



25 years [Vienna International Centre](#)



United Nations Postal Administration (UNPA)

25 YEARS VIC—25 YEARS UNPA IN VIENNA

On 24 August 1979, one day after the opening of the Vienna International Centre, the United Nations Postal Administration issued its first United Nations stamps in Austrian currency

The idea of the United Nations issuing its own stamps was first proposed by Argentina in 1947. An agreement with the United States postal authorities was reached in 1951 and it stipulated that the stamps be denominated in United States currency, and used only at United Nations Headquarters.

The first United Nations stamps were issued in US dollar denominations on United Nations Day, 24 October, in 1951. The stamps were an immediate success and sold out within days.

Similar postal agreements were reached with the Swiss and Austrian postal authorities on 11 December 1968. An agreement between the United Nations and the Swiss Postal Telephone and Telegraph Enterprise enabled the Geneva office of UNPA to issue the first United Nations stamps in Swiss francs on 4 October 1969.

A similar agreement with the Austrian government on 28 June 1979 enabled the Vienna office of UNPA to issue the first United Nations stamps in Austrian schillings on 24 August 1979. Since 2 July 2002, due to the change of currency, Vienna United Nations-stamps are issued in Euro.

Since that day, United Nations stamps are issued simultaneously at United Nations offices in New York, Geneva and Vienna

Each issue carries a related design theme, with different denominations for each office. The stamps are available from UNPA offices in person or by mail, and from stamp dealers. They are valid for postage when used on mail from the United Nations offices in New York, Geneva and Vienna.

Usually, six new commemorative issues are released each year and remain on sale for 12 months only. After that date, any remaining stocks are destroyed. Commemorative stamps are so named because they commemorate a certain theme. They are never reprinted, even if they are sold out before the end of the 12-month sale period. Definitive stamps have an indefinite sale period and carry denominations necessary for general postal needs. Definitive stamps can be reprinted as necessary.

United Nations stamps are printed all over the world by security printers, both government printing offices and private security printing firms. They are produced under the same security controls used for the printing of bank notes. Collectors appreciate the high quality of the stamps, which undergo many quality controls and are screened by UNPA for any flaws. This makes the United Nations one of the highest-quality producers of stamps among postal administrations.

**Not only do United Nations stamps artistically promote
the aims of the United Nations, they provide income
for the Organization as well**

This income derives almost exclusively from sales of stamps to collectors. The majority of United Nations postage stamps—approximately 85 per cent—are collected by philatelists. The value of all United Nations stamps used for mailing purposes is reimbursed to the US Postal Service, the Swiss PTT or the Austrian PTT, as appropriate.

Human rights, the environment, endangered species and peace are all subjects of universal concern to the peoples of the world. They are also subjects which the United Nations Postal Administration has promoted on its stamps.

Because United Nations stamps reflect the work of the world Organization, the stamps extend beyond the boundaries of philately to draw attention to significant world problems and to serve as a reminder of the United Nations' commitment to its goals.

To celebrate its 25th birthday on 24 August 2004, the UNPA office in Vienna is issuing a picture postcard of the Vienna International Centre with a special cancellation, available at the permanent UNPA sales counter at the VIC's Visitor Centre at Checkpoint 1.

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