

### Part III: End of the war, end of the European postal area? (1943-1959)

After the congress in Vienna in October 1942, the aim of the EPTU was – as was stated in the union’s agreement and was the case in other technocratic unions – to continuously improve PTT services within the territory of the member administrations. Following the policy cycle model, the working phase included implementation of the policy as well as its further development. On 1 April 1943, the agreed-upon standards of the EPTU went into effect. This date was loosely defined as the beginning of the working phase of the union. However, preparations for this phase were already ongoing in the early months of 1943, which is why some aspects discussed in this part relate to an earlier date. Defining the end of the working phase remains difficult. It can be equated to the ending of the EPTU, which is also difficult to determine, as outlined in the following paragraphs. However, the definition of ‘working’ versus merely still existing is an open question. The Allied advances in winning the war impaired the work of the EPTU. The loss of Italy as a partner particularly impacted the balance within the EPTU as the project had always been presented as an Axis initiative. A congress that was originally planned to take place in Rome in 1943, then scheduled for 1944 in Vienna never happened.<sup>862</sup> Furthermore, while proof of Germany’s payment of the membership tariffs exist for 1943,<sup>863</sup> no such documentation was found in the accounts of 1944.<sup>864</sup> Similarly, transfer of the Danish tariff via the clearing system can be verified for 1943<sup>865</sup> but not for 1944. Thus, there is reason to assume that the working phase might have actually ended with the session of the permanent committee for telecommunications in September 1943, particularly for multilateral standardisation work within the EPTU.

---

862 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/11630, Von Forster an Risch, 06.05.1944 and Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R901/116970, Reichspostminister an Auswärtiges Amt, 30.09.1944.

863 Cf. Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/13454.

864 Cf. Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/13455.

865 Rigsarkivet, København, Generaldirektoratet for Post- og Telegrafvesenet, Journalsager vedr. forholdet til udlandet (1884-1983); I.N (1933-1974), 13078, Überweisung mittel des Clearings, 31.07.1944.

While the EPTU ceased to exist, the general idea for a European postal union resurged quickly after the Second World War. Calls for the institutionalisation of European PTT cooperation came among others from the Council of Europe<sup>866</sup> as well as from the German and French PTT ministers.<sup>867</sup> More intensive cooperation was achieved within the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), leading to the issuance of the first European stamps. These stamps were issued by all six administrations of the member states of the ECSC but had a common motif.<sup>868</sup> While discussions addressed creating a European postal union modelled on supranational organisations,<sup>869</sup> this was not realised. Instead, after several rounds of conferences, the CEPT was founded in 1959 as a strictly inter-administrative organisation with political independence from other European organisations.<sup>870</sup> Institutionally, it did not differ greatly from the EPTU. The CEPT was the Western European counterpart to the OCSC created under the leadership of the Soviet Union.<sup>871</sup> These unions continued harmonising PTT services. For postal services, similar issues to those discussed in the EPTU were pointed out within the first 15 years after the Second World War. This part ends in the same way as the analysis of EPTU preparation began in the first part of this work, namely with a focus on actors. As described in Part I, careers in public service were often long. Did the Second World War mark a caesura in the sense that the heads of the European PTT administrations changed, or did the same people continue working on the same issues under a different political regime? Before answering this question, the working phase of the EPTU as well as its end are examined, the history of the foundation of the CEPT and the OCSC is briefly retraced, and the standards discussed and stamps issued to promote European PTT cooperation are analysed and compared to those discussed and issued during the time of the EPTU.

- 
- 866 Joint Committee, Recommendation 143 on the institution of a European Conference of Ministers of Posts and Telecommunications, Strasbourg, 11.06.1957.  
867 Laborie, *L'Europe mise en réseaux*, p. 352-364.  
868 Rötzel, *Europamarken*, p. 58-65.  
869 Laborie, *L'Europe mise en réseaux*, p. 367.  
870 *Ibid.*, p. 379-380.  
871 Cf. Henrich-Franke, *Die Gründung europäischer Infrastrukturorganisationen*.

Chapter I: Continuing the European Postal and Telecommunications Union's work under changing conditions

This first chapter addresses standard-setting from October 1942 until the committee session in September 1944. Standardisation processes were still ongoing during this time. Afterwards, the working phase de facto came to an end. The *Reichspost* also continued to attempt to enlarge the union. As with the other two phases, an overview of the developments within the working phase is provided.

October 1942–April 1943	Government approval of the agreement
1 April 1943	Entry into force of the EPTU agreement and implementation within the member administrations' states
April 1943	Preparation of the conference of the postal committee
24–30 June 1943	Conference of the postal committee
12 August 1944	Invitation to the congress
End of September 1944	Cancellation of the congress
8 and 9 May 1945	Surrender of the <i>Wehrmacht</i>
24 November 1945	Denmark orders the suspension of the EPTU provisions

Table 9: Timeline 'Working Phase'

In order to analyse the working phase, the implementation of the standards agreed upon during the congress of October 1942 is first examined. Second, the negotiations before and during the session of the postal committee in September 1943 as well as the standards discussed are explored. Regarding the implementation of the results of this conference, the preparations for the envisioned congress in 1944 are described in brief. Third, the German efforts to gain new member administrations are assessed for the cases of France, Spain and Switzerland.

*Implementing the European Postal and Telecommunications Union's agreement*

In Vienna, not all the administrations had the authority to definitively sign the agreement. The Albanian, Croatian, Hungarian, Italian, Romanian and San Marinense PTT administrations signed with reservation. Their governments still had to approve the agreement as well as the regulations and the final protocol. In a letter to the administrations of the EPTU in February 1943, Risch asked them on behalf of the *Reichspostminister* to notify him early enough so that he could still inform the other administrations. In the same letter, he informed the administrations of the new tariffs that the Dutch administration would apply in the services with the other EPTU administrations. In March, Risch's request was answered by all administrations with the exception of Romania and San Marino. The Danish and Bulgarian PTT administrations did not have to seek government approval and thus simply informed the others of their equivalents to the German tariffs. While no such letter could be found from the Finnish or Norwegian administrations, it can be assumed that they too notified the others as their tariffs appear in the tariff table of April 1943. The Italian, Albanian and Hungarian PTT administrations all announced that their governments had lifted the reservation at the end of March.<sup>872</sup> The Croatian administration also reported that its government had approved the agreement, but the administration was using the option to delay the implementation of the regulations for one year. In the postal services in Germany, Italy, Slovakia and Hungary, the provisions of the respective bilateral agreements were applied, while in the services in the other EPTU administrations, the UPU provisions were still valid.<sup>873</sup>

In brief, the implementation process went well. Most administrations obtained their governments' approval and were ready to start applying the new tariffs beginning in April 1943. Thus, from April onwards, a European postal area existed, and the borders between nations were erased in European letter and postcard services. Despite the exceptions and the non-membership of some important European countries, it cannot be understated how

---

872 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/25935, Reichspostminister an die Generaldirektionen der Post- und Telekommunikationsverwaltungen des Europäischen Post- und Fernmeldevereins, Albanische Gegenwerte im Wiener Übereinkommen, Italienische Gegenwerte im Wiener Übereinkommen, Europäisches Post- und Fernmeldevereinsabkommen, jeweils 27.03.1943.

873 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/25935, Reichspostminister an die Generaldirektionen der Post- und Telekommunikationsverwaltungen des Europäischen Post- und Fernmeldevereins, 25.03.1943.

far-reaching this agreement was and is in European postal history. Such an agreement has never been reached again, which shows how important the geopolitical dominance of the Axis powers and especially Germany was to at least partially realise the old technocratic dream of borderless communication (for letters up to 1,000g and postcards). The fact that the German *Reichspost* was the administration to provide information about the new tariffs and government approval<sup>874</sup> was the result of the German administration providing the services of the later union office as well as a clear continuation of the organisational dominance of the German side within the EPTU. The equivalents reported by the administrations corresponded with those set in the bilateral agreements with one exception: Hungary's administration introduced higher tariffs in postal services within the EPTU than those from Hungary to Germany.<sup>875</sup> The Hungarian and Finnish administrations signed a bilateral agreement in October 1942 guaranteeing that the same favourable tariffs were in place from Hungary to Finland as from Hungary to Germany.<sup>876</sup> Nevertheless, the otherwise congruent tariffs in the bilateral agreements and in the EPTU again demonstrate the importance of the agreements.

In line with this last point, the German *Reichspost* continued making bilateral agreements during this period between the end of the congress and the implementation of the EPTU provisions. On 2 December 1942, the Belgian Director General Schokaert sent the signed bilateral postal agreement back to the *Reichspost*. The agreement included all the standard points of the previous agreement. The tariff equivalents were precisely calculated with the exchange rate that had been fixed since 1941. The German version was designated as the original.<sup>877</sup> Despite the signing of the bilateral agreement, which in the other cases opened the door to becoming part of the

874 Cf. Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/25935, Reichspostminister an die Geschäftsstelle des Europäischen Post- und Fernmeldevereins, 12.03.1942.

875 Rigsarkivet, København, Generaldirektoratet for Post- og Telegrafvesenet, Journalsager vedr. forholdet til udlandet (1884-1983);, I.O (1942-1950), Generaldirektoratet for Post- og Telegrafvesenet, Journalsager vedr. forholdet til udlandet (1884-1983);, I.O (1942-1950), 13079, Gebühren für Briefe und Postkarten, April 1943.

876 Rigsarkivet, København, Generaldirektoratet for Post- og Telegrafvesenet, Journalsager vedr. forholdet til udlandet (1884-1983);, I.O (1942-1950), 13079, Geschäftsstelle des Europäischen Post- und Fernmeldevereins an die Generaldirektion für das Königlich Dänische Post- und Telegraphenwesen, 02.06.1943.

877 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/23595, Abkommen zwischen der Deutschen Reichspost und der Belgischen Postverwaltung über den Postdienst zwischen dem Deutschen Reich und Belgien, Art.7, 02.12.1942.

EPTU, Belgium did not become part of the union. From a German point of view, the Belgian non-entrance to the union was an expression of political unwillingness. The Belgian PTT administration did not take the initiative to contact the other administrations,<sup>878</sup> which the French administration did, as will be seen later. However, the German administration did not want to force the Belgian administration.<sup>879</sup> The agreement itself appears to have been a sign of dominance, not only due to the rigid setting of the equivalents but also because of the non-admittance of other languages, despite the fact that Belgium had multiple official languages at the time. However, in the draft of the German-Swiss agreement – with Switzerland also being a multilingual country – the question of languages was simply not mentioned,<sup>880</sup> which could also have happened in the case of the German-Belgian agreement. The agreement meant that from a German perspective, the harmonised European postal area grew, while it remained the same for the other countries. This meant that Germany was more deeply integrated into the European postal area than were the other countries.

The majority of the member administrations thus confirmed their agreement and the respective prices before 1 April 1943. Therefore, it can be assumed that the new provisions were implemented as a consequence of the entry into force of the Vienna agreement. The new tariffs were also communicated to the members of the UPU via the union's bulletin.<sup>881</sup> The office of the union also began work, as the tariff table<sup>882</sup> and correspondence<sup>883</sup> show. No pictures of the office equipment could be found. However, the German side had already begun discussing the interior design in July 1942. German national emblems were to be avoided so as not to discourage neutral countries from participating in the EPTU.<sup>884</sup> The office was staffed by

---

878 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/11248, Stenographische Aufnahme der Berichte der Beauftragten der DRP im Ausland, Belgien, 18-28.03.1943, p. 7-9.

879 Ibid., p. 9.

880 PTT Archiv, Bern, P-00C\_0108\_01, Anlage 1, Entwurf eines Abkommens zwischen der Deutschen Reichspost und der Schweizerischen Postverwaltung über den Postdienst zwischen dem Deutschen Reich und der Schweiz, 02.07.1942.

881 Rigsarkivet, København, Generaldirektoratet for Post- og Telegrafvesenet, Journalsager vedr. forholdet til udlandet (1884-1983): X.C.1.A (1935-1944), 14281, Bulletin No.9, 30.04.1943.

882 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/25935, Reichspostminister, Gebühren für Tarife und Postkarten, April 1943.

883 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/11630, Geschäftsstelle des Europäischen Post- und Fernmeldevereins an das Reichspostministerium, 10.03.1944.

884 Keil, Rudi: Die Gründung des Europäischen Post- und Fernmeldevereins während des Zweiten Weltkriegs und seine Bedeutung für die Expansionspolitik des

the German Dr. Ferdinand Kleinowitz and the Italian GE Ferdinando Bagnolio,<sup>885</sup> reflecting the desire to present the EPTU as an Axis project.

There were two exceptions. The Romanian postal administration could only report after 1 April that its government had approved the Vienna agreement as well as the regulations. The administration announced that like the Croatian administration, it would make use of the clause in the postal regulations that allowed it to postpone the introduction of the new prices for a year.<sup>886</sup> Thus, the unified postal area did not include Romania at this point. The lower prices only applied to the German-Romanian postal services. In April 1944, both the Croatian<sup>887</sup> and Romanian<sup>888</sup> administrations introduced the lower tariffs, but the postal administration in San Marino had not communicated whether its government had given consent.<sup>889</sup> According to the tariff table, San Marino applied the Italian tariffs,<sup>890</sup> which would make sense due to its being geographically close to Italy. In March 1944 – after San Marino was occupied by Germany – the San Marino postal administration declared that it no longer had reservations.<sup>891</sup> In summary, 13 of 13 signatories implemented the agreement and the postal regulations, and 13 of 13 applied the lower agreed-upon prices in the postal services with the other member administrations starting in March 1944. This meant that one could send a letter for the same price from the north of Finland to Calabria

---

deutschen Faschismus, in: *Die Deutsche Post* 4 (1959) as found in Bundesarchiv, Koblenz, B257/343, p. 219.

- 885 Rigsarkivet, København, Generaldirektoratet for Post- og Telegrafvesenet, Journalsager vedr. forholdet til udlandet (1884-1983): I.N (1933-1974), 13078, Verzeichnis der zur Führung gebührenfreier Dienstgespräche in Post- und Fernmeldeangelegenheiten berechtigten leitenden Beamten der Vereinsverwaltungen und der Vereinsgeschäftsstelle, December 1943.
- 886 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/25935, Reichspostminister (i.A. Risch) an die Postverwaltungen der Mitgliedsverwaltungen, 08.04.1943.
- 887 Rigsarkivet, København, Generaldirektoratet for Post- og Telegrafvesenet, Journalsager vedr. forholdet til udlandet (1884-1983): I.O (1942-1950), 13079, Geschäftsstelle des Europäischen Post- und Fernmeldevereins and die Generaldirektion des Königlichen Dänischen Post- und Fernmeldewesens, 22.02.1944.
- 888 Rigsarkivet, København, 1 Generaldirektoratet for Post- og Telegrafvesenet, Journalsager vedr. forholdet til udlandet (1884-1983): I.O (1942-1950), 13079, Geschäftsstelle des Europäischen Post- und Fernmeldevereins and die Generaldirektion des Königlichen Dänischen Post- und Fernmeldewesens, 21.03.1944.
- 889 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/25935, Reichspostminister (i.A. Risch) an die Postverwaltungen der Mitgliedsverwaltungen, 08.04.1943.
- 890 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/25935, Reichspostminister, Gebühren für Tarife und Postkarten, April 1943.
- 891 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/25935, Geschäftsstelle des Europäischen Post- und Fernmeldevereins an das Reichspostministerium, 10.03.1944.

in the south of Italy, from the annexed Alsace-Lorraine to the Black Sea and from Berlin to Munich. As mentioned above, the tariffs set by the administrations were exactly the equivalents agreed upon in the bilateral agreements,<sup>892</sup> showing once again that the Swiss delegate Bonjour was right to highlight their importance.

However, as has been outlined previously, the equivalents to the German tariffs were not always converted exactly; the administrations made use of the clause that allowed them to raise or lower the tariffs by 50%. In addition to the exceptions in implementation and the bilateral agreements, this led to a heterogeneous status of harmonisation and integration. The *Reichspost* applied the same provisions for letters and postcards with every member administration – including the Belgian – and vice versa. This was also the case for the two countries (Romania and Croatia) who opted out of the tariff reduction for 1943. The German administration negotiated more concessions from which users in Germany benefitted in other areas of postal services with these administrations. These concessions were applied bilaterally but not in all parts of the union, making these bilateral relations deepest within the union and making Germany the most integrated country as well as the centre of the union. Additionally, Croatia implemented lower prices in postal services with Italy, Hungary and Slovakia but not with the other administrations, meaning that its integration status was different from member administration to member administration. It should be mentioned that the Danish administration unilaterally lowered the minimum tariff for business papers with all EPTU member administrations starting in April 1943.<sup>893</sup> It remains unclear why the administration took this step, but it appears to reflect the Danish willingness to cooperate.

---

892 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/25935, Reichspostminister, Gebühren für Tarife und Postkarten, April 1943.

893 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/25935, Reichspostminister an die Postverwaltungen des EPFV, 05.04.1943.



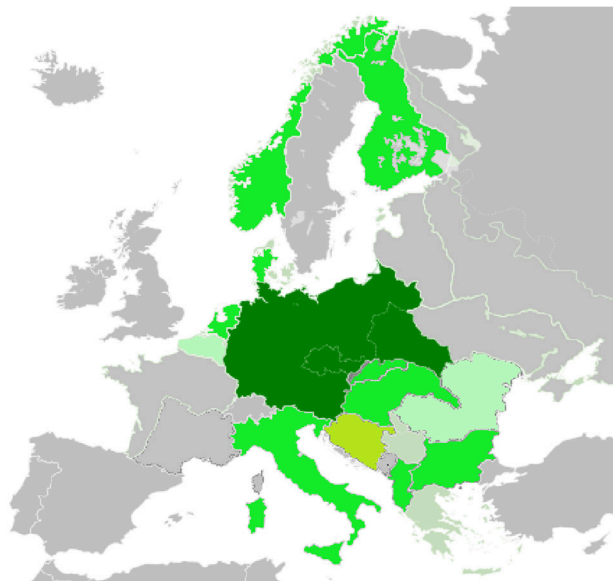


Figure 6: Implementation of the EPTU agreement on the 1st of April 1943; the darker the green, the more integrated a country was. In Germany, the same tariffs applied for the EPTU territory as for Germany. In the majority of the countries, the EPTU tariffs (equivalent to inner German tariffs) applied for postal services to another EPTU country. In Croatia, these favourable tariffs only applied in postal services with Germany, Italy, Hungary and Slovakia. Romania and Belgium only applied the EPTU tariffs with Germany.<sup>894</sup>

### *Continuing the standardisation efforts within the European Postal and Telecommunications Union*

Despite the continuing war and the fact that the Axis powers were losing ground to the Allied forces, the administrations continued to work towards a better European postal system; however, it remains unclear why they did so. In the following, their efforts are presented and analysed. It is generally impressive that the *Reichspost* still obtained permission for conferences and

---

<sup>894</sup> Own illustration. Template from: Wikimedia Commons: Axis Occupation of Europe (1942), [https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/5/58/Axis\\_Occupation\\_of\\_Europe\\_%281942%29.svg/450px-Axis\\_Occupation\\_of\\_Europe\\_%281942%29.svg.png](https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/5/58/Axis_Occupation_of_Europe_%281942%29.svg/450px-Axis_Occupation_of_Europe_%281942%29.svg.png) (last access: 20.01.2022), GNU Free Document License.

congresses. Hitler had forbidden these since March 1943 - with the exception of events important to the war<sup>895</sup>.

In June 1943, delegates met in Copenhagen for the first conference of the postal committee of the EPTU. The session had been prepared by the three administrations presiding over the committee, which had changed since the congress in October 1942: Germany was still part of the committee's presidency, in contrast to the Netherlands and Slovakia,<sup>896</sup> who had been replaced by Denmark and Hungary. The representatives of the three national PTT administrations met in Budapest (Hungary) in April 1943 to decide which proposals would be discussed during the committee session in Copenhagen. Thus, this section first analyses the results of the preparatory meeting before focussing on the general setting of the conference in Copenhagen and the decisions taken there.

