

## A History of Europa Stamps

EUROPA postage stamps are an annual joint issue of stamps with a common design or theme with Europe as the central topic. EUROPA stamps underline cooperation in the posts domain, taking into account promotion of philately. They also build awareness of the common roots, culture and history of Europe and its common goals. As such, EUROPA stamp issues are among the most collected and popular topical stamps in the world.

Since the first issue in 1956, EUROPA stamps have been a tangible symbol of Europe's desire for closer integration and cooperation.



### Journey of the EUROPA Postage Stamps



Since 1956 the EUROPA issue is an annual joint issue of stamps with a common design or theme by postal administration members of the:

- European Communities (1956-1959), then
- European Conference of Postal and Telecommunications Administrations (CEPT) (1960 to 1992), then
- PostEurop Association (1993 onward)

### From 1956 to 1993

The first EUROPA issue dates back to 15 September 1956. The postal administrations of the founding six members of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) issued stamps with a common design: a tower made up of the letters of the word "EUROPA" and surrounded by construction scaffolding.

#### First Europa Issues (1956)

Belgium – Germany – France – Italy – Luxembourg – The Netherlands



In 1959, the European Conference of Postal and Telecommunications Administrations (CEPT) was formed, and from 1960 the initials "CEPT" were displayed on the joint issue stamps.

The stamps had a common design from 1956 to 1973 (with the sole exception of 1957). However, many countries issued a stamp that did not feature the common pattern but just displayed the word "EUROPA". From 1974, the common design was replaced by stamps with different designs, but with a common theme.

## Some Other Common Designs



The success of Europa issues among collectors prompted many postal administrations of small countries or territories dependent of European countries (the Channel Islands for instance) to join the issuing countries in the 1970s. Andorra (French) has issued Europa stamps since 1966 and Andorra (Spain) since 1972. Andorra cannot Join PostEurop as its Postal System is looked after independently by both France and Spain. The Isle of Man and Guernsey, Crown dependencies of the United Kingdom, first issued Europa stamps in 1976, with Jersey following in 1978. The number of participants reached 35 in the 1980s. Turkey participated continuously since 1960, and communist Yugoslavia from 1969. The collapse of the communist bloc in 1989–90 brought new issuers, reaching 57 countries in the late 1990s.

## Since 1993

When CEPT decided to focus more on telecommunications in 1993, PostEurop took over the management of the Europa issues. The CEPT logo was replaced by a new logo created by PostEurop, i.e. the word "EUROPA" leaning to the right.

Although in 2006 the member countries of PostEurop chose the theme of "Integration as seen by young people" instead of a theme related to the 50th anniversary of Europa issues, several countries issued stamps showing the first common designs of the years 1956-1970. An anniversary logo (the number 50 in the middle of a star with 5 branches) is also featured on these stamps.



In order to promote Europa issues among philatelists, PostEurop created in 2002 an annual competition of the "Best Europa stamp". Since 2005, several non-European countries and non-PostEurop members have issued stamps in connection with this anniversary. In Europe, some countries, including Serbia, Montenegro, Albania, Armenia, Moldova, Gibraltar, Cyprus, etc. also participated in these issues.

Until 2006, only representatives of the various postal administrations were entitled to elect the best Europa stamp during the Plenary Assembly of PostEurop, but since 2007, the winner is elected through an open and public voting procedure on the PostEurop website.

From January 2011, the new EUROPA logo, preceded by a symbolic reminder of the mailbox, applies, and a Jury Prize Competition is designed by seven philatelic experts.

**EUROPA**