

Balkanfila



Newsletter

No 4, June 2024

Editorial

Communicating Philately

“Seek truth from facts” was an often-employed motto by the reformist leader of China following the end of the havoc caused by the Cultural Revolution.

In the world of philately, following a successful international exhibition, widespread elation reigns among participants. However, is this elation actually pragmatic?

In this Balkanfila Newsletter, Dr. Claudio Manzati’s interview highlights important issues that have been ignored for some time but have now become vital in the context of philately’s future. These issues include diminishing numbers of philatelists, despite strong increases in stamp collectors in certain regions. Additionally, organized philately faces challenges in effectively using digital communication and lacks a clear outward communication strategy.

One of the Postal Organizations issuing stamps has devised an original motto: “a World in Stamp.” However, many argue that nowadays we find “a World” on our mobile screens. The unanswered question remains: How can we effectively communicate the charm of philately to a wider public?

While rare and pricey philatelic items occasionally capture public attention, philately offers more than just financial assets. Philatelists collect, research, and present items that contain elements of information and communication—whether stamps, covers, or other postally used materials. Unfortunately, they struggle to convey their passion to non-philatelists.

In my view, the core problem lies in our failure to communicate effectively. As a result, we remain a restricted, aging circle. Are we akin to the last of the Mohicans?

Pošta Slovenije (Slovenian Post) will commemorate the 11th Biennial Narrow Theme Exhibition **EnajstoOkno Kranj 2024** with a pictorial postcard.



First Day Cancellation: 8.7. 2024. The Exhibition will be opened on August 29 in the venues of the Gorenjski Muzej in Kranj, Slovenia.


There are 47 exhibits in 54 frames from 11 Countries shown combined in vivo and/or on the Exhibition website.

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Dopisnica

Posiljatelj
Ime in priimek: _____
Ulica: _____
Poštna št.: _____
Kraj: _____

Naslovník



Karel Postl, Kranj 1815

BALKANFILA XX is in full swing



BALKANFILA XX
13-16 NOVEMBER 2024
THESSALONIKI, GREECE

Balkanfila XX, 35 years after the last Balkanfila organized in Thessaloniki, is in full swing to offer to philatelists and visitors a memorable experience through the intriguing world of collections.

The General Commissioner has already received competitive exhibits, including Literature, from 21 countries. The majority of the exhibits are of high-calibre, previously awarded whilst few are first-time exhibits presented by known collectors and exhibitors. This fact has made the Organizing Committed very optimistic about the high level of competition.

Balkanfila XX is co-organized by the Hellenic Philatelic Federation and the Hellenic Philatelic Society of Thessaloniki and has received the Auspices of the Municipality of Thessaloniki, the Prefecture of Central Macedonia and the Cultural Foundation of the National Bank of Greece (MIET Thessaloniki). The Exhibition has FEPA Recognition of and FIP Sponsorship.

Court of Honour

At least three World Class exhibits of top-awarded, acclaimed exhibitors will be shown at the Court of Honour : the Large Hermes Heads of Greece by Louis Fanchini (France), the 12-frame Classic Mexico by Joseph Hackmey (Great Britain) and the 1896 Olympic Games by Anestis Karagiannidis (Canada).





Events

During the Exhibition a number of events have been scheduled to complement Balkanfila XX, with emphasis on the relations among Philately, Collecting and the Society such as :

- A Round-table on “The Unexplored Power of Regional Philately” aiming at proposing strategies regarding the challenges and opportunities that Regional Philately offers.
- Lectures during the exhibition will focus on the Balkans, Thessaloniki and the surrounding area through rarely seen philatelic material by academics and acclaimed collectors.
- Presentation of the Anniversary Publication “Traces of Communication” celebrating the 100 years since the founding of the Hellenic Philatelic Society, that aspires to publicize Philately to a wider non-philatelic public.
- The Literature Awards of the Hellenic Philatelic Federation for the best annual publication will be given to two previous winners : Professor Konstantinos Tsitselikis and World Stamp Champion collector Stavros Andreadis.
- A Live Auction of the Major Sponsor of Balkanfila XX, “Karamitsos Co” will take place with a number of remarkable and sought-after lots by collectors.

Non-Competitive Exhibits

An impressive collection of antique Maps and Engravings of Thessaloniki, Macedonia and the Balkans will be displayed. Moreover a 15-frame exhibit of Thessaloniki and the surrounding area of old postcards will present to the visitors an iconographic, historical perspective of the place and the people.

The City...

Thessaloniki, a cosmopolitan centre for centuries, has been loaded with more than 100 monuments of diverse historical periods from Roman, Old Christian & Byzantine, Ottoman, Jewish and Modern times. Among these monuments, the White Tower is considered as the City’s most emblematic landmark.



and its Museums

The strong cultural character of Thessaloniki is additionally manifested by its 30 museums that cater for a wide range of interests. Within a few minutes walk from Helexpo Exhibition Hall that will host Balkanfila XX, are located three of the most important museums, namely the Archaeological, the Byzantine and the State Museum of Contemporary Art with a stunning collection that includes 1.275 masterpieces of prominent Russian Avant Garde artists.



Not to miss

The Museum of the Royal Tombs of Aigai (Vergina) just an hour from Thessaloniki takes the visitors to the Capital of the ancient Kingdom of Macedonia in order to explore the burial chamber of king Philip II, father of Alexander the Great, in this UNESCO-protected archaeological wonder.

THESSALONIKI is READY to WELCOME and OFFER YOU a MEMORABLE VISIT !



CITY OF **THESSALONIKI**



SPONSORSHIP

EXHIBITIONS

DOBRICH FILEX 2024

Preparations have begun for the National Philatelic Exhibition DOBRICH FILEX 2024 with international participation, which will open on October 9, 2024 in the city of Dobrich. Exhibits of exhibitors from Romania, Moldova and North Macedonia are invited to participate. An extremely interesting philatelic program is planned, as well as a number of accompanying events.

SHUMEN City



From June 21 to 23 an anniversary philatelic exhibition SHUMEN 2024 was held in Shumen, dedicated to the 85th anniversary of the philatelic society "Horseman of Madara" in the city. On 70 exhibition frames were exposed the best Bulgarian exhibits in the "Thematic", "Maximaphily" and "Open Class" classes. The idea was the untried viewer to meet collections that are more comprehensible from his point of view, which would arouse the natural interest in the general fascination. This was the reason why exhibits from the "heavier" classes "Traditional Philately" and "Postal History" were not presented.

