

Balkanfila



News letter

No 13, February 2026

Editorial

A great Balkanfila Philatelic encounter

From April 28th until May 2nd Balkanfila XXI will be organized in Pernik, Bulgaria and this is going to be a great Balkanfila Philatelic encounter. The announcement by the Union of Bulgarian Philatelists of the 21st Balkanfila was an unexpected, still a very welcome event as this will continue Balkanfila exhibitions at the place they were born in 1965.

In this issue there are reports from the International Philatelic Exhibition: “Postal History of Slovenia and Serbia”, the FIP Dubai 2026, a Philatelic Symposium in Chisinau and from the latest SIBIUMAX.

The News and Events provide an insight to the activities of the National Federations and their various activities. The sad news of the passing of a remarkable personality, that of Aleksandar Boričić, doyen of Serbian philately felt deeply by the entire Balkan Philately.

The 2025 FEPA awards and certificates of appreciation to five philatelic societies as well as to two excellent philatelists from our region, it is something that made our day.

Part II of the FEPA–organized web meeting on “The Future of Stamp Exhibitions” presents specific practices for organized philately on how to deal with the crucial questions that we are currently facing.

An intriguing article on the “Quarantine cordon in the Danubian Principates Wallachia and Moldova” provides the reader with an insight of the frequent epidemics brought from Asia during early 19th c.

This time the spotlight is on the Panhellenic Association of Thematic Philately and Youth and its publications and events activities since 1989.

The last section is dedicated of certain New Postage Stamp Issues of interest.

Janez and Gregor Cerkvėnik,
Lovro Kořir Philatelic Society řkofja Loka

**International Philatelic Exhibition:
“Postal History of Slovenia and Serbia”**

The international philatelic exhibition “*Postal History of Slovenia and Serbia*” was one of eight events organised within the cultural programme “*Serbia in Slovenia 2026*”, coordinated by the Embassy of the Republic of Serbia in the Republic of Slovenia and held in several cities across Slovenia.

The exhibition took place at the Museum of Post and Telecommunications, which operates within the Technical Museum of Slovenia, located in the historic manor house at Polhov Gradec. It was open to the public from March, 3rd till 22nd, 2026, with the official opening held on March, 3rd, 2026.

The exhibition was organised in cooperation with the Embassy of the Republic of Serbia in the Republic of Slovenia, the Museum of Post and Telecommunications of Slovenia within the Technical Museum of Slovenia, the PTT Museum of Serbia in Belgrade operating under Post of Serbia, the Philatelic Association of Slovenia (FZS), the Union of Philatelists of Serbia (SFS), the Philatelic Society Lovro Kořir řkofja Loka, as well as the national postal operators Pořta Slovenije and Pořta Srbije (Fig. 1).



Figure 1. The Museum of Post and Telecommunications of Slovenia, today operating under the auspices of the Technical Museum of Slovenia (TMS), located in the Polhov Gradec manor. Artistic graphic treatment of the photograph: Gregor Cerkvėnik, Philatelic Society Lovro Kořir řkofja Loka.

Displayed across 48 exhibition frames, the exhibition presented a selection of rarely seen and highly valuable philatelic exhibits by three distinguished Serbian philatelists:

- Predrag C. Antić – *Principality of Serbia, 1840–1880*
- Aleksandar Boričić – *Airmail of the Kingdom of SHS and the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, 1923–1941*
- Vladimir Milić – *Yugoslav Inflation, 1989–1994 and Its Impact on Postal Rates*

Slovenian philatelists also contributed important exhibits:

- Bojan Kranjc – *Carved Postmarks*
- Bojan Bračić – *Postmarks of the Post Offices Marburg/Maribor, 1818–1945 and Postmarks of the Post Office Pettau/Ptuj, 1818–1945*
- Andro Alujevič – *Slovenian Commemorative Postmarks, 2023–2025*
- Janez Cerkenik – *Impressions of the Postmarks of Škofja Loka (Figs. 3–9).*

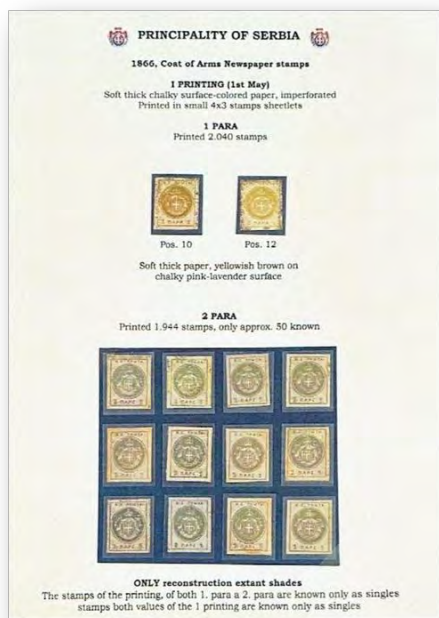


Figure 3. From the collection of Serbian philatelist Predrag C. Antić: Principality of Serbia (1840–1880), the so-called Grbuša issue of 1866 – a complete reconstruction of the printing sheet of the 2–para green newspaper stamp.

Figure 4. From the collection of Serbian philatelist Aleksandar Boričić: Airmail of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia (1923–1941). A 1937 airmail cover addressed to a recipient in the Czechoslovak Republic.





Figure 5. From the collection of Serbian philatelist Vladimir Milić: *Yugoslav Inflation (1989–1994): Impact on Postal Rates*. The illustration shows a registered letter sent on April, 7th 1993 from Bojnik to Belgrade, Serbia. The cover is franked with 22 overprinted stamps with a total face value of 2,200 Yugoslav dinars (YUR).

Figure 6. From the collection of Slovenian philatelist Bojan Kranjc: *“Carved” Postmarks*. Illustrated are the Škofja Loka postal cancellations: the original cancellation marked “c”, already in use before the First World War; the cancellation with obliterated inscription Bischoflack, used in December 1918 & January 1919; and the so-called “carved” cancellation, used from February 1919 until the summer of 1921.



Figure 7. From the philatelic collection of Slovenian philatelist Bojan Bračič: *Postmarks of the Post Offices in Maribor/Marburg and Ptuj/Pettau (1818–1945)*.



Figure 8. From the philatelic collection of Andro Alujevič:
Slovenian Commemorative Postmarks, 2023–2025.

The illustrated commemorative cancellations are often not fully aligned with the standards of Pošta Slovenije. For example, the date is not consistently expressed numerically; the month is sometimes not indicated by a number (e.g. June 26th, 1991, Ljubljana; January, 21st 2013, Podčetrtek/Post Office of Slovenia, June, 16 2023, Ormož).



Figure 9. From the philatelic collection of Slovenian philatelist Janez Cerkvenik:
Postal cancellations of Škofja Loka.

The illustration shows a “carved” cancellation from 1920 and a machine post cancellation of the Gorenjska predilnica in Škofja Loka from 1982



In Memoriam

Aleksandar Boričić (1946–2026), a distinguished Serbian philatelist, former member of the Yugoslav national volleyball team and long-time president of the European Volleyball Confederation (CEV), later its honorary president, and former president of the Union of Philatelists of Serbia, passed away at the very time when his airmail exhibit was being publicly presented in Polhov Gradec. On behalf of the Lovro Košir Philatelic Society Škofja Loka, we conveyed our sincere condolences to the Union of Philatelists of Serbia, as Mr. Boričić had personally planned to attend the exhibition and view his exhibit displayed there.



Significance of the Exhibition

The significance of this international exhibition lies not only in the successful cooperation between two postal museums from friendly countries, but also in presenting to the broader public the rarely exhibited postal history of the former common state — the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes and later the Kingdom of Yugoslavia — as well as the postal developments during the post-war forms of the shared state and the period following the independence of both countries up to the present day. At the same time, the exhibition helps introduce younger generations to an important part of our shared cultural and historical heritage.

Particularly noteworthy was the philatelic collection known as “*Classical Serbia*” by Predrag Cuki Antić, considered the most comprehensive collection of the postal history of the Principality of Serbia and the Kingdom of Serbia from the 19th and early 20th centuries in existence. It was therefore a special privilege that part of this outstanding collection, “*Principality of Serbia*”, was presented at our international philatelic exhibition in Polhov Gradec.

Commemorative Philatelic Issues

On the opening day of the exhibition, several commemorative philatelic items issued by the Lovro Košir Philatelic Society Škofja Loka were also presented: an illustrated postal card (which also served as the exhibition invitation), a personalised postage stamp issued by Pošta Slovenije with denomination “A”, a commemorative special postmark, and a commemorative envelope describing the exhibition.

A catalogue of the international philatelic exhibition, edited by colleagues from the Union of Philatelists of Serbia, was also published.

After the opening ceremony, the commemorative postmark remained available for **fourteen days** at the Pošta Slovenije – Post Office 1355 Polhov Gradec for all interested users of postal services (Figs. 10–13).

Figure 10. Illustrated postcard (obverse and reverse)



Figure 11. Special commemorative postmark.



Figure 12: Commemorative envelope (obverse and reverse).

On the front of the standard envelope a personalised postage stamp of Pošta Slovenije, denomination “A”, together with the special commemorative postmark, is applied.



Summary

An exhibition entitled “Postal History of Slovenia and Serbia” at the Museum of Post and Telecommunications in Polhov Gradec, Slovenia.

Figure 13: Cover of the catalogue of the international philatelic exhibition “Postal History of Slovenia and Serbia”, published by the Union of Philatelists of Serbia (SFS), the Philatelic Association of Slovenia (FZS), the Technical Museum of Slovenia, and JP Pošta Srbije, Belgrade, Republic of Serbia, March 3rd, 2026



The exhibition is organized in cooperation with Pošta Srbije (Post of Serbia), the Technical Museum of Slovenia, and the PTT Museum (Postal, Telegraph and Telephone Museum) of Serbia, Union of Philatelists of Serbia with the support of the Slovenian Philatelic Association and the Philatelic Society Lovro Košir Škofja Loka.

The display will present selected historical postal items, including early letters, covers, cancellations, and philatelic material illustrating the development of postal communication in Slovenia and Serbia.

e-mails: cerkvenik.janez@gmail.com & cerkvenikgregor@gmail.com

A spectacular video for BALKANFILA XXI

The organizers of Balkanfila XXI, making best use of digital imaging, have produced a spectacular video with animated Bulgarian postage stamps.



The video intends to promote Balkanfila XXI, scheduled to take place from April 29 to May 2, in Pernik, Bulgaria.



This video is a fine example on how philately using digital technology and a marketing approach can appeal to the general public.

The video can be watched at : <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=INljo31OYBg>

Between 4-8 February 2026, I had the honor of being national commissioner, at the FIP Specialised World Stamp Exhibition DUBAI 2026. The exhibition took place at the Sheikh Maktoum Hall, World Trade Centre, Dubai, United Arab Emirates. DUBAI 2026 FIP Specialised World Stamp Exhibition had been successfully held by the Emirates Philatelic Association and was the first world exhibition celebrating the Centenary of FIP in 2026.



Dubai was formally founded when Al Maktoum Family established the fishing settlement of Dubai in 1833. The succession of rulers from Al Maktoum family led to Sheikh Rashid bin Saeed Al Maktoum, who took leadership of Dubai from 1958 to 1990. Sheikh Rashid was wise enough to foster an unparalleled prosperity in the emirate, transforming Dubai into a global urban area, a center for major international companies, tourist attraction, and economic affluence. Seven rulers from Al Maktoum Family ruled Dubai before Sheikh Rashid.g and spending free time.

Dubai played a pivotal role in the formation of the United Arab Emirates in 1971. Global increases in oil prices allowed Dubai to focus on rapid development of key infrastructure.

Despite the international turmoil over the cost of oil, Dubai is already considered to be the Hong Kong of the Middle East. When the world's oil supply runs out, Dubai would survive in a new oil-free world unlike Riyadh. Commercial activity in the Dubai region would simply grow instead of wither because Dubai was a major trading center centuries before oil was known to even exist.

During the 21st century, Dubai may have to implement policies that move away from globalization and toward localization to conserve their energy resources, provide local jobs to citizens of the United Arab Emirates instead of foreign citizens, and maintain their local decision-making authority.



...short visit of the city before and after the exhibition installation



The entire exhibition event was hosted in the Sheikh Maktoum Hall Exhibition Complex, World Trade Centre, Dubai, United Arab Emirates, a modern complex equipped with many exhibition halls, while several other major events were also present, located less than a hundred meters from the official hotel.

The organizers have strived to provide conditions and facilitate the development of the entire event in the most optimal conditions and I believe that they have managed to provide a high-level exhibition.

The small shortcomings caused by the destruction or damage of a fairly large number of frames during transport, were overcome with the help of Thai consultants and volunteers who worked until late at night to complete the installation of the exhibition. We thank the FIP president for the help provided with the free loan of frames and the team of volunteers.



...my family, volunteers at this great event

The exhibition was organized into 8 competitive classes spread 452 exhibits in about 2000 frames.

Organized by : The Emirates Philatelic Association (EPA)

Supported by : Fédération Internationale de Philatélie with Patronage, Federation of Inter-Asian Philately (FIAP) under the Auspices.

76 national commissioners and 41 jury members were present and numerous volunteers who helped set up the exhibits.



..exhibition frames



...and I personally lent a helping hand



...but we came to Dubai, a little relaxation never killed anyone 😊





... the international jury

The Grand Prix National prize, Mr Abdulla Khoory for his exhibit "Abu Dhabi: From Trucial States to U.A.E.". The WSC winner went to Tarik Alireza (Turkey) for his exhibit "Forerunners of Saudi Arabia (1916-1925): Postage stamps of the Kingdom of Hijaz, the Sultanate of Najd and the Kingdom of Hijaz & Najd.



Mr. Abdulla Khoory presenting the Grand Prix National prizes alongside Commissioner General Ali Abdulrahman Ahmad



... jury work



... jury work



... jury work



... jury work

2000 frames, Naturally, the results show many high scores: 44 Large Golds and 101 Golds.

Participants from Balkan countries:

Bulgaria: 3 G, 1 LV, 1 V, 1 LS;

Croatia: 1 G, 1 V, 4 LS;

Cyprus: 1 LV, 2 V;

Romania: 2 LG, 4 G, 1 LV, 2 V, 1 B;

Serbia: 1 G, 1 LV;

Slovenia: 1 LV, 1 V, 1 S;

Turkey: 3 LG (1 GPIC), 1 G, 1 LV, 2 V, 2 LS

And a FIP juror accredited at TR - Vladimir Milic

From my point of view, the exhibition was a real success. Stands were set up for dealers and postal administrations, seminars and presentations were held, culminating in a special afternoon in the desert.



...first meeting of national commissioners, information and presentation of the program



...through the exhibition area for dealers and postal administrations



...visitors, dealers, stands



...World Trade Centre, Dubai



...feedback with exhibitors



...with my wife in front of my exhibit of Pictures Postcards, LV awarded



FIP OPEN Philately commission meeting



OPEN Philately FIP Qualifying Seminar



The exhibition organizers treated the jury members, national commissioners, and their companions to an unforgettable afternoon in the desert with a Desert Safari, culminating in a unique and memorable artistic program.



...FIP Past President, Mr. Tay Peng Hian, hands over a donation to the FIP collections section of the Museum of Romanian Records



...together with dear friends from the Turkey team



...together with Mr. Chris Lazaroff the Commissioner General of the BOSTON 2026 World Expo and exhibitor Mr. Ion Chirescu



...the ceremony of awarding medals to the national commissioners.



