

9.8 SMALL VALUABLE BOXES (*ÉRTÉKDOBOZ*)

9.8.1 Introduction

The concept of the 'value box' for the postal transport of small amounts (less than 1 kg) of valuable material came from the 1891 Vienna UPU discussion, and a translation of the Hungarian announcement is given below to explain the concept, requirements and limitations. The service was limited to sending to foreign countries willing to reciprocate in the service, not domestically, and was not instituted universally.

PTRT 33, 15.06.1892: Boxes of value in international traffic.

The international convention concluded in Vienna on July 4th of last year and to be published soon, under the name of 'box of value' (*boîte avec valeur déclarée*), created a new type of item in international postal traffic, which is intended for the sending of jewellery and valuables. The convention will come into force on July 1st of this year.

Boxes of value can currently only be sent to the following countries: Bulgaria, Egypt, France, Italy, Portugal, Romania, Serbia, Tunisia, and also to the German protectorate of Cameroon and to the German post office in Shanghai.

The following are the conditions for the use of value boxes:

1. Paper or metal money in circulation (including bills of exchange), as well as securities payable to bearer, closed or open letters, or other written communications, and finally business papers, may not be sent in valuables boxes. If a written communication or other prohibited object is found in such a shipment during the customs or hallmarking procedure, the shipment will be returned to the place of sending as undeliverable.
2. The weight of valuables boxes may not exceed one kilogram, and their value may not exceed 10,000 *franc* (4,000 *Ft*). Declaring a value that is obviously higher than the actual value (e.g. declaring a value of 2-300 *Ft* for an item worth 50 *Ft*) is prohibited and deprives the sender of any claim for compensation that may arise.
3. Boxes cannot be loaded with cash-on-delivery for the time being.
4. The box (or chest) must be made of wood and must have walls at least 8 mm thick, its length must not exceed 30 cm, and its width and height must not exceed 10-10 cm.
5. A clean, unlined sheet of white paper must be glued to the top and bottom sides in its entire extent, not with sealing wax, but with gum or other durable adhesives, and in such a way that as wide a wooden edge as possible remains uncovered all around. Since valuable boxes are sent to the post office without a delivery note, everything that would otherwise be written on the delivery note must be noted on the top sheet of paper, even. and at the top, after the word "*expéditeur*", write your own address (this is not absolutely necessary, but is highly desirable); below this, the words "*boîte-valeur*" and then the full address of the addressee. The value must be declared as on the value documents (1. "Postal Tariffs" § 69, point 6); it is advisable to also briefly name the contents. The postage stamps are also affixed to this sheet, and in as few pieces as possible and in no case directly next to each other or to the bare wood. The post offices of exchange and destination stamp their place and date on the bottom sheet.
6. The box must be tied crosswise over the paper sheets with a strong, knotless string, the two ends of which are tied together with a seal made with fine sealing wax and an engraved seal. The string shall be affixed to the four sides not covered with paper with the same stamp.
7. The sender shall be responsible for the number and materials of the goods declarations (customs declarations) to be attached; usually the same number will be required as for an international parcel of similar purpose.
8. Valuable boxes shall always be prepaid upon dispatch. Their price shall consist of a uniform postage by weight and an insurance premium calculated for each 300 *francs* (120 *Ft*) or fraction thereof and shall be determined as follows:
 - a) To Italy, Romania and Serbia, 50 *kr* postage by weight and 5 *kr* insurance premium for each 300 *francs* (120 *Ft*) or fraction thereof of the declared value;
 - b) To Bulgaria and France, 75 *kr* postage by weight and 13 *kr* insurance premium per item of value (300 *francs*);
 - c) To Egypt 1 *Ft* weight postage and 25 *kr* insurance premium (including marine peril insurance);
 - d) To Portugal (on a ship departing from France) 1 *Ft* 50 *kr* weight postage and 18 *kr* insurance premium;
 - e) to Tunis, and also by Italian ship to the Italian post offices of Goletta, Susa and Tunis cities 1 *Ft* weight postage and 13 *kr*. insurance fee; by Italian ship to the Tunisian post offices 1 *Ft* 25 *kr*. weight postage and 18 *kr* insurance fee; finally by French ship to the Italian or Tunisian post office 1 *Ft* 50 *kr*. weight postage and 18 *kr* insurance fee;
 - f) To Cameroon and Shanghai, 1 *Ft* 50 *kr* weight postage and 18 *kr* insurance fee.

