

Philatelic code of ethics

2004 Bucharest Congress

Recommendation C 26/2004

Philatelic code of ethics for the use of UPU member countries

Congress,

Referring

- to article 6 of the Universal Postal Convention (Beijing 1999), which specifies the terms under which postage stamps may be issued;
- to article RE 306 of the Regulations of the Beijing Convention, which specifies the characteristics of postage stamps and postal prepayment impressions; and
- to the Philatelic Code of Ethics adopted by the Beijing Congress under recommendation C 70/1999,

Observing

that postage stamps continue to have a commercial value when used for philatelic purposes,

Recognizing

that the Philatelic Code of Ethics as adopted by the Beijing Congress has provided valuable guidance to postal administrations in maximizing the value of postage stamps to collectors and administrations,

Reaffirms

its commitment to the production of high quality, ethical stamps, and to a vibrant philatelic market,

Recommends

that all postal administrations observe the procedures set out in the attached revised philatelic Code of Ethics when issuing and supplying postage stamps and postal items for postal and philatelic purposes.

(Proposal 20. 0.10.Rev 1, Committee 7, 2nd meeting)

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Annex

Philatelic code of ethics for the use of UPU member countries

The philatelic code of ethics for the use of member countries comprises the following recommendations:

1 Administrations creating philatelic products shall ensure that the use of the postage stamps and other means of denoting payment of postage does not lead to the creation of such postal products as would not result from the exercise of proper postal procedures.

1.1 Philatelic products within the scope of this code include, but are not limited to:

- postage stamps, as defined in article 6 of the Universal Postal Convention (Beijing 1999);
- maximum cards;
- first day covers;
- presentation packs or albums;
- envelopes with embossed or pre-printed stamps;
- cachets for special occasions and events and related products;
- stamps with surcharges, in conformity with article RE 306 of the Regulations of the Beijing Convention.

1.2 Other means of indicating payment (e.g. franking marks, postage paid indicia and other labels) are permitted in accordance with article 6 of the Beijing Convention, but are not considered to be postage stamps.

2 Administrations shall not authorize such use of cancellation dies, hand stamps or other official informative or operational markings as would not result from the exercise of proper postal procedures.

2.1 Administrations shall not permit the use of such cancelling or marking devices by persons other than their own employees.

2.2 In certain exceptional cases, and provided that direct supervision is exercised by their employees, administrations may authorize the use of these cancelling or marking devices by persons other than their own employees.

2.3 Where administrations contract out part of their operational activity and in particular cancellation, the contract shall specify that the cancelling and marking devices shall be used for operational purposes only and in strict accord with the proper postal procedures of the administration concerned, which shall ensure that this rule is strictly observed.

3 In the sale of products for philatelic purposes incorporating postage stamps, administrations shall ensure that the handling of the postage stamp itself and the use of cancellation dies, handstamps, cachets and other marking devices is in conformity with their respective postal procedures.

4 For each issue of postage stamps, administrations shall ensure that these are printed in sufficient quantity to meet potential operational requirements and foreseeable philatelic needs. In employing cancellation dies, handstamps and cachets for special occasions or events, administrations shall ensure that a sufficient quantity of philatelic products is available to meet requirements. Although administrations may not be able to make every stamp issue available from every outlet, they must nonetheless make sure that their customers and philatelists are well-informed at all times where each postage stamp issue is available for postal and philatelic purposes.

4.1 Issues of postage stamps depicting particular regions of a country or territory may be produced, so long as they comply with the requirements of this Code of Ethics and that customers and philatelists are well-informed at all times of their availability for postal and philatelic purposes.

4.2 Administrations shall take care to ensure that they issue stamps which help meet market demands. They shall ensure that the number of stamps issued each year is limited to that which their market will accept. If policies are still to be decided, administrations should respond cautiously to market demand to avoid oversupply. They shall not saturate the market and thus drive philatelists and collectors away from the hobby.

5 In choosing themes, logos, emblems and other design elements for their issues of postage stamps, administrations shall, at all times, respect intellectual property rights.

6 Whilst administrations have no control over the use of postage stamps or articles entrusted to the postal service for postal or philatelic purposes once they have been sold, they shall nevertheless:

6.1 Not support or acquiesce in any artifice intended to enhance sales of their postage stamps or products incorporating postage stamps by suggesting a potential scarcity of these products.

6.2 Avoid any action which might be taken as declaring approval of or conferring official status on products of unofficial origin incorporating postage stamps.

6.3 In the event that they appoint agents to market their philatelic products, instruct such agents to observe the same procedures and practices as those of the administrations themselves, to respect the provisions of the Philatelic Code of Ethics and of the administration's national postal legislation. Administrations shall not permit agents to operate or alter their proper postal procedures nor to control philatelic procedures.

6.4 Specifically prohibit the sale or disposal by their agents of their postage stamps or products incorporating postage stamps below face value. In remunerating their agents, administrations shall obviate as far as possible any need for agents to sell postage stamps or philatelic products incorporating postage stamps above face value. Due allowance may be made for national or local variations in sales and other taxes which may be pertinent, including at international philatelic exhibitions.

6.5 Administrations shall retain full responsibility for the printing and delivery of postage stamps and related philatelic products, either directly, or by making sure that all contractual obligations are fully respected and fulfilled by the agent, in order to avoid any misunderstanding between partners.

6.6 Printing of postage stamps should only be awarded to security printers that have signed up to the Code of Ethics for postage stamp security printers and that have achieved or undertaken to achieve certification as a security printer.

7 Postal administrations shall not produce postage stamps or philatelic products that are intended to exploit customers.

8 Administrations shall acknowledge in all their philatelic activities that, while their stamps represent symbols of national identity and culture, such stamps retain a secondary value beyond face value only because philatelists and collectors choose to purchase them. Administrations pledge to abide by this code of conduct in order to ensure the long-term survival of the philatelic market in each country.