...the awards ceremony, in the middle Mr. Ion Chirescu LG awarded



The Palmares celebration took place in the same building of the exhibition complex and hotel, and was attended by approximately 400 people.

Mr. Atadan Tunaci receiving the Medal of Appreciation from the FIP President, Mr. Prakob Chirakiti and Mr. Abdulla Khoory the President of the Organizing Committee



...awards ceremony



The ceremony of handing over the FIP flag to the organizers of Boston 2026

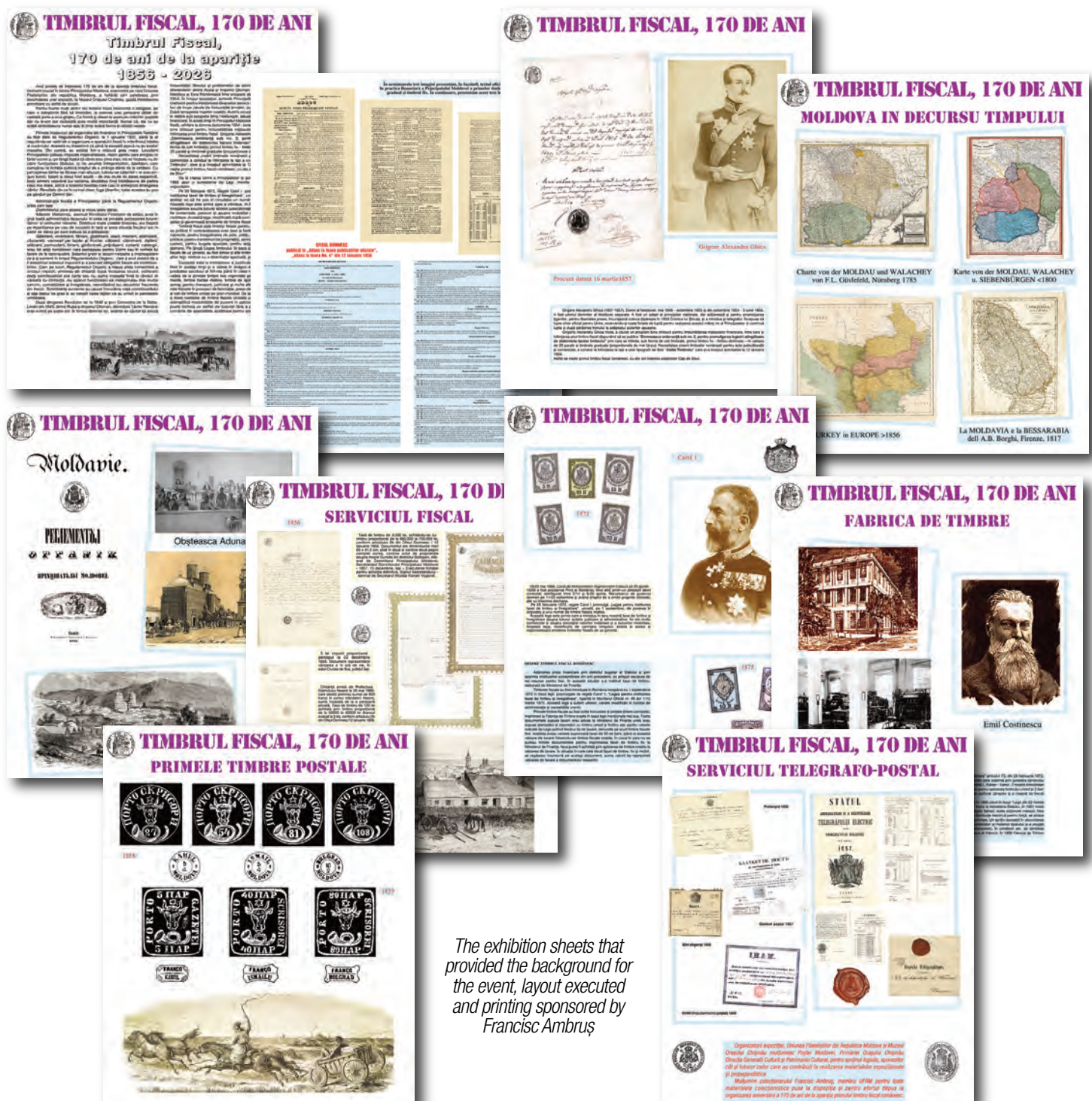
Philatelic symposium – round table - a solution for low-budget exhibitions

Francisc AMBRUȘ

On January 12, 2026, the Union of Philatelists of the Republic of Moldova, Chisinau City History Museum, under the auspices of the General Directorate of Culture and Cultural Heritage, in partnership with the Union of Philatelists of the Republic of Moldova and with the support of the Moldovan Post and the philatelist Francisc Ambrus, initiated a mini-exhibition that celebrated the 170th anniversary of the establishment of the first fiscal stamp in the Principality of Moldova (a few years later it united with the Principality of Wallachia, becoming Romania).

The Round Table participants were Dr Silviu Andrieș-Tabac, historian and State Heraldist of the Republic of Moldova; Ioan-Luca Vlad, attorney to the Royal House of Romania; Francisc Ambrus, philatelist; Victoria Tănase, staff member of Poșta Moldovei; Dr Ana Boldureanu, historian and staff member of the National Museum of History of Moldova. The event was moderated by Andrei Adam, president of UFRM.

The event marked an important moment in the history of state administration: the introduction of the fiscal stamp in the Principality of Moldavia on 12 January 1856. The reform was initiated by Prince Grigore Alexandru Ghica. The new law ended the abuses of the previous system, in which taxes were collected arbitrarily by boyars and tax collectors, and introduced fiscal fairness, requiring both wealthy citizens and ordinary people to contribute according to clear rules. Through this reform, Moldavia aligned itself with contemporary European practices, and the fiscal stamp became an instrument of social justice, as well as an object of outstanding historical, documentary, and philatelic value.



The exhibition sheets that provided the background for the event, layout executed and printing sponsored by Francisc Ambrus

During the event, a special postmark dedicated to the given event was put into use.

Also, the bilingual Romanian / English brochure "170 years since the appearance of the first Romanian fiscal stamp" was presented, published on this occasion in a print run of 50 copies, a private commemorative cover print run 300 copies together with a personalized stamp 350 copies and a maximum postcard in a print run of 50 copies, all distributed for free.



Commemorative postmark of the event sponsored by the Moldovan Post



Promotional exhibition materials executed and sponsored by exhibitor Francisc Ambruș

The event featured speeches by the organizers and invited personalities, with discussions on the theme and subject of the event. Interviews were also given to local television and radio stations.



...Mr. Ioan-Luca VLAD, Lawyer of the Royal House of Romania, Mr. Francisc AMBRUȘ, Mrs. Ana BOLDUREANU, Mr. Silviu ANDRIEȘ-TABAC, Mrs. Victoria TĂNASE, Mr. Andrei ADAM



...Mr. Ioan-Luca VLAD, Mr. Francisc AMBRUȘ, Mrs. Ana BOLDUREANU, Mr. Silviu ANDRIEȘ-TABAC, Mrs. Victoria TĂNASE, Mr. Andrei ADAM



... Mrs. Ana BOLDUREANU, doctor in history, head of the Medieval History and Numismatics section, MNIM, Mr. Silviu ANDRIEȘ-TABAC, Doctor of History, State Herald of the Republic of Moldova, Mrs. Victoria TĂNASE, head of the philatelic editorial service of the State Enterprise "Moldovan Post", Mrs. Valeria SURUCEANU, Director MIOC presents the opening of the exhibition.



...Mr. Andrei Adam, president of Union of Philatelist of the Republic of Moldova, organizer of the exhibition project



...Mr. Francisc Ambruș, exhibitor and organizer of the exhibition project

The idea for a round table belongs to Mr. Andrei Adam and it worked perfectly for a philatelic-commemorative event. Such events with a low budget can be initiated and become popular. We all know that the current budgetary situation in Eastern Europe no longer allows sponsorship from government institutions for such events, and in these conditions, through personal effort and minimal involvement of state institutions, the events can be celebrated.

Until this date, February 25, 2026, the exhibition was visited by approximately 1400 people and the president of the UFRM wants to exhibit it in Chisinau - at the Agency for Military Science and Memory and in the north of Moldova, - the municipality of Balti, or in Calarasi - in the district museum.

I believe that such initiatives can be repeated, their purpose being to bring history back together with philately and amateurs.

INTERNATIONAL MAXIMAPHILY EXHIBITION

“SIBIUMAX 2025”

ROMANIA – FRANCE – ITALY – REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA

by Horia Barbu

As in every year, we once again had the pleasure of meeting in Sibiu for a new exhibition organized by the Philatelists' Association of Sibiu County, in collaboration with the Sibiu City Hall, the ASTRA County Library, the Romanian Maximaphily Society Dr. Valeriu Neaga, the Romanian Philatelic Federation, and the Sibiu County Postal Office.

The second edition of the international maximaphily exhibition “SIBIUMAX 2025” – Romania – France – Italy – Republic of Moldova – was held in the foyer of the ASTRA County Library on September 12-14, 2025.



PRIMĂRIA MUNICIPIULUI SIBIU
ASOCIAȚIA FILATELIȘTILOR DIN JUDEȚUL SIBIU
BIBLIOTECA JUDEȚEANĂ ASTRA
SOCIETATEA ROMÂNĂ DE MAXIMAFILIE
Dr. VALERIU NEAGA
FEDERAȚIA FILATELICĂ ROMÂNĂ
DIRECȚIA JUDEȚEANĂ DE POȘTĂ SIBIU

EXPOZIȚIA INTERNAȚIONALĂ
DE MAXIMAFILIE

„SIBIUMAX 2025”

România - Franța - Italia - Republica Moldova

Sibiu, 12-14 septembrie 2025

At the opening ceremony, Mr. Nicolae Salade, president of the Sibiu County Philatelists' Association, welcomed the attendees and noted that this year Sibiu had the honor of hosting this new exhibition, continuing a philatelic tradition that dates back to 1930. Unlike previous exhibitions in Sibiu, which included a smaller number of maximaphily exhibits, this edition was dedicated exclusively to maximum card collectors. He emphasized that maximaphily, though a newer branch compared to philately, is considered by enthusiasts to be more attractive and visually engaging. In a country with

strong traditions in the field, like Romania, one could say that maximaphily is “right at home” He expressed his gratitude to colleagues from Romania and the participating countries.

Mr. Răzvan Pop, director of the ASTRA County Library, expressed his delight in hosting this new edition of “SIBIUMAX 2025,” an event that brings together Romania, France, Italy, and the Republic of Moldova in a celebration of friendship and a shared passion for beauty. He described the exhibition as not only a gathering of collections but also a cultural dialogue between nations — a bridge between past and present, tradition and innovation, and an invitation to discovery, dialogue, and the joy of sharing.



Mr. Mircea Mureșan conveyed greetings from the president of the Romanian Philatelic Federation, congratulating the organizers on the success of this landmark event for the field. He expressed confidence that the large number of high-quality exhibits and the strong presence of young visitors show a bright future for maximaphily, to the delight of collectors and the public alike.

Mr. Bogdan Florin Năstase affirmed that Romanian Post continues to support philatelists and thanked the maximaphilists of Sibiu for the invitation and the opportunity to once again be part of the event.

The exhibition featured 140 display panels and included 35 exhibits, 5 of which were non-competitive ones, belonging to the jury members and their families.

The Jury carefully evaluated the exhibits, awarding gold-level diplomas to the most outstanding entries. These went to: Vasile Doroș, Mihai Ceucă, Cochet Serge (France), Greppi Italo (Italy), Engel Hubert (France), and Nicolae Salade in the adult category, and Pierre Barbe-Almori (France) and Sara Maria Muntean in the youth category. In the literature class, two gold-level diplomas were awarded (to the Sibiu County Philatelists’

Association for “A Brief History of Sibiu Philately” and to Maximaphiles Français for “Secrets of the Collections – Maximaphily”), along with two large vermeil and five vermeil diplomas.

To mark the event, the organizers produced a range of materials (invitation and poster, envelope and special postmark, maximum card, badge, and exhibition medal), which were distributed free of charge to all exhibitors and contributors.



Additionally, Romanian Post issued three prepaid postcards for the event, which could be mailed directly from the postal counter set up at the exhibition.

Participants from Romania and the guest countries also visited the ASTRA County Library, the Brukenthal National Museum, Sibiu’s historic center, and the ASTRA Museum of Traditional Folk Civilization, and took part in the philatelic fair.

The exhibition proved to be a fruitful meeting of maximaphilists from Romania and abroad, and we are confident that the connections formed will continue in the years to come.

Congratulations to the organizers and participants for a memorable edition in which maximaphily once again brought together hearts and friendships among collectors from Romania, France, Italy, and the Republic of Moldova!



75th Anniversary of The Union of Philatelists of Macedonia

The Union of Philatelists of Macedonia is celebrating its anniversary this year, 75 years since its founding. In 1950, a group of enthusiasts from various professions, lawyers, economists, doctors, bankers, engineers, united their interest to develop their hobby in an organized manner.

The result of their activities was an increase in the number of members, issuing newsletters and publications and participation in the compilation of the Program for the issuance of new stamps. In the following years, the members of the Association participated in philatelic exhibitions organized in the former Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia, and over time they were trusted, leadership positions in the Association of Philatelists of Yugoslavia.



It has to be noted the high level of our friendly relations and mutual support aimed at enriching the forms of philatelic manifestations.

In honor of the Union of Philatelists of Macedonia, the Post of the Republic of North Macedonia contributes to this anniversary and issues today a commemorative stamp and a First Day Cover. This anniversary philatelic material has been sent to Federations with friendly philatelic greetings hoping that it will be permanently preserved in their archive.

The Federation of Turkish Philatelic Societies

New Board Members 2025-2027

The Federation of Turkish Philatelic Societies' current Board of Directors was unanimously re-elected for the 2025-2027 term during the election held on 22 November 2025.



Serving on the new Board are Ziya Ađaođulları, President; Arman Arıkan, General Secretary; Murat Hazinedarođlu, Vice President; Edip Ađaođulları, Vice President; Cengiz Ülkerdođan, Treasurer; Mehmet Akan, Coordinator; and Atadan Tunacı, Muzaffer Arda, Nihat imrin, Yama Erhan, Murat elebi, Can Dengey, and Serdar Yazgan, Members.



The Italian Song in Italy, Greece and the World

On Wednesday, December 17th, the Music and Theater group of the New Chalkidona “Open Care for the Elderly Centre” organized a lecture on the topic “Italian Song in Italy, Greece, and around the World” with employment of philatelic material.



The speaker at the event Pantelis Leoussis, musician and president of the Panhellenic Thematic Philately and Youth Association, was accompanied by digital music and sound support.



