

Sabrina Proschmann

# Creating the ‘New Europe’ through Postal Services

Setting Postal Standards during World War II



Nomos

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“Historical Dimensions of European Integration”  
is edited by

Prof. Dr. Guido Thiemeyer | Dr. Christian Henrich-Franke

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Prof. Dr. Gerold Ambrosius

Volume 33

Sabrina Proschmann

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**Nomos**

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## List of Abbreviations

CCIT	Comité consultatif international télégraphique
CCIR	Comité consultatif international des radiocommunications
CCNR	Central Commission for the Navigation on the Rhine
CEPT	Conference of European Postal and Telecommunications Administrations
CoE	Council of Europe
EEC	European Economic Community
ECSC	European Coal and Steel Community
EPTU	European Postal and Telecommunications Union
GAPU	German-Austrian Postal Union
GE	Graduate Engineer
ICL	International Chamber of Law
ITU	International Telecommunications Union
Min-Z	Zentralabteilung ( <i>Reichspostministerium</i> )
NPU	Nordic Postal Union
NSB	Nationaal-Socialistische Beweging
NSDAP	Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei
NSKK	Nationalsozialistische Kraftfahrkorps
OCSC	Organisation for Cooperation of Socialist Countries in the Field of Telecommunication and Postal Communications
OKW	Oberkommando der Wehrmacht
PTT	Post, Telegraphy and Telecommunications
PUASP	Postal Union of the Americas, Spain and Portugal
SA	Sturmabteilung
UPU	Universal Postal Union



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## Introduction

At first glance, the Second World War does not seem like it would provide a suitable background for European integration. This is true not only when considering European integration as it is commonly understood today – that is, as closely linked to the development of the European Communities and the European Union – but also when viewing it as a process of the entanglement of networks<sup>1</sup>. A war that started on the basis of National Socialist ideology does not appear to present the right preconditions for European integration because nationalism and internationalism are often represented as contradictory. Accordingly, post-war discourses have described National Socialist ideas on Europe as ‘anti-Europe’<sup>2</sup>. European integration is often viewed as having started in the 19<sup>th</sup> century; the Second World War is then considered an aberration in this process, which started anew after the war. However, this view of the war has recently been contested in light of new research on international cooperation, especially between the Axis powers.<sup>3</sup> This research shows that both the Italian Fascists and the German National Socialists were interested in using international organisations to gain control over several policy areas. The National Socialists spent considerable time and resources evaluating existing international organisations and deciding how to proceed with them – that is, whether to close them, take them over, replace them or create new organisations altogether<sup>4</sup>. The research underlines the long-standing international impact that National Socialist social policies have had even if they were taken as a counterexample<sup>5</sup>. Yet,

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1 Thiemeyer, Guido: *Europäische Integration*. Köln 2010, p. 9-13.

2 Writer’s own translation: “Antieuropa”, Schmale, Wolfgang: *Geschichte Europas*. Wien 2001 (UTB für Wissenschaft Geschichte, 8213), p. 116.

3 Cf. Fehlhaber, Nils: *Netzwerke der “Achse Berlin-Rom”*. *Die Zusammenarbeit faschistischer und nationalsozialistischer Führungseliten 1933-1943*. Köln 2019 (Italien in der Moderne, Band 25), Martin, Benjamin George: *The Nazi-fascist new order for European culture*. Cambridge, Massachusetts 2016.

4 Herren, Madeleine: Fascist Internationalism, in: Sluga, Glenda, Clavin, Patricia (Eds.): *Internationalisms. A twentieth-century history*. Cambridge, United Kingdom 2017, p. 191-212, p. 208.

5 Kott, Sandrine / Patel, Kiran Klaus: Fascist Internationalism: Nazi Social Policy as an Imperial Project - An Introduction, in: Kott, Sandrine / Patel, Kiran Klaus (Eds.): *Nazism across borders. The social policies of the Third Reich and their global appeal*. Oxford 2018 (Studies of the German Historical Institute London), p. 1-25.

the internationalist efforts of fascists and National Socialists lacked one important component: a clear vision of what the future Europe – in propaganda terms, the ‘New Europe’ that was supposed to result from victory in World War II – would actually look like.<sup>6</sup> This ambiguity suited the general despotism often attached to the leadership style of National Socialist Germany and left room for various individuals to implement their own international projects.

This work centers on individuals who pursued such projects, in particular, staff within European postal, telegraphy and telecommunications (PTT) administrations. The choice of this group might be unusual, and research on this group’s actions during the Second World War is limited, but this work aims to explain why it is an important story to tell. The story combines and reflects different aspects of the ‘New Europe’ and continuous European infrastructure integration that occurred not despite but because of World War II. Given that PTT infrastructures depended on international cooperation and overcoming national borders, members of some PTT administrations felt that cooperation was even more necessary during the war time because communication lines had been cut and international communication faced multiple obstacles. In addition, the war had paralysed this group’s usual means of cooperation, namely the Universal Postal Union (UPU) and the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) as well as their committees. Therefore, there was an opportunity for a new PTT organisation to emerge that would satisfy the administrations’ need for cooperation, represent continuity with previous technocratic work and perfectly fit into the propaganda surrounding the ‘New Europe’. The European Postal and Telecommunications Union (EPTU) emerged to meet this opportunity, and it is the focus of this work.

The EPTU was founded in October 1942 by 14 national PTT administrations from 13 countries<sup>7</sup> under the leadership of the two European Axis

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6 Mazower, Mark: *Hitler's Empire. Nazi rule in occupied Europe*, London 2008.  
7 In Norway, the postal and the telecommunications administration were separated.

powers, Germany and Italy. The *Reichspost*<sup>8</sup> and the *Amministrazione postale-telegrafica dell'Italia*<sup>9</sup> made the first steps towards establishing European organisations for PTT services at the end of 1940 and set up the union in the following years. In addition to the 14 member administrations<sup>10</sup> that joined later and were from countries occupied by or allied with the Axis powers, four other administrations – from Turkey, Switzerland, the Vatican and Spain – sent delegates as observers to the European Postal Congress in Vienna in October 1942.<sup>11</sup> The union bodies included three permanent committees that discussed specific service-related and technical questions in the time between the sessions of the plenary assembly. Due to the war, only one permanent committee meeting each for postal services and telecommunions as well as one congress took place. A second congress, planned first for October 1943 and then for October 1944, was cancelled. The EPTU was not revived after the Second World War, likely because it was an Axis organisation. The little-known and scarcely researched union was a first in European PTT history: until then, national administrations had successfully averted the creation of a European PTT union to prevent weakening the UPU and avoid political interference in their field of expertise and daily work.<sup>12</sup> This work deals with postal services, and there is only a limited discussion of telecommunications.

A 1942 report on the European postal congress and the creation of the EPTU in the *Diplomatisches Bulletin* states: ‘A treaty has come about that will have a special place in the annals of postal history’.<sup>13</sup> Propagandistic

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8 The literal translation would be ‘Empire post’. The term designates the German administration responsible for postal and telecommunications services in German. The term ‘Reichspostministerium’ which could be translated into ‘ministry of the empire post’ designates the political structure of German PTT services and is used also in the sources – the delimitation of the terms is not quite clear and often employed as synonyms which will be done in this work as well.

9 Italian PTT administration.

10 Germany, Italy, Finland, Norway, Denmark, Hungary, Slovakia, Bulgaria, Albania, Croatia, the Netherlands, Romania, San Marino.

11 *Europäischer Postkongress. Wien 1942*; Original-Nachdruck zur postgeschichtlichen Forschung in deutscher (ohne italienische) Sprache = Congresso Postale Europeo (2013). Lizenzierte ed., [Nachdr.] der Ausg., Berlin, Reichsdr., 1942. Berlin-Schönefeld: Morgana-Ed (Moderne Postgeschichte, GG 77).

12 Laborie, Léonard: Enveloping Europe. Plans and Practices in Postal Governance, 1929–1959. In *Contemporary European History* 27 (2018), p. 301-325. DOI: 10.1017/S0960777318000085, p. 305.

13 Writer’s own translation: “Es ist ein Vertragswerk zustande gekommen, das in die Annalen der Postgeschichte seinen besonderen Platz einnehmen wird”. Diplo-

aims almost certainly fuelled this declaration, and it turned out to be false. The PTT administrations have largely written the EPTU out of postal history on a national and, more importantly, European level. It is therefore unsurprising that historical research concerning the EPTU is lacking. In addition, the Second World War has often been described as a caesura in international cooperation, and the creation of an international organisation during the war seems to contradict this narrative. Yet, ‘the hegemony of the Third Reich facilitated transnational connections and circulations, particularly when it came to the continent’s technological integration’.<sup>14</sup> This is also supported by Vincent Lagendijk’s research on a European electricity system during the Second World War.<sup>15</sup> Similarly, research in recent years has shown that the Reich pursued different European projects together with Fascist Italy in almost all policy areas.<sup>16</sup> Thus, the creation of a European union that coordinated and harmonised civilian communication in an Axis-controlled Europe should not appear surprising and, in fact, is consistent with these findings. After all, economic and propagandistic agendas need efficient communication to work, especially for a population at war and to establish the Nationalist Socialist’s vision of a future European order.

Postal services – which include the sending of letters, packages, newspapers and much more – were significant for states’ finances at the time because they were a state monopoly; generally, the revenue from these services went directly to the state. Postal administrations were also an important employer as their large size required significant manpower to sustain them.<sup>17</sup> Additionally, the creation of the UPU in 1874 and other restricted postal unions such as the Nordic Postal Union (NPU) formally in-

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matisches Bulletin 19, Nr. 83 (28. Oktober 1942), 19. Jahrgang 1942: “Europäisches Einheitsporto beschlossen. Reichspostminister Ohnesorge würdigt das Wiener Vertragswerk”.

14 Laborie, *Enveloping Europe*, p. 302.

15 Lagendijk, Vincent: *Ideas, Individuals and Institutions. Notion and Practices of a European Electricity System*, in: *Contemporary European History* 27 (2018), p. 202-220. DOI: 10.1017/S0960777318000115.

16 Cf. Brydan, David: *Axis Internationalism. Spanish Health Experts and the Nazi ‘New Europe’, 1939-1945*. In *Contemporary European History* 25 (2016), p. 291-311. DOI: 10.1017/S0960777316000084; Fehlhaber, Netzwerke der Achse; Herren, *Fascist Internationalism*; Kott, Sandrine / Patel, Kiran Klaus (Eds.): *Nazism across borders. The social policies of the Third Reich and their global appeal*. Oxford 2018 (Studies of the German Historical Institute London); Martin, *The Nazi-fascist new order for European culture*.

17 Laborie, *Enveloping Europe*, p. 304.



stitutionalised international cooperation in postal services. These points underline the necessity of further contextualising the EPTU by starting in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

The international PTT unions founded throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century played a major role in European postal cooperation, and more specifically, standardisation, because they remained a constant reference point for PTT experts. Mercantilism had formerly hindered the development of a well-functioning, cross-border infrastructure, but the emergence of railroads challenged this system.<sup>18</sup> The first multilateral postal union was the German-Austrian Postal Union (GAPU). Prior to the GAPU's establishment, the postal systems of the German states were fragmented, and sending letters was difficult. Starting with bilateral agreements between Austria and Prussia, the GAPU was created in 1850 and quickly attracted other German administrations that joined until the end of 1851. The majority of these administrations initially signed a 'participation agreement'<sup>19</sup> with Prussia.<sup>20</sup> Multilateral agreements were signed at five conferences between 1851 and 1866 that progressively standardised postal relations between the German states; this was done mainly because of practical necessities and despite political tensions.<sup>21</sup> The latter would lead to the formal dissolution of the GAPU when Austria left the German confederation in 1866. The participating member states committed to revising their agreements with foreign states to fulfil the conditions of the GAPU's provisions. The GAPU proved highly effective as foreign countries were interested in having access to the same conditions of one unified postal territory that extended from Hamburg to Trieste to the Black Sea and encompassed around 72 million people. The GAPU was an inter-governmental agreement that could only be changed during conferences at which every country was represented by a high-ranking member of the postal administration. While no legislative competencies

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18 Benz, Andreas: *Integration von Infrastrukturen in Europa im historischen Vergleich*. Band 3. Post. Baden-Baden 2013 (Schriftenreihe des Instituts für Europäische Regionalforschungen, 18), p. 43.

19 Hörter, Christian: *Fahrpost in Deutschland 1808-1923*. Unter besonderer Beachtung von Bayern und Preussen: Pakete, Wertsendungen, Nachnahmen, Barzahlungsbriefe. Nürnberg 1992, p. 180.

