

4.4 PICTURE POSTCARDS AS PRINTED MATTER

4.4.1 Introduction

At the start of the 1890s there was something of a tussle between the post office and businesses as to what was a postcard and what was a printed paper of postcard shape, resulting from the significant difference in postage rates. The post office had ruled out any handwritten text other than the address on printed matter, but business wanted at least a personalised greeting.

At the 1891 UPU congress it was agreed to permit a limited hand annotation on printed matter. At the 1897 UPU congress it was specifically agreed: 'To add in manuscript, on printed visiting cards, the address of the sender, his title, as well as good wishes, congratulations, thanks, condolences or other formulas of courtesy, **expressed in five words at most** or by means of conventional initials'. In Austrian provinces, from 15.03.1898 (**PuTVB 25/1898**) it was permitted in domestic traffic to remove the designation 'correspondence card' or 'postcard' on open, printed cards or to replace it with the note 'printed matter' ('*Drucksache*' in German, '*Nyomtatvány*' in Hungarian) and then, provided that the other requirements were met, allowing the card to be sent at the printed matter postage rate. Although the UPU regulations permitted five words of greeting for exchange between countries, Austria provided further restrictions on internal use; initially such cards were not allowed to contain any individual messages, including not a single greeting. It was only in 1900 when the internal printed matter rate fell from 2 *kr* to 3 *heller* did it become of significant advantage to use this option, and only after 1907 was there full flexibility for advantageous internal use. However, there was a more obvious immediate saving for postcards sent outside the Empire for which the lowest foreign printed paper rate was 3 *kr*, and the foreign postcard rate was 5 *kr*.

It is unclear exactly when Hungary also accepted this. The text of the 1897 UPU resolutions appeared in late 1898 (**PTRT 41, 22.12.1898**). The earliest example seen is a 2 *kr* postal stationery card (Millennium issue) supplemented with a 1 *kr* stamp and sent from Temesvár to Genoa, Italy on 27.12.1899. It has just a two-word signature on the picture side, perhaps a cautious test of the procedure?



Hungarian Millennium 2 kr postal stationery card supplemented with a 1 kr stamp, with the heading crossed through and 'Nyomtatvány - Stampa' written at the top, posted in Temesvár at the 3 kr foreign printed matter rate on 27.12.1899 addressed to Genoa, Italy, with 'Genova' receiving mark. The reverse has only the sender's signature.

After 1900, the scheme came into much wider use, but was unilaterally halted internally by the Austrian government during WWI. It is unclear exactly when it was restarted, but possibly not until the change of currency in 1926. The option was not obviously cancelled during WWII, but owing to circumstances (wartime mail restrictions, slow recovery of postal service after 1945, then hyperinflation) perhaps simply did not happen again until 1946-48. The five-word picture postcard option at 8 *fillér* for inland mail and 20 *fillér* for foreign mail appears in the *Postatarifák Adók Illetékek Közlekedési Menetrendek* issues, vol.41, no.2, June 1948, vol.42, no.1, January 1949, vol.42, no.2, May 1949, but only for foreign mail in vol.43 no.1-2, January 1950. For inland mail it was restricted only to printed text plus a signature which rate also applied to Czechoslovakia according to vol.43, no.4, October 1950 and in the unnumbered June 1951 issue.

The information in the 'Black Book' suggests (in the footnote to Table 3.10.16) that the foreign rate for the five-word postcard was 20 *fillér* up to 14.11.1968, then 1.20 *Ft* from 15.11.1968 to 30.06.1971, after which there are no data, suggesting the option came to an end at this point ¹. However, the footnotes to Table 3.10.7 for inland picture postcard rates translate as:

‘The rate for a five-word greeting from 1930.07.01 to 1947.07.01 was the same as the rate for the first printed matter weight step (not adjusted for the inflation of 1945-1946). The five-word greetings cards thus exempted from postage were also considered as normal postcards by the Hungarian Post between 1949.12.23 and 1950.01.19.’

(and thus subject to postage due if not fully franked at the 20 *f* rate?).

4.4.2 PTRTs

Translations of some of the postal documents related to this subject are given below:

PTRT 4, 25.01.1890: Handling of postcard-shaped printed matter.