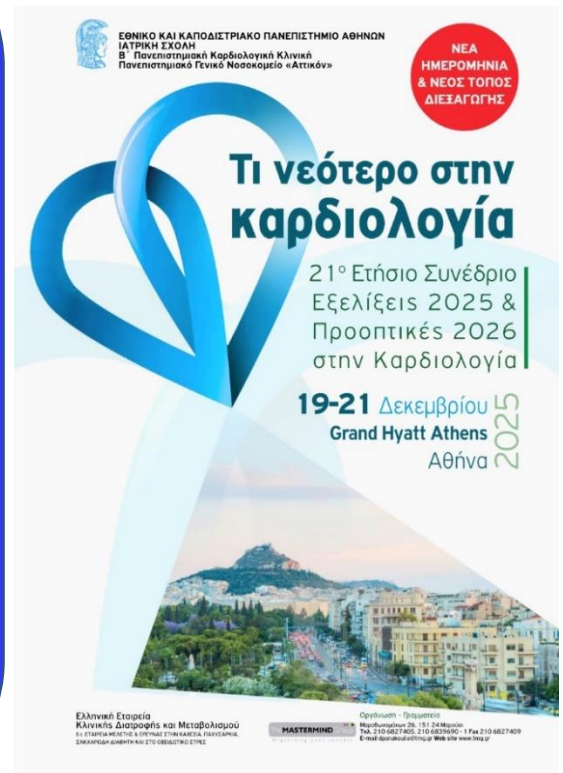
The participants enjoyed the event as they remembered and sang beloved, old Italian tunes.

Philately is present at a Heart Congress

The 21st Annual Congress on “2025 Advances 2025 and 2026 Perspectives in Cardiology” was organized by the 2nd Cardiology Clinic of the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens from December 19th to 21st at the Athens Grand Hyatt.

During the Congress, Dimitris Giannoglou a military cardiologist and a keen collector displayed his one-frame philatelic collection themed : “Heart and Stamp” with stamps related the various cardiology practices.

This philatelic exhibit was well-received by the medical participants of the Congress as it was both unanticipated and of targeted interest.

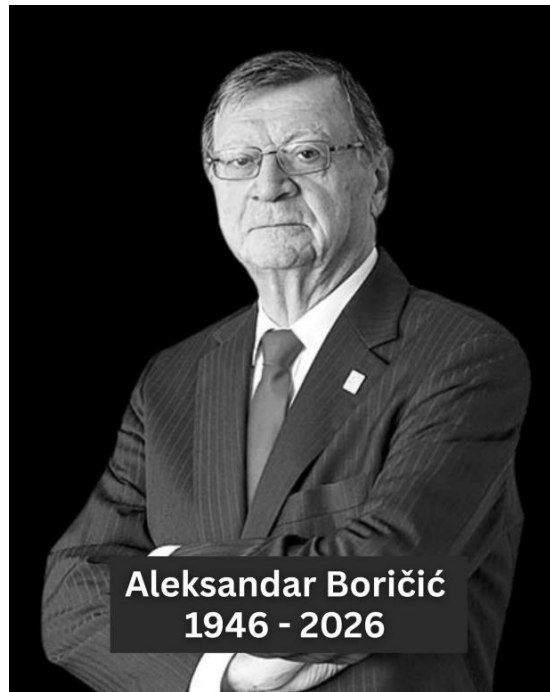


The entire one-frame collection can be seen at the following link:

<https://www.efo.gr/wp-content/uploads/2025/12/HEART-on-STAMPS-pdf.pdf>

Aleksandar Boričić, doyen of Serbian philately passed way

We are saddened to announce that Aleksandar Boričić, doyen of Serbian philately, distinguished exhibitor and former President of the Union of Philatelists of Serbia, has passed away.



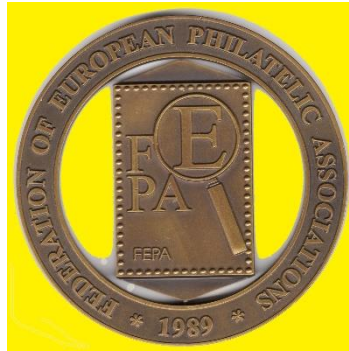
Union of Philatelists of Serbia

As a philatelist, he was a tireless collector and a profound connoisseur of philatelic material across a wide spectrum, leaving an indelible mark on Serbian philately. As an exhibitor, he was the most awarded Serbian philatelist, receiving numerous gold medals at world, regional and national philatelic exhibitions for several exhibits, including “Postal History of Montenegro 1799–1916,” “Serbia Postal History 1755–1915,” “First World War in Serbia,” “The Usage of Postage Due Issues of Serbia,” and “Partisan Correspondence of Yugoslavia 1943–1945.”

For his exhibit “Serbia Postal History 1755–1915,” he was also awarded the Grand Prix at the regional exhibition BALKANFILA 2012.

His approach to philately and his understanding of it as cultural heritage will remain a lasting inspiration for future generations.

FEPA Certificates of Appreciation 2025



In 2025, Twelve Philatelic Societies from across Europe and two individuals were eligible to receive the 2025 FEPA Certificate of Appreciation. Five of the 2025 awarded Societies are members of Balkanfila group Philatelic Federations.

2025 Philatelic Societies that received the FEPA Certificate of Appreciation :

- **Varna Philatelic Society (Bulgaria)**
- **Philatelic Society Trbovlje (Slovenia)**
- **Philatelic Society of Lesvos (Greece)**
- **Themaphila (Belgium)**
- **Philatelic Association of Sibiu County (Romania)**
- **Association Philatelique et Numismatique Carcassonnaise (France)**
- **Hamburger Verein für Briefmarkenkunde (Germany)**
- **Ankara Philatelic Society (Turkey)**
- **Philatelic Society of Tampere (Finland)**
- **Unione Siciliana Collezionisti (Italy)**
- **Liberec 2025 (Czech Republic)**
- **West Riding Stamp Club (United Kingdom)**

Awarded Individuals:

- **Francisc Ambrus (Romania)**
- **Vladimír Münzberger (Czech Republic)**

FEPA Certificate of Appreciation : Francisc Ambrus



Born in 1956 in a country where philately was the only contact with the outside world, starting with simple stamp collections and in 1968 became a member of the first philatelic club. For 20 years, he studied paper types, watermarks, perforations, errors, printing.

His desire to be helpful made him co-opted into the teams organizing and setting up national philatelic exhibitions, actively helping and participating in these for over 40 years.

For the last 26 years he has been voluntarily involved in the design of stamps, medals, posters, catalogs and award lists at over 12 national exhibitions. From 1998 to 2007, he started opening personal exhibitions with the beautiful world of Scripophily (old bonds and stocks), 5 editions with the History Museum of Bucharest, 2 with the National Bank of Romania and 2 with the Bucharest Stock Exchange.

Been nominated national commissioner for over 20 international and world exhibitions.

Published a number of articles about the exhibitions and participated as a national commissioner or exhibitor, wrote philatelic study articles in several Romanian magazines, and from 2000 to 2018 he managed and designed the website of the Romanian Philatelic Federation.

Since 1998 he got seriously involved with the forgotten field of fiscal stamps and contributed to 40 personal participations and with 10 different exhibits. Created his personal website dedicated to Romanian revenues. (<http://www.revenues.ro/pagini/exponat.php>). In 2006, has opened a personal exhibition for a month in the center of Bucharest dedicated to the 150th anniversary of the appearance of the first tax stamp in Romania, (<http://www.revenues.ro/pagini/150ani.htm>), followed in the spring of 2026 year by a new commemorative exhibition at the Chisinau City Museum.

In 2008, was appointed as a member of the Bureau of FIP Revenue Commission for 2 terms until 2016, for which he created pro-bono the dedicated commission website (<http://fip-revenue.org>), maintained until 2022 which will be moved to the FIP platform.

Also dealt with fiscal philately in the Balkans and in 2009, became a member of the Union of Bulgarian Philatelists. Since then, has participated in 4 national and 2 international exhibitions with exhibits of the first Bulgarian fiscal issues and currently has three exhibits with different Bulgarian fiscal stamps with historical continuity.

Thanks to his guidance and promotion of fiscal philately, a Moldovan citizen and a young Bulgarian have already participated in three international exhibitions where they received LV and G medals. In addition, in Romania, as President of the Revenue Stamp Commission, over the years he has helped build and display 12 more fiscal exhibits belonging to 8 other philatelists. (<http://www.revenues.ro/pagini/alteexpo.php>) and in 2009, he opened the pro-bono website (<http://www.balkanfila.eu/index.php>), a meeting point for philately in the Balkans.

In 2019, he also became an active member of the Union of Philatelists of the Republic of Moldova to actively help philately in this small Republic, participating in two national exhibitions there.

In recent years, became active in online groups promoting exhibitions and philatelic activity, publishing short articles to regain young people's attention to philately, attention disrupted by far too many free online opportunities.

Acquired his philatelic training through the several dozen philatelic seminars organized within all the exhibitions that had participated. In recent years served as a juror at 5 regional and 4 world exhibitions, culminating in the position of Commissioner General of a world exhibition in 2024, organizer of an FIP Philatelic Academy and juror at two classes. Became a fully qualified FIP juror for the OPEN (2022) and REVENUES (2025) classes.

For 10 years he coordinated managed and arranged the over 2000 square meters of the permanent philatelic exhibition of the Museum of Romanian Records, that includes the greatest Romanian philatelic rarities, thanks to the goodwill and financial involvement of the owner of this unique museum, Mr. Ion Chirescu.

His apprehension is related to the massive decline in interest among young Europeans in philately and believes it is high time to raise awareness and find new solutions to attract young people.

He believes that the extremely low or completely non-existent government or postal financial support for philatelic exhibition does not mean the death of large-scale exhibitions, by saying that in 2024 EFIRO exhibition in Bucharest -with very low government support- was a successful a world exhibition.

Last but not least he is grateful to his family for their constant support of his 55-year philatelic journey.

In recognition of his long and extensive philatelic contribution, Francisc Ambrus received the 2025 FEPA Certificate of Appreciation.

FEPA MEDAL 2025 for Exceptional Study and Research



Medal awarded to : **Călin Gheorghe Marinescu (Romania)**

for 40 Years of the Romanian Postal History 1830–1869.

The author, Romania's leading philatelic researcher, has published over 400 articles and 16 volumes since 1984, becoming a central figure in Romanian postal history. His latest two-volume work is a valuable piece of fundamental research, serving both as a primary source and as a reference book. Its bilingual format enables it to reach a global audience. A tremendous amount of effort has gone into locating and studying historical documents, not to mention translating them into English. The book addresses all the essential aspects of its subject. It provides an excellent basis for further research, enabling the original texts to be interpreted and made more accessible to a wider readership.

A special event in a special place

Francisc AMBRUȘ

On February 26, 2026, the Romanian Records Museum hosted a very special event. The launch of the postage stamp issue dedicated to the celebration of the 100th anniversary of the founding of the International Philatelic Federation (F.I.P.). Why was the event held here?

The choice of venue had strong symbolic and thematic relevance.

The launch was organized by ROMFILATELIA, Romanian Post and Romanian Philatelic Federation at the Museum of Romanian Records because the institution is dedicated to outstanding achievements and record-setting milestones.

This matched Romfilatelia's intention to unveil a new world record - the smallest postage stamp from the modern and contemporary era, following its 2025 achievement of issuing the world's longest stamp.

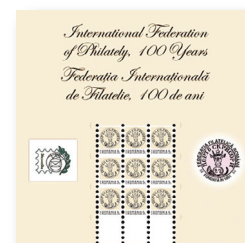
The issue released by Romfilatelia, consists of one postage stamp, one perforated souvenir sheet, a First Day Cover, in Liliput size (130 × 90 mm) and a philatelic folder with special products in limited run printing, marks a world philatelic premiere: the world's smallest postage stamp. <https://filatelia.ro/albume-si-mape-filatelice/federatia-internationala-de-filatelie-100-de-ani-mapa-filatelica-2026-1p-2554b.html>



The smallest postage stamp, designer: George Ursachi



Special folder dedicated to the 100th anniversary of FIP



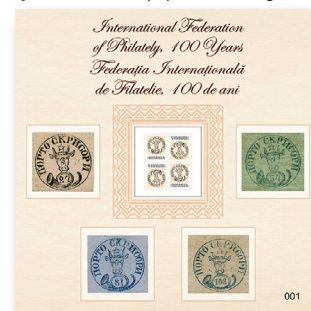
The souvenir sheet, was designed by Tudor Banuș, painter, engraver



Perforated souvenir sheet dedicated to 100 years of FIP, designer: Tudor Banuș



FDC dedicated to 100 years of FIP



Imperforate block of 4 stamps on the folder dedicated to 100 years of FIP

At the same time, the stamp issue celebrated 100 years of the Fédération Internationale de Philatélie (F.I.P.), giving the event both commemorative and record-setting significance. The venue was even more appropriate because the Museum of Romanian Records hosts a unique global philatelic collection dedicated to F.I.P. activity:

- the largest collection of materials from F.I.P. exhibitions and congresses since its founding in 1926ș
- a display spread across more than 100 showcases, documenting the evolution of international philately.

Together, these elements explain the choice of location:

• the museum represents both record achievement and philatelic heritage, making it an ideal and traditional host for such landmark launches.

The event brought together key institutions and a diverse cultural audience. It was attended by representatives of ROMFILATELIA, the Romanian Philatelic Federation, and the Museum of Romanian Records, alongside personalities from the art world, art critics, stamp collectors, and members of the public interested in philatelic field.



Mr. Gabriel-Florin Bulumac, General Director of ROMFILATELIA



Arch. Ion CHIRESCU, president of Romanian Philatelic Federation and owner of the Museum of Romanian Records



...Mr. Alexandru Dan Bartoc, curator F.I.P. collection, Mr. Victor Bota, Director of the 'Romanian Remarkable Records' Foundation, Mr. Gabriel-Florin Bulumac, General Director of ROMFILATELIA, Mrs. Luminita Toncu, Promotion Director ROMFILATELIA, Mr. Ion Chirescu, president of Romanian Philatelic Federation and owner of the Museum of Romanian Records, Mr. Pavel Șușară, art critics and historians, Mr. Petru Dumitriu, member of the Philatelic Commission

...Mr. Mihai Bota, videographer photographer, Mr. Victor Bota, Director of the 'Romanian Remarkable Records' Foundation, Mrs. Simona Chirescu, Mr. Alexandru-Dan Bartoc, Mr. Ion Chirescu, owner of the Museum of Romanian Records, Pavel Șușară, art critics and historians member of the Philatelic Commission.

From the participants' perspective, the event was considered a clear success, both symbolically and institutionally.

Beyond marking the centenary of the Fédération Internationale de Philatélie (F.I.P.), the launch strengthened collaboration between ROMFILATELIA and the Romanian Philatelic Federation. The presence of leading figures from the art world, philatelists, collectors, and cultural representatives created a constructive atmosphere of dialogue and mutual appreciation. Participants highlighted:

- the renewal of institutional ties between ROMFILATELIA and the Romanian Philatelic Federation.
- a shared commitment to promoting philately at national and international level.
- the reaffirmation of Romania's active role within the global philatelic community.

In this respect, the event was not only a commemorative and record-setting moment, but also an important step toward consolidating partnerships and revitalizing cooperation within the Romanian philatelic sphere.



...Mrs. Luminita Toncu viewing the FIP collection



...both, Mr. President of the Romanian Philatelic Federation and General Director of ROMFILATELIA, discussing about FIP collections



...Lixandru Onel, Head of Domestic Sales Service ROMFILATELIA

We extend our sincere thanks to the organizers and key contributors who made the event possible:

Mr. Gabriel-Florin Bulumac, Mr. Ion Chirescu, Mr. Victor Bota, Mr. Alexandru-Dan Bartoc, Mr. Romeo Mincă the president and the board members of the Bucharest Philatelists Association, members of the National Philatelic Commission, philatelists and the Museum team.

