

Berne (Switzerland), October 9, 2009

## **UPU celebrates 100 years of historical landmark on World Post Day *Swiss and French stamps pay homage to monument and its creator***

On World Post Day, the Universal Postal Union has held a double celebration in Berne, commemorating the centenary of its monument and hosting the unveiling of commemorative stamps by Swiss Post and France's La Poste. The stamps depict the sculpture, located in the Kleine Schanze park, and its creator, French sculptor, René de Saint-Marceaux.

Representatives from both Posts were present to unveil the stamps, alongside Edouard Dayan, the UPU director general, Alexander Tschäppät, mayor of Bern, Urs Gasche, executive councillor of the Canton of Bern, and 200 other guests. The monument, entitled *Around the world*, was inaugurated on October 4, 1909, after de Saint-Marceaux won an international competition in which more than 120 artists participated. One year after winning the competition, de Saint-Marceaux was admitted to the French Academy of Fine Arts.

The UPU's monument is known the world over, having appeared, over the years, on hundreds of stamps issued by the Posts of many of the organization's 191 member countries. The central image of the monument – the five women passing letters around a globe – was adopted as the UPU emblem several decades ago. The monument symbolizes international postal communication. The women represent each of the five continents: the Americas, Australia, Asia, Europe and Africa. The majestic figure of Berna – the city personified as a reclining figure at the sculpture's base - dominates the artwork. It serves as an ever-present reminder of the UPU's birth city, where the world's second oldest international organization was created in 1874.

### **Commemorative stamps**

Both French and Swiss stamps depict the granite and bronze monument with an image of the artist in the background. The Swiss stamp is a UPU service stamp carrying a 1.80 CHF value. It can be bought through Swiss Post as a collector's item or at UPU headquarters for use on mail leaving the building. Swiss Post regularly issues service stamps for the UPU. Such stamps can only be used on mail posted from the UPU in Berne. The French stamp is a joint issue between France and Switzerland. It can be used on international mail leaving France and costs 0.70 EUR. De Saint-Marceaux was a native of the French town of Reims, where many of his sculptures adorn the streets and squares.

### **Exhibition**

The public is cordially invited to visit a special exhibition about the monument and its history at Berne's City Hall (Rathaus). Complete with historic photos and documents, as well as valuable stamps, postal marks and postcards, the exhibition, organized by the UPU, is free of charge and open from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. from October 9 - 11.

Posts around the world are also celebrating World Post Day today. The annual event on October 9 marks the foundation of the Universal Postal Union in Berne in 1874. Please see separate press release at: [http://www.upu.int/press/en/press\\_releases\\_2009.shtml](http://www.upu.int/press/en/press_releases_2009.shtml)



### Key facts about the UPU monument

- Designed by French sculptor, René de Saint-Marceaux;
- Inaugurated on October 4, 1909, to commemorate the foundation of the Universal Postal Union in Berne in 1874;
- The five female figures passing letters to each other around a globe each represent one of five continents: Africa, Asia, Australia, Europe and the Americas;
- Berna, a reclining figure, dominates the artwork, representing the city of birth of the UPU;
- The monument is 16 metres long and 9.6 metres high. The globe's diameter is 2.8 metres. Each figure is 4 metres high and weighs 1.8 tonnes;
- The cost of the monument in 1909 was estimated at 304,000 CHF (worth about 3.5 million CHF today); at the time, the artist received 170,000 CHF for his work.

### About the Universal Postal Union

Created in 1874, the UPU, based in Berne (Switzerland), is an intergovernmental organization and the primary forum for cooperation between governments, Posts and other stakeholders of the worldwide postal sector. In addition to maintaining a genuinely universal network that provides modern products and services, it establishes the rules for international mail exchanges among its 191 members and makes recommendations to stimulate mail volume growth and to improve the quality of service for customers. Some 5.5 million employees process and deliver 433 billion domestic letter-post items annually, as well as some 5.5 billion international items and over 6 billion ordinary parcels. About 660,000 postal establishments make the postal network the largest physical distribution network in the world. The UPU celebrated 60 years as a specialized agency of the United Nations in 2008.

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