20 Hörter, *Fahrpost in Deutschland*, p. 179-181.

21 Neutsch, Cornelius: Standardisierungen im Postverkehr zwischen 1815 und 1914, in: Ambrosius, Gerold, Christian Henrich-Franke, Neutsch, Cornelius, Thiemeyer, Guido (Hrsg.): *Standardisierung und Integration europäischer Verkehrsinfrastrukturen in historischer Perspektive*, Baden-Baden 2009. (=Schriftenreihe des Instituts für Europäische Regionalforschungen, Bd. 13), p. 59-80.

were transferred to a supranational institution, postal laws and services nevertheless became harmonised<sup>22</sup> prior to German unification in 1871. All important decisions had to be taken unanimously, which is why Andreas Benz characterises the union as trans-governmental and, in a limited way, supranational.<sup>23</sup>

The European and international postal relations of the 1870s mirrored those between the German states in the 1840s. Multiple bilateral and multi-lateral agreements with differing provisions made the international system complex and inconsistent. In particular, high transit charges and difficult accounting procedures between the national PTT administrations became increasingly untenable due to continuous societal and economic internationalisation, which heightened the need for information exchange.<sup>24</sup> Between 1869 and 1948, international traffic tripled while domestic exchange doubled.<sup>25</sup> Thus, 'this system, which was no doubt adequate enough for the small and leisurely postal traffic of the seventeenth century, was becoming almost unworkable'<sup>26</sup>. In 1864, seven postal administrations of South and Central America had already formed a union.<sup>27</sup> Furthermore, bilateral agreements were difficult to negotiate because every administration attempted to increase its income, and agreements were geographically and temporally limited.<sup>28</sup>

Against this background, in 1873, state secretary of the German Empire's postal office Heinrich von Stephan wrote a 12-point memorandum that called for the creation of a unified postal area between participating states and the introduction of a single common transit charge regardless of distance. The overarching aim of von Stephan's memorandum was to abolish the transit charge altogether. Furthermore, it stated that the administration of the letter's origin country should keep the entire charges for sending the letter, and the member administrations should only conclude administrative agreements (not state treaties) with each other. It also set uniform rules for agreements with non-member administrations. These 12 points were the basis for the UPU, which was founded in Bern on 9 October 1874. The 21

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22 Benz, *Integration von Infrastrukturen*, p. 69-71.

23 Benz, *Integration von Infrastrukturen*, p. 71.

24 Neutsch, *Standardisierungen im Postverkehr*, p. 72-73.

25 Laborie, Léonard: *L'Europe mise en réseaux. La France et la coopération internationale dans les postes et les télécommunications (années 1850-années 1950)* / Léonard Laborie ; préface Pascal Griset. Bruxelles 2011 (*Enjeux internationaux*, 12), p. 96.

26 Benz, *Integration von Infrastrukturen*, p. 74.

27 Neutsch, *Standardisierungen im Postverkehr*, p. 72.

28 Benz, *Integration von Infrastrukturen*, p. 64.

participants were mostly from European countries, but access was open to all sovereign states, and the union expanded quickly. The member administrations met regularly and worked on detailed aspects of the broad range of postal services.<sup>29</sup> The conference was only possible due to the French defeat at the hands of the German states in 1871. A German-French agreement in 1872 signalled the end of French resistance<sup>30</sup> to a union, yet, the French delegation abstained from all votes during the month-long conference in Bern in 1874 and refused to sign the agreement.<sup>31</sup> Notably, the UPU was created nine years later than the ITU, even though postal services are much older than telecommunications.<sup>32</sup>

The international office of the UPU opened in 1875 in Bern, and its job was limited to coordinating, publishing and distributing information.<sup>33</sup> However, it was also able to establish its own structures and mechanics, such as conferences and congresses, and bring together a professional community that met every three or four years and became independent of diplomats.<sup>34</sup> The legal basis of the UPU consisted of one treaty that mainly determined its organisational standards; the more practical aspects of the postal services were stipulated in conventions and protocols, including the exceptions to the general rules of the treaty.<sup>35</sup> Certain principles guided the experts' work when drafting the treaties and regulations to achieve a unified postal area: freedom of transit, harmonised weight categories for all mailings, one common clearing currency, harmonised tariffs and the simplification of the netting of tariffs for international mail. The UPU had multiple bodies that performed its work. In addition to the bureau and the regular congresses, there were (and still are) different commissions that addressed specific questions regarding postal services. Arbitration was established for topics that could not be resolved within the bodies. The member administrations guaranteed the financing of the union; these were divided into seven contribution groups depending on the size of the country, the size of the

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29 Neutsch, *Standardisierungen im Postverkehr*, p. 72-74.

30 Bilateral negotiations gave the French administration an advantage due to its bigger power.

31 Laborie, *L'Europe mise en réseaux*, p. 98-104.

32 Griset, Pascal / Fickers, Andreas: *Communicating Europe. Technologies, information, events*. 1st edition. New York 2018 (Making Europe, 14816), p. 88.

33 Laborie, *L'Europe mise en réseaux*, p. 127-129.

34 Laborie, *L'Europe mise en réseaux*, p. 116.

35 Sasse, Horst: *Der Weltpostverein. französischer und deutscher Text des Weltpostvertrages und anderer grundlegender Bestimmungen mit einer Einführung*. Metzner 1959, p. 14-15.

population, the national economic situation and whether the country received the union's publications.<sup>36</sup> The UPU discussed all postal service aspects. Although the provisions for letters and postcards are pertinent to this work, they are too numerous to be fully described in this work as they concern topics ranging from letter sizes and the material of postcards to logistics.<sup>37</sup> It is important to note that a vast standardisation machinery was already in place and had regulated multiple questions surrounding letters and postcards before 1942. Thus, the members of the EPTU were able to build on this standardisation work and did not need to start entirely anew.

The First World War presented a great challenge to the UPU, not only because it interrupted traffic but also because it destabilised exchange, making it impossible to uphold uniform tariffs. This paralysis of the UPU triggered the creation of restricted unions such as the Pan-American Postal Union<sup>38</sup> and the NPU.<sup>39</sup> These restricted unions also intended to aggregate voices within the UPU to gain more power in decision-making processes.<sup>40</sup> During the interwar period, the UPU's independence from diplomacy was tested by the creation of the League of Nations. However, the UPU was not integrated into this system because of the League's weak influence,<sup>41</sup> and the League had few consequences on the work of postal administrations.<sup>42</sup> Additionally, postal services were reformed by the introduction of a new infrastructure: aviation. Flying accelerated transport and led to the elimination of the majority of ground transit. The postal administration had to collaborate with airline companies to establish a working system, but trains nevertheless remained an important means of transport due to their lower costs.<sup>43</sup>

The interwar period was also characterised by further proposals to create a European postal union, which the Swiss postal director deemed 'relatively easy to achieve'.<sup>44</sup> This idea had been discussed well before the First World War, such as during the GAPU's first conference in 1851,<sup>45</sup> and it re-

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36 Sasse, *Der Weltpostverein*, p. 18-34.

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

38 In the beginning only Latin-American States. After several new adhesions, it is today the Postal Union of the Americas, Spain and Portugal.

39 Finland, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Iceland.

40 Laborie, *L'Europe mise en réseaux*, p. 250.

41 Laborie, *L'Europe mise en réseaux*, p. 278-281.

42 Benz, *Integration von Infrastrukturen*, p. 187.

43 Benz, *Integration von Infrastrukturen*, p. 171-177.

44 Laborie, *Enveloping Europe*, p. 306.

45 Sasse, *Der Weltpostverein*, p. 10.

emerged more strongly after the war. These types of proposals were also put forward by economic actors, such as the International Chamber of Commerce.<sup>46</sup> Moreover, there were plans for a postal union for Central Europe based on the idea of *Mitteleuropa*<sup>47</sup> – a concept which would be alluded to in the German National Socialists’ ideas for a ‘New Europe’.

In 1927, 38 administrations from mostly European countries<sup>48</sup> held a conference on the issue of air mail due to the growing number of air mail connections.<sup>49</sup> The multilateral agreement concluded in Den Haag in 1927 harmonised the bilateral agreements that had previously existed.<sup>50</sup> The UPU recognised the results of this smaller conference as important work,<sup>51</sup> and a first step towards European organisation within the UPU had been made. The Briand Plan of 1930 signalled the strongest political attempt to create a European postal union; it included plans for a European postal area and aimed to establish a European regime for PTT services, starting with, among other ideas, the introduction of a European stamp. Stresemann, the German Foreign Minister and Briand’s counterpart, responded to first contents of the Briand Plan and championed the idea of a European stamp by underlining that it would create new links between European peoples. The inclusion of postal services in the Briand Plan was the result of a concerted lobbying effort by ‘liberal Europeanists’,<sup>52</sup> which included the International Chamber of Commerce and the International Committee for a European Customs Union. The aims of these unified postal services were economic (erasing barriers to trade) as well as political (promoting the idea of a unified Europe).

However, the national PTT administrations did all not support these plans. They answered about a year late to the Briand Plan – during which time, for instance, the influential French and British PTT administrations formed a coalition against the plan. Their arguments can be summarised

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46 Laborie, *Enveloping Europe*, p. 305.

47 Cf. Elemér Hantos, *Mitteleuropäischer Postverein*. W. Braumüller, Wien/Leipzig 1929 as found in: Bundesarchiv, Koblenz, N1006/80, and Soutou, Georges-Henri: *Europa! Les projets européens de l’Allemagne nazie et de l’Italie fasciste*. Paris 2021, p. 72.

48 Henrich-Franke, Christian / Laborie, Léonard: European Union by and for Communication Networks: Continuities and Discontinuities during the Second World War, in: *Comparativ* 28 (2018), p.82–100. Available online at <https://comparativ.net/v2/article/view/2823>.

49 Laborie, *L’Europe mise en réseaux*, p. 252.

50 Benz, *Integration von Infrastrukturen*, p. 173.

51 Laborie, *L’Europe mise en réseaux*, p. 254.

52 Laborie, *Enveloping Europe*, p. 305.

into the following points: the Briand Plan would lower incomes; it would add to the complexity of the international system because a new tariff would be introduced and endanger the UPU; it could threaten the independence of the postal system from political projects, an issue postal experts were concerned about.<sup>53</sup> However, the postal community did not universally share this view. For instance, while the German postal director was opposed, the responsible minister was in favour of the plan. Similarly, Károly von Forster, the later deputy Director General of the Hungarian postal services, supported the idea, as did Swedish, Yugoslavian and Czechoslovakian experts.<sup>54</sup>

Immediately before the war, in 1937 and 1938, when the Commission of Enquiry for European Union within the League of Nations took action again for a short period, the plans for a European postal union resurfaced. The argument made for a postal union at that time was that it represented a way to unite a new polity.<sup>55</sup>

Alongside the ideas for a European postal union proposed in the 1930s, the National Socialists' rise to power slowly started to influence European postal relations. The first issues arose in 1933, and they regarded censorship. The *Reichspostministerium*<sup>56</sup> was not the driving force behind the intensification of censorship – disagreements on the latter between the *Reichspost* and other German entities, such as the *Oberkommando der Wehrmacht* (OKW),<sup>57</sup> continued during the war.<sup>58</sup> The censoring led to complaints from other administrations, and it was feared that this would damage the *Reichspost*'s reputation abroad. Nevertheless, reports of censorship incidents continuously appeared and in increasing numbers.<sup>59</sup> In addition, the German postal administration began preparing for war in 1935. Postal Protection, which became a section of the *Schutzstaffel* (SS) in

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53 Laborie, L'Europe mise en réseaux, p. 322-325.

54 Laborie, Enveloping Europe, p. 308.

55 Ibid.

56 The term *Reichspostministerium* which could be translated into 'ministry of the empire post' designates the political structure of German PTT services.

57 Created in 1938, the OKW was an authority of the Wehrmacht directly subordinate to Hitler.

58 Bundesarchiv, Lichterfelde, R901/112559, Fernschreiben Wiehl an den Reich-  
außenminister, 20. Mai 1942.

59 Lotz, Wolfgang: *Die Deutsche Reichspost 1933-1945, Eine politische Verwal-  
tungsgeschichte*. Band I: 1933-1939. Berlin 1999, p. 176-179.

1944,<sup>60</sup> was strengthened for ‘the time of tension’<sup>61</sup> before a potential future war in September 1935.<sup>62</sup> The first tests of continued field and civil post service in case of war were conducted in 1937.<sup>63</sup>

Despite postal experts’ aversion to them, politics played an important role during the congress of Buenos Aires in April and May 1939. The question of the representation of the annexed territories of former Czechoslovakia and continued references to them as independent countries in the agreement of 1939 caused tensions because the German delegation claimed to represent these territories. Ultimately, Germany, Italy, Spain and Hungary did not sign the agreement during the congress and de facto left the UPU. The *Reichspost* did not support this exit, but Adolf Hitler had commanded it, which left the *Reichspost* delegates with no leeway in Argentina. The head of the delegation, ministerial director Karl Ziegler, stated that no political questions had been debated during the congress,<sup>64</sup> but the German military aggressions had nonetheless managed to influence international and European postal relations. The aggressions isolated Germany from the international postal community. However, the non-signatories quickly regained their foothold in the postal community as the *Reichspost* applied the conditions agreed upon in 1939 to the services conducted with non-hostile countries.<sup>65</sup> This solution simultaneously fulfilled two criteria: it favoured political allies and neutral countries, which would be accepted from the political and foreign affairs point of view, and it gave the *Reichspost* renewed access to the UPU and the postal expert community, which would appeal to technocrats. The ability to appease the demands of several sides would later also become crucial in establishing the EPTU.