Their dedication ensured the success of a milestone event that celebrated both the 100th anniversary of the Fédération Internationale de Philatélie (F.I.P.) and the setting of a new world record in modern postage stamps.



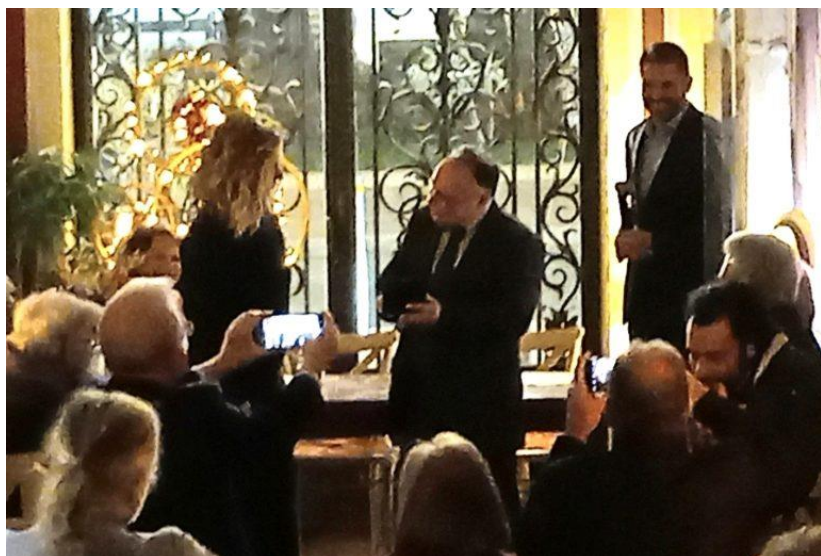
...extended family, organisers, museologists, collectors, enthusiasts

Hellenic Philatelic Society

Medals Ceremony

On Monday January 16th on the Event Hall of prestigious “Black Duck” Café, located at the ground floor of Athens City Museum, the Hellenic Philatelic Society presented the Medal of Exceptional services to Philately to the awardees of the years 2022 to 2025.

For 2022 the Medal was awarded to Pantelis Leoussis, for 2023 to two distinguished philatelists Nikos Mallouchos and Socrates Bosovitch, for 2024 to Costas Chazapis and for 2025 to Dr. Myrsini Vardopoulou.



This event was a pleasant encounter of several, brave philatelists that faced the cold, windy weather to participated in order to congratulate in person their distinguished and awarded fellows.

The “S. Macrymihalos” Award for the Best Article of “PHILOTELIA” Journal



The “S. Macrymihalos” for the Best Article published in Hellenic Philatelic Society’s Journal “PHILOTELIA” for year 2025, following the internet voting of the Society’s Members, was awarded to Manolis Koutsounakis for his article “The 1953 Ionian islands’ Earthquake and its impact on the Postal Service”.

*“PHILOTELIA” Journal Editor,
Costas Choudalakis (left) presents the Award
to the author of the article Manolis Koutsounakis (right).*

FEPA web meeting on “The Future of Stamp Exhibitions”

PART II

This is Part II of “The Future of Stamp Exhibitions” which is a vital issue of Organized Philately as we have entered a new communication era and the traditional postal environment has already undergone tectonic changes. The consultation the FEPA has initiated is beyond doubt a functional blueprint that not only points out specific weaknesses but it also proposes certain actions and practices across Organized Philately in Europe in order to go through.

Innovations and New Ideas

The results from the FEPA questionnaire and Zoom discussions demonstrate a remarkable level of creativity and experimentation across Europe. Many Federations are testing new formats that make exhibitions more accessible, educational, and adaptable to modern conditions – both online and offline.

These new exhibiting formats are :

Virtual Exhibitions as they are allowing on one hand collectors to display their material digitally and reach audiences far beyond national borders whilst on the other hand they do lower the barriers for participation, reduce costs, and create opportunities for new collectors who might never attend a physical show. When combined with the physical exhibition, it becomes a *hybrid exhibition* – reaching far beyond the visitors to the physical exhibition.

Youth Competitions and Educational Links in order to inspire the next generation, by launching youth competitions and school collaborations so students are able to see philately as both a creative and educational pursuit.

Exhibitions in Cultural Venues because this kind of partnerships elevate the status of exhibitions, presenting philately as a cultural and educational activity, not just a specialist hobby. They also connect philately with broader cultural themes such as art, history, and communication. By integrating exhibitions into established cultural venues, organizers attract new audiences and often benefit from logistical and promotional support.

Cross-Collector Joint Exhibitions and Fairs that combine philately with related hobbies such as numismatics, postcards, medals, or model trains. These multidisciplinary events expand the visitor base, attract families and general collectors, and strengthen philately's connection to the wider collecting community.

Innovative Exhibition Formats such as :

- **One-Frame** exhibitions allowing each exhibitor to show a single frame with contextual material and storytelling.
- **Contextual exhibits** where one frame is dedicated to everything around one single item: Who sent the letter? Who received the letter? What are the postmarks on the letter? What route did it go? – often supplemented with various historical documents and focusing on narrative and presentation rather than competition according to the current rules.
- **Non-competitive exhibits** as an option for new exhibitors interested in exhibiting.
- **Short exhibitor presentations** – typically 20 minutes at the frames – giving visitors a personal introduction to the exhibit and strengthening interaction.
- **QR codes** at frames linking to short **YouTube videos** where exhibitors present their work.

These ideas make exhibitions more dynamic, educational, and appealing to casual visitors.

Micro and Specialized Exhibitions

The concept of micro-exhibitions – smaller, low-cost, one-day events – has gained strong interest. These exhibitions often feature one to three frames per exhibitor and can be hosted in community centres or libraries. They require minimal logistics and can be repeated several times a year, reaching local audiences more frequently. Similarly, specialized one-class exhibitions or one-page exhibits allow collectors to focus on a narrow theme, reducing costs while encouraging creativity and experimentation. Also, exhibitions that only physically show the first frame of a multi-frame exhibit – with the rest only available online – are proving successful.

Reduced Physical Capacity and Practical Solutions

Many federations note that the aging profile of organizers and volunteers brings practical challenges – particularly with the physical work of setting up and dismantling exhibition frames. The traditional reliance on collectors for these demanding tasks is becoming unsustainable. A creative response has been the “HAFNIA solution”, where the organizers hired a local youth organization to handle the physical labour under supervision. The young helpers needed initial guidance, but quickly became efficient, and the collaboration provided the youth organization with both income and insight into the world of philately. This approach proved highly effective and could serve as a model for other exhibitions facing similar capacity issues.

Developing New Exhibitors

One of the most promising initiatives is the Netherlands' "1+1+1" exhibitor training model – a three-day format where participants receive guidance, prepare exhibits at home between sessions, and return for feedback. This structured approach has proven effective in turning collectors into confident exhibitors and could be replicated across other federations.

Overcoming the Challenges

It is acknowledged that Virtual Exhibitions cannot fully replace the social, emotional, and commercial aspects of traditional events.

Still Virtual exhibitions could offer instead certain advantages :

- Virtual dealer stands linked to online shops or video sessions.
- Hybrid opening ceremonies, award presentations, and juror feedback sessions hosted on Zoom.
- QR codes placed at physical frames that lead to videos where exhibitors explain their material – merging the physical and digital worlds.

These innovations demonstrate that technology, when thoughtfully applied, can enhance rather than replace the philatelic experience.

The Path Forward

Virtual and hybrid exhibitions represent a strategic opportunity for European philately. They allow Federations to stay relevant in a digital age, maintain international participation, and engage collectors who cannot travel. The most promising path forward will likely combine both worlds:

- Physical exhibitions for personal interaction, social connection, and dealer activity.
- Virtual and hybrid components for education, reach, and long-term visibility.

In the years ahead, success will depend not on choosing one format over the other, but on integrating them intelligently – ensuring that every exhibition, large or small, physical or digital, contributes to keeping philately visible, accessible, and alive for future generations

Digital Solutions and Innovation

As exhibitions evolve, so too must the tools that support them. Across Europe, federations are beginning to integrate digital solutions that make philatelic exhibitions easier to access, more interactive for visitors, and more efficient for organizers. Digital technology is no longer an optional add-on; it is becoming a natural extension of the exhibition experience.

Emerging Technologies

Beyond the current digital tools, several innovative technologies hold promise for the next generation of philatelic exhibitions:

- **Augmented Reality (AR)** – allowing visitors to point their smartphones at a frame and see extra information, animations, or videos overlaid on the display.
- **Virtual Reality (VR)** – offering immersive tours of exhibitions that can be visited remotely, either through web browsers or VR headsets.
- **AI-based translation tools** – enabling international visitors to read exhibit texts in their own language instantly, breaking language barriers.
- **Data analytics** – giving organisers real-time insight into visitor behaviour, popular exhibits, and online engagement.

Funding Models

Across Europe, funding remains one of the central challenges facing philatelic exhibitions. While enthusiasm and volunteer commitment remain high, the financial foundations of exhibitions have become increasingly fragile. Rising venue costs, higher insurance fees, and reduced public support mean that organizers must look for new and more sustainable funding models to keep exhibitions viable.

The Current Situation

The FEPA questionnaire revealed that a large majority of federations (86%) identify funding as their main concern when planning exhibitions.

Historically, many exhibitions benefited from postal administration sponsorship or government cultural grants. As postal services have commercialized and budgets tightened, such support has become rare. In most countries, national federations no longer receive annual grants. This new reality requires organizers to think more entrepreneurially and to build partnerships beyond traditional philatelic circles.

New Funding Approaches Emerging

A number of promising models and ideas are being tested across Europe such as : **Corporate Sponsorships, Partnerships with Museums and Cultural Institutions, Private Donors and Crowdfunding and Community Support:**

The Case for Smarter Cost Management

Funding is not only about generating more money – it is also about reducing and optimizing expenses.

- **Smaller, shorter, and more focused exhibitions** can significantly reduce costs while maintaining impact.
- **Hybrid exhibitions** require fewer physical frames and less venue space, cutting logistics costs.
- **Digital catalogues and QR codes** replace printing, while online registration systems save administrative time.

These practical measures are already being implemented by several federations and could be more widely adopted.

In the changing landscape of philately, effective marketing and visibility have become just as essential as the exhibits themselves.

Rethinking the Audience

The traditional audience of exhibitions – active collectors and exhibitors – remains at the core of the philatelic community. These participants are motivated by competition, recognition, and the joy of meeting peers. But to secure the future, exhibitions must expand their reach and address several new segments:

- **Returning collectors** in mid-life, who rediscover philately after a professional or family break.
- **Younger generations**, who respond better to visual, digital, and interactive formats.
- **Cultural visitors** interested in history, design, geography, or heritage – themes that connect naturally with stamps.
- **Local audiences**, who attend exhibitions hosted in their city as part of a wider cultural offering.

Tailoring messages to these groups requires modern communication channels and fresh storytelling.

The Shift Toward Digital Marketing

The most noticeable change in recent years is the growing importance of digital and social media. Many Federations now use Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, WhatsApp, and even TikTok to promote exhibitions. These platforms are inexpensive, visual, and allow federations to reach audiences beyond their traditional mailing lists.

- **Facebook** remains the dominant channel for collectors aged 50+, ideal for event announcements, exhibitor interviews, and photo albums.
- **Instagram** and **YouTube** work well for short, engaging visual content such as “behind-the-scenes” videos, award moments, or close-up images of exceptional exhibits.
- **Short-form video** is particularly effective in reaching new audiences: even a one-minute clip showing how a stamp tells a story can attract thousands of views.

Integrating Traditional and Modern Channels

While digital tools are essential, traditional communication still plays a valuable role – especially for reaching established collectors and older audiences. **Press releases in national philatelic magazines, collector newsletters, and local newspapers remain effective.**

Combining traditional and modern approaches provides the best results:

- **Announce the exhibition** in philatelic journals and on FEPA’s website.
- **Use local radio or TV** for interviews with organizers or exhibitors.
- **Place posters** in libraries, museums, and tourist information centres.
- **Share photo material** with the local press to increase chances of coverage.

This integrated communication ensures that exhibitions stay visible to both loyal and new audiences.

Storytelling: Turning Exhibitions into Narratives

Modern audiences respond to stories rather than statistics. Instead of focusing solely on technical achievements, organisers can present exhibitions through human stories – about collectors, discoveries, or historical themes illustrated by stamps.

Examples include:

- **“A journey through Europe’s Postal History”**
- **“When design met diplomacy: stamps that changed history”**
- **“Collecting the world, one stamp at a time”**

This type of storytelling can be used in press releases, social media posts, and exhibition displays, making philately accessible and relatable.

Developing Communication Skills

Several federations noted that philatelists often lack formal training in marketing or public communication. There is a growing need for training workshops on public relations, media handling, and social media strategy.

Leveraging Events and Influencers

Philatelic exhibitions can also benefit from partnerships with influencers or online content creators who specialize in history, collecting, or education. Collaborations with YouTubers, Instagram storytellers who highlight cultural content could bring philately to new audiences. Some federations already experiment with live streaming of award ceremonies or guided tours on social media platforms – combining real-time interaction with digital reach.

The future visibility of exhibitions will depend on communication that is inclusive, modern, and creative. The formula is clear:

- **Combine digital and traditional outreach.**
- **Use storytelling to make philately human and accessible.**
- **Build partnerships that connect exhibitions to cultural and local life.**
- **Provide training and coordination to strengthen professional communication skills.**

With these elements in place, European philatelic exhibitions can move from being events known only to collectors to becoming recognized cultural experiences – open, visible, and inspiring for a much wider audience.

The Role of FEPA: Let's Experiment Together!

FEPA currently recognizes exhibitions under two main categories: FEPA Patronage (continental) and FEPA Recognition (regional and bilateral).

Discussions during the Zoom meetings proposed introducing new levels such as FEPA Regional Patronage and FEPA Specialized Patronage. The FEPA Board will be working on this.

FEPA encourages Federations in Europe to experiment with new ways of conducting exhibitions. Please send descriptions of your ideas and innovations, so we can share them with all other Federations through our website, newsletters, and magazine.

The present article was based on the comprehensive FEPA Report.

The full Report can be reached at : <https://fepanews.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/FEPA-REPORT-The-Future-of-Stamp-Exhibitions.pdf>

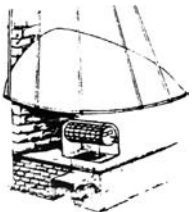
Quarantine cordon in the Danubian Principates Wallachia and Moldova

Francisc Ambrus

Austrian autochthonous quarantine. In the first decades of the 19th century, plague and cholera were frequent epidemics, brought from Asia through Russia and Turkey. The Habsburg Empire ordered the establishment of an external quarantine cordon in Serbia, Bosnia, Bulgaria, Transylvania and Banat in order to stop the entry of diseases into the empire. Among the disinfection points, the largest number of letters was transited through Semlin (Zemun), followed by Turnu Rosu. As sanitary measures, quarantine and disinfection points were established at the border points. A number of 9 quarantine stations were established in Austria in contingency with the quarantine localities on the left and the right bank of the Danube and on the border secured by the Carpathian Mountains: SEMLIN (Zemun), ALT-ORSOVA, SHUPPANEK (Jupalnic), TORZBURG (Vulcan), ROTHENTHURN (Turnu Rosu), TÖMÖS (Timis), OJTOS (Oituz), TÖLGYES, BOJAN (Poiana). Disinfection is carried out by border guards under the guidance of a doctor. All border quarantine points with Moldova and Wallachia, were subordinated to the headquarter in Hermannstadt (Sibiu).