Within the framework of the exhibition, a children's contest for a postage stamp project was held. 80 children artists participated and the best of the drawings will be presented to the Stamp Board to form a series of "Children's Drawings" stamps. Special congratulations were given to the chairman of the "Madarski Konnik" Society Lyubomir Iliev, the chairman of the Society in the city of Dobrich Dimitar Chernev, the chairman of the Varna Society Nikolay Penev, with whose efforts this exhibition was realized.



The event was opened by the Regional Governor of the Shumen region Prof. Dobromir Dobrev and the Deputy Mayor of Shumen Desislava Petrova. Two new editions of postage stamps were also put into use, and the logo of the exhibition in Shumen is present in these editions.



EFIRO 2024, the only world philatelic event of this year

Francisc Ambrus

Between April 16-19, 2024, the Specialized World Exhibition EFIRO 2024 took place in Bucharest. Hosted on the surface of two floors in the modern building of the National Library of Romania, the exhibition developed on the surface of 2650 frames was a real success



for the Balkans and on the world level. They were present in the competitive class, 554 philatelic exhibits belonging to exhibitors from 66 FIP and FEPA member countries and another 100 frames with non-competitive exhibits.

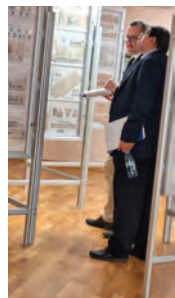


Having the patronage of the Ministry of Culture, the patronage of the FIP, FFR, and FEPA recognition, the exhibition also hosted the annual AIJP Congress, the meeting of BWG, AEP and AIEP members, and five specialized seminars. The national commissioners of 66 participating countries, the 43 jurors and experts, the team of 40 volunteers, 26 stands of big auction houses, postal administrations and philatelic dealers completed the image of the exhibition.



The exhibition budget being quite small, 60% of the exhibition was self-financed from participation and private donations, government sponsorships in an election year being extremely small. In this case, the organizing committee made the decision to hold this major event only for four days, instead of five, insufficient time for an exhibition of this

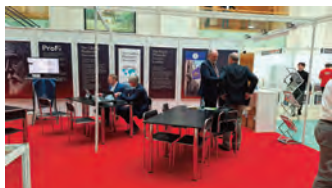
high level. However, with all the pressure exerted by the short time, the 43 jurors and experts did their duty in good time, so that the Palmars was completed on time. The commissioners and the jurors were accommodated in hotels very close to the exhibition hall, which made it easier for everyone to travel.



Seminars and meetings of specialized commissions or working groups were held both in the exhibition

building and in the halls of the Museum of Romanian Records the welcoming host of the FIP Jury Academy, located a short distance from the exhibition. Throughout the period, besides visiting the exhibition and other Bucharest objectives, participants and visitors had the opportunity to visit the 100 collections of this unique private museum.





For this special event, the Romanian Post printed philatelic materials, stamps, vignettes, special stationery and maximum cards. The Romanian Philatelic Federation,



through the organizing committee, ordered three medals dedicated to the event, eight commemorative cancellations and other promotional materials dedicated to the six celebrated philatelic events, made available to the public at the stand of the Romanian Post and the EFIRO Organizing Committee.

The Palmares ceremony was attended by over 300 guests and apart from the presentations of the Great Gold medalists and the awarding of the two Grand Prix, the flags of the representatives of the following exhibitions, FEPA Hafnia 2024 and FIP China 2024, were handed out. The Grand Prix International was awarded to Joseph Hakmey for the exhibit "Classic Baden" and the Grand Prix National was awarded to Ion Chirescu for the exhibit "Foreign posts in the Romanian territories, 1811-1878". 47 Large Gold and 105 Gold diplomas and 36 special prizes were awarded.



I don't have more information about the exhibition because even though I was General Commissioner, I also had the capacity of a jury member plus many other organizational duties. Honestly and regrettably for me, it is the first world exhibition of the approximately 20 exhibitions that I have participated in in the last 16 years, where I only had time to view the exhibits for the two classes in which I was appointed as a juror. For me it was an enormous loss considering the massive participation of some large-scale exhibits.

In the end, I think that the feedback of the exhibition is good and we are confident that a similar event of an even larger scale can be organized in the future.



EFIRO 2024 EXHIBITION MEDALS



EFIRO 2024 GRAND PRIX



EFIRO 2024 STAMP ISSUES



EFIRO 2024 OFFICIAL COVERS

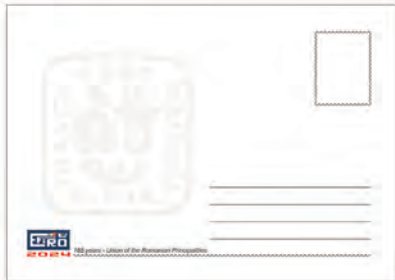
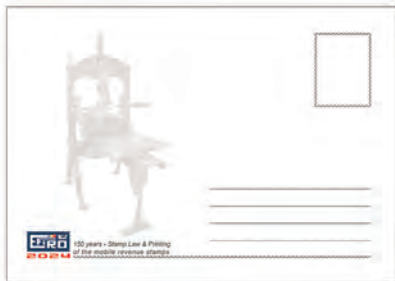


First Day Cover



Stationery Covers

EFIRO 2024 OFFICIAL MAXIMUM CARDS



EFIRO 2024 POSTMARKS



EFIRO 2024 SPECIAL COVERS



EFIRO 2024 MAXIMUM CARDS



EFIRO 2024 - Card 1 and Reverse Edition



EFIRO 2024 - Card 2



EFIRO 2024 - Card 3



EFIRO 2024 - Card 4 and 5th



EFIRO 2024 - Card 5



EFIRO 2024 - Card 6

EFIRO 2024 VIGNETTES





Dr Claudio Manzati speaks to Balkanfila Newsletter explaining why “the Future of Philately depends on how we can effectively communicate its Charm”

Dr. Claudio Manzati an important philatelist and editor of a philatelic magazine that from the beginning stood out both for its articles and for the aesthetics of its graphic design similar to art magazines, underlines the reasons and the potential that philately can reach and appeal to a wider audience.