The Universal Postal Convention adopted in Buenos Aires in 1939 was 244 pages long.<sup>66</sup> Its most important stipulated standards for this work concerned the tariffs for letters and postcards and the transit charge. The general principle – that the first weight category was up to 20 g, the second between 20 g and 40 g, the third between 40 g and 60 g and so on – did not change. The charges for those categories were lowered, from 25 cents to 20

60 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/27017, Mitteilungen über den ehemaligen Postminister Ohnesorge, p. 11.

61 Writer’s own translation: “Spannungszeit”. Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/11161, Anweisung für den verstärkten Postschutz, p. 2.

62 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/11161, Anweisung für den verstärkten Postschutz, p. 2.

63 Cf. Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/11154 and R4701/12132.

64 Lotz, *Die Deutsche Reichspost*, p. 281-284.

65 Lotz, *Die Deutsche Reichspost*, p. 284.

66 Universal Postal Union Convention of Buenos Aires, 23.05.1939.

cents for the first category and from 15 cents to 12 cents for every additional 20 g. The charge for a simple postcard was reduced from 15 cents to 12 cents, and the charge for a postcard with a reply card from 30 cents to 24 cents.<sup>67</sup> These reductions were justified given the currency devaluation in some countries in relation to the *Franc*; they were an adaptation to the new realities rather than actual reductions. The subject of the transit charge was discussed in one special commission but dismissed without a conclusion, so that the transit charge was upheld.<sup>68</sup>

The beginning of the military aggressions in September 1939 further worsened the state of international postal relations, and deteriorated the work of the UPU as well as restricted postal unions such as the NPU. The UPU had to reduce its services to, for example, distributing information from the postal administrations as well as stamp collections, identity cards and ‘coupons-réponse’,<sup>69</sup> and the NPU did not come together for a single congress between 1941 and 1946.<sup>70</sup> As information was crucial for both sides of the war, and Switzerland had become a key country in terms of information,<sup>71</sup> it is not surprising that the office of the UPU (located in Bern) reported cases of censorship. The office proposed that the Swiss Foreign Office introduce a special regime for its mail to be protected from the censoring regimes.<sup>72</sup> This weakening of the UPU did not occur without consequences. Doubts concerning the benefits of international organisations were even raised in France. In the beginning of 1942, the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs asked to review a list of international organisations to define whether French participation in them was useful. While the ministry emphatically underlined the necessity of remaining in the ITU, the *Comité consultatif international télégraphique* (CCIT) and the *Comité consultatif international des radiocommunications* (CCIR), it did not show the same support to the UPU.<sup>73</sup>

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67 Ibid., Art.34.

68 Ibid., Art.75.

69 PTT Archiv, Bern, P-00C\_0128\_11, Expédition des documents de service par le bureau international aux Administrations de l'Union, 05.1943.

70 Riksarkivet, Oslo, S-1342 - Samferdselsdepartementet, 1. postadministrasjonskontor A, F - Konvensjoner og overenskomster med utlandet, L0042 - Overenskomster Den nordiske Postforening.

71 Kreis, Georg: *Die Schweiz im Zweiten Weltkrieg*. Aktual. Neuausg. Innsbruck 2011, p. 122.

72 PTT Archiv, Bern, P-00C\_0128\_11, Expédition des documents de service par le bureau international aux Administrations de l'Union, 05.1943.

73 Archives politiques, Paris – La Courneuve, Union internationales, 429QO/356, F50dg, Offices internationaux – Dossier général – documentation, Décembre 1941- Février 1942.



In summary, the EPTU was founded alongside a weakened UPU and could build on over 50 years of international postal governance. PTT experts could take over processual and structural elements and the content of the cooperative, standardising work that the delegates of the participating postal administrations had done before. The administrations within the EPTU saw themselves as the continuation of this work, and the union was considered a restricted union of the UPU.<sup>74</sup> Article 5 of the UPU treaty allows the creation of such restricted unions to foster further cooperation in postal services between member administrations. Other restricted unions, such as the NPU,<sup>75</sup> the Balkan Entente<sup>76</sup> and the Pan-American Postal Union,<sup>77</sup> were established in the interwar years and talks of a European postal union reached their high point in 1930, when the idea was included in the Briand Plan.<sup>78</sup>

The UPU mostly focussed on harmonising postal services, agreeing upon standards for letter sizes, weight categories and so on. In addition, tariffs for international services were lowered, and coordination between the administrations' accounting systems was facilitated. Standardisation has thus been identified as a common theme in the postal history of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries,<sup>79</sup> and unions have been recognised as means to achieve this.<sup>80</sup> Standards facilitate the interoperability and interconnectivity of cross-border systems and are therefore highly important in international infrastructure cooperation.<sup>81</sup> Additionally, once all members had agreed upon them, the international 'framework standards'<sup>82</sup> were characterised by longevity;

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74 Europäischer Postkongress, p. 6.

75 Created in 1919 (Universal Postal Union: *About NPU*, <http://www.upu.int/en/the-upu/restricted-unions/npu/about-npu.html>, last access: 27.05.2020).

76 Created in 1936 (Bridg.-Gen. Sir Mance, Osborne (1944): *International Telecommunications*, London: 1944, p. 7).

77 Created in 1911. Spain joined in 1921. (Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/984)

78 Laborie, L'Europe mise en réseaux, p. 315.

79 Neusch, Standardisierungen im Postverkehr, p. 60.

80 Neusch, Standardisierungen im Postverkehr, p. 68.

81 Cf. Ambrosius, Gerold: Standards und Standardisierungen in der Perspektive des Historikers – vornehmlich im Hinblick auf netzgebundene Infrastrukturen, in: Ambrosius, Gerold, Christian Henrich-Franke, Neusch, C., Thiemeyer, Guido (Hrsg.): *Standardisierung und Integration europäischer Verkehrsinfrastrukturen in historischer Perspektive* 13, Baden-Baden 2009, p. 15-36.

82 Writer's own translation: "Rahmenstandards", Ambrosius, Gerold / Henrich-Franke, Christian: Pfadabhängigkeiten internationaler Infrastrukturnetze, in: *Jahrbuch für Wirtschaftsgeschichte / Economic History Yearbook* 56 (2015), p. 291-312, DOI: 10.1515/jbwg-2015-0012, p. 292.

this is partly due to the high costs that having to renegotiate these overarching standards would incur within a complex politico-administrative international environment.<sup>83</sup> The supposed path dependency of these infrastructure standards requires a deeper investigation of standard-setting within the EPTU.

As an organisation founded during the Second World War, the EPTU cannot be discussed without considering the wider context of the development of the war. Throughout this work, the history of the EPTU is contextualised in relation to the events of the war. While it would go beyond the scope of this work to summarise the existing research on the Second World War, some general findings on the course of the war are important. Generally, the Battle of Stalingrad and the defeat of the Wehrmacht on 31 January 1943 is often considered the most important turning point in the war. In his historiography of the Second World War, John Keegan uses the year of 1943 to chronologically structure his work.<sup>84</sup> Schmidt similarly describes the Battle of Stalingrad as having changed the overall war situation to the detriment of Germany.<sup>85</sup> As will be shown in Part III, this development had an influence on the workings of the EPTU. However, this change in the course of the war was not necessarily foreseen. At the beginning of the Battle of Stalingrad, the Embassy of the United States of America in Moscow expected ‘the collapse of the Soviet regime at any moment’.<sup>86</sup> Additionally, while the Second World War is often designated as a ‘total war’ or a ‘totalising war’<sup>87</sup> with respect to the mobilisation of weapons, people and natural resources,<sup>88</sup> parts of the population remained immobilised,<sup>89</sup> and there was

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83 Ambrosius / Henrich-Franke, *Pfadbabhängigkeiten*, p. 292-296.

84 Cf. Keegan, John: *Der Zweite Weltkrieg* (Kober, Hainer). Rowohlt 2009 (rororo, 61914).

85 Schmidt, Rainer F.: *Der Zweite Weltkrieg. Die Zerstörung Europas*. Berlin 2008 (Deutsche Geschichte im 20. Jahrhundert, Bd. 10), p. 155.

86 Writer’s own translation: “jeden Augenblick den Zusammenbruch des Sowjetregimes”, Beevor, Antony: *Der Zweite Weltkrieg*, 1. Aufl., München 2014, p. 411.

87 Pearson, Chris: *Environments, states and societies at war*, in: Geyer, Michael / Tooze, Adam (Eds.): *The Cambridge History of the Second World War. Total War: Economy, Society and Culture*. Cambridge, United Kingdom 2015 (The Cambridge history of the Second World War, 3), p. 220-244, p. 221.

88 Pearson, *Environments*, p. 242.

89 Cf. Cocks, Geoffrey: *Hors de combat: mobilization and immobilization in total war*, in: Michael Geyer, Adam Tooze (Eds.): *The Cambridge History of the Second World War. Total War: Economy, Society and Culture*. Cambridge 2015 (The Cambridge history of the Second World War, 3), p. 363-384.

still room for initiatives such as the European Youth Association<sup>90</sup> or the EPTU, both of which were founded in autumn 1942. These two organisations could be rhetorically connected to the war effort, but their goals were much more focussed on constructing a ‘New Europe’ to be created after the war was won. Thus, while the *Reichspost* supported the war effort with personnel, infrastructure, communication, research and field post and could thus be described as mobilised, there was an immobilised component of it that was able to work on projects beyond providing war assistance.

The EPTU can be considered from numerous perspectives, such as European, national, ideological, geopolitical or in terms of its place within the framework of other technocratic international unions before, during and after the Second World War. This leads to different conclusions.

From a technocratic point of view, the congress to found the EPTU and its further results were a success – beyond any foreign policy implications, they represented the goals of international postal cooperation since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. In his dissertation ‘Europe mise en réseaux’, Léonard Laborie concludes consequently that the two main innovations of the EPTU were the establishment of a single regime for letters and telegrams and the abolition of the transit charge. Nevertheless, he too cannot separate the technocratic from the political aspects entirely. From his perspective, the EPTU represented the first time that PTT services were successfully used for a European political project<sup>91</sup>: Henrich-Franke and Laborie highlight its integration into the plan for an Axis-led new European order as well as its utility for German PTT administration as a tool to regain importance and influence – especially in comparison to France – in international PTT governance. Consequently, they question whether the EPTU was a case of Europeanisation or Germanisation.<sup>92</sup> With a focus on telecommunications, Henrich-Franke reasons that international cooperation had to continue despite the war. He argues that the same PTT experts continued to work together but on a different, less formal level and classifies the EPTU as an attempt to govern intra-European affairs outside of the ITU.<sup>93</sup>

90 Kühberger, Christoph: Europa als “Strahlenbündel nationaler Kräfte”. Zur Konzeption und Legitimation einer europäischen Zusammenarbeit auf der Gründungsfeierlichkeit des “Europäischen Jugendverbandes” 1942, in: *ZGEI 15* (2009), p. 11-28. DOI: 10.5771/0947-9511-2009-2-11, p. 14.

91 Laborie, L’Europe mise en réseaux, p. 336-345.

92 Cf. Henrich-Franke / Laborie, European Union by and for Communication Networks.

93 Cf. Henrich-Franke, Christian: Comparing Cultures of Expert Regulation. Governing Cross-Border Infrastructures, in: *Contemporary European History* 27 (2018), p. 280-300. DOI: 10.1017/S0960777318000139.

In line with these conclusions, the EPTU is often represented as an organisation dominated by the German side. From this perspective, the EPTU constituted a part of the mission of the Reichspost ‘to hurry ahead as a “trail-blazer” in building the new Europe’.<sup>94</sup> Starting in the spring of 1940, the project was also important to the Reichspostminister<sup>95</sup> Wilhelm Ohnesorge, who envisioned the EPTU as an organisation that could serve a new world after the Axis powers won the war. Gerd Ueberschär portrays a dominant German administration that intensively planned the union and was determined to execute these plans; however, while the plans were initially supported by the events of the war, it was ultimately the war that impeded them. The declaration of war by some of the member administration countries and the capitulation of the Wehrmacht meant the end of the EPTU.<sup>96</sup> Rudi Keil places the EPTU even more clearly in the power-political context of the Second World War. Even though he acknowledges that the Reichspostministerium was not forcing other administrations to join the EPTU, he underlines what he sees as the clear connection between the EPTU and the National Socialist plans for ‘world domination’<sup>97</sup>: he describes the EPTU as an ‘institution for the promotion of German fascist expansionist policy’<sup>98</sup> as well as an instrument to achieve dominance within the ITU and the UPU.<sup>99</sup> There are however restrictions to the German hegemony: Valentine Aldebert and Sabrina Proschmann analyse the ideological and power asymmetries in the EPTU and determine that the asymmetries were at least partially flexible, meaning that the differences between technocratic internationalism and National Socialism were continuously renegotiated. Similarly, the imbalance of power between the German and French PTT administrations changed from situation to situation. The EPTU included an ongoing revision of the European PTT governance regime,

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94 Writer’s own translation: “beim Aufbau des neuen Europas ein vorauseilender ‘Wegbereiter’ zu sein”, Ueberschär, Gerd R.: *Die Deutsche Reichspost 1933-1945. Eine Politische Verwaltungsgeschichte*. Band 2: 1939-1945. Berlin 1999, p. 160.