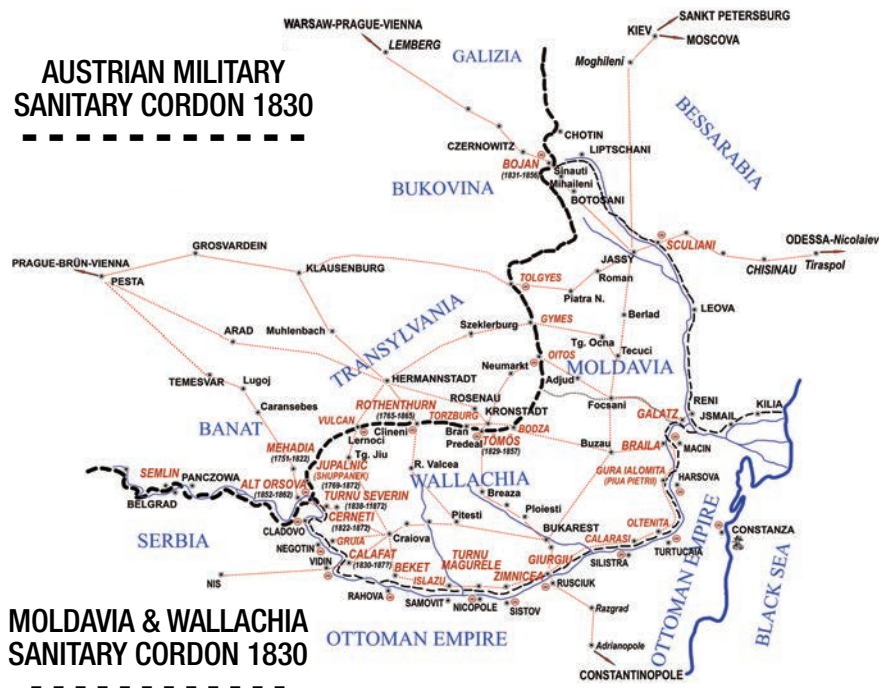
Disinfecting tools



The establishment of the quarantine post at Turnu Rosu dates back to 1765 and was placed outside the localities so that possible cases of plague would not be transmitted to the inhabitants. Disinfection and quarantine were carried out under the supervision of the border troops. The staff consisted of a director of the quarantine and disinfection station, a priest, a doctor, a goods supervisor, a letter smoker and helpers.

ROTHENTHURN quarantine

Letters were disinfected by smoking or treating them with vinegar vapors or other acidic substances. In the first period, the letters were disinfected by soaking them in vinegar, the process leading to the deterioration of the writing, making it indecipherable. The quarantine regulation issued by the Postal Directorate from Sibiu and republished in 1830 through articles 41-43 modifies this system and shows how this disinfection should be carried out in practice. Since the letters, pierced with an awl and soaked in vinegar, were deteriorating, the disinfection stations were equipped with special devices. The letters were punched or opened and placed in the device that had three overlapping floors. In the lower one there were burning coals, in the second an acidic substance, and in the third a grill on which the holed or open letter was placed. The operation takes about 8 minutes.

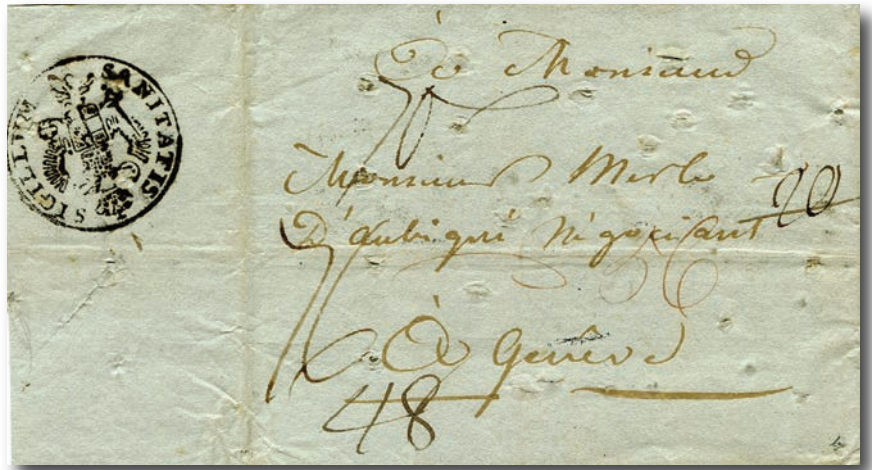


NETTO DI FUORA E SPORCO DI DENTRO
100% copy of Rothenthurn quarantine
negative seal confirms external and
internal cleaning

1797 (April 17) Unpaid letter 1 loth sent from SMIRNE to London. Letter sent via Vienna, smoked, resealed on the back applied 'NETTO DI FUORA E SPORCO DI DENTRO' Rothenthurn quarantine black ink seal. Rate: Austria 8 kr, British 2 Shilling. **The only one reported on this route during this period.**

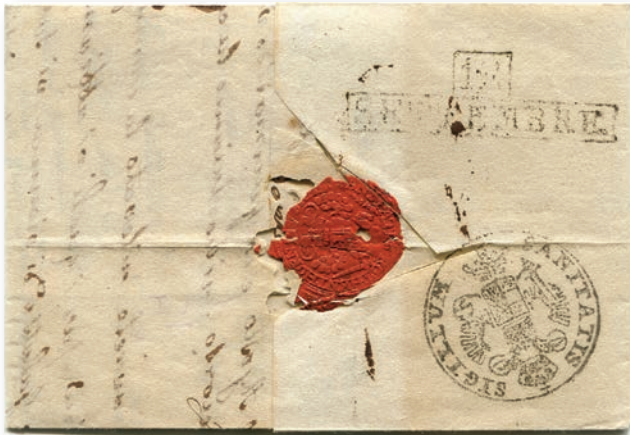


SANITATIS SIGILLUM
100% copy of Rothenthurn quarantine negative seal confirms external cleanings



1815 (Aug. 10) Unpaid letter 2 loth sent from Constantinople to Geneva. Letter sent via Vienna, smoked, resealed on the back applied 'SANITATIS SIGILLUM' Rothenthurn quarantine black ink seal. Rate: Austria 48 kr.

The earliest use of the red wax seal to certify disinfection inside the letter would be the year 1811. According to the specialized literature, it would be the first attestation of the use of this wax seal. It is a letter presented in frame 2. Interesting are the changes that occurred over time. Initially the word ROTHERNTHURN had the last letters joined by extending the letter R. After that, instead of U, the letter V appears. And finally the word is correctly written with all the letters equally spaced.



Reduced copy of front side



SIGIL:SANITATIS ROTHENTHURN
150% copy of Rothenthurn quarantine red wax seal confirms internal cleaning

1818 (Aug. 10) Unpaid letter 1 loth sent from Constantinople to Firenze. Letter sent via Vienna, smoked, resealed on the back applied red wax seal 'SIGIL:SANITATIS ROTHENTHURN' and 'SANITATIS SIGILLUM' Rothenthurn quarantine black ink seal (cleaned inside and out). Rate: Austria 24 kr, Papal States 6 Bajochi.

The only official letter sent by the General Directorate of Quarantines on special paper with a watermark. Even though it is marked 'Exoffo' (Exempt from postage) by hand, the letter was taxed upon arrival. The letter was not disinfected but is interesting for the special red seal of the quarantine directorate.



150% copy of backside with red seal of Quarantine General Directorate
K.K.CONTUMAZ AMT AN ROTHENTHURN IN SIEBENBURG

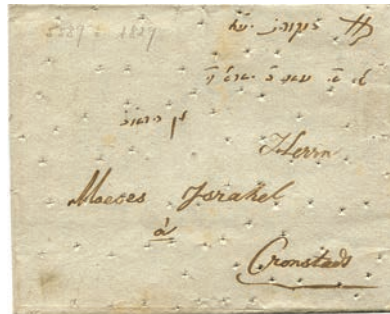


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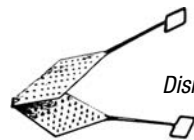
1827 (Dec. 17): Official letter sent from Rothenthurn Quarantine General Directorate to Semlin, charged 28 kr (Postage to be collected from the party concerned). Red wax seal K.K.CONTUMAZ AMT AN ROTHENTHURN IN SIEBENBURG: applied on back. Rate Austria 28 kr. The only official letter sent by the General Directorate of Quarantines known.

TÖMÖS quarantine

Located on the Hungarian-Romanian border in Transylvania, one quarter mile from Wallachia, operated together with Tortzburg and Bodza under frontier commando located in Kronstadt, the southeast portion of the Outer Military-Sanitary Cordon, against the Ottoman Empire. In all articles and specialized books, the period of operation of the quarantine is indicated as 1841 to 1858. The famous researcher Karl Mayer knew only two letters when he wrote his memorable book. Two other researchers indicate a single piece each and Dr. Hedy Faibel indicates six more copies, all circulated between 1841-1858. Another 15 letters from this collection come to complete the information already published. The letter presented below confirms and fills the information gap. Initially, the first process for purification was the piercing (drilling) of the letters with a special device, then putting them in a disinfection oven for 10-20 minutes with special tongs and fumigating them with disinfectant vapors (sulphides, chlorine, aromatic plants). The process often resulted in damage to the writing. Sometimes the letters were disinfected open, then sealed with a red wax seal that was inscribed with the place and type of quarantine. The stages and manner of carrying out the quarantine are still unclear. Very few letters from different periods show traces of punctures, most of them without punctures, only with the stamp certifying the quarantine. Dr. Hedy Faibel mentions in an article that after 1855 in the Austrian Empire, the use of disinfection certification stamps stopped. Towards the end of the quarantine period, stabbing devices with 13 mm long linear blades were used. Difficult to determine because not all transit offices applied the stamps and routes to the destination, often they are unknown. In the collection there are a number of 15 letters sent from Bucharest, Galati, Braila, Focsani via Hermannstadt, between the years 1855-1860, which show this method of stabbing, but do not show any other clear indications about the place of quarantine.



Reduced copy of front side



Disinfecting tools

K.K. CONTUMAZ AMT
ZU TOEMOS SIEBENBURGEN"
150% copy quarantine red
wax seal



1829ca (??): Disinfected folded letter, written in Hebrew (Ladino) in 5589 sent from BUKAREST to Kronstadt (today Brasov in Romania), initiated punch holes and smoked, resealed with the wax seal of the quarantine station Toemos "K.K. CONTUMAZ AMT ZU TÖEMÖS" (The Royal and Imperial Office of the Timis Quarantine). Rate: Austria 2 kr. **The only recorded with Tömös wax seal quarantine**



SANITATIS SIGILUM TOMOS
100% copy of quarantine
negative seal
confirms external cleanings

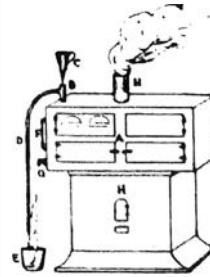


Disinfecting tools

1843 (Feb. 5) Private forwarding agents. Private letter sent by an agent accompanying a transport of sugar, from BRASOV (Transylvania) to Giurgiu. The letter was quarantined for 10 days along with the transport of food. Letter fumigated and applied the quarantine station Timis "TÖMÖS SANITATIS SIGILUM" black carbon seal.



Reduced copy of front side



Disinfesting tools with vinegar vapor

1855 (Nov. 7) Forwarded letter from BRAILA to Paris via Bucharest with Austrian consular post and Hermannstadt (Transsylvania). Letter disinfested with vinegar vapor and applied the quarantine station Timis "TÖMÖS SANITATIS SIGILIUM" black carbon seal. Rate: Austria 6 kr CM, France 29 decimes.

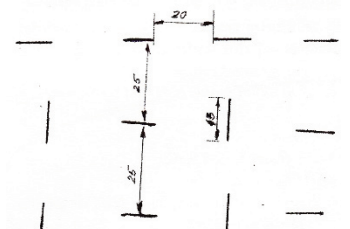
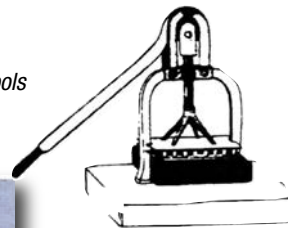


Reduced copy of front side

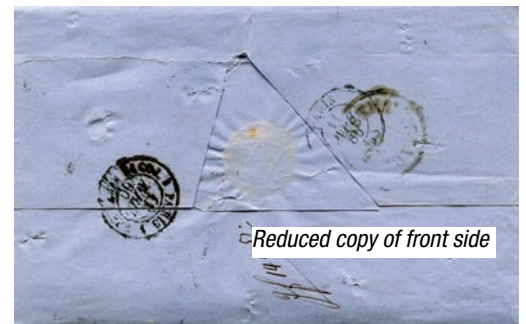


1855 (Aug 2): Prepaid letter 1½ Loth from Bucharest to Lyon, via Hermannstadt, circle BUKAREST 2/8 date pmk. Disinfested at the Tömös quarantine applied black carbon seal 'SANITATIS SIGILUM TOMOS', FRANCO Austrian pmk. in oval applied to confirm payment. Rate: Levant 6 kr, Austria 23 kr.

Disinfesting tools



Tomos quarantine linear cuts



Reduced copy of front side

1860 (April. 3): Commercial Rothschild unpaid letter 1 Loth from Bucharest to Paris 11/4, tranzit Hermannstadt 6/4, Austria Erquelines 11/4. tied by BUKAREST 3/4 pmk. Disinfested at the Tomos quarantine (linear cuts) Rastel No 1445. Rate: France 10 decimes.

SHUPPANEK Quarantine

Significant Austrian quarantine offices were located in Schuppanek (Zsuppanek, Neu Schpparetz) near Orsova and a little further north in Mehadia. There are indications that mail from Constantinople was transported to Austria through these quarantine offices in exceptional circumstances. The Schuppanek quarantine station reopens to an official order no. 136 of February 7, 1775. Letters from around 1821 and 1822 are particularly shown in the literature, which were disinfected there. The fact that Kontumazamt Schuppanek was used during this period is mainly due to the fact that the revolutionary movement in Wallachia in 1821/22 under Tudor Vladimirescu exercised power, which is why the postal route Constantinople - Vienna via Bucharest was closed. The quarantine in Schuppanek, located upstream from Orsova, was apparently initially responsible for the official quarantine treatment of travelers and goods coming from the Lower Danube to Austria on DDSG ships. A common regulation of k.k. The Ministries of War, Finance and Commerce of June 26, 1851 in the course of regulating and simplifying kontumaz and customs treatment in § 9 provides that: „ the facility (there is) that trips and their effects are not subject to the official act of the medical authority in the Kontumaz institution in Schuppanek, as was the case previously, but in Orsova, where all incidental procedures are performed at the same time..."