Since the postal printed matter tariff was introduced on November 14, 1889, by my decree No. 546, there have been cases where printed items in the shape of a postcard and marked 'Postcard' were sent to the post office with a 1 *kr* franking. Since the postcard is a type of item that is clearly defined in international treaties and has a separate tariff to prevent handling difficulties and doubts, I cannot allow items in the shape, (size, style) of postcards, or even those marked with a postcard, to be delivered using the printed matter tariff.

Post and telegraph offices should therefore consider such items, even if they otherwise meet the conditions of the printed matter tariff, as insufficiently franked postcards and charge the sender double the missing postage.

PTRT 23, 27.04.1891: Handling of postcard-shaped printed matter.

In connection with my decree No. 67.310/1889 of 10 January 1890 on the handling of postcard-shaped forms (**PTRT 4, 25.01.1890**), I warn the Royal Post and Telegraph offices that only those postcard-shaped forms may not be exempted from postage with one *krajczár* according to the form tariff, which, due to their shape, colour and possibly the inscription 'Correspondence Card', cannot be distinguished from postal correspondence cards from a distance.

On the other hand, forms which, although they have the shape of regular correspondence cards, are noticeably different in colour, do not have the inscription 'Correspondence Card' on their address side, and otherwise fully comply with the requirements of forms that can be delivered by post, shall be treated without objection within the territory of the Holy Crown of Hungary, with a 1 *kr* postage stamp.

PTRT 30, 24.05.1892: Changes in the mounting and pricing of postcards.

Based on the resolutions of the Vienna International Postal Congress, the following changes will come into effect as of June 1st of the current year, and for the time being only in the territory of the Holy Crown of Hungary and in circulation with Austria and the occupied provinces, with regard to open postcards:

¹ The Hungarian Peoples' Republic continued to sign the later UPU conventions continuing to permit this five-word form of mail.

1. The address (*i.e.* the name of the addressee, his position, the place of destination, *etc.*) may be written or printed on the address side of the postcard (reply card) as desired, or may be affixed in the form of an address label. This address label (etiquette) may not be longer than 5 cm and not wider than 2 cm.
2. The sender may also put his own name and address in a suitable place on the address side of the postcard (reply card), either with a stamp or in any typographical manner, or by hand.
3. Any postcard that does not comply with the rules applicable to postcards (1. Postal Tariffs G. §.) in terms of size, appearance, paper stiffness, equipment and display, *etc.*, shall be considered a letter and shall be charged as such.

For example, if the sender has written a notice on the address side of a postcard from Vienna to Budapest and has been duly prepaid with 2 *kr*, or if the paper is so weak that it is crumpled during transit, such a postcard shall be considered an insufficiently prepaid letter and therefore an additional postage of 8 *kr* shall be charged by the post office (or, if the recipient does not accept it, from the sender).

4. Postcards submitted to the post office completely without postage or with invalid postage stamps (e.g. if the reply card is addressed to a country other than the one from which it is sent) will be delivered, but they will be charged as for unstamped letters, *i.e.* 6 *kr* of postage will be charged from the post office in local traffic, and 10 *kr* from Hungarian territory, Austria, or Bosnia.
5. The delivering postal service will not release postcards charged with postage or additional postage before the fee is paid, but will show the address page (to the intended recipient).

The post (telegraph) offices shall register this decree in Section 6 of the “Postal Tariffs” and shall adapt to the changes, and shall instruct their delivery agents not to hand out open postcards charged with postage before payment of the fee, in order to avoid abuses, but to show the addressee the address page for the purpose of proving the fee claim and taking note of the place of posting of the postcard, *etc.* Budapest, May 19, 1892.

PTRT 35, 20.06.1892: Changes in international circulation regarding postcards, printed matter, samples and business papers. (Extract only.)

