.*



*Ladies who helped the exhibition to run smoothly, led by Zuzka Kunášková.*



*FEPA President Bill Hedley and the organising committee after the Palmares.*



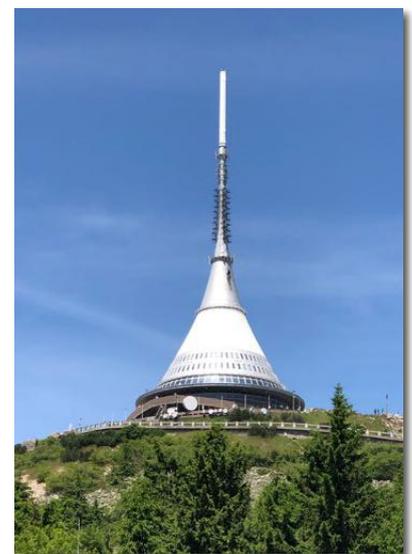
*Peter Suhadolc and Pavol Lazar sign the agreement for FIP Patronage of SLOVFLEX 2027.*



*The view from the Liberec Town Hall.*



*Team Slovenia visit Ještěd.*



*Ještěd television tower.*

# NORDIA 2025 12<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 2025

## *Costas Chazapis writes:*

Five years later than originally planned (thanks to COVID restrictions), NORDIA finally got underway in Malmö on Friday 12<sup>th</sup> September in an excellent venue at MalmöMässan (Right). It was just a three-minute walk from the railway station and, for visitors travelling from abroad, Malmö proved to be an excellent choice as the city is very close to Copenhagen International Airport, conveniently connected by train. The official hotel was also located directly across the street.



At exactly 12:00 noon on 12th September the Chairman of the Exhibition Committee Ulf Nilsson and the Vice-President of FEPA Lars Engelbrecht welcomed visitors and officially opened the exhibition. 'NORDIA is a proof that Europe's philately thrives when we meet across borders, share best practices, and celebrate each other's strengths' remarked Lars Engelbrecht.



Inside the main hall of MalmöMässan visitors first encountered 24 commercial stands before reaching the main exhibition area with 700 frames. Excellent lighting without distracting reflections across the frames, a wide central corridor with ample tables and chairs for resting, comfortable spacing between the frames, and the intelligent arrangement of the exhibits all combined to make strolling around an enjoyable experience.

Among the exhibits in competition a few frames featured philatelic gems provided by members of the Club de Monte-Carlo. Another highlight was Wolfgang Maassen's one-hour presentation on the life of Philippe de Ferrari, one of his favourite research topics. The speaker shared new findings and announced plans to publish a third book on the legendary philatelist within the next three years. He also encouraged the audience to visit Genoa to admire the former Ferrari family residences which today belong to the state.

On Saturday evening—only the second day of the exhibition—the 10-member jury chaired by Fredrik Ydell was ready to present medals to exhibitors who attended the traditional dinner. The ceremony took place in the spacious dining hall of MalmöMässan, in front of an audience of around 200 guests. The highest honours were awarded as follows:

- GP National:** Lennart Järnum, Sweden – Coat of Arms in skilling and öre denominations, 1855–1872.
- GP Nordic:** Benny Winther, Danish West Indies, 1856–1917, Stamps and Postage Due.
- GP International:** Benny Winther, The Duchies of Schleswig, Holstein and Lauenburg, 1850–1867.
- NORDIA 2025 Champion and winner of the Silver Postiljon:** Kai Nieminen, Grand Duchy of Finland, 1856–1875.

Among several awards presented in recognition of philatelic excellence, one stood out: a special medal from the Swedish Federation awarded to Göran Persson for the remarkable achievement of having earned ten Gold and Large Gold Medals at international exhibitions. Warmest congratulations are due to Ulf Nilsson and his team, for a job extremely well done. Equal thanks go to Lars-Olow Carlsson and Claes Arrrup of Postiljonen & FACIT, the exhibition's major sponsor, as well as to Nordfrim and Philasearch, its valued co-sponsors.

'At FEPA, we will continue to support international regional exhibitions and will do our utmost to help achieve even higher standards, as we firmly believe that strong regional events represent the future in international exhibitions', were my closing words to the Palmares' guests, where I was honoured by the organisers to represent FEPA.



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## Exhibitions in Serbia are thriving!

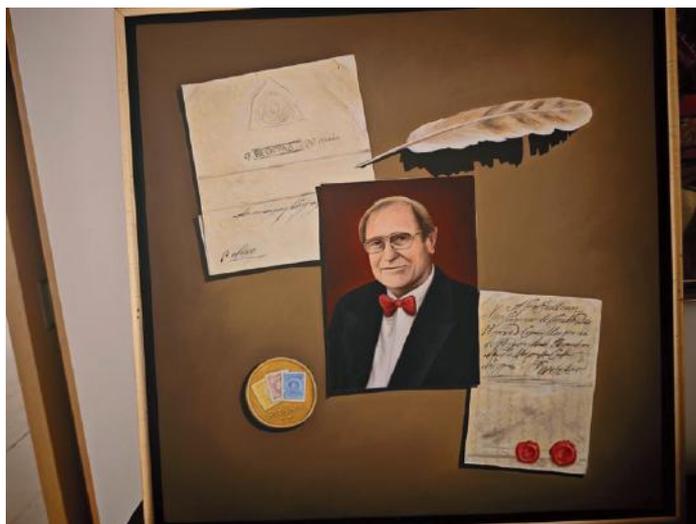
*Vladimir Milić has sent us news of three important exhibitions in Belgrade:*

### Exhibition by Predrag Cuki Antić at the PTT Museum in Belgrade

Mr. Antić has long been dedicated to acquiring and researching Serbian postal history, stamps, and archival material at home and abroad. Consequently, he has been able to fill gaps in our knowledge and his collections of the Principality and Kingdom of Serbia have received major gold medals at world exhibitions. As a result we have a better understanding of the development of the Serbian postal system.

This event was inaugurated by Marko Jelić, Director of the PTT Museum, who extended his gratitude to the author for curating this remarkable exhibition — the culmination of decades of committed collecting — and for his patriotic efforts to return some of the most historically significant and valuable philatelic artefacts of the Principality and Kingdom of Serbia to their homeland. He concluded that “What distinguishes this exhibition is its deeply interdisciplinary character — intertwining historical analysis, technical study, visual culture, and museum curation. These philatelic pieces transcend their philatelic function to stand as cultural documents, bearing silent witness to Serbia’s geopolitical realities, its interconnections with East and West, and the maturation of its internal institutional frameworks”.

Vladimir Milić, President of the Union of Philatelists of Serbia, emphasised the stature of philately as “the king of hobbies and the hobby of kings.” He added that, “Predrag Cuki Antić stands as one of the foremost philatelists in our country’s history and, without question, the most accomplished Serbian exhibitor. His landmark collection of ‘Classical Serbia’ — represented through two complementary exhibits on the Principality and the Kingdom — transcends philately, offering a profound narrative of Serbia’s postal development as a mirror of the nation’s institutional and political evolution.” Antić’s exhibit is the only one by a Serbian exhibitor to be nominated twice for the Grand Prix d’Honneur at world philatelic exhibitions — the highest distinction attainable in the field.



*Mr Antić with items from his collection.*

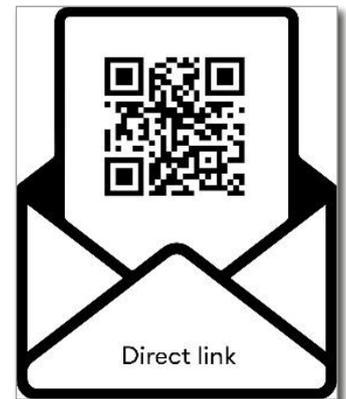


Antić responded, “I warmly invite visitors to experience this exhibit and urge younger philatelists and exhibitors to bring their work to a culmination through exhibiting. By doing so, they do not merely present a hobby — they contribute to the preservation of historical memory, enriching and expanding our understanding of the period they study, often revealing insights long obscured. Such achievements can only be reached through meticulous and sustained scholarly engagement”.

*Predrag Antić (Centre) with Zivadin Jovanovic and Marko Jelić.*

The exhibition was accompanied by a comprehensive bilingual Serbian-English catalogue, expertly edited by Dragoljub Jovanovic of Belgrade. Far more than a simple inventory, it presents the most important items of classical Serbian philately, carefully selected and structured in alignment with the narrative flow of the exhibit. Each piece is meticulously documented with chronological precision and philatelic depth, offering readers both context and analysis. It stands as a seminal reference for the field — a cornerstone for any serious collector or researcher with an interest in the classic issues of Serbia.

With the courtesy of the PTT Museum and the author, a digitised version of the catalogue has been published on the official website of the Federation (<https://philaserbia.org/en/>). You can find a direct link to the catalogue by scanning the qr-code. (Right)



*Photos courtesy of Photo Posta / Vuk Brankovic*

## SRBIJAFILA XVI : 7<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> October 2026

***We have received the following information from the Organising Committee:***

SRBIJAFILA XVI will take place in Belgrade from October 7<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> 2026,. It will be a National Stamp Exhibition organised by the Union of Philatelists of Serbia.

SRBIJAFILA XVI stands as a celebration of two historic jubilees of Serbian philately. It will mark 75 years since the very first national stamp exhibition in 1951 and 160 years since the printing of the first Serbian definitive postage stamps, the Prince Michael issue of 1866.

International participation is foreseen, featuring exhibitors from philatelic federations across the former Yugoslav region - Serbia, Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and North Macedonia.

SRBIJAFILA XVI takes place in the building of the Military Club of Serbia, a building at the city centre. The building was built in the spirit of modern architecture with elements of expressionism of the forties of the twentieth century.

More information will be available soon.

[www.srbijafila.org](http://www.srbijafila.org)



# BELGRADE 2027

## GENERAL WORLD EXHIBITION – FIP PATRONAGE

### 12<sup>th</sup>–17<sup>th</sup> October 2027, Belgrade, SERBIA

***Vladimir Milić writes:***

At the 77<sup>th</sup> FIP Congress held on 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2024 in Shanghai, the candidacy of the Union of Philatelists of Serbia and the Serbian Post was officially accepted. Belgrade will host the General World Philatelic Exhibition BELGRADE 2027, from 12<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> October 2027.

This decision confirmed the earlier approval made by the FIP Board (Fédération Internationale de Philatélie) in April 2024.

BELGRADE 2027 stands as the general world stamp exhibition in 2027 under FIP patronage, featuring 2,500 frames.

The official FIP Consultant for the exhibition is Peter Suhadolc (Slovenia), representing FIP. BELGRADE 2027 has already been officially listed in the FIP Exhibition Calendar and on the FIP website.

This is a unique opportunity for Belgrade to show its rich history and present itself to the world as an open, welcoming city — ready to receive philatelists and stamp lovers from across the globe. The exhibition will be organised by the Union of Philatelists of Serbia with the full support of the Government of Serbia and the Serbian Post.

Logistical preparations for the exhibition are currently underway, and supporting information — including details on the concept, schedule, and participation — will be released during 2025.



***Vladimir Milić, President of the Union of Philatelists of Serbia, and Peter Suhadolc, FIP Director for Europe, sign the contract for BELGRADE 2027 at the FIP Congress in Shanghai.***

# APATIN 2025: ON-LINE PHILATELIC EXHIBITION

## 15<sup>th</sup> December 2025 – 15<sup>th</sup> January 2026

***Željko Popović has an important announcement:***

**We invite fellow philatelists to participate in APATIN 2025, an online philatelic exhibition with international participation for all exhibition classes in philately.**

The exhibition will be held from 15.12.2025 to 15.01.2026. It will be displayed on the website of the “Association of Philatelists Apatin” at <https://www.udruzenjefilatelistaapatin.org.rs>

The exhibition organisers are the Association of Philatelists Apatin, the Associazione Italiana di Maximafilia (AIM) and the Federation of Italian Philatelic Societies (FSFI). The exhibition is sponsored by the Municipality of Apatin. The Organising Committee is appointed by the Management Board of the “Association of Philatelists Apatin”.

This is a competitive exhibition to which entry is free. Exhibitors will not be asked to participate in the costs.

Entries will be accepted for all philatelic exhibition classes. Exhibits (collections) must be written in English.

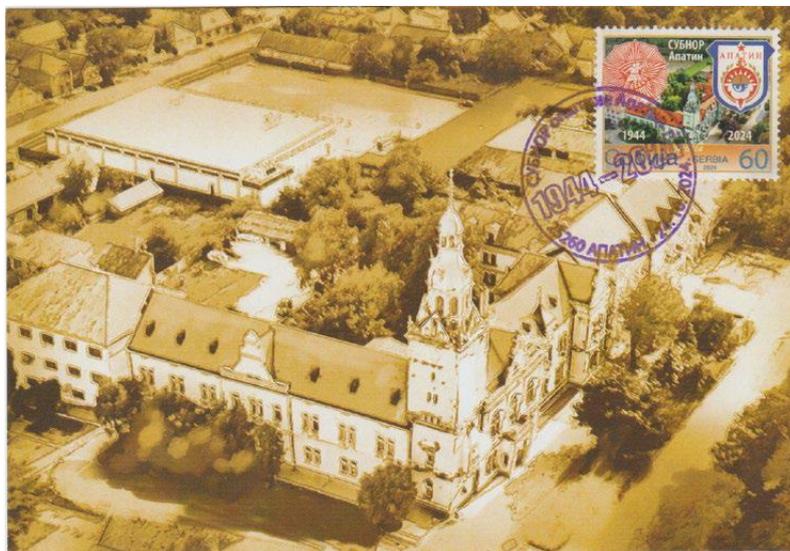
Entry is open to all members of SFS, members of the Federation of Italian Philatelic Societies (FSFI) and members of other national philatelic organisations.

The organisers’ aim is to promote philately by showing the quality of philately in the world, enabling philatelists and visitors to learn something new, and providing a window for young people and others who view the exhibition to see and understand the beauty of philately.

The timetable for entry is:

Registration (with introductory sheet):	15 <sup>th</sup> October 2025 – 15 <sup>th</sup> November 2025
Applications should be sent to:	apatinfila@gmail.com
Forwarding scanned exhibits (collections):	25 <sup>th</sup> October 2025 – 25 <sup>th</sup> November 2025
Files should be sent by Wetransfer to	apatinfila@gmail.com

Further information can be found in the exhibition documents at <https://udruzenjefilatelistaapatin.org.rs>





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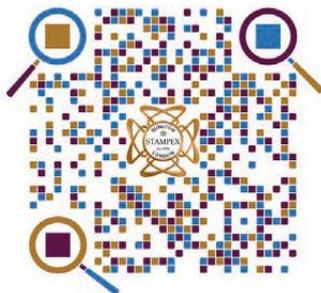
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**Rafael Acuña Castillo writes:**

EXFILNA 2025, the 63<sup>rd</sup> National Philatelic Exhibition in Spain, will be held jointly with JUVENIA 2025 at the Baluarte de la Candelaria in Cádiz from 5<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> November 2025. It will feature nearly 500 frames covering all competition classes.

There is a busy programme for the festival.

5<sup>th</sup> November Official opening.

6<sup>th</sup> November Cádiz Day, including presentation by Correos and FESOFI of EXFILNA 2025 commemorative issues in Cádiz City Council; opening of the Trade Fair; school visits.

7<sup>th</sup> November Dedicated to the Spanish Royal Family. A new ATM will be unveiled and will travel to San Fernando (the Juan Sebastián Elcano training ship). Stamps dedicated to Constitution Bridge and King Felipe VI will be issued. Jerez's 2031 bid to be "European Capital of Culture" will take place with a commemorative postmark and special card. The Royal School of Equestrian Art of Jerez de la Frontera will give a demonstration. A Wine of Honour offered by the Cayetano del Pino Winery, with a venenciador. A joint issue of the Elcano ATM and coin by the Spanish Post Office and the Spanish Royal Mint (FNMT) is planned. There will be a poetry reading by the Friends of the Telegraph Association and a talk/colloquium on Maximaphily based on the collection "Mujer tuvo que ser" (A woman had to win it).

8<sup>th</sup> November. Youth Day. Issue of the "29 JUVENIA Cádiz - Puppets La Tía Norica Batillo" stamp. Lecture and discussion on the postal service between Cádiz and Cuba. Discussion with participants in the "Draw a Stamp for Cádiz" contest, with prizes awarded, and a workshop for young people, "Searching in the Chest of Memories". The Palmares Dinner and presentation of medals will be held at the Meliá Hotel Cádiz Paseo del Mar. The festival concludes with a live outdoor drawing session by the Bahía de Cádiz Urban Sketchers group.



There will be an extensive cultural and recreational programme. A scheduled city tour includes a tour of the Pópulo neighbourhood and a visit to the Casa de la Camorra. There will also be a tour of ancient Cádiz, Gadir, the Provincial Museum, the Salting Factory, and the Roman Theatre.

The opening, broadcasts, and lectures will be streamed live on the official FESOFI website: [www.exposicionesfesofi.es](http://www.exposicionesfesofi.es) and [www.fesofi.es](http://www.fesofi.es)

## TimFileX 2025 : Timișoara, 14<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> November 2025

**Marius Muntean writes:**

TimFileX 2025 is the Romanian National Philatelic Exhibition with International Participation. It will take place from 14th - 16th November at the Asociația Filatelica in the Universitatea de Vest in Timișoara.

The exhibition will celebrate the 150th anniversary of the birth of Queen Maria of Romania.



**AF Timișoara – Queen Maria and King Ferdinand 2019**



**Beautiful Timișoara, European Cultural Capital 2023.**

The warm personality of the Queen, her enormous contribution at the formation of the Romanian state, the winning bi-nomen Ferdinand-Maria which finished the realization of Carol and Elisabeta will be part of the exhibition. The Queen, The King, The Kingdom, Romanian culture, science, beauty will be presented through stamps, post cards, postal effects.

We count on more than 70 collections from Romania, Germany, Hungary, Serbia, Slovak Republic and Ukraine.

The Exhibition will take place at Universitatea de Vest din Timișoara, one of the most important cultural and scientific institutions in Western Romania.

The opening ceremony will take place at Universitatea de Vest on Friday 14th November. On Saturday at the same location, everyone is invited to take part in a Collector's Fair.

A rich programme is prepared for children:

- Members of the Scholar Club "Bufnițele" working at the Bănățean National College under the guidance of the Philatelic Association will have a guided tour of the exhibition.
- The children of "Galeria din Curte" (the Gallery in the Yard) will have the opportunity to design their own stamps.



