

5.1 INTROUCTION TO RATES FOR PRINTED MATTER, SAMPLES, BUSINESS PAPERS, NEWSPAPERS, ETC.

5.1.1 Introduction

These classes of mail have complex rules and charges which are difficult to summarise. From Austrian Empire times, they were usually lumped together under a single reduced charge rate with the expectation that they would be sent by letter post, not as a parcel, *i.e.* by *Briefpost*, not by *Fahrpost*. The distinctions between the various classes of mail are as follows:

Printed matter (*Nyomtatvány, Drucksorte*, often translated as ‘forms’) was generally defined as containing only printed matter with no hand annotations, and including advertising, brochures, leaflets, notifications of deaths, sheet music, *etc.* Typically, these forms of mail were required to be sent under ‘cross-band’ (sleeve, or wrapper), but it could be in an unsealed envelope. Any sign of hand annotation led to the item being classed as a letter, with postage due to be paid on receipt. The weight limit was initially about 250 g, but later rose to 2 kg. The extent of hand annotations changed with time, and became a little more relaxed, but was still subject to critical viewing by the post office.

Samples of goods (*Áruminta, Warenprobe*) had to be wrapped, might be opened for inspection, should contain no handwritten text, and might be liable for customs inspection and customs duty if sent outside the Empire. The weight limit was generally 250 g.

Business papers (*Üzleti papir, Geschäftspapier*) were supposed to be limited to printed business documents, plans, diagrams, *etc.*, with no hand-written material, but later could contain copies of business letters, invoices, waybills, *etc.* This class of sending appears to have been recognised also in Austria, but after the State Compromise, postally independent Hungary mentions it in PTRT documents only in passing connected with foreign mail, and usually as a result of having accepted bilateral agreements between countries and later UPU agreements. Many foreign countries, including Germany, did not accept this class of mail, and Germany did not even accept such mail passing through it to a third country. Furthermore, there appears to have been no ability to send this class of mail internally until it was formally announced as being ‘a new class of mail’ in 1916! By then a weight of up to 2 kg was permitted.

Newspapers (*Hirlap, Zeitungen*) sent through the post were intended to be regular publications under subscription from recipients. They had to be posted under cross-band. When special stamps were first issued to pay the postage, they could only be purchased by licensed newspaper producers, and had to be affixed to individual wrappers or to bundles for re-sellers. They were mostly cancelled on arrival to save time. In addition, there was a newspaper tax to be paid, initially through the application of a tax signet, later a newspaper tax stamp. Newspaper tax was abandoned at the end of the 19th century.

Books (*Könyv, Bücher*) sent through the letter post were obviously limited in weight, and special rates for books only came in much later. It was more common to send books as a parcel. Text books could receive a discount in certain periods, and there were strict rules as to what was a text box for postal purposes.

Braille literature for the blind (*Vakok dombornyomtatvány*) was subject to printed matter rates from 1907 provided that it contained nothing of a personal nature, but a special very low rate was available from 1922. The maximum weight rose from initially 2 kg to 7 kg.

5.1.2 Rules for qualifying as printed papers

The identification of mail being of these types which qualify for a reduced rate compared with letter post has a long history. In an 1842 decree concerning the posts (**RGB 39, 1842, *Neu Porto Regulativ der k.k. Post-Anstalt***, article 16) the text reads:

‘Printed or lithographed circulars, price lists, stocks lists, books, brochures, music scores, then other printed works, also samples, which are sent under cross-band and franked on posting, are permitted to be sent by letter post only up to the weight of 2 pounds. For such shipments, a third part of the standard rate is payable, and if the amount is higher, the full postage rate measured according to distance for a simple letter must be paid. For letters and documents, which such shipments are sealed, a reduced tax cannot be applied.’

i.e. charges could be reduced to one third of equivalent weight of a sealed letter. All such mail had to be pre-paid and could not be sent unfranked or part paid.

An early example of the conditions of service and class grouping arrangements made is from the Austro-Hungarian – Italian postal agreement of April 1867, published in **PTRT 13, 27.09.1867** for coming into force on 01.10.1867.

Article 19. Merchandise, printed correction sheets and manuscript supplements thereto, newspapers and other periodicals, bound or bound books and pamphlets, printed, lithographed or engraved musical compositions, registers, drafts, advertisements, price lists, *etc.*, shall be free of charge to the place of destination, and if sent from Austria or the German-Austrian federal provinces to Italy, they shall be subject to a charge of 3 *kr* for every 2½ *Zoll-Loth*, and conversely, if sent from Italy to Austria or the German-Austrian federal provinces from Italy, a charge of 5 *centesimi* for every 40 grams.

Article 20. Merchandise may be sent only under the conditions laid down by the customs laws of both countries.

They must not weigh more than 15 *Zoll-Loth* (250 grams), have no value, and be wrapped with tape or in such a way that there can be no doubt about their nature.

They must not contain any handwritten notes other than the recipient's name, the factory or shop's marks, the number, and the prices.

Press correspondence sheets and the manuscripts attached to them may also be sent only under tape and may not contain any letters or additions that bear or appear to be in the nature of correspondence.