The changes that entered into force in domestic circulation with decrees No. 21.838 of 1 May and Nos. 33.312, 33.313 and 33.316 of 1 June (PTRT 18, 23 and 30) regarding postcards, forms and samples in domestic circulation will also enter into force in international circulation on 1 July of the same year, based on the Universal Postal Convention concluded in Vienna on 4 July of last year and the related implementing regulations. These changes, including those concerning business papers, are as follows when applied to international circulation:

1. The same applies to postcards as in domestic circulation.

It is also permitted to print advertising or other illustrations and advertisements on the page intended for written communications. The reply card of a postcard with a paid reply may be stamped either with the postage stamp of the issuing country or with that of the country in which the reply card is posted. However, if the latter is stamped with the postage stamp of the issuing country, the postcard can only be returned to the same country, otherwise it is subject to the postage of an unposted letter. If a reply card with a Swiss postage stamp is sent from France to Hungary, the addressee pays 20 *kr*, *i.e.* the same as the postage for an unposted letter originating in France. If the same Swiss reply form is sent to a domestic address in our country, a 0 mark should be added next to the Swiss franking stamp and the postage for the form will be charged as a domestic postage-free letter, *i.e.* 10 *kr*. If it is addressed to Italy, it will also be marked with a 0 mark and a 1 in the upper left corner, as the fee and surcharge for a simple (15 gr.) letter will be collected upon delivery.

PTRT 85, 31.12.1892: Full text of the 1891 Vienna UPU Convention.

PTRT 13, 03.04.1898: Handling of postcards as printed matter if the inscription ‘Postcard’ has been erased.

In order to dispel misunderstandings, I hereby warn the Royal Post and Telegraph Offices that postcards produced by private industry on which the inscription ‘Postcard’ has been erased or otherwise removed are to be charged according to the printed matter tariff, but in domestic circulation only if their colour is noticeably different from that of the postcards (**PTRT 23, 27.04.1891**).

The Royal Post and Telegraph Offices shall, in this respect, apply the ‘Postal Tariffs’ and ‘Postal Business Regulations’ Part I, § 7. The following should be added at the end of paragraph 3 of point 2: However, postcards on which the inscription ‘Postcard’ has been erased or otherwise removed and whose colour in domestic circulation is noticeably different from the colour of postcards issued by the Treasury, shall be treated as printed matter.

PTRT 41, 22.12.1898 (part): Changes concerning postcards, printed matter, business papers and samples of goods. In accordance with the resolutions of the Washington Postal Congress, the following changes shall take place with regard to postcards, printed matter and samples of goods in domestic and Universal Postal Union trade with countries:

- I. Postcards.

1. Postcards (simple or with reply sheet) addressed to Austria, the occupied provinces and other foreign countries may bear pictures or advertising graphics not only on the back but also on the address page. However, these pictures or advertising graphics may occupy only a certain amount of space on the address page. so that the clarity of the address does not suffer and there is enough space for the imprint of the destination post office's local stamp and for recording other service notes (*e.g.* a new destination in case of forwarding).

In purely domestic traffic, postcards with pictures or advertising graphics on the address page will no longer be accepted, and if such are found in a mailbox, the relevant post office will return them to the sender, or if the sender is unknown, it will be forwarded to the directorate with the returned items.

2. Postcards sent by post with completely unstamped or invalid postage stamps, as well as reply cards addressed to a country other than the one from which they originate, will no longer be charged as unstamped letters, but will be charged twice the postage for the postcard (*i.e.* 4 *kr* for those originating from Hungary, Austria, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Montenegro, Germany and Serbia, and 10 *kr* for those originating from other countries belonging to the Universal Postal Union). There will be no change in the postage for postcards with insufficient postage stamps.

II. Printed matter.

3. Albums containing photographs and copies of typewritten documents, whether produced by chromograph, polygraph, hectograph, papyrograph, phoenix, *etc.*, are now considered printed matter and will receive a discount as such.

However, these copies will only be subject to a discount if they are handed over to the receiving postal agent at the post office in at least 20 identical copies at once.

4. In addition to the comments and changes previously permitted on printed matter, the following will now also be permitted:

- a) **a maximum of five words of congratulations, thanks, condolences or other polite expressions may be written on printed business cards;**
- b) in price lists, promotional advertisements or business circulars, in addition to the names of travel agents and the time of their journey, the place (city) they will visit on their journeys may be entered or changed;
- c) on Christmas and New Year cards, a dedication, as is customary abroad, may be recorded;
- d) on announcements cut from newspapers or magazines, the title, date and place of publication of the newspaper or magazine from which the announcement was cut may be recorded either by hand or mechanically.

Austrian PuTVB 77, 24.09.1916: The reduced rate for 5-word max. greetings cards equal to the 10 g printed matter rate (3 *f* inland, 5 *f* foreign) has been cancelled throughout the Empire.