**AF Timișoara – Universitatea de Vest shown on commemorative postcard produced for TimFileX 2023.**

# BOSTON 2026 WORLD EXPO



May 23-30, 2026

at the Boston Convention and Exhibition Center

## **Boston 2026 is now a General World Philatelic Exhibition with FIP Patronage!**

- Boston 2026 World Expo will consist of multiple philatelic exhibitions including the decennial FIP show in the United States with 4,000 frames, the annual APS Champion of Champion competition, a Polar Salon with 200 frames, a German American Salon, an Ephemera Exhibition, a Court of Honor with major world rarities, outstanding invited exhibits, philatelic literature, museum displays, iconic baseball memorabilia, Lego display, and much more!
- More than a hundred dealers and auctioneers, postal administrations, society tables and a large presence of the US Postal Service.
- Great location very close to the airport, hotels and within the city.
- Beginners and Youth Area, First Day of Issue and commemorative ceremonies.
- **FREE** admission, **FREE** rooms for meetings, seminars and conferences.



[www.Boston2026.org](http://www.Boston2026.org)

# bephila



# 2026

17-19 July 2026 Bilateral competition exhibition Germany-Sweden  
in the Sparkassen-Arena Bernau at the Ladeburger Dreieck, 16321 Bernau near Berlin

## Newsletter #6

( June 2025 )

### **The BEPHILA 2026 - more than a Bilateral Competitive Exhibition -**

The organising team has already been asked several times by collectors who are not members of the BDPH or the Swedish Federation SFF whether they too can take part in the exhibition. The clear answer to this question is: **YES !!**

In accordance with the show regulations, members of other FIP member associations can also participate in BEPHILA 2026, subject to the show management's approval. However, only Swedish exhibitors will have a commissioner at their disposal. Interested parties from other countries are required to register in person with the German show organiser without a commissioner. The required application form can be found on the exhibition website.

So don't hesitate to join us in making BEPHILA 2026 an interesting, colourful and richly themed exhibition. Please note that your registration must be submitted by **28 February 2026**.

We would be very pleased about your participation. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us. The exhibition manager Michael Fukarek will be happy to help you. Here is his e-mail address:

**[fukarek@bephila.de](mailto:fukarek@bephila.de)**

**<https://www.bephila.de>**



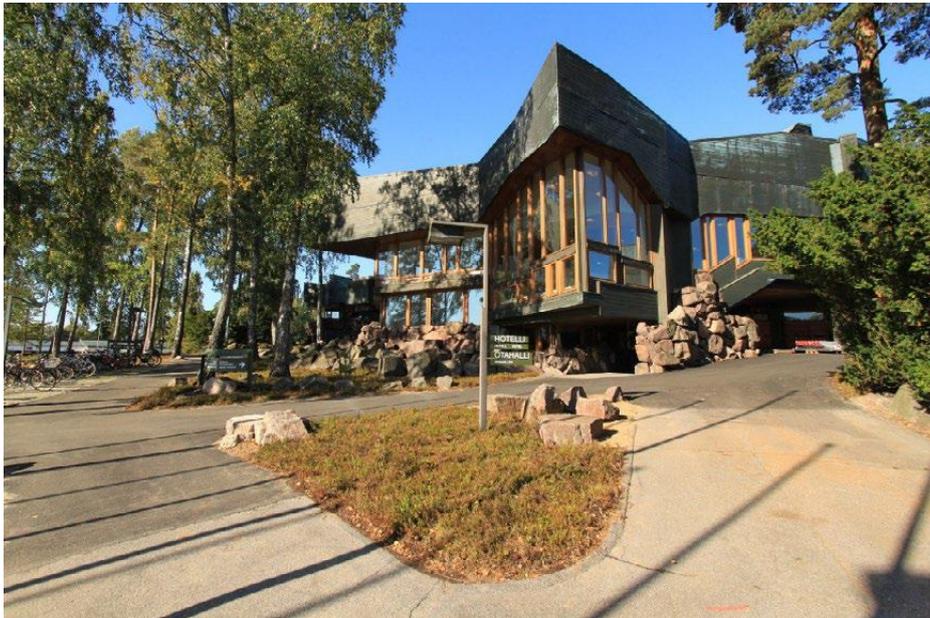
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Berliner Auktionshaus für Philatelie





# The Nordic Exhibition of Philately and Picture Postcards, 8-10 May, 2026, Espoo, Finland

Dipoli Congress Centre



The Finnish Philatelic Society (SF) – The Philatelic society of Helsinki (HFF)

The Philatelic Federation of Finland – The Foundation for promoting Finnish Philately

[www.nordia2026.fi](http://www.nordia2026.fi)



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with Ministry of Transport of the Slovak republic  
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organize first time in history in Slovakia

Specialized world stamp exhibition

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with FIP patronage and FEPA recognition

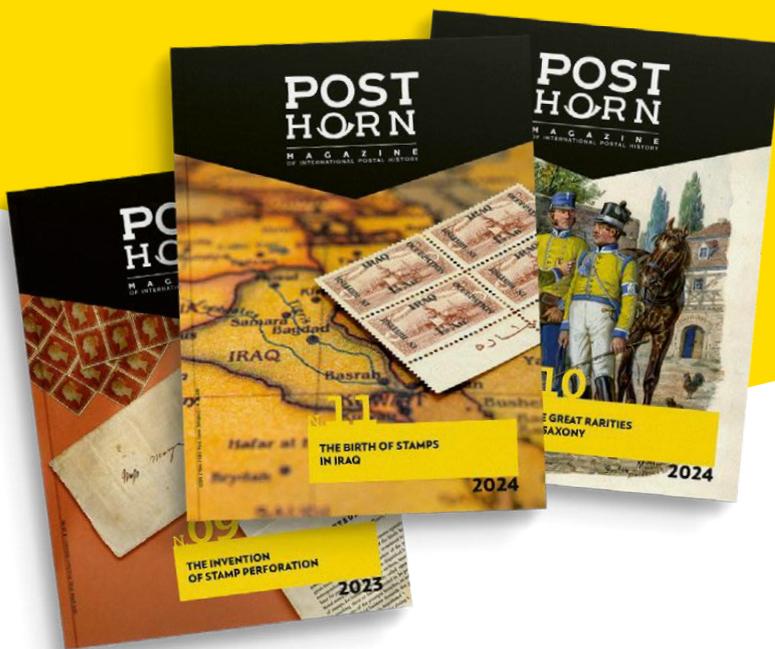
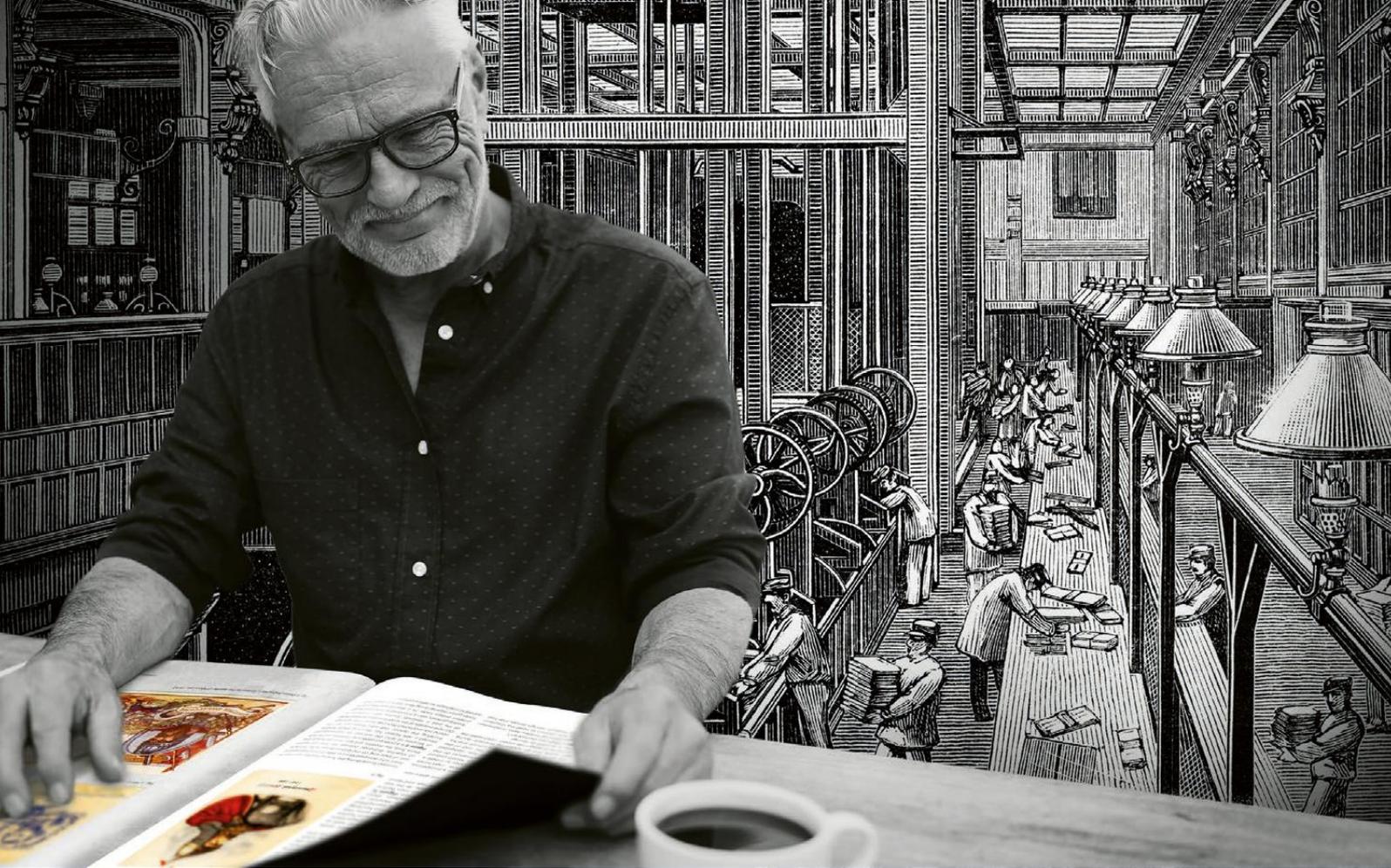
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**FIP-FEPA**  
**Large Gold Medal**  
Balkanfila 2024  
**Gold Medal**  
IBRA 2023  
London 2022  
Notos 2021

**Press Award**  
**2021**  
Académie Européenne  
de Philatélie



## BALKANFILA - 60 Years Old and Looking Forward

**Igor Pirc and Christos Gikas take a look at BALKANFILA, the oldest and largest of the Regional Philatelic Working Groups.**

In 2026 “BALKANFILA” will celebrate its 60th anniversary so this seems a good moment to look back at how it has developed over the years and forward to its plans for the future.



### The Story of BALKANFILA

The idea of holding a regional exhibition in the Balkans first appeared in 1965 when the Union of Philatelists in Bulgaria decided to organise a Philatelic Exhibition with that name. The invitation was open to collectors of all Balkan countries and the idea was accepted with great enthusiasm by all neighbouring Philatelic Federations. Consequently, the decision was taken to set up a similar exhibition every two years, each time in a different city, with the intention that all countries would take turns in hosting the event.

Six philatelic federations responded to the first invitation - Albania, Greece, Romania, Turkey, Yugoslavia, and, of course, the organiser Bulgaria. The same happened in the following year in Istanbul, and from 1971 the exhibition was held regularly every other year until 1991 when political processes in Yugoslavia, which led to its disintegration into several states, interrupted cooperation for several years. Nevertheless, there was a strong desire to revive cooperation and, at an informal meeting at the 2005 FEPA Congress in Brno, representatives of several countries of South-Eastern Europe showed interest. The President of the Bulgarian Federation, Spas Panchev, then invited the committee that had taken this initiative to Sofia in 2006. At that meeting Mahmut Emirmahmutoglu (now the honorary president of Balkanfila) took over the organisation of the XIVth exhibition and revived BALKANFILA. It was held in Istanbul in the autumn of 2009 with great success and a lot of promises for the future.

Since then the circle of participants / members has expanded to 12 countries including successor states of Yugoslavia and Moldova, with the Cyprus Federation always present as a traditional guest. Exhibitions have been hosted by Turkey (Istanbul 1966, 1983, 2007, Izmir 1973), Romania (Bucharest 1971, 1983, Bacau 1991), Bulgaria (Varna 1966, Sofia 1975, Vratza 1985, Plovdiv 2010, Vidin 2014), Greece (Athens 1979, Thessaloniki 1989, 2024), Yugoslavia (Beograd 1977, 2023, Novi Sad 1987) and Slovenia in 2012 (where the regional group Alpe Adria and guests Portugal and Cyprus also took part). In short, BALKANFILA has now been held on 20 occasions in 12 countries.

### The Balkans

The Balkans is a region of southeastern Europe that corresponds partially with the Balkan peninsula. It takes its name from the Balkan Mountains that stretch throughout the whole of Bulgaria and has various geographical and historical definitions. The Balkan Peninsula is bordered by the Adriatic Sea in the northwest, the Ionian Sea in the southwest, the Aegean Sea in the south, the Turkish Straits in the east, and the Black Sea in the northeast. The northern border of the peninsula is variously defined.



There is no universal agreement on the borders of the Balkans. By most definitions they include Albania, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia (up to the Sava and Kupa rivers) mainland Greece, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Northern Dobruja in Romania, Serbia (up to the Danube river), and East Thrace in Turkey. However, the remaining territories of Croatia, Romania and Serbia are often included also, as well as Slovenia (up to the Kupa river). Additionally, some definitions include Hungary and Moldova for cultural and historical reasons.

## BALKANFILA today and tomorrow

Over the years a multitude of quality collections from various competition classes have been presented at BALKANFILA exhibitions. There is no doubt that they have helped to promote philately in the region to a high standard.

Postal history, which is common to this region, has stood out in terms of its interest and educational value.

A close friendship has also developed between the philatelic organisers of these countries who meet regularly in the Balkanfila Working Group. This also leads to cooperation for the benefit of philately in the region.

For more than ten years the Balkanfila website has been operating under the technical guidance of author Francisc Ambrus and co-editor Igor Pirc, providing all basic information and details of current events. All are welcome to visit the website at [www.balkanfila.eu](http://www.balkanfila.eu). At the suggestion of Christos Gikas, news has also been exchanged since 2023 in the online Balkanfila Newsletter which Christos also edits (To receive the Newsletters send a message to [xgikas@gmail.com](mailto:xgikas@gmail.com)).

At Balkanfila XX in Thessaloniki in November 2024 we decided also to publish a digital English-language Balkanfila Yearbook with the aim of presenting Balkan-related philatelic research and knowledge to a broad audience. The first issue, with 198 pages, was circulated in May 2025. It featured seventeen articles on Traditional Philately, Postal History, Postal Stationery, Picture Postcards and Open Philately. By presenting a diverse range of philatelic material to readers, the intention is to offer a good general understanding of postal communications throughout the Balkan region. Looking ahead our aim will be to cover all philatelic classes by drawing up a list of articles proposed by the delegates and using it to detect and fill "possible gaps". Some delegates suggested that, with the aim of reaching a wide audience in mind, the Yearbook should also offer shorter, less specialised articles as well as covering such topics as international-level exhibits and modern philately.

We are optimistic that this initiative will help BALKANFILA in its efforts to promote philately in this region.

The Balkanfila Yearbook 2025 can be found at:  
<https://www.efo.gr/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/BALKANFILA-YEARBOOK-2025.pdf>



***Representatives on the Balkanfila Working Group after its regular meeting in Thessaloniki, November 2024.***

## A Fresh Approach to the Evaluation of Philatelic Literature

***Giancarlo Morolli has been hard at work for two years with Ari Muhonen and other colleagues on finding ways in which the Guidelines for evaluating philatelic literature exhibits could be updated and improved. Here he provides a report on the requirements for an effective improvement of this class at the exhibition and a better satisfaction for the exhibitors.***

In his opening letter of this issue, the FEPA President emphasises that the task of promoting philately will be more necessary than ever in the years to come. Philatelic literature, in all its forms, plays a substantial role in fulfilling such a task, attracting new exhibitors, helping the existing base to enjoy and obtain even more satisfaction out of it, and supporting those eager students who want to stretch their knowledge to new levels.

In recent years, I have been involved, with several other experts, in defining the new regulation for evaluating philatelic literature publications in the digital era. Unfortunately, after the Birmingham Congress, an annoying problem with my right hand has delayed the completion of such a task.

The consequences of the surgery for taking care of the carpal tunnel syndrome are still there, but finally, I can manage to type this article without much pain. In the meantime, the thinking process has not been frozen, but it has been expanded to cover most aspects concerning this matter, without focusing on marks. This issue of FN47 enables me to share these insights with our readers, hoping to draw their attention to the need for better organisation of this class at national and international exhibitions.

### Exhibiting Philatelic Literature

It is a matter of fact that, unlike any other competitive class, philatelic literature is not based on a structured approach based on regional and national exhibitions. There is no requirement from previous national awards for entering an international exhibition, as any additional work presented in this class enriches the philatelic content of the exhibition. GREX art 10.3 specifies only time limits for entering a show, in the sense that only recent publications may be presented. However, from a practical standpoint, such a provision also takes into account the fact that, to my knowledge, the philatelic literature class is not present regularly at the national level, at least in a number of countries. I have never analysed this aspect in depth, but I am aware that setting up an exhibition of books and magazines and, in the last few decades, digital works, is not easy from a logistical standpoint. In general, adding another class implies just installing more frames. For philatelic literature, organisers are required to reserve a suitable area to be filled with shelves or showcases, chairs, and desks for visitors to examine the paper exhibits, as well as a person to assist them. The display of digital works can be facilitated by installing suitable billboards that provide information to visitors exploring the exhibits on their smartphones, as well as equipment with large displays, which can aid in a better evaluation of the exhibits.

The lack of a national level at which exhibitors and jurors share experiences and evaluations puts more burden on international exhibitions as, by their nature, they gather entries dealing with a variety of subjects, in several languages, whereas the exhibition is on just for a very few days. Philatelic literature would widely benefit from more frequent and intense national-level exhibitions, which would train both exhibitors and jurors for more demanding challenges. As a side benefit, it would provide visitors with an up-to-date overview of recently published works and hopefully help disseminate them to a larger audience.