The first aim of the preparatory session was to set tariffs for letters heavier than 1,000g. There was a proposal to define two weight categories, from 1,000 to 1,500g and from 1,500 to 2,000g. The tariffs set for these categories were 1.50 and 2.00 *Reichsmark*, respectively. In a letter to the other administrations, it was noted that 'these tariffs have been set a little higher than a proportional increase (...) would have resulted in to counteract an undesired strong rise in heavy letters'.<sup>897</sup> Basically, the administration wanted to discourage people from sending heavy letters instead of packages. Furthermore, there was a suggestion to expand provisions of the EPTU to other objects sent via postal services, namely prints, commercial papers, samples and mixed mailing. The tariffs were to be set up to the highest weight regulated within the UPU provisions so that the tariffs of the UPU would not have to be applied as well.<sup>898</sup> This would simplify the system. If the EPTU provisions were only applicable, for example, for prints up to 1,000g, this would mean that the UPU provisions would have to be used when the prints weighed more than 1,000g. Thus, if the tariffs were set within the EPTU for the higher weight categories as well, this would

---

895 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, Hausblatt des RPM Nr.8, Nr.30 Abhaltung von Kongressen und Tagungen, 24.03.1943.

896 Europäischer Postkongress, p. 26.

897 Writer's own translation: "Diese Gebühren sind etwas höher gewählt worden als sie eine proportionelle Steigerung (...) ergeben hätte, um dadurch einer unerwünschten starken Zunahme der schweren Briefe entgegenzuwirken", Riksarkivet, Oslo, S-1342 - Samferdselsdepartementet, 1. postadministrasjonskontor A, Dd - Journalsaker (emneordnet), L0022 - Div. journalsaker. Den europeiske post- og fjernmeldeforening, Vorsitz der 1. Ausschusses des EPFV Risch an den Generaldirektor der norwegischen Posten, 04.05.1943.

898 Ibid.

simplify the process at the post offices and in accounting. In the bilateral agreements with some countries, the German *Reichspost* defined categories and tariffs for lower weights (up to 500 and 100g, depending on the object sent). Therefore, it is not surprising that these lower weight categories and the tariffs proposed in this letter to the EPTU administrations were overall quite similar to those in the bilateral agreements.<sup>899</sup> Only one change could be detected: for prints, the weight categories 'up to 20g' and '20–50g',<sup>900</sup> no longer existed; instead, the first weight category was 'up to 50g'. The tariff rate, conversely, remained the same at 4 *Reichspfennig*.<sup>901</sup> The national administrations could set their respective tariffs 50% lower or higher than the equivalent in their currency.<sup>902</sup>

The next topic on the agenda was the transit charges for sea mail. Denmark had already raised this issue during the committee meeting in October 1942 in Vienna, but the subject had been postponed. According to the letter, the three administrations had agreed that an abolition of the sea mail tariff would further facilitate European postal services. The German *Reichspost* offered to do without the transit charge for its two sea mail connections: Warnemünde, Germany to Gjedser, Denmark and Saßnitz, Germany to Trälleborg, Sweden.<sup>903</sup>

The other national administrations were asked to send statements regarding the results of the meeting in Budapest and to inform Risch as to whether they would send their own proposals. Furthermore, they were told that due to the ongoing war, there were restrictions on the conference such as maximum number of delegates, which was set at two. The final invitation would come from the Danish administration, while the proposals would be sent by the office of the EPTU,<sup>904</sup> which was represented during this preparatory meeting by its Italian vice director.<sup>905</sup> In the last sentence of the letter, Risch

---

899 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/23935, Abkommen zwischen der Deutschen Reichspost und der Königlichen Ungarischen Verwaltung über den Postdienst zwischen dem Deutschen Reich und Ungarn, Juni 1942

900 Ibid.

901 Riksarkivet, Oslo, S-1342 - Samferdselsdepartementet, 1. postadministrasjonskontor A, Dd - Journalsaker (emneordnet), L0022 - Div. journalsaker. Den europeiske post- og fjernmeldeforening, Vorsitz der 1. Ausschusses des EPFV Risch an den Generaldirektor der norwegischen Posten, 04.05.1943.

902 Ibid.

903 Ibid.

904 Ibid.

905 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R901/116969, Aufzeichnung über die heutige Besprechung mit Min.Dir. Risch, 22.04.1943.

communicated that he had been named the president of the committee by the *Reichspostminister*, thereby replacing Poppe.<sup>906</sup>

The proposals mentioned here appear to have been a coherent continuation of the standardising work that had been done in Vienna. In fact, they aimed mostly at enlarging the decided-upon standards either via additional weight categories or by including other classes of articles in the provisions. Compared to the UPU Convention, only small packets and ‘phonopost’ articles were missing from the list of 1939.<sup>907</sup> Abolishing the transit charge in the case of sea mail followed the same pattern. Again, the change of presiding administrations – with the exception of the German administration, which kept the presidency – also seems rather logical: Denmark was the hosting country, and the Hungarian postal administration in the person of von Forster had been a proponent of a European postal union since the 1920s; he was also supportive of the Axis project, as has been shown already. By bypassing the vice director of the office of the EPTU, the Italian administration was in a way also represented at the meeting, although not in the same way as the German *Reichspost*, in an attempt to maintain the appearance of equality among Axis partners. For this interpretation, it is important to know that this preparatory meeting was held against the background of Italy having to cancel the EPTU congress that was to take place in Rome in 1943. This was a direct consequence of the course of the war, but it also further weakened the Italian position towards Germany within the EPTU.

The committee conference in Copenhagen was held in Moltke’s Palace, which was then owned by the Craftman’s Guild. (The mansion still stands today in central Copenhagen.) In addition to the scheduled two-hour working sessions, the programme included joint breakfasts, two banquets and a voluntary excursion. Visits to concerts or similar outings were not part of the programme, as had been the case in Vienna. In general, the war was quite present: the delegates’ food was rationed. Except for the German delegation, the representatives were not allowed to use the telegraph for private matters, and they were warned that all correspondence with other countries was subject to censorship. Furthermore, the brochure for the conference contained information regarding the daily testing of air-raid warnings and

---

906 Riksarkivet, Oslo, S-1342 - Samferdselsdepartementet, 1. postadministrasjonskontor A, Dd - Journalsaker (emneordnet), L0022 - Div. journalsaker. Den europeiske post- og fjernmeldeforening, Vorsitzer des 1. Ausschusses des EPFV Risch an den Generaldirektor der norwegischen Posten, 04.05.1943.

907 Universal Postal Union Convention of Buenos Aires, 23.05.1939, Table of Contents.

how to behave in case of an actual air raid.<sup>908</sup> It can be assumed that this had a negative impact on the general atmosphere of the conference.

Risch asked for proposals from the other administrations, which led to a total of 12 points to discuss in Copenhagen. The proposals from Germany and Italy were partially discussed at the 1942 congress of Vienna. Some were apparently withdrawn, while others were reformulated.<sup>909</sup> The 12 proposals came from Germany (three), Finland (one), Italy (five) and Croatia (three),<sup>910</sup> and they are presented in more detail in the discussion of the course of the conference.

The great majority of participants had been present in Vienna: the Danish delegates Arne Krog and J.E.T. Andersen, the German delegate Dr. Friedrich Reiss, the Dutch delegates W.R. van Goor and D. Bosma, the Norwegian delegates Svein Sevensen and Sten Haug, the Hungarian delegates Károly von Forster and Elemér Modos, the Romanian delegates Dr. Caius Bordoși and René Rosca, the Slovakian delegate Georg Gruschka, the Croatian delegate Slavoljuh Kucera and the Bulgarian delegate Ivan Walkoff. In the Finnish delegation, Urho Talvitie was again present. The new Finnish Director General Simbri Ahola replaced Albrecht.<sup>911</sup> The cuts in the delegations can be explained by the wish to keep the delegations as small as possible due to costs and logistics. The Albanian delegation was, as in Vienna, not represented on this committee. The only delegation to be entirely replaced was the Italian one, which consisted of Giuseppe Gneme and Cipriano Cipriani.<sup>912</sup> Gneme was a telecommunications expert and was also on one of the telecommunications committees as well as the committee for the union agreement in Vienna.<sup>913</sup> This complete replacement can be explained by the fact that the Italian PTT administration hosted the conference of the

---

908 Riksarkivet, Oslo, S-1342 - Samferdselsdepartementet, 1. postadministrasjonskontor A, Dd - Journalsaker (emneordnet), L0022 - Div. journalsaker. Den europeiske post- og fjernmeldeforening, Europäischer Postausschuss, Auskünfte für die Abgeordneten, 24-30.06.1943.

909 Europäischer Postkongress, p. 104-116; Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/25935, Vorschläge der Vereinsverwaltungen für die erste Tagung des europäischen Postausschusses.

910 Bundesarchiv, Berlin Lichterfelde, R901/116969, Bericht Risch über die Kopenhagener Tagung des Europäischen Postausschusses, 18.08.1943.

911 Abkommen zur Gründung der Europäischen Konferenz der Verwaltungen des Post- und Fernmeldewesens vom 26.06.1959, in: Amtsblatt des Bundesministers für das Post- und Fernmeldewesen, Bd.5, 1960, p. 21-31.

912 Europäischer Postkongress, p. 40; Nationaal Archief, Den Haag, Hoofdbestuur van het Staatsbedrijf der PTT, nummer toegang 2.16.09, inventarisnummer 14, Urkunden über die 1. Tagung des Ausschusses in Kopenhagen, undated, p. 6.

913 Europäischer Postkongress, p. 41-43.

second permanent committee in September 1943, and the Italian delegation wanted to use the opportunity of this conference to hold a preliminary meeting with the other administrations.<sup>914</sup> The secretariat of the committee was composed of the director and the vice director of the union's office as well as members of their staff.<sup>915</sup>

The conference opened with a short speech by Director General of the Danish PTT Jensen; he regretted not being able to assemble a better programme and praised the Danish landscape. He referenced the congress in Vienna the previous year and noted the camaraderie experienced there. He hoped that the same willingness to cooperate would guide the coming negotiations. President Risch replied to his words by confirming these sentiments.<sup>916</sup> It must be added here that there were some tensions between the German *Reichspost* and the Foreign Ministry in the aftermath of this conference in Copenhagen. Apparently, there were doubts on the side of the German legation in Copenhagen as to whether it was beneficial to hold such conferences on Danish territory.<sup>917</sup> This added to the communication difficulties on the German side.

In terms of postal content, the conference began with a discussion of the proposed procedural rules, whose provisions it is not necessary to discuss as no new competences were bestowed upon the committee compared to the congress in Vienna. The rules were adopted with only minor changes; they followed the model of the CCI committees, as noted by an Italian delegate.<sup>918</sup> Before discussing the proposals, Risch reported on developments that had occurred since the congress in Vienna. This included the establishment of the union office; the state of negotiations with France, Spain and Switzerland; and the cancellation of the congress in Rome. The report was rather optimistic about the inclusion of France and Spain in the union, and the cancellation of the congress was presented as creating the possibility of

---

914 Nationaal Archief, Den Haag, Hoofdbestuur van het Staatsbedrijf der PTT, nummer toegang 2.16.09, inventarisnummer 14, Urkunden über die 1. Tagung des Ausschusses in Kopenhagen, undated, p. 23.

915 Europäischer Postkongress, p. 40; Nationaal Archief, Den Haag, Hoofdbestuur van het Staatsbedrijf der PTT, nummer toegang 2.16.09, inventarisnummer 14, Urkunden über die 1. Tagung des Ausschusses in Kopenhagen, undated, p. 6.

916 Nationaal Archief, Den Haag, Hoofdbestuur van het Staatsbedrijf der PTT, nummer toegang 2.16.09, inventarisnummer 14, Urkunden über die 1. Tagung des Ausschusses in Kopenhagen, undated, p. 18-19.

917 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R901/116969, Vermerk Martius, 17.07.1943.

918 Nationaal Archief, Den Haag, Hoofdbestuur van het Staatsbedrijf der PTT, nummer toegang 2.16.09, inventarisnummer 14, Urkunden über die 1. Tagung des Ausschusses in Kopenhagen, undated, p. 20.

the participation of France, Spain and even Sweden.<sup>919</sup> While this positive outlook on the future of the union is not fully supported by the sources,<sup>920</sup> it is not surprising that Risch presented it in this light. Naming the problems would likely have been counterproductive to the agenda.

The first proposal discussed was from Germany and aimed to add new weight categories for letters: 1,000–1,500g and 1,500–2,000g. The tariffs suggested were 150 *Reichspfennig* (1.5 *Reichsmark*) and 200 *Reichspfennig* (2 *Reichsmark*), respectively. The German *Reichspost* argued that the tariffs were set high enough to prevent people from abusing the new standard by sending heavy letters instead of packages.<sup>921</sup> The proposal was discussed in three steps: first, the addition of weight categories up to 2,000g; second, the determination of the two proposed new weight categories; and third, the tariffs accorded to these weight categories. While the committee quickly agreed on the first two steps, the question of tariffs resulted in disagreement. Both the Finnish and Italian delegations feared high financial losses and so proposed higher tariffs. The other administrations' representatives joined their proposal to increase tariffs. Risch suggested 300 and 400 *Reichspfennig* (3 and 4 *Reichsmark*), to which the delegates agreed. The new standard resulted in an important reduction: Risch remarked that the tariffs under UPU provisions would be up to 11.35 *Reichsmark*.<sup>922</sup> Thus, even though the proposed tariffs were doubled, this still represented an important step in the EPTU towards lowering the costs of European letter posts.

The second proposal concerned items in the spectrum of postal services that were not discussed in Vienna but were already part of the bilateral agreements, namely printed materials, mailings in braille, business papers, samples and mixed mailing.<sup>923</sup> Compared to the bilateral agreements, the weight categories were the same. For the most part, this also held for the tariffs: few were higher. This increase did not follow any specific pattern.<sup>924</sup>

---

919 Ibid., p. 22–23.

920 This will be outlined further in the next section.

921 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/25935, Vorschläge der Vereinsverwaltungen für die erste Tagung des europäischen Postausschusses, June 1943, p. 8.

922 Nationaal Archief, Den Haag, Hoofdbestuur van het Staatsbedrijf der PTT, nummer toegang 2.16.09, inventarisnummer 14, Urkunden über die 1. Tagung des Ausschusses in Kopenhagen, undated, p. 23–25.

923 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/25935, Vorschläge der Vereinsverwaltungen für die erste Tagung des europäischen Postausschusses, June 1943, p. 10–12.

924 Ibid. and Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/25935, Abkommen zwischen der Deutschen Reichspost und der Königlichen Ungarischen Postverwaltung, 01.07.1942.

According to Risch, the tariffs corresponded to the domestic German tariffs.<sup>925</sup> Thus, it can be assumed that the *Reichspost* had increased them. While most of the other delegations approved the proposal, the Italian delegation doubted whether the new provisions would be in line with the UPU Convention. The Hungarian representative and President Risch did not share these concerns. Finally, the committee agreed on the proposal with the reservation that the Italian doubts about conformity with UPU provisions and the Dutch administration's national problems<sup>926</sup> would be resolved before the next congress.<sup>927</sup>

The third proposal consisted of abolishing the transit charge for sea mail in reference to mail from countries within the EPTU,<sup>928</sup> which the Danish delegation had already mentioned during the committee sessions in Vienna. The Dutch and Italian delegations worried that this transit charge would lead to high financial losses on their part. These fears were strengthened by the fact that other important countries with access to the sea, such as France and Spain, were not part of the union. Thus, letters could be diverted via their countries in order to make them cheaper. The administrations from northern and eastern Europe did not share the same concerns, and they agreed to the proposal. As Italy and the Netherlands did not approve the proposal, no agreement was reached, and a decision was made to discuss the topic again during the next congress.<sup>929</sup>

The fourth proposal came from the Finnish administration, recommending that exchanges between the PTT administrations via telephone or telegraph be free of charge.<sup>930</sup> The proposal was accepted unanimously. The

---

925 Nationaal Archief, Den Haag, Hoofdbestuur van het Staatsbedrijf der PTT, nummer toegang 2.16.09, inventarisnummer 14, Urkunden über die 1. Tagung des Ausschusses in Kopenhagen, undated, p. 25-26.

926 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/25935, Vorschläge der Vereinsverwaltungen für die erste Tagung des europäischen Postausschusses, June 1943, p. 14.

927 Nationaal Archief, Den Haag, Hoofdbestuur van het Staatsbedrijf der PTT, nummer toegang 2.16.09, inventarisnummer 14, Urkunden über die 1. Tagung des Ausschusses in Kopenhagen, undated, p. 25.

928 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/25935, Vorschläge der Vereinsverwaltungen für die erste Tagung des europäischen Postausschusses, June 1943, p. 14.

929 Nationaal Archief, Den Haag, Hoofdbestuur van het Staatsbedrijf der PTT, nummer toegang 2.16.09, inventarisnummer 14, Urkunden über die 1. Tagung des Ausschusses in Kopenhagen, undated, p. 26-29.

930 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/25935, Vorschläge der Vereinsverwaltungen für die erste Tagung des europäischen Postausschusses, June 1943, p. 16.



Danish administration remarked that this step had simply been overlooked in Vienna, where only postal exchange between the administrations was made free.<sup>931</sup>

Proposals 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12 – four out of five of the Italian and all three of the Croatian proposals – were deferred to a later date as decisions regarding these aspects were considered untimely. Some were withdrawn (Proposals 5, 6 and 8); the others were discussed briefly without reaching any conclusions.<sup>932</sup> The Italian proposals concerned the tariffs for return receipts, closed letter post, the deadline for reimbursement of replacement contributions in the case of lost mail and the question of reply coupons and mailings.<sup>933</sup> The Italian administration had sent the same proposals to the congress of 1942.<sup>934</sup> The three Croatian proposals revolved around the issues of a maximum weight for newspapers and journals, express post and sending back return receipts.<sup>935</sup> The fact that all these proposals had to be postponed shows how much the war had restricted postal services, thus impeding further standardisation. Additionally, the Albanian delegation, which did not attend the congress, sent a proposal by telegraph that addressed the topics of registered post, express letters and additional tariffs for airmail. The proposal was not discussed because no other delegation had the authority to negotiate for the Albanian delegation. Additionally, the committee had already deliberated parts of the proposal and had postponed these discussions.<sup>936</sup>

The one proposal that was taken up but changed to a recommendation for the next congress was Proposal 7 from Italy. The committee suggested that the administrations use their right to return mail that was not stamped or insufficiently stamped. This standard had already been established at the

---

931 Nationaal Archief, Den Haag, Hoofdbestuur van het Staatsbedrijf der PTT, nummer toegang 2.16.09, inventarisnummer 14, Urkunden über die 1. Tagung des Ausschusses in Kopenhagen, undated, p. 29-30.

932 Ibid., p. 30-36.

933 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/25935, Vorschläge der Vereinsverwaltungen für die erste Tagung des europäischen Postausschusses, June 1943, p. 17-22.

934 Europäischer Postkongress, p. 112-116.

935 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/25935, Vorschläge der Vereinsverwaltungen für die erste Tagung des europäischen Postausschusses, June 1943, p. 23-25.

936 Nationaal Archief, Den Haag, Hoofdbestuur van het Staatsbedrijf der PTT, nummer toegang 2.16.09, inventarisnummer 14, Urkunden über die 1. Tagung des Ausschusses in Kopenhagen, undated, p. 37.

UPU Convention.<sup>937</sup> That is probably why the member administrations – except those of Italy and San Marino – implemented it from November 1943 until August 1944<sup>938</sup> despite it only being a recommendation.

In summary, proposals for two new tariff regulations, the discussion of expanding the abolition of the transit charge on sea mail and one administrative-operative standard were set for the next congress. The majority of proposals had to be deferred to later conferences as the state of postal services during the ongoing war as well as the absence of some European PTT administrations (France, Spain, Belgium and Sweden) made further standardisation steps impossible. The harmonisation of the weight categories and tariffs for letters from 1,000 to 2,000g as well as for other items of mail nevertheless represented a success for the *Reichspost*. The conference once again showed that Germany was in control, while the Italian delegation was cautious about further measures. Presenting the image of a strong Axis – which was already crumbling in Vienna – appears to no longer have been a goal. In his report to Martius, Risch described the conference as ‘harmonious’<sup>939</sup> despite the Italian delegate’s ‘certain reclusive tendencies’.<sup>940</sup> Denmark and Hungary continued to be active allies of the German *Reichspost*. In addition to joint preparatory sessions, they also regularly supported the German position.