Philatelists study and research postal items which are means of communication, do you think that organized philately knows how to communicate to wider publics what philately is all about ?

C.M : My point of view is that the philatelic world, is not only a very restricted circle but it also is made up of individuals who so far they lacked both a plan and a proper communication strategy on how to promote Philately to people not being already collectors.



Old letters, ca. 18th century.
Alamy/Alamy Stock Photo



Portrait of a young woman reading a letter at the window.
Alamy/Alamy Stock Photo

The importance of postal history

It is useful to explain what POSTAL HISTORY is and in what way it can be studied and deepened. As a first step, we have to consider its mother, the great History of mankind: the set of political, social, economic, cultural and historical events that generated the conditions under which postal services evolved. Starting from the ancient past of the Sumerians and Assyro-Babylonians, to that of Egyptian papyrus and Roman tablets, and ending with the Munich parchments. However, it was only with the spread of paper, the true medium of writing, that correspondence gained momentum in the 14th century. It is to the credit of Emperor Charles V, the man on whose reign the sun never set, that he intuited the genius of Torre and Tasso and entrusted them with what

was truly the first systematic transport of letters. From that 16th century onwards, there was a continuous acceleration and we could witness the decisive influence of history on postal communication services. Having said that, it must be remembered that already at the end of the 19th century, some pioneers were already talking about postal history. There were English and German scholars who, in addition to the postage stamp, were beginning to examine the methods of communication. Their studies, however, were of a personal nature: they lacked the necessary collective organicity. For a long time, hardly anyone turned their attention to tariffs, international interchanges and thus to the relevant Interstate Agreements on reciprocal billing for

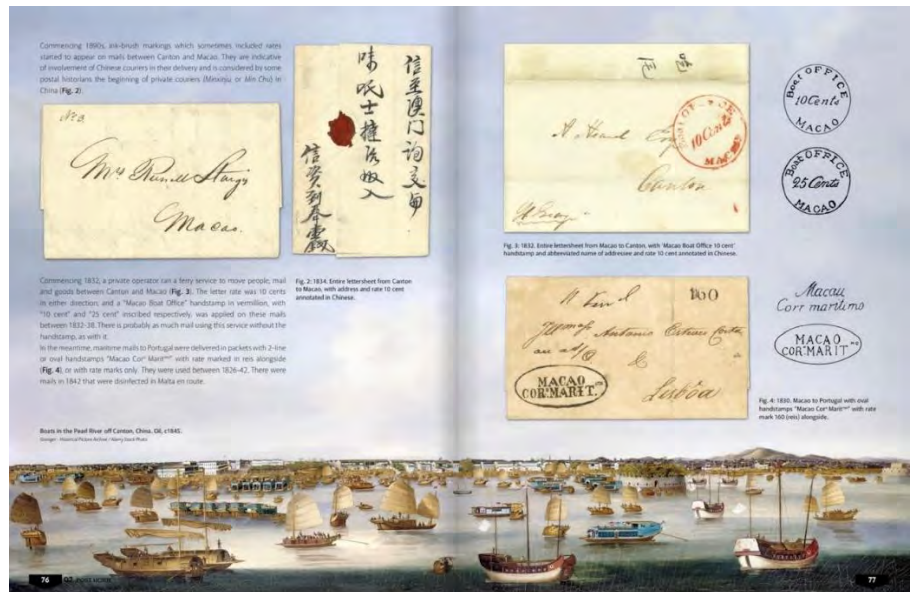
Emotions and fascination of postal history

taxes on exchanged letters. It was only in the 20th century, with the great increase in collecting and, the reflections, philatelic trade, that Postal History was fully developed. It became necessary to gain a better understanding of why and how letters were franked: thus the collecting of travelled letters, complete with stamps and cancellations, developed. In more recent times, the Fédération Internationale de Philatélie – the F.I.P. – intervened and Postal History was well defined and codified in its different fields. Today, postal history collections analyse the conventions, routes, rates, taxation, postal stamps, services, functions and activities that led to the development of the postal service.

Another characteristic of these documents is to be able to bring out from the writings the humanity of the writers (fighters, patriots or simple people), their reactions to the war and their innermost feelings expressed to friends and family. The Risorgimento, from 1848 to 1870, is the period in Italian history during which Italy, at the price of three 'wars of independence', gained a unitary political identity by merging the old Italian states into the Kingdom of Italy. The Grand Duchy of Tuscany was one of the most important centres supporting independence.

Most of the people going to art galleries appreciate art but they are neither art collectors nor painters, why this does not apply to non-collectors in relation to philatelic exhibitions ?

C.M : You are right, in that case, people are interested to see the beauty of a painting or a statue, in other words one appreciates the art, because that activity generates in one's mind a feeling of pleasure upon viewing an artwork and one does receive a good feeling which is very much similar to drinking a fine wine or eating a special food.



Do you think that philately could cause the release of endorphins, that are related to feeling good ?

C.M : As humans we all are a fine “collection” of biochemical reactions. That is why all pleasurable activities, including philately, do release endorphins which are “responsible” for creating a positive mood and attitude. This kind of positive mood for some people could be for attending a fashion show and at such an event, I would very much like to see a fashion show with a parallel exhibition of a philatelic collection on clothing and fashion.

When an article about Philately appears on a newspaper it usually refers to the price, how expensive is a stamp ? Is that a myth that philately has to correct ?

C.M : I think it is important to make an effort to make stamps or covers more appealing to a wider audience outside of the philatelic world without focusing on the price of philatelic material but emphasizing on the story behind this material.

In order to attract and interest people it is important to tell the story how such items were discovered. A good example was presented on Post Horn Magazine, about the Austrian 1867 colour error of 3 kr which were discovered during the pandemic after being in a garage for 30 years. Post Horn Magazine had the exclusive privilege of presenting this discovery before the items were auctioned at Viennafil in December 2022.

Being an editor of Post Horn, what in your opinion should be done to publicize philately ?