## Improving the Experience for Exhibitors

Exhibitors should be treated in the same way as their fellows in the other classes. That requires some basic changes, which should not be challenging to implement, as they are already provided for the other classes.

At each exhibition, the final session between jurors and exhibitors is a key moment, and its success is measured by the fact that often the scheduled time is not sufficient to meet the exhibitors' and national commissioners' requests. In all frame-based classes, exhibitors are supported to improve their entry from one participation to the next by implementing what they learn from the jury's assessment.

Such a meeting is uncommon for literature entries. It was thought that, once printed, the work remains unchanged, whereas the frame exhibits may be easily changed and even entirely redone from one participation to the next. However, such consideration does not apply to periodicals, which, by their nature, have new issues published at a periodical pace and could then take advantage of the advice from jurors. However, the evolution of digital publishing technology has changed the nature of the objects presented in the philatelic literature class. Besides digital works, paper publications may be modified from one participation to the next, as the move from typographic to digital printing makes it possible to produce updated versions in small batches and with reduced costs. Authors may take advantage of suggestions from reviewers, readers, and, hopefully, jurors, so that the next printing batch can offer improved content without implying a new edition.

At the international level, some technical considerations initially led to the decision not to store the award data in a database file, as for the frame-based exhibits. The first obstacle was the variety of languages and, in some cases, of alphabets. Spelling of names changed from one FIP language to another, and several entries were in other languages. Translation of titles in English was (slightly) different in different exhibitions. In addition, the exhibitor's name may vary, as in some cases more than one entity holds the rights for the publication and may therefore apply to enter it in competition. Nowadays, with computer applications at a far more advanced level in terms of user friendliness, recording of literature entries in the award database is what matters. Both the original language title and the English title should be entered in the applicant on the entry form; after the first time, an appropriate identification number should ensure a unique and permanent link to the object. As already in place for the frame exhibits.

The application form should differ from those of the other classes and request specific publication data to be included in the catalogue. Personally, I believe that the presenter's email address should also be added, as catalogues reach a far larger population that may consist of philatelists interested in adding such works to their libraries. Rather than a commercial goal, it serves as a means for spreading philatelic knowledge.

Furthermore, exhibitors should be asked to submit a special type of synopsis that ideally consists

of two parts. The first one provides all data necessary to satisfy a bibliographical cataloguing of the work. Such input should be maintained in a special database that will offer a vast panorama of philatelic literature worldwide.

## Improving the Experience for Judges

The third major area for improvement is the organisation of judging operations and the display of the entry at the exhibition. Once an entry is accepted, exhibitors should be asked to submit the physical object to the organisers well before the show. There is a general trend to request only one copy, but two copies are still necessary whenever the philatelic literature jurors are scheduled to work during the show. Hopefully, they should complete the evaluation before the opening, so that

all entries are made available for public examination. It is pretty frustrating to have some titles missing because they are still in the jury room... By the way, in case of a second copy, exhibitors must retain the right to have it sent back at their own expense. Some works are printed in small batches, and the exhibitor may need that copy back. The first copy should not be dispersed, but the whole lot should be donated to the national philatelic library or a similar institution, perpetuating the benefits of the exhibition for the host organisation. At large, libraries nowadays fight for each penny of their budget, and such a donation would be very significant for them.

The organisation of the jury work is not easy. First, budgeting constraints inevitably limit the number of jurors and the duration of their on-site stay, posing a significant challenge due to the diverse range of topics, languages, and implementation approaches in the entries in competition. In any case, jurors should be provided with the list of entries as soon as it has been defined so that they can look at the libraries they are familiar with, find reviews in the philatelic press and on the web, and consult friends dealing with the topic. For paper publications, obtaining the PDF file of the work can provide some assistance, but it only allows for evaluating certain aspects of the criteria. In some situations, like at IPHLA 2012 and Italia 2018, the two FEPA exhibitions devoted to philatelic literature, it was possible to arrange sending the works to the jurors at home or to hold preliminary meetings with a part of the jury. However, it is helpful for the team leader to arrange meetings on a digital platform, allowing team members to exchange ideas and discuss issues.

The synopsis, as outlined above, would allow the applicant to present the object, real or digital in the “free format” part. In the first period of implementation, a questionnaire based on the evaluation criteria might stimulate the exhibitor to provide facts rather than useless information, like generic statements on how important the subject is or how innovative the approach.

The final evaluation needs the real object. For digital works, the situation is easier, as jurors may already look at the objects using their own home equipment. For some entries, it is essential to repeat the assessment due to frequent additions or updates depending on the nature of the entry.

## Conclusion

I hope that these considerations will spark meaningful discussion, as this area truly requires significant participation to reach its full potential. I have deliberately left out the regulations and the relevant criteria for evaluation, as I consider them mere technicalities in front of the issues and the solution I have described. I am fully aware that most considerations have already been discussed and even considered in the regulations, but I am convinced that in this matter, “*repetita jvant*”, repeating the main concepts helps to ensure the attention of all parties concerned. In the meantime, I am completing the draft for the new regulations and guidelines to be submitted to the panel members, the FEPA Board and the FIP Literature Commission.

# Modern Philately

(This article was first published in the June 2025 issue of the Balkanfila Newsletter and is reproduced in FEPA NEWS with the kind permission of the editor).

## **Svetislav D. Jelić writes:**

“Modern (contemporary) philately, which has recently been included as an experimental ‘promotional class,’ primarily aims to encourage collectors of newer or modern philatelic material to exhibit at the highest FIP level” — this is exactly how the guidelines dated August 22, 2013, begin on the official website of the Fédération Internationale de Philatélie (FIP).

But what exactly is modern philately, and what are the recent trends in this exhibition class? Modern philately is one of the newest FIP exhibition classes, bringing together all collectors of more recent philatelic material. For now, it includes material that, by its nature, belongs to one of the traditional exhibition classes—traditional philately, postal history, or postal stationery—but due to the significant difference in the period of usage - it cannot compete directly with exhibits from those established classes.

The generally accepted rule is that modern philately encompasses material from around 1991 onward. However, there is an increasingly noticeable trend—especially in East Asian countries—to accept material from as early as 1980, and this broader time frame is now more frequently being adopted at European exhibitions as well.

As with all other exhibition classes, there is a defined scoring range, in this case divided into four criteria:

Presentation 5 points	Treatment and importance 30 points a) Treatment - 25 points b) importance – 5 points
Knowledge and research 35 points	Condition and rarity – 30 points a) Condition – 10 points b) Rarity – 10 points B) Difficulty of Acquisition – 10 points
Total available points	100

Although modern philately is still considered an “experimental class,” all exhibits in this category are treated, at both FEPA and FIP exhibitions, in the same manner as those from other competitive classes. As such, they are awarded medals and recorded in the FIP registry.

Thanks to the generosity of the exhibitors — Mr. Guy Heijblom (Belgium), Dr. Claudio Ernesto Manzati (Italy), and Vladimir Milić (Serbia) — this article presents a brief overview of three award-winning exhibits shown at FIP and FEPA exhibitions. The aim is to provide insight into the diversity of material and the possibilities available for exhibiting in this relatively new class.

**\*\*Note:** The images shown are either selected portions of exhibit pages or full exhibit sheets. The image numbering is specific to each exhibit presented in this article.

**Guy Heijblom** (Belgium), a gold medal winner at the world exhibitions in China (2019) and Thailand (2018), presented an exhibit in the modern philately class focused on regular Belgian stamps featuring King Baudouin I, type “Velghe” (original exhibit title: \*Studie koninklijke beeltenis type “Velghe”\*)).

This exhibit demonstrates a traditional philatelic approach within the modern philately class, as it includes stamp proofs, printing types, perforations, marginal markings on the sheet edges, and all other technical details typically covered in traditional philately exhibits, along with examples of the stamps’ usage.



**Figs. 1 and 2** Overview of a proposed design draft for the definitive issue, with the artist’s signature on the reverse side. The shown images are fragments from the exhibit page.



**Figs. 3 and 4** Overview of the first stamp series with the date of issue, and parts of the sheets featuring the artist’s signature in the margin. The shown images are fragments from the exhibit page.

**OVERVIEW OF THE COMPLETE ISSUE CLASSIFIED FOLLOWING ISSUE DATE**

**NORMALISED DOMESTIC MAIL ITEMS UP TO 20 GRAMS (postal regulation number 101)**

ISSUE DATE: 15/11/1982	05/04/1983	23/01/1984
TARIFF PERIOD: 15/04/1982 14/04/1983	15/04/1983 11/01/1984	01/02/1984 28/02/1985

**DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL MAIL ITEMS AS PER POSTAL REGULATION NUMBER**

Number 101 : normalised domestic mail item up to ...grams  
 Number 301 : normalised international mail item up to ...grams  
 Number 302 : letter and postcards international  
 Number 303 : printed items international up to ... grams  
 Number 305 : newspapers international up to ... grams

ISSUE DATE: 26/03/1984	26/03/1984	26/03/1984	26/03/1984
TARIFF PERIOD: 01/02/1984 15/01/1985	01/02/1984 15/01/1985	01/02/1984 15/01/1985	01/02/1984 15/01/1985
POSTAL REGULATION N° : 302	301 : to 20gr	101 : to 100gr	301 : to 100gr

**DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL MAIL ITEMS FROM 100 UP TO 500 GRAMS**

ISSUE DATE: 06/12/1984	12/06/1984	12/06/1984
TARIFF PERIOD: 01/02/1984 15/01/1985	01/02/1984 15/01/1985	01/02/1984 15/01/1985
POSTAL REGULATION N° : 305 : to 250gr	305 : to 500gr	301 : to 250gr

**TARIFF INCREASES POSTAL REGULATION N° :**

FROM 22F 301 : to 20gr	FROM 12F 101 : to 20gr
ISSUE DATE: 25/02/1985	10/04/1986
TARIFF PERIOD: 16/01/1985 28/02/1986	01/03/1986 15/01/1990

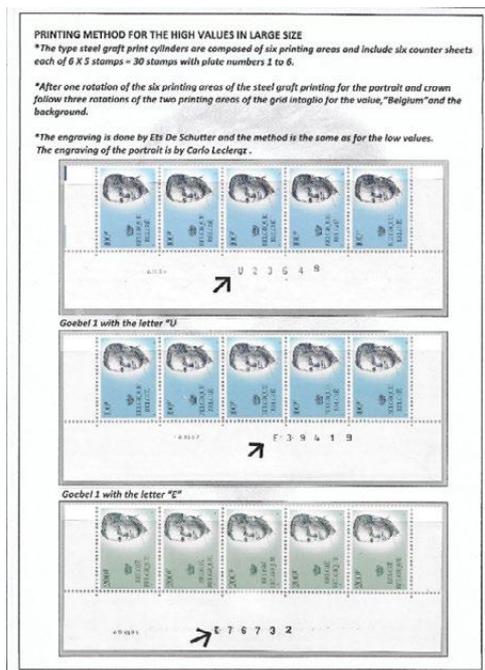
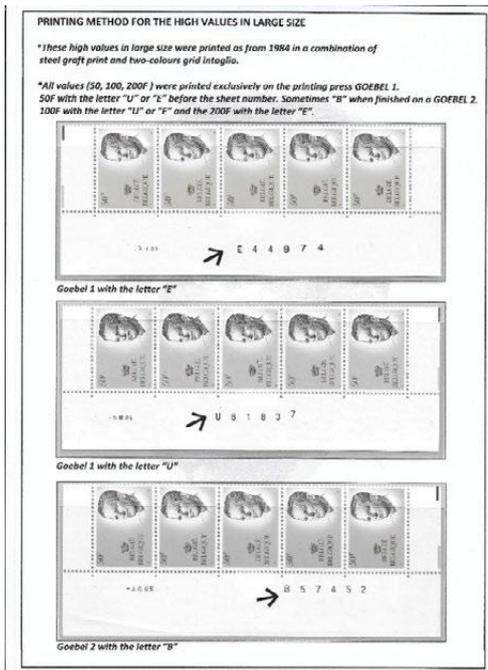
↓ ↓

ISSUE DATE: 07/04/1986	15/01/1990	03/11/1986
TARIFF PERIOD: 01/03/1986 15/01/1990	16/01/1990 31/03/1992	01/03/1986 15/01/1990
POSTAL REGULATION N° :		305 : to 2kg

↓

ISSUE DATE: 19/02/1990
TARIFF PERIOD: 16/01/1990 31/03/1992

**Figs. 5 and 6** Overview of all issued stamps of the second type, sorted by date of issue. On two exhibit pages, all the stamps covered by the exhibit are displayed, with precise issue dates, accompanying postal rates, and the duration of those rates for the purposes for which the stamps were issued.



**Figs. 7 and 8 Overview of the printing types for higher-denomination stamps on two exhibit pages.**

Another important segment in exhibiting within the traditional philately class is the types of paper and gum. In this section of the exhibit page we see a tabular presentation of different paper types along with the names of the printing house suppliers, as well as descriptions of the types of gum on the back of the stamps.

**THE DIFFERENT TYPES OF PAPER AND GUM USED**

POLYVALENT PHOSPHORESCENT PAPER WITH GUM MADE WITH POLYVINYLALCOHOL (= PVA).

<p>Company Harrison from the UK supplies the paper "Harrison and Sons"</p> <p>GUM : green (abbreviated GRG) OCB (Offic. Catal.) : P5 (1976)</p> <p>PAPER : Following list Verpoort/Mesdagh</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A HS2 Harrison</li> <li>B G+P Harrison</li> <li>D Harrison</li> </ul>	<p>Company Epacar from Belgium supplies the paper "Henry and Leigh Slater", part of "Associated Paper Industries", later "Coated Paper Ltd"</p> <p>GUM : white(abbr. WG) GUM : yellow(abbr. YG)</p> <p>OCB : PSA (1983) OCB : PSB (1984)</p> <p>PAPER : PAPER :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>C Epacar</li> <li>C Epacar</li> </ul>
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**Fig. 9 Overview of the paper and gum types used in the production of the subject stamps.**

**The "SPECIMEN" STAMPS**

The "SPECIMEN" stamps are used for demonstrations, documentation purposes, the announcements of new stamps via the press and education in the ex postal schools.

The "SPECIMEN" handstamp is applied in black colour onto the normal postal sheets at the printing company.

The "SPECIMEN" stamps cannot be used for the normal postal traffic because they have no value.

A lot of Administrative Departments use the Latin word "SPECIMEN". Some countries use the word in their own language : Spain : MUESTRA / Portugal : PROVA / UK : SPECIMEN / Italy : SAGGIO / Finland : MALLI / Russia : OBRASEZ / Germany : MUSTER.

For the VELGHE stamps there exist "SPECIMEN" stamps for the 14F, 24F, 25F, 40F and 200F.

Alongside the display of stamps marked SPECIMEN, the exhibitor provided a brief explanation of the purpose of SPECIMEN stamps, including a review of the different inscriptions depending on the country of issue.

**Fig. 10 Overview of SPECIMEN stamps from the studied issue.**

Along with the detailed treatment of all stamp segments, the exhibit also presents various usage examples, which is an important part of exhibiting in the traditional philately class. From everything shown, we see a very detailed approach to the material treatment in the Modern Philately class but incorporating all the exhibition elements typical of the traditional philately class.

Dr. Claudio Ernesto Manzati (Italy), winner of the Large Vermeil medal at the European exhibition in Prague 2018, where he received the award for the best exhibit in the class, presented regular Italian stamps in his exhibit titled “The Definitive Stamps of Italian Priority Mail.”



Figs. 11/12: Overview of usage in domestic and international postal traffic.

In my opinion, judging by the exhibit’s title, I would certainly classify this as a “subclass” of traditional philately, since the title indicates the focus is on stamps. However, in the exhibit itself, the usage of stamps is prominently displayed in the majority of the material—by my rough estimate, over 50% of the exhibit. Whether this is the reason why the exhibit, despite being the best in its class, did not receive a gold medal at that exhibition remains open to speculation.

As explained in the introductory part of this article, even though Modern Philately is treated as a separate exhibition class, the approach to material treatment remains closely tied to one of the already established classes, such as traditional philately, postal history, postal stationery, etc. In this context, considering that FIP guidelines for the traditional philately class recommend that covers and postal stationery with stamp usage should comprise about 30% of the exhibit, it is possible that this particular segment was a limiting factor for achieving a gold medal. Still, since Modern Philately is still an experimental class, it is noteworthy that this exhibit was highly awarded with 86 points, which speaks well to the quality of the material presented and the exhibit as a whole.

I firmly believe that the better an exhibit adheres to the FIP guidelines for the exhibit’s “subclass,” the greater the chance it has for receiving a high score and achieving good success.

## The definitive stamps of Italian Priority Mail

The Priority Service was introduced experimentally on 1st December 1997. This new service offered by Poste Italiane provided the delivery of letters and postcards the next day at a cost of 1,200 L for weights up to 20 grams. This was a modern and innovative service in line with the European developments in the delivery of correspondence and heavily publicized by Poste Italiane who had invested significantly in the project. The first stamp dedicated to the service was issued on June 14, 1999, one week before the launch of the service with a face value in two currencies, i.e. 1,200 lire and 0.67 euro. In 2000 and 2001 some of these values were reprinted. Only in 2002 the first real set of priority stamps was issued, with facial values of € 0.62, € 0.77, € 1.00, € 1.24, € 1.86 and € 4.13 to cover the main priority rates for both domestic and foreign countries. In 2004, another 7 values of € 0.60, € 0.62, € 0.80, € 1.40, € 1.50, € 2.20 and € 2.20 were issued, using two different printing methods: lithography and microgravure printing. For the latest issues the postage stamps were issued without an attached label.

This exhibit aims to illustrate all the values of the series produced, showing the typical characteristics and the printing, emission or die-cut varieties. In addition, the most interesting and rare postal uses are presented, first showing single, single colour and mixed uses. Lastly, a final chapter is devoted to the many forgeries that were made.

