



## **The traces left behind: an appraisal of the archival heritage of the Universal Postal Union in the European archives**

Anna Batzeli and Luke Davis (Archives Portal Europe)

The Universal Postal Union, boasting a global membership of 192 nations, stands as a key player in international communication. For researchers seeking a comprehensive understanding of the UPU's activities and its substantial contributions to global multilateralism, the Archives Portal Europe (APE) proves to be an invaluable resource. APE, an online repository of archival descriptions, facilitates simultaneous research across thousands of institutions in over 30 countries through a user-friendly online search system.

Aligned with the internationalist spirit of the UPU, APE aggregates descriptive records from approximately 7,000 archival institutions, encompassing over 280 million archival descriptive units. Researchers delving into UPU-related case studies can benefit significantly from APE, as the portal houses over 900 items related to the UPU from nine countries, spanning a broad temporal range from the 1880s to the 1990s.

This paper aims to showcase the UPU-related collections available on APE, providing a starting point for reflections on potential research directions grounded in primary documentation. The methodology employed to research and select these collections will be presented, emphasizing the advantages of using APE for exploring the UPU's history. The paper will delve into specific case studies shedding light on various facets of the UPU's history, roles, missions and challenges. Additionally, it will explore the bilateral postal unions that operated before the UPU's establishment, and underscore APE's potential contribution to researching the transnational history of stamps and philately. Lastly, the presenting authors will present stamps related to the UPU philatelic exhibition that are accessible through APE.