95 Minister heading the German postal ministry from 1937 until 1945.

96 Ueberschär, *Die Deutsche Reichspost*, p. 160-187.

97 Writer’s own translation: “Weltherrschaftsplänen”, Keil, Rudi: *Die Gründung des Europäischen Post- und Fernmeldevereins während des Zweiten Weltkriegs und seine Bedeutung für die Expansionspolitik des deutschen Faschismus*, in: *Die Deutsche Post* 4 (1959) as found in Bundesarchiv, Koblenz, B257/343, p. 218.

98 Writer’s own translation: “Einrichtung zur Förderung der deutschen faschistischen Expansionspolitik”, *ibid.*, p. 220.

99 *Ibid.*, p. 224.

making it dynamic.<sup>100</sup> These dynamics can be seen when analysing the role of other administrations within the EPTU. Unfortunately, an analysis of the role of the Italian administration is still pending.

With respect to administrations whose countries were occupied or dependent from the Axis powers, their reaction to and involvement in the newly founded organisation has to be contextualised within the broader framework of collaboration, cooperation and resistance. Regarding France, which was initially notably excluded from the union,<sup>101</sup> Laborie asks whether it was the French PTT administration that wanted to collaborate and was hindered by the Reich or whether the French resisted by making it difficult for the German administration to integrate France into the EPTU. The French administration complicated matters by insisting on using French as the official language and the Gold franc as the reference currency of the union (as was the international tradition).<sup>102</sup> Concerning the Danish administration's role, Bent Blüdnikow emphasises that the overlying 'politics of cooperation' which guided Danish actions towards Germany during occupation were also a politically dominant reason to first sign a bilateral agreement and then join the EPTU. However, Blüdnikow also mentions that the Danish PTT administration was generally in favour of the union and that Director General Kristjan Johannes Jensen described being impressed by the German orchestration of the congress. He describes the Danish role as an active one – the administration hosted a committee session in Copenhagen in 1943 – but remarks that Denmark left the EPTU immediately after liberation in 1945.<sup>103</sup> Thus, cooperation or foreign policy also influenced administrations' decision-making; this also applies to the Swiss.

Not unsurprisingly, the assessment of the EPTU also varies depending on the national perspective of neutral countries. Madeleine Herren analyses Swiss internationalism during the Second World War, arguing that the Swiss reaction to this attempt at German internationalisation fits perfectly into a pattern which she terms 'neither one way nor the other'. The difficult positioning of Swiss neutrality had already been challenged by its relationship with the Soviet Union. During the war, international organisations

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100 Aldebert, Valentine / Proschmann, Sabrina: L'Union Européenne des Postes et des Télécommunications (1942-1945). Un ensemble d'asymétries complexes, in: *Guerres mondiales et conflits contemporains* 275 (2019), p. 43-54. Available online at <https://www.cairn.info/revue-guerres-mondiales-et-conflits-contemporains-2019-3-page-43.html>.

101 At least in the beginning.

102 Laborie, L'Europe mise en réseaux, p. 343-345.

103 Blüdnikow, Bent: *Post og Tele under samme tag*. P&Ts historie 1927-1960. København 1993, p. 354-358.

based in Switzerland became even more important, and the warring parties tried to exploit these organisations for their own purposes. Additionally, the actions of the international offices based in Switzerland were interpreted as being based on Swiss foreign policy positions. In the case of the EPTU, this meant that the Swiss strategy was to undercut German political intentions by making decisions only on a technical basis. Switzerland sent observers who were fully aware that Nazi Germany would take advantage of Swiss participation and that the foundation of the EPTU presented a power grab of European PTT governance by the Axis powers.<sup>104</sup> Due to the importance of European PTT administrations, leading within Europe also meant having considerable influence on the global stage. Georg Kreis thus interprets the foundation of the EPTU as a way to challenge and weaken existing international organisations. He argues that these competitive, newly founded organisations were often framed as ‘European’, and he evaluates Swiss neutrality as a pragmatic position that led to indirect partiality in different situations. Swiss foreign relations were oriented towards current necessities especially in the case of communication and information flows, of which Switzerland became the main hub in Europe during the war.<sup>105</sup>

When contextualising the EPTU beyond the Second World War, there are clear continuities and discontinuities with interwar and post-war international technocratic cooperation. Laborie emphasises that the EPTU put into practice plans for a European postal union as early as the 1920s and 1930s, providing an inspiration which the National Socialists did not mention in their narration of the EPTU’s story. Laborie also stresses that while the Nazi project for a European postal union was based on concepts that previously existed institutionally and in terms of content, the EPTU was relevant for post-war projects as well – not as a model, even though the details remained similar, but as a sign that a European restricted postal union could be founded, even though the administrations had impeded this before the war.<sup>106</sup> Similarly, Christian Henrich-Franke and Laborie note the continuities between the interwar, war and post-war periods regarding individuals, institutions and structures. They maintain that the EPTU connects pre/inter- and post-war international PTT relations. They even argue that ‘the war hardly mattered in [the PTT administrations’] negotiations. What’s

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104 Herren, Madeleine: “Weder so noch anders”: schweizerischer Internationalismus während des Zweiten Weltkrieges, in: *Schweizerische Zeitschrift für Geschichte - Revue suisse d'histoire - Rivista storica svizzera* 47 (1997), p. 621-643. Available online at <http://dx.doi.org/10.5169/seals-81207>.

105 Kreis, Die Schweiz im Zweiten Weltkrieg, p. 119-124.

106 Laborie, Enveloping Europe, p. 325-345.

more, the experts included war enemies like Great Britain into their plans for a peacetime European telephone network'.<sup>107</sup>

As these findings show, the EPTU can be understood as lying at the intersection of different research interests. The EPTU touched upon various related phenomena that materialised in the newly founded union, from its integration into the Axis vision of a 'New Europe' to the continuities in technocratic international cooperation and the interrelationships between the Axis powers and internal German power struggles. This explains the EPTU's importance in different research contexts, such as infrastructure and technical history, Europeanisation, foreign policy and national PTT history. This work is also at the intersections of different research directions but focusses on standardisation and its processes in European postal services. The interest in the relatively short-lived EPTU is thus not only justified by its relevance to different research fields but also because it represents the missing link between inter- and post-war international postal relations. It can shed light on the extent to which the war can be viewed as a caesura or continuity in international postal relations. The EPTU represents a first in European postal history, and it is a case of organisation-building and standard-setting in the time of a specific war; this means that it is a chance to test the validity of known theories of path dependency, organisation-building, standard-setting and policy coordination at different times – that is, what remains the same and what changes between the inter-war, war and post-war periods? Furthermore, the EPTU could provide important information for the growing research on Nazi-fascist European projects as it presents a different conception of the European integration commonly discussed and implemented in post-war Western Europe.

Hence, this work explores the following questions: how did the EPTU fit into the larger international postal system established by the UPU with regards to the standards established between 1942 and 1945? Which standards were continued or altered, to what extent, and was this successful? Where did the standard-setting happen? Which committees were of major importance? Which platforms and channels were used to make decisions regarding different standards? Which role did the Axis powers have, and how can their relationship be described? Which agents besides the administrations were involved? Which hierarchies between countries and their actors are reflected in the final standards? What role did the larger historical context of World War II play in the decision-making process or in shaping the

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107 Henrich-Franke / Laborie, *European Union by and for Communication Networks*, p. 89.

standards? How were these standards promoted inside the international postal community and to a larger civilian public?

In this work, the assumption is that the EPTU was a synthetic product responding as much as possible to the interests of political, technocratic and diplomatic agents not just from Germany but from other participating European countries as well. However, there is a strong German hegemony within the EPTU regarding the standardisation in postal services and in relation to the Italian postal administration. At different points in the preparation and working of the EPTU, interests and viewpoints sometimes overlapped but also diverged, leading to situations in which the hierarchy between the different interests had to be negotiated. This hierarchy was influenced by the type of standard under negotiation. For example, standards concerning postal services were heavily influenced by the postal administrations' opinion as it was their field of expertise and interest. In this area, German dominance was especially strong, and the EPTU represented a tool to export German standards to intra-European postal services. Regarding organisational and/or politico-symbolic standards, the situation presented itself quite differently: foreign ministries and sometimes even the heads of governments intervened as they had to agree to these standards.

Before analysing the EPTU, the scope of this research project should be set, both thematically and in terms of the available archival material. Thematically, there are two important restrictions: the scope of the postal services and the relevant agents examined.

While this work only considers postal services, it is nevertheless necessary to further hone this analysis to specific civilian postal services. Field post is excluded from the work because it was not important for the EPTU despite its key role during the war. The transport of German field post was organised separately from the civilian post; the *Reichspost* was responsible for transport of the civilian post, whereas the genuine 'field post' was a military task.<sup>108</sup> The EPTU itself was thus only concerned with the transportation of civilian post,<sup>109</sup> and it is not mentioned in the relevant documents regarding field post from the *Reichspost*.<sup>110</sup> Moreover, the analysis focuses on letters and postcards; all other services, such as packages, jour-

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108 Lotz, Wolfgang (Ed.): *Deutsche Postgeschichte. Essays und Bilder*, Berlin 1989, p. 480.

109 The agreement does not contain any provisions for the field post. (Europäischer Postkongress, p. 98-103).

110 Bundesarchiv Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/12133, Feldpostsammelstellen 1939-1945.



nals, and postal cheque services, have a subordinate role because the standardisation work within the EPTU was mostly concentrated on these two postal services. Post was usually transported through different means (cars, trains, ships and planes), but during the war, the so-called ‘land post’ was the main channel of transport as it was the most secure within continental Europe.

This study also mentions different actors from the postal administrations and examines their role in the EPTU and after the war. However, it was difficult to find information about major agents beyond their position and career within the national postal administrations, especially regarding their political views or adherence to the National Socialist and/or fascist ideologies. Personal documents such as diaries are not available in the languages known by the author, which made it difficult to comment upon the intentions that were not officially stated. Except for *Reichspostminister Ohnesorge*, the Allies as well as the German *Bundespost*<sup>111</sup> do not seem to have done further research into individual actors. The barriers to finding information on non-German actors were even greater, which is why the agents must be treated disproportionately. The limited analysis of relevant actors due to missing material leads to a more general description of the available sources for this project.

With 14 member administrations, there were many possible archives for EPTU research. Additionally, in 1942, there were other interested postal administrations that were either not invited, were invited and then uninvited or were observers at the congress of Vienna. This dissertation is based on archives on eleven European countries: Spain, France, Finland, Germany, Switzerland, Italy, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, the Netherlands and Croatia.

The main archives consulted were from the PTT administrations as well as the foreign ministries. Given the lack of an important connection between field post and the EPTU, no military archives were consulted. In addition to the gap caused by the war destruction, which occurred between January and November 1943 for important German files,<sup>112</sup> some difficulties arose when accessing documents were the different organisation of each national archive and the relative ignorance surrounding the EPTU at the time of archiving. Additionally, most documents are Western European; the main reason for this bias are language barriers that hindered the necessary preparatory work, such as research in online catalogues. The Croatian archives

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111 Postal service of the Federal Republic of Germany.

112 Cf. Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/11621 – R4701/11627.

provided documents, but these are limited to official agreements. The service of the Slovakian national archives answered upon request that they found no documents related to the EPTU. Similarly, no references to the EPTU were found in the Bulgarian and Albanian archives. Another difficulty is the lack of documentation from Belgian and British archives. Unfortunately, the research did not identify any folders containing information on involvement in or discussions about the EPTU. These findings contrast the results of other archival work, which heavily suggests that the Belgian postal administration was invited to participate in the congress but declined and was then uninvited.<sup>113</sup> Furthermore, the facts that the Dutch government-in-exile was informed about the EPTU<sup>114</sup> and that a London-based German newspaper of the resistance published information on the union<sup>115</sup> suggest that the British government and postal administration most likely knew about the EPTU.

To be precise about the terms used in this work, they must be clarified. One key term is *standard*, along with related terms such as *standardisation* and *standardisation process*. *Standards* are a tool to reduce complexity, and they can influence all areas of life. Concerning infrastructure, ‘standards are about compatibility and connectivity or combinability of “systems” and its components in general’.<sup>116</sup> The aim of infrastructure standardisation is to work together at interfaces (interconnectivity), merge entire systems (interoperability) or transmit singular components (portability).<sup>117</sup> According to Katza Brøgger, standards are a ‘form of regulation’<sup>118</sup> that only exist when they are being practiced and are not rigid but instead constantly transformed, not only with regard to themselves but also to new developments and the processes that formed them.<sup>119</sup> Gerold Ambrosius and Henrich-Franke have defined standards as a ‘comparatively uniform or harmonised way to produce or carry out something that has established itself over other

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113 Cf. Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/11615.