1838 (June 13): Prepaid valuable letter (in value of 236 Fr 26 centimes) 2 loth sent from Vidin to Pesth. Money letter sent via Alt-Orsova, smoked, resealed on the back applied 'SIGILLUM SANITATIS' Shuppanek quarantine black ink seal. Rate: Austria 22 kr. **The only known letter of value transited this route, only two quarantine seals of this type reported in all the literature.**

Reduced copy of front side



K.K.SHUPP:CONTUMAZAMT
140% copy quarantine
red wax seal Type 2 Small



K.K.SHUPP:CONTUMAZAMT
140% copy quarantine
red wax seal Type 1 Big



SIGILLUM SANITATIS
100% copy of quarantine
negative seal SHUPPANEK
confirm external cleanings



Reduced copy of front side



1844 (Aug.4/16): Unpaid folded letter, sent from TIRNOVO to Pesth, smoked, resealed with the red wax seal of the austrian quarantine station JUPALNIC (SHUPPANEK) "K.K.SHUPP:CONTUMAZAMT" type 2.

ALT-ORSOVA quarantine

ALT-ORSOVA, river quarantine station for ships ascending the Danube at the frontier of the Banat and Wallachia, used two types of disinfection cachets and manuscript certification on letters entering Austria from Serbia and the Balkans. Demidoff briefly commented on the operation of the quarantine facility in Alt-Orsova around 1837.

The Rastelamt in Alt-Orsova later played a fairly prominent role, as there essentially the mail exchange between the Austrian Post and the DDSG, among other things, for places on the lower Danube. In the literature there are reports of disinfection in Alt-Orsova in the period from October 4, 1852 to October 12, 1862, namely with regard to shipments from Krajova, but also from Widdin, Ibraila, Galatz and Constantinople



Gereiniget b.k.k. Rastelamte
ALT-ORSOVA
Copy of quarantine negative
seal Alt-Orsova confirm
external cleanings

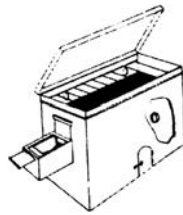


Reduced copy of front side

1859 (July. 24): Partially paid disinfected letter from BRAILA to Marseille. On the back mentioned 'Gereiniget b.k.k. Rastelamte ALT-ORSOVA' (Cleaned on the rack Old Orsova) quarantine black ink seal. Rate: Austria 12 kr CM, France 10 decimes



Reduced copy of front side



Fumigation
disinfection
device



Disinfecting tools



1858 (Jan. 28): Unpaid letter sent from CRAIOVA to Vienna. Letter sent with DDSG vesels. On the back mentioned 'Gereiniget b.k.k. Rastelamte ALT-ORSOVA' quarantine black ink seal. Rate: Austria 24 kr CM



Postmark reproduction
'Cleaned on the rack Old Orsova'
"K.K. ALT-ORSOVA RASTELAMT
Passen: Person:
18 13/7 59"
Unrecorded pmk.

1859 (July 14): Unpaid letter sent from GALATZ to Vienna. Letter sent with DDSG vesels. On the back mentioned 'K.K. ALT ORSOVAER RASTELAMT 1859' quarantine black ink seal. Rate: Austria 20 kr CM, DDSG 10 kr CM.

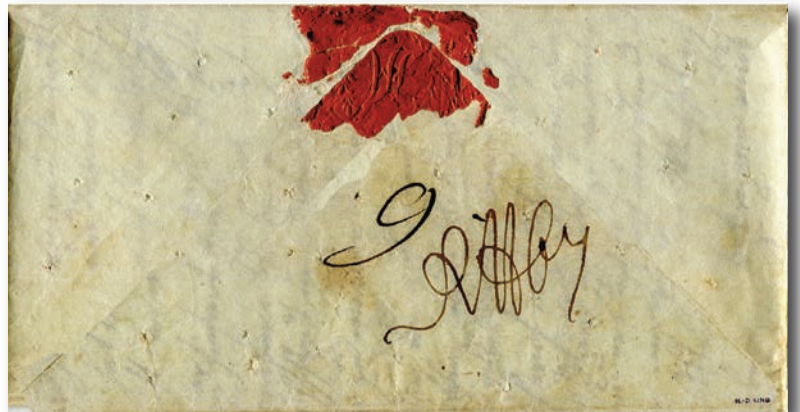
The only letter discovered so far with this quarantine stamp not mentioned in any specialized work.

BOJANA quarantine

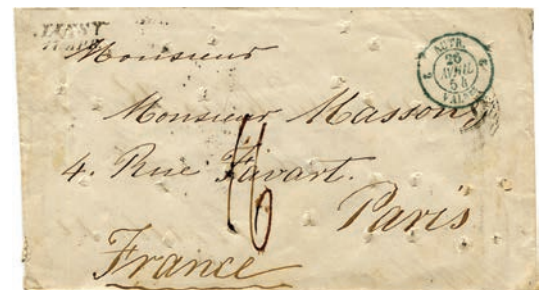
Located on the Crownland of Bukowina (Austrian Empire) border of Moldavia the terrestrial Contumaz amt. received mails from Bessarabia and Ottoman Empire and passed it into the Galicia-Austrian Crownland and East Central Europe. The letters were pierced with a special device equipped with many nails and then fumigated. On the back is written by hand "R. N." "Raucher Nummer" in German which translates to "fumigation number" and a number. This number increased during the year depending on the number of bags with disinfected letters. All quarantine points, Moldova/Wallachia, were subordinated to the headquarters in Vienna and Hermannstadt (Sibiu).



1840 (Oct 9/21): Forwarded prepaid letter from GALATZ to Genova (North Italy) Nov. 9, via JASSY straight line handstamp in black. Then after cross the Austrian border, disinfected on the 'Bojana' quarantine station (punches hole and on the back smoking number RN 91), follow the northern postal route to Genova (red "LT" -mark "Lettere di Transite") and "VIA DI VOGHERA".



1841 (Aug. 9): Prepaid letter 1 Loth from Jassy to Vienna, JASSY straight line handstamp in black, disinfected at 'Bojana' (punches hole and on the back smoking number RN 64) and reverse with Wien arrival pmk (Oct 11) in black. Rate: 36 kr.



Disinfecting tools



1854 (Apr. 17): Prepaid letter 1 Loth sent from Iasi to Paris via Czernowitz, Krakau canceled with double line JASSY 17. APR. cancel. Cleaned at the 'Bojana' quarantine station (punches hole and on the back smoking number RN). Rate: Austria 10 kr, France 16 decimes.

SEMLIN quarantine

SEMLIN (Zemun), this, the most active sanitary station in the frontier cordon of the Austrian Empire was situated at the border between the Bannat, Serbia and Turkey at the confluence of the Sava river with Danube, on the shore opposite Belgrad. according to Meyers this Contumaz Amt was established in 1730.



SIGILLUM SANITATIS
100% copy of Semlin quarantine
negative seal
confirms external cleanings



Reduced copy of front side



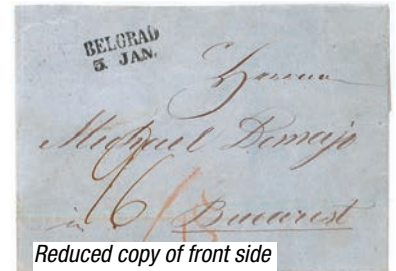
1854 (January 19): Unpaid letter 3 dirham (1 loth) sent from CONSTANTINOPLE to Bucharest. Letter sent terrestrial via Timisoara and Hermannstadt to Bucharest. Smoked, resealed on the back applied 'SIGILLUM SANITATIS' SEMLIN quarantine black ink seal. Rate: Austria 6 kr, Levant 2.20 piaster.



1855 (Mart 13) Unpaid letter 1 loth sent by civilians from BELGRAD to Bucharest. Letter sent with DDSG vesels and then after terrestrial via Timisoara and arrived with austrian military post in Bucharest. On the back mentioned 'SIGILLUM SANITATIS' quarantine black ink seal. Rate: Austria 26 kr CM, FPO 15 kr CM.
One of the rarest private letters quarantined and sent by FPO post office.



NETTO DI FUORA ET
DI DENTRO
Copy of quarantine
negative seal SEMLIN
confirm external an
internal cleanings



Reduced copy of front side



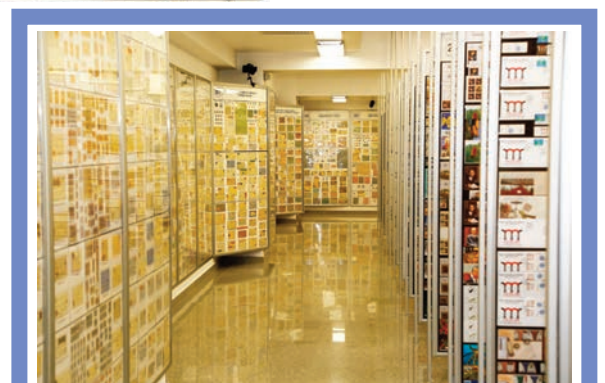
1857 - 1860

NETTO DI FUORA E
DI DENTRO
Copy of quarantine negative seal
SEMLIN confirm external and
internal cleanings

Reduced copy of front side



1859 (April 13): Unpaid letter 2 loth, sent from CONSTANTINOPLE to Pesth, smoked, resealed with the red wax seal of the austrian quarantine station SEMLIN 'NETTO DI FUORA E DI DENTRO' (disinfected inside and out) quarantine black ink seal. Rate: Austria 24 kr. **One of the latest usage of this quarantine seal.**



The images and descriptive texts were
obtained with the consent of the owner of
the Museum of Romanian Records.
<https://museumofromanianrecords.com>



The Panhellenic Association of Thematic Philately and Youth

The Panhellenic Association of Thematic Philately and Youth was founded in 1989 by a group of well-known philatelists from all over Greece. Despite the fact that most of them were not Thematic Philatelists themselves, seeing the lack of a purely Greek Thematic Philatelic Association, they had decided to establish it. Its official recognition was carried out with the 683/1990 decision of the Athens Court.



The aims of the P. A. T. P. & Y include:

1. the Promotion of Philately, and especially the Thematic Philately in Greece,
2. the Attraction and encouragement of new and old philatelists to this wonderful way of collecting,
3. the Raising of the level of thematic philatelists, older and newer, mainly by disseminating and consolidating philatelic thematic knowledge and rules.



Means for achieving these aims are:

1. the Publication of a Journal of Thematic content, which is available free of charge to every registered member,
2. the Organization of exhibitions in the center and in the periphery,
3. the Organization of Philatelic–Thematic lectures and speeches,
5. the detailed Presentation of all international rules governing exhibition of Thematic Philately,
7. The interconnection of Greek Thematic collectors with colleagues abroad for the exchange of Philatelic material and information,
8. the Encouragement and promotion of Thematic collections at Exhibitions abroad.



Pantelis Leoussis (left) President of Thematic Association, Efrosyni Stavraki (centre), then President of the Hellenic Post and Nikos Mallouchos President of Maximaphily Association (right)

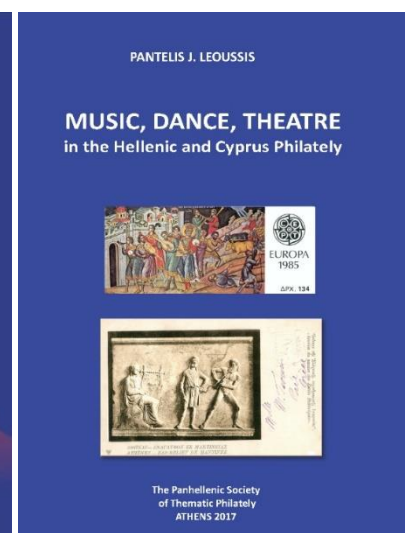
In its long history, our society has organized a number of Thematic exhibitions or co-organized Thematic and general Philatelic Exhibitions, and has given a series of Thematic Lectures at the Philatelic and Postal Museum of Greece, at the Hall of the Greek Writers' Society, at the halls of various Municipalities around Athens and Provincial towns.

Our Association has also published the Journal “THEMATIC PHILATELIST” since 2000. With the publication of its 100th issue in 2024, it celebrated its 25th Anniversary.



THEMATIC PHILALIST no 100 The Birth of Cinema and its establishment in the USA

Finally, he actively participated in philatelic seminars, published the multi-page books of "Music, Theater, Dance, in Greek and Cypriot Philately" (published in Greek by the Hellenic Post and in English language and "The Handbook of Thematic Philately" by our Association.



Tango and his history : a Philatelic and Musical Thematic Lecture

Music, Dance, Theatre in the Hellenic and Cyprus Philately

Twenty Years of Personalized Postage Stamps in Serbia

by **Milos Vukovic**

Personalized postage stamps, a phenomenon that has revitalized the traditional hobby of stamp collecting in Serbia, are celebrating a major milestone — twenty years.

As is often the case, the history of Serbian philately is closely intertwined with the history of the Serbian state. In 2006, following the referendum in Montenegro and the dissolution of the State Union, the Post of Serbia introduced, at the end of December, a unique and innovative service for the region of the former Yugoslavia. The personalized postage stamp emerged as a marketing concept in the era of digital communication, when it was widely believed that traditional forms of exchanging news and information were losing their relevance.

Although the service was introduced somewhat modestly, the approach to personalization itself was handled with great care. The visual model was based on the Austrian Post design, where a predefined standard stamp frame (in yellow) accommodates the user's chosen motif. In addition to the motif, mandatory elements include the country name, the nominal value, and the postal logo. Initially, the Post of Serbia deliberately avoided including the year of issue on personalized stamps, but due to strong demand from collectors, this element eventually became standard. As a result, the solution adopted by the Post of Serbia gave personalized stamps a status comparable to that of regular and commemorative issues. They were printed in the same printing houses and on the same types of paper as regular and commemorative stamps.

However, one particular feature distinguishes them — their nominal value. Throughout these twenty years, personalized postage stamps have been issued exclusively with a denomination corresponding to the postage rate for domestic letters weighing up to 20 grams, in accordance with the applicable postal tariff.

These stamps carry full franking value, just like regular and commemorative issues, and remain valid indefinitely. They can be used for franking all types of domestic mail, and there have even been cases where they were used for international shipments.

Over the past twenty years, there have been eight changes in nominal values, as shown in Figure 1.



Figure 1: Overview of all nominal values of personalized postage stamps in the period 2006–2026

(Private collection)

In order to fully meet user demands, standard elements were occasionally modified. As a result, there are stamps with hidden designer marks (signatures of the graphic artist), stamps without the standard frame color, and in recent years, increasingly frequent issues that fully resemble commemorative stamps, even including vignettes. This was not always well received by collectors, but the response of the Post of Serbia, as the sole issuing authority, was that user requests had to be fully respected.

As in every field of philately, this area also has its peculiarities, which often pose challenges for collectors, challenges that could be more easily overcome with systematic cataloguing. One of the drawbacks for collectors, and a factor limiting the broader popularization of personalized philately, is the fact that information about users and print runs is kept confidential. A significant contribution toward overcoming this issue was made by Zoran R. Bošković through the *“First Catalogue of Serbian Personalized Stamps.”* Covering the entire production from 2006 to 2014, Bošković transformed years of collecting and research experience into a foundational knowledge base for all collectors in this field of Serbian philately.

Over the past two decades, slightly more than three hundred stamps have been issued. At times, users released multiple stamps within a series; at other times, single stamps were issued repeatedly. Users of this service have included individuals, institutions, and various associations. Foreign embassies, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and even the Post of Serbia itself have commissioned such stamps. There are also cases where stamps were reprinted after being sold out, with identical elements, as well as variations in color, gum, and even imperforate issues.