C.M : I'm pleased to share with you the presentation I did, following the invitation of the RPSL at Crawford Festival in 2023. During that presentation I tried to outline the reasons of this magazine's success after receiving the Philatelic European Philatelic Academy Press Award in 2020 as well as Gold Medals in Philatelic Literature Exhibitions (Notos 2021, London 2022 and IBRA 2023).

In a few words what we did was to define a Vision and a Communication Strategy. Right from the beginning we wanted to be different compared to the some very important philatelic magazines such The London Philatelist and the NY Collectors Club Magazine. We aimed to present history with stamps and postal documents as to witnessing History rather than to be the main focus. This is quite difficult to convince authors to avoid presenting all of their exhibit rarities, which are uninteresting to collectors that they don't collect this type of philatelic material.

Would it be possible such an article to appeal to a non-collector ? The answer is no.

We had therefore decided to create an attractive magazine by employing a professional graphic designer that was given full power to decide on the layout.

This attractive layout was paired with articles of philatelic items that would provide accurate information but through an appealing narration.

What do think the future of philately could be ?

The Future of Philately depends on the decisions to be taken in regard to a new approach that can effectively communicate the charm of collecting.

THE DISCREET CHARM OF POSTAL HISTORY

Uncommon items and fascinating pieces of Postal History

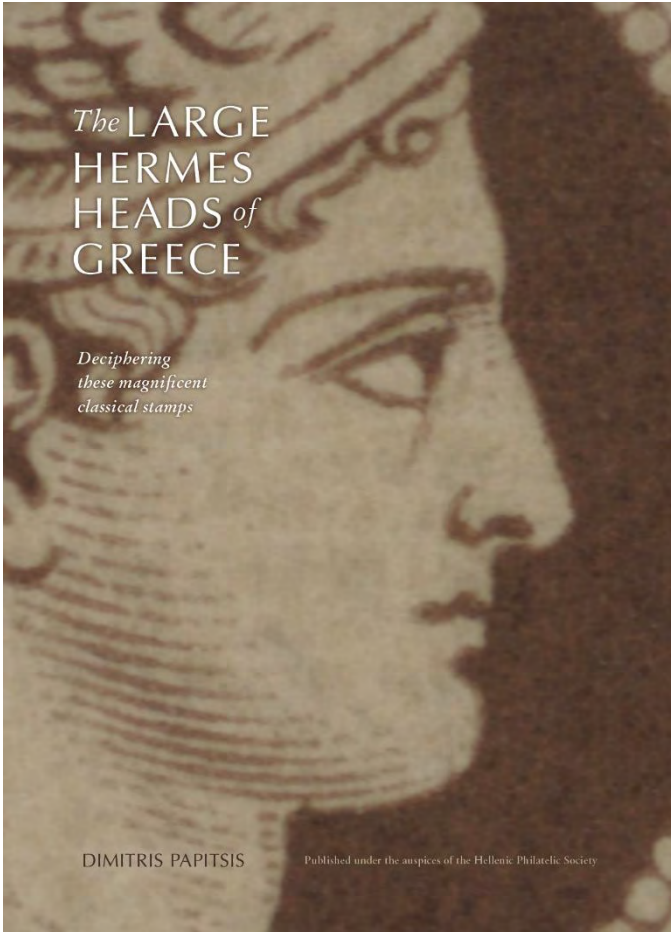
Feather letters
In the middle of the 18th century, the Swedish postal service decided to devise something that would visually emphasize to both the sender and addressee the increased speed of mail delivery achieved in those years.
Considering the speed of bird flight, the postal authorities came up with the idea of using bird feathers for an immediate and effective impact on the public. This practice was successful and continued until the late 19th century. Officials were authorized to attach feathers to the seal to emphasize the speed of the delivery, the more feathers were affixed to a letter the faster it had to be delivered. In addition to royal officials, the military and the church were also authorized to affix feathers to their letters.

The feathers were mostly chicken feathers, but there were also guinea fowl and hoopoe feathers in the colors white, brown, grey, black, speckled, but also dyed blue or yellow. Furthermore, so-called crown loops were also attached to the address side to refer to the Royal Post Office and delivery instructions with dispatch dates and notations such as EXTRA, EXTRA POST, FORT, FORT-FORT and FORT-FORT-FORT, crown stamps were also in use. In 2003, letters with four ribs came into circulation for the first time (three letters known to date). On the Aland Islands and in Finland feathers were soon used as well, but mostly goose feathers. We present you three different feather letters from Sweden, sharing with you the persuasive and discreet charm of Swedish Postal History.

118 06. POST HORN 119

The Large Hermes Heads of Greece –

Deciphering these Magnificent Classical Stamps



Dimitris Papitsis 240–page publication "The Large Hermes Heads of Greece – Deciphering these Magnificent Classical Stamps" fulfils its title. This systematic and thorough presentation of the Large Hermes Heads (L.H.H) by issue is according to the classification of the "Hellas" catalogue with detailed reference to previously published studies. The precise colour rendering of the stamps in combination with the larger than life size of the images both facilitate the reader to identify and classify these classical stamps.

Moreover, the inclusion of QR codes in this book as well as the use of Social Media and a specialized website serve as practical "vehicles" for updating as well as exchanging continuously all relevant information.

Michalis Tseriotis, an expert on Large Hermes Heads, states that : “this book is excellent in every way, and it is an incomparable resource for the serious philatelist who would like to get involved with the Large Hermes Heads. Highly recommended!”

This english–language book is distributed in Greece and Europe from the Hellenic Philatelic Society (H.P.S) which encouraged and supported this publication as part of the festivities for its 100th Foundation Anniversary.

NEW CATALOG for BULGARIAN STAMPS is published



The new "FEPPA" catalog, volume one, for Bulgarian postage stamps from the period 1879 – 1969, has been printed. Its volume is 184 pages and is a publication of the "Philatelin Review" magazine.

The catalog is made by "Art Eternal Print" on matte paper 130 g, and the cover is on cardboard 300gr with laminate-gloss. The catalog is a kind of encyclopedia of Bulgarian Postal and Philatelic History, and the prices in it are the selling prices in the store network of the "Bulgarian Philately and Numismatics"

FIP Jury Academy Class #9 in Bucharest before EFIRO 2024: The miracle continues, ...