114 Cf. Nationaal Archief, Den Haag, Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken te Londen (Londens Archief), nummer toegang 2.05.80, inventarisnummer 4044.

115 PTT Archiv, Bern, P-00C\_0108\_01 Arbeiter Zeitung: “Gefährliche Postverhandlungen”, 15.10.1942

116 Writer’s own translation: “Bei Standards geht es um die Vereinbarkeit, Anschlussfähigkeit bzw. Kombinierbarkeit von Systemen und ihren Komponenten im Allgemeinen”, Ambrosius, Standards und Standardisierung, p. 18.

117 Ibid., p. 15-18.

118 Brøgger, Katza: *Governing through standards. The faceless masters of higher education: the Bologna process, the EU and the open method of coordination*, Springer 2019 (Educational governance research, volume 10), p. 73.

119 Ibid., p. 75.

ways and is generally accepted and usually applied (or is intended to)'.<sup>120</sup> The International Organisation for Standardisation describes them as the 'formula for the best way of doing something'.<sup>121</sup> More specifically, Olivier Borraz defines a standard as a 'document established by consensus that provides, for common and repeated use, rules, guidelines or characteristics for activities or their results, aimed at the achievement of the optimum degree of order in a given context'.<sup>122</sup> This definition best describes what standards are in the framework of this work: the result of experts negotiating and finding a consensual solution.

This work analyses three types of standards: organisational standards, administrative-operational standards and tariffs. Organisational standards are those that shape an organisation, such as a postal union; for example, voting procedures or language provisions, as well as the structures created to formalise negotiations. Administrative-operational standards describe the rules for administrative procedures between administrations. Finally, tariffs concern all aspects related to postage.

This work thus examines three typical dimensions that Benz also uses in his comparative work on the integration of the postal infrastructure services<sup>123</sup>: first, the polity, which designates the structures in which standardisation processes happen; second, politics, which describe the decision-making and negotiation processes; and third, policy, which is defined as the contents – in this case, the standards – agreed upon by international postal services.<sup>124</sup>

Usually, legal and technical standards are included in the examination of standards in postal history. However, these standards were not negotiated within the EPTU. Legal standards designate agreed-upon rules translated into national (or international) law. In the case of translating these standards into law, this means that a unified postal law emerges solely for international postal relations. One could argue that the EPTU agreement would qualify as such a legal standard. However, the standards discussed in the agreement and the EPTU regulations for postal services did not change

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120 Ambrosius, Gerold / Henrich-Franke, Christian: *Integration of infrastructures in Europe in historical comparison*, Springer 2016, p. 135.

121 International Organization for Standardization: *ISO STANDARDS ARE INTERNATIONALLY AGREED BY EXPERTS*, URL: <https://www.iso.org/standards.html> (last access: 09.06.2020).

122 Borraz, Olivier: Governing Standards. The Rise of Standardization Processes in France and in the EU. In *Governance* 20 (2007), p. 57-84. DOI: 10.1111/j.1468-0491.2007.00344.x., p. 57.

123 Benz, Integration von Infrastrukturen, p. 30.

124 Rohe, Karl: *Politik. Begriffe und Wirklichkeit*, Kohlhammer 1994, p. 61-66.

postal law: They were simply further processing an already-existing legal framework. Additionally, there was an understanding – at least between the German postal administration and the German Foreign Ministry – that the agreement should not be turned into an object of international law at that time.<sup>125</sup> The other administrations agreed, though the request for the governments to declare the EPTU a states' treaty was formulated during the congress by the Hungarian delegate von Forster.<sup>126</sup> In Germany, this was more the wish of the Foreign Ministry than the *Reichspost*, but the latter was aware that it needed the approval of the Foreign Ministry. When Carl Bilfinger, a German constitutional and international law expert, wrote an article that suggested that the EPTU agreement could be more than an inter-administrative agreement and could constitute an international treaty,<sup>127</sup> the *Reichspostministerium* and the Foreign Ministry reacted quickly to dismiss this claim. Foreign Ministry envoy Georg Martius argued 'that Bilfinger's work is by no means fortunate from the perspective of the neutral countries'.<sup>128</sup> The representative from the *Reichspostministerium*, Friedrich Risch, agreed and confirmed that his press office would not further use Bilfinger's article.<sup>129</sup> The embassies in the neutral countries of Spain and Portugal were instructed to use a language regime that underlined the administrative character of the agreement and emphasised that a treaty between states would only be considered later.<sup>130</sup>

Technical standards are here defined as 'a means to achieve control and to regulate or coordinate the production and uses of technology. (...) [They] are a prerequisite for enabling the (international) interlinking of technical components and systems'.<sup>131</sup> In contrast to the negotiations surrounding the postal car innovations within the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century,<sup>132</sup> these technical aspects were not on the EPTU's agenda.

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- 125 Politisches Archiv, Berlin, R106301, Martius an Dir.HaPol., 19.06.1942.  
126 Europäischer Postkongress, p. 94.  
127 Cf. Bilfinger, Carl: Völkerrechtliche Betrachtungen zum ersten europäischen Postkongreß, in: *Postarchiv*, Bd. 71 (1943), p. 101-115.  
128 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R901/116969, Vermerk Martius, 29.07.1943.  
129 Ibid.  
130 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R901/116969, von Selzem an die Deutsche Botschaft Madrid, Gesandtschaft Bern, Lissabon und Stockholm, 03.08.1943.  
131 Hommels, Anique/ Schueler, Judith / Fickers, Andreas: Introduction, in: Judith Schueler, Judith/ Fickers, Andreas / Hommels, Anique (Eds.): *Bargaining norms, arguing standards. Negotiating technical standards* (STT/Beweton publications, no 74), 2008, p. 12-17, p. 13.  
132 Benz, Integration von Infrastrukturen, p. 177.

Having defined the standards pertinent for this work and those omitted from it, the work moves on to discuss the term ‘standardisation’. This is important as ‘standardisation runs through the postal history of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century as a clear thread’.<sup>133</sup> The unions served as a platform for it.<sup>134</sup> *Standardisation* ‘includes the development and approval of standards, the process of making these standards available, the acceptance and subsequent implementation of standards and the impact of them.’<sup>135</sup> The term highlights the processual and dynamic aspects of setting standards.<sup>136</sup> Another aspect of standardisation is especially important for this work: ‘Standardisation should be understood as technological as well as social and political’.<sup>137</sup> Thus, the standards resulting from standardisation reflect which ‘interests, values and norms will be institutionalised’.<sup>138</sup> Standardisation can thus also be understood as a normative act expressing the collective identity of the actors involved.<sup>139</sup> A *standardisation process* is defined as the ‘continual production, distribution or reproduction of’<sup>140</sup> standards; it denotes something more extensive than standardisation by including several cycles of standardisation. There are ‘high stakes involved in standardisation processes’<sup>141</sup> that concern technical, economic and political issues as well as prestige, reputation<sup>142</sup> and power. Finally, setting standards means essen-

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- 133 Writer’s own translation: “Standardisierungen durchziehen die Postgeschichte des 19. und 20. Jahrhunderts gleichsam wie ein roter Faden”, Neusch, *Standardisierungen im Postverkehr*, p. 60.
- 134 Neusch, *Standardisierungen im Postverkehr*, p. 68.
- 135 Vries, Henk de: Standardisation: A Business Science Perspective, in: Schueler, Judith / Fickers, Andreas / Hommels, Anique (Eds.): *Bargaining norms, arguing standards. Negotiating technical standards* (STT/Beweton publicaties, no 74), 2008, p. 18-33, p. 26.
- 136 Ambrosius / Henrich-Franke, *Integration of infrastructures*, p. 141.
- 137 Hommels / Schueler / Fickers, *Introduction*, p. 13.
- 138 Egyedi, Tineke: A Research Autobiography from an STS Perspective, in: Schueler, Judith / Fickers, Andreas / Hommels, Anique (Eds.): *Bargaining norms, arguing standards. Negotiating technical standards* (STT/Beweton publicaties, no 74) (2008), p. 34-47, p. 38.
- 139 Fickers, Andreas / Hommels, Anique / Schueler, Judith: *Conclusions: Implications for Research and Policy*, in: Schueler, Judith / Fickers, Andreas / Hommels, Anique (Eds.): *Bargaining norms, arguing standards. Negotiating technical standards* (STT/Beweton publicaties, no 74) (2008), p. 144-153, p. 148-152.
- 140 Brøgger, *Governing through standards*, p. 73.
- 141 Hommels / Schueler / Fickers, *Introduction*, p. 13.
- 142 *Ibid.*

tially also governing. This is of particular importance in this discussion because the experts within the PTT administrations aimed to work as much as possible without political influence.<sup>143</sup>

One result of standardisation and standardisation processes in Europe is the integration of infrastructures that occurred through the harmonisation of systems. As such, there are important parallels between how European integration and standardisation are theorised. Importantly, these theories are mostly conceptualised for times of peace, making it difficult to apply them to the situations of war and hegemony that this work addresses. The two main theories on European integration, inter-governmentalism and neo-functionalism, define integration as the transfer of competencies to a supranational body. However, the agreements in the EPTU occurred at the inter-administrative level, even though ministerial and governmental actors were involved in the process. Thus, the EPTU was not an inter-governmental or supranational organisation, and it seems inadequate to use inter-governmentalist and neo-functionalist theories on European integration to explain why standardisation happened during World War II. Nevertheless, these theories provide a partial basis for explaining coordination processes in this case. Liberal inter-governmentalism explains coordination based on vital interests that develop nationally and are aggregated on a European level. This theory is embedded in a rational-choice model of international cooperation.<sup>144</sup> Instead, neo-functionalism focusses on the spill-over effects from previous coordination as the main cause of coordinative efforts.<sup>145</sup> This means that the integration of one policy necessitates the integration of another policy. In addition to these two major theories, the less-studied theory of constructivism focusses on the influence of institutions on actors' preferences.<sup>146</sup> Constructivism's main idea appears pertinent here; the theory maintains that coordination stems from the formation of epistemic communities that work towards greater harmonisation. Constructivist theories stipulate that these communities shape their members and the ideas actors have regarding European integration, which in turn influences outcomes. Existing institutions play a crucial role in this theory by building the actors'

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143 See Part I Chapter I Technocratic traditions and the new political regime.

144 Pollack, Mark A.: Theorizing EU Policy-Making, in: Wallace, Helen / Pollack Mark A. / Young, Alasdair R. (Eds.): *Policy-making in the European Union*, 7th edition, Oxford: 2014, p. 12-45, p. 16-18.

145 Ibid., p. 14-15.

146 Ibid., p. 21.

environments and creating systems of meaning that subsequently impact individuals' behaviours, ideas and preferences.<sup>147</sup>

Dirk Leuffen, Berthold Rittberger and Frank Schimmelfennig have developed the concept of differentiated integration. While this concept is not entirely applicable here, it sheds light on the fact that integration processes happen on different levels and with different intensities.<sup>148</sup> This concept can be transferred to standardisation: for instance, Leuffen, Rittberger and Schimmelfennig distinguish between horizontal and vertical integration. Horizontal integration denotes the territorial expansion of the integration, or how many countries are involved. In contrast, vertical integration describes the intensity of integration, or how much political power has been given to a higher body. In this work, this idea is used as follows. Horizontal standardisation designates the geographical expansion of the standard and answers the following questions: in how many territories was this standard valid? How far did this system of governance reach? Vertical standardisation describes different intensities of standards. Two intensities are defined: bilateral standards and multilateral standards.

Standardisation and the standardisation process in international technocratic cooperation were cooperative and mostly formal, meaning that standards were set after bilateral and multilateral consultation through what is called 'cooperative committee standardisation'.<sup>149</sup> Additionally, cooperation was overwhelmingly formalised even though informal talks were also occurring. Final decision-making on the negotiated standards occurred in a formal setting between the representatives of the national administrations. For the coordination of standards, Ambrosius formulates three possible scenarios the actors may confront: everyone wants the same standard; everyone wants a common standard but not the same one; not everyone wants one common standard.<sup>150</sup> These scenarios are less complex than real ones,<sup>151</sup> especially during a war, but can be used as templates for further elaboration. The positions taken by different actors are not fixed: they are in flux and can vary at different stages of standard-setting.

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147 Ibid., p. 21-23.

148 Leuffen, Dirk / Rittberger, Berthold / Schimmelfennig, Frank: *Differentiated Integration. Explaining Variation in the European Union*, Basingstoke 2012, p. 757-767.