Plan of Exhibit		
1. 1997/1999 – The experimental phase, without dedicated stamps and stamps not issued	3 sheets	
2. 1999/2001 – The issue of dedicated stamps in Lire currency (1,200 L) and Lire/Euro (1,200 L / 0.62 €)	16 sheets	
3. 2002/2003 – The definitive stamps set of 9 values with and without indication of “S.p.A.”	12 sheets	
4. 2004 – The definitive stamps set of 7 values printed by serigraphy and rotogravure	22 sheets	
5. 2005 – Reprinted of stamp values of 0.60 € / 0.62 € / 0.80 € / 1.50 €	10 sheets	
6. 2006 – Reprinted of stamp values of 0.60 € / 0.62 € / 1.40 €	2 sheets	
7. 2006/2009 – The issue of 6 values without blue labels	10 sheets	
8. The fake stamps	4 sheets	

### Posta Prioritaria. Veloce, facile, economica.

**Si chiama Posta Prioritaria.** È il nuovo prodotto di Poste Italiane per far viaggiare più velocemente le corrispondenze in Italia e nel mondo. Da vicino che la vostra spedizione arrivi il giorno dopo\*, Posta Prioritaria le garantisce un servizio veloce, facile ed economico.

**Veloce:** Posta Prioritaria è veloce perché la corrispondenza viene spedita in aereo e arriva il giorno dopo.

**Facile:** Posta Prioritaria è facile perché basta acquistare la speciale busta indicata sul tabellone al ufficio postale o mettere sulla busta in alto a sinistra, l'etichetta blu di Posta Prioritaria.

**Economica:** Posta Prioritaria è economica perché la tariffa base è di sole 1.200 lire. Da oggi, essere veloci conviene.

**Come si usa Posta Prioritaria:**

- Indicare l'indirizzo completo del destinatario.
- Indicare sempre il CAP.
- Mettere la speciale francobolla sulla busta in alto a destra.
- Mettere l'etichetta blu di Posta Prioritaria sulla busta in alto a sinistra.
- Rispondere gli orari d'impostazione indicati sulle connette.

PESO	Zona 1 (Italia)		Zona 2 (Europa)		Zona 3 (Mondo)	
	Lire	Euro	Lire	Euro	Lire	Euro
20 g (1) (2)	1.200	0,62	1.200	0,62	1.200	0,62
20 g (3) (4) (5) (6)	2.000	1,00	2.000	1,00	2.000	1,00
20 g (7) (8) (9) (10) (11) (12) (13) (14) (15) (16) (17) (18) (19) (20) (21) (22) (23) (24) (25) (26) (27) (28) (29) (30) (31) (32) (33) (34) (35) (36) (37) (38) (39) (40) (41) (42) (43) (44) (45) (46) (47) (48) (49) (50) (51) (52) (53) (54) (55) (56) (57) (58) (59) (60) (61) (62) (63) (64) (65) (66) (67) (68) (69) (70) (71) (72) (73) (74) (75) (76) (77) (78) (79) (80) (81) (82) (83) (84) (85) (86) (87) (88) (89) (90) (91) (92) (93) (94) (95) (96) (97) (98) (99) (100)	2.000	1,00	2.000	1,00	2.000	1,00
20 g (101) (102) (103) (104) (105) (106) (107) (108) (109) (110) (111) (112) (113) (114) (115) (116) (117) (118) (119) (120)	10.000	4,99	10.000	4,99	10.000	4,99

\* \*\* a cura del Servizio Clienti, valida fino a 10 giorni lavorativi dalla data di emissione della posta. \*\* a cura del Servizio Clienti, valida fino a 10 giorni lavorativi dalla data di emissione della posta.

(Above) Fig. 1: Title page displaying the postal rates for the “Priority” service.

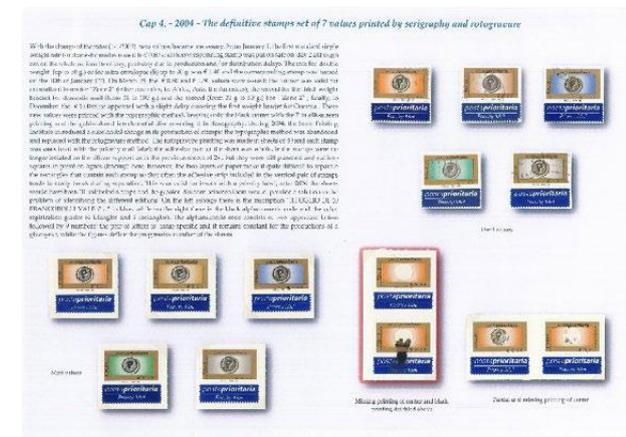


**Figs. 2 and 3: Exhibit pages showing the usage of the “Priority” service before the appearance of the subject stamps, as well as the first issue of stamps released for this purpose denominated in lire.**



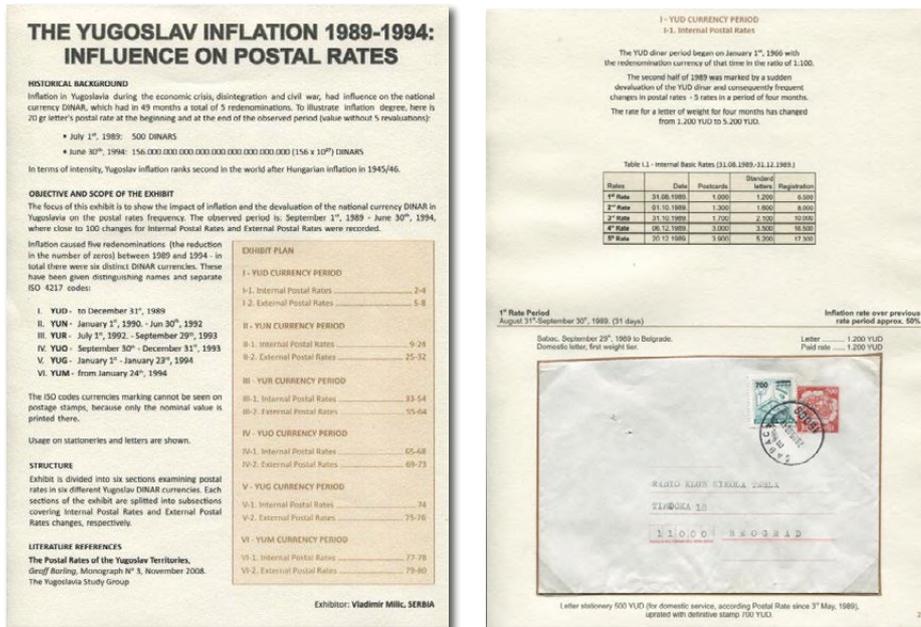
**(Left) Fig. 4: New issue consisting of 6 stamps with denominations in euros, along with their usage on a letter and a receipt.**

**(Right) Fig. 5: Display of the later reprinting of the stamps shown in Fig. 4, along with their usage.**

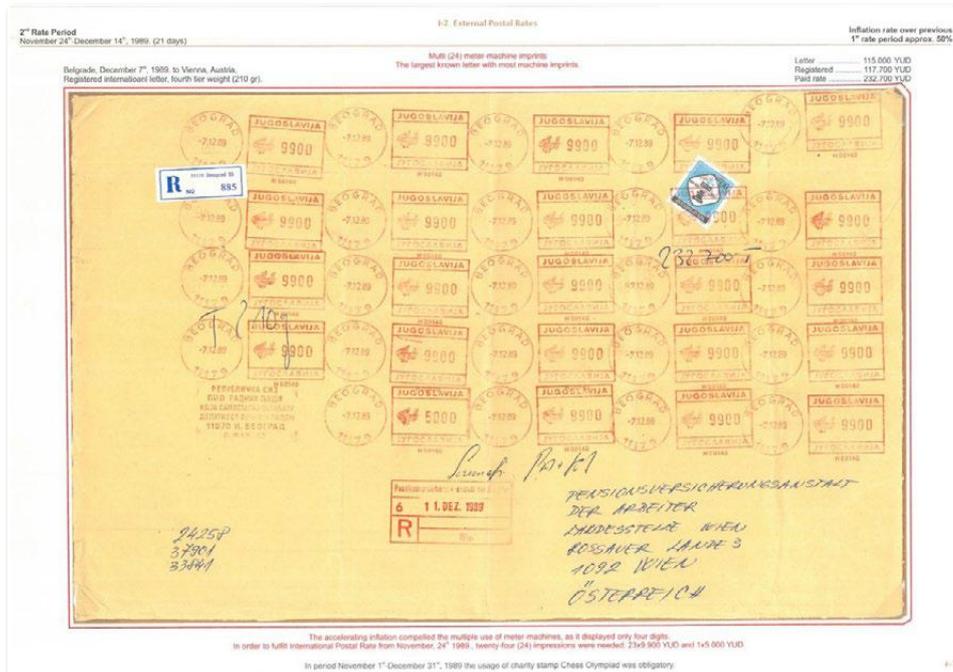


**(Right). Figs. 6 and 7: Display of the new stamp issue along with their usage. From the shown fragments of the given exhibit, we can conclude that the Modern Philately class allows a bit more flexibility regarding the balance of the material presented, as its primary goal is the promotion of more recent philatelic material.**

Vladimir Milić, Serbia, won the gold medal at the world exhibition in Essen, Germany, 2023, along with a special award for the research. His exhibit, titled “The Inflationary Period in Yugoslavia 1989–1994: The Impact on Postal Rates,” clearly belongs to the postal history subclass, as it deals with postal tariffs during the hyperinflation era in the former SFR Yugoslavia. Decades of collecting postal items and classifying rates, accompanied by detailed displays in the exhibit, vividly reflect the state of the country during those turbulent years. The significance of this exhibit lies in its documentation of the hardship and turmoil of that time.



**Figs. 1 and 2** Title and first exhibit pages featuring detailed introductory remarks that describe the situation during the inflation period, changes in postal tariffs, and the Yugoslav dinar itself, around which the entire exhibit is conceptually structured.



**Fig. 3** Display of a letter franked with 23 machine cancellations.

## Conclusion

From the fragments of the three highly awarded exhibits at FEPA and FIP exhibitions, we can conclude that there is a wealth of interesting philatelic material even from the modern era. The Modern Philately class, as a new exhibition category, gives us the opportunity to present this material and participate in those very exhibitions.

Certainly, this class offers a wide range of possibilities for new exhibitors, because with the proper selection of material and a serious approach to preparing the exhibit, we can always create and showcase something beautiful and fresh. Moreover, being in a separate class means the exhibit will be fairly judged — without direct comparison to older material, which forms the solid core of world philately.

## Questions and Answers (taken from FIP guidelines):

Q : What is the difference between Modern Philately and Promotional Class?

A : Nothing – they are essentially the same thing. Modern Philately is the most recent and final name for the category of showing modern philatelic issues in a shorter format of 3-5 frames.

Q : Why do Modern Philately exhibits receive FIP Medals and Open Philately and One Frame exhibits do not? A : The subjects of Modern Philately exhibits are actually a segment of the already established Classes of Traditional, Postal History, and Postal Stationery formal Classes with their own SREVs. The other two categories are quite different in the content material and scope of the actual exhibits.

Q : Will the Modern Philately category ever become its own separate Class?

A : No, as the exhibits are actually Traditional, Postal History, and Postal Stationery material judged under these SREVs, the Modern Philately exhibits can be judged by the accredited FIP Jurors from these Classes.

Q : Can modern philately exhibits receive Large Gold awards?

A : Because of the brevity and recent time frame of the exhibits, the development and importance of the exhibits are restricted thus not allowing for the demanding nature of achieving a Large Gold award.

Q : Why have yet another category of exhibits?

A : There is a demand for showing more recent philatelic material that can be recognized as such at the international level. Much of this demand comes from newer exhibitors and Federations that are just now starting to develop FIP level exhibitors.

Q : Can a stamp series that was first issued in 1985 and is still used today be exhibited in Modern Philately?

A : Modern Philately exhibits emphasize material issued in the last 20 years or so. However, this is not meant to be a rigid time rule and if the majority of the material falls inside the 20 year period, it can be shown as a Modern Philately exhibit.

# The Fascinating History of Maximum Cards

**Boštjan Petauer FRPSL writes:**

Some philatelists believe that maximum cards (MC) are a modern “invention”, rather philatelically inspired. This is not true. They are also one of the most FIP regulated areas of philately, which means that it is not easy to prepare a good maximum card, and their creation goes back a long way.

Early maximum cards can be classified into two categories:

1. Maximum cards based on postcards,
2. Maximum cards based on illustrated postcards.

Postcard-based maximum cards

The first maximum cards appeared at the same time as postcards, i.e. some 30 years after the first postage stamp (the famous penny black). Some call these MC the predecessors or precursors of maximum cards. Of course, no one had even dreamt of maximum cards at the time, but they were declared as MC later.

At that time postcards performed the same function as they do today in relation to MC. Of course, not every postcard could be the basis for a MC. As postal stationery they usually had a printed stamp embedded on the front and, if another stamp was added, for example, to pay the fee to send the postcard abroad, that was not in itself sufficient to create an MC. The postcard had to have another motif printed on it, and it only became a maximum card if the motif on the attached stamp, or at least one very similar, was also printed on the postcard.

The first maximum card based on a postcard appeared in Germany in 1872. It had the imperial coat of arms printed in the middle, and on the right, there was space for a stamp although this was not embedded. However, the sender applied a 1 Groschen stamp of the first German imperial issue that came into circulation on 1st June 1872. This also had the imperial coat of arms as a motif.



**Fig. 1. The world's first maximum card.**



**Fig. 2. Bosnian maximum map from 1891. The stamp is nicely placed below the coat of arms. In addition, it is a beautiful postcard with a rather rare destination.**

The motifs on the postcards of countries with monarchical forms of government were mainly imperial coats of arms or the image of the ruler.

Fig. 3. Swedish maximum card from 1897. The postcard was issued on the 25th anniversary of the reign of King Oscar II.



Fig. 4. In addition to postcards, other types of postal stationery were used for maximum cards, although much less frequently. In this case, it is a Russian letter card from 1896.

In countries with a republican form of government, other motifs prevailed.



Fig. 5. On a Brazilian MC from 1897 both the stamp and the postcard feature a motif from the Bay of Rio de Janeiro.



Fig. 6. The Guatemalan MC from 1896 features the then Guatemalan coat of arms on both the stamp and the postcard. It shows the year 1821 - liberation from Spanish rule, and the quetzal - the bird symbol of the country.

## Maximum cards based on (early) illustrated postcards

At the end of the 19th century, both the first postcards and commemorative stamps appeared. Regular stamps became more picturesque and more attractive to the eye than before so maximum cards made with them became more beautiful. Of course, even in this period there were still postcard-based MC.

Below are some examples of early MC from the period up to World War I. It should be noted that these MC also arose more by chance, since even in that period the concept of maximum card did not yet exist. Most of the maximum cards shown are rare, some may even be unique.

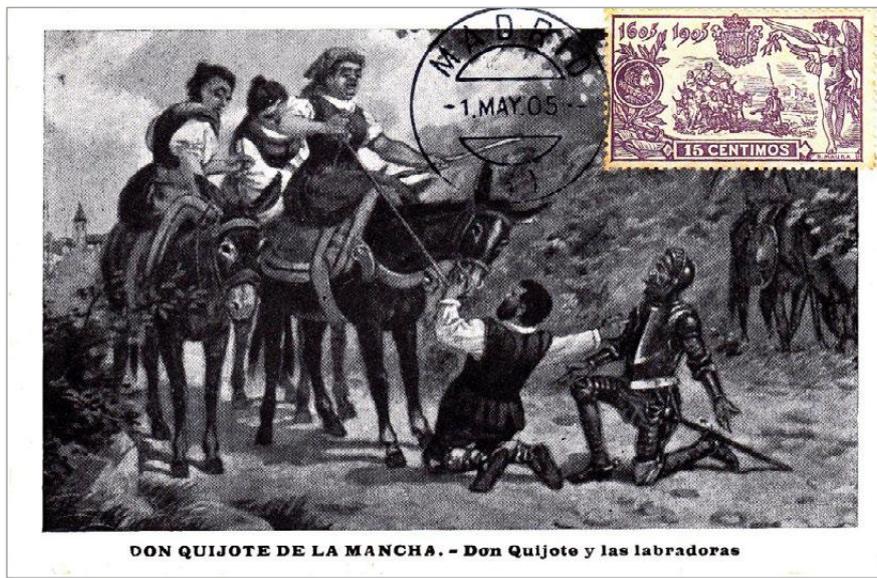


Fig. 7. A Spanish MC from 1905 depicts a scene from the novel *Don Quixote of La Mancha* (authored by Miguel de Cervantes), where the main character of the novel kneels before female workers on horseback.



Fig. 8. Japanese MC from 1906 showing confiscated weapons from the Russo-Japanese War of 1905. The picture and the stamp show the same confiscated cannon, and the stamp is cancelled with one of the earliest Japanese cancellations (bilingual, Japanese -English) that connects the theme of the picture and the stamp. Unfortunately it is weak and difficult to read.



Fig. 9. An Italian MC from 1912 shows the bell tower of the Church of St. Mark, patron saint of Venice, on the postcard and both stamps. It was cancelled on the first day of issue.



Fig. 10. MC from Martinique in 1917 shows a Creole girl with a typical hairstyle. The number of feathers in her head shows the different levels of her romantic state. One feather: my heart is free; two: I am engaged, but you can try; three: I am engaged; four: anyone who wants to try is welcome!

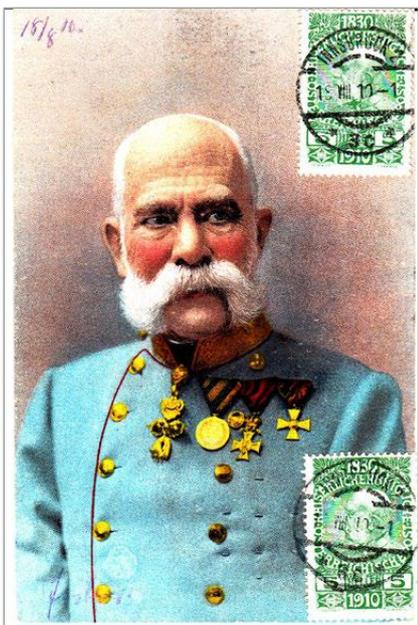


Fig. 11. Austrian MC from 1911 depicting Emperor Franz Joseph (1830-1916, reigned from 1848).



Fig. 12. An Ethiopian MC from 1909 shows Emperor Menelik II (1844-1913) with a crown. The peculiarity is that the crown is worn on a turban and not directly on the head like conventional crowns.

# Philately in the Digital Social Media Age

## What FEPA's Zoom Meetings Revealed About the Future of our Hobby

**Lars Engelbrecht, FEPA Vice-President, writes:**

In March 2025 the Federation of European Philatelic Associations (FEPA) hosted a series of six online meetings that brought together representatives from 26 European and neighbouring philatelic federations. The topic was how to use social media effectively to attract new members for philatelic organisations and to keep philately vibrant in a time of rapid digital transformation.