Francisc Ambrus

The Federation Internationale de Philatelie, together with the Romanian Philatelic Federation and the Museum of Romanian Records, organized the FIP Jury Academy Class #9. This session was hosted in the Amphitheater Hall of the museum between April 12-14, 2024. The FIP Coordinator for this Jury Academy was FIP Director Aldo Samame y Samame (Peru). 15 FIP accredited jurors participated, the training was led by FIP Director Peter Suhadolc (Slovenia) and FIP Jury Member Andrew Cheung (Hong Kong), who will train Apprentice Trainer Ed Kroft (Canada) for future courses.

The aim of the Academy is to improve judging work to be more professional, responsible and flexible in its interactions with teams and exhibitors. In step with the changes and improvements in the regulations, exhibits, and the mentality of exhibitors, jurors, in turn, must continue to perfect themselves and align with these new changes. In this way, these intensive courses appeared where a number of jurors learn together how to improve their own activity, how to work in a team, sometimes under pressure, how to treat the exhibitor's work with professionalism and stimulate him for the future.



It is an action of great responsibility and these courses remind us of the stages and



process of judging and the role of the juror in an exhibition. Such actions would be useful to be organized as often as possible because they help enormously for the future of philatelic exhibitions. The juror's approach to the satisfied or dissatisfied exhibitor, the way he encourages him for future presentations, are part of the things learned here. By participating in these

courses, the modeling of jurors becomes much better. Always there will be something new to learn. And we should keep in mind that without exhibitors there can be no jurors.

I was personally very impressed by the truth of the principles in the words of apprentice trainer Ed Kroft:

*“A juror must not judge the exhibitor, or the track record of the exhibit, or by comparison with other exhibits. **He must judge what he sees at that moment, the others being only elements that must not influence the objectivity of the judging.**”*

These three principles are important elements that every juror must remember when judging the work of others. And the same, he in his turn, in the position of exhibitor, will be judged.



During the three days of intensive courses, the most important points in the judging process were reached:

- The role of the juror, the preparation of the judging, the role of the Team Leader, the judging criteria according to the regulations;
- Preparing the jury in the team, establishing the responsible for each exhibit, evaluating the exhibits and feedback in the team and individually;
- Preparing and evaluating feedback to be useful to the exhibitor at the final discussion.



During the courses, all stages of the judging were discussed on the general classification of the exhibition classes and where there was a particular case according to the class regulations. Four teams were formed and each participant answered all the points in the program, individually or in a team. Team Leaders were delegated by rotation both for team examinations

and for exhibit examinations, the roles of juror/exhibitor, exhibitor/juror were reversed, and at the end each student was examined orally. Each team had well-prepared students who ensured the homogeneity of the teams. Thanks to the highly qualified trainers, these courses were a real success, all participants graduating the courses and being appreciated at the graduation ceremony, receiving the FIP JURY FELLOW badge.



After the end of the courses, before the graduation ceremony, were visited the philatelic collection of the Museum of Romanian Records and the 100 showcases dedicated to FIP Exhibitions and Congresses, all the participants being extremely delighted by the uniqueness and innovation of these collections.

The final conclusion is that such courses should be held as often as possible, jurors should always participate, and together with the specialized Seminars, philatelic exhibitions should continue to be a major point of attraction in the world of collectors.

Some pictures from the Graduation Dinner



Two covers from the Heritage of Milan Govekar (1937 –2006)

by Peter SUHADOLC

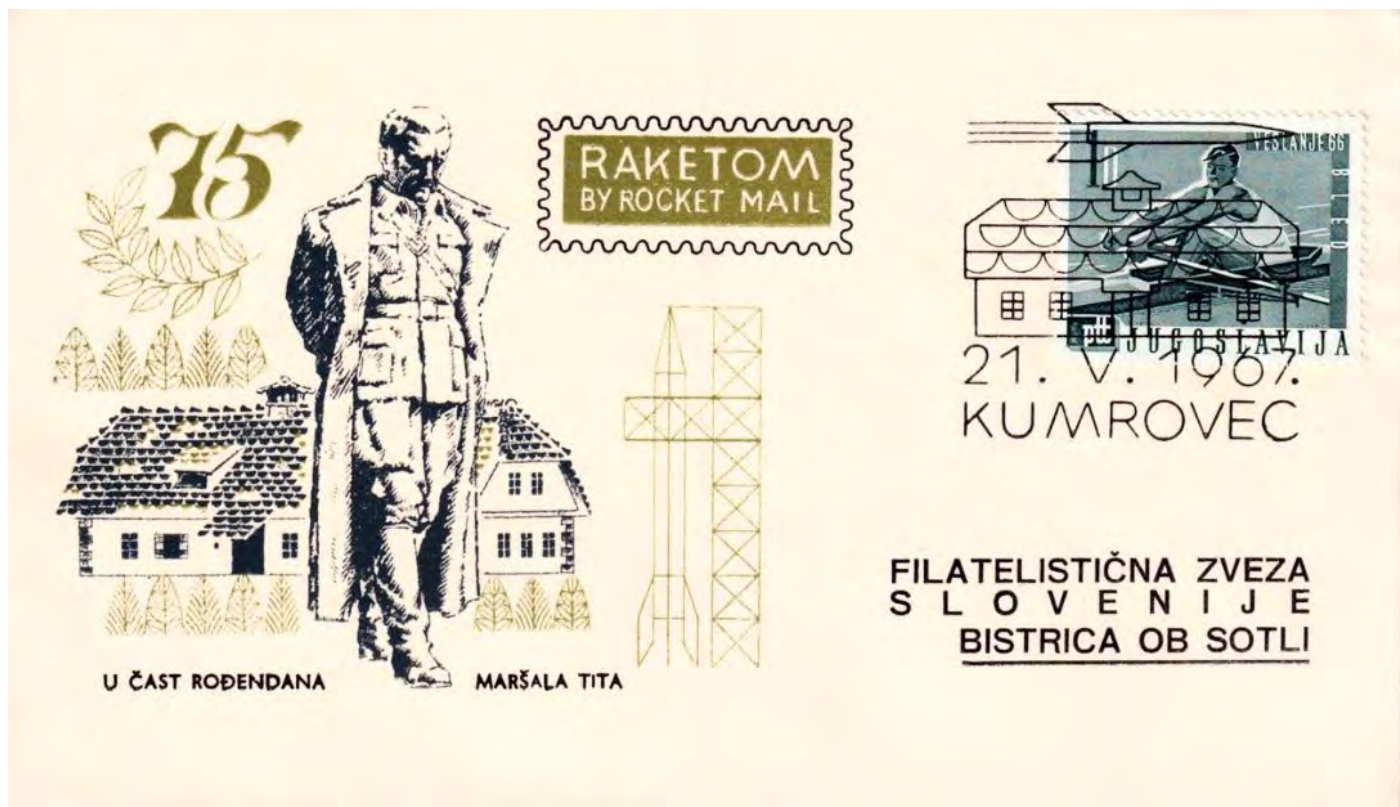
I trust most of the older generation of philatelists remember Milan Govekar, a passionate Slovenian collector, from 1973 to 1975 secretary of the Slovenian Philatelic Association (FZS) and in May 2004 founding member of the Slovenian Philatelic Academy (SFA). Recently, two commemorative covers have been found out of his heritage that are very similar.