After the congress and around the date the agreement and regulations went into effect, the task was at least two-fold from the perspective of horizontal standardisation. First, the member administrations had to remain in the union, and second, the union had to gain members as this would increase its legitimacy. Both tasks were not necessarily easy given the development of the war, which was not going in the Axis’ favour. The relationship with the member administrations was fostered by the appointees abroad, who met shortly before the agreements and regulations went into effect to receive reports on the current situation. The Foreign Department in Berlin

---

937 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/25935, Vorschläge der Vereinsverwaltungen für die erste Tagung des europäischen Postausschusses, June 1943, p. 39.

938 Rigsakrivet, København, Generaldirektoratet for Post- og Telegrafvesenet, Journalsager vedr. forholdet til udlandet (1884-1983): I.O (1942-1950), 13079, Geschäftsstelle des Europäischen Post- und Fernmeldeverein an die Generaldirektion für das Königlich Dänische Post- und Fernmeldewesen, 09.11.1943, 10.11.1943, 11.11.1943, 12.11.1943, 25.11.1943, 10.03.1944, 06.07.1944, 07.07.1944, 08.08.1944.

939 Writer’s own translation: “harmonisch”, Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R901/116969, Aufzeichnung Martius, 12.07.1943.

940 Writer’s own translation: “gewisse Neigungen zur Eigenbrötlerei”, *ibid*.

appears to have been responsible for the negotiations with possible new member administrations. Both aspects are examined in the following.

The *Reichspost*'s appointees abroad continued their work after the congress in 1942. Their session in March 1943 reveals what they did and how they observed the general attitude towards the German occupiers in each country while also adhering to the national PTT administrations' perspective on the EPTU.

The reports all begin with an account of the political situation in the country and the attitude towards the Germans in general; all appear relatively negative. According to the appointees, Stalingrad or the Allied press were often to blame for the rather tense atmosphere. This first issue was highly politically charged for the appointee to Hungary, Dipl.-Ing. Tieg, and it added an ideological aspect via anti-Semitic rhetoric.<sup>941</sup> This division into politics and technical details is a clear theme in the German *Reichspostministerium*. It mirrors the speeches by Risch and Timm at the beginning of the EPTU project.

Regarding the relationship among the PTT administrations and their view of the EPTU, the situation was judged as rather positive. Rost, the appointee to the Netherlands, reported that relations had improved with Director General van der Vegte, an NSB member since 1933. The Dutch administration was reportedly proud of having been part of the creation of the EPTU, and Rost expected the cooperation to continue. He suggested that the Dutch postal administrations would immediately agree to a 'Germanic stamp'<sup>942</sup> depicting the common fight against Bolshevism. GE Tieg declared that the Hungarian 'participation in the European Postal and Telecommunications Union is entirely clear and one hundred percent'.<sup>943</sup> According to him, the administration felt honoured that the preliminary meeting of the postal committee was to take place in Hungary. He described his relationship with the Hungarian PTT administration as being friendly. Nevertheless, he also said that the administration feared that it would lose its

---

941 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/11248, Stenographische Aufnahme der Berichte der Beauftragten der DRP im Ausland, Ungarn, 18-28.03.1943.

942 Writer's own translation: "germanische Briefmarke", Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/11248, Stenographische Aufnahme der Berichte der Beauftragten der DRP im Ausland, Niederlande, 18-28.03.1943.

943 Writer's own translation: "Beteiligung am Europäischen Post- und Fernmeldeverein ist vollkommen klar und 100%ig", Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/11248, Stenographische Aufnahme der Berichte der Beauftragten der DRP im Ausland, Ungarn, 18-28.03.1943.

independence.<sup>944</sup> In Slovakia, the fear was that the country would be taken over by Hungary. GE Riedl further reported that the administration was thankful for the help of the *Reichspost* and viewed the EPTU positively. The only concern was how to finance participation as the budget of the Slovakian postal administration was small. The administration had felt honoured that it had been treated as an equal with the larger administrations during the congress.<sup>945</sup> The appointee to Bulgaria, GE Habig, described a country that put its own interests before European questions and faced the challenge of being between two powers, Russia and Germany. He nevertheless did not doubt the German-Bulgarian alliance. His relations with the PTT intensified due to the congress, but he criticised the fact that the majority of the staff in postal services had been trained in France,<sup>946</sup> which meant that few spoke German. Therefore, he proposed sending them to Germany to study the German language and postal services. The Director General of the Bulgarian postal administration agreed to this suggestion.<sup>947</sup> The appointee to Romania, GE Stock, reported a positive relationship with the national PTT administration, especially with Postmaster General Colonel Teodorescu, who he considered a good friend. Similar to his colleague in Croatia GE Engelhardt, he was mainly needed for technical advice and had a clear focus on telecommunications.<sup>948</sup> Engelhardt reported from Croatia that the situation was dangerous due to ongoing fighting which had destroyed important telecommunications material. While he claimed to have a positive relationship with the Croatian PTT administration, he also said that some members were anti-German due to their prior involvement in the Yugoslavian PTT administration. He named Kucera, who was present at both the conference and the postal committee's conference, as one of these anti-German members.<sup>949</sup>

---

944 He refers here apparently also to fears that Hungary would be annexed by the Germans and become a "Gau" of the Reich, *ibid.*

945 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/11248, Stenographische Aufnahme der Berichte der Beauftragten der DRP im Ausland, Sloakei, 18-28.03.1943.

946 The engineers on the other hand were highly influenced by German telecommunications. (Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/11248, Stenographische Aufnahme der Berichte der Beauftragten der DRP im Ausland, Bulgarien, 18-28.03.1943).

947 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/11248, Stenographische Aufnahme der Berichte der Beauftragten der DRP im Ausland, Bulgarien, 18-28.03.1943.

948 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/11248, Stenographische Aufnahme der Berichte der Beauftragten der DRP im Ausland, Rumänien, 18-28.03.1943.

949 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/11248, Stenographische Aufnahme der Berichte der Beauftragten der DRP im Ausland, Kroatien, 18-28.03.1943.

GE Löffler, the appointee to Italy, mentioned more difficulties. The Italian cabinet had undergone some changes which led to Host-Venturi leaving the government. Host-Venturi was said to have had difficulties with Italian Foreign Minister Ciano, but he also had a positive attitude towards the German PTT administration and the EPTU, which was now guaranteed by Director General Pession, who promoted this cooperation and had overcome the difficulties with the Foreign Ministry. The preparations for the postal congress in Rome were reportedly underway. Risch asked whether they expected the surprises from Rome at which Gnome had apparently hinted. Löffler denied this and blamed the allegations on Gnome's character and need for a special position.<sup>950</sup>

What the reports all show is that the appointees were well aware that public support for Germany was diminishing. It is also clear that the appointees often tried to tie the national PTT administrations to the *Reichspost* by offering technical support. This is especially true for the Eastern European countries. Postal relations overall played a minor role compared to telecommunications issues. The appointees all claimed to have good or at least improved relations with the national PTT administrations and that these administrations had a positive attitude towards the EPTU. Thus, according to the viewpoints of the appointees, the general support of the experts within the member administrations did not seem to be declining. The question of the next section is whether the German *Reichspost* successfully found new members for the union.

### *Keeping the union together and enlarging it*

After the creation of the EPTU and the entry into force of the agreed-upon regulations in October 1942, efforts to enlarge the union continued. One possible explanation for this is that the members of the EPTU stood to benefit if the union became larger and the provisions were applied to a larger territory. In addition to the technical aspects, there is also a legitimising factor for a union with more members. In order to establish the EPTU as an important player in international postal relations, it was important to add members beyond the administrations of the occupied countries, not all of which were even included, as the non-membership of France, Belgium, Greece and Serbia shows. For the last three countries, no evidence was

---

950 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/11248, Stenographische Aufnahme der Berichte der Beauftragten der DRP im Ausland, Italien, 18-28.03.1943.

found that the *Reichspost* lobbied intensively to integrate them into the EPTU. With Belgium, a bilateral agreement was signed, as mentioned above. The situations in Greece and Serbia were judged too difficult for adhesion to the EPTU even though the administrations would have reportedly wanted to join to show their people that their countries were again part of the ‘European concert’.<sup>951</sup> Thus, it is all the more surprising that in 1944 the German *Reichspost* nevertheless intended to invite them to the planned congress.<sup>952</sup> Regarding Greece, this almost certainly had to do with the war developments. Continued resistance and the Italian armistice with the Allied forces weakened the German position in Greece. The Greek administration thus never answered the German invitation.<sup>953</sup> In the summer of 1944, the advance of the Red Army led to the situation becoming more and more difficult for the German vassal state. The Belgian territory was part of the EPTU postal provisions – at least from a German point of view – and the Belgian telecommunications director maintained a firm stance against even a bilateral agreement, as has been previously shown. Thus, the *Reichspost* had no clear incentive to negotiate further. Given that the signing of a bilateral German-Belgian agreement did not lead to a declaration of Belgium’s entry into the EPTU even before April 1943, it appears that rejecting the invitation of the German *Reichspost* to the congress in October 1942 would have closed the door on the Belgian administration’s entrance into the EPTU. In the Belgian case, it is also interesting that there was another shift in the German stance on inviting the Belgian PTT administration. As in 1942, this stance could change within days. While the Belgian PTT administration was not supposed to be invited on 18 July 1944,<sup>954</sup> it was on the list of invitations again on 26 July 1944.<sup>955</sup>

Regarding the Swedish administration, in the above-mentioned meeting of all the appointees abroad, the appointee to Sweden summarised the failure of the attempts to change the mind of Örne, the head of the postal administration, regarding the EPTU – even when trying to establish contact

---

951 Writer’s own translation: “europäisches Konzert”, Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/11248, Stenographische Aufnahme der Berichte der Beauftragten der DRP im Ausland, Griechenland und Serbien, 18-28.03.1943, p. 6.

952 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R901/116970, Aufzeichnung Steengracht, 26.07.1944.

953 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R901/116970, Reichspostminister an den Gesandten Martius, 13.10.1944.

954 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R901/116970, Arbeitstagung des Europäischen Post- und Fernmeldevereins, 18.07.1944.

955 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R901/116970, Aufzeichnung Steengracht, 26.07.1944.

via the members of the NPU. Once the Finnish administration raised the idea of participating in the EPTU, the Swedish side cancelled a planned meeting. Despite the fact that the Swedish Director General was said to have had his own plans for a European PTT union and to have said so out loud during a conference in Brussels, the appointee to Sweden, Harder, stated that opinions differed on the right time to implement such a union. The head of the Swedish postal administration wanted to wait until the end of the war.<sup>956</sup> This was despite information that the Nordic Postal Union had ceased its activities<sup>957</sup> and reports that Sweden was losing revenue due to the favourable conditions of the EPTU.<sup>958</sup> As a side note, it can be added that it was considered improbable that Portugal would join the union, and its administration was not invited to the congress in 1944.<sup>959</sup>

The *Reichspost's* rescinding of France's invitation to the congress in 1942 did not mean that negotiations regarding French entry into the EPTU ended, as appears to have been the case with Belgium. Instead, the topic was repeatedly on the agenda. Despite progress, it appears that ultimately, France did not join the union, even though a French delegation participated in the session of the second committee of the EPTU (telecommunications) in 1943.<sup>960</sup> A French delegation was not present in Copenhagen during the postal committee session.<sup>961</sup> In the status report for April and June 1943, the military commander in France noted that the French government had declared that the country would participate in the provisions of the EPTU after one year of negotiations.<sup>962</sup> In July 1943, a French delegation went to Berlin to negotiate with the German *Reichspost* but was not able to formally announce that the French administration would join the union. It is notable that these negotiations were part of the path to entry as the EPTU provisions simply stated that an administration that wanted to join the EPTU only had to write to the office in Vienna. Thus, this trip reflects how military and

---

956 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/11248, Bericht Harder, 18-28.03.1943.

957 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R901/116969, Telegramm Martius, 05.06.1943.

958 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R901/116969, Anschluss an den Drahtbericht Nr.1624 vom 08.06.1943, 08.06.1943.

959 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R901/116970, Telegramm Nr.2342 v.17 VI., 29.06.1944.

960 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R901/116969, Nagel an Steengracht, 04.08.1943.

961 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R901/116970, Telegramm Nr.2342 v.27.VI., 29.06.1944.

962 Militärbefehlshaber in Frankreich, Lagebericht April - Juni 1943, An, AJ 40/444, 21-07-1943, <https://prefets.ihtp.cnrs.fr/prefets/fr/content/lagebericht-april-juni-1943-mbf> (last access 03.08.2020).

political aspects led to hegemonic power in an organisation that was presented as purely technical and administrative. During the meeting – in which the entire Foreign Department of the *Reichspostministerium* was present – considerable time was dedicated to telecommunications issues, while discussions about postal services mainly consisted of reports from Risch regarding the standardisation work completed to date and an outlook on the issues to be discussed during the committee session in September 1943. The minutes only indicate two longer discussions about standards pertinent for this work which concerned the questions of currency and language.<sup>963</sup>

These questions addressed administrative-operative and organisational standards that mark a clear break with the existing institutions. Before the war, the currency was the Gold franc, and the language was French, which was a sign of French influence and power, and for the National Socialists, it was a sign of the Versailles Treaty; thus, the new geopolitical power was used to enforce new standards in this regard. This was to the detriment of the French, who had insisted on continuing these standards in the runup to the congress in 1942 and who did so again during this meeting. Risch explained the change in base currency with the fact that a ‘living currency’ was preferred to determine the equivalents. The French delegation had also prepared five reasons for French to be an equal negotiation language, including the argument that French had been the official language in all the PTT unions and committees up to that point. If there was no concession on this point, the French administration could not definitively confirm its participation in any capacity. Risch answered that the language question was a political one and thus under the purview of the Foreign Ministry, and he could not make any promises. His answer did not clearly state that he would support the French demand during talks with the representatives of the Foreign Ministry.<sup>964</sup>

Concerning tariffs, there were two important points raised during the meeting. The first was the French delegation’s announcement that France wanted to adopt the provisions of the EPTU in postal services and that the other administrations had been contacted to ensure they would do so as well. The concrete tariffs had already been determined, and the administration wanted to use the higher deviation limit included in the postal regulations. To do so, the French administration asked the *Reichspostminister* to support elimination of the demarcation line for PTT services. It would have been difficult to explain to the French public why international service was facilitated while difficulties regarding the domestic French service remained.

---

963 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/11618, Niederschrift über die Eröffnungssitzung der deutsch-französisch Besprechung im Reichspostministerium zu Berlin, 20. Juli 1943.

964 Ibid.



Risch stated that he thought the elimination was feasible,<sup>965</sup> which is interesting because the Foreign Ministry, represented by Martius, had stated in June – only a month before the reunion – that the connection of the EPTU and the demarcation line would not be accepted by the Foreign Ministry.<sup>966</sup>

It is not known whether the French administration actually implemented the provisions of the EPTU agreement and thus became – not formally but in fact – a member of the EPTU. In May 1944, the state secretary informed the Foreign Ministry that he had once again pressed the issue of the demarcation line given the upcoming entry into force of the Vienna agreement and regulations in France,<sup>967</sup> and the French administration signed a bilateral agreement in August 1944.<sup>968</sup> As a consequence, the German postal administration introduced EPTU tariffs for letters up to 1,000g and postcards in postal traffic from Germany to France at the end of August 1944,<sup>969</sup> which means that from a German point of view, France was also part of the then existing European postal area.

While *Armeefeldpostmeister* Müller noted in March 1943 that the French government lacked willingness to cooperate politically and were using delaying tactics,<sup>970</sup> the French administration appears to have contacted other member administrations of the EPTU to discover when they could apply the EPTU provisions in their mutual postal services;<sup>971</sup> this seems to have caused irritation on the German side, which reminded the Danish administration through the union office that Risch had reported on the state of the

---

965 Ibid.

966 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R901/116969, Vermerk Martius, 15.06.1943.

967 Archives diplomatiques, La Courneuve, Vichy Guerre 245, Le Ministre Secrétaire d'Etat à la Production Industrielle et aux Communications à Monsieur le Chef du Gouvernement, Ministre Secrétaire d'Etat aux Affaires Etrangères, p. 157, 12.05.1944.

968 Militärbefehlshaber in Frankreich, Lagebericht April - Juni 1943, An, AJ 40/444, 21-07-1943, <https://www.ihtp.cnrs.fr/prefets/fr/content/lagebericht-april-juni-1943-mbf> (last access 03.08.2020).

969 Rigsarkivet, København, Generaldirektoratet for Post- og Telegrafvesenet, Journalsager vedr. forholdet til udlandet (1884-1983): I.O (1942-1950), 13079, Geschäftsstelle des Europäischen Post- und Fernmeldevereins an das Generaldirektorat für das Königliche Dänische Post- und Telegraphenwesen, 29.08.1944.

970 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/11248, Stenographische Aufnahme der Berichte der Beauftragten der DRP im Ausland, Frankreich, 18-28.03.1943.

971 Rigsarkivet, København, Generaldirektoratet for Post- og Telegrafvesenet, Journalsager vedr. forholdet til udlandet (1884-1983): I.O (1942-1950), 13079, Union postale européenne, Application des dispositions du Règlement d'exécution concernant le service postal et du Protocole final y annexé, 16.07.1943.

German-French agreement in June during the postal committee's conference and had no new information.<sup>972</sup> Thus, the French case remains opaque and full of contradictions that reinforce how difficult it is to determine whether the French PTT administration was collaborating or resisting as Laborie already discussed.<sup>973</sup>

The French administration thus used technical issues to address political questions. This was especially the case regarding the demarcation line. Even though the country was divided and partly occupied, the French administration showed an ability to act and support its interests, which were not necessarily postal standards but rather securing the French position in international relations as much as possible, here in international PTT relations. This is clear in the discussions about currency and language. In addition, the French administration appears to have been much more important for telecommunications issues as French participation in the two telecommunications committees was discussed, which was not the case for the postal committee. France had led in the creation of the ITU,<sup>974</sup> and the CCIT and CCIR were (and still are) located in Paris. This might be why the Germans wanted to integrate French expertise into the EPTU.

The *Reichspost* repeatedly tried to conclude a bilateral agreement for postal services with the Spanish administration. In a meeting of the appointees of the *Reichspost* abroad in March 1943, GE Thoms reported that the two-sided agreement had been sent to the Spanish government. However, there had been a diplomatic error in the note: the economic department of the German embassy stated that the two postal administrations had achieved 'full agreement'<sup>975</sup> on the contents of the proposal; however, the Spanish administrations were not allowed to negotiate with other national administrations, which was why Thoms expected that this statement had caused irritation within the Foreign Ministry. Thoms added that the Director General of the postal administration was in favour of the agreement but that in general, it was interpreted in Spain not as a technical but as a political agreement.<sup>976</sup> No evidence was found that the agreement was ever signed. The

---

972 Rigsarkivet, København, Generaldirektoratet for Post- og Telegrafvesenet, Journalsager vedr. forholdet til udlandet (1884-1983): I.O (1942-1950), 13079, Geschäftsstelle des Europäischen Post- und Fernmeldevereins an das Generaldirektorat für das Königliche Dänische Post- und Telegraphenwesen, 28.09.1943.

973 Laborie, L'Europe mise en réseaux, p. 343-344.

974 Laborie, L'Europe mise en réseaux, p. 72.

975 Writer's own translation: "vollstem Einverständnis", Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/11248, Stenographische Aufnahme der Berichte der Beauftragten der DRP im Ausland, Spanien, 18-28.03.1943, p. 5.