These meetings marked the largest coordinated effort in FEPA's history to address the digital shift in the hobby—and the result was clear. There is enormous untapped potential in social media for philatelic federations and societies, if used strategically and creatively.

### The Digital Challenge—and Opportunity

Across Europe, traditional philatelic societies are facing a familiar problem: falling membership numbers, aging demographics, and difficulty attracting new collectors. Some Federations report membership declines of up to 50% over the past decade. At the same time, online philatelic activity—particularly on platforms like Facebook—is thriving. Tens of thousands of collectors are actively buying, selling, sharing, and discussing stamps in online groups every day. This contrast presents a clear opportunity: societies must meet collectors where they already are—online.

FEPA's six Zoom sessions with the FEPA Federations were designed to facilitate cooperation through exchange of information, inspiration, and action. The sessions were facilitated by FEPA Vice President Lars Engelbrecht and supported by FEPA President Bill Hedley and all other FEPA Board members, and were characterised by openness, creativity, and a shared urgency to adapt.

### What We Learned: Key Recommendations for Societies

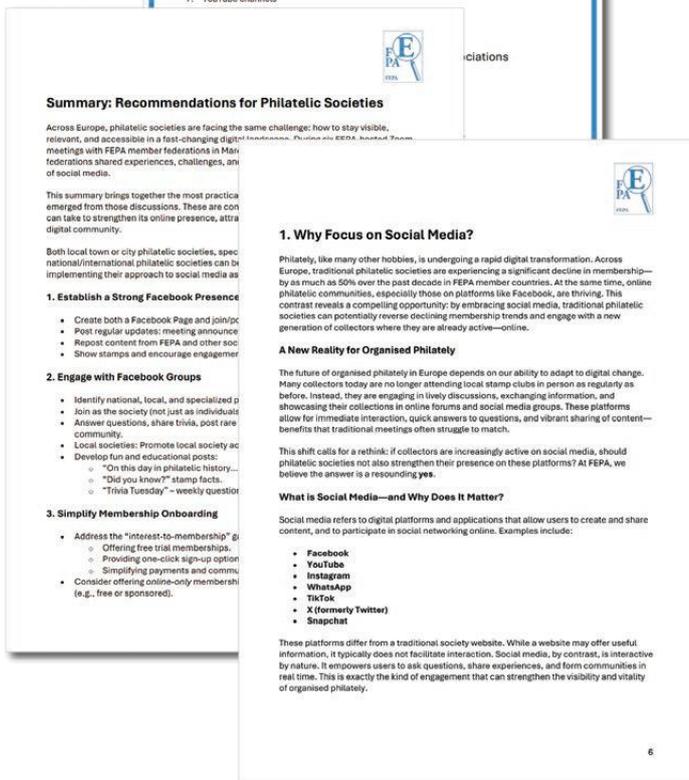
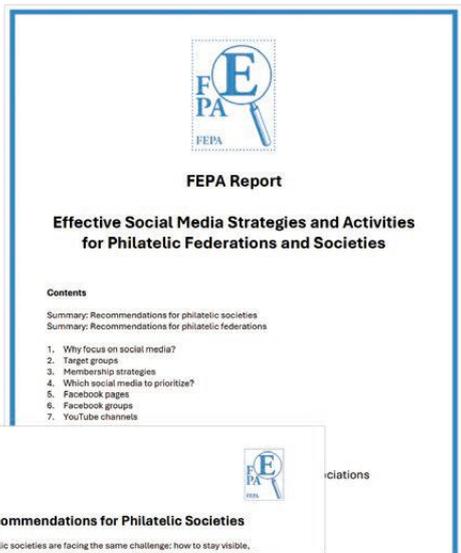
One strong consensus from the meetings was the importance of Facebook—especially for societies targeting mature collectors (typically men over 50). More than 70% of Europeans in this age group use Facebook, making it the most effective social media platform for philatelic outreach today.

The report recommends that societies:

- Establish a Facebook Page to post news, event updates, photos, and member activities.
- Join and post in Facebook Groups—both general and specialized, as well as in local town groups.
- Encourage engagement by sharing visual content (stamps, postcards, postal history etc.), posting trivia or “Did you know?”-style posts, and highlighting society benefits.
- In addition to Facebook, YouTube is another powerful channel. Short videos about stamp collecting tips, exhibitions, or “how-to” guides can reach thousands. With modern smartphones and basic editing tools, even small societies can create compelling content.

### From Followers to Members

A recurring theme was how to turn online interest into real-world membership. Many societies report high levels of social media engagement—but limited conversion into dues-paying members. To bridge this gap, the report suggests:



- Offering free trial memberships promoted through Facebook.
- Providing easy online sign-up and payment options.
- Creating special online-only memberships (free or low-cost), especially for younger or more casual collectors.
- Engaging with online followers directly—responding to comments, asking questions, inviting them to events.

## The Federation’s Role: Leading the Way

While local societies play a vital role in grassroots engagement, Federations have a unique opportunity to lead the digital transformation by:

- Producing professional content that societies can share—like videos, infographics, or promotional posts.
- Maintaining a central Facebook Page to amplify events, exhibitions, and society activities across the country.
- Creating a content calendar with ready-to-use social media posts for societies.
- Offering training workshops on how to manage Facebook Pages, create posts, or use media like Instagram.
- Collaborating with influencers and online content creators to reach new audiences.

## Local Examples: How It’s Already Working

During the sessions, several countries shared inspiring examples of digital engagement, from posting in local town Facebook groups to promoting stamps in history-themed communities. Specialised Facebook Groups have also proven especially effective in deepening interest and engagement.

## A Shared Digital Future

The FEPA meetings confirmed that digital outreach is no longer optional. For philately to remain relevant and accessible in the 21st century, societies and federations must embrace the tools of today’s collectors—tools that invite interaction, storytelling, and community.

The full FEPA report, “Effective Social Media Strategies and Activities for Philatelic Federations and Societies”, (illustrated above) offers practical advice, success stories, and implementation tips. It has been sent to all Federations and is available at [www.fepanews.com](http://www.fepanews.com). It marks the beginning of FEPA’s ongoing support in this area.

By acting now, and by acting together, European philatelic organisations can reinvent its future—not by abandoning tradition, but by bringing it to life in the new places where collectors already meet.

# What's Next for Stamp Exhibitions? FEPA Launches New European Dialogue

***Lars Engelbrecht, Vice-President of FEPA, sets out the next stage in the Board's initiative to work with the FEPA Members in planning the future for philately in Europe.***

Following the success of its Spring 2025 Zoom meetings on social media strategies, FEPA is inviting its Member Federations to participate in a new round of discussions—this time with a spotlight on the future of stamp exhibitions.

The upcoming meetings, scheduled for October 2025, will bring together leaders from all European philatelic Federations to reflect on current challenges and opportunities surrounding exhibitions. With shifts in collector behaviour, rising costs, and the growing role of digital tools, the time is ripe for a focused, cross-European conversation on how exhibitions can evolve—and thrive—in the coming years.

Each Federation will be asked to complete a brief questionnaire before the meetings, providing insight into the current state of exhibitions in its country. Topics include the financial sustainability of events (including such issues as frame fees, booth costs, and postal/governmental support), current attendance trends, and the Federation's vision for future exhibition formats—physical, digital, or hybrid.

## A Collaborative Format

The meetings will once again take place over Zoom, using the same format as in spring 2025. Each session will last 90 minutes and include around eight Federations to allow for rich and open dialogue. Each Member Federation is invited to send two participants: the President and one additional Board member or subject expert.

Two FEPA Board members will join each session, one of whom will facilitate the discussion. This ensures both continuity and support, as well as a platform to share ideas and inspire concrete actions across countries.

## Key Discussion Points

The agenda for the October meetings will cover several pressing questions:

- What is the current status of stamp exhibitions in each country?
- How can we make the economics of exhibitions more sustainable?
- Should we expand into virtual or hybrid formats, and what are the benefits and trade-offs?
- What levels and types of exhibitions should we prioritize in the future?
- How can exhibitions become more attractive to a broader audience including potential new members and younger collectors?

## A Step Forward for Organised Philately

These sessions represent FEPA's ongoing commitment to fostering collaboration, innovation, and shared learning across its member organisations. The goal is not only to preserve traditional exhibition models but to explore how they can be reimagined to meet the needs of today's and tomorrow's philatelic community.

As with the spring meetings on social media, the October sessions will be followed by a summary report highlighting best practices, creative ideas, and possible pathways forward. This report will be shared with all FEPA Members and published at [www.fepanews.com](http://www.fepanews.com).

Stamp exhibitions have long been at the heart of organised philately. With thoughtful reflection and shared solutions, they can continue to play a vital role in showcasing our passion—and connecting collectors across borders—for generations to come.

# It Is About the Leadership

## A White Paper on “The Rock Ahead” in Philately

**Jonas Hällström RDP FRPSL, Managing Director of the Global Philatelic Network and of Corinphila Auktionen AG, has kindly sent us his ‘White Paper’ on the future of philately, for which we are extremely grateful.**

This year it is 40 years since I was elected President of my local stamp club in Sweden. I was only 13 years old, but I loved the opportunity the new role gave me. It was my first leadership assignment, and since then leadership has formed my career both professionally and in philately. The motivation for me is to make a difference and to deliver this by result. This White Paper aims to share my concern about a challenge I have identified regarding the future of our enterprise — a challenge I define as “The Rock Ahead”.

I will outline the areas where focus is needed and make proposals to influence decisions going forward. The phrase **“It is about the leadership”** encapsulates my central message: effective leadership is a critical factor in the success of any enterprise. Leadership is not merely a position or title, but a combination of behaviours, mindset, and actions that inspire and guide others. My concern is the issue of concurrent leaderships within our enterprise — multiple leadership directions operating at the same time.

In his book ***The Fathers of Philately: Inscribed on the Roll of Distinguished Philatelists*** (2019), author Brian Birch describes the “Fathers of Philately” — key figures who laid the foundations for our field. Here, the term “enterprise” refers to the intricate network of societies and organisations, both formal and informal, along with their management and leadership structures. These “Fathers of Philately” played pivotal roles in the 19th century, establishing the enterprise of stamp collecting that we have inherited today.

***The author was invited to deliver a statement at the opening ceremony of EuroPhilEx 2025 in Birmingham (Right). He spoke about the many positive opportunities for the philatelic enterprise going forward, and about the importance of social events as part of the nature of stamp collecting. However, he also addressed the significant importance of providing leadership in philately and delivering results.***



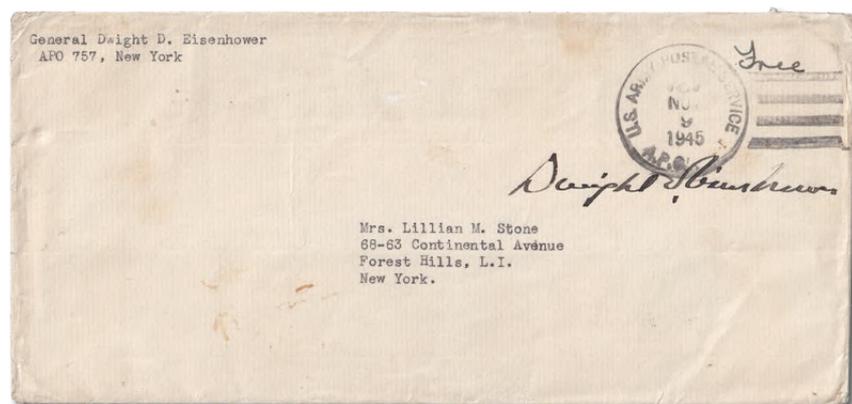
In January 1865, the first-ever stamp club in the world was formed in Paris — the Société Philatélique. Most of the leading Parisian collectors of the day were among its members. The first president, Tobie Gustave Herpin (1820–1900), was best known for inventing the word Philatélie for the hobby. Yet Herpin soon lost interest in philately and sold his collection. Abandoned by its leader, the Société **Philatélique** quickly faded into oblivion. This example from the dawn of philately is early proof of what happens when leadership fails to uphold its commitments. In 1865, members of the Society were outraged at what they saw as Herpin’s betrayal of both the organisation and the hobby. Today, we too are incensed by what we perceive in many parts of the philatelic enterprise as a betrayal of responsibilities and the emergence of “abandoned” leaderships.

It is often said that one should live in the here and now. The Swiss author Pascal Mercier (1944–2023) argued that it is an error — “a nonsensical act of violence” — to concentrate solely on the present in the belief that one can thereby grasp the essential. What matters, Mercier wrote, is to move forward steadily and calmly, with the appropriate mix of humour and melancholy, through the temporal and spatial landscape in which we find ourselves. I believe I have a clear overview of our enterprise and its challenges — and I can see **The Rock Ahead**. In my view, current leaderships are too often focused on the wrong priorities. How much time do philatelic leaders spend thinking about the past, the present, and the future? Put another way: how much do they reflect on what has been? How often do they imagine

what the future may hold? And how often do they confront the risks that lie ahead? They cannot change the past — but they can damage the present by failing to consider the future of the philatelic enterprise. This is why it is important to recall Dwight D. Eisenhower's (1890–1969) famous observation: “Plans are worthless, but planning is everything.” The point is that while specific plans may need to be revised or abandoned in the face of unforeseen events, the process of planning itself is invaluable. And yet, we see philatelic leaders abandoning not only their plans — but the very process of planning itself.



*The author emphasises the importance of recalling the famous quote, “Plans are worthless, but planning is everything,” attributed to Dwight D. Eisenhower (1890–1969) — accompanied here by a strip of five with shifted perforations.*



***Boldly autographed free frank by Dwight D. Eisenhower on a legal-size envelope from THE OFFICE OF THE COMMANDING GENERAL AT THE HEADQUARTERS OF U.S. FORCES AT THE EUROPEAN THEATRE, U.S. Army Postal Service A.P.O. NOV 9, 1945, duplex dated November 9, 1945. Eisenhower later served (1953–1961) as the 34th President of the United States.***

For several years, concurrent leaderships in the philatelic enterprise have concentrated on debating the negative quantitative trends of the past 20–30 years. This focus — and repeated attempts to reverse the numerical decline in target groups — has long since proven futile. Efforts to recruit young collectors to the hobby, within today's cultural and social context, have also shown themselves to be ineffective. I go so far as to say: this focus has been wrong.

Financially, our hobby has never been stronger. My strategic assessment is that our target groups have never spent more money on acquiring material for their collections than they do today. But there is one crucial difference: the awareness of what collectors are buying is far greater now than in the past. This awareness includes knowledge of provenance and history, quality and rarity — and purchases are made within a context collectors actively wish to embrace. Today's collectors are far more educated, demanding, and intellectually engaged than those of previous generations. In fact, I dare to say that in the past the industry has led collectors — but today, the collectors are setting standards for the industry. Leadership has failed to adapt to this shift, with the result that the enterprise now compensates in a panic, rather than focusing on the present and planning for the future.

**In the past, the industry has led collectors — but today, the collectors are setting standards for the industry.**

I believe that the solution to today's challenges in philately — and the key to a viable plan for the future — lies in looking back to the example set by the ***Fathers of Philately***. We must return to the origins of the hobby and remind ourselves how it was first founded. As Brian Birch's book makes clear, several of these “Fathers” assumed

comprehensive leadership roles and approached philately strategically, with a plan for moving forward. They wanted to develop philately in its early years. The attitude to develop is still a required mindset.

One telling example from the dawn of philately is the 1860s “war” between the French and British schools of philately. The second half of that decade saw major strides in France, led largely by Dr. Jacques-Amable Legrand (1820–1912, Father of Philately), who made significant scientific contributions: publishing articles on watermarks (1865), devising different methods of stamp separation, inventing the perforation gauge (1866), and introducing stamp albums (1867). At the same time many collectors in England were content with simply collecting face-different stamps, often trimming them to the exact size of the design — whether imperforate, perforated, or cut from postal stationery — to fit the precisely measured spaces in albums. However, some English collectors recognised the merit of the French school’s more scientific approach and thus began the controversy between the two traditions. Ultimately, the French school “won the war.” Today we say there is another “war” to be fought in philately. The nature is the same — a struggle over the direction of the hobby — but the character is different. Then, the fight was over how to collect going forward. Now, the fight is over how to survive and thrive going forward — not because collectors lack energy or enthusiasm, but because leadership has the wrong focus.

When I look back to the dawn of philately in the 1860s, it is clear that target groups were intellectually driven collectors with well-defined goals. Many papers presented at society meetings of that time prove this. Yet many of today’s leaders in philately do not take the same level of responsibility for the present and future as those early leaders did. Instead, they focus on preserving “the latest” as if it were “the greatest,” protecting immediate history, and obsessing over quantitative measures. In my view, the focus should instead be on the genuine quality that exists among the current — albeit smaller — target groups. Looking ahead, I remain optimistic about the future. But key leaders in philately today are often working in isolation and are concentrating on the wrong Rock Ahead. And this will have consequences.

## Key leaders in philately today are often working in isolation and are concentrating on the wrong Rock Ahead. And this will have consequences.

One of the Fathers of Philately — and one of its great leaders — was **Marcellus Purnell Castle** (1849–1917) of the UK. In 1879 Castle was elected a member of the [Royal] Philatelic Society, London, at a time when it had only 30 members. By 1881, he had joined the Council and later became vice-president. For the better part of 38 years, Castle was the mainstay of the Society, involved in virtually every important decision. He served as vice-president until 1902, when he resigned and nominated the Earl of Crawford as his replacement — a selfless act intended to allow the Earl to take on a more prominent role. The members responded immediately, electing Castle as honorary vice-president. When the Prince of Wales ascended the throne on 6 May 1910 as King George V, the Earl of Crawford became president, and Castle returned to the vice-presidency. Castle also took on pressing challenges of the time, notably launching *The London Philatelist* in 1892 and serving as its editor for over 25 years. Always taking the widest possible view of philately and acting in its best interests, Castle delivered a paper in February 1895 to the Philatelic Society, London, entitled *The Rock Ahead in Philately*. By this, he referred to the growing number of stamps issued primarily for collectors. Unfortunately, the demand from collectors for new issues — combined with the willingness of many in the trade to supply them — contributed to the Society’s setbacks by early 1898. Castle was also a close friend of Charles James Phillips, who had purchased Stanley Gibbons Limited in 1890, and was always ready to finance Phillips’s larger deals. Less than three years later, Castle became chairman of Stanley Gibbons’ Board of Directors. As the business grew, Phillips announced in February 1898 the conversion of the company from a private to a public entity. The notice named the new board of directors: of the six members, besides Phillips and his brother William Henry Phillips, the remaining four were members of the [Royal] Philatelic Society London — with Castle as chairman. On 31 January 1913, following the death of the Earl of



*Marcellus Purnell Castle*

Crawford, Castle was elected president of the Royal Philatelic Society, London. He remained in office until his own death four years later.