149 Ambrosius / Henrich-Franke, Integration of infrastructures, p. 145.

150 Ambrosius, Standards und Standardisierung, p. 24.

151 Ambrosius / Henrich-Franke, Integration of infrastructures, p. 147.

The *Cambridge Dictionary* defines cooperation as ‘the act of working together with someone or doing what they ask you’.<sup>152</sup> From a business perspective, cooperation denotes ‘the process of working with another company, organisation, or country in order to achieve something’.<sup>153</sup> Both definitions match the project of the EPTU. In this work, ‘cooperation’ denotes actors working together in formal and informal settings; this does not explicitly mean that different actors must have the same interests, that there are no conflicts between them or that there must be a successful result. This study does not use the word ‘collaboration’ as it has an additional historical connotation that varies from country to country and is thus not fruitful when telling a pan-European story. The work also does not focus on whether the actors involved incriminated themselves by working with representatives from the administrations of Fascist Italy and National Socialist Germany.

This text follows Douglas C. North’s definition of ‘institutions’ as ‘the rules of the game in a society or, more formally, (...) the humanly devised constraints that shape human interaction’.<sup>154</sup> Institutions set the formal and informal frameworks for behavioural choices, including within international organisations.<sup>155</sup> In contrast to this exogenous approach to institutions, Masahiko Aoki defines institutions as the ‘endogenous equilibrium outcome of the game’.<sup>156</sup> Institutions are only stable if they are reconfirmed by multiple games and based on shared beliefs.<sup>157</sup> Whether defined exogenously or endogenously, institutions have the power to shape individuals’ and groups’ actions and expectations. Additionally, institutional change is assumed to be complex and lengthy to achieve. While these definitions stem from game theory, they are nevertheless fruitful for this work. As is shown throughout this work, the relevant actors were involved in different levels of politics, both national and international, and in different policy areas, namely postal services and foreign policy. Following Robert D. Putnam,<sup>158</sup>

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152 Without Author (2014): cooperation, in: Cambridge Dictionary, Cambridge University Press, URL: <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/de/worterbuch/englisch/cooperation> (last access: 05.01.2021)

153 Ibid.

154 North, Douglass C.: Institutions. In *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 5 (1991), p. 97–112. DOI: 10.1257/jep.5.1.97., p. 97.

155 North, Douglass C.: *Institutions, institutional change and economic performance*, Cambridge 1990, p. 3-5.

156 Aoki, Masahiko: *Toward a comparative institutional analysis*, Cambridge 2001, p. 6.

157 Ibid., p. 9-10.

158 Putnam, Robert D.: Diplomacy and domestic politics: The logic of two-level games, in: *International organization* 42.3 (1988), p. 427-460.



one could characterise the creation and workings of the EPTU as a two-level, if not a multi-level, game. All these levels are shaped by different institutions which influence actions and choices. In contrast to the term ‘institutions’, ‘organisations’ is only used to describe the entity of the EPTU or the UPU as a whole. All other features of these organisations – such as regulations, provisions, informal rules and the resulting standards – fall under the scope of the term ‘institutions’.

The use of the term ‘European’ requires a short explanation as well. The EPTU did not cover all states typically considered European. Spain, France, the United Kingdom, and Russia for example are missing. Nevertheless, a glance at the geopolitical situation – at least in 1942 – indicates that the Union’s territory includes a large part of geographical Europe, and thus it is appropriate to use the descriptor of European cooperation in postal services. Additionally, the actors involved also used the term European. This work does not attach any ethical, moral or political ideals to the terms ‘Europe’ or ‘European’. These terms are simply an expression of the geographic attachment of the project discussed. Finally, the term ‘Axis powers’ is here mainly understood as Germany and Italy. This is not to disregard the importance of the Japanese ally, yet as Daniel Hedinger points out the three imperial powers’ alliance started to disentangle at the end of 1942<sup>159</sup> which is when the EPTU was founded. In addition, Japan did not play an important role in the EPTU.

Methodologically, this work follows a hermeneutic approach to analyse the EPTU; a template used in this work is the sequential policy model. When defining the standardisation process, multiple attempts have been made to define clear-cut phases of policy development with different stages. According to Werner Jann and Kai Wegrich, the most conventional classification of phases is agenda-setting, policy formulation, decision-making, implementation and evaluation. These stages represent an ideal type of policymaking, and it is highly unlikely that policymaking processes follow them strictly.<sup>160</sup> Frank Pfetsch identifies the following stages of the negotiation cycle: pre-negotiations, agenda-setting, negotiation formula, detailed negotiations, agreements, implementation and post-negotiations. These

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159 Hedinger, Daniel: *Die Achse. Berlin-Rom-Tokio 1919-1946*. München 2021, p. 368.

160 Jann, Werner / Wegrich, Kai: Theories of the Policy Cycle, in: Fischer, Frank / Miller Gerald J. / Sindey, Mara S. (Eds.): *Handbook of Public Policy Analysis*, 2017, p.43–62, p. 43-44.

stages are iterative.<sup>161</sup> This work divides the timeframe from 1942 to 1945 – or the years in which the EPTU existed – into three phases according to the establishment and functioning of the EPTU. This division is partially based on the model used by Henrich-Franke to compare the creation of the Conference of European Postal and Telecommunications Administrations (CEPT) and the Organisation for Cooperation of Socialist Countries in the Field of Telecommunication and Postal Communications (OCSC) in the 1950s.<sup>162</sup> The phases consist of the initiation phase, the decision phase and the working phase. More phases are barely detectable, coincide or both in the case of the EPTU, and a crucial part of the policy cycle – the evaluation – is largely missing due to the short span of the EPTU's existence. The initiation phase describes the time of draft elaboration, problem formulation, information collection and agenda-setting. This phase also includes the first negotiations. During the decision phase, content issues are resolved, and actors negotiate, identify compromises and create a consensus. A final decision regarding the adoption or rejection of a policy is then made. The working phase includes policy implementation as well as the further development of the union.<sup>163</sup>

This work is divided into three parts. Part I deals with the ideational background of a European PTT union created during a time of war. In the context of the EPTU, this means the intersecting of two internationalisms: technocratic and fascist internationalism. Both internationalisms influenced the founding and workings of the EPTU, and they are thus key to the analysis of standard-setting in postal services during the Second World War. On this basis, the initiation phase of the EPTU, as derived from the sequential model of the policy cycle described above, is analysed along three main lines: the discussions within the German *Reichspostministerium*; the cooperation between the Axis powers; the bilateral agreements concluded between the *Reichspost* and the majority of later member administrations of the EPTU. The main aim is to define the different arenas which were part

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161 Pfetsch, Frank: Bargaining and Arguing as Communicative Modes of Strategic, Social, Economic, Political Interaction, in: Schueler, Judith / Fickers, Andreas / Hommels, Anique (Eds.): *Bargaining norms, arguing standards. Negotiating technical standards* (STT/Beweton publicaties, no 74), 2008, p. 52-65, p. 56.

162 Henrich-Franke, Christian: Die Gründung europäischer Infrastrukturorganisationen im Ost/West-Vergleich: die PTT Organisationen OSS und CEPT, in: Ambrosius, Gerold / Neusch, Cornelius / Henrich-Franke, Christian (Eds.): *Internationale Politik und Integration europäischer Infrastrukturen in Geschichte und Gegenwart*. 1. Auflage. Baden-Baden 2010, p. 113-142, p. 117.

163 Jann / Wegrich, Theories of the Policy Cycle, p. 46-51; Henrich-Franke, Die Gründung europäischer Infrastrukturorganisationen, p. 113-115.

of the early standardisation. Furthermore, the examination includes findings on the actors. Ultimately, the part attempts to describe the actors' network involved in setting standards within and outside of the emerging EPTU's structures. The initiation phase was crucial for the standardisation as almost all important decisions were made during this phase. A strong German hegemony characterised both the bilateral negotiations between the German and Italian PTT administrations and the expansion of the bilateral efforts to include more European administrations; this applies not just to the purely organisational aspect of the negotiations but also to the contents of standards related to union-building and international postal services.

Part II focusses on the decision phase, wherein the administrations chose to create a union, and revolves around the decision-making processes during the congress of Vienna. Although only a week long, the congress was essential in finalising the one-year-long preparations done mainly by the German and Italian PTT administrations. These preparations allowed the congress to be short: it mostly confirmed the results of prior negotiations. Thus, the congress officially created the first-ever European postal union, and the German postal system for letters and postcards was used for the international postal services between member administrations. After analysing the setting up of the congress and the negotiations concerning the EPTU's organisational structure, the part examines the decisions regarding postal services in detail. This examination concentrates on the committee sessions and their dynamics because documents on any informal talks are unfortunately missing. Finally, the part briefly analyses the politico-symbolic aspect of the stamps that accompanied the congress and the foundation of the union. Part II provides evidence that the experts mainly influenced the decision-making regarding postal standards, and German hegemony and the German administration played an influential role as they wanted to control the newly founded union, its contents and after-war postal governance in Europe.

Part III examines the working phase of the union and the continuities and discontinuities between the EPTU and post-war European cooperation in postal services. It evaluates the implementation of the 1942 provisions and the work and negotiations during the 1943 postal committee conference in Copenhagen, particularly the development of the standards set in 1942 and the introduction of new standards within this short period. Additionally, it analyses the continued efforts to enlarge the union, driven mainly by the *Reichspost*, and improve relationships with countries that remained outside of the EPTU. There is also a brief discussion of when to date the end of the union. This part thus discusses the final period of the EPTU's existence,

which was shaped by failed attempts to continue the EPTU's work. Although the first European postal union ended, two other European restricted organisations were founded after the Second World War, and European cooperation in postal services continued. Therefore, Part III gives an overview of the continuities and discontinuities in the institutions, actors, tariff standards and symbols. This evaluation goes beyond a comparison of different standards based on the previous findings and considers who set the standards. As much as possible, it considers both the CEPT in 1959 and the OCSC founded in 1958; however, research on the OCSC, which was attached to the Soviet Union, is scarce. This part shows that the Second World War can represent connection between the inter- and post-war periods in the field of European cooperation in postal services. However, the political situation influenced the shape of the after-war organisations and how they were created, meaning that there are also some important discontinuities.

# Part I: The European Postal and Telecommunications Union – An Axis Initiative for the “New Postal Europe” (1940-1942)

While World War II hindered the work of the UPU and the ITU,<sup>164</sup> international PTT cooperation remained important; this was true not just for Europe during the war but also for the Axis vision of future peacetime Europe, namely one in which the Axis powers won the war and Fascism ruled the continent. The victory would lead to a ‘new order of Europe’. While it was unclear what the ‘New Europe’ was supposed to look like,<sup>165</sup> influential individuals within the Italian and German PTT administrations, notably German *Reichspostminister* Ohnesorge, thought it should include a European restricted postal union shaped after the technocratic ideals of existing international unions. Both technical and political aims led to two German-Italian cooperation initiatives, one focused on expert telecommunication cooperation in working groups<sup>166</sup> and the other on creating a European organisation that would guarantee post-war influence in the UPU.<sup>167</sup> The latter initiative prevailed and was set up such that working groups also found a place in the organisation; this aligned with the developments of technocratic internationalism, demonstrating that the initiative unified both technocratic traditions and fascist and/or National-Socialist ideas for a ‘New Europe’. Based on this ideological framework, members of the German and Italian PTT administrations cooperated to achieve the first European PTT union. While the initial meeting had a representative context, including celebrating the Axis powers, the following meetings became more technical. The cooperative efforts encountered more difficulties, described in the Chapter II of this part. In particular, the Italian side felt increasingly outplayed by and unequal to the German administration, which led the Italian

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164 PTT Archiv, Bern, P-00C\_0128\_11, Expédition des documents de service par le bureau international aux Administrations de l’Union, 05.1943.

165 Mazower, *Hitler’s Empire*, p. 555.

166 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/12284, Niederschrift über die zu gründende AG Europäischer Fernmeldeverwaltungen.

167 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/11248, Vortrag auf der Gesamtsitzung des RPM von Oberpoststrat Dr. Timm.

Foreign Ministry to intervene and bring the project to a halt.<sup>168</sup> More members were needed to make the union European. The German administration mainly did outreach to other European PTT administrations, and their success was mixed. While most administrations from non-occupied countries were technically interested, they were politically unwilling to join the union. The German administration consulted intensely with the German Foreign Ministry regarding which of the occupied countries could and should join. The most vibrant discussion revolved around France's membership, and the French administration ultimately did not participate in the congress.<sup>169</sup> Before delving into the inter-administrative negotiations that took place before the congress, the following chapter describes the framework in which these negotiations took place: at the intersection between technocratic internationalism and the political quests for a 'New Europe' by different fascist actors. After this, Chapter II and III of this part detail the preparations within the *Reichspostministerium*, between the German and the Italian PTT administrations and between the *Reichspost* and other European PTT administrations.

### Chapter I: Technocratic traditions and the new political regime

Johan Schot and Vincent van Lagendijk coined the term 'technocratic internationalism' to describe the experts' international cooperation in the area of infrastructures. Based on their research on interwar cooperation regarding motorways and electricity networks, they argue that technocracy is a 'way of business leaders, engineers, politicians, intellectuals and their respective organisations and parties to create a new societal order for nation-states in Europe plagued by huge problems of instability, social conflict, unemployment and economic depression'.<sup>170</sup> They define its three main elements as 'the myth of networks, an assumed harmony between nation-states, and a preference for a working method which separates technical issues from politics'.<sup>171</sup> Networks are seen as a form of governance because

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168 Politisches Archiv, Berlin, R106301, an Dir. Ha Pol, 23.07.1942.