976 Ibid., p. 5.

Spanish administration was nevertheless invited to the planned congress of 1944.<sup>977</sup>

The Swiss documents offer little information about further negotiations between the administrations regarding Switzerland joining the EPTU. Nevertheless, the *Reichspost* tried to keep the Swiss administrations close to itself and the project, as demonstrated by the continued efforts to conclude a bilateral agreement for telecommunications up to 1944.<sup>978</sup> The Swiss administration also received the documents from the committee sessions.<sup>979</sup> However, the Swiss position towards the union that the Swiss delegate Bonjour proposed in his report from the congress was seemingly the one adopted. Thus, the Swiss administration did not sign any agreement<sup>980</sup> and did not participate in the committee conferences.<sup>981</sup> The longer the war continued, the clearer it became that the Third Reich was no longer in a favourable position to win, and the smaller the possibility became that Switzerland would join the EPTU. This possibility decreased not only because it became increasingly politically impossible but also because it would strengthen the EPTU against the UPU and its universal standards, which the Swiss administration preferred. This preference was shared by other administrations, as evident in their argumentation against a European postal union in the 1920s and 1930s. However, in addition to this technocratic argument, it was surely also important for the Swiss administration to support the UPU as it had its union office in Switzerland, which gave the Swiss administration influence.

When examining the *Reichspost*'s actions with regard to France, Spain and Switzerland, it is even clearer that from the *Reichspost*'s perspective, the bilateral agreements remained the main standardising tool; this is true not only for the time before the congress but also afterwards as bilateral agreements remained the main tactic pursued to move forward. This way, the *Reichspost* could not only negotiate bilaterally, which enhanced its prominent position within postal Europe, but it could also ensure favourable conditions for German users that went beyond the provision of the EPTU agreement and regulations. However, it must be said that the *Reichspost*

---

977 Archivo General de la Administracion, Alcala de Henares, 82/06330, Invitación para un Congreso de la Unión Europa de Correos y Telecomunicaión.

978 Cf. PTT Archiv, Bern, T-00B\_0148\_09.

979 PTT Archiv, Bern, P-00C\_0143\_03, Europäischer Post- und Fernmeldeverein, Ständiger Ausschuss 2, Urkunden über die erste Tagung des Ausschusses in Wien, September 1942.

980 Cf. PTT Archiv, Bern, T-00B\_0148\_09.

981 PTT Archiv, Bern, P-00C\_0143\_03, Europäischer Post- und Fernmeldeverein, Ständiger Ausschuss 2, Urkunden über die erste Tagung des Ausschusses in Wien, September 1942, p. 4, and Nationaal Archief, Den Haag, Hoofdbestuur van het Staatsbedrijf der PTT, nummer toegang 2.16.09, inventarisnummer 14, Urkunden über die 1. Tagung des Ausschusses in Kopenhagen, undated, p. 5.

was not successful in convincing more administrations to join; none did. This was certainly due to the war developments: The Axis project became de facto entirely German after the armistice between Italy and the Allied powers in September 1943, and in other countries, the situation of the occupier Germany worsened, and its geopolitical power consequently diminished. This aspect is especially visible in the Swiss reaction to the invitation. The administrations did not want to be attached to an organisation on the losing side. The EPTU, though often described as purely technical, was here judged only by its political character. The cancellation of the congress in 1944 was thus not the first but one of the most prominent signs of the end of the organisation.

The working phase of the EPTU was thus marked by the diminishing geopolitical power of both Germany and Italy, the rising visibility of the conflict between the two countries and a remarkable willingness to continue the technocratic work. The dawning of the loss of the war did not keep the *Reichspost* and other European PTT administrations from continuing to work towards harmonising postal services through standards. That willingness came from the German and Italian sides as well as from within the administrations of occupied countries. However, the war limited the range of aspects where this standardisation still made sense. Thus, the same actors who had achieved important steps towards creating a single European postal area were no longer able to continue as they had during the preparation and decision phases. As a result, many proposals were deferred to a later date. The postal committee conference produced fewer results because both the Italian and Dutch PTT administrations blocked proposals. The agreed-upon standards were never approved by the general assembly because the next congress did not take place. However, as demonstrated above, the European administrations that were still involved in the EPTU implemented the recommendations on insufficiently stamped or unfranked letter items without this approval. Thus, the working phase can be described as ineffective in terms of new standards for PTT services within the EPTU not because of experts' unwillingness to cooperate or to find common ground but because of developments in the war.

Similarly, the expansion of the union was difficult: no major successes were recorded in this regard. While negotiations with France were the most intensive, it remains unclear whether France finally joined the union or applied the provisions of the EPTU without formally joining. The sources suggest that France at least adopted the EPTU standards but never fully joined the union. Apart from France, the countries that had stayed outside the union remained outside. Portugal and Spain never appear to have had a genuine interest in joining. Likewise, the Swedish postal administration was reluctant to participate. While the Swiss administration generally agreed on the technical reasoning behind the EPTU and was closer to the EPTU than

the Swedish administration, political motivations kept the administration out of the union. When the military situation changed, any technical necessity of being close to the project was eliminated.

The EPTU's existence depended on geopolitical shifts resulting from the Axis powers' military victories and consequently could not work properly once German and Italian hegemony over the continent became endangered and subsequently ended. These negative effects were strengthened by the fact that the cooperation of the Axis administrations became even more strained. The Germans took the lead in this phase of the EPTU. As the position of the Italian administration was significantly weakened by its military losses, the *Reichspost* and the German Foreign Ministry gave up on attempting to present an equal relationship between the German and Italian administrations. The Italian administration – which had formerly been impeded in its work by the Italian Foreign Ministry – further slowed the standardisation process. In summary, the EPTU was neither deepened nor enlarged from April 1943 to the end of the war.

*Chapter II: From the Second World War to the Cold War: The end of the EPTU and the creation of two European postal unions*

Initially, the congress of 1942 decided that the next congress would be held in Rome in 1943.<sup>982</sup> It had been very important to the Italian PTT administration that it be held in Italy, and this was one of the conditions of continuing with the preparations for the congress in 1942 after the Italian Foreign Ministry had brought them to a temporary halt.<sup>983</sup> The Italian administration started planning this congress<sup>984</sup> but had to postpone it due to technical issues.<sup>985</sup> However, the problems were likely not actually technical but rather caused by the Allied Forces' attack on Italy. The armistice of September 1943, the Badoglio government's declaration of war against Germany and the creation of the Italian Social Republic as a German satellite state made a congress on Italian territory impossible.<sup>986</sup> Neither was the

---

982    Europäischer Postkongress, p. 304.

983    Politisches Archiv, Berlin, R106301, Telegramm Mackensen, 16.07.1942.

984    Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R901/116969, Risch an Martius, 09.04.1943.

985    Nationaal Archief, Den Haag, Hoofdbestuur van het Staatsbedrijf der PTT, nummer toegang 2.16.09, inventarisnummer 14, Urkunden über die 1. Tagung des Ausschusses in Kopenhagen, undated, p. 23

986    The Italian delegates to the second permanent committee were trapped in Vienna as the committee was in sessions at the same moment. (Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R901/116969, Aufzeichnung Martius, 10.09.1943).

German Foreign Ministry in favour of another congress, arguing that it was not appropriate during a total war.<sup>987</sup> Though the *Reichspostminister* disagreed as he thought postponing the congress would cause ‘irreparable damage’,<sup>988</sup> the Foreign Ministry advised the minister not to raise the topic in a meeting with his Italian colleague.<sup>989</sup> The congress was finally officially cancelled in August 1943 and rescheduled for an unspecified date. The director of the union’s office, Kleinowitz, explained the cancellation by saying that some permanent committees had not finished their work,<sup>990</sup> which was accurate as only two of the three committees had held a conference.

*A last failed attempt to keep the European Postal and Telecommunications Union going – the congress planned for 1944*

However, the development of the war did not discourage the German administration’s efforts. The Hungarian PTT director was still ready to continue the work of the EPTU and suggested to Risch a congress in Vienna to confirm the decisions made in the committee sessions.<sup>991</sup> Risch approved these thoughts, saying that the preparatory work was already done.<sup>992</sup> In the end, the German *Reichspost* invited the member administrations – at least those that were still relevant – to a congress in October 1944 in Vienna. The congress was to be entirely technical, without a broader programme or festivities due to developments in the war. The circle of invitations was to be larger: Belgium, Serbia, Greece and France were to be invited this time in order to avoid gaps in the postal area. Switzerland, Spain and Sweden were

---

987 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R901/116969, Telegramm Martius, 08.05.1943.

988 Writer’s own translation: “Nicht wieder gut zu machende Einbuße”, Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R901/116969, Reichspostminister an Herrn Reichsminister des Auswärtigen, 12.05.1943.

989 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R901/116969, Aufzeichnung Martius, 06.06.1943.

990 Riksarkivet, Oslo, S-1342 - Samferdselsdepartementet, 1. postadministrasjonskontor A, Dd - Journalsaker (emneordnet), L0022 - Div. journalsaker. Den europeiske post- og fjernmeldeforening, Geschäftsstelle des Europäischen Post- und Fernmeldevereins an die Generaldirektorin der Norwegischen Posten, 23.08.1943.

991 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/11630, von Forster an Risch, 06.05.1944.

992 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/11630, Risch an von Forster, 25.05.1944.

also sent invitations.<sup>993</sup> Italy, Albania and Turkey were not invited, nor were the Serbian<sup>994</sup> or French<sup>995</sup> administrations. However, the congress had to be cancelled due to the other administrations' refusal to attend. In September, the Swiss,<sup>996</sup> Danish,<sup>997</sup> Swedish<sup>998</sup> and Finnish<sup>999</sup> PTT administrations declined the invitation. The Spanish administration seems to have circumvented to answer as the Director General of the Spanish administration said that the Spanish Foreign Ministry was responsible for this decision.<sup>1000</sup> The German *Reichspost* did not receive an answer from Greece, San Marino or the Vatican,<sup>1001</sup> while the Norwegian, Slovakian, Hungarian and Croatian administrations accepted.<sup>1002</sup> This shows that at least some administrations assessed the situation in October 1942 differently than in October 1944. While this may seem obvious, it is important to note that contemporaries might not have been able to safely predict the Axis' defeat, and thus they still participated in the congress in October 1942. This is especially visible in the Swiss reaction to the invitation: the Swiss PTT administration members reacted quite decisively, saying that participation 'would be out of the question'<sup>1003</sup> not only due to the political circumstances but also because the technical work would suffer under these conditions.<sup>1004</sup> Therefore, the

- 
- 993 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R901/116970, Aufzeichnung Steengracht, 26.07.1944.
  - 994 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R901/116970, Abschrift Abschreiben, 14.09.1944.
  - 995 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R901/116970, Reichspostminister an den Gesandten Martius, 13.10.1944.
  - 996 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R901/116970, Generaldirektion der Post-, Telegraphen- und Telephonverwaltung (Schweiz) an den Reichspostminister, 08.09.1944.
  - 997 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R901/116970, Generaldirektoratet for Post- og Telegrafvesenet an das Reichspostministerium, 31.08.1944.
  - 998 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R901/116970, Örne an Reichspostminister, 08.09.1944.
  - 999 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R901/116970, Ahola an Reichspostministerium, 01.09.1944.
  - 1000 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R901/116970, Abschrift Direction général des Postes et des Télécommunications à Sr Ministro de Comunicaciones del Reich, 01.09.1944.
  - 1001 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R901/116970, Reichspostminister an den Gesandten Martius, 13.10.1944.
  - 1002 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R901/116970, Abschrift 23.08.1944, 31.08.1944, 04.09.1944, and 21.09.1944.
  - 1003 Writer's own translation: "kommt nicht in Frage", PTT Archiv, Bern, P-00C\_0143\_03, Bemerkung Oberinspektorat, 25.08.1944.
  - 1004 PTT Archiv, Bern, P-00C\_0143\_03, DG PTT au Département politique, 31.08.1944.

‘convocation (...) [was] not easily understandable’<sup>1005</sup> for them, and they proposed a letter of rejection to the Foreign Ministry in which they outlined these points.<sup>1006</sup> Unsurprisingly, the Foreign Ministry agreed to the assessment of the administration.<sup>1007</sup> It is noteworthy, though, that the Swiss administration highlighted its general interest in such a union not only to the German administration<sup>1008</sup> but also internally; Chief Inspector Möckli remarked that ‘a conference that would comprise the Western European countries would be more understandable’.<sup>1009</sup> This shows that the technocratic necessity of a restricted union as such was not denied, but a change of territorial scope and thus member administrations was seen as appropriate at the time.

The German *Reichspost* was supposed to use Italy’s weakened position to show strength regarding the language question; the only official language of the congress was supposed to be German. This solution would also appease the French PTT administration’s ambitions of making French an official language.<sup>1010</sup> The agreements to be decided on during the congress would be administrative rather than constitute a state treaty.<sup>1011</sup> In May 1944, the German *Reichspost* was still discussing plans for a European air-mail network with the Foreign Ministry, the *Lufthansa* and the aviation ministry.<sup>1012</sup> In September 1944, GE Löffler reported to Risch that Italy had adapted the charges for inland postal services to the German ones – a process he described as ‘delicate’<sup>1013</sup>. This should come as no surprise. As has been described above, the inner Italian postal system differed from the German one. It also shows that the *Reichspost* was still working on harmonising

---

1005 Writer’s own translation: “convocation (...) pas bien comprehensible”, PTT Archiv, Bern, P-00C\_0143\_03, Remarque pour le département, 12.08.1944.

1006 PTT Archiv, Bern, P-00C\_0143\_03, Entwurf Schreiben an Reichspostministerium, 12.08.1944.

1007 PTT Archiv, Bern, P-00C\_0143\_03, Chef der Abteilung für Auswärtiges an DG PTT, 05.09.1944.

1008 PTT Archiv, Bern, P-00C\_0143\_03, Entwurf Schreiben an Reichspostministerium, 12.08.1944.

1009 Writer’s own translation: “Eine Konferenz, die die westeuropäischen Länder erfassen würde, wäre eher begreiflich”, PTT Archiv, Bern, P-00C\_0143\_03, Bemerkung Oberinspektorat, 25.08.1944.

1010 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R901/116970, Aufzeichnung Martius, 17.05.1944.

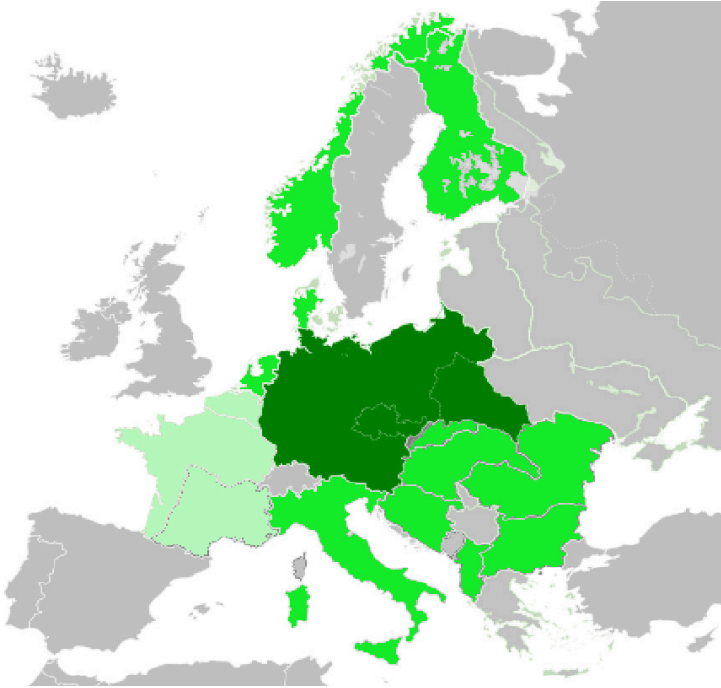
1011 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R901/116970, Aufzeichnung Steengracht, 26.07.1944.

1012 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R901/116970, Aufzeichnung Martius, 17.05.1944.

1013 Writer’s own translation: “heikel”, Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/11620, Löffler an Risch, 30.09.1944.



European postal services onto the German system when there was a possibility. Planning for a second congress continued until the end of September<sup>1014</sup>.



*Figure 7: Implementation of the EPTU tariffs until November 1944; the darker the green, the more integrated a country was. Romania and Croatia applied the provisions of the EPTU agreement entirely. The German and the French postal administration signed a bilateral agreement in August 1944. In November 1944, Bulgaria declared its exit from the union.*<sup>1015</sup>

It is rather difficult to determine when the EPTU ended. One could say that with the end of World War II in May 1945, at least from a military perspective, the Axis-led union would have been a thing of the past. Additionally,

1014 Cf. Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R901/116970.

1015 Own illustration. Template from: Wikimedia Commons: Axis Occupation of Europe (1942), [https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/5/58/Axis\\_Occupation\\_of\\_Europe\\_%281942%29.svg/450px-Axis\\_Occupation\\_of\\_Europe\\_%281942%29.svg.png](https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/5/58/Axis_Occupation_of_Europe_%281942%29.svg/450px-Axis_Occupation_of_Europe_%281942%29.svg.png) (last access: 20.01.2022), GNU Free Document License.

Germany was at war with some of the states to which member administrations of the union belonged, for example Italy. The Bulgarian administration considered the consequences of Bulgaria no longer being allied with the Third Reich<sup>1016</sup> and declared its exit from the EPTU in November 1944.<sup>1017</sup> Nevertheless, the union continued to exist, and the Third Reich turned to other partners. In terms of postal services, these partners were Denmark and Hungary. The de facto end of the union occurred on 8 May 1945; this is the consensus in the literature on the EPTU.<sup>1018</sup> F. A. Hofman, head of the Dutch postal administration after the war, wrote at the end of the 1950s: 'Besides, this Union had no life in it; it disappeared at the end of the war'.<sup>1019</sup> While one could disagree with that statement on a factual basis regarding the standardisation successes, after the war, there was an obvious political necessity to delegitimise the EPTU. The Danish PTT administration sent a letter to all PTT offices on 24 November 1945 declaring its exit from the EPTU. It stated that as the conditions for the continuation of the union were no longer in place and as multiple former member states had already declared their exit, Denmark would no longer apply the tariffs of the EPTU, meaning that with the exception of Finland, Iceland, Sweden and Norway,<sup>1020</sup> the usual international prices<sup>1021</sup> would thereafter be valid for posts to and from a foreign country.<sup>1022</sup> This shows that the administrations themselves did not necessarily equate the end of the war with the end of union and that the fees imposed by the union and the recently created European postal area remained relevant after the war. In November 1945, the Danish administration could only state with certainty that Bulgaria, Finland, Croatia, the Netherlands, Norway and Slovakia were no longer applying the EPTU agreement; it could not state this regarding Albania, Italy, Romania

---

1016 Schmidt, *Der Zweite Weltkrieg*, p. 157.

1017 Rigsarkivet, København, Generaldirektoratet for Post- og Telegrafvesenet, *Journaler vedr. forholdet til udlandet (1884-1983)*: I.O (1942-1950), 13079, Afskrift til 3. Ekspeditions kontor, 05.11.1944.

1018 Ueberschär, *Die Deutsche Reichspost*, p. 178-179, and Laborie, *L'Europe mise en réseaux*, p. 344.

1019 Hofman, F. A.: 'The Usefulness of an European Postal Union and its Task', in: *L'Union postale*, 75, 1 (1950), 2-5 (translated from *Het PTT Bedrijf*, 3, 1947-1948), p. 2.