**In summary**, Castle brought a comprehensive perspective to philatelic leadership. He recognised the nature of the enterprise as a joint venture between collectors (collecting), structures and organisations (societies), and the trade (industry). My perspective in this White Paper derives from this same insight. I believe we need more leaders like Castle if we are to overcome the current Rock Ahead facing the philatelic enterprise. Like Castle — and many other Fathers of Philately — our leaders must take an integrated, organisation-wide approach to the complexities of the field. If philately is to prevail, it needs the same calibre of characters to lead us forward.

**What type of leadership should we strive for?** The Rock Ahead I see requires leaders with some of the character of General George S. Patton Jr. (1885–1945), renowned for his memorable words: *“Lead me, follow me, or get out of my way.”* Right now, as the philatelic enterprise shakes to its core, we need leaders with that same resolve. Today’s Rock Ahead is built from inherited challenges — issues passed down by recent leaders who have failed to manage them and have no real plan for the future, focusing instead on cost-cutting to preserve outdated structures from the past.



The author contends that it is time to sit down together, confront The Rock Ahead, and create a comprehensive mitigation plan for the entire enterprise. We must nominate leaders who are integrated into the enterprise’s diverse structures, who care less about themselves and their titles, and who embrace a Patton style of leadership: *“Lead me, follow me, or get out of my way!”*

Over the last 40 years, I have consistently reaffirmed my own commitment to support this hobby in all its facets. My commitment has been repaid in the trust I have earned from the target groups currently engaged in our enterprise — clear evidence that we all operate within a living ecosystem. This White Paper is a deliberate push and a first draft identifying what the Rock Ahead is about: – **It is about the leadership.**

I want the philatelic enterprise to return to the principles of its founding era, adopting more of the leadership qualities and commitments exemplified at the time of the Fathers of Philately. We should gather to discuss the Rock Ahead. We should draft a new mitigation plan and nominate leaders who are deeply integrated into our structures, unburdened by ego or title. Now is the time for a transformational style of leadership - holistic in its planning, ambitious in its future goals, and bold in its approach. I suggest it is the time for decisions.



### About the author

#### **Jonas Hällström RDP FRPSL**

- ◇ 1992–2011 Swedish Armed Forces, retired as Lieutenant Colonel.
- ◇ 2011–2023 Saab AB, Program Manager.
- ◇ 2023– The Global Philatelic Network, Partner Shareholder & Managing Director.
- ◇ 2023– Corinphila Auktionen AG (CH), Managing Director.
- ◇ International (FIP) large gold and gold medal collections in three disciplines: Postal History, Postal Stationery, and Thematic Philately.
- ◇ Signed the Roll of Distinguished Philatelists in Cambridge in 2016.
- ◇ Publisher and Editor-in-Chief of Nordisk Filateli, a philatelic ‘bookazine’ and the largest philatelic magazine in Scandinavia.
- ◇ Exhibition Manager to STOCKHOLMIA 2019 – The International Celebration of the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Royal Philatelic Society London.

## Philatelic Societies Collaborate at GASS

### *Harold Krische writes:*

An exhibition like the Great American Stamp Show (GASS) offers many amazing opportunities, but none may be more significant than the ability for philatelic leaders from a diverse range of societies to connect and discuss the future growth and development of philately. The Collaboration Crew (an independent group of passionate philatelists) convened a meeting for such an opportunity on the Sunday morning of the GASS show held in Chicago last August. Seventeen people, having affiliations with over 40 different philatelic societies, participated in an engaging, vibrant and informative session led by co-directors Suzanne Rae and Harold Krische.

While the conversation areas could be very broad, it was the impact of digital transformation and artificial intelligence (AI) upon cultural and social institutions that brought a specific focus to the discussion. Philatelic organizations are among those challenged to respond and adapt to these shifting dynamics. Collaboration Crew members Jim Hill and David Ball shared their research on search engines and their ability to make appropriate philatelic connections. Wikipedia, given its powerful influence upon search engines, was used as part of an assessment. Over 170 American Philatelic Society (APS) affiliates were entered into Wikipedia searches with less than 10 yielding meaningful information. The American Airmail Society search provided minimal dated information and became the target for creating a meaningful Wikipedia search result. This effort was successful and resulted in publication of a guide: "How to Create an Effective Wikipedia Article to Publicize your Society and its' Members' Collecting Areas." This article is available for a free download here. ([https://www.collaborationcrew.org/resources?mc\\_cid=e2642a581a&mc\\_eid=32d636c55f](https://www.collaborationcrew.org/resources?mc_cid=e2642a581a&mc_eid=32d636c55f))

The round-table discussion focused mainly on two questions related to aspects of 'digitalization':

### **What do you see as the biggest challenges in the 'digitalization' realm?**

- Search functionality: Library and research platforms struggle with philatelic-specific terminology
- Burden of time: Significant time is required for scanning of periodicals, literature and exhibits/collections. Further notable efforts are required to make literature content searchable.
- Central points for Philatelic Information Access: Locating or sourcing philatelic information can be challenging. Examples include philatelic census, philatelic zoom sessions, posted philatelic exhibits, etc.
- AI limitations: Current AI tools are largely ineffective for specialized philatelic content.
- Revenue concerns: Finding balances between 'open access' and 'membership-based' revenue models.
- Compatible Organization: Approaches across philatelic organizations and societies must be coordinated to maximize impacts for search engine 'visibility' within and outside philately.

### **What success or best practices have you had and what do you attribute them to?**

- Virtual community building: Presentations are often posted on YouTube channels for relatively easy access. Regular Zoom meetings/presentations are supporting stronger member connections.
- Display Your Way: Touchscreen exhibits allowing global display sharing and ease of access to digital exhibiting are attracting online interest.
- Social media engagement: Active Facebook groups foster real-time community via strong interaction elements and sharing. Philatelic Tik Tok and Instagram posts often record significant viewing levels.
- Journal digitization: Significant strides are being made in making historical content searchable and accessible with online access being available for many societies.
- Improving Search Engine connection: Wikipedia articles for philatelic societies can be immensely improved using directions of the Collaboration Crew publication.

In addition, we discussed whether community value may surpass intellectual property value. We also recognised that relationships and shared passion drive long-term membership.

Discussions of this kind are vital to support of the strategic growth of philately over the next 15-20 years. The Collaboration Crew will continue to foster collaborative philatelic society engagement by sharing practical resources and fostering the sense of community that is highly valued by all. To learn more about the Collaboration Crew, its mission and its growing collection of resources, please visit the website at [www.collaborationcrew.org](http://www.collaborationcrew.org) and its Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/groups/394822260223524](https://www.facebook.com/groups/394822260223524).

## How can we support young people in stamp collecting and exhibiting?

### ***Vojtech Janković writes:***

The absence of a youth class at many philatelic exhibitions indicates the need to change the approach to young collectors and exhibitors and to reconsider the categorisation and evaluation of youth exhibits.

### **Alarming present – where is the youth class?**

Recently the absence of a youth class at philatelic exhibitions has become increasingly common. In fact, it is no longer included in many major international exhibitions. There are several reasons, the most significant of which is probably the financial issue - young exhibitors don't pay frame fees and exhibitions are increasingly expensive due to the lack of or only minimal financial support from postal authorities. Other serious reasons are the stagnation and even slow disappearance of youth philately, not only because of low interest among young people and the reluctance of experienced collectors to work with them. Paradoxically, many exhibits show too much adult involvement which serves to discourage other young exhibitors.

### **Key causes of the state of youth philately – what is hindering it?**

The education of young philatelists and the related creation of their exhibits need to be adapted to the present time because the pace of change is overwhelming. This calls for new approaches. Traditional methods, however well established, often fail to engage adults today—let alone children and teenagers.

### **What are the key causes or problems that we encounter which most hinder progress?**

#### Lack of interest among young people in philately and stamp collecting.

Possible solutions: Identifying and addressing the internal motivators of young people—desire for knowledge, competitiveness, striving to excel, playfulness, creativity, technological skills.

#### Low promotion of the meaning and benefits of collecting to the public, especially young people.

Possible solutions: Using available promotion options (social networks, podcasts, etc.) and communication in a language suitable for target groups (young people, beginning collectors); Pointing out the benefits – development of knowledge, language and communication skills, development of systematic work and purposefulness, learning about the world and its history, mental relaxation.

#### Lack of qualified philatelic youth club leaders and lack of interest among experienced collectors and exhibitors in working with young people.

Possible solutions: Finding other forms than traditional club meetings – online classes, lectures, meetings, involvement in social networks, use of audio, video, interactive video games etc.

Low motivating (and outdated) evaluation of youth exhibits by age category.

Possible solutions: Modifying categorisation and rules, lowering the upper age limit for youth.

#### A challenging transition from youth to adult philately.

Possible solutions: Early involvement in relevant focus groups, individual and group support for promising youth collectors through mentor or buddy assignment, revision of the rules for evaluating youth exhibits.

The issue is broad, so we cannot fully address all areas. In the following, we will focus mainly on the last two.

An unpleasant realisation – have you experienced this too?

“Could you please interpret for the youth exhibitors the jury's recommendations for their postcard exhibits?”

“But I don't understand postcard exhibits!?”

“I know, but you're a juror for youth philately, that's what's expected of you.”

“I know, well...”

During this conversation, I realised that in developing philately and creating new exhibition classes such as picture postcards and open philately, we have forgotten that they concern youth exhibitors as well as adults. We have assumed that all new trends will be understood and used by youth club leaders and youth philately jurors in their work with young people. Or, even worse, that these new classes (and trends) will not affect youth philately. How many national exhibition rules have classes for postcards and open philately in their youth categories? How many even admit that young exhibitors can create single-frame or small-scale exhibits?

We did this in our national exhibition rules and you would not believe the level of astonishment, even resistance, we encountered at the national and even at the international level.

### **Young people demand fairness – did you know that unfairness is a strong demotivator?**

Let's face it, is it fair that adult exhibitors can compete and win medals for one, two or three-frame exhibits, while young people who are learning the basics must have a prescribed number of frames? It doesn't make sense. You may argue that the breadth of the topic/area of treatment must fit a small-scale exhibit, but that is not a very strong argument since the vast majority of adult small-scale exhibits, at least those of exhibitors who are starting out, don't meet this criterion. Younger exhibitors naturally have a narrower scope of knowledge so we should judge the topic/area of treatment according to their capabilities and knowledge and not, as with adults, absolutely. In every respect, it seems downright unfair not to evaluate the exhibit of a young philatelist who exhibits two frames instead of the prescribed three, but at the same time to congratulate adult exhibitors who have shown 1-, 2- or 3-frame exhibits (a very recent sad experience). In my opinion, if we want to educate new generations of collectors and exhibitors, we must place them on an equal standing with adults and give those who have the ability a chance to develop much earlier than the prescribed age for adults.

### **Some possible solutions – what if we tried this?**

We could change the system and rules for evaluation of youth exhibits by lowering the age limit for youth from 21 to 18, or even 16, and weighting the evaluation in favour of young exhibitors, for example by introducing point bonuses depending on the exhibitor's age. A young collector's exhibit would be evaluated by specialised jurors for the given class in the same way, i.e. in the corresponding class, as an adult exhibit according to the same evaluation criteria and with the same rigour as the adult exhibit. Depending on age, a point bonus of up to a certain amount might then be added to the total point evaluation: 10% bonus for ages 16–17, 8% for ages 18–19, and 5% for ages 20–21, depending on the jury's assessment of adult involvement.

Another, not necessarily alternative, option is to abolish the prescribed range of exhibits (e.g. number of frames) for age categories so that young people would have the opportunity to choose the size of the exhibit themselves – in the same way as adults are allowed to do in small-scale exhibits.

### **Advantages and benefits – what does the proposed solution offer?**

The amendments suggested to the point evaluation system could bring multiple benefits:

More objective evaluation of youth exhibits since the entries would be assessed by jurors with expertise in the specific exhibition class, rather than a single jury group evaluating them solely on the basis of the exhibitor's age.

Early integration of young exhibitors into the relevant collection group or exhibition class stimulating interaction with experienced adult philatelists, which can provide a supportive and inspiring environment, especially if experienced mentors are assigned and a smoother transition from youth to adult exhibiting. I speak from personal experience, having greatly benefited from working with senior exhibitors and jurors in the thematic philately class.

The removal of outdated criteria that prioritise the appearance and layout of youth exhibits over more meaningful evaluation criteria.

A reduction in the need for specialised youth jurors and in the demands on their professional training.

### **Financing participation in exhibitions – who is interested in the development of youth philately?**

The question remains about the payment of exhibition fees for youth exhibitors. Since these are people of non-productive age without their own income, it would be logical and fair for other entities to take responsibility for these fees. For example, world and/or continental philatelic organisations and could help with financial sponsorship schemes for supporting youth philately. For lower levels of exhibition, the exhibitors' national philatelic federations, could pay the frame fees as part of supporting their young members. The exhibition organiser would thus receive a corresponding payment for each exhibition frame with a competitive exhibit, which would contribute to a fairer and more sustainable system. Moreover, it would once again open the door to youth exhibits at all levels of exhibitions.

### **Final summary – let us get to it!**

The alarming state of youth philately requires immediate solutions. We cannot solve everything but focusing on respecting young people's motivators and a fair approach when evaluating their exhibits can bring a significant shift in their perception of the attractiveness of philately and increase the feeling of acceptance (even equality) among adults.

We are opening a discussion, so let us discuss. Let's bring meaningful ideas and suggestions. Let's ask the young people who are directly affected. Let's not stop until we find meaningful solutions that we can implement and truly want to. Please send your thoughts to me at [vojtech.jankovic@gmail.com](mailto:vojtech.jankovic@gmail.com)

# The Future of Philately – A Call to Arms

*Editor's Note: I had the privilege of giving a display to the Dublin Stamp Society earlier this year and in return Chris McDonagh, the Honorary Secretary of the Society, has kindly sent FEPA NEWS an open letter setting out some thoughts on a topic of interest to us all – the Future of Philately.*

## An Open Letter to fellow Philatelists everywhere

May 2025

Dear friend,

I don't talk to myself ... much. At least that's what I said when I sat drinking my early-morning cup of tea, feet up, on a warm sunny veranda, alone, by myself. No interruptions. No challenges. That's the way I like it. And white, with milk, no sugar. My cup of tea. That's the way I like it.

Stamp collecting is also my cup of tea. I was thinking about my stamp collection. What I have. How much I have. What it's worth. How I started. Where I have it. How organised it is. What's missing. Who has seen it.

Now, there's a question ... Who HAS seen it? WHO has seen my collection?

Some of my stamp collection is painstakingly mounted with hand-manuscripted text describing every Irish commemorative issue in a pristine spring-back Simplex album, with interleaving pages, all held in a protective case. Oh, what pleasure! Woe betide anyone who should thumb those pages and risk leaving their unwanted DNA imprint on a page. Or worse still, gosh, on a stamp!

But why am I so protective? As I grow more wise and accepting with age, I realise that information not shared is information lost. We've already lost many traditional trade skills to the passage of time, to industrialisation, to mechanisation, to computing, to change. The only way to preserve lost skills and preserve our heritage is to educate today's populace in those skills. Likewise, if we don't encourage people in the ways of philately then we are at risk of losing the skills of the philatelist. We will lose our valuable history through research. We will diminish our national heritage that can be preserved through documentation. We will lose more stamp collectors to the continual marching progress of modernisation and innovation.

Think about that for a moment.

Modernisation. We have more online tools at our disposal today than we ever had.

Innovation. We have more access to knowledge at our fingertips today than we ever had 50 years ago.

What's missing? Aah, ingenuity.

So, with an ounce of modernisation, an ounce of innovation, an ounce of ingenuity, and let's add in an ounce of common sense for good measure... we can have a recipe for the future. A recipe for the future success of philately.

Aaargh! My tea has gone cold and I need a refill. While I'm gone to put the kettle on, I'll leave you with this personal brain dump of topics for you to ponder, and I'll be right back.

### ACCESS TO PHILATELY

- Societies / Members / Identity
- Umbrella societies
- High-street dealers
- Exhibitions
- Libraries / Heritage centres
- Archives
- Auctions
- Stamp & Coin Fairs

### HISTORY OF PHILATELY

- Postal services
- Post offices
- Couriers
- Delivery by foot / horse
- Stamps / coils / gummed / self-adhesive / digital
- coaches / TPO's / ship / balloon / air plane



## Correos España begins a comprehensive study to analyse philatelic trends.

**Editor's note:** *We are grateful to the FESOFI for sending us this report on an important study under way on philately in Spain.*



Last May, the Spanish Post Office's Philatelic Directorate, through the Spanish Federation of Philatelic Societies (FESOFI), conducted a comprehensive study to analyse philatelic trends, given the decades-long decline. This study aimed to predict its scope and future impact, in order to take measures to address this situation.

Within this exhaustive study a specific section addressed the international panorama. To compare the situation in Spain and the Post Office with that of Europe and the rest of the world, FEPA, along with other philatelic institutions, was selected to gather their opinions on the matter.

The questions focused primarily on thematic collecting of annual issues (new stamps), a service typically provided by postal services such as the Spanish Postal Philatelic Service, which specialises in this area. They also asked if the responders saw any differences between collecting of thematic material and that of other, more traditional and specialised philatelic areas.

Specifically, information was requested about the current situation of philately in Europe and the rest of the world, as well as the reasons and causes that have led to this situation.

The survey also asked how responders saw the future prospects of philately and what measures they thought should be taken to reverse or stop the decline.

Likewise, within the European and international panorama, participants were asked if they were familiar with philately in Spain, and how it compared with other postal services/countries. If there were any positive or negative differences, it asked responders to indicate them.

Finally, given that UFE is essential in the philatelic field, what role can it play in these future trends? This includes any other considerations not included in the previous points.