Similarly, periodicals and printed matter of any kind may be sent under cross-binding, and they may also not contain any handwritten notes, numbers, or marks other than the recipient's name, the sender's signature, and the envelope.

Items containing manifests, press releases and printed matter of any kind, which do not comply with the above conditions or are not stamped upon posting, shall be considered as unstamped letters and shall be forwarded to the authorities.

Note: The above rate was subsequently reduced to 2 *kr* per 2½ *Zoll-Loth*.

Naturally, commercial interests in using the reduced rates compared with letter or parcel post rates led to the public and business testing of the boundaries of what was permissible, with the classic example of the adoption of the five-word greetings postcard as permitted printed matter in the late 19th century (see article 4.4). The following PTRT offers some clarifications:

PTRT 29, 21.06.1906: Handling of printed matter sent to the post with unauthorized entries.

I have experienced that the postal (telegraph) offices of the Hungarian Royal Mail charge postage and a fine for the infringement of the postal code, in addition to recording a description of the facts, on printed matter sent to the post with unauthorized entries, in accordance with the ‘Postal Tariffs and Postal Business Regulations’ Part I, Section I, Section 7, Point 9 and the ‘P. T. Sz. Gy.’ Part III, Section 952, Section 64389/895, regardless of whether the entry can be classified as an excise offence or not.

The interested consignors very often speak out for this reason, and in many cases, refusing to pay the fine, they submit the case, mostly successfully, to the judgment of the competent excise criminal court.

In order to prevent such legitimate objections and to ensure uniform handling of printed matter sent by post with unauthorized entries, I hereby order the following:

1. Printed matter in the form of cards sent without an envelope, if they contain an expressly unauthorised written or mechanically printed entry intended to supplement the printed text, which gives the printed text the character of actual and personal correspondence, or if they contain notes on them, independently of the printed text, which in themselves constitute personal correspondence, need not be seized (or a description of the facts taken and a fine imposed) for excise violations, since excise violations cannot be committed with printed matter in the form of cards sent without an envelope.

Such a card-shaped item, if it meets the requirements of a postcard (1. Postal Tariffs and Postal Business Regulations, Part I, Section 6), must be treated as a postcard, otherwise as a letter, and after charging the postage due and noting the missing amount of postage next to the 'T' handstamp, it must be forwarded and delivered without hindrance.

The offices should delete any inscriptions on such items such as '*Nyomtatvány*', '*Imprimé*' or '*Drucksache*' and if the item is addressed to a foreign country (Austria, Bosnia-Herzegovina, etc.), they should add the inscriptions '*Carte postale*' (postcard) and '*Lettre*' (letter).

2. Printed matter sent in an open envelope, with a tape, or under a cross-binding, which contains unauthorized entries between the printed text to supplement the text, which — although they cannot be considered personal correspondence in themselves — give the printed text the character of actual and personal correspondence (e.g. a printed payment notice in which the date of the invoice or the address of the claim and the amount to be paid are entered in handwriting): post (and telegraph) offices should also not fine them, but should return them to the sender with a *Szabályellenes* ('Unlawful') label attached and the necessary information, and if the sender's identity is unknown, they should be treated as returned items.

This is exactly how postal (and telegraphic) orders should be treated, as business cards sent as printed matter in an open envelope, on which the sender has written a polite expression consisting of more than the permitted five words.

3. If, on the other hand, the aforementioned business card does not contain any other short communication or other unauthorised note of a personal correspondence nature, not as a polite expression, but as an address tape or cross-bound letter, the sender attaches a letter (written communication) to any printed matter sent in an open envelope, with an address tape or under a cross-bound envelope, or makes an unauthorised entry, addition or addition to the printed matter in the envelope, or to the outer or inner part of the envelope, which has the nature of actual and personal correspondence: the post (and telegraph) offices shall immediately detect such printed matter for excise truncation, i.e. shall handle it in accordance with the provisions of the decree published under Part III, Section 952 of the 'P. T. Sz. Gy.' The post (and telegraph) offices shall implement this decree in accordance with Part III, Section 952 of the 'P. T. Sz. Gy.' in the decree published under No. 952, and in the 'Postal Tariffs and Postal Business Regulations' Part I, Section I, Section 7, the following adjustments shall be made on this occasion:

The last line of the first paragraph of point 2 (the clause between brackets) shall be deleted and the following shall be entered in its place: 'The exceptions to this are the printed items sent to the post with the entries listed in point 3 below, as well as card-shaped items sent without an envelope in general, which, if they contain an unauthorized entry, shall be treated as postcards and/or letters (paragraph 1. in PTRT 29, 1906. Decree No. 36743.)'.

In the second line of the first paragraph of point 3, after the word 'in consignments', insert the following: '(including the extracts referred to in the second paragraph of point 1)'.

In the third line of the first paragraph of point 3, after the word 'works', insert the following: '(the name of the recommended or ordered work, the name of the author or translator, the number of the edition and volume and the price of the work)'. Finally, in the fourth line of point 9, after the phrase "952. f. sz.", insert the following: 'as well as Decree No. 36743 of PTRT 29, 1906.'.

Nowadays, such printed matter rates have substantially disappeared by being merged with non-priority letter post, although special discount rates for large quantities of advertising materials still exist.