169 Europäischer Postkongress, p. 10.

170 Schot, Johan / Lagendijk, Vincent: Technocratic Internationalism in the Interwar Years. Building Europe on Motorways and Electricity Networks, in: *Journal of Modern European History* 6 (2008), p. 196-217. DOI: 10.17104/1611-8944\_2008\_2\_196, p. 197.

171 Schot / Lagendijk, Technocratic Internationalism, p. 198.

they mirror the status and power of specific interests and can influence policies in a lasting way without entirely determining them.<sup>172</sup> The so-called myth of networks describes the idea that networks, for example, infrastructures, almost automatically create integration and peace. The second element, ‘the denial of the dichotomy between national and international interests’,<sup>173</sup> can be summarised as follows: politics hinder optimal network-building, as nationalism leads to inefficiencies. Instead, technical aspects should play a crucial role in coordinating international networks. Nevertheless, this does not mean that some engineers or experts were not convinced nationalists:<sup>174</sup> ‘In contrast (to diplomats), the experts regarded themselves as generous, able to overcome prejudices and capable of seeking consensus through rational communication’.<sup>175</sup> Consequently, the third element of technocratic internationalism was to avoid a politicised discussion by simply not defining the issues as political, which left experts and engineers to discuss them and identify the best solution.<sup>176</sup> Limiting the role of politics did not mean that the experts wanted to avoid regulation; rather, they aimed at ‘organised and planned capitalism’<sup>177</sup>. In sum, the main goal was to establish an improved international economy through technocratic cooperation and coordination to work towards prosperity and peace. This had to occur without the interference of political actors, which shows how standardisation processes can amount to governing without government. Economic integration was to precede political integration.<sup>178</sup>

### *International infrastructure cooperation and technocratism*

Technocratic internationalism developed based on the evolution of international cooperation during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when the UPU was also founded.

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172 Kaiser, Wolfram / Gehler, Michael / Leucht, Brigitte : Networks in Informal European Governance. Diachronic Perspectives on the EU as a Multi-Level-Polity, in: Gehler, Michael / Kaiser, Wolfram / Leucht, Brigitte (Eds.): *Netzwerke im europäischen Mehrebenensystem. Von 1945 bis zur Gegenwart, Networks in European multi-level governance; from 1945 to the present*. Universität Hildesheim. Institut für Geschichte. Wien 2009 (Historische Forschungen (Vienna, Austria), 6), p. 28-30.

173 Ibid.

174 Ibid.

175 Kaiser, Wolfram / Schot, Johan W.: *Writing the rules for Europe. Experts, cartels, and international organizations*. 2014 (Making Europe), p. 42.

176 Schot / Legendijk, Technocratic Internationalism, p. 199.

177 Ibid., p. 198.

178 Ibid., p. 198.

This period is one of non-binding agreements (or arrangements) that did not have to be ratified nationally and addressed international administrative issues. The time was characterised by ‘three outstanding recurring features: the periodic congress or conference, the permanent committee or commission, and the bureau’.<sup>179</sup> Though no binding decisions were made, opt-outs were difficult as decisions made by consensus were preferred, and peer pressure was high.<sup>180</sup>

While this ideology was never made public or promoted by, for example, an international movement, it was a ‘very influential background ideology’<sup>181</sup> that gained momentum due to the instability caused by the Great Depression at the end of the 1920s. The networks were regarded as a way to surmount economic and political problems and ‘restore the pre-war prestige of European “civilisation”’.<sup>182</sup> This thought was rather popular in interwar Europe and matched the fascist rhetoric around Europe. Technocratic internationalism did not have a clear European vision; networks were often considered larger than continental borders. According to Schot and Lagendijk, due to its hidden character, one must examine discussions of different projects to identify the technocratic internationalist discourse.<sup>183</sup> They note that the implementation of projects following the ideas of technocratic internationalism had long-term effects: the ideology became important again after the Second World War as it contained a ‘clear vision on how to construct European infrastructures’.<sup>184</sup>

‘Technocratic internationalism’ has been used to explain and describe developments in international infrastructure cooperation and coordination. Ambrosius and Henrich-Franke have emphasised the ‘increasing importance of informal cooperation in stakeholder networks’<sup>185</sup> during the interwar period. This led to a change in the relationship between traditional diplomats and the experts within international infrastructure organisations such as the UPU. The latter ‘shared professional and pertinent convictions (and based their actions on a scientific and technological reasoning)’<sup>186</sup> which did not always fall in line with government directions. Ambrosius and Henrich-Franke also stress the uniting power of technical expertise

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179 Lyons, Francis S. L.: *Internationalism in Europe. 1815-1914*, Sythoff 1963, p. 29.

180 Kaiser / Schot, *Writing the rules for Europe*, p. 42.

181 Schot / Lagendijk, *Technocratic Internationalism*, p. 199.

182 Ibid.

183 Ibid., p. 199-200.

184 Ibid., p. 214.

185 Ambrosius / Henrich-Franke, *Integration of infrastructures*, p. 5.

186 Ibid.



within the organisation and its specific culture. Technical expertise was also used externally to distinguish the organisation from other institutions.<sup>187</sup>

Furthermore, Henrich-Franke argues that the organisational setting of the international infrastructure organisations reinforced the emergence of epistemic expert communities. The more political questions, such as the organisations' structure and the basic rules, were discussed in plenipotentiary; however, the experts could discuss the coordination of technical standards almost autonomously in so-called consultative committees, which depoliticised the issues and excluded foreign ministries and their diplomats from the process as much as possible. Additionally, one of the main guiding ideas was that 'scientifically informed policy-making' could guarantee the interoperability and compatibility of different national systems.<sup>188</sup> These consultative committees thus also fostered epistemic communities because the regular conferences gave ample opportunity for socialising, and, according to Laborie, they were quickly ritualised. Change in the higher ranks of the administrations was slow so that a steady network could develop.<sup>189</sup> Thus, a particular network governance in PTT developed under the umbrella of technocratic internationalism.

Laborie uses the term 'technical delegate' to describe the public officials who cooperate in these networks by finding a balance between being a national agent and a transnational public service creator. He describes the strategy used to overcome tensions as a formula of 'mutual concession'.<sup>190</sup> While the international infrastructure organisations may have seemed less far-reaching than political ones, they were 'more realistic'<sup>191</sup> and efficient due to the lack of political and diplomatic influence. For example, while Germany had already left the League of Nations by 1939, German experts still participated in the UPU congress of that year in Buenos Aires in the same year.<sup>192</sup> The formalisation of technocratic practices via the creation of unions gave experts a strong position that, in return, further legitimised their autonomy and role. Thereby, they created their own spheres of influence to the detriment of diplomatic and national political actors.<sup>193</sup>

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187 Ibid.

188 Henrich-Franke, *Comparing Cultures*, p. 288.

189 Laborie, *L'Europe mise en réseaux*, p. 115-122.

190 Laborie, Léonard: *Fragile links, frozen identities: the governance of Fragile links, frozen identities: the governance of telecommunication networks and Europe (1944–53)*. In *History and Technology* 27 (2011), p. 311-330.; p. 313.

191 Ibid., p. 311.

192 Ibid., p. 311-314.

193 Kaiser / Schot, *Writing the rules for Europe*, p. 39 and 296.

Erik van der Vleuten and Arne Kaijser call these experts ‘Europe’s Network Builders’,<sup>194</sup> stressing the importance of the human factor in network-building. Reinalda calls them more generally ‘public system builders’.<sup>195</sup> This understanding of experts makes visible the conception, building, negotiation and contesting of networks. It also makes possible an analysis of the broader context in which the experts cooperated. Van der Vleuten and Kaijser underline the importance of power structures in trans-European networks: ‘While Europe was increasingly integrated, it was a game of winners and losers, of successful and failed projects, of cooperation, negotiations and conflicts’.<sup>196</sup> They also outline that the idea of unifying Europe by building transnational infrastructure networks gained hold in the 1930s and was taken up by the National Socialists as part of their conception of a ‘New Europe’. Kaiser and Schot emphasise that this period ‘highlighted the ambivalence and pitfalls of the experts’ preference for depoliticising policy-making’.<sup>197</sup> They argue that experts detached technocratic goals from their methods and served the fascist and National Socialists regimes sometimes out of ideological conviction or because authoritarian regimes promised faster processes than democratic ones. The development projects gave them room to realise their own plans.<sup>198</sup> With respect to this argument, Jeffrey Herf describes an ‘ideal typical construct’<sup>199</sup> termed reactionary modernism; this was an important current of thought within conservative and National Socialist thinking that embraced both anti-modernist romanticism and modern technology. According to Herf, reactionary modernists realised that Germany needed to be technologically advanced to be a strong nation and could not just rely on being a *Kulturnation*. Joseph Goebbels talked about a ‘century of (...) steel-like romanticism’.<sup>200</sup> Though paradoxical, reactionary modernism combined two traditional discourses on technology

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194 van der Vleuten, Erik / Kaijser, Arne: *Networking Europe. Transnational infrastructures and the shaping of Europe, 1850-2000* Sagamore Beach, Mass. 2006, p. 31.

195 Reinalda, Bob: *Routledge history of international organizations. From 1815 to the present day*. London 2009, p. 95.

196 van der Vleuten / Kaijser, *Networking Europe*, p. 34.

197 Kaiser / Schot, *Writing the rules for Europe*, p. 74.

198 *Ibid.*, p. 74-75.

199 Herf, Jeffrey: *Reactionary modernism. Technology, culture, and politics in Weimar and the Third Reich*. Cambridge, Massachusetts 1984, p. 1.

200 *Ibid.*, p. 3.

that are usually seen as opposites – namely romance<sup>201</sup> and tragedy<sup>202,203</sup> – allowing technocrats to become esteemed members of National Socialist society. However, there were restrictions to the compatibility of technocratic ideas with National Socialism. Renneberg and Walker state that ‘the Third Reich had room for individual technocrats, not for a technocratic movement’.<sup>204</sup> This incompatibility also led to a disconnect of technocratic methods from technocratic aims.<sup>205</sup> Nevertheless, the ideological contrast between the internationalist (and rationalist) characteristics of technocracy and National Socialism might not be as automatic and drastic as sometimes described.<sup>206</sup> Another important element of the ‘internationalist’ framework of the EPTU to consider is the propaganda surrounding the term ‘New Europe’; the term described an internationalist fascist Europe and gained importance at the start of the Second World War when the German *Wehrmacht* quickly occupied large parts of Europe.

### *The ‘New Europe’ propaganda*

Though it might seem counterintuitive due to the nationalistic elements of National Socialist and fascist ideology, different actors within Germany actively pursued international projects and goals – especially with their Italian counterparts – that focused on the European continent. This development is described as an innovation in the history of European imperialism: ‘The Nazis shared that imperial desire but did something that was unprecedented and shocking to the European mind of the early twentieth century: they tried

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201 Very briefly described: Technological development is good and leads to societal progress. For more cf. Heßler, Martina: *Kulturgeschichte der Technik*. Frankfurt am Main 2012. (Historische Einführungen, Band 13). Available online at <http://www.campus.de/livebook/9783593397405/html5.html>.

202 Very briefly described: Technological advancement endangers humanity. For more cf. Heßler, *Kulturgeschichte*

203 Heßler, *Kulturgeschichte*, p. 21-22.

204 Writer’s own translation: “Das Dritte Reich hatte Platz für einzelne Technokraten, nicht für eine technokratische Bewegung”, Renneberg, Monika / Walker, Mark: *Naturwissenschaftler, Techniker und der Nationalsozialismus*, in: Dirk Bönkel (Ed.): *Ich diene nur der Technik. Sieben Karrieren zwischen 1940 und 1950*. Berlin 1995 (Berliner Beiträge zur Technikgeschichte und Industriekultur, Bd. 13), p. 15-24, p. 18.

205 *Ibid.*, p. 18.

206 *Ibid.*, p. 17.

to rebuild their Empire in Europe itself and, what is more, to do it at break-neck speed in only a few years'.<sup>207</sup>

It is all the more interesting as Hitler is often said to have had no interest in creating European structures and saw Europe simply as an instrument for propaganda and a region to economically exploit to benefit Germany.<sup>208</sup> In 1928, Mussolini declared Fascism to be a non-exportable product.<sup>209</sup> Similarly, Himmler and Goebbels<sup>210</sup> are said to have had no concrete use for 'Europe' and did not use the power-political opportunity to create a new order.<sup>211</sup> Thus, authors such as Wolfgang Schmale denominate the German National Socialists' ideas for Europe as being 'anti-Europe'.<sup>212</sup> This term highlights the difference between the Europeanism of the 1920s and the exploitation of its ideas as well as the fascist plans for Europe in the 1930s (and consequently the 1940s).<sup>213</sup> Recent research, however, suggests that Fascism was both a national and transnational movement that led to entanglements between fascists on different levels, from high-ranking officials to poets and composers: 'Rejecting democracy, liberalism, communism and socialism as well as the politics of compromise and negotiation, fascist parties and groups undoubtedly shared a common point of departure'.<sup>214</sup>

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207 Mazower, Hitler's Empire, p. XXXIX.