1020 All members of the Nordic postal union.

1021 Most probably the ones agreed upon within the Universal Postal Union.

1022 Rigsarkivet, København, Generaldirektoratet for Post- og Telegrafvesenet, *Journaler vedr. forholdet til udlandet (1884-1983)*, I.M.5.c (1942-1955), 13076, Generaldirektoratet for Post- og Telegrafvesenet til Samtlige Post- og Telegrafkontorer, København, 24.11.1945.

or Hungary.<sup>1023</sup> This changed in March 1946 when the information was shared that Hungary was no longer implementing the agreement.<sup>1024</sup> The Danish administration also considered the bilateral agreements – which had been a key instrument for the *Reichspost* in building the EPTU – as no longer in effect.<sup>1025</sup>

### *New regimes in Europe, new initiatives for restricted postal unions*

As the idea of founding a European postal union existed well before the Second World War, and the necessity of European PTT administrations co-operating did not vanish after the war, it is not surprising that initiatives to create a European postal union emerged shortly after the war. According to Bilfinger, talks of continuing the German PTT cooperation projects in a new setting after the war were already ongoing in the United States in January 1943.<sup>1026</sup> The (geo)political context had obviously changed. The beginnings of the Cold War and the division of Europe into two blocs as well as the creation of new European political organisations such as the Council of Europe (CoE) and the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) need to be considered when examining the funding of not one but two restricted PTT unions. In both unions, member administrations came from European countries. The Eastern bloc created its own PTT union, the OCSC, in 1957, while the Western bloc quickly followed suit in 1959. Less is known about the OCSC than the CEPT. Nevertheless, the emergence of the two organisations is briefly described here.

Henrich-Franke describes the emergence of the OCSC as a process generally dominated by the Soviet Union.<sup>1027</sup> His characterisation of the creation of the socialist PTT organisation is somewhat similar to that of the EPTU. This is especially the case regarding the power hierarchy between

---

1023 Rigsarkivet, København, Generaldirektoratet for Post- og Telegrafvesenet, Journalsager vedr. forholdet til udlandet (1884-1983);, I.N (1933-1974), 13078, Note til Trafikministeren, 07.11.1945.

1024 Rigsarkivet, København, Generaldirektoratet for Post- og Telegrafvesenet, Journalsager vedr. forholdet til udlandet (1884-1983);, I.N (1933-1974), 13078, gentel kh, københavn 64, 12.03.1946.

1025 Rigsarkivet, København, Generaldirektoratet for Post- og Telegrafvesenet, Journalsager vedr. forholdet til udlandet (1884-1983);, I.N (1933-1974), 13078, Note til Trafikministeren, 07.11.1945.

1026 Bilfinger, *Völkerrechtliche Betrachtungen*, p. 105.

1027 Henrich-Franke, *Die Gründung europäischer Infrastrukturorganisationen*, p. 140.

the different member administrations. While the main aspects of the later organisation were developed during a conference of PTT experts within the national administrations in Warsaw in October 1956, the project was only considered implementable with ministerial as well as Soviet support. In June 1957, the government of the Soviet Union informed the other states of a PTT conference in the second half of the same year. According to Henrich-Franke, the organisational standards were subordinated to administrative-operative and technical standards. He also emphasises that telecommunications were omnipresent in the planning of the technical discussions, whereas postal services played no role. In what followed, the hegemonic status of the Soviet Union influenced the organisation to the extent that the centre was in Moscow: the preparations for the conference were made there; the relationships between the administrations were organised bilaterally (Soviet Union vs. others); and initiatives could only be developed there. The PTT administrations had relative independence from the foreign ministries regarding technical issues, and in the case of disagreements, the Soviet PTT ministry was unilaterally responsible for finding consensus; these issues were not discussed during the conference in 1957. Henrich-Franke concludes that the final decision to establish the organisation was not in question, and there was agreement on the majority of Soviet proposals. It remains unknown whether the consensus was so strong because of Soviet hegemony or because of intensive coordination efforts before the conference. It is certain, though, that there were no negotiations between equal partners. The decision was even made not to establish a permanent office for the new organisation as it was judged unnecessary.<sup>1028</sup>

In the Western bloc, the first European organisation to consider the subject of a European postal union was the CoE; it proposed one in 1951 in its ninth recommendation, which was met with resistance by some administrations.<sup>1029</sup> While German PTT Minister Hans Schuberth had been a strong proponent of a European postal union, and the Bundestag supported it, the French PTT ministry reacted with hesitancy.<sup>1030</sup> However, the idea emerged again in the framework of the CoE, for example coming from French PTT Minister Bonnefous in 1955.<sup>1031</sup> In this experimental phase of European integration,<sup>1032</sup> another European political organisation was founded that was

---

1028 Ibid., p. 135.

1029 Laborie, *Enveloping Europe*, p. 316.

1030 Laborie, *L'Europe mise en réseaux*, p. 355-357.

1031 Joint Committee, Recommendation 143 on the institution of a European Conference of Ministers of Posts and Telecommunications, Strasbourg, 11.06.1957.

1032 Thiemeyer, *Europäische Integration*, p. 45.

interested in creating a European postal union attached to it: the ECSC. The creation of a European postal union was even integrated into the Spaak Report in 1956.<sup>1033</sup> The six countries created working groups in which ideas for organisational, administrative-operative as well as legal standards and tariffs were discussed. These discussions were organised by a provisional secretary, and they led to conferences<sup>1034</sup> and different proposals on how to institutionalise cooperation,<sup>1035</sup> they also resulted in concrete technical questions, proposals<sup>1036</sup> and measures.<sup>1037</sup> It was planned to include the PTT into the Treaties of Rome but in the end, the PTT were not mentioned. This abrupt change meant the end of creating a union attached to a political organisation. Instead, the discussions were opened to a wider group of European national administrations, which would eventually end in the creation of the CEPT based on a Swiss and British proposal.<sup>1038</sup> The latter had already participated as observers in a conference of the Six's PTT administrations on the issue of the creation of a restricted PTT union<sup>1039</sup>. Consequently, the new structure was detached from any political organisation, and the CEPT gave itself an administrative programme<sup>1040</sup>. Therefore, the CEPT came into being to definitively prevent European PTT cooperation from being organised within a European political organisation, especially within a European supranational organisation with only six members (at the time). After the founding of the CEPT, the provisional secretary of the PTT community of the ECC ceased its work<sup>1041</sup>.

Compared to the emergence of the Western and Eastern European PTT conferences, it is striking that the Nazi and Soviet strategies towards the

---

1033 Laborie, *L'Europe mise en réseaux*, p. 365.

1034 Archives nationales, Pierrefitte, 19870773/33, Premier rapport du Secrétariat provisoire des Groupes européens de travail des Postes et des Télécommunications créés à Paris le 20 janvier 1956, Juin 1958.

1035 Cf. Archives nationales, Pierrefitte, 19870773/35, Assemblées plénières, Examen des propositions belge et françaises relatives à l'officialisation des groupes européens de travail des Postes et des Télécommunications, 1958 (?).

1036 Cf. Archives nationales, Pierrefitte, 19870773/34, Nouvelles questions à examiner, Introduction pas les pays de la C.E.C.A communes à soumettre aux congrès postaux (Proposition belge), 29-31.10.1956.

1037 E.g., the 'Europe stamps', see part: European PTT Cooperation in the after-war Europe: New times – new standards?

1038 Laborie, *L'Europe mise en réseaux*, p. 375-381.

1039 Bundesarchiv, Koblenz, B257/21158, Tagung der Europäischen Gemeinschaft für Post- und Fernmeldewesen in Frankfurt (Main), 11.02.1957.

1040 Laborie, *L'Europe mise en réseaux*, p. 375-381.

1041 Bundesarchiv, Koblenz, B257/31159, Exposé über die europäische Zusammenarbeit auf dem Gebiet des Postwesens, 1959 (?).

foundation of such an organisation appear quite similar. Both administrations focussed on intense and almost exclusively bilateral preparations for the first conference or congress in order to avoid conflict. The hegemony of the two powers was omnipresent in the process of establishing the organisations. Moreover, in both cases, the initiative seems to have come from expert circles before the idea was picked up by the ministries, which were ultimately necessary not only because they needed to support the projects but also because of the logistics of preparing a conference. One difference between the EPTU and the OCSC was in their focus. While the EPTU had a strong postal branch, postal services played seemingly no role in the OCSC; this is likely due to the historical context of the two conferences and the German emphasis on creating an international postal organisation, a proposal which the National Socialists repeatedly raised. The creation of a Western conference, conversely, was not steered by one country. Within both the CoE and the ECSC, initiatives arose that sought to guide the process of creating such a union, but they eventually failed. As a result, the administrations were able to create their own organisation according to the aforementioned technocratic ideals. The agreement creating the CEPT was not signed by ministers but by the heads of administrations. In the German case, this was the state secretary for postal services, Dr. Hans Steinmetz.<sup>1042</sup> Nevertheless, in both the OCSC and the CEPT, the responsible ministers appear to have been more influential than before. They were present for the founding conferences,<sup>1043</sup> which differs from the EPTU's founding congress where only invited participants and the German and the Italian ministers were present.<sup>1044</sup> Thus, there occurred an increasing politicisation of European PTT cooperation on a representative level. The last chapter of this part examines what influence this development had on the standardisation processes.

---

1042 Abkommen zur Gründung der Europäischen Konferenz der Verwaltungen des Post- und Fernmeldewesens vom 26.06.1959, in: Amtsblatt des Bundesministers für das Post- und Fernmeldewesen, Bd.5, 1960, p. 21-31.

1043 Henrich-Franke, Die Gründung europäischer Infrastrukturorganisationen, p. 134.

1044 Europäischer Postkongress, p. 40-55.

*Chapter III: European post, telegraphy and telecommunications cooperation in the post-war Europe: New times – new standards?*

Did the standards set from 1942 to 1943 have any lasting effects on post-war European postal services? Which aspects of cooperation within the European postal services remained similar, and which were changed? How were new organisations designed? Which actors from 1942 were still active in European postal relations after 1945? How was the idea of Europe or European PTT cooperation portrayed on stamps in post-war Europe? These are the main questions addressed in this chapter. As stated in the introduction, the EPTU has generally not been included in international postal history, in part because the administrations have not been keen to make it public themselves and because in the aftermath of the war, the union was not evaluated as a ‘Nazi’ union, as the following shows.

It is clear that the idea of a European postal union was not buried with the end of the Nazi regime; rather, it was quickly revived after the war on both sides of politically divided Europe. In this chapter, we thus briefly examine which standards remained and which were changed during the war in order to then focus on which of the changed standards had an influence on post-war Europe. To do so comprehensively would go beyond the scope of this work. Additionally, broad research on the majority of the aspects examined here is lacking. Therefore, this comparison is made on the basis of examples that nevertheless address important lines of continuity or discontinuity such as institutions, standards, actors and symbols of international postal cooperation.

More specifically, this first includes a comparison of organisational standards between the EPTU and the Western European postal organisation. Second, the discussions around lowering tariffs as well as the abolition of the transit charge are briefly considered. Furthermore, as this work attempts to identify the actors involved in the Europeanisation of postal services during the war as far as possible, the post-war professional careers of selected actors are addressed. The Danish and Hungarian postal administrations appeared somewhat more involved in the European postal union. Therefore, this selection seems valid. Third, the idea of a common European stamp did not disappear with the end of the war; it was revived in 1956 with the ‘Europe’ stamps of the members of the ECSC. The members of the OCSC also issued stamps to commemorate their conferences. Thus, at the end of this chapter, we compare how the organisations promoted their work to a wider public. In order to do so, the chapter begins by retracing the coming together of the two European postal organisations created in 1959. These unions are

compared to the EPTU before the continuity of standards, stamps, and actors is examined.

*Continuities in technocratic questions, discontinuities in political aspects*

All the organisations combined postal services and telecommunications, in contrast to the global unions where there were and are two organisations for the two branches, the UPU and the ITU. The following organisational standards were to be included: a) a union office in a comparatively small state, b) financing systems based on classes depending on the size of the country, c) a non-binding agreement and no sanction mechanisms, d) admission through a declaration made to the union office, e) a voting mechanism: one administration, one vote, f) official language(s), and g) the reference currency.

The EPTU's office in Vienna did not comply with the criteria for a union office in a comparatively small state, the choice of Copenhagen<sup>1045</sup> as the site of the CEPT's office however fits this pattern. The choice is interesting because of the active role the Danish administration played in postal services in the EPTU and because Director General Jensen remained in office, as discussed later in this chapter. From what is known of the OCSC, there was no official office; the work was coordinated within the Russian ministry.<sup>1046</sup> This was a clear break from the norms of PTT unions.

The financing system based on classes can be found in both the organisation of the EPTU and the CEPT.<sup>1047</sup> The same applies to the fact that the agreement could ultimately only be enforced through peer pressure, which was even higher when the *Wehrmacht* occupied the country. No state could be legally forced to implement the agreed-upon standards.<sup>1048</sup> The OCSC also depended on voluntary implementation of the standards agreed upon (at least according to its founding agreement). The financing system differed from the class systems: The costs of the Meeting of Ministers were to

---

1045 Henrich-Franke, Die Gründung europäischer Infrastrukturorganisationen., p. 136.

1046 Ibid., p. 135.

1047 Abkommen zur Gründung der Europäischen Konferenz der Verwaltungen des Post- und Fernmeldewesens vom 26.06.1959, Art.10, in: Amtsblatt des Bundesministers für das Post- und Fernmeldewesen, Bd.5, 1960, p. 21-31.

1048 Abkommen zur Gründung der Europäischen Konferenz der Verwaltungen des Post- und Fernmeldewesens vom 26.06.1959, in: ibid.



be paid by the hosting administration, other costs were distributed among the participating administrations.<sup>1049</sup>

The first changes can be seen in the process to enter the unions: any administration could theoretically adhere to the EPTU. In practice, however, a bilateral agreement with Germany and, more importantly, negotiations with the *Reichspost* were necessary. The German and Italian Foreign Ministries had a veto on whom to invite to congresses. This can be seen as a sign of a more politicised entry policy – a development that continued after the war. For instance, the discussion of whether to invite German, but more importantly Spanish, representatives to the UPU congress in Paris in 1947<sup>1050</sup> shows that political aspects had become more important. The fact that after the war, it was decided that a two-thirds majority was necessary for an administration to join the UPU<sup>1051</sup> clearly influenced CEPT regulations of 1959, which also included a clause that no new members were allowed for the next to years.<sup>1052</sup> Notably, the CEPT agreement also stated that only European administrations that were members of the UPU and the ITU could join the conference;<sup>1053</sup> this denoted a strengthening of the universal PTT organisation and must be seen in terms of the argument that restricted unions, although allowed, undermined the UPU and the ITU. This institution avoided political problems due to membership in the CEPT but not in the UPU or ITU too. It was left open what ‘European’ actually meant. However, at the time of the Cold War and against the background of an existing Eastern European PTT organisation, this question was probably less relevant than in a Europe that was not ideologically divided. The OCSC established a political barrier for membership via the provision that only socialist countries could join the union<sup>1054</sup> underlining the point in general membership institutions became more political in the technocratic PTT organisations.

---

1049 Butler, William Elliot: *A Source Book on Socialist International Organizations*. Alphen aan den Rijn 1978, p. 526-530.

1050 Archives politiques, Paris - La Courneuve, Y80, Bordereau d’envoi, 27.08.1946 et 11.12.1946.

1051 Sasse, Der Weltpostverein, p. 26.

1052 Abkommen zur Gründung der Europäischen Konferenz der Verwaltungen des Post- und Fernmeldewesens vom 26.06.1959, Art.3, in: Amtsblatt des Bundesministers für das Post- und Fernmeldewesen, Bd.5, 1960, p. 21-31.

1053 Ibid.

1054 Butler, A Source Book, p. 526.

Regarding the voting system, the continuity of the EPTU voting system (one administration, one vote) in the provisions of the CEPT agreement<sup>1055</sup> likely had to do with the fact that colonies were not relevant in the Western European context. In the OCSC, decisions could only be made unanimously, the only exception were recommendations where a majority was enough<sup>1056</sup>.

The most politicised standard – the official language(s) – was adapted to the new political situation after the war. While the Axis powers had used their hegemony to impose German and Italian as official languages, the post-war reality led to French being the official language for documents, while English, French and German were the official negotiation languages in the CEPT.<sup>1057</sup> The main languages of the OCSC were Russian, German, Chinese and French<sup>1058</sup> – but not English. Nothing substantial could be found out about the provisions regarding the reference currency in the CEPT or the OCSC. In summary, this shows how much organisational standards mirrored each other despite some differences, which were often based in political reasoning. Thus, in general, the postal experts agreed that their format of cooperation was working and should not be changed substantially. Similar to organisational cooperation, contents did not change significantly.

As there is little information on how standardisation was discussed within the OCSC was organised, this comparison mainly concerns the EPTU and the CEPT. The continuities in simplifying and lowering the prices of European and international postal services are clear. Shortly after the war, the question of transit charges and one common European tariff returned to the agenda. The issues around airmail also became important again.<sup>1059</sup> However, while the standardisation process during the time of the EPTU only took approximately two or three years, the process after World War II took much longer. It would therefore go beyond the scope of this work to discuss in detail the continuities with reference to standards, nor can any claims to completeness be made here. Such an intensive examination of the development of specific standards in the European postal system

---

1055 Abkommen zur Gründung der Europäischen Konferenz der Verwaltungen des Post- und Fernmeldewesens vom 26.06.1959, Art.3 and Art.8, in: Amtsblatt des Bundesministers für das Post- und Fernmeldewesen, Bd.5, 1960, p. 21-31.

1056 Butler, A Source Book, p. 527-528.

1057 Abkommen zur Gründung der Europäischen Konferenz der Verwaltungen des Post- und Fernmeldewesens vom 26.06.1959, Art.9, in: Amtsblatt des Bundesministers für das Post- und Fernmeldewesen, Bd.5, 1960, p. 21-31.

1058 Butler, A Source Book, p. 529.

1059 Benz, Integration von Infrastrukturen, p. 174.

of the 20th century must therefore be left to future research. There are, however, five findings that are worth mentioning here.

First, though the standards set in the EPTU constituted an expression of German hegemony, the EPTU still served as a reference point for European postal union projects after the Second World War. The idea of uniform intra-European tariffs remained particularly relevant. The German administration reread Risch's article on a European postal union as well as the agreement from 1942.<sup>1060</sup> Based on the dating of the files and documents, this coincided with German *Bundespostminister*<sup>1061</sup> Schubert's promotion of the idea of a European postal union. This could be also due to the fact that the person responsible for international postal services, Dr. Friedrich Reiss, had previously worked in the Foreign Department of the *Reichspost* on the EPTU. However, this shows that within the ministry, there was an awareness of the lines of continuity. This was also true for the actors within other administrations. F. A. Hofmann, for instance, also advocated a European postal union and apparently felt pressured to explain why this was different than the EPTU. His response included the following: 'It bore wrongly the title of "European" because only a restricted number of European countries were members. (...) Nevertheless, the foundation of a truly European Postal Union is worth considering in detail'.<sup>1062</sup> Thus, for Hofman, an organisation that did not include all European countries could not be truly European. This argument had been made in the *Svenska Dagbladet* in 1942.<sup>1063</sup> The statement is interesting in itself, but the definition of the term 'European' is certainly beyond the scope of this work. However, if this was the criterion for calling an organisation 'European', then the CEPT was not a truly European organisation when it was founded. As mentioned above, the Council of Europe also dealt with the topic of the creation of a European postal union. Notably, in a memorandum written for the commission on economic questions, the EPTU is mentioned as it introduced a reduced and uniform tariff. The EPTU agreement was attached to the memorandum and introduced as follows: 'These texts seem to retain considerable topicality in

---

1060 Bundesarchiv, Koblenz, B257/6819, Abschrift "Betrachtungen über einen europäischen Post- und Fernmeldeverein von Ministerialdirektor Dr. Friedrich", undated.

1061 PTT minister of the Federal Republic of Germany.

1062 Hofman, The Usefulness of an European Postal Union, p. 2.

1063 Utan författare: Tsyka nyordningsplaner på postområdet, in: *Svenska Dagbladet*, 29.10.1942, p. 15.

relation to the subject of this study'.<sup>1064</sup> However, the road to harmonisation of these standards was different after the war. This is indicated not only by the fact that no uniform tariff was introduced but also by the fact that national regulations for postal services were compared<sup>1065</sup> rather than one national regulation being simply exported to inner European postal services, as was the case in the EPTU.