Mr. Lars Engelbrecht, Vice President of FEPA, has provided an extensive and detailed response to all questions asked in our questionnaire. CORREOS ESPAÑA and FESOFI thank FEPA for their invaluable collaboration. The final results are still in the study and evaluation phase, pending receipt of additional information sent from other philatelic institutions to which the survey was sent.



## Messengers of the University of Paris and their Contribution to Communications across Europe in the late Middle Ages

**Martina Hacke is a mediaevalist specialising in the history of universities (Paris) and communication (messengers and envoys). She has also been researching communication structures in early printing and the book trade up to 1520 for several years. We are very grateful to her for providing FEPA NEWS with an article on her research in this fascinating aspect of the history of communications.**

While the postal service in countries such as France has remained a semi-public enterprise, in others it has been privatised - such as Royal Mail in the UK in 2013. This is a reminder that pre-modern postal organisations were all “private” in the sense that the services they offered were only available to specific groups of people. The Roman *cursus publicus*, for example, only served the Roman administration. The “Royal” mail services in England only became available to the public in 1635. In France too, the “post” was only opened up slowly, e.g. with the *petite poste* for Paris emerging alongside the *grande poste* between the cities. In principle we can only speak of a “modern postal service” when everyone had the right to participate. Thus, a prerequisite for the development of a modern postal system was political and social development that gave every individual the opportunity to send and receive letters.

The national and supranational postal organisations that exist today were preceded by many individual steps, most of which have been forgotten. For example, it is a little-known fact that the French royal postal service was based to a significant extent on the messenger service of the University of Paris. Like the university itself, this had developed over a long period of time. It began in the early 13th Century with privileges granted to individual messengers who served scholars and developed gradually until after the middle of the 14th Century by which time an organised messenger service had taken shape - the so-called “messengers of the nations”. This service was not responsible for the business and official affairs of the university institution, for which there were other types of messenger. Rather, it looked after private communications of university members.

The messengers of the nations served the masters and scholars who belonged to a higher faculty - theology, canon law or medicine - or to the faculty of Arts. The Arts faculty was made up of sub-institutions, called “Nations” – French, Norman, Picard and Anglo-German. Every member of this faculty was assigned to a Nation depending on his geographical origin – but in a broad sense. For example, the Anglo-German nation encompassed not only the British Isles and the German Reich but also Northern and Eastern Europe (cf. Fig 2). Within its overall area a Nation could, if requested, appoint a messenger for each home region of its members. As an officer of the Nation, the messenger was responsible for the members’ communications.

By the mid-15<sup>th</sup> Century around 160 of these messengers were allowed to work in parallel. During this period they worked part-time but in the 16th Century there were developments towards professionalisation of their activities. Later, the “*poste royale*” took a lease on the organisation of this messenger institution which by then had become considerably more complex insofar as, among other things, they maintained regular messenger services between individual cities. Eventually the Paris university messengers were completely absorbed into the royal postal service.

**Fig.1. Miniature from the “*Liber procuratorum*” of the Picard nation (1476). (Arch. Sorb., Reg. 9, f. 1r)**



The existence of “messengers of the nations” allowed members of the university to communicate with their home countries during their studies or teaching. Many had come from faraway places to study at the famous university. The surviving books of the Heads of the Nations (procuratores) are the most important source for the history of the messengers and also recorded their election. They contain illustrations of these messengers.

The illustration at Fig. 1 shows a messenger of the Picard Nation in 1476 on the right. There is a banner above him with the words: *Jehan Le Queux, messagier de guyse en therasse, ou dyo[cè]se de Lan*. He was the messenger for Guise en Thiérache in the diocese of Laon in northern France. As such, he undertook messenger services for those teachers and students who came from the town of Guise in the diocese of Laon. The messenger is wearing travelling clothes and carrying a pike over his right arm. This was probably iconographic rather than part of a messenger's standard equipment but it indicates to the dangerous nature of the journey – there are frequent references to attacks on messengers who usually travelled on foot.

On the left is the procurator, the Head of the Nation: Magister Johannes de Vendeuil, who also came from the diocese of Laon and thus had a particular interest in knowing the messenger for his home town. In his right hand he carries a small package. Next to the procurator stands the bedellus, an official of the Nation who performed the function of caretaker and was responsible for maintaining order. He is holding a sealed letter.

Messengers transported letters and parcels containing fabrics and clothing, as well as wine and medicines. However, the most important item was money. When students were away from home for long periods of time they needed regular funds to cover their living expenses, accommodation and meals, as well as examination fees. At that time Paris was by no means as well-equipped with banks as Italy. Many students in the Arts faculty were too young to undertake the dangerous journey home during their studies, some starting to learn Latin in Parisian schools at the age of 9 or 10. During term time they were also forbidden to be absent which explained why they needed messengers to communicate with their families.

Each messenger was usually responsible for a diocese from which one or more members of the university came, including the town and the surrounding area of the diocese. This was because the University of Paris was a cooperative under ecclesiastical law that had grown out of the cathedral school in Paris. Consequently, as the university developed, the structures of church organisation had naturally been absorbed into its organisation and that of the messenger service. Messengers sometimes travelled also to individual cities or counties from which masters and scholars came, especially in densely-populated areas such as Picardy.

The messengers of the nations received privileges for their work, but no wages. This form of remuneration had its origins in canon law because, when the French King Philip II Augustus (1180-1223) legally equated Parisian scholars and masters with the clergy in 1200, he also did so for the members of their households (familiars) which later included the scholars' messengers. As a result, the messengers received many of the privileges enjoyed by clergymen.

One consequence was that the long-distance traders among the messengers benefited in particular from working as Parisian university messengers. They were exempt from taxes and customs duties in France and enjoyed the protection of the Pope and the King with the right of safe conduct. Travelling booksellers were a notable group among the messengers as they had access to the economically-interesting book market of the university through their university office.

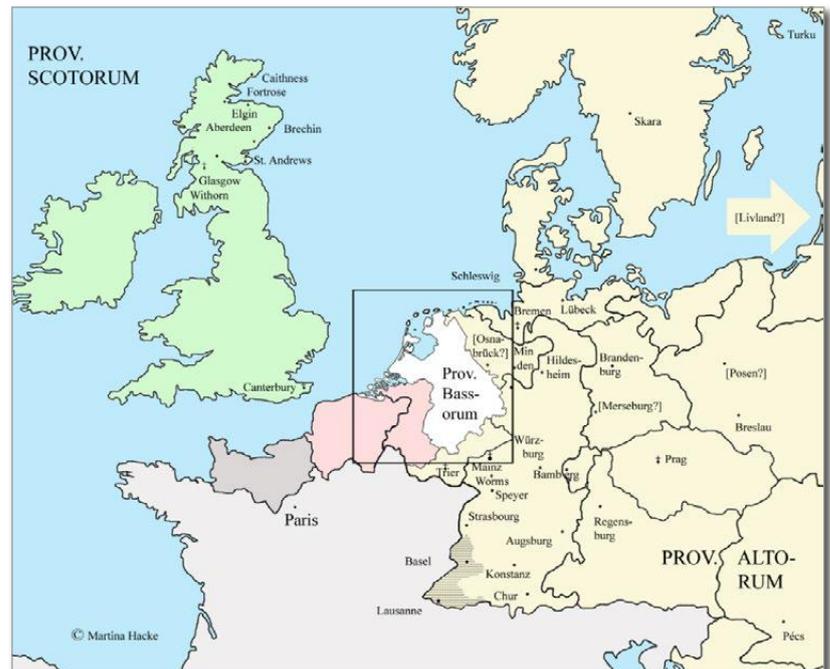
Working part-time in the 15th century, the messengers of the nations carried letters and parcels from the university members with them if they were addressed to destinations that were on their own long-distance route. This was also common practice among the population in general at that time: everyone took something for someone else if it were intended for the same destination.

Messengers of the nations served mainly Central and North-Eastern Europe. For the French Nation, they travelled to all regions of France, except for the territories of the Norman and Picard Nations, and also to the eastern Iberian Peninsula including Catalonia. There is no evidence that Italian territories were destinations for Parisian university messengers in the 15th century, but in the 16th century Siena was one such destination – Italy also had excellent universities.

**Fig 2. The messenger network of the Anglo-German nation in the 15<sup>th</sup> century.**

As far as long-distance travel to places such as Scandinavia was concerned, it is unlikely that messengers travelled there more than once or twice a year. They went to some cities in France several times a year, also on the route from Paris to Basel. Overall, the messenger services can be regarded as a simple but free basic transport service. Their service was mainly used by students who were less well-off financially. Wealthier students could afford their own messengers.

The messenger network of the Anglo-German nation was the largest in terms of area. The largest messenger province, Altorum, with approximately 26 dioceses comprised Scandinavia including Finland in the north-east, the German Reich and Poland in the east, and most of the Swiss Confederation in the south as far as Hungary in the south-east. The smallest messenger province, Bassorum, consisted of the Archdiocese of Cologne and the dioceses of Münster, Utrecht and parts of Liège. The third messenger province (Scotorum) included Aberdeen, Brechin, Caithness, Dunblane, Elgin, Fortrose, Glasgow (archdiocese since 1492), St Andrews (archdiocese since 1472) and Withorn. With one exception England was excluded from the area of activity of the Parisian university messengers, mainly because of the Hundred Years' War (1337-1453) and the resulting enmity between France and England, but also by the existence of excellent universities in England. The exception concerned the Archdiocese of Canterbury which may be explained by its ecclesiastical significance.



The Parisian messengers of the nations were not the only messenger service in the Middle Ages. The Hanseatic League and the Pope with his couriers had comparably extensive communication networks. Merchants such as Francesco Datini (1335-1410), who was active in Prato, should also be mentioned - although research is still lacking on the destinations and messengers of more than 150,000 letters of his correspondence between 1382 and 1410.

The Parisian university messengers were a remarkable phenomenon in the history of European communications. They were available to more than 3,000 university members (depending on the method of calculation, which is complicated). Even more extraordinary is the fact that - in addition to university members - their families, friends and professional contacts were also able to use the messengers' services. Thus, this "private" messenger service was perhaps the first in European history to show signs of a certain public utility, later a fundamental feature of a postal service. It is extraordinary that they were able to cover such a large geographical area in the late 15th Century. This is a clear illustration of how Europe's cities were much more closely connected in the Middle Ages than is often assumed.

## Further reading:

Martina Hacke, *Die Boten der Nationen im Mittelalter*, Husum 2022.

Jacques Verger, *Les universités françaises au Moyen Âge*, Leiden 1995; *L'université de Paris au Moyen Âge (XIIIe -XIVe siècle)*, in: Boris Bove (ed.), *Le Paris du Moyen Âge*, Paris 2014, p. 175-193.

Giampiero Nigro (ed.): *Francesco di Marco Datini. The Man, The Merchant*, Florence 2010.

Brigide Schwarz, *Im Auftrag des Papstes. Die päpstlichen Kursoren von ca. 1200 bis ca. 1470*, in: Andreas Meyer et al. (eds.), *Päpste, Pilger, Pönitentiarie*, Tübingen 2004, pp. 49-71.

<http://martina-hacke.de/>

# Deutscher Altbriefsammler-Verein

From 'Insider Club' to an International Postal History Heavyweight.

*Thomas Hoepfner writes:*



The Deutscher Altbriefsammler-Verein (DASV) – the German society for collectors of pre-philatelic and classic covers - is a specialised society (Arbeitsgemeinschaft) that has long attracted postal history collectors interested in all aspects of pre-postage stamp era material.

The DASV is the post-war successor to the SAVO (Internationaler Verein der Sammler vorphilatelistischer Briefe und Postdokumente – the International Society of Collectors of pre-philatelic covers and postal documents) that was founded in 1933 under the leadership of Baron Anton von Kumpf-Mikuli. In its journals (Rundbriefe) and at its regular meetings the main focus was on explaining stampless covers with all their links to postal contracts, researching and archiving postmarks, and many more similar subjects. This was remarkable at a time when stamp collecting was almost unthinkable without stamps, but it continued a German tradition of looking beyond the stamps at the operation of postal services, seen for example at the Berlin exhibition in 1930.

Being a community of enthusiastic postal history “fans” is one thing, but that did not mean that DASV activities received wide attention beyond its insider circles. That began to change in the late 1990s with regular participation in the Sindelfingen Stamp Fair which always took place on the last October weekend., Located not far from Stuttgart in Southwest Germany, Sindelfingen had become an important meeting place for all categories of stamp collector in Germany as well as from Austria, Switzerland, Italy and other European countries. DASV grabbed the opportunity to hold Postal History Days (“Postgeschichtliche Tage”) there and to have displays in frames. Those who visited Sindelfingen at that time still remember the legendary “Sachsen Salon” in 1996 showing 74 Saxony Three Pfennig stamps (“Sachsen Dreier”).

Over the following decades Sindelfingen developed into a major platform for DASV, offering the chance to talk to postal history collectors and win many new members. The exhibit displays and various other offerings such as

symposia with lectures held by high-profile experts attracted a growing number of visitors. In 2012 the DASV decided to select special partners and invite them to participate in the Sindelfingen activities, especially in the exhibition. This worked really well with groups from Italy (2012) as well as Austria and Switzerland (2013) and a real highlight in 2014 – the invitation of the Royal Philatelic Society London (RPSL) turned out to be a huge success. Many DASV members still talk of Alan Holyoake's hand-out, his Penny Black book, and the signing session at the end of the festive dinner.

DASV activities in Sindelfingen were now advertised as "Postgeschichte live" and the following years saw visiting groups as special partners from Portugal, Italy, the Netherlands and Belgium, Austria, the United Kingdom, Turkey as well as a group of members of the International Postal History Fellows (IPHF). In 2025 Sweden will be the invited guests. The "Postgeschichte live" exhibitions have developed into a high-level Postal History show covering a huge range of subjects and flavours. The jury members have ensured the highest competence level, being from Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Italy, Belgium, Hungary and Luxembourg, most of them FIP accredited. Over the years the awards for the best exhibits, the golden, silver and bronze posthorns have become more attractive than the gold medals at regular exhibitions for quite a few exhibitors.

The Coronavirus Pandemic brought more or less all activities in organised philately to a standstill. It was a time when video conferences by "Zoom" were the only possible means of bringing people together. The DASV devoted major efforts to re-designing its journals (Rundbriefe) and created a new website with a lot of additional content. The takeover of a postal history web forum gave access to hundreds of users, and the web archive of more than 5.000 postal contract documents is one of the largest worldwide. In 2021 the sale of the Sindelfingen Fair buildings came as a big surprise which meant that a new home had to be found for the exhibition. Fortunately a new location in Ulm was found quite quickly, and the first Stamp Fair at Ulm Messe in 2022 gave the confidence that the move would be a seamless transition. At that time DASV took over responsibility for the Postgeschichte live programme.

Today DASV can fairly claim that it is among the most important European Postal History societies. Its membership extends across many countries in Europe and beyond, and its members include a lot of international exhibitors who have achieved the highest award levels. Recent trends in philately show that postal history receives a lot of attention from both philatelists and researchers outside of the philatelic cosmos. 'Social Philately' gives the opportunity to include non-philatelic treatment and material in exhibits. The DASV is open for that and is also interested in cooperating with academics and researchers working in fields that have a connection to postal history.

Of course the annual shows in Ulm as well as the regular Society meetings will continue. There is always something happening in postal history, and DASV will continue to make its contribution. In 2025 DASV will once again be at the Ulm Fair between 23<sup>rd</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> October. We will be pleased to see visitors again then.

*The Posthorn plaque presented to medal winners annually at the DASV Postgeschichte-live competition in Ulm.*



# CITIZEN HISTORY #BOVINO

**Marco Occhipinti writes:**

Citizen History is a project promoted by the Archeoclub d'Italia Sede di Bovino in collaboration with the City of Bovino and the association Presidi del Libro di Bovino, financed by Puglia region. The project partners are the association Historia Ludens and the University of Bari Aldo Moro - Department of Research and Innovation in the Humanities. The management of all the process and the creation of the community portal have been entrusted to the start-up D.E.E.P. LAB. S.r.l.



**Marco Occhipinti demonstrating how materials can be used for the benefit of local historians.**

At the launch of the project, the population of Bovino, both residents and non-residents (and in particular Bovino natives living abroad, in France, Australia and Canada), were asked to open their drawers and pull out any documentary objects from the past, even if personal. This included both physical documents such as letters, postcards, diaries, school reports, photographs, business cards, deeds, decrees, posters, flyers, commercial documents, etc., and intangible documents such as films or audio files. Anything useful for reconstructing the social, economic, religious and administrative fabric of a town and, at the same time, useful for preventing the loss of evidence of the past, partly due to depopulation and the progressive ageing of the population.

The material is immediately digitalised by scanning or photographing and returned instantly to its rightful owners. A file is then compiled for each item, with predefined fields, according to the DCMI (Dublin Core Metadata Initiative) scheme developed by the Online Computer Library Centre, the large American network of library services.

The operator then completes the file by entering the appropriate metadata, and finally the images and file are entered into a large web database created with Omeka, an open source web publishing platform for sharing digital collections and creating online exhibitions of multimedia content.

In this way, it is possible to reconstruct the history of a city starting from documents, especially postal documents.

The working team consists of representatives from the various organisations involved in the project, with Marco Occhipinti joining as an expert in philately and postal history.

On 12 August 2025, at the Carlo Gaetano Nicastro Civic Museum in Bovino, the community portal was presented with all the documents currently collected and described, and the researchers were available to upload new documents on site.

<https://citizenhistorybovino.omeka.net/>

**Mira** 25

**Agosto**

**12 MAR**  
 Citizen history #Bovino  
**PRESENTAZIONE DEL SITO E OPEN DAY**  
 con Antonella Fiorio e Marco Occhipinti  
 a cura dell'Archeoclub di Bovino  
**ore 10.30**  
 c/o **MUSEO CIVICO**

**13 MER**  
 Citizen history #Bovino  
**STORIA, MEMORIA E NARRAZIONE. RESTITUIRE IL PASSATO CON PAROLE E IMMAGINI**  
 con Giovanni Rinaldi  
 a cura dell'Archeoclub di Bovino  
**ore 10.30**  
 c/o **MUSEO CIVICO**

**21 GIO**  
 Citizen history #Bovino  
**IL SOLE FRA LE PIETRE: OSSERVAZIONI E IPOTESI SUL SOLSTIZIO D'ESTATE AL CASTELLO DI BOVINO**  
 con Angelo Bruno e Mauro Lisanti  
 a cura dell'Archeoclub di Bovino  
**ore 10.30**  
 c/o **MUSEO CIVICO**

Per info e prenotazioni  
 Segreteria di progetto  
 +39 350 520 1017

**Eventi estivi di SEMI NEL VENTO**  
 Contaminiamo il Territorio con la Musica e l'Arte

Logo of the City of Bovino and various partner logos (Ministero della Cultura, Regione Puglia, etc.) are visible at the bottom.