There is no exemption from postage for valuable boxes.

If a receipt is required, the words “*Avis de réception*” must be written prominently on the address sheet and a franking stamp of 10 *kr* more must be affixed to the box.

In traffic with Italy, express delivery (or advice of delivery) can also be arranged; in this case the word “express” must be written on the address and 15 *kr* more franking stamps must be added. The Royal Post Offices deliver express boxes arriving from abroad and addressed to their headquarters without any additional charge up to a value of 250 *francs* (100 *Ft*); those of higher value or those addressed to the countryside are generally only notified and for the latter the difference between the courier fee and the aforementioned 15 *kr* (30 *centime*) is paid by the addressee.

For boxes not to be delivered by express, the addressee pays the normal delivery or notification fees.

9. There is no charge for forwarding within Hungary and to Austria, and for returning undeliverable boxes (which are carried out without prior consultation with the sender). There is also no additional charge for forwarding to another country up to the border of the original country of destination; but the further carrier and the new country of destination shall charge the addressee 25-25 *kr* (50 *centimes*) of weight postage and 2.5 - 2.5 *kr* (5 *centimes*) of insurance for 300 *francs*, or possibly a separate 50 *kr* of weight postage and 5 *kr* of insurance for sea transport, unless someone has paid these charges before forwarding and they are not covered by franking stamps.

Value boxes destined for domestic use, if the addressee has travelled to Germany or Switzerland, may also be forwarded in addition to the above charges. However, such boxes may not be forwarded to countries not party to the agreement.

10. For valuable boxes not yet delivered, at the request of the sender, a change of address (only up to a value of 500 *francs* = 200 *Ft*) or a return may be made in writing or by telegram in traffic with Bulgaria, Egypt, France and Italy, Romania and Tunisia, in accordance with the rules of procedure for other items.

11. In the event of loss, damage or mutilation, the rules applicable to international parcels with a declaration of value shall apply to the sender's claim for compensation and to the procedure. In the event of a maritime accident, compensation shall only be granted for boxes destined for Egypt.

Austria did not initially fully endorse this proposal (there is no equivalent announcement in the PuTVB documents of 1892) but had to permit the transit and the delivery of such mail from other countries as a signatory to the UPU agreement. As the Hungarian PTRT notes, the service was initially available only to countries where the transit did not involve going through Austria.

Later in 1892, the full text of the agreement was laid out in **PTRT 85, 31.12.1892** naming Austria-Hungary as a signatory. Germany was also not an adopter of this class of mail, and this virtually blocked Nordic countries from adopting it, but it was permitted to the German Post Offices in China and Cameroon. However, slowly the number of countries adopting the concept increased, and routes opened up. WWI put paid to the outward service, apart from to other Axis countries, but inward services from non-aligned countries still had to be handled by the terms of the UPU agreements.

After WWI, Hungary was now independent of Austria, and the service slowly opened up as trade improved. By 1925, the service was becoming world-wide, as shown by Table 1 taken from **PTRT 7, 06.02.1925**.

At some point in 1925 (as illustrated by the postage rate increase document **PTRT 56, 26.09.1925**), Hungary decided to open up the service for internal use, which appeared to continue for a while after the interruptions of WWII.