Second, the Western European PTT administrations handled their involvement in the EPTU differently. *Bundespostminister* Schuberth actively promoted the project of not merely a European postal union but also of a common European stamp; he was aware that this common European stamp would at first only be expressed through a common motif on national stamps. In a speech in Aachen (Aix-la-Chapelle) in September 1951, he actively advocated for both<sup>1066</sup> and received feedback on the proposals from many Western European administrations. They supported the basic idea of the proposal but considered the introduction of a common stamp to be premature and too difficult.<sup>1067</sup> Despite highlighting the challenges, the Luxembourgish<sup>1068</sup> and Belgian<sup>1069</sup> PTT administrations supported the idea. Considering this background, the introduction of a stamp with a common motif (called the 'Europe stamp') in 1956 by the administrations of the member states of the ECSC shows that this negative positioning towards a European stamp, for example by the Dutch<sup>1070</sup> and French<sup>1071</sup> PTT administrations,

---

1064 Writer's own translation: "Ces textes semblent conserver en effet, en relation avec le sujet traité dans la présente étude, une considérable valeur d'actualité", Bundesarchiv Koblenz, B257/446, Union Européenne des Postes et des Télécommunications, Memorandum préparé par le Secrétariat Général relatif au projet de recommandation adopté par la commission des questions économiques, undated.

1065 E.g: Bundesarchiv, Koblenz, B257/31157, Étude comparative de la réglementation relative aux imprimés en service intérieur des 6 pays de la C.E.E., 11.11.1967.

1066 Bundesarchiv, Koblenz, B257/6819, Discours prononcé le 21 septembre 1951 à Aix-la-Chapelle, au cours de la conférence des présidents par M. l'ingénieur diplômé Schuberth, Ministre fédéral des Postes et des Télécommunications sur le sujet: "Contribution à l'Union Postal Européenne", 21.09.1951.

1067 Bundesarchiv, Koblenz, B257/6819, Directeur General des Postes de Suède, 18.03.1952.

1068 Bundesarchiv, Koblenz, B257/6819, Europäische Briefmarke 29.02.1952.

1069 Bundesarchiv, Koblenz, B257/6819, Minsitère des Communications à Hans Schuberth, 13.03.1952.

1070 Bundesarchiv, Koblenz, B257/6819, Stattsbedrijf der Posterjen, Telegrafie em Telefonie ann Hans Schuberth, 22.02.1952.

1071 Bundesarchiv, Koblenz, B257/6819, Ministère des Postes, Télégraphes et Téléphones à Monsieur Hans Schuberth, 18.02.1952.

proved short lived. The Finnish administration, in the person of Director General Simbri Ahola, who was active in the EPTU starting in 1943, was not entirely convinced by Schuberth's idea.<sup>1072</sup> The Italian administration, though not on the forefront of the post-war push towards a European postal union, agreed with Schuberth's suggestions.<sup>1073</sup> The German post minister's involvement is indeed interesting given the short time that had passed since the end of the EPTU, but this involvement cannot be clearly explained. Schuberth himself had not risen in the hierarchy of the *Reichspost* during the war because he refused to join the NSDAP;<sup>1074</sup> it may be that a desire to rehabilitate the German postal service was at the root of this. Moreover, by integrating Germany into international organisations, the Adenauer government pursued the goal of regaining the sovereignty of the FRG. Nevertheless, the repercussions of the EPTU were present in the *Bundespostministerium's*<sup>1075</sup> tactics: In a confidential message to a personal adviser to the then *Bundespostminister* Siegfried Balke, it was noted in 1955 regarding a ministerial meeting in Paris that the German administration welcomed joint (Western) European preparation for the next ITU conference. However, due to the legacy of the EPTU, this should not be officially proposed by the German administration.<sup>1076</sup>

Third, tensions between the German *Bundespostministerium* and the German Foreign Ministry regarding questions of European postal services arose around questions related to competences – which was due to the politicisation of certain postal standards. For example, when the six member nations of the ECC had recommended lowering transit charges between the countries in 1957, but the German PTT administration delayed the implementation, the Foreign Minister pressured the *Bundespostminister* to do so<sup>1077</sup>. In his letter, he stated that this would make Germany look like 'bad Europeans'<sup>1078</sup>. Within the German Foreign Ministry, reducing the tariffs was seen as a gesture of community within the ECC and a symbol for progress regarding European unity, and failing to comply with the ECC would

- 
- 1072 Bundesarchiv, Koblenz, B257/6819, Generaldirektor des Post- und Telgraphenwesen von Finnland an Han Schuberth, Bundesminister für das Post- und Fernmeldewesen, 03.05.1952.
  - 1073 Bundesarchiv, Koblenz, B257/6819, Il Direttore Generale del Servizi Tecnici ed Economici a Sua Eccellenza il Dott. Hans Schuberth, 24.04.1952.
  - 1074 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/14201, Personalbogen Schuberth.
  - 1075 PTT ministry of the Federal Republic of Germany.
  - 1076 Bundesarchiv, Koblenz, B257/342, An Pers.Ref.Min., Vertraulich!, 22.12.1955.
  - 1077 Bundesarchiv, Koblenz, B257/31158. Der Bundesminister des Auswärtigen an den Bundesminister für das Post- und Fernmeldewesen, 29.05.1942.
  - 1078 Writer's own translation: "schlechte Europäer", *ibid*.

‘contradict (...) the clear foreign policy principles of the federal republic’<sup>1079</sup>. The German Foreign Minister also stressed the importance of Germany implementing the recommendation by pointing out that the countries of the Eastern bloc had also already progressed in harmonising their fees<sup>1080</sup>. The Belgian administration withdrew the proposed reduction in postal traffic with Germany because it had been waiting for three years for the German side to implement the same reduction<sup>1081</sup>. The matter was also discussed in the French press<sup>1082</sup>. The *Bundespostministerium* replied similar reductions were meanwhile recommended within a working group of the CEPT which had more members than the ECC and that it would thus prefer to wait for a finale decision within the CEPT<sup>1083</sup>, notably the less political organisation than the ECC. In his response, the *Bundespostminister* underlined that the criticism from France must have come from ‘bodies outside the French postal administration without detailed knowledge of the context’<sup>1084</sup>. The rather sharp choice of words in the correspondence between the two ministries indicates, on the one hand, the foreign policy relevance of the reduction in postal charges and, on the other hand, the aversion to interfere in expert matters of the *Bundespostministerium*. This case is interesting insofar as the political and symbolic aspects of supposed technocratic decisions become evident and because the German Foreign Ministry was even interested in these facts. As seen in the case of the EPTU, the Third Reich’s Foreign Ministry only cared about political organisational standards such as the official language, not about postal service details. In the context of the Federal Republic of Germany’s wish to gain legitimacy via the European integration, the diplomatic and political interest in some of these details appears to have grown considerably. The staff of the *Bundespostministerium* much like their predecessors preferred to do their work without outside interference: This can be also seen by the fact that in

---

1079 Writer’s own translation: “klaren außenpolitischen Zielen der Bundesrepublik (...) widersprechen”, Bundesarchiv, Koblenz, B257/31158, Staatssekretär des Auswärtigen Amtes Lahr an den Herrn Staatssekretär Dr. Hans Steinmetz, 13.11.1961.

1080 Bundesarchiv, Koblenz, B257/31158. Der Bundesminister des Auswärtigen an den Bundesminister für das Post- und Fernmeldewesen, 29.05.1942.

1081 Ibid.

1082 Bundesarchiv, Koblenz, B257/31158, Abschrift France Soir Nr.5313 vom 20/21. August 1961, p. 6.

1083 Bundesarchiv, Koblenz, B257/31158, An den Bundesminister des Auswärtigen, 07.06.1962, and Vermerk, 30.03.1962.

1084 Writer’s own translation: “Stellen außerhalb der französischen Postverwaltung ohne nähere Kenntnis der Zusammenhänge”, Bundesarchiv, Koblenz, B257/31158, An den Bundesminister des Auswärtigen, 07.06.1962.

an overview on efforts by the commission of the EEC to harmonise postal charges in the 1960s, the commission's plan to enact such harmonisation was described as 'rushed', and it was noted that the commission had finally taken the position of the PTT administrations<sup>1085</sup>. Other issues between the competencies of ministries arose as well. In 1958, the German minister of justice, Fritz Schäffer, objected to the discussion of the European Community of Posts and Telecommunications during a Cabinet's session because he was displeased that in his opinion, the *Bundespostministerium* had kept him and his ministry out of the preliminary negotiations.<sup>1086</sup>

Fourth, the aforementioned politicisation of specific postal standards such as tariffs can be detected also outside the German Foreign Ministry. For instance, the commission for economic and social policy of the German-French Parliamentarians' Conference decided that parliamentarians would work towards convincing the relevant actors in their countries to apply the same tariffs as were applied domestically in bilateral postal services. The implementation of this request was supposed to occur on 1 September 1950.<sup>1087</sup> A German-French youth camp which brought together the *Jeunes du Mouvement Fédéralist Européen* and the *Bund Europäischer Jugend* called for an expansion of the inland tariffs to cover all six countries of the ECSC to help transform the 'Europe stamps' into valid European stamps.<sup>1088</sup> The unifying potential of being able to send a letter within the supranational organisation or between two countries for the same price applied domestically, which Ohnesorge had already underlined, led to a high political interest in implementing such tariffs. However, the German PTT administration rejected this proposal based on several arguments. Technical issues included the loss of income and the fact that inland tariffs in France and Germany were not the same.<sup>1089</sup> The administration also argued for deferring the issue until other questions were solved, for example the creation of a European postal union<sup>1090</sup> and the introduction of a single European

---

1085 Bundesarchiv, Koblenz, B257/31159, Harmonisierung des Postwesens in der EWG, undated.

1086 Bundesarchiv, Koblenz, B257/343, Vermerk, 14.11.1958.

1087 Bundesarchiv, Koblenz, B257/6819, Auszug aus dem Protokoll der Kommission für Wirtschafts- und Sozialpolitik der deutsch-französischen Parlamentarierkonferenz in Rheinfelde, undated.

1088 Bundesarchiv, Koblenz, B257/342, Resolution an die Regierungen, BEJ Informationen, Oktober 1956, p. 2.

1089 Bundesarchiv, Koblenz, B257/6819, Einführung von Inlandsgebühren im Postverkehr zwischen Deutschland und Frankreich, 12.08.1950.

1090 Bundesarchiv, Koblenz, B257/6819, An den Bundesausschuss für Auswärtige Angelegenheiten, Unterausschuss Drucksache 436, 06.09.1954.

currency.<sup>1091</sup> Interestingly, the *Bundespost* also argued that bilateral agreements would impede if not prevent a multilateral agreement.<sup>1092</sup> This argument marks a change in the approach to institutionalising international co-operation in postal services. The GAPU, UPU and EPTU were all based on bilateral agreements that prepared the unions' foundations. The reasoning might also reflect the general context of European integration in which multilateral unions such as the CoE and the ECSC were on the agenda.

Fifth, a unified European postal area for letters and postcards up to 1,000g, like that of the EPTU, was never again achieved. Though the ideal of borderless communication was not abandoned, the transit charge continued. Apparently, the specific (geo)political situation of the 1940s was necessary to create such a strong move towards an integrated European postal system. While the *Reichspost* had no clear political European project (only rhetoric) to attach to the EPTU, the concrete European political organisations did not create enough pressure to unify Europe from a letter and postcard perspective. In addition to the obvious military dominance and brutal occupation, it might be that this missing attachment to a clear political project to reconstruct Europe also helped the actors of the *Reichspost* negotiate the more technocratic aspects of the EPTU.

### *Stamps – still (not) the messenger of cooperation*

As mentioned previously, stamps can be an important tool to transport ideas to a broader public. The plan to issue a common (European) stamp was also pertinent to the plans of the Foreign Department of the *Reichspost* during its creative process of designing a stamp commemorating the EPTU.<sup>1093</sup> However, all these plans failed. After the war, it did not take long for proponents of a unified Europe in the West to put the topic back on the agenda. For instance, the *Europa-Union* wrote to the German minister lobbying for such a stamp.<sup>1094</sup> Additionally, stamps that expressed support for the European idea were proposed<sup>1095</sup> even by the chancellor of the Federal Republic

---

1091 Bundesarchiv, Koblenz, B257/342, An den Bunde Europäischer Jugend, 21.10.1956.

1092 Bundesarchiv, Koblenz, B257/6819, An den Herrn Staatssekretär des Bundeskanzleramts, 25.07.1952.

1093 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/11444, Risch an Min-Z, 16.06.1942.

1094 Cf. Bundesarchiv, Koblenz, B257/42239, Europa-Union Deutschland an den Postminister Schubert, 14.08.1951.

1095 Cf. Bundesarchiv, Koblenz, B257/42239, Europa-Union Deutschland an den Bundesminister für das Post- und Fernmeldewesen, 25.07.1952.



of Germany (FRG), Konrad Adenauer. Adenauer asked the *Bundespostministerium* whether the issuance of European youth stamps following the Belgian model was possible in the FRG as well.<sup>1096</sup>

The aim of this section is to compare the stamps of the EPTU to those of the Western European organisations and those of the Eastern minister conference. This comparison is rather difficult to make; only four stamps were issued during wartime, and all of them related to the one congress that took place. In Western Europe, the series 'Europe stamps' started in 1956 and continues to be issued today. For reasons explained in the following, the period of examination is from 1956 to 1973. Concerning the Eastern bloc, two conferences of the postal ministers of the socialist countries were commemorated by stamps during this time. This resulted in an uneven sample of stamps. This is of course due to the fact that the EPTU lasted only about two-to-three years. For the administrations within the OCSC, promoting the idea of Europe to the citizens appears to have been less important than representing the cooperation of socialist countries.

In Western Europe, the first 'Europe stamp' was issued in 1956 by the six members of the ECSC. At this time, it was not entirely certain how the European PTT administrations would be organised in the future. PTT affairs were also discussed within the structures of the ECSC and, later, the European Economic Community (EEC). In the 'Europe stamp' project, the six administrations issued stamps with the same motif and an overprint of the national administration. The stamps were issued with two values in each country: with one value, the stamp was to be used to frank international letters sent from within the country.<sup>1097</sup> A German 'Europe stamp' could not be used to send an international letter from France to Belgium. In total, the ECSC members issued four stamps; the newly founded CEPT would take over the responsibility for the 'Europe stamp' series in 1960.

The members together determined the common theme. In 1958, for example, they chose from the topics 'Europe guarantees work at peace', 'prosperity through common efforts', 'recovery of the economy through the spirit of cooperation', 'united Europe: harmony, strength and prosperity' and 'united Europe: factor for peace and source of prosperity'.<sup>1098</sup> These

---

1096 Bundesarchiv, Koblenz, B257/456, Der Bundeskanzler (Der persönliche Referent) an den Bundesminister für das Post- und Fernmeldewesen, 28.01.1954.

1097 Bundesarchiv, Koblenz, B257/342, Die Ergebnisse der europäischen Postkonferenz in Paris, 1956 (?).

1098 Writer's own translation: "L'Europe garantissant le travail dans la paix, la prospérité dans l'effort commun, le relèvement économique par l'esprit de coopération, l'Europe unie : concorde, force et prospérité, l'Europe unie : facteur de paix

topics were all related to Europe coming together for a better future. On the one hand, this was of course rather vague, but on the other hand, it was relatively political. Because there was no postal union they could reference, cooperation within the political project of European integration efforts was highlighted.

In the end, the topics in the different years were realised on the stamps as follows. In 1956, the motif consisted of a scaffolding with the lettering 'Europe'. In the background, there was a flag with the letter 'E' on it. All stamps in the following years read 'Europa' in their motifs. The stamp of 1957 consisted of a tree with six roots. In 1958, the letter 'E' was again added to the motif, this time in the forefront and with a dove of peace on top of it. The 'Europe stamp' of 1959 showed a six-unit chain. These motifs all related to the idea of constructing a united Europe through nations coming together.<sup>1099</sup> The higher aim of creating lasting peace, especially through the creation of the ECSC, was represented by the peace dove. The motifs themselves, however, were not overly political, and one could say that it was important to include the lettering 'Europe' in all the motifs because otherwise it would have been rather difficult to make the connection between the stamps and the European communities. It is also debatable whether the typical user would have noticed that the chain had six units or that the tree had six roots, both of which referred to the number of member states. A map like the one the German *Reichspost* used in 1942 would have been clearer. Yet, the geopolitical situation had changed; there were two German states, and Europe was divided into two blocs. The ECSC only covered six Western European states, which would have made a map of all Europe without national borders quite inappropriate. Additionally, a map of the ECSC member states would have fixed the borders of the community, which was clearly contrary to the will of enlargement<sup>1100</sup>. The members of the CEPT were also exclusively from Western Europe. The official stamps of the CoE also only depicted for the first time a map of Europe in 1990<sup>1101</sup>. The German administration rejected the idea of using such a map for the

---

et source de prospérité", Archives nationales, Pierrefitte, 19870773/35, Projets de thèmes pour les timbres-poste européens 1957, 1957.

1099 Rötzel, *Europamarken*, p. 58-60.

1100 Trautsch, Jasper M.: Von der nationalen zur europäischen Identität? Potential und Problematik von Europakarten auf Briefmarken, in: *Journal of European Integration History* 25 (2019), p. 165-188, DOI: 10.5771/0947-9511-2019-2-165, p. 185.

1101 Michel® CEPT 2021 – *Gemeinschaftsausgaben*, 45. Aufl., Germering 2020, p. 410.

Europa stamps;<sup>1102</sup> whether this was because of the reasons mentioned or the fact that continuity with the wartime was avoided in the motifs remains unanswered. Despite the lack of political message in the motifs of the stamp, the Embassy of the Federal Republic in Venezuela suggested holding an exhibition of stamps in South America to promote the European idea<sup>1103</sup>. However, this was rejected by the *Bundespostministerium*<sup>1104</sup>.

From 1960 onwards, the newly created CEPT took over the process of choosing and issuing the 'Europe stamp', but this did not change the process itself. The member administrations decided on the motif based on national proposals that were designed according to a common topic. The choice of motif was made through a process of elimination: the representatives of every administration voted for their least favourite proposal in several rounds. Rötzel emphasised that the representatives tried to choose at least one proposal from every administration from 1956 to 1973. The idea that everyone was considered in the decision making not only corresponds to the consensus culture of technocratic internationalism but also to the European communities. In chronological order, the motifs of the stamps from 1960 until 1973 were the wheel of a stagecoach, 19 doves arranged into the shape of one dove, a tree with 19 leaves, an ornament made of the letters 'CEPT', a flower with 22 leaves and 'CEPT' in the pistil, a branch with three leaves (postal services, telecommunications and telegraphy), a boat with billowing sails, gearwheels, a key, a building carried by the lettering 'EUROPE' and 'CEPT', wickerwork, a chain, flashing lights and a post horn with three arrows.<sup>1105</sup>

One can retrace the CEPT's growth as an organisation within this period: it went from 19 to 22, which is visible in the changing number of leaves on the tree and the flower, respectively. The use of plants (tree, branches, flower) could be explained by the fact that they are symbols of growth and prosperity. The image of several administrations coming together to work as one appears frequently, for example with the doves becoming one large dove or the flower and the tree having the same number of leaves as the CEPT had members at the time. The motifs also point to cooperation as the key that connects and builds Europe. With the exception of the peace dove

---

1102 Bundesarchiv, Koblenz, B257/6899, Entwurf einer Stellungnahme zum Vorschlag der französischen Verwaltung "Ausgabe der Europa-Marke 1961", 1960 (?).

1103 Bundesarchiv, Koblenz, B257/6885, Botschaft der Bundesrepublik Deutschland Caracas an das Auswärtige Amt Bonn, 06.10.1960.