The first is commemorating the 75th Anniversary of the former Yugoslav president Tito on May 25, 1967 and was prepared by the Croatian Philatelic Federation (FSH). It bears the commemorative cancellation of the town Kumrovec, Tito's birthplace, and is the second commemorative cover issued by the HFS (mark 2/1967) that year.



More interesting is the second one, very similar to the first one. In fact the used design copies the one of the first cover with just an addition to the right, a rocket on its launching pad and the inscription »RAKETOM / BY ROCKET MAIL« above it. The cancellation, also used at the post office Kumrovec, shows a rocket above the house where Tito was born.

The interesting fact is that the cancellation has the date May 21, 1967, that is four days before that of the first cover, and that it was prepared and sent by the Croatian Federation (based in Kumrovec) to the Slovenian one in Bistrica ob Sotli, a town located very near Kumrovec across the Slovenian–Croatian border. In fact, Tito's mother was Slovenian from Bistrica ob Sotli. The cover is numbered (N. 381) and has the mark R1/1967 with the R denoting »Rocket mail«.



So the HFS used the design prepared for the Tito's birthday commemorative cover to prepare a second cover to be used with rocket mail four days earlier! The rocket landed very probably in Slovenia and the cover is a proof of the cooperation between Croatian and Slovenian philatelists.



STAR WARS on Stamps

by Primož Čebulj



For almost 50 years, the Star Wars Saga has thrilled moviegoers with its epic story of good versus evil. Set across a fantastic galaxy of exotic planets and bizarre creatures, the saga tells the mythic tale of the disintegration of the Old Republic, the creation of the Empire, the rise of the evil Darth Vader, and the ultimate victory of the Rebel Alliance. Star Wars has inspired generations of fans with its unbridled sense of adventure, advancing the art of filmmaking while leaving an indelible mark on our cultural imagination. The galaxy is populated with a diverse array of beings, humans, aliens, creatures, and **electronic droids**.

Droids are everywhere in the galaxy. First developed in the distant past, they assist humans and aliens in every way, from flying spaceships and providing power to spreading war and terror. Most droids speak only in electronic sounds to other droids and have their memory wiped when passed to a new owner. However, some droids escape memory wipes and can appear to develop personalities of their own and even form bonds with their owners.

You will meet some of the **droids** in the next video:

https://youtu.be/Kt_pXYPWwIw





The Slovenian Castles

Slovenia is often dotted with castles and mansions. Together with the disappeared noble residences, there are around 800 of them. Some are lost, their exact locations are unknown, many are in ruins, but many are still standing, many of them are in a poor condition. Many of them are more or less successfully restored. Of course, their role today is different from the role that was intended for them at the time of construction. Due to Slovenia's location, most of these castles were primarily built as border fortifications against various attacks from the east and south. They rarely got the character of excellent residences. Fortunately, some of them are at least protected from decay or have even been restored for museum or tourism purposes.

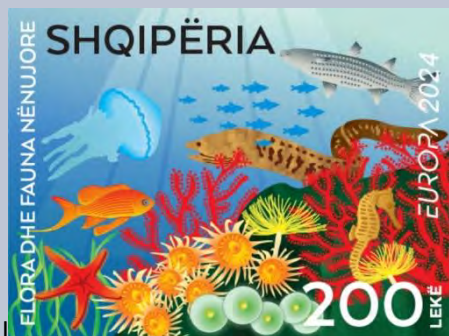
Check out video to learn a little more about The Slovenian castles: <https://youtu.be/Pruq5TFw0g8>





VOTE for your most beautiful 2024 EUROPA “Underwater Flora and Fauna” Stamp till September 9th 2024.

ALBANIA



BiH Mostar



BiH Banja Luka



BOSNIA and HERZGOVINA



BULGARIA



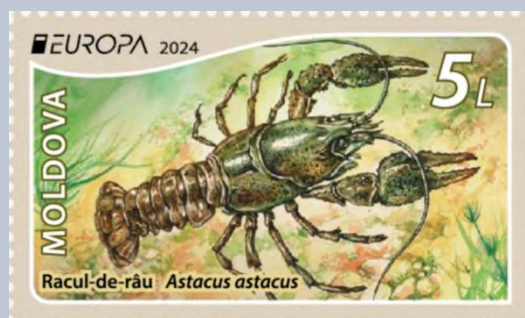
CROATIA



GREECE



MOLDOVA



MONTENEGRO



Republic of SERBIA



ROMANIA



SLOVENIA



TURKIYE



<https://www.europastamps.eu/europa2024>

BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA FBiH HP Mostar

A national monument and one of the most beautiful late-antique buildings in Bosnia and Herzegovina is Mogorjelo (Čapljina). This unique archaeological monument is a well-preserved ancient Roman *Villa Rustica* (a centre of landed property) built by an immigrated Italic in the middle of the 1st century. The building likely burned down in a fire. In the 4th century, a 102 x 86 m rectangular-shaped Roman fortress with corner towers was built on the same site.