All of this demonstrates that this field requires continuous monitoring, systematic analysis, and further cataloguing.

In the past decade, and especially in the years ahead, marketing has evolved into a comprehensive system of creating and maintaining customer relationships. Digital communication has become the primary channel for reaching end users, which means that many products are increasingly moving toward personalization and branding. The postage stamp, originally conceived as a practical tool to simplify and facilitate payment for mail delivery, has found its place in modern conditions precisely through this transformation.

Nevertheless, the service has not fully realized its potential or achieved widespread adoption. It is up to us, as collectors, to promote it further and make it more accessible to both users and new collectors. In this way, through stamps, we will preserve moments of joy and happiness of individuals, as well as important anniversaries and business achievements of companies and institutions — and, in doing so, ensure that philately remains timeless.

Balkanfila



News letter

Bosnia and Herzegovina Croatian Post

Definitive postage stamp : Međugorje 2026

The parish of Međugorje was canonically established on May 1, 1892, and dedicated to the patron saint of pilgrims, St. James. Since June 25, 1981, following the testimony of six children regarding the apparition of the Blessed Virgin Mary – Queen of Peace, Međugorje has become a pilgrimage site of prayer and reconciliation. Its fruits are visible throughout the world, and with the emergence of IT – Information Technology, the space for sharing information has been raised to another level – the connection between technology and spirituality.

The first Catholic IT Conference in Međugorje, where the Međugorje Catholic IT community was founded, was held in 2024 and served as the foundation for creating new connections and achieving a common goal.



The third Catholic IT Conference – ITM 2026 is being held from March 5 – 8, 2026, under the theme “The Fusion of Technology and Spirituality in Međugorje”. It brings together experts, priests, and innovators to explore how artificial intelligence and digital tools can support human dignity and spiritual growth. Under the patronage of the Queen of Peace, lectures, workshops, testimonies, and prayer are held, combining professional development, technological innovations, and spiritual growth. (Željka Šaravanja)

Croatian Post Ltd. Mostar has issued a definitive postage stamp in a sheet of 10 stamps, a maximum card (MC), a postmark and a First Day Cover (FDC). Stamps and accompanying materials can be purchased at Croatian Post Mostar post offices and online at www.epostshop.ba

Annual Philatelic Stamp Collection 2025 of the Croatian Post Mostar

The Croatian Post (HP) Mostar printed the Annual Stamp Collection, which presents 16 issues and 22 postage stamps from 2025. Various anniversaries were commemorated with postage stamps: *1100th anniversary of the Croatian Kingdom and the coronation of the first Croatian king Tomislav*, *50th Anniversary of the Croatian Ethnic Institute in Chicago*, *50th Anniversary of the Death of Sister Bogoljuba Jazvo* (director of the Hospital of the Sisters of Mercy in Zagreb who, with her associates and Cardinal Stepinac, saved more than 300 Jews during World War II), *150th Anniversary of the Herzegovinian Uprising* led by Duke Don Ivan Musić, *550th anniversary of the birth of Michelangelo Buonarroti*, *100th Anniversary of the Death of Antun Branko Šimić*, *100 years of the Croatian Cultural and Artistic Society Seljačka sloga – Trebižat*.

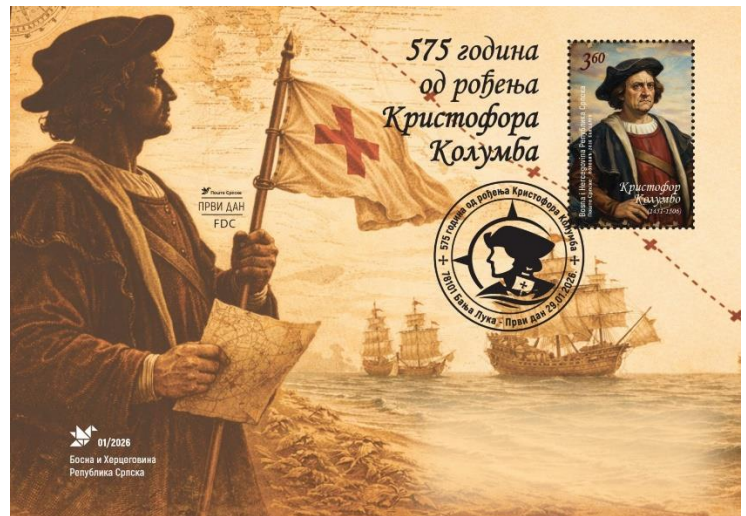


The issue of “EUROPA 2025 – National archaeological discoveries” features the motif of the Glasinac cart, an archaeological find from 1880 that researchers place in the 7th century BC. The edition dedicated to Međugorje presents an overview of the Camino Dubrovnik – Međugorje pilgrimage trail, while *Christmas and New Year* edition recalls traditional Christmas customs.

Three editions mark different world days: Earth Day (Crystal of the mineral Zepter Quartz), World Autism Awareness Day and World Art Day. *The Myths and Flora* edition tells the story of a weeping willow that lowered its branches into the river and saved kittens from drowning. The motifs of the *Flora* edition are medicinal plants – Comfrey and Elderberry, while the *Fauna* edition depicts land and sea snails: Roman Snail, Banded Snail, Triton’s Trumpet and Giant Tun.

Bosnia and Herzegovina Srpska

Christopher Columbus played a very important role in world history in the late 15th century. The previous, widely accepted theory was that Columbus was born in Genoa in 1451, into a family of wool weavers. However, it is now thought that he was more likely born in Valencia to a Jewish family. As a young man, he developed a great interest in the sea, navigation, and geography, believing that it was possible to reach Asia by sailing west across the Atlantic Ocean.

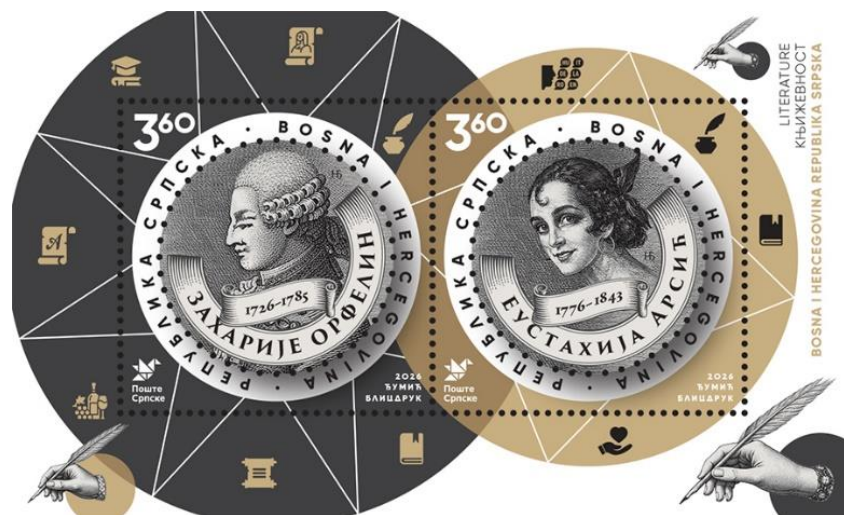


However, at that time, no one believed that the Earth was round and everyone was afraid that when the ship reached the edge of the Earth's plate, it would sink and everyone would die, so no one wanted to risk financing this voyage. After years of unsuccessful attempts to gain support for his idea, he received help from Queen Isabella I of Spain. With three ships—the Santa Maria, the Pinta, and the Niña—Columbus set out in 1492 on a voyage that would change the course of history.

The exact number of Columbus's companions is unknown, but it is believed that there were about 100 of them. The crew was no different from the others in any way, except for their fear of the unknown. After several weeks of sailing, he reached an island in the Caribbean, believing that he had reached the eastern shores of Asia. Although Columbus never realized that he had discovered a new continent, believing until his death that he had discovered the eastern coast of India, his travels paved the way for European exploration and colonization of America.

He made a total of four voyages across the Atlantic during his lifetime. His discoveries had enormous consequences, both positive and negative, especially for the indigenous population. Despite his enormous contributions to Spain, which acquired rich colonies, Columbus was denied the promised recognition and rewards, and he died in poverty in 1506, unaware of the significance his voyages would have for the future of the world.

Today, he is considered one of the most significant and controversial figures in history.



Eustahija Arsic was the first significant Serbian writer and one of the first educated women in Serbian culture. She wrote at a time when it was very difficult for women to participate in public and cultural life, so her work is of particular importance. Arsic dealt with moral, educational and social issues in her works, especially the position of women and the importance of education. Her most famous works are “Mother`s advice” and “Useful Thoughts”, in which she emphasizes the importance of intellect, honesty and learning. She believed that an educated woman contributes to the progress of the family and society as a whole. She wrote in a simple style, with the aim of making her messages understandable to a wide range of readers. She spoke several languages. It was said that she translated Voltaire, Wieland, James Thomson... Just like George Sand, with whom she was often compared, Eustahija published her first literary work anonymously, in Budim, in 1814. She hid her name under one of the two poems that were added at the end of the book. Eustahija Arsic was undoubtedly a forerunner of Serbian (literary) feminism, but also a great benefactor.

Zaharije Stefanovic Orfelin was among the most significant, but also the most unusual creators that the Serbs have ever had. A teacher, official, poet, graphic artist, lexicographer, naturalist and historian. The beginning of new Serbian literature is associated with Zaharije Orfelin. As one of the most enlightened Serbs of the 18th century, he knew several languages and traveled most of Europe, leaving behind many significant works. He is the author of the famous Calligraphy (1778) and several copper engravings with motifs of Fruska Gora monasteries. His life's work is the two-volume book "The Life of Peter the Great". He edited the first and only issue of the first Serbian magazine "Slavonic-Serbian Magazine", and he also wrote the manual "Experienced Cellar". His contribution to Serbian culture is reflected in the introduction of new literary forms and the spread of the ideas of the Enlightenment.

GREECE

200 Years since the Exodus of Messolonghi

Hellenic Post commemorating the 200th anniversary of the Exodus of Messolonghi issued on February 15, 2026 a set of four commemorative stamps Series and a numbered Miniature Sheet for the "200 years since the Exodus of Messolonghi".



DENOMINATIONS	DESIGNS	QUANTITY
0,20 €	Christos Kapsalis (1751–1826) Polychronis Lebesis (1848 – 1913) 1881, oil on canvas, 100 x 80 cm National Historical Museum	25.000 pieces
0,50 €	Athanasios Razi–Kotsikas (1798–1826) Ioannis Trikoglidis (1891 – 1962) 1929, Oil on canvas, 100 x 80 cm National Historical Museum	25.000 pieces
1,20 €	Episode of the siege of Missolonghi François–Émile de Lansac 1827, Municipal Art Gallery of Missolonghi	25.000 pieces
3,00 €	Greece on the Ruins of Missolonghi Eugène Delacroix (1798–1863) 1826, Oil on canvas, 169 x 127 cm Musée des Beaux–Arts de Bordeaux Photo_F.Deval	25.000 pieces
4,00 €	The Exodus from Missolonghi Theodoros Vryzakis (1814 ή 1819 – 1878) 1853, Oil on canvas, 169 x 127 cm The National Gallery–Museum of Alexandros Soutsou	15.000 feuillets

Romanian Gendarmerie – 175 years

Romfilatelia and Romanian Post introduce into circulation on *Tuesday, December 16th this year* an anniversary postage stamp issue entitled **Romanian Gendarmerie, 175 years**. The issue consists of two postage stamps, a philatelic block of two postage stamps, and a 'first day' cover.



The founding of the Romanian Gendarmerie is recorded in the calendar of events on April 3rd, 1850, when, by princely decree, Grigore Alexandru Ghica, the Ruler of Moldavia, approved the decision of the Public Divan and signed the 'Law for the Reform of the Corps of Gendarme Servants'.

During the reign of Alexandru Ioan Cuza, the Gendarmerie underwent an extensive process of modernization and was removed from the administration of the Ministry of Internal Affairs (then called in Romanian *Ministerul Trebilor din Lăutru* – the Ministry of Domestic Affairs), being placed under the direct subordination of the Ministry of War, with the status of a permanent military force.

During the War of Independence of 1877, as well as in the two World Wars, the Gendarmerie played an important historical role, both as a combat force and as a public order force.

It is worth noting that after the law enacted by Grigore Alexandru Ghica, the legislation (inspired by French legislation) adopted in 1893 and 1929 fully clarified the role, place, and organization of the Rural Gendarmerie. The legislator in 1893, Lascăr Catargiu, placed particular emphasis on maintaining public safety, accompanied by strict observance of the law.

In 1949, as a result of the organizational changes imposed by the communist regime, the Gendarmerie lost a significant part of its responsibilities, being replaced by the Security Troops of the Ministry of Internal Affairs. The Rural Gendarmerie was subordinated to the

General Directorate of the Militia. The restructuring of the institution became possible after 1989, on the foundations of the rule of law, through the development of new concepts regarding the place and role of internal security forces. Reorganized, equipped, and trained in line with similar European forces, the Gendarmerie is now capable of assuming the responsibilities incumbent upon Romania as a member of the European Union.

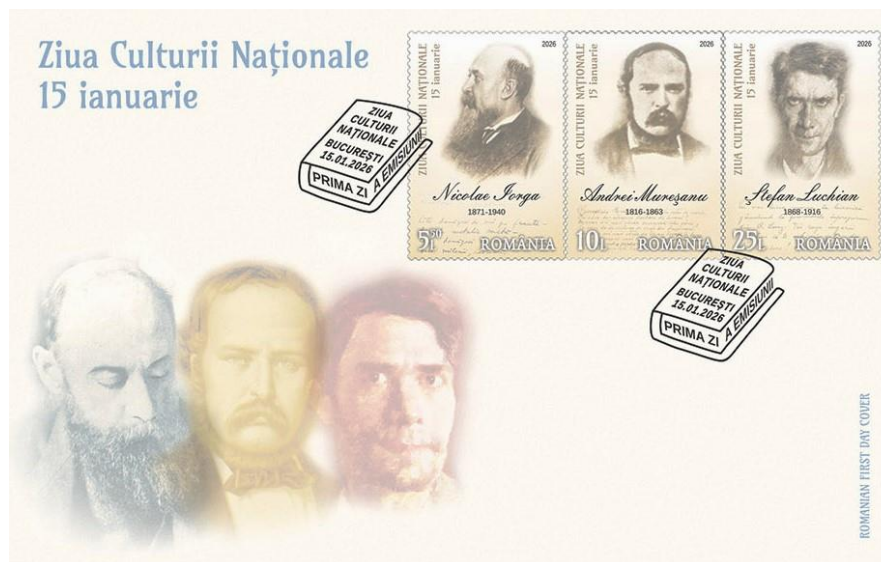
It is worth highlighting that the activity carried out by the Romanian Gendarmerie, both nationally and internationally, has led to the recognition of the institution's capabilities and the professionalism of its gendarmes by national and international bodies, as well as by Romanian citizens, the main beneficiaries of the services provided by the institution.

In this anniversary year, the Romanian Gendarmerie, a modern elite corps, presents itself as a public order force that is reliable, credible, politically impartial, and ready at any moment to carry out its entrusted missions flawlessly, being perceived as a fundamental pillar of public safety and order.