1104 Bundesarchiv, Koblenz, B257/6885, Notiz, 27.12.1960.

1105 Rötzel, *Europamarken*, p. 60-63.

and the building, which can be understood as references to the peace project and working towards one European house, the references remain largely vague and universal. They show no obvious link to any idea or vision of a future Europe and thus, 'they did not champion or intend to increase identification with' the European communities<sup>1106</sup>. Instead, the flashing lightning, the post horn and the arrows depict traditional symbols of the PTT. The connection to Europe can once again only be made because 'Europa' is written on the postcard. Outside the framework of the 'Europe stamps', European postal administrations did issue stamps that were clearly linked to political projects such as commemorating their countries' accession to the Council of Europe or European political ideas such as linking European unification to peace.<sup>1107</sup> This underlines the strict independence of the CEPT from other European political organisations. The motifs of the 'Europe stamp' became more political through redesign by Croatian, Romanian and Slovenian anti-communist movements:<sup>1108</sup> the motifs of the 'Europe stamps' of 1956 and 1959 to 1962 were adapted to carry an anti-communist statement. For example, the 'E' on the motif of 1959 is endangered by a snake with a hammer and sickle,<sup>1109</sup> and the tree with the 19 leaves on the 1962 'Europe stamp' is being cut down by an axe on which a hammer and sickle can be seen.<sup>1110</sup> A caption explains the motif: 'Communism should not further divide Europe'.<sup>1111</sup> No research could be found on these stamps. Yet, using stamps as part of anti-communist resistance can be found elsewhere. In Poland, the opposition movement used stamps in the 1980s to carry their messages and finance their movement.<sup>1112</sup>

It is also important to note that the national PTT administrations were allowed to deviate from the agreed-upon motif. The French administration used this option in 1957, the second year the stamps were issued, and in

---

1106 Trautsch, Japer M.: European Integration by Mail: European Symbols and Subjoints on Postage Stamps, in: Gehler, Michael / Loth, Wilfried: *Reshaping Europe, Towards a Political, Economic and Monetary Union, 1984-1989*, Baden-Baden 2020, p. 17-42, DOI: 10.5771/9783748907855-17, p. 20.

1107 Bundesarchiv, Koblenz, B257/343, Beilage zu den Mitteilungen des Europarats, June 1959.

1108 Dallay, Tome II, *Catalogue de cotations de Timbres d'Andorre; Monaco, Terre Australes, Europa 2002-2003*, Paris 2002, p. 435-439.

1109 Ibid., p. 436.

1110 Ibid., p. 438.

1111 Ibid.

1112 Cf. Plate, Silke: Widerstand mit Briefmarken. Die polnische Oppositionsbewegung und ihre Unabhängige Post in den 1980er Jahren, *Neue Studien zur Geschichte Polens und Osteuropas*, Band 3, Paderborn 2021.

1971 and 1973.<sup>1113</sup> The Dutch administrations also chose a different motif in 1957.<sup>1114</sup> The British administration had to change their motif because the Queen needed to be on British stamps. The Royal Mail only issued the stamps in 1960, 1961 and 1969.<sup>1115</sup> After 1973, issuing one common motif/stamp was entirely abandoned. Instead, an overarching theme was chosen, and every country could design its national stamp based on that theme. This approach was in line with other restricted postal unions, such as the Nordic Postal Union, which issued stamps with common motifs in 1956, 1961, 1969, 1973 and 1977 and since then have only defined a common theme, which is then implemented nationally<sup>1116</sup>. Since 1989, the countries of the Postal Union of the Americas, Spain and Portugal (PUASP) also issue stamps sharing a theme<sup>1117</sup>. The tradition of the 'Europe stamps' persists despite the trend of privatisation in postal services. The themes since 1973 have been highly apolitical, ranging from birds to sculptures, paintings and bridges.<sup>1118</sup>

All six administrations that have issued stamps since 1956 shows published stamps with two face values (which increased over time) and often in different colours. In all countries, the number of copies diminished in the period from 1956 to 1973. In Belgium, the 1973 edition contained half as many stamps as in 1956.<sup>1119</sup> In France, there was a smaller reduction in the stamps with the higher face value: from 43.5 million (lower face value) and 13.3 million (higher face value) to 20 million and 10 million, respectively.<sup>1120</sup> In Italy, the number of copies of the lower face value stamps also diminished quite drastically over the years, falling from 50 million to 15 million, and the issuance of the higher face value stamps declined from 15 to 8 million.<sup>1121</sup> In the FRG, the circulation did not drop significantly from 1956 to 1957: 68 to 60 million copies (lower face value) and 28 to 25 million copies (higher face value). In 1963, fewer stamps with the lower face value were issued for the first time: 30 million vs. 110 million. Over the years, the circulation of the lower value stamps increased to 50 million,

1113 Michel® Westeuropa 2020. *Europa Teil 3*, 105. Aufl., Germering 2020, p. 137, p. 176, p. 181.

1114 Michel® CEPT, Gemeinschaftsausgaben, p. 9.

1115 Michel® Europa, Westeuropa, p. 330-342.

1116 Michel® CEPT, Gemeinschaftsausgaben, p. 422-444.

1117 Ibid., p. 469-511.

1118 Ibid. p. 43-407.

1119 Michel® Europa, Westeuropa, p. 63-103.

1120 Michel® Westeuropa, Europa Teil 3, p. 133-184.

1121 Michel® Europa 2019. Band 3. *Südeuropa*, 104. Aufl., Germering 2019, p. 396-424.

while that of the higher value stamps decreased to 73.3 million in 1973.<sup>1122</sup> Stamps of the most used values were issued in Germany.<sup>1123</sup> In Luxembourg, the first three European stamps were issued in three denominations, while only two were issued from 1959 onwards. In 1957, the number of copies decreased slightly compared to the previous year, and, as in France, a different motif was published. The highest circulation was recorded in 1962 (3.1 million of the lower face value and 2.1 million of the higher face value). Thereafter, the number of copies decreased, and from 1968 onwards, a constant 1 million stamps were issued each year.<sup>1124</sup> In the Netherlands in 1956, the administration placed 44.5 and 5.3 million stamps into circulation; in 1973, the numbers were 24.6 and 3.4 million.<sup>1125</sup> In relation to the number of special stamps issued each year, the proportion in Belgium fell from 35% in 1956 to 11% in 1973.<sup>1126</sup> In France, the 'Europe stamps' accounted for a 16% share in the first year of issuance, then fell below 10% in 1965, where it remained in 1973.<sup>1127</sup> In the Italian case, the share of the 'Europe stamp' varied from 1956 to 1964 from 13% to 28% and decreased by 1973 to a level of 4%.<sup>1128</sup> In the FRG, the share differed quite strongly over the years. For instance, in 1960, the share was around 30%, in 1961 around 1%; this was due to the fact that the *Bundespost* issued a series on important Germans with a high number of copies that year.<sup>1129</sup> However, an overall reduction can also be seen. The share decreased from 29% in 1956 to 11% in 1973.<sup>1130</sup> In the Dutch case, the share also varied quite significantly. In 1956, the share was 59%, in 1963 only 4% and then 20% in 1973.<sup>1131</sup> In Luxembourg, the share was initially very high at 24% to 50% in the years 1956 to 1965. This share decreased to just under 17% in 1973.<sup>1132</sup>

The reduction in the number of copies issued in the six countries and the fact that in four of these six, the numbers dropped considerably after the first year point to a strong possibility that the stamps likely had a reduced

---

1122 Michel® Deutschland, Deutschland, p. 825-862.

1123 Bundesarchiv, Koblenz, B257/42315, p. 53, Verbrauch an Postwertzeichen, undated.

1124 Michel® Deutschland, Deutschland, p. 825-862.

1125 Michel® Europa, Westeuropa, p. 1238-1255.

1126 Ibid., p. 63-103.

1127 Michel® Westeuropa, Europa Teil 3, p. 133-184.

1128 Michel® Europa, Südeuropa, p. 396-424.

1129 Michel® Deutschland, Deutschland, p. 834.

1130 Ibid., p. 825-862.

1131 Michel® Europa, Westeuropa, p. 1238-1255.

1132 Michel® Deutschland, Deutschland, p. 825-862.

reach over time. Even for philatelists, the collecting of the stamps was complicated as the CEPT did not have a dispatch office for collector stamps like the national administrations<sup>1133</sup>. In all countries, the share of the 'Europe stamps' with respect to all stamps issued in the same year fell over time. Additionally, the fact that the French and the Dutch administrations changed the motif in the second year of the series did not contribute to visibility nor to a projection of cooperation and unity.

For the administrations that were part of the OCSC, no similar stamp series could be found, as mentioned previously. However, some of the participating administrations issued stamps in 1958 and 1965 to commemorate the first conference of the postal ministers and the sixth conference in Beijing. The latter seems especially interesting as the administrations appear to have agreed on one common element: the heads of Marx and Lenin. The German Democratic Republic (GDR) additionally issued stamps in 1982 when the OCSC conference took place in Chemnitz. The motif of the stamp, however, was more about the presentation of Chemnitz as *Karl-Marx-Stadt* than about the conference taking place there.<sup>1134</sup>

The stamps issued in 1958 do not show signs of such a high level of coordination. First, not all participating European administrations issued stamps: Albania,<sup>1135</sup> Bulgaria<sup>1136</sup> and Poland<sup>1137</sup> did not commemorate the occasion. Romania, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, the GDR and the Soviet Union, however, did. With the exception of the Soviet Union's stamp, symbols of postal services and telecommunications were highlighted.

As the Soviet Union was the leading country within the OCSC, its stamps are analysed first. The stamps, issued on 26 May 1958, consisted of a telex machine and a telephone at the bottom and a radio mast in the background. In the forefront, a badge with an inscription surrounded by flags is visible. The flags are those of North Korea, Poland, Romania, Hungary, Albania, Vietnam, Czechoslovakia and the GDR. The Chinese and Soviet flags are at the top of the stamp, which had to be reprinted because initially the Czechoslovakian flag was not correctly depicted. The Soviet administration issued 4.5 million stamps,<sup>1138</sup> which represented just under 2% of special stamps released that year.<sup>1139</sup>

---

1133 Bundesarchiv, Koblenz, B257/6885, Dr. Fickel à Madame Renaut, 07.07.1965

1134 Ibid., p. 636.

1135 Michel® Europa, Südeuropa, p. 35-36.

1136 Michel® Europa 2019. Band 4. *Südosteuropa*, Germering 2019, p. 69-71.

1137 Michel® Europa 2019/2020. Band 7. *Osteuropa*, 104. Aufl. Germering 2019, p. 138-140.

1138 Ibid., p. 744.

1139 Ibid., p. 742-751.

The Romanian administration released its stamps on 21 March 1958. The stamps were in red and blue and contained elements related to telecommunications such as waves and masts. A total of 3 million stamps were issued,<sup>1140</sup> corresponding to 5.3% of the special stamps released during the year.<sup>1141</sup> The Hungarian postal administration issued two stamps in green and red on 30 June 1958. The green stamp showed the town hall of Prague and a postal horn with lightning flashes around it, thereby symbolising both postal services and telecommunications. The red stamp depicted the castle of Prague with a telegraph mast whose cable was represented with Morse signals. In total, the Hungarian PTT administration issued around 510,000 stamps,<sup>1142</sup> which represented 9.5% of the total special stamps issued.<sup>1143</sup> The Czechoslovakian administration chose two stamps (orange and green) with elements linked to telecommunications. The orange stamp showed telephonists at work, while the green stamp showed masts and waves. The stamps were issued on 20 June 1958 with an edition of around 6 million.<sup>1144</sup> This was a 1.1% share of all the special stamps issued in Czechoslovakia in 1958.<sup>1145</sup> The GDR released its stamps in grey and red on 20 March 1958. The motifs contained a mast with Morse signals in the forefront and a postal horn with lightning flashes (grey stamp) or the inscription ‘conference of the ministers for postal services and telecommunications of the socialist countries’ formed as a radio wave (red stamp) in the background. The 6.1 million stamps issued<sup>1146</sup> comprised around 3.3% of all the special stamps issued in the GDR in 1958.<sup>1147</sup> The stamps had a clear connection to PTT, but it seems unlikely that a transnational audience was formed, not only because the number of copies was low but also because the connection between the different national stamps was not obvious.

Albania,<sup>1148</sup> Bulgaria<sup>1149</sup> and Poland<sup>1150</sup> issued stamps in 1965. The motifs were clearly more coordinated as the heads of Marx and Lenin appeared

---

1140 Michel® Europa, Südosteuropa, p. 618.

1141 Ibid., p. 618-621.

1142 Michel® Europa, Mitteleuropa, p. 937.

1143 Ibid., p. 935-938.

1144 Ibid., p. 757.

1145 Ibid., p. 756-759.

1146 Michel® Deutschland, Deutschland, p. 512.

1147 Ibid., p. 512-516.

1148 Michel® Europa, Südosteuropa, p. 50.

1149 Ibid., p. 92.

1150 Michel® Europa, Osteuropa, p. 166.



on all of them.<sup>1151</sup> This is a clear political statement with no obvious connection to PTT services. The clearly ideologically designed stamps indicate a deliberate even if only symbolic strengthening of the socialist countries as a unit. This had only been a subordinate issue in the negotiations for the founding of the OCSC in 1958.<sup>1152</sup> The Soviet PTT administration added a drawing of protesting people below the two heads,<sup>1153</sup> which means there was no visible connection to the PTT on the stamp. The Romanian administration used the exact same motif.<sup>1154</sup> The PTT administrations of Albania, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, the GDR and Poland used the heads as well, but they chose a different design and wrote the occasion, namely the conference of the PTT ministers, on the stamps.<sup>1155</sup> The Hungarian administration combined these two versions, the Soviet design and the occasion as lettering.<sup>1156</sup> The number of copies amounted to 0.6% of the special stamps issued in the Soviet Union,<sup>1157</sup> 2.3% in Romania,<sup>1158</sup> 0.3% in Czechoslovakia,<sup>1159</sup> 1.8% in the GDR,<sup>1160</sup> 8.8% in Hungary,<sup>1161</sup> 0.2% in Poland,<sup>1162</sup> 0.1% in Bulgaria<sup>1163</sup> and 2.0% in Albania.<sup>1164</sup> These stamps would likely have been lost among other propaganda stamps in the Soviet bloc and would not have captivated much attention. PTT cooperation was excluded completely from the motif in these stamps. Attentive individuals could have realised the similarity of the stamps, but due to the low numbers in circulation, this seems unlikely.

In conclusion, none of the stamps issued in the framework of the ECSC, the CEPT or the OCSC can be assumed to have had a widespread audience. While the stamps issued within the framework of the ECSC reflect the wish to portray an idea of European togetherness and community, the CEPT

---

1151 Michel® Deutschland, Deutschland, p. 542, Michel® Europa, Mitteleuropa, p. 780, p. 970.

1152 Henrich-Franke, Die Gründung europäischer Infrastrukturorganisationen, p. 128.

1153 Michel® Europa, Osteuropa, p. 806.

1154 Michel® Europa, Südosteuropa, p. 650.

1155 Michel® Deutschland, Deutschland, p. 542, Michel® Europa, Mitteleuropa, p. 780.

1156 Michel® Europa, Mitteleuropa, p. 970.

1157 Michel® Europa, Osteuropa, p. 803-812.

1158 Michel® Europa, Südosteuropa, p. 647-652.

1159 Michel® Europa, Mitteleuropa, p. 778-782.

1160 Michel® Deutschland, Deutschland, p. 540-545.

1161 Michel® Europa, Mitteleuropa, p. 968-974.

1162 Michel® Europa, Osteuropa, p. 166-168.

1163 Michel® Europa, Südosteuropa, p. 90-94.

1164 Ibid., p. 49-52.

stamps focussed much more on PTT cooperation, which mirrored the technocratic and deliberately apolitical image of the CEPT. The first stamps of some administrations within the OCSC followed the same pattern of highlighting PTT aspects, while the second stamps were solely used as political identifiers. The harmonisation of motifs in the 'Europe stamps' of the ESCS and the CEPT was closer to the ideal of a European stamp and the implementation of what was initially aimed at by the *Reichspost's* Foreign Department. While the ESCS and CEPT stamps were issued every year, independently of conferences or committee sessions, the OCSC stamps were only issued on the occasion of two conferences rather than regularly.

*Actors in the post-war postal Europe and their connection to the European Postal and Telecommunications Union*

As individuals play an important role in establishing international organisations, it was important to present the main German actors at the beginning of this work and to present biographical elements of other European postal experts involved in the EPTU. This section examines who remained in their positions or in their PTT administration and who did not. This work has shown that although Heinrich von Stephan died in 1897, his work and ideas were constantly brought up during the conceptualisation of the EPTU. Therefore, even if they no longer worked within the national postal administration, they could still influence its contemporary work. The post-1945 careers examined here are those of Ohnesorge (Germany), Risch (Germany), Reiss (Germany), Jensen (Denmark) and von Forster (Hungary). The Danish and Hungarian postal administrations appeared relatively involved in the postal service side of the EPTU. The Danish administration hosted the postal committee conference in 1943, the Hungarian delegate von Forster led the postal committee during the congress and pushed for an EPTU general assembly in 1944. It must be said that research on these actors is rare, which is why few can be presented here. No Italian actor is listed because the Italian administration changed its representatives quite often, as has been already shown, and evidence of postal experts' continuous involvement even in the EPTU cannot be found. Additionally, the Italian PTT administration appears to have taken on the role of slowing down instead of advancing harmonisation, and it does not appear to have been a leading force in the creation of the CEPT. This differs significantly from the cases of, for instance, Risch, Reiss, Jensen and von Forster. Overall, for the Western European postal administration, a minority of the heads of

postal administrations in office in 1942 remained in 1959. For instance, Albrecht, the head of the Finnish PTT administration, had resigned during the war.<sup>1165</sup> His successor in 1943, Simbri Ahola, took part in the 1943 postal committee conference<sup>1166</sup> but does not appear to have been involved in the preparatory talks with regard to the CEPT.<sup>1167</sup> As the head of the Finnish PTT from 1943 to 1962,<sup>1168</sup> Ahola signed the agreement creating the CEPT in 1959.<sup>1169</sup> The Dutch Secretary General W.L.Z. van der Vegte was imprisoned and charged with helping the enemy during the war<sup>1170</sup> and was consequently not involved in further Dutch delegations.<sup>1171</sup> The list of participants in meetings within the framework of the ECSC and CEPT show only three persons returning: Friedrich Reiss, Kristjan Johannes Jensen and Simbri Ahola. With regard to the administrations' representatives within the OCSC negotiations in 1957, no expert involved in 1942 or 1943 could be found in the delegations in 1957.<sup>1172</sup>

From what could be found in the archives, it seems that Ohnesorge was the only person in the ministry whose activities from 1937 to 1945 have been examined closer. This is not supposed to mean that the *Reichspostministerium* as a whole was not subject to dismissals based on the staff's role in the Third Reich<sup>1173</sup>. However, the report on the *Reichspostministerium*

- 
- 1165 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/11802, Bureau international de l'union postale universelle, Circulaire, No.22, 02.04.1943.
  - 1166 Abkommen zur Gründung der Europäischen Konferenz der Verwaltungen des Post- und Fernmeldewesens vom 26.06.1959, in: Amtsblatt des Bundesministers für das Post- und Fernmeldewesen, Bd.5, 1960, p. 21-31.
  - 1167 He is not named in any participation list. (Cf. Archives nationales, Pierrefitte, 19870773/35, *ibid.* 19870773/35.
  - 1168 Nevalainen, Pasi: *Virastosta liikeyritys : posti- ja telelaitoksen muutosprosessi 1930-1994*. Jyväskylä 2014 (Jyväskylä studies in humanities). Available online at <http://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-951-39-5932-6>, checked on 03.02.2021, p. 89.
  - 1169 Abkommen zur Gründung der Europäischen Konferenz der Verwaltungen des Post- und Fernmeldewesens vom 26.06.1959, Unterschriften, p. 25 in: Amtsblatt des Bundesministers für das Post- und Fernmeldewesen, Bd.5, 1960, p. 21-31.
  - 1170 PDC Informatie Architectuur, 2020, [https://www.parlement.com/id/vh7x2txdlazs/w\\_l\\_z\\_van\\_der\\_vegte](https://www.parlement.com/id/vh7x2txdlazs/w_l_z_van_der_vegte) (last access 05.03.2021).
  - 1171 Cf. Archives nationales, Pierrefitte, 19870773/37, Liste des participants, 26.-31.01.1959.
  - 1172 Bundesarchiv, Lichterfelde, DM3/16234, Liste der Delegationen, die an der Beratung der für Fragen des Post- und Fernmeldewesens in den sozialistischen Ländern zuständigen Ministern teilnehmen, 03.-17.12.1957.
  - 1173 Cf. Bundesarchiv Koblenz, B257/40411, Politische Bereinigung des Personalkörpers, 25.08.1945.

focuses almost entirely on the former minister<sup>1174</sup>. Karl Sautter, state secretary of the *Reichspostministerium* until 1933 when he was forced into early retirement, wrote a report on Ohnesorge's leadership, and he included a long list of accusations, from embezzlement of property of the *Reichspost* to illegal terminations without notice to an extramarital affair with a postal employee whom he later married. Sautter paints a picture of a man who regularly abused his position of power and who cared more about himself than anything else. This is demonstrated in the description of his flight from Berlin in April 1945, during which Ohnesorge allegedly stole food designated for the staff of the *Reichspostministerium*: 'The activities of the *Reichspostminister* Ohnesorge ended with the concern for the safety of his own livelihood'.<sup>1175</sup> Ohnesorge was captured by soldiers of the Soviet Union, whose central administration for postal services and telecommunications declared him to be one of the main culprits of the destruction of the German *Reichspost*.<sup>1176</sup> At the Nuremberg Trials, he testified and was declared 'belastet'; his case went through three trials and ended in 1955 with a closing of the proceedings.<sup>1177</sup> According to his daughter, Ohnesorge never discussed his time at the top of the ministry; he died in 1962.<sup>1178</sup> He was already 73 at the end of the war and did not return to work in the *Reichspostministerium*.

