World of Topicals:
The Europa Topical
by John F. Dunn

Information in this article comes in part from past articles in *Mekeel's Weekly* and *STAMPS Magazine*. Websites that also are particularly good resources are:

http://www.posteurop.org/History

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Europa_postage_stamp

http://www.europastudyunit.org/

Many additional Europa stamp images may be found at:

http://www.ibolli.it/cat/cept/cept60/cept60.php (The iBolli illustrated catalog.)

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The Europa issues date back to September 15, 1956, when the postal administrations of the founding six members of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) issued the first stamps with a common design: a tower made up of the word "EUROPA" placed vertically within scaffolding.

From left: Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands

Since then the number of participating nations has grown as the common Europa movement increased in significance and the stamps became one of the most popular of all topical collecting themes.

From 1956 to 1959 the Europa stamps were issued by the ECSC nations. From 1960-1962 the annual joint issue fell under the aegis of the European Conference of Postal and Telecommunications Administrations (CEPT), and since 1993, the PostEurop Association members have been the authorized participants.

Europa stamps serve many purposes. They are a symbol of and a medium for cooperation among the participating nations and their postal administrations. At first the designs exemplified a unity; with they advent of individual designs they now demonstrate the diversity of the participating nations—their history and culture—within a common theme and common goals.

In 2002 PostEurop created an annual "Best Europa stamp" competition, not only reinforcing the purpose of Europa stamps as a collectible, but also adding to the spirit of competition among participating nations and their stamp designers and printers.

Along the way, as might be expected, nations that are not separate members of these organizations have also joined in the program, whether it be as subdivisions of member nations, to support the Pan-Europe movement or simply to sell stamps to collectors.

Andorra is an example of a postal administration that issues Europa stamps even though France and Spain are responsible for its postal system. The postal administrations of Jersey, Guernsey and the Isle of Man are examples of smaller countries who have formal or informal ties PostEurop member nations—in this case Great Britain—but have independent postal adminstrations that issue their own Europa stamps.

As we shall see in our chronological review, the collapse of the Soviet Union substantially increased the number of nation states and their Europa-issuing postal administrations.

If all of this isn't enough, Europa collectors also can include forerunner issues, "Cinderella" stamps from Local Posts and fantasy "nations," and outright bogus stamps pretending to be the issues of relatively small or obscure nations.

As with the issuing entities, the designs also have spread across an ever-widening spectrum. With the exception of 1957, from 1956 to 1973, a different common design theme was used each year, with the "CEPT" initials in each stamp.

The issuing nations also began to add separately-designed stamps with the word "EUROPA", and by 1973 the restrictive common-design format was abandoned in favor of annual themes, with each nation creating its own distinctive interpretations of those themes.

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Following is a summary of Europa themes and participants from Wikipedia, supplemented by stamp designs primarily from the iBolli illustrated catalog, at

http://www.ibolli.it/cat/cept/cept60/cept60.php

1956

Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands

A tower in the form of the letters of the word Europa.

1957

Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Saarland, Switzerland
A common theme of Peace and Welfare through Agriculture and Industry.

1958

Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Saarland, Turkey
A dove flying above the letter E of Europe, symbolizing the co-operation of the European Postal Services as a vehicle of realizing a United Europe.

1959

Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Switzerland
An interlocking keychain made of four circles and four squares, alternating, symbolizing the eight nations.

1960

Under the new aegis of the European Conference of Postal and Telecommunications Administrations (CEPT), the number of issuing nations increased substantially.

Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Great Britain, Greece, Ireland, Iceland, Italy, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey

The letter O of the word Europa is a Roman mail-coach wheel with 19 spokes, one for each 1960 member of CEPT.

1961

Belgium, Cyprus, France, Germany, Great Britain, Greece, Iceland, Italy, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Portugal, San Marino, Spain, Switzerland, Turkey

A stylized dove made up of 19 individual doves, one for each 1961 member of CEPT.

1962

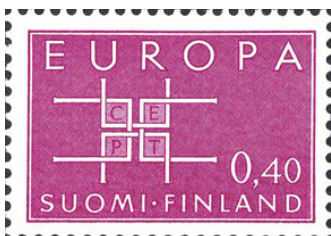Belgium, Cyprus, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Iceland, Italy, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Monaco, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, San Marino, Spain, Switzerland, Turkey

A stylized tree with 19 leaves.

1963

Belgium, Cyprus, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Iceland, Italy, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg,

Monaco, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, San Marino, Spain, Switzerland, Turkey.

A stylized cross design composed of four 3-sided U shapes with CEPT inlaid.

1964

Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Iceland, Italy, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Monaco, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, San Marino, Spain, Switzerland, Turkey

A flower with 22 petals, one for each 1964 member.

1965

Belgium, Cyprus, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Iceland, Italy, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Monaco, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, San Marino, Spain, Switzerland, Turkey

A tree sprig, with three leaves said to represent Posts, Telegraphs and Telephones.

1966

Andorra (Fr.), Belgium, Cyprus, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Iceland, Italy, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Monaco, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, San Marino, Spain, Switzerland, Turkey

A symbolic ship, representing CEPT steady progress on a calm sea.

1967

Andorra (Fr.), Belgium, Cyprus, France, Germany, Greece,

Ireland, Iceland, Italy, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Monaco, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, San Marino, Spain, Switzerland, Turkey

A cogwheel with 22 teeth, one tooth for each 1967 member of CEPT.