NATIONAL CULTURE DAY

As every year, on January 15th, the Romanian stamp celebrates *National Culture Day*, within the issue with the same title, which pays tribute to some outstanding personalities of national culture: **Nicolae Iorga** (face value of Lei 5.50), **Andrei Mureșanu** (face value of Lei 10) and **Ștefan Luchian** (face value of Lei 25). This year's issue, consisting of 3 postage stamps, a First Day Cover, a set of 3 maxicards for maximaphily enthusiasts and a philatelic folder with a special product in limited run printing, was introduced into circulation by **Romfilatelia** and **the Romanian Post** on January 15th.

Andrei Mureșanu (1816–1863), a Greek–Catholic priest, author of the national anthem 'Deșteaptă-te, Române' (*Awaken thee, Romanian!*), whose birth marks the 210th anniversary this year, is ranked among the foremost personalities of the country. He was born in Bistrița on November 16th, 1816, as the son of Toader and Eftimia, and completed his early studies at the German school and at the Piarist (Catholic) High School in Bistrița. He went on to continue his education at the Greek–Catholic Seminary in Blaj, studying philosophy and theology, having as teachers from 1832 onward Timotei Cipariu, the father of Romanian philology, and Simion Bărnuțiu, President of the Romanian Revolutionary Committee in Transylvania.



George Barițiu, who later became President of the Romanian Academy, founded in Brașov the first Romanian-language newspaper in Transylvania, ‘Foaie pentru minte, inimă și literatură’ (*Leaflet for Mind, Heart, and Literature*). A close colleague of Andrei Mureșanu in Blaj, he called him to Brașov in 1838 to serve as a teacher at the Romanian school, which was headed by George Barițiu himself. He then worked in Brașov as a secondary school teacher until 1848. After the Revolution of 1848–1849, he moved to Muntenia together with George Barițiu. He later returned to Transylvania, settling in Sibiu, where he worked as a civil servant and translator for the government’s official gazette.

In his poetry, **Andrei Mureșanu** wrote under the allegorical influence of the Văcărești poets, yet his ‘Deșteaptă-te, Române’ (*Awaken thee, Romanian!*) remains immortal, a true popular anthem, sung during the great trials of the Romanian people, such as the War of Independence and World War I, and revived after the events of December 1989.

This popular anthem expresses, to the highest degree, the ideas of national solidarity, belonging to the Latin heritage, and national nobility, which led, after the events of December 1989, to its adoption as the national anthem, as stipulated by the Romanian Constitution of 2003, which enshrined in Article 12 that ‘The national anthem of Romania is *Deșteaptă-te, Române*’.

Nicolae Iorga (1871–1940), whose 155th birthday is being celebrated this year, was a historian, literary critic, documentalist and encyclopaedist, and remains a leading personality in Romania and an academic figure unanimously recognized by Europe’s cultural elite.

In Romanian culture in the early decades of the 20th century, Iorga played ‘the role of Voltaire’ (George Călinescu). Gifted with an exceptional intellect, he studied at universities

in Paris, Berlin and Leipzig, obtaining his doctorate in 1893 at the age of 23. From 1910, he was an honorary member of the Romanian Academy. He had an exceptional scientific career, authoring 1,003 volumes and over 12,000 articles and studies, culminating in the 10-volume *History of the Romanians*, for which he was named the greatest historian and scholar of Romania of all time. Nicolae Iorga was a personality who created a school and gave substance to national culture, strongly influencing the social and political life of the country, expressing himself as a prolific creator both in writing and in speech.

Ștefan Luchian (1868 – 1916), whose commemoration marks 110 years, was born on February 1st, 1868, in Ștefănești, in northern Moldavia. Ștefan Luchian enrolled in the painting class at the National School of Fine Arts in Bucharest in 1885, graduating four years later and receiving the bronze medal for *Head of Expression* and *Study from Nature*. He then continued his studies in Munich at the Academy of Fine Arts, and later in Paris at the Académie Julian. He returned to Bucharest in 1896, where, together with Alexandru Bogdan-Pitești, he initiated the Exhibition of Independent Artists. In 1900, he was in Paris at the Universal Exhibition, where he exhibited two pastels. Due to an incurable illness, from 1909 until his death in 1916, he was confined to a wheelchair. His paintings capture the splendor of the Romanian landscape with unmatched mastery, reflecting his boundless passion for nature.

CARNIVOROUS PLANTS

An interesting issue, with the topic *Flora*, will be introduced into circulation by **Romfilatelia** and the **Romanian Post** on January 21st, this year, under the title ***CARNIVOROUS PLANTS***, consisting of three postage stamps and a First Day Cover.

These plants arouse the admiration of all observers. The carefully designed mechanisms for capturing prey and its subsequent 'digestion' are a fascinating spectacle. Not only the digestive process itself is of interest in carnivorous plants, but also their splendid flowers.

The concept of the issue is approached from two perspectives: the plant itself, depicted realistically, and, as a background, a stylized landscape ensemble, spectacular and rich in sinuous forms.



Nepenthes (face value of Lei 5.50) is the only genus of the family **Nepenthaceae** and comprises approximately 150 insectivorous species, with a native distribution in Southeast Asia, Australia, and Madagascar. The leaves have evolved specialized traps for capturing insects, the traps consisting of an approximately cylindrical pitcher and an operculum (lid). Insects are attracted by the bright colours of the pitchers, as well as by the nectar present along their rims and on the operculum.

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Some are adapted to obtain nutrients from the excrement of certain mammals (such as rodents and bats), which are attracted by the nectar produced on the operculum.

Sarracenia (face value of Lei 6) is one of the genera of the family **Sarraceniaceae**, comprising 34 herbaceous species distributed in the marshes of temperate and tropical regions of the northeastern South America, western and eastern North America. The basal leaves are transformed into tubular pitchers filled with digestive fluid, with hairs directed toward the base to prevent insects that enter the pitcher from escaping.

Also called the **pitcher plant** is a remarkable ornamental appeal due to its vividly coloured, pitcher-shaped traps.

Drosera or 'sundews' (face value of Lei 14) belongs to the family **Droseraceae** which comprises three genera and 130 species. Plants are, with few exceptions, small in size and

have leaves arranged in a basal rosette, adapted for insectivorous nutrition. These leaves are covered with glandular hairs that are sticky and sensitive to movement. The more a prey struggles to escape, the more glandular hairs are stimulated to become active. In this way, insects searching for food become easy victims.

Drosera has species distributed worldwide, but the greatest diversity is found in Australia. In Romania, the best known is *Drosera rotundifolia* (sundews). *Drosera* grows in peat bogs and oligotrophic marshes, habitats that are extremely sensitive to human impact and climate change, and are therefore largely designated as protected areas.

The First Day Cover of the issue features the carnivorous plant *Dionaea muscipula*.

Dionaea muscipula is also popularly known as **Venus flytrap** or **Steel trap** and is the most famous for the speed with which it closes its trap. The plant grows naturally in the marshy areas along the northeastern coast of North America (North Carolina and South Carolina).

INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF PHILATELY, 100 YEARS

World Philatelic Premiere

To mark the Centenary anniversary of a leading organization in the international philatelic field, **Romfilatelia** and the **Romanian Post** introduce into circulation on *Thursday, February 26th this year*, the postage stamp issue entitled **INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF PHILATELY, 100 YEARS**.

The issue, consisting of one postage stamp, one perforated souvenir sheet, a First Day Cover, in Liliput size (130 × 90 mm) and a philatelic folder with special products in limited run printing, marks a world philatelic premiere: the world's smallest stamp.

The philatelic folder contains two pieces of great philatelic interest, in limited edition, numbered:

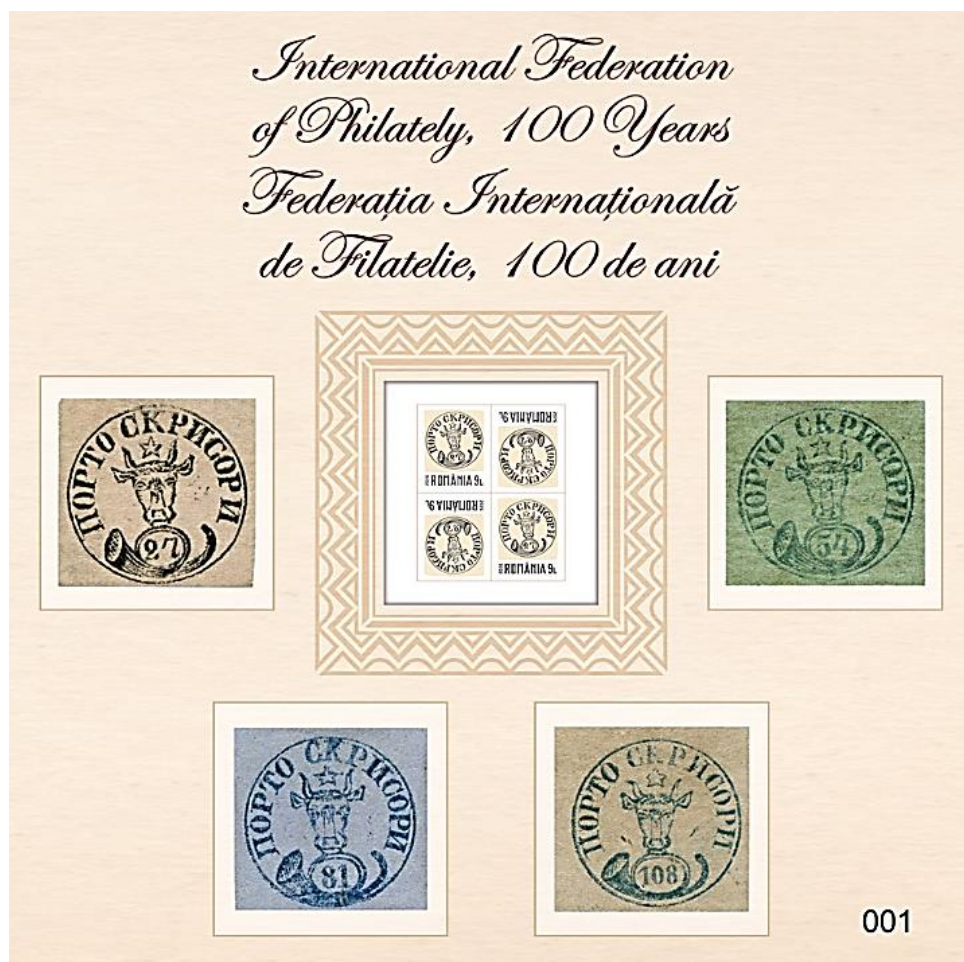
- the imperforated block of four stamps with tête-bêche, miniature reproductions of the first Romanian stamp, "Bull's Head" – First issue, 27 parale.
- the second block is an adaptation of the frontispiece of the 1859 unionist newspaper "Zimbrulu and Vulturulu" on which there are displayed: a strip of five miniature stamps of the anniversary issue *FIP, 100 years*, replicas of the "Cap de Bour" ("Bull's Head") – First

issue, 27 parale stamp, respectively a strip of four stamps of the anniversary issue with the same characteristics. The piece is reminiscent of the most expensive philatelic piece sold at a public auction, namely the Gazette with the above-mentioned title, cancelled with eight stamps of five parale "Porto Gazetei" from 1858.

The postage stamp, with the face value of **Lei 9**, concept of the designer George Ursachi, reproduces in miniature the 27-parale stamp from the First issue - "Cap de Bour"(The Bull's Head).

The souvenir sheet of the issue, having the stamp with the face value of **Lei 30**, designed by Tudor Banuș, painter, engraver, book illustrator and graduate in architecture, pays tribute to the 100th anniversary of the International Federation of Philately and, indirectly, to this remarkable instrument that connects people to one another (through the post: the letter!) and fully qualifies as a cultural object when aesthetic criteria are met.

The logo of the International Federation of Philately and the logo of the Romanian Philatelic Federation are inserted on the souvenir sheet of the issue.



Founded in Paris on June 18th, 1926, the International Federation of Philately (FIP) is the world's leading organization which coordinates and promotes philately, namely the collecting and study of stamps and postal materials. Established to promote philately, foster international friendship, and organize major competitive exhibitions, FIP has evolved from an initially European structure into a worldwide network coordinating philatelic activity at the global level.

Headquartered in Zurich, Switzerland, FIP brings together more than 90 national member federations worldwide, acting as the leading body of global philately and the supreme authority in defining modern philatelic disciplines.

In 2026, FIP marks a century of uninterrupted activity in support of the development of philately – often referred to as the ‘King of Hobbies’ – by strengthening competition standards and promoting specialist research.

The fundamental objectives of the FIP include:

- promoting philately worldwide;
- organizing international exhibitions and granting its patronage thereto;
- establishing judging regulations and standards (GREX, GREV);
- encouraging philatelic research and specialized literature;
- supporting young philatelists through the development of the Youth Class.

The governing structure of the FIP consists of the FIP Congress – the supreme decision-making body – the Executive Committee (Board), and specialized committees for each competition class. The Congress is held biennially, usually in conjunction with a major international exhibition, and determines the strategic direction of the organization.

The FIP recognizes the following competition classes: Traditional Philately, Postal History, Aerophilately, Astrophilately, Thematic Philately, Open Class, Maximaphily, Revenue Philately, Postcards, Philatelic Literature and Youth.

Through the patronage granted to FIP World Exhibitions, International Specialized Exhibitions, and Continental Exhibitions organized via regional federations, FIP raises the competitive standard and ensures a rigorous evaluation system. Judging is conducted in accordance with the FIP regulations, and distinctions include medals (Grand Gold, Gold, Large Vermeil, etc.) as well as special prizes.

At the international level, FIP plays an essential role in:

- establishing rules and regulations for the evaluation of exhibits;
- coordinating relations among national philatelic organizations;
- combating illegal stamp issues and counterfeiting, as well as maintaining ethical standards, in cooperation with the Universal Postal Union (UPU);
- encouraging cultural exchanges through exhibitions and international collaborations.

For a philatelist, participating in an exhibition under the patronage of the FIP represents international recognition of the value of their collection, an opportunity to qualify for world exhibitions, and the consolidation of their prestige within the philatelic community.

In the modern era, FIP has expanded its activities into the broader sphere of global philatelic development. In 1990, in cooperation with the Universal Postal Union (UPU), it contributed to the establishment of the World Association for the Development of Philately (WADP), thereby strengthening efforts to promote and safeguard the field.

The anniversary year 2026 will be marked by a series of world-class exhibitions, including:

- the Specialized World Exhibition DUBAI 2026 (February 4–8);
- the General World Exhibition BOSTON 2026 (May 23–30);
- the Specialized World Exhibition MACAO 2026 (June 26 – July 1);
- the World Stamp Championship (WSC) PHILATAIPEI 2026 Specialized Exhibition (November 20–25).

We mention that within the Romanian Records Museum in Bucharest, materials produced on the occasion of philatelic exhibitions under the patronage of FIP are presented (the first being organized in Algiers in 1930).

The Museum's collection, unique in the world, includes over 13,000 pieces: bulletins, catalogs, award lists, envelopes, stamps and postmarks, medals, plaques, badges and everything produced by the national organizing committees, as well as by the participating philatelic federations.

Over the course of a century, the FIP has constantly evolved to support collectors, researchers, and exhibition organizers, adapting to new realities, including promoting philately through digital and traditional means. Today, the International Federation of Philately is globally recognized as the leading authority in the evaluation of elite collections and in defining contemporary philatelic standards.



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