

3.6 THE ‘SEA-POST SURCHARGE’ - 1879-1892

Following the 1878 UPU convention, Union members agreed to impose uniform foreign mail charges, including a uniform surcharge for mail that had to travel by sea to destinations more than 300 sea-miles away. Hungary’s charges followed those imposed by the Austrian side of the Empire and commenced on 01.04.1879. The published PTRT text divides foreign countries into two Groups; Group I is most of Europe, North America and some North African countries, while Group II includes much of the rest of the world. A translation of the text in **PTRT 11, 28.03.1879** is given below:

Group I

All European countries; from Africa: Algeria (as belonging to France), Egypt, the Spanish settlements in Morocco, then Tunis and Tripoli; from America: the United States of America, Canada, and Newfoundland; from Asia: the possessions of Brazil and Turkey located there. The rate for franked correspondence from the Austro-Hungarian Empire to the countries in this group is:

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|---------------------------------------|---|
| a) for letters per 15 grams | 10 <i>kr</i> ; |
| b) for correspondence cards per piece | 5 <i>kr</i> ; |
| c) for printed matter per 50 grams | 3 <i>kr</i> ; |
| d) for commodity samples per 50 grams | 3 <i>kr</i> , however, for each shipment, at least 5 <i>kr</i> ; |
| e) for business papers per 50 grams | 3 <i>kr</i> , however, for each shipment, at least 10 <i>kr</i> . |

The rate for unstamped letters from this group to the Austro-Hungarian Empire is 20 *kr* per 15 grams.

Correspondence from or to those places in Turkey and the Levant where Imperial and Royal Post Offices are in operation, as well as correspondence with Persia and China mediated by Russia, is subject to the same rates. For correspondence with Persia via Bombay and with China via Suez, the rates set for the second group apply.

The registration fee is 10 *kr*; the fee for a return receipt is also 10 *kr*.

There is no maximum weight for letters. Printed matter and business papers can only be accepted up to two kilograms, and samples only up to 250 grams.

Unfranked or non-compliant printed matter, samples, and business papers will not be sent. Insufficiently franked items of this type will be sent, but the addressee must pay double the missing postage for them, as well as for other insufficiently franked correspondence.

An exception to this group is:

- a) Correspondence to Germany and Heligoland, which is subject to the same rates as domestic correspondence. Therefore, the maximum weight for letters and samples is 250 grams and for printed matter is one kilogram, while business papers are not accepted at all; and
- b) Correspondence to Serbia and Montenegro, whose current rates remain in place, as well as the rates for:
- c) Correspondence from the Hungarian border region, *i.e.*, Besztercze-Naszód County, and further, the area from the left bank of the Maros River down to the western border of Hunyad County and the Romanian border, finally, Szörény County, to Romania and vice versa.

Group II

Argentina, Brazil, British India, the following British colonies: in Africa, Accra, the Gold Coast, Lagos, Senegambia, Mauritius, and the Seychelles Islands; in America, the Bermuda Islands, Guyana, British Honduras, the Falklands Islands, Jamaica, and Trinidad; in Asia, Ceylon, the Straits Settlements, and the British colonies in China and Anam—all overseas colonies of Denmark and Greenland, all French, Dutch, Portuguese, and Spanish overseas colonies, the American republics of Honduras, Liberia, Mexico, and El Salvador, Japan, and Persia. The rates for franked correspondence from the Austro-Hungarian Empire according to this group are:

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|--------------------------------------|---|
| a) for letters weighing 15 grams | 20 <i>kr</i> . |
| b) for correspondence cards per item | 8 <i>kr</i> |
| c) for printed matter per 50 grams | 6 <i>kr</i> |
| d) for samples per 50 grams | 6 <i>kr</i> , but for each shipment at least 8 <i>kr</i> |
| e) for business papers per 50 grams | 6 <i>kr</i> , but for each shipment at least 13 <i>kr</i> |

The rate for unstamped letters from the countries in this group from the Austro-Hungarian Empire is 30 *kr* per 15 grams.

Correspondence to Baghdad and Bussora via Bombay is subject to the same rates.

The fee for registration and for a return receipt, the maximum weight, and the handling of insufficiently stamped items are the same as for the first group (respectively 10 *kr* and 10 *kr*).

The rate for correspondence to countries that have not joined the Universal Postal Union is composed as follows:

- a) of the Union rate to the border of the Universal Postal Union, or from this border to the destination, and
- b) from the tariff for transport within the foreign country. Post offices will soon receive the detailed tariff from their superior postal directorate; the relevant international postal agreement and regulations will be published in one of the next issues of the Postal Ordinance Gazette for information and compliance.

The imposition of the Group II surcharge came to an end on **01.07.1892**, and rates to the above countries returned to the single standard foreign rate already in place for Group I countries (Hungarian **PTRT 34, 18.06.1892**, Austrian **PuTVB 58, 16.06.1892**).

Hungarian sea-surcharged mail is undoubtedly scarce, with less than 80 items known.