Risch's career in the *Reichspost* was also over after the war, and he went to work for the Evangelical Regional Church in Hamburg.<sup>1179</sup> Nevertheless, he published a book about Heinrich von Stephan in 1948, in which he omits any hint at the EPTU<sup>1180</sup>. In his denazification process, Risch used the EPTU to defend himself. He stated that 'his whole work during that time was to connect peoples, states and humans, to balance out differences and

---

1174 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/27017, Bericht vom Sonderbeauftragten für die Abwicklung des Reichspostministeriums.

1175 Writer's own translation: "Mit der Sorge um die Sicherung des eigenen Lebensunterhaltes endete die Tätigkeit von Reichspostminister Ohnesorge", *ibid.*, p. 18.

1176 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/25641, Kammerspruch, 09.07.1948.

1177 Ueberschär, *Die Deutsche Reichspost*, p. 25.

1178 Stefanie Flamm: *Das Geisterhaus*, *Tagesspiegel*, 27.11.2004, <https://www.tagesspiegel.de/kultur/das-geisterhaus/566130.html> (last access 10.02.2021).

1179 Staatsarchiv Hamburg, Hamburg, 221-11 C(P)774, Erwin Jacobi, Fr. Gienapp, Walter Donandt an Zentralstelle für Berufungsausschüsse zur Ausschaltung Nationalsozialisten, 30.07.1947.

1180 Risch, Friedrich Adolf: *Heinrich von Stephan: Die Idee der Weltpost*. Hamburg 1948.

this in the middle of a war against the horrors of the war'.<sup>1181</sup> Testimony by church representatives and one member of the German Social Democratic Party in his denazification case highlighted Risch's strong ties to the *Bekennniskirche*, which he did not renounce; this evidently led to difficulties and allegedly to Ohnesorge moving the seat of his department to Graz.<sup>1182</sup> Additionally, Risch's own and other testimony tied him to the assassination attempt on Hitler on 20 July 1944. Risch destroyed any evidence of his knowledge or involvement after its failure.<sup>1183</sup>

Two former colleagues also testified in written form: Dr. Timm, former member of the Foreign Department and personal assistant to *Reichspostminister* Ohnesorge, and GE Harder, former appointee of the *Reichspost* to Spain and Sweden. Timm described Risch's department as small and unimportant and noted his firm loyalty to the church. He also mentioned that Risch had been under the supervision of SS *Brigadeführer*<sup>1184</sup> Köhn, who was responsible for the *Reichspost* in the East at the time. Timm's testimony is interesting insofar as the Foreign Department had been created by Ohnesorge himself and was under his direct supervision. Timm also had to face trials, especially since he initially failed to mention his affiliation with the SS via his membership in the Postal Protection.<sup>1185</sup> In January 1948, he was released again, in part because he was ranked as an active member of the resistance with no connection to Nazi propaganda in his publications.<sup>1186</sup> Harder argues that Risch had not been influenced in his work by the party or the military and that his work must be seen as having a purely

---

1181 Writer's own translation: "der ganze Inhalt seiner Arbeit während dieser Zeit darauf gerichtet war, die Völker, Staaten und Menschen miteinander zu verbinden, die Gegensätze auszugleichen und das gerade mitten im Kriege gegen den Schrecken des Krieges", Staatsarchiv Hamburg, Hamburg, 221-11 C(P)774, Erwin Jacobi, Fr. Gienapp, Walter Donandt an Zentralstelle für Berufungsausschüsse zur Ausschaltung Nationalsozialisten, 30.07.1947, p. 4.

1182 Ueberschär, *Die Deutsche Reichspost*, p. 26.

1183 Staatsarchiv Hamburg, Hamburg, 221-11 C(P)774, Erwin Jacobi, Fr. Gienapp, Walter Donandt an Zentralstelle für Berufungsausschüsse zur Ausschaltung Nationalsozialisten, 30.07.1947.

1184 Brigade leader.

1185 He claimed not to have known of this connection but having been forced to enter the Postschutz by the minister. (Landesarchiv Schleswig-Holstein, Schleswig, Abt. 460.13 Nr. 436 Timm, Kurt, Kopie Timm an Pagel, undated). Similarly, Risch described the Postschutz as part of the police. (Staatsarchiv Hamburg, Hamburg, 221-11 C(P)774, Erwin Jacobi, Fr. Gienapp, Walter Donandt an Zentralstelle für Berufungsausschüsse zur Ausschaltung Nationalsozialisten, 30.07.1947).

1186 Landesarchiv Schleswig-Holstein, Schleswig, Abt. 460.13 Nr. 436 Timm, Kurt, Berufungsausschuss für die Entnazifizierung des Kreises Segeberg, 13.01.1947.

postal character due to the fact that no appointees of the *Reichspost* abroad were held accountable or had established contact with important officials in foreign countries again. According to Harder, Risch was responsible for the focus on postal services and had made an agreement with the Foreign Ministry that no one other than him and minister Ohnesorge could give orders to the appointees.<sup>1187</sup>

As described in the first section, Friedrich Reiss was employed in the Foreign Department of the *Reichspost* headed by Friedrich Risch. He worked on postal affairs within the EPTU<sup>1188</sup> and participated in both the Vienna<sup>1189</sup> and Copenhagen conferences.<sup>1190</sup> Thus, he was a relevant actor with important insight into the project. In contrast to Ohnesorge and Risch, Reiss found his way back to Germany and international postal services after the war. After having to participate in an Assessment Centre as part of the denazification<sup>1191</sup> he became chief of the *Bundespostministerium*'s division for international postal services.<sup>1192</sup> In 1950, he was part of the Western German delegation to an exposition of the Spanish postal administration.<sup>1193</sup> He was a member of the working group for postal services that was formed during the EEC's efforts to create a European postal union.<sup>1194</sup> On the postal services side, he was the only expert with such a level of involvement in the EPTU who was still engaged in the CEPT. This could also explain why Risch's article on a European postal union was found in the documents of the *Bundespostministerium* in Reiss's division after the war. One of the prominent German actors on the international stage for postal services was

---

1187 Staatsarchiv Hamburg, Hamburg, 221-11 C(P)774, Erklärung Harder, 21.04.1947.

1188 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/11256, Geschäftsverteilungsplan, Abteilung Min-A, Ref.1, 01.07.1944.

1189 Europäischer Postkongress, p. 40.

1190 Nationaal Archief, Den Haag, Hoofdbestuur van het Staatsbedrijf der PTT, nummer toegang 2.16.09, inventarisnummer 14, Urkunden über die 1. Tagung des Ausschusses in Kopenhagen, p. 6, Verzeichnis der angekündigten Teilnehmer, Juin 1943.

1191 Bundesarchiv, Koblenz, B257/40411, Subject: German Personnel Research, June 1946.

1192 Bundesarchiv, Koblenz, B257/3237, Gliederungsplan, Abteilung I, 1951 (?), and Bundesarchiv, Sankt-Augustin, B257-ORG/8, Organisationsplan des Bundesministeriums für das Post- und Fernmeldewesen, Stand April 1956.

1193 Bundesarchiv, Koblenz, B257/21592, Fernschreiben, 11.10.1950.

1194 Archives nationales, Pierrefitte, 19870773/34, Représentants des offices européens, undated.

Dr. Werner Seebass; he was a ministerial director within the *Bundespostministerium* and responsible for the budget of the postal services.<sup>1195</sup> He apparently participated in all relevant reunions from 1956 to 1959<sup>1196</sup> and was together with Reiss a member of the working group for postal services within ECC-PTT cooperation.<sup>1197</sup> While he was not involved in the EPTU, he worked in the *Reichspost*. Seebass held the position of *Feldoberpostdirektor*<sup>1198</sup> and was the second deputy to *Heeresfeldpostmeister*<sup>1199</sup> Karl Ziegler,<sup>1200</sup> who was the head of the entire German field post during the Second World War and who, as mentioned in the introduction, had led the German delegation to the UPU congress in 1939 and possessed ample international experience.<sup>1201</sup> While this does not mean that Ziegler had the opportunity to share his experience with Seebass, it shows the cross-connections in the filling of posts in the *Bundespostministerium*. The state secretary, Dr. Hans Steinmetz, signed the CEPT agreement for the *Deutsche Bundespost*<sup>1202</sup> and worked within the *Reichspostzentralamt* from 1941 to 1943 as a research assistant. According to Steinmetz himself, he left the *Reichspost* for political reasons. A career as a jurist had been denied to him in 1934 due to resistance against the NS regime. After the war, he worked at different positions within the *Bundespost* and was also a two-time member of the Hessian State Parliament before becoming state secretary in the *Bundespostministerium*, a position he held from 1956 to 1969.<sup>1203</sup>

The Director General of the Danish PTT administration, Jensen, remained in office after the war. It was decided that no members of the PTT administration would be legally charged for their actions during the occupation. However, this does not mean accusations were not made. Jensen defended his actions and the entry into the EPTU with the fact that it fit into the general appeasement politics of the Danish government. He called the

1195 Bundesarchiv, Sankt-Augustin, B257-ORG/9, Organisationsplan des Bundesministeriums für das Post- und Fernmeldewesen, Stand April 1956.

1196 Cf. Archives nationales, Pierrefitte, 19870773/34; *ibid.*, 19870773/35; *ibid.*, 19870773/37

1197 Archives nationales, Pierrefitte, 19870773/34, Représentants des offices européens, undated.

1198 Writer's own translation: Field chief postmaster.

1199 Writer's own translation: Army field postmaster.

1200 Ueberschär, *Die Deutsche Reichspost*, p. 37.

1201 Lotz, *Die Deutsche Reichspost*, p. 281.

1202 Abkommen zur Gründung der Europäischen Konferenz der Verwaltungen des Post- und Fernmeldewesens vom 26.06.1959, *Unterschriften*, p. 25 in: *Amtsblatt des Bundesministers für das Post- und Fernmeldewesen*, Bd. 5, 1960, p. 21-31.

1203 Lengemann, Jochen: *Das Hessen-Parlament. 1946-1986*, Frankfurt am Main 1986, p. 399.

decision to join the EPTU ‘factual, correct and justified’<sup>1204</sup> and noted that there was an unwillingness to participate.<sup>1205</sup> It is unclear how long Jensen remained Director General of the Danish PTT administration; however, he still held the position 1959, when the preparations for the creation of the CEPT were ongoing. He was a member of the preparatory commission and participated in its meeting in St. Moritz in January 1959,<sup>1206</sup> where he signed the agreement creating the CEPT for the Danish PTT administration.<sup>1207</sup> Next to Reiss and Ahola, Jensen is thus the third verifiable person involved in both the EPTU and the CEPT.

In contrast to his Danish colleague, Károly von Forster went into retirement after the war and left the Hungarian PTT administration in July 1945 after being released from service as a consequence of the change of government in Hungary at the end of 1944. According to research by Bartók Ibolya, this retirement was forced upon him, and he was denied payment of his full pension, which had already been lowered at the beginning of his retirement. Thus, after 29 years in the Hungarian PTT administration, von Forster was in a legal battle with the organisation. He died in 1960.<sup>1208</sup>

These personal continuities and, primarily, discontinuities demonstrate that though the actors were important for founding the postal unions, the general idea of and rationale behind European postal unions were more important and, to large extent, independent of the political regime. Despite singular continuities in important positions, the staff turnover from 1942 to 1959 appears to have been significant, which means that the majority of delegation members of the former EPTU administrations at the founding conference of the CEPT had not been involved in the EPTU. While the individuals were no longer the same, the cooperation strategies and tools of the postal administration proved to be persistent, as is shown above.

This comparison makes no claim of completeness; rather, it is an attempt to highlight certain aspects of continuity and discontinuity in Western European postal cooperation in quite different political environments. With

---

1204 Writer’s own translation: “saglig, rigtig og forsvarlig”, Blüdnikow, Post og Tele, p. 388.

1205 Ibid.

1206 Archives nationales, Pierrefitte, 19870773/37, Liste des participants, 26.-31.01.1959, p. 3.

1207 Abkommen zur Gründung der Europäischen Konferenz der Verwaltungen des Post- und Fernmeldewesens vom 26.06.1959, Unterschriften, p. 25 in: Amtsblatt des Bundesministers für das Post- und Fernmeldewesen, Bd.5, 1960, p. 21-31.

1208 Ibolya, Dr. Forster Károly, p. 118-121.



regard to organisational standards, the comparison can only be made between the EPTU and the CEPT, and it has revealed several similarities.<sup>1209</sup> The main differences can be found in the more political decisions such as language questions and entry provisions. The latter were restricted, which seems to represent a continuity of the war as the ideologically systemic divisions had become more important. Concerning the different standards discussed, an intensive analysis was impossible due to the different durations of the unions. However, the issues at hand were similar. For instance, transit charges and air mail were still relevant and discussed. The complete abolition of the transit charge for mail transported by land as well as the harmonisation of fees was to this extent never achieved again and emerges as a singular success of the *Reichspost* that was possible due to German hegemony over large parts of the continent. Regarding the actors involved in the projects, discontinuities clearly outweigh continuities within the traceable circle of actors. Some actors were punished for their cooperation with representatives from Nazi Germany, while others retired. In Germany, it seems that not even Minister Ohnesorge faced major repercussions, but relevant actors in postal services did not re-join the *Bundespost*, with the exception of Friedrich Reiss. Finally, stamps continued to be used to promote PTT cooperation. While the motifs changed, some general trends persisted, for example a stronger focus on neutral as opposed to political PTT symbols. Only the Soviet Union used highly political depictions on both stamps. As the symbols for PTT did not change with the political environment, the continuities are not surprising, either.

In summary, the political environment did influence how the unions emerged as well as the more political aspects of organisational standards. The technical work, however, seems in general largely untouched by the historical context with respect to common aims and ideas. The technocratic ideals described in the first part of this work appear to have withstood time and political regime changes. This is consistent with the goal of remaining outside politics. However, the case of specific standards, such as the abolition of the transit charge, shows that the political context might have influenced the possibility for consensus if one standard was particularly important to the administration of a powerful country. This seems to be even more the case when technocratic (borderless communication) and political goals (hegemony over a united Europe or support of European integration) overlapped.

---

1209 E.g., work organised in specialised committees and payment system.

## Conclusion

The war situation, which changed to Germany's disadvantage, increasingly affected the work of the union. After the defeat at Stalingrad, little was achieved in 1943 and the following years, either in terms of gaining new members or setting new standards, until the capitulation of the Wehrmacht in May 1945. Despite efforts by the *Reichspost*, no new administrations joined the union. The administrations of possible candidates – Spain and France – could play for time due to the developments of the war and thereby stall the German administration. While the *Reichspost* attempted to sign a bilateral agreement with the Swiss administration, the Third Reich likely would have needed to win the war to convince the Swiss administration. Although a conference could still be organised, it had few concrete results, especially as these would have had to be confirmed by a congress. In fact, it is surprising that the different PTT administrations continued working on it at all. The recommendation of the postal committee was at least partially implemented, which suggests that the recommendation was either technically rational and correct or that the influence of the *Reichspost* was still high despite German military losses. It is even more surprising that the *Reichspost* was invited to a congress in October 1944 and that some administrations agreed to attend the congress given that it must have been clear to all that wartime organisation would cease once Germany lost the war. From the German point of view, the drive to continue could also have been linked to the fear of severe repercussions if one openly considered the war a lost cause and stopped working. It is also possible that the other European administrations wanted to show goodwill toward the Germans. In Denmark, this kind of appeasement had led to the Danish population being treated better in comparison to other occupied countries.<sup>1210</sup> Even after German troops withdrew, they were still able cause substantial harm to civilians. It cannot be determined exactly when the EPTU met its definitive end. However, it is clear that the European administrations erased the EPTU from official memory. For example, nobody reminded Hans Schubert, the German *Bundespostminister*, that a European postal union had existed during the war when he proposed a new union in 1952.<sup>1211</sup> In Karl Sautter's book on the history of the *Reichspost* from 1871 to 1945, the postal union is not even mentioned in the section on international unions.<sup>1212</sup>

---

1210 Lund, Denmark and the European New Order, p. 321.

1211 Cf. Bundesarchiv, Koblenz, B257/6819.

1212 Sautter, Karl: *Geschichte der Deutschen Post. Teil 3: Geschichte der Deutschen Reichspost 1871-1945*, Frankfurt am Main 1951, p. 286-292.

The second section of this part began with a short summary of the processes that led to the creation of two PTT unions with member administrations from Europe after the Second World War: the CEPT and the OCSC. While the European PTT union of the Western bloc emerged in the environment of various European political organisations with changing leadership, the founding of the OCSC was dominated by the Soviet Union. Thus, the latter process more closely mirrored the creation of the EPTU, which was largely guided by the *Reichspost*.

Finally, a thorough comparison of different standards could not be made. With regard to organisational standards, the most important changes were those in official languages. While the documents of the CEPT were written in French, the languages for the negotiations were in English, French and German. The changing political environment in Western European politics is clearly reflected in these decisions, despite the claim of political independence laid out in the CEPT agreement.<sup>1213</sup> Revisionist ideas were not at the forefront of these decisions. Entry restrictions were new and clearly political. Furthermore, the main characteristic of technocratic cooperation – that is working in specialist committees brought together by regular plenary sessions – remained the same. The central issue for postal services also remained unchanged in the time leading up to the creation of the CEPT. Nevertheless, the questions of the abolition of the transit charge and the introduction of one common tariff for international services gained political interest that they did not have during the Second World War. The German Foreign Ministry was notably uninterested in the details of the standards negotiated within the EPTU. However, after the war, the unifying potential of sending a letter from, for example, France to Germany for the same price as within Germany or within France led politicians to become involved with the issue. The political symbolism of such a choice was recognised, and the technical hindrances that the postal administrations faced were less important to the political side. The same can be argued for the common stamp. While a common stamp was deemed infeasible or too early with regard to the state of European PTT integration in 1952 by many administrations in Western Europe, the first stamp with a common motif was issued by ECSC member administrations in 1956. Three years later, no discussion appears to have taken place regarding the CEPT's decision to adopt the 'Europe stamps'. However, this adoption made the stamps less political and more difficult to decode for the normal user. An understanding among civilians

---

1213 Abkommen zur Gründung der Europäischen Konferenz der Verwaltungen des Post- und Fernmeldewesens vom 26.06.1959, Art.2, in: Amtsblatt des Bundesministers für das Post- und Fernmeldewesen, Bd.5, 1960, p. 21-31.

of the relationship between the motifs and European PTT cooperation cannot be assumed. Lastly, the comparison of relevant actors shows continuities and discontinuities that likely also reflect how different countries dealt with the developments of the Second World War. However, for the general idea of creating a European postal union, technical necessities and political pressure might have been more important than one specific person or network of actors.