



**UNIONE STAMPA FILATELICA
ITALIANA**



**ASSOCIATION INTERNATIONALE DES
JOURNALISTES PHILATELIQUES**

GUIDELINES FOR PREPARING PHILATELIC PRESS RELEASES

FOREWORD

The philatelic press circulates information concerning new issues and help collectors to become aware of the details of the stamps, so that they can determine those of interest for their collections. The Italian Union of the Philatelic Press (USFI) and the International Association of Philatelic Journalists (AIJP), which gather specialized journalists and writers, have drafted a set of suggestions on how to arrange such information, so that it can be used at best by those who are in charge with analyzing and possibly publicizing it, or who exploit it for writing specialized articles, or who insert it in their catalogues.

Such suggestions should enable the issuing organizations to use at best this specialized and free channel in order to reach their potential customers.

INFORMATION'S CHARACTERISTICS

For each new issue the following documents should be diffused:

- 1) Press release, as detailed hereafter;
- 2) Image of each item issued;
- 3) Image of each first day cancellation in use.

In addition, the following information could be useful:

- 4) Text of the announcement bulletin or card concerning the issue (if any);
- 5) Details about related philatelic products (if any).

CONTENTS OF THE PRESS RELEASE

To match the rules of journalism, the text should be:

- Attractive and convincing, so that readers are motivated to spread the information around;
- Easily reusable and direct, allowing simple "copy and paste" operations.

The press release should contain:

Technical details of the issue:

- Date of issue and, if the case, date of the presale;
- Reason for issue, explaining the meaning of any abbreviation or acronym;
- Denomination of each item (in case of abbreviations or summary indications of a type of service, please specify the price at time of issue);
- Composition (number of stamps per sheet, availability of same stamps in other formats like miniature sheets, mini-sheets, carnets, coils); indication of special technical arrangements, like



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appendixes, labels or vignettes without denomination, special characteristics like tête-bêche and se-tenant, decorations and markings on the margins of the sheet;

- Amount of the surcharge (if any), purpose and recipient(s) of the same;
- Size;
- Perforation (type, measure);
- Watermark, if any;
- Type of gum (traditional or self-adhesive);
- Type of paper, luminescence;
- Printing process and printing company;
- Author and/or engraver of the design;
- Printed quantity;
- Last date of sale to the public (if any);
- Last day of validity (if any);
- Place where the first day cancellation is used;
- Name and position of the author who signed the announcement bulletin or card;
- In case of postal stationery, sale price, whenever it differs from the denomination;
- Availability of related collectors' items, if any (e.g. first day covers, folders, books, CDs).

Characteristics of the Design

- Description of the main subject and of secondary details, if any.

In particular, it is suggested to provide:

- Author, year of realization and place of conservation of art works (including posters, photographs, etc.);
- Manufacturer and type/model of transportations means and other products clearly identifiable;
- A specific reference for animals, flowers (e.g. the scientific names), geographic places.
- An additional, short description of the subject of the issue (e.g., biography of the person(s) represented, characteristics of the organization or the place concerned). This is very important for less known or unusual subjects.

For example, in case of an issue concerning Christmas, information should clarify its design and, if significant, the reasons of its choice; any generic text highlighting the relevance of such festivity is redundant as it is well known.

Joint Issues

In case of joint issues, it is advisable to provide also the same information and relevant images for all items originated from the other postal operators involved.

SENDING PRESS RELEASES OUT

How

Press information should be sent out by electronic mail, that offers the most effective and viable approach; journalist and writers should not be compelled to check periodically a site and download the most recent information;

- Each issue should be presented in a separate mail;
- The e-mail should have attached files as listed under 1-5 above (information requirements).



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Files - Technical Requirements

- Text: Microsoft Word or compatible applications (doc, txt, rtf). Pdf files are useful only if their content can be copied;
- Language: in addition to the country language, English for the international press;
- Images: jpg at 300 dpi or higher, size 1:1. Please specify if (and how) higher resolution pictures are available, for enlargements and special effects. Copyright constraints should be clearly specified.

Images should be included neither in text files nor in the body of the mail, as their usability is affected, but attached as jpg files instead.

File names should contain a “keyword” enabling easier retrieval later, e.g. the surname and the name of the person, the sport, the flower, the town which the issue is devoted to. In case of two or more stamps, the denomination may be added to the name, e.g. Football010, Football 020...

When

The aim is to enable media to publish the information concerning a new issue before or on the day of the event. Considering the lead-time of the different types of publications, press material should be received at the editorial office:

- At least two days before the issue: general public press and web magazines (daily);
- At least one month before the date of issue: philatelic specialized press (monthly).

PRACTICAL HINTS

Media have little interest in information:

- Already circulated to philatelists through direct channels of the issuing entity or its official distributors;
- Released after the issue, when the same is already available at post offices counters.

Furthermore, customer oriented marketing material, provided by such entities, cannot satisfy all the requirements of the philatelic press.

In case of several issues on the same date, it is preferable to stagger the releases on different days (today an issue, tomorrow another one...) summarizing in the first release the titles and denominations of the following ones. As a matter of fact, for reasons of space:

- Media for the general public might be compelled to choose one single issue, with consequent loss of important promotional opportunities;
- Specialized magazines might find it difficult to cope with the concentration of several issues vis-a-vis the space allocated to the “new issues” feature;
- Web magazine could also have problems to exploit adequately them.

It would be advisable to circulate the **yearly program of issues** as soon as it becomes available, as well as its major updates along the year.

TERMINOLOGY

The adjective “philatelic” defines the objects prepared for collectors, such as folders and cards. The adjective “postal” refers to the objects used for mail transportation services.



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In particular:

- Stamps are not philatelic issues, but postal issues;
- A “postal card” is a particular type of postal stationery; its imprint of value is already included in the sale price and, normally, is represented by the imprint on the top right corner
- Other types of postal stationery are: aerogrammes, postal letter sheets, postal envelopes, all of them being postal stamped items;
- Stationery items needing franking to go through the mail are to be defined simply as postcards, envelopes, and so on. They are not entitled to have the “postal” adjective.

“Thematic” stamps do not exist per se: virtually any stamp has a thematic relevance, deriving from the reason of its issue and the content of its design.

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: COMUNICAZIONE@USFI.EU, INFO@AIJP.ORG