This service had complicated rules and significant bureaucratic complexity. The overall cost comprised a combination of a weight fee, a postal registration fee, an insurance fee and, if required and available, an express fee and/or a cash-on-delivery fee. Sendings had to be accompanied by up to as many as three customs forms, and could only be sent to named head post offices for collection by addressees. The weight fee depended on the country of receipt and the route taken. The registration fee was the normal fixed price. The insurance fee depended on the value and the route to the destination country (and was often the same as for value letters). The value for cash-on-delivery purposes could not exceed the limits of the postal money order system of the destination country, nor the agreed postal limits, whichever was the lesser. Values had to be converted into gold *centimes* and *francs* for the purposes of defining

insurance costs and value limits, and thus costs varied according to currency fluctuations. Recipients of such boxes in Hungary were expected to pay for customs inspections and any resulting duties, as well as for advice of arrival and home delivery fees.

The postal income from this service had to be divided between the sending, the transiting and the destination country in agreed proportions, presumably in order to pay for the special security required. This resulted in detailed instructions on how to fill out complicated statistical forms.

From the collector's point of view, this service was not greatly used because of its cost. It is unclear whether any documentation of sendings actually still exists. Further, it remains unclear to the writer whether, for example, a parcel card had to be used to accompany the customs forms, and thus what evidence to look out for.

Table 1: Summary table of services for value letter and value boxes, 1925.

Taken from **PTRT 7, 06.02.1925**: Expansion of value letter circulation. Columns 2 & 3: service availability (*igen* = yes); column 4: maximum value in gold *francs*. Column 5: number of customs forms required. Note: Austria, Germany, USA and the UK are non-participating.

Rendeltetési ország	Érték- levél	Érték- doboz	A nyilvánított érték maximuma	Az érték- dobozokhoz csatolandó céltartalékok darabszáma a = angol f = francia n = német	Jegyzet
	küldhető-e?		aranyfrank		
Belga Kongó gyarmat:					
1. Belgiumon át.	igen	igen	1200	4 f	
2. Franciaországon át	igen	igen	1200	3 f	
Chile 1. német hajóval...	igen	igen	10000	3 f	
2. Franciaországon át	igen	igen	5000	3 f	
Danzig szabad város	igen	igen	korlátlan	2 f	
Franciaország következő gyarmatai:					
Indó Kinai francia gyar- matok	igen	—	5000	2 f	
Syria	igen	igen	5000	2 f	
Libanon	igen	igen	5000	2 f	
Ir szabad állam	igen	igen	10000	3 f a	
Japán Korea					
(Chosen és					
a többi Ja- pán érde- keltségi te- rületek	igen	igen	10000	2 f	
2. Franciaországon át	igen	igen	5000	2 f	
3. Olaszországon át	igen	igen	3000	4 f	
Kína	igen	—	3000	—	
Lengyelország	igen	—	5000	—	
Lettország	igen	—	10000	—	
Litvánia és Memel vidék	igen	—	10000	—	

Rendeltetési ország	Érték- levél	Érték- doboz	A nyilvánított érték maximuma	Az érték- dobozokhoz csatolandó céltartalékok darabszáma a = angol f = francia n = német	Jegyzet
	küldhető-e?		aranyfrank		
Nagybritannia következő gyarmatai:					
Ceylon	igen	—	3000	—	
Cyprus	igen	—	3000	—	
Jamaika	igen	—	10000	—	
Malta 1. Németországon át	igen	—	5000	—	
2. Olaszországon át	igen	—	3000	—	
Palesztina	igen	igen	3000	3 f, a	
Új Zéland	igen	—	10000	—	
Olaszország következő gyar- matai:					
Eritrea	igen	igen	3000	3 f	
Olasz Szómali föld (Benadir)	igen	igen	3000	3 f	
Tripolis és Cyrenaika	igen	igen	3000	3 f	
Perzsia	igen	—	3000	—	
Portugália következő gyar- matai:					
Angola	igen	igen	5000	4 f	
Mozambique	igen	igen	3000	3 f	
Cap-Vert, Guinée, St Thomas és Principe	igen	igen	1000	4 f	
Szigetek	igen	igen	1000	4 f	
Portugál India:					
1. Franciaországon át	igen	—	5000	—	
2. Olaszországon át	igen	—	3000	—	
Makao 1. Franciaországon át	igen	—	5000	—	
2. Olaszországon át	igen	—	3000	—	
Timor 1. Franciaországon át	igen	igen	5000	4 f	
2. Olaszországon át	igen	igen	5000	4 f	
Saar vidék	igen	igen	korlátlan	2 f	
San-Marino	igen	igen	3000	3 f	
Spanyolország és spanyol gyarmatok:					
1. német hajóval	igen	—	10000	—	
2. Franciaországon át	igen	—	5000	—	