The corners and the gates of the large frame wall were protected by three square-based defence towers, while the fourth was circular. The southwest wall had small gates, while the other gates were wide and double-doored. The north gates were decorated with two *orthostats* – stone blocks depicting acanthus (a Mediterranean plant) on one and grapevines on the other block. The eastern and western gates were similar but lacked decorations. The owner of the complex lived in a two-story palace built within the structure, consisting of a series of rooms adjoining an entrance porch with Corinthian columns. The walls were adorned with false marble, and the floors with mosaics. Rooms for workers' accommodation, storage for tools and agricultural products, and five oil tanks were located inside the building.



Within the villa, two early Christian Basilicas were built in the middle of the 5th century.

Throughout the entire surface of the former villa, ancient tombs, early and late Slavic graves, and later graves up to the 19th century were found.

MYTHS and FLORA was released on May 22nd.

Mijat Tomić is a famous Croatian leader of Hajduks who fought against Turkish rule during the Ottoman Empire. He was born in Gornji Brišnik at the beginning of the 17th century (1610?), died in Doljani near Jablanica on Ilindan, on July 20, between 1656 and 1659. His parents died early and Mijat was raised by his uncle. When he grew up, he entered into a lease with Bey Kopčić. He had a reputation as a hero with whom no one in the tobacco region could compete. He challenged an Arab to a "megdan" (fight), who threatened to Bey Kopčić and the people, and overcame and executed him. Because of his heroic deed, Bey Kopčić gives him a meadow called Jabuka and the honour of being his standard-bearer at weddings. One tradition mentions that the Turks didn't like that, especially since Mijat beat them in the game stone throwing from his shoulder, they decided to kill him. Upon learning of their intention, Mijat fled to Vran mountain gathering a group of 30 to 40 Hajduks.



Hrvatska Pošta d.o.o. Mostar issued one commemorative postage stamp in a block, stamp and a First Day Cover (FDC). Stamps and accompanying materials can also be purchased online at www.epostshop.ba

BULGARIA

Two NEW Stamp issues at SHUMEN City Exhibition

Roman Emperors Connected with the Bulgarian Lands

On 21.06.2024 the Ministry of Transport and Communications put into circulation a set of two postage stamps “Roman Emperors Connected with the Bulgarian Lands”.

The issue commemorates some of the most important Roman emperors connected with the Bulgarian lands. During the Roman period, a great number of Roman cities, fortresses, roads and bridges were built on the Bulgarian lands. Their remains are popular tourist attractions now.

Stamps Design:

1.35 Lv.–The stamp shows Romula (left) and Gaius Galerius (right) (258–311). The map shows the Roman city of Serdica, which is the historical name of Sofia, the present capital of Bulgaria.

1.90 Lv.–The stamp shows Flavia Julia Elena (246–330), the mother of Constantine the Great (left) and Constantine the Great (272–337) (right). The map shows the location of Naissus, the ancient name of Nish. Now it is a part of Serbia, but it belonged to Bulgaria in the Middle-aged period.



Bulgarian Natural Phenomena

The Lion's Head



The Three Brothers



On 21.06.2024 the Ministry of Transport and Communications put into circulation a set of two postage stamps “Bulgarian Natural Phenomena”.

The issue commemorates 2 popular rock formations located not far from the Bulgarian Black Sea coast. “The Lion's Head” is a rock formation of 65–70 million years, declared a natural monument. It is located 80m. above the Ropotamo River and is tourist destination due to the beautiful forest landscape and its panoramic view. The rock phenomenon “The Three Brothers” is located in the Slaveeva Reka forest park at an altitude of 200m, not far from Aytos city and is one of its landmarks. The inhabitants of Aytos have erected a monument at the entrance, reminding them the city is guarded by the stone giants, The Three Brothers.

GREECE

Celebrating Marine Biodiversity



Hellenic Post is once again participating this year in the joint European edition with the theme “**Underwater Fauna and Flora**” and they are taking us on a journey to the bottom of the Greek seas. The two impressive stamps, circulated on May 10th, highlight the unparalleled beauty of marine biodiversity, presenting the famous shell of gastropod *Pseudotorinia architae* and the special shell that houses the eggs of the female octopus *Argonauta argo*.

Olympic Games – PARIS 2024

On June 12, 2024 the Hellenic Post released the commemorative set of two stamps for the “**Olympic Games – PARIS 2024**”, highlighting the historical heritage of the host. The design depicts the “**History of the Olympiads in Paris**” on one of the €1,20 stamp whilst the “**Paris 2024 : New Sports to discover**” are shown on the other stamp of €1,20 face value.



GREECE



On July 8th 2024 has put in circulation the commemorative issue «**EUROMED 2024 – Sports in the Mediterranean**», with two stamps of €2 and €3 depicting Rowing and Water-polo respectively. There were also issued MS of two sets, a booklet, a FDC and a commemorative cancelation.



ROMANIA

Flowers of Colours, a postage stamps issue with a theme that represents a symbol of optimism and beauty, was released by Romfilatelia, on *Wednesday, May 8th, this year*. It consists of three postage stamps, a First Day Cover and three maximum postcards for the maximaphily collectors.



Taking from the tradition of ancestral fairy tales the characters considered as female demi-divinities, popularly known as fairies, the chromatic and idealized concept of the graphic layouts renders in the images of the postage stamps a world of joy, optimism and beauty.

The “**Princess of Flowers**” (face value of Lei 5.00) presents a young woman dressed in an original wedding dress where the border and ruffles of the sleeves are covered with thousands of white flowers, a symbol of purity, newness, energy and peace. The traditional blouse (in Romanian: *ie*), flooded by the crowd of flowers, borrows in its stitches their patterns and colours.

The “**Fairy of Spring**” (face value of Lei 6.00) suggests the movement, in a gliding flight, over the beauties of enchanting views, of a fairy dressed in traditional blouse (*ie*) and garlands, as carrying the spirit of renewed nature, accompanied by the fragrance and incomparable beauty of flowers.

The “**Fairy of Flowers**” (face value of Lei 25.00) unfolds as a mistress of the Kingdom of Flowers, in an attitude of relaxation, tranquility and well-deserved gratitude for all the good things she has achieved: she has beautified the plains of a country and brought close to people’s souls the marvelous world and the delightful fragrance of flowers, solidly integrated in their lives and present in all moments, of joy and sometimes of sadness.