1968

Andorra (Fr.), Belgium, Cyprus, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Iceland, Italy, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Monaco, Netherlands, Portugal, San Marino, Spain, Switzerland, Turkey

A key with CEPT in handle, said to be opening the door to a United Europe.

1969

Andorra (Fr.), Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Great Britain, Greece, Ireland, Iceland, Italy, Yugoslavia, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Monaco, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, San Marino, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, Vatican

EUROPA and CEPT inset on two sides of an architectural colonnade.

1970

Andorra (Fr.), Belgium, Cyprus, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Iceland, Italy, Yugoslavia, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Monaco, Netherlands, Portugal, San Marino, Spain, Switzerland, Turkey

A sun composed of 24 interwoven fibres.

1971

Andorra (Fr.), Belgium, Cyprus, Finland, France, Ger-

many, Greece, Ireland, Iceland, Italy, Yugoslavia, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Malta, Monaco, Netherlands, Portugal, San Marino, Spain, Switzerland, Turkey

A chain of Os with CEPT in the links.

1972 Andorra (Fr. & Sp.), Belgium, Cyprus, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Iceland, Italy, Yugoslavia, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Malta, Monaco, Netherlands, Portugal, San Marino, Spain, Switzerland, Turkey.

Sparkles said to be representative of communications.

1973

Andorra (Fr. & Sp.), Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Iceland, Italy, Yugoslavia, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Malta, Monaco, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, San Marino, Spain, Switzerland, Turkey

Stylized Post horn with three arrows that represent Posts, Telegraphs & Telephones.

Common Themes with separate issues (except 1984)

1974
Sculptures
23 issuers

1975
Paintings
24 issuers

1976
Handicrafts
27 issuers

1977
Landscapes
28 issuers

1978
Monuments
30 issuers

1979
Post & Telecommunications
31 issuers

1980
Famous People
32 issuers

1981
Folklore
32 issuers

1982
Historic Events
35 issuers

1983
Inventions
35 issuers

1984
Common Design, Bridge & Arches, for
25th Anniversary of CEPT
35 issuers

1985
European Music Year
35 issuers

1986
Nature conservation
35 issuers

1987
Modern
 architecture
35 issuers

1988
Transportation and communications
35 issuers

1989
Children's
 games
35 issuers

1990
Post offices
37 issuers

1991
European
  aerospace
41 issuers

1992 Voyages of discovery in America, 42 issuers

PostEurop Era

1993
Contemporary art
46 issuers

1994
Great
  discoveries
49 issuers

1995
Peace and freedom
49 issuers

1996
Famous women
52 issuers

1997
Tales and legends
54 issuers

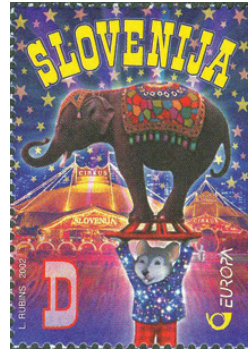**1998**
Festivals &
National Celebrations
57 issuers

1999
Nature reserves
and parks
57 issuers

2000
Common Design
Tower of 6 stars
56 issuers

2001
Water, treasure of nature
57 issuers

2002
The Circus
58 issuers

2003
Poster art
58 issuers

2004
Holidays
59 issuers

2005
Gastronomy
59 issuers

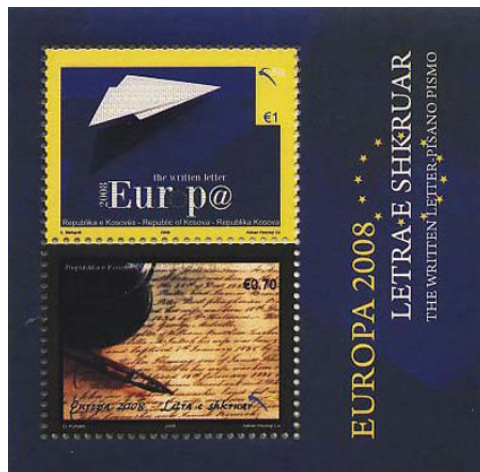No counts given for the next section

2006
Integration through the eyes of Young People

2007
Scout Centenary

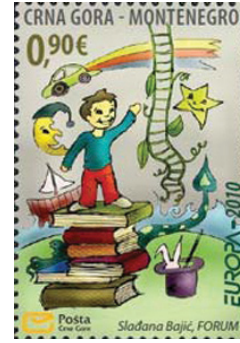*UNMIK, U.N. Mission in Kosovo*

2008
Writing Letters

2009
Astronomy

2010
Children Books

2011 Forests - International year of forests

2012
Tourism, "Visit _____"
(In this case, Austria)

2013 Van of the Postman - Postal vehicles (celebrating PostEurop's 20th anniversary)

2014
National Musical instruments

2015
Old toys

Finally, in *Stamp News Online* and in *Mekeel's & STAMPS* we have covered many Cinderella issues on the Europa theme. Shown here is one such issue, from a November 25, 2011 article on Jethou by Geir Sør-Reime.

You will see this and many other Cinderella, Bogus, and other Europa issues at the site of the Europa Study Unit referenced above, and more specifically at:

http://www.europastudyunit.org/Cinderellas.htm