## Launching an International Journal of Postal History Today: “A Crazy Idea or a Reasoned Challenge?”

***Claudio Manzati writes:***

A few months ago, Wolfgang Maassen, President of the AIJP (International Association of Philatelic Journalists), invited me to give a talk during the Congress to be held in Wiesbaden on the occasion of the Heinrich Köhler & AIJP Summit on Philatelic Literature, on POST HORN Magazine of International Postal History. So I mentally retraced the seven years of the magazine, which was conceived in 2018, and wondered whether founding this new philatelic and postal history magazine had been a crazy idea or a reasoned challenge. The answer was both, but also much more. Let's see why.

I will start, of course, by telling you how the idea for this new magazine came about. Like many other things, it came about by chance, aided by pleasant surroundings, good company, and a generous helping of Valpolicella Ripasso, a wine produced using a winemaking technique that involves a second fermentation of Valpolicella wine on the spent skins of Amarone, one of the finest wines of that region. This process gives the wine greater structure, colour, body, and aromatic complexity than traditional Valpolicella, and it is also significantly less expensive than the more noble Amarone wine.

The place is a trattoria in the Valpolicella hills overlooking Lake Garda. The date is 23rd November, 2018, a Friday, and the occasion is the traditional weekend dinner held during the famous Veronafil philatelic fair. In addition to the writer he actors are Giorgio Migliavacca, philatelist from the British Virgin Islands and Vice President of the Italian Academy of Philately, Thomas Mathà, current President of the AIEP (International Association of Philatelic Experts) and President of the Italian Academy of Philately, and Clemente Fedele, academic and author of countless treatises on the history and ways of the postal service in Europe.

The dinner went well, accompanied by the aforementioned wine, and by the third bottle, when the fumes of alcohol began to loosen inhibitions, the four diners began to digress and came up with the “crazy idea” of creating one of the most beautiful magazines on philately and postal history. After dessert and coffee, they shook hands and agreed to meet to define the next steps. This is where my personal managerial and organisational experience comes into play, as I begin to schedule video conference meetings. This is also where “The Reasoned Challenge” emerges, as the first question we ask ourselves is: if we want to create a successful magazine, what do we need to do to differentiate ourselves from the most prestigious international philately and postal history magazines? What should be the distinctive factors for success?

The collective response was that the magazine should not only be of interest to the small world of philately but should also have a different editorial line from the most prestigious philatelic magazines such as the London Philatelist of the RPSL or the NY Collectors Club Magazine. It should also appeal to a wider audience who, through the magazine, could begin to think about collecting and studying philately. In the vision that was developed, the magazine should express its content through images (paintings, photos, symbols, maps, etc.) and the articles should “tell a story,” in which stamps and postal documents should represent witnesses to history and not necessarily be the focal point, as in the aforementioned specialised philatelic magazines of high pedigree.

All this reasoning, translated into a clear mission and vision, has led to a new editorial line for the philatelic world, which we believe has also determined its success in competitions. In fact, since its launch in 2019, it has received the following international awards over the years:

- 2020 Press Award from the European Academy of Philately
- 2021 FIP-FEPA Gold Medal in Athens (Notos 2021)
- 2022 FIP-FEPA Gold Medal in London (London 2022)
- 2023 Christoph Gaertner Literature Award Montecaralo (Monacophil 2023)
- 2023 FIP-FEPA Gold Medal in Essen (IBRA 2023)
- 2023 Invited to the Crawford Festival in Londra by the RPSL
- 2024 FEPA Large Gold Medal in Thessaloniki (Balkanfila 2024)

Some may ask, but what was the magic formula for creating this editorial work? From my point of view, it can be summarised in the following points:

1. Aim high right from the start, i.e., have the ambition to create a successful magazine
2. Think outside the box, welcome all ideas, even “crazy” ones, from the editorial team
3. Understand who the target audience is and what needs to be met
4. Planning and determination (never give up), especially in difficult times
5. Have lots of friends: authors and translators who believed in our project and supported us by providing high-quality articles, and sponsors who supported us financially.
6. Finally, finding Elisa Volpato, a designer with great creativity and skill, who enhances the content through her work.

Below are the names of the candidates and images of the first graphic tests.: RSP Postal History Magazine, Mail things, Culture and collecting, Tabellarius, The Estafette and finally the chosen name POST HORN Magazine of International Postal History.



And what difficulties did you encounter along the way?

- The first was the loss of Clemente Fedele from the editorial team due to personal problems.
- The second was trying to convey the editorial line to the authors, which was to tell stories rather than present the specialist aspects of their collections, thus limiting the number of philatelic images and replacing them with iconographic elements such as photos, maps, paintings, and even videos that can be downloaded from a QR code next to the iconographic reference.
- The third difficulty arose in 2019 with the launch of the trial issue 00, which was supposed to be presented at the event held in Stockholm in May to mark the 150th anniversary of the founding of the Royal Philatelic Society of London. This issue was raised by our friends at the Scandinavian Collectors Club as their magazine, The Posthorn (Journal of the SCC), founded immediately after the war, had a similar name to the new magazine. At the time, they asked us to refrain from officially presenting the magazine at that event and requested that we not use the name Post Horn.

I must admit that this incident put us to the test, so much so that for a few days the editorial committee questioned whether to publish the magazine, but we decided to press ahead because the name Post Horn Magazine had been registered by us with the European Trademark Agency based in Valencia and the term POST HORN was already in use by the Cuban Philatelic Society of America, Inc. Furthermore, the Australian Posthorn was the bulletin of the Postal Stationery and Postal History Society of Australia Inc. and other magazines, listed below in the image. This allowed us to continue with determination in the project.



It is also important to mention the help we received in resolving a possible litigation, especially from Wolfgang Maessen, Chris King, Prof. Charles Oppenheim (international trademark expert) Jonas Hällström, Patrick Maselis, and Alan Warren, with whom a meeting was scheduled in Stockholm to clarify the situation (meeting image below). This subsequently resulted in a Gentleman’s Agreement between the parties and with SCC, which, not having registered their trademark, had to take action retrospectively.

Once this initial difficulty had been overcome POST HORN Magazine could officially be launched, with issue #01 Autumn-Winter 2019 being officially presented during the AEP Congress, the European Academy of Philately, in Monte Carlo on the occasion of Monacophil 2019.



*Left image: King Simeon in the centre.*

*Right image: the editorial committee with Giorgio Migliavacca on the left and Thomas Mathà on the right, in the trattoria where the magazine was conceived.*

Previously, the trial issue #00 had been presented in Plovdiv (Bulgaria), European City of Culture, to King Simeon of Bulgaria during an international philatelic event.

As a natural consequence, POST HORN has also produced philatelic literature with the following successful books: TUSCANY - No. 3 Large Gold Medal FIP-FEPA, 2021-2022, TRENTINO Catalogue - Gold Medal FIP-FEPA 2023. For those who would like to embark on a “madness” like the one I shared with Giorgio and Thomas, it is important to remember that the financial investment is considerable and that in our case, we broke even after five years. The support of our sponsors was fundamental, and I would like to thank them here.



## Use of a Video Spectral Comparator for Forensic Philately

*Paul Leonard BSc (Hons), CSci., FRPSL and Winner of the Royal Philatelic Society London Medal for Forensic Philately, led a FEPA seminar on the topic of 'Assisting Expert Committees through the use of Forensic Philately' at EuroPhilEx in May 2025 and kindly accepted our invitation to write an article on it for FEPA NEWS.*

### Summary

The aim of this article is to show how philatelic material can be analysed using forensic methods to assist the process of expertisation. Two examples have been provided and the author welcomes comments and suggestions on future work.

### Introduction

In FEPA NEWS 46, it was highlighted that the Board wished to enable information to have the widest possible reach, which included utilising modern technology to promote philately. Those able to attend EuroPhilEx 2025 in Birmingham may have had the opportunity to attend my presentation on 'Assisting Expert Committees through the use of Forensic Philately'. A recording has been made and the talk and presentation can be downloaded via: <https://fepanews.com/seminars/>.

In this paper I want to show how advances in technology are helping expertisers by providing examples of work I have undertaken in which I have utilising the VSC8000HS, manufactured in the UK by Foster Freeman who describe it as 'combining sophisticated digital imaging and multi-wavelength illumination technology with a clear and efficient software interface, to provide a complete solution to the examination of all questioned documents.' The equipment includes a high resolution 12MP camera, magnification from x2 to x 250, 15 Modes of advanced Ultraviolet Violet-Visible-Infra Red imaging and 3D document imaging. Further information can be found via these links: VSC8000/HS | Foster + Freeman , VSC8000HS-English-Brochure.pdf .

### Spectral Analysis

If there is an opportunity to make money fraudulently by changing a stamp, some people will be happy to take it and the unwary stamp collector may be deceived into thinking that a forged item is genuine. The VSC helps to ascertain the history of an item. In this example, we appear to have a 3-shilling stamp of the so-called 'Admiral' issue from Rhodesia that has been cancelled. The stamp has many varieties and was printed between 1913 and 1919.

Spectral analysis is one option among the features of the VSC. By using a 'blue' filter (380 – 450 nm) we can obtain a clearer image of the cancellation.



Fig. 1: The 3/- used stamp.



Fig. 2. Response to 380 – 450 nm.



Fig. 3. Response to 540 - 615 nm.

However, moving to the 'yellow / orange' spectral range (540 – 615 nm), we can see that the stamp had previously been used for fiscal purposes. The inverted fiscal canceller was used by the Native Commission office. My thanks to Mark Thomas for providing this example.

### 3D capability

The VSC also has a 3D capability. The cover shown below was sent from Paddington in London to Lowestoft in Suffolk on 22nd July 1931. It includes an embossed 1½d stamp. Using the 3D capability it is possible to obtain detail of the embossing, and information about the engraver.

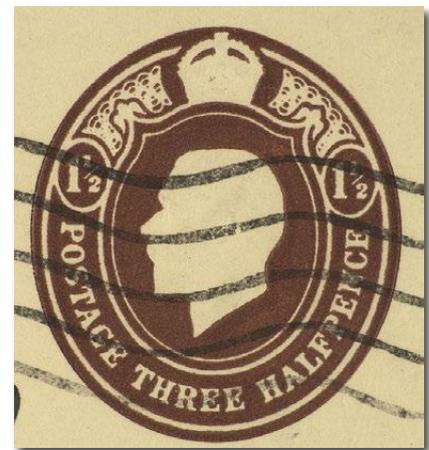
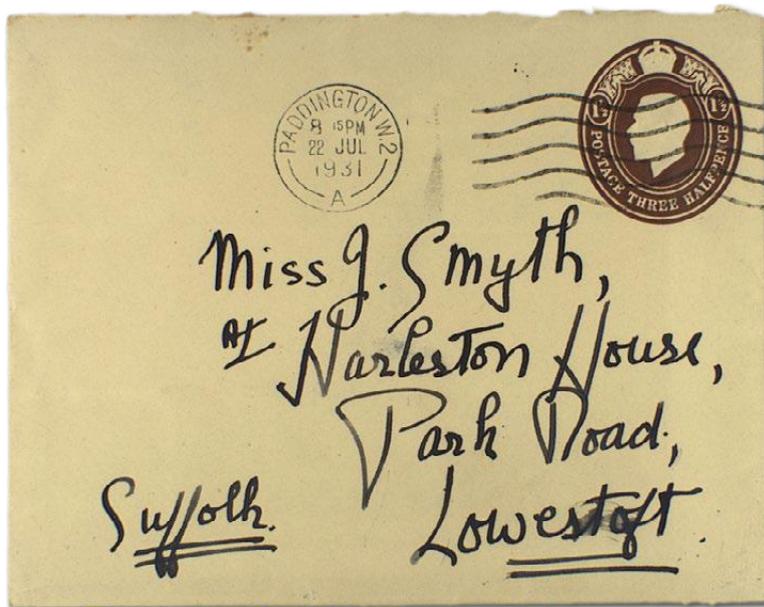


Fig. 5. The embossed 1½ d stamp.

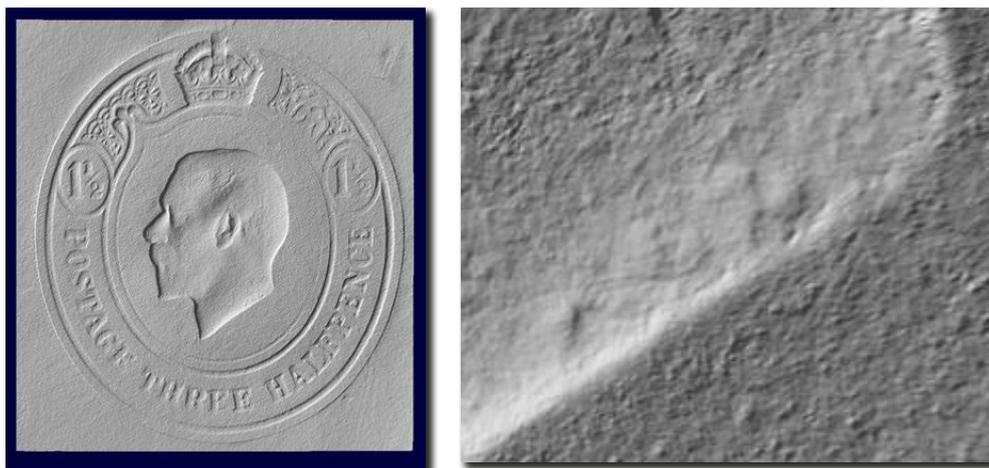


Fig. 6. Use of 3D on the embossed stamp.

### Conclusion

This article has been written to illustrate how forensic philately can help the expertisation process. Philatelists wishing to submit material for expertisation at the Royal Philatelic Society London can do so by sending their item(s) to Lucy Caulfield, Expert Committee, RPSL Limited, 15 Abchurch Lane, London EC4N 7BW. E-mail : [experts@rpsl.limited](mailto:experts@rpsl.limited), Website: [www.rpsl.limited](http://www.rpsl.limited) .

# Federation of European Philatelic Associations

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## BOSTON 2026 WORLD EXPO



23–30 May 2026

Boston Convention and Exhibition Center

FIP Patronage ♦ FEPA Recognition

# Events Calendar

## 2025

10-12 October	STAMPA 2025, Dublin, Ireland	National Exhibition <a href="https://stampa.ie">https://stampa.ie</a>
22-25 October	STAMPEX 2025, London, UK	International Stamp Fair <a href="https://www.stampexinternational.com">https://www.stampexinternational.com</a>
23-25 October	Internationale Briefmarken-Börse Ulm	International Stamp Fair <a href="https://briefmarken-messe.de">https://briefmarken-messe.de</a>
5-9 November	EXFILNA & JUVENIA 2025, Cádiz, Spain	National Exhibition <a href="https://exposicionesfesofi.es">https://exposicionesfesofi.es</a>
14-15 November	HERTOGPOST 2025, 's-Hertogenbosch, Netherlands	National Exhibition <a href="https://www.hertogpost-event.nl">https://www.hertogpost-event.nl</a>
14-16 November	TIMFILEX 2025, Timisoara, Romania	National Exhibition with international participation, FEPA Recognition
15 December 2025 15 January 2026	APATIN 2025, Apatin, Serbia	International Virtual Exhibition <a href="https://udruzenjefilatelistaapatin.org.rs">https://udruzenjefilatelistaapatin.org.rs</a>

## 2026

4-8 February	DUBAI 2026, Dubai, UAE	Specialised World Exhibition, FIP Patronage <a href="https://dubai2026wse.com">https://dubai2026wse.com</a>
6-8 March	VIRTUAL STAMPEX 2026, London, UK	International Virtual Stamp Fair <a href="https://www.stampexinternational.com">https://www.stampexinternational.com</a>
9-12 April	ALPEN-ADRIA 2026, Poreč, Croatia	Multinational Exhibition <a href="http://www.alpeadria.eu">http://www.alpeadria.eu</a>
8-10 May	NORDIA 2026, Espoo, Finland	Multinational Exhibition, FEPA Recognition <a href="https://nordia2026.fi/en">https://nordia2026.fi/en</a>
23-30 May	BOSTON 2026, Boston MA, United States	General World Exhibition, FIP Patronage, FEPA Recognition <a href="https://boston2026.org">https://boston2026.org</a>
26-29 June	PhilLat26, Riga, Latvia	International Exhibition, FEPA Recognition
26 June - 1 July	MACAO 2026, Macao, China	Specialised World Exhibition, FIP Patronage <a href="https://www.macao2026.org.mo">https://www.macao2026.org.mo</a>
17-19 July	BEPHILA 2026, Bernau, Germany	Germany-Sweden Bilateral Exhibition, FEPA Recognition <a href="https://www.bephila.de">https://www.bephila.de</a>
28-29 August	PHILHAINAUT '26, La Louvière, Belgium	National Exhibition with international participation
7-11 October	SRBIJAFILA, Belgrade, Serbia	National Exhibition with international participation
October 2026	Internationale Briefmarken-Börse Ulm	International Stamp Fair <a href="https://briefmarken-messe.de">https://briefmarken-messe.de</a>
19-24 November	PHILATAIPEI 2026, Chinese Taipei	Specialised World Exhibition, WSC, FIP Patronage
December 2026	MONACOPHIL 2026, Monte Carlo, Monaco	International Exhibition <a href="https://monacophil.com">https://monacophil.com</a>

## 2027

1-5 July	SLOVFILEX 2027, Bratislava, Slovakia	Specialised World Exhibition, FIP Patronage, FEPA Recognition <a href="https://www.slovphilex2027.sk/en/home/">https://www.slovphilex2027.sk/en/home/</a>
12-17 October	BELGRADE 2027, Serbia	General World Exhibition, FIP Patronage
October 2027	Internationale Briefmarken-Börse Ulm	International Stamp Fair <a href="https://briefmarken-messe.de">https://briefmarken-messe.de</a>

Check the Events Calendar regularly at <https://fepanews.com/events> for the latest updates, including any last-minute changes made by the organisers.