A postage stamps issue with the title **Ladybirds** was introduced into circulation on *Tuesday, June 11th*. This issue consists of 4 stamps, 1 First Day Cover, a philatelic folder with special product in a limited edition and a set of 4 maxicards for the passionate of maximaphily. The four postage stamps reproduce images of insects whose characteristics make them stand out as surprising appearances through colouring and shapes: *Cheilomenes sexmaculata septempunctata* (face value of Lei 4.60), *Psyllobora vigintiduopunctata* (face value of Lei 5.00), *Sospita vigintiguttata* (face value of Lei 13.00), *Harmonia axyridis var. axyridis* (face value of Lei 22.00).

Ladybirds, some of the most well-known and beloved insects in the world, belong to the *Coccinellidae* family. In some countries, they have names associated with the Virgin Mary: *Măriuță* in Romanian. The connection with the Virgin Mary comes from the association of the colour of the insects with the red mantle worn in many depictions of the Virgin.

Popular tradition considers them a symbol of good luck (they are reproduced as Mărțișoare – March Amulets), protection and an atmosphere of calm and tranquility. Their presence near people would constitute a bulwark against evil.

On Tuesday 21 May this year, Romfilatelia put into circulation a new joint issue of Romanian and Moroccan postage stamps on the theme of **Popular Art**. The common themes chosen by the two countries are based on the presence of ancient traditions, preserved and promoted in the design of traditional costumes and ceramic and porcelain objects.



The postage stamp, with a face value of 4 Lei, features an image illustrating an **ia** (traditional Romanian blouse) from Vâlcea and a **pottery object from Horezu**. The traditional costume of Vâlcea is one of the most refined and varied in the style found in the Carpathians, with the sheets of fabric gathered in a band around the neck.

On 1 December 2022, "The Art of the Traditional Blouse with Embroidery on the shoulder" (altiță), an element of cultural identity in Romania and the Republic of Moldova" was inscribed on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity (UNESCO) whilst the traditional Horezu pottery technique was included on UNESCO's Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in December 2012 recognizing a hundreds of years of unchanged tradition.

The postage stamp, with a face value of 10 Lei, shows an image of a "Khrib" caftan typical of the city of Fez in Morocco and an object made of Fez porcelain. Brocade, the raw material of the kaftan, is one of the most remarkable fabrics made by Moroccan craftsmen. Its complex, polychrome relief patterns are very similar to embroidery. The creation of this fabric involves the participation of the artisan weaver, "derraz" or "zardkhani".

As for Moroccan decorative ceramics, they were of the highest quality: considered one of the most refined Moroccan products, they figured prominently among royal gifts. There are two varieties of ceramic painted on enamel: monochrome, generally blue, and polychrome in shades of blue, brown, green and yellow. Moroccan ceramics come in a variety of forms, each with its own specific function: decorative, for special festive occasions, including weddings, collectors' items, and so on.



The postage stamps issue entitled **UNICEF. Children's Mental Health. The Right to Health**, was introduced into circulation, on *Monday, June 3rd, 2024* having the honourable mission of supporting the initiative launched by this prestigious organization, *Romania for every child*. Every child and adolescent's mental health must be a priority for decision makers and stakeholders in every community.

UNICEF reaffirms the right of every child to good mental health and wellbeing, and the need for investment in every community to make this right a reality for children and young people.

Every child must be given the best possible start in life. Their nations and the whole world depend on it.

EUROPEAN FOOTBALL CHAMPIONSHIP 2024



SLOVENIA

On May 31st came to circulation 5 stamps honouring the "Works of Slovene Illustrators".

All five illustrators have produced remarkable designs and have mastered the line that Paul Klee had "explained" that "a line is a dot that went for a walk".



Karel Zelenko is a subtle observer of life, a master of the line. The playfulness of his line reveals a melancholy and poetic art of life, depicting the world as a scene of human comedy and anxiety, permeated at times with humanity or grotesque satire, sometimes full of mischievousness and occasionally unobtrusively *engagé*.

The late **Kostja Gatnik** was a man of many talents and a unique and original artist. He was a painter, an excellent draughtsman, a cartoonist, an illustrator, a photographer, a graphic designer . . . and above all a perfectionist who was totally at one with his craft.



Zvonko Čoh is one of the most prominent, original and immediately recognizable Slovene illustrators. His creations have a specific, caricature-like style and he presents them in a colourful, vivid manner with all their human failings. His brush brings every character to life and they stir powerful feelings in those who view them.



Marlenka Stupica, a creator of fabulous images who illustrated all the famous fairy tales from the Brothers Grimm to Andersen. As she herself once put it: "I only truly embraced those texts that awakened my imagination, including my artistic imagination." Her work is redolent of the embroideries of time, nostalgia for paradise, the fruits of uniqueness and the mystery of the unseen.



Jelka Reichman is an Illustrator with a big " I " who has spent her life creating illustrations for little people. As she herself puts it: "The thing that interests me most in life is beauty . . . I see beauty in small creatures, animals, children . . . I see their inner world radiating outwards. That is what I depict."



31/05

EUROPA – Underwater Fauna and Flora

The **Noble Pen Shell** (*Pinna nobilis*) is a Mediterranean endemic species and the largest bivalve mollusc in the Mediterranean Sea. *Pinna nobilis* plays a key ecological role by filtering water and retaining organic matter, which contributes to water clarity. By offering a habitat to numerous organisms, it also increases biodiversity but today the noble pen shell is listed among critically endangered species.



The **Water Beetle** *Graphoderus bilineatus* is a member of the Dytiscidae family. Because of its rarity and the endangered status of its habitats, it is recognized as a species of European conservation importance. It is also extremely rare in Slovenia.

On July 8 the issue of the **Games of the XXXII Olympiad** in Paris was put in circulation with two stamps depicting Sport Climbing and Road Cycling



Euromed issue on July 8 is dedicated this year to the **"Sports in the Mediterranean"** with a stamp depicting scenes from watersports.



Philatelic co-operation around the Mediterranean

Euromed Postal was established by twenty two Postal Authorities -regarding the Mediterranean as their shared, bonding centre in terms of culture, traditions, customs and way of living.

Every year a common topic is selected and this year 'Games of the Mediterranean' are illustrated by each participating country in their own way.



For **Suggestions, Comments and Inquiries**, kindly contact the **National Delegates**



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