9.8.2: Tables of charges

The following tables of standardised charges have been derived from PTRT data.

Table 2: Small valuable boxes (*Értékdoboz*) – Inland - 1927 to 1946

Date		Weight fee, per 50 g	Minimum	Registration	Insurance fee	Source PTRT
01.01.1927		20 <i>f</i>	1.00 <i>P</i>	Yes	40 <i>f</i> per 400 <i>P</i>	PTRT 61, 18.12.1926
01.07.1940		30 <i>f</i>	1.30 <i>P</i>	Yes	-	PTRT 27, 28.06.1940
15.09.1941		30 <i>f</i>	1.30 <i>P</i>	Yes	80 <i>f</i> per 500 <i>P</i>	PTRT 44, 09.09.1941
	Period					
01.08.1945*	2	3 <i>P</i>	10 <i>P</i>	5 <i>P</i>	20 <i>P</i> per 4000 <i>P</i>	PTRT 11, 26.07.1945
16.09.1945	3	10 <i>P</i>	50 <i>P</i>	20 <i>P</i>	20 <i>P</i> per 10,000 <i>P</i>	PTRT 21, 15.09.1945
01.11.1945	3	60 <i>P</i>	300 <i>P</i>	480 <i>P</i>	No change?	PTRT 33, 30.10.1945
**						
01.08.1946		0.60 <i>Ft</i>	3 <i>Ft</i>	2.00 <i>Ft</i>	1.20 <i>Ft</i> per 1200 <i>Ft</i>	<i>Postatarikák</i> 1948, 42.2

* The circulation of letters of value, boxes of value and parcels with declaration of value shall be introduced from 1 August 1945 but only between post offices on a specific list.

** No data in Morgan for this class of mail during the Hyperinflation period.

Table 3: Small valuable boxes (*Értékdoboz*) – Foreign - 1927 to 1946

Date	Weight fee, per 50 g	Minimum fee	Registration	Insurance	PTRT or source
01.01.1927	0.20 <i>P</i>	1 <i>P</i>	Yes	0.50 <i>P</i> per 500 <i>F</i>	PTRT 61, 18.12.1926
01.06.1940	0.30 <i>P</i>	1.30 <i>P</i>	Yes		PTRT 27, 28.06.1940
15.09.1941*	(0.30 <i>P</i>)	(1.30 <i>P</i>)	Yes	0.80 <i>P</i> per 500 <i>P</i>	PTRT 44, 09.09.1941
01.08.1945 **	3 <i>P</i>	10 <i>P</i>	Yes	20 <i>P</i> per 4000 <i>P</i>	PTRT 11, 26.07.1945
16.09.1945 **	10 <i>P</i>	50 <i>P</i>	Yes	20 <i>P</i> per 10000 <i>P</i>	PTRT 21, 15.09.1945

01.08.1946	0.60 <i>Ft</i>	3 <i>Ft</i>	2.00 <i>Ft</i>	1.20 <i>Ft</i> per 1200 <i>Ft</i>	<i>Postatarifák</i> 1948, 42.2

* Express fee 1 *P*.

** Only inland rates given. This type of mail to foreign countries may not have started until after the hyperinflation period.

*** No data in Morgan for this class of mail during the hyperinflation period.

No later data are available. It is not known when this class of mail ceased to be available, but certainly after 1951 and before 1985.