208 Cf. Gruchmann, Lothar: Nationalsozialistische Großraumordnung. Die Konstruktion einer "deutschen Monroe-Doktrin", in: *Schriftenreihe der Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 4 (1962), p. 7-167, p. 113-114; Kühberger, Europa als Strahlenbündel, p. 17, Sandkühler, Europa und der Nationalsozialismus, p. 430, Martin, The Nazi-fascist new order for European culture, p. 8.

209 Fioravanzo, Monica: Italian Fascism from a Transnational Perspective: The Debate on the New European Order (1930- 1945), in: Bauerkämper, Arnd / Grzegorz Rossoliński-Liebe, Grzegorz (Eds.): *Fascism without borders. Transnational connections and cooperation between movements and regimes in Europe from 1918 to 1945*. 1st.; New York 2017, p. 243-263, p. 243.

210 Benjamin Martin however shows Goebbels as an important actor in the creation of a new order for European culture (Martin, The Nazi-fascist new order for European culture, p. 6).

211 Sandkühler, Thomas: Europa und der Nationalsozialismus Ideologie. Währungspolitik, Massengewalt, in: *Zeithistorische Forschungen/Studies in Contemporary History* 9 (2012), p. 428-441, p. 430.

212 Writer's own translation: "Antieuropa" Schmale, Geschichte Europas, p. 116.

213 Schmale, Geschichte Europas, p. 115.

214 Bauerkämper, Arnd / Rossoliński-Liebe, Grzegorz: Fascism without borders. Transnational Connection and Cooperation between Movements and Regimes in Europe, in: Bauerkämper, Arnd / Rossoliński-Liebe, Grzegorz (Eds.): *Fascism without borders. Transnational connections and cooperation between movements and regimes in Europe from 1918 to 1945*. 1st. New York 2017, p. 1-38, p. 3.

While research on the Nazi or Axis rule in Europe has been primarily focused on military, economic and ethnic aspects, in recent years, studies have also examined cultural, social and other policies. To fruitfully use the existing findings for this work, this section focusses on three hypotheses derived from earlier works: First, the New Order of Europe was a propaganda term, not a straightforward concept with strategic goals or milestones. Second, this ambiguity led to different strategies within internationalist fascist projects: some organisations were upheld but infiltrated, while others were ‘replaced’ with new, though often similar structures. Third, the German National Socialists’ internationalist efforts aimed to gain hegemony in different areas of international cooperation.

The so-called ‘New Order of Europe’, ‘New European Order’ or ‘New Europe’<sup>215</sup> cannot be described as a coherent concept or strategy.<sup>216</sup> A concrete policy for Europe was never established, and projects in this direction were prevented.<sup>217</sup> Mazower concludes, ‘The more the Nazis talked about Europe, the less they actually seemed to be saying’.<sup>218</sup> This conceptual emptiness of the terms was also reflected in the diverging realities in occupied countries: ‘German occupation policy and its enforcement in Europe were seriously uncoordinated, impeding the implementation of larger political schemes’.<sup>219</sup> However, the sources relevant to the EPTU frequently use these terms. This mostly occurs when the actors wanted to place the EPTU into a larger, non-PTT context and legitimise it politically, as is shown in the following parts.

Researchers have focussed on different elements of the ‘New Europe’: Schmale notes that the main aspects of the National Socialist concept of Europe were racism and the strong German hegemony over the continent,<sup>220</sup> which were also visible in the *Generalplan Ost*.<sup>221</sup> Sandkühler sees the heart of the concept in the anti-Bolshevism and the anti-Semitism that legitimised

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215 In German, the efforts are often summed up in the term: “Neuordnung Europas” – however, there are multiple terms in other languages.

216 Kühberger, *Europa als Strahlenbündel*, p. 11.

217 Schmale, *Geschichte Europas*, p. 115-121.

218 Mazower, *Hitler’s Empire*, p. 555.

219 Lund, Joachim: Denmark and the ‘European New Order’, 1940-1942, in: *Contemporary European History* 13 (2004), p. 305-321. DOI: 10.1017/S096077-7304001742, p. 307.

220 Schmale, *Geschichte Europas*, p. 116-119.

221 Eichholtz, Dietrich: Der “Generalplan Ost” als genozidale Variante der imperialistischen Ostexpansion, in: Rössler, Mechthild / Schleiermacher, Sabine / Tollmien, Cordula: *Der "Generalplan Ost". Hauptlinien der nationalsozialistischen Planungs- und Vernichtungspolitik*, Berlin 1993, p. 118-121.

the war as a preventive and defensive action of Europe against Jewish Bolshevism.<sup>222</sup> This conception of Europe drew on interwar ideas of the continent, both spatial concepts (Lebensraum<sup>223</sup>) and more organisational ones (*Mitteuropa*,<sup>224</sup> International Paneuropean Movement<sup>225</sup>).<sup>226</sup> The spatial concept of the Lebensraum, introduced by Friedrich Ratzel,<sup>227</sup> was most prominently picked up by Carl Schmitt, who coined the term *Großraum*.<sup>228</sup> This region was supposed to be constituted by several states and dominated by one empire. It was also to be an economic entity before becoming a political one.<sup>229</sup> Schmitt divided the world into different *Großräume* and claimed an interdiction against intervention by powers foreign to the region.<sup>230</sup> However, he did not determine the borders of this *Großraum*. This also holds for German annexation plans. It was unclear which countries were seen as Germanic enough to become part of an often-envisioned Greater Germanic Reich: for example, while Norway, Denmark, the Netherlands and Flanders could have been integrated into the Greater Germanic Reich, the integration of Finland and Sweden was less sure. Similarly, high dependence on Germany, as in the case of Hungary and Romania, could simply lead to integration into the *Großraum* but not the Reich. Since the Fascists and National Socialists did not win the war, they did not implement their ideas for a ‘New Europe’, so that the economic exploitation of states occupied by Germany remained the main common element of the Nazi ‘New Europe’. The terms were mostly used for internal and external propaganda and mobilisation purposes and, according to Walter Post,<sup>231</sup> even became the cornerstone of German foreign propaganda in the autumn of

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222 Sandkühler, *Europa und der Nationalsozialismus*, p. 430.

223 Concept of the “living space” in the East which provided grounds for the war in the East of Europe where this living space was supposed to be established for German settlers.

224 “Middle Europe”: A concept that foresaw a deeper integration within central Europe with a strong German dominance.

225 Founded in 1923 under the leadership of Richard Nikolaus Coudenhove-Kalergi, the movement envisioned a unified European state.

226 Kletzin, Birgit: *Europa aus Rasse und Raum. Die nationalsozialistische Idee der Neuen Ordnung*. Münster 2000 (Region, Nation, Europa, Bd. 2), p. 2-9.

227 *Ibid.*, p. 11.

228 Writer’s own translation: Great Space.

229 Böttcher, Winfried: *Klassiker des europäischen Denkens. Friedens- und Europavorstellungen aus 700 Jahren europäischer Kulturgeschichte*, 1. Aufl., Baden-Baden 2014, p. 584.

230 *Ibid.*

231 Post, Walter: *Hitlers Europa. Die europäische Wirtschaftsgemeinschaft 1940-1945*. 1. Aufl. Stegen am Ammersee 2011, p. 164.

1940. The content of the ‘Europe’ propaganda was not homogeneous: it varied from actor to actor and public to public, which only emphasises the term’s hollowness. It remains unknown whether this was intentional or simply a leadership failure. The lack of a concrete vision for Europe caused tensions with fascists in occupied countries. Countries other than Germany and Italy also discussed the concepts for Europe: the ‘to-be-created fascist Europe found (...) specific national legitimisations’.<sup>232</sup> Robert Grunert explains these legitimisations as aiming to guarantee a degree of national sovereignty, which he deems illusory and indicative of the dichotomy between nationalism and transnational solidarity.<sup>233</sup> Thus, ‘pan-Europeanism was not only espoused by liberals and democrats but also exploited by the Fascists and National Socialists’<sup>234</sup> and had different national characteristics. Johannes Dafinger argues that all concepts defined a specific European element – culturally or biologically – that had to be defended against the common enemy, understood as the United States of America and the United Kingdom or the Soviet Union or all of them.<sup>235</sup> However, the German side did not fully address these ideas. As Ferenc Szálasi from the Hungarian Arrow Cross Party put it, ‘I know what Moscow wants to make out of Europe, (...) I know for sure too, what London and Washington want to make out of Europe, but I do not know yet what Berlin wants to concretely make with Europe regarding its big construction’.<sup>236</sup> Thus, there was no concrete German plan to create a European federation under National Socialist leadership: ‘Instead, Germany installed a ruling system over the continent with racist downgrading that partially followed transnational concepts, but essentially solidified and shifted hierarchies between nation states’.<sup>237</sup> This

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232 Writer’s own translation: “zu schaffende faschistische Europa fand (...) national-spezifische Legitimationen”, Grunert, Robert: *Der Europagedanke westeuropäischer faschistischer Bewegungen 1940-1945*, 2012, p. 446.

233 Grunert, *Der Europagedanke*, p. 447.

234 Bauerkämper / Rossoliński-Liebe, *Fascism without borders*, p. 13.

235 Dafinger, Johannes: The Nazi “New Europe”: Transnational Concepts of a Fascist and Völkisch Order for the Continent, in: Bauerkämper, Arnd / Grzegorz Rossoliński-Liebe, Grzegorz (Eds.): *Fascism without borders. Transnational connections and cooperation between movements and regimes in Europe from 1918 to 1945*, 1st., New York 2017, p. 265-287, p. 275-277.

236 Grunert, *Der Europagedanke*, p. 446.

237 Writer’s own translation: “Stattdessen installierte Deutschland eine rassistisch abgestufte Herrschaftsordnung über den Kontinent, die partiell transnationalen Prinzipien folgte, in wesentlichen Hinsichten aber nationalstaatliche Hierarchien befestigte und verschob”, Sandkühler, *Europa und der Nationalsozialismus*, p. 440.

system relied heavily on military hegemony and on the will of national leaders to maintain national sovereignty. These leaders often used the system as an argument for collaboration, as was the case in France<sup>238</sup> and Denmark.<sup>239</sup> Nonetheless, it remained very clear that Germany was at the top of the hierarchy ruling over the continent.

*From propaganda to concrete projects: conflict or cooperation?*

Despite the absence of a clear European agenda, there were concrete projects and plans that would, in one way or another, match the ‘New Europe’ concept and surely also included the EPTU. Cooperation between fascist movements on a common approach to Europe was quite difficult, partially due to their nationalistic sentiment and the supposed superiority of their own group.

Madeleine Herren describes Italian, German and Japanese Fascists’ internationalist strategies as reinforcing their governance beyond their own territory by copying the pattern of the international organisations that they did not accept ideologically. She points to the competitiveness of German and Italian organisations responsible for expanding Fascist rule over the continent. Herren emphasises that the war was a catalyst for the creation of new international organisations, for which a handbook was developed but never finished: the *Deutsche Kongress Zentrale* actively collected information on international organisations by accumulating the archival material of occupied countries. Herren defines three ways of dealing with international organisations: ‘close (...), undercut (...) or transform and/or create’.<sup>240</sup> She calls the International Chamber of Law, created in 1941, the ‘most striking product of fascist internationalism in its German incarnation’<sup>241</sup>. The Chamber’s task was less to exchange expertise than to build a propaganda platform.<sup>242</sup>

In the area of culture, Benjamin Martin notes that the common Italian-German effort to create a new cultural European order began even before 1936 and unions such as the ‘Union of International Writers (1934), the

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238 Durand, Yves: *Le Nouvel Ordre européen nazi. La collaboration politique dans l'Europe allemande, 1938-1945*. Bruxelles 1990 (Questions au XXe siècle, 20), p. 56.

239 Cf. Lund, Denmark and the European New Order.

240 Herren, Fascist Internationalism, p. 208.

241 Ibid.

242 Cf. Herren, Fascist Internationalism.



Permanent Council for International Cooperation among Composers (1934), the International Film Chamber (1935) and the European Writers Union (1941) (...) were built on the practices of the kind associated with precisely the internationalism that Nazis and fascists rejected'.<sup>243</sup> He also notes the importance of controlling international or transnational networks to gain hegemony. Although Germans and Italians approached culture differently, Martin states that divisions were put aside to achieve a common goal, which was revising 'the existing international order and (...) [the] national-imperialist expansion'.<sup>244</sup> However, because both partners thought of themselves as culturally superior, the cooperation was highly conflictual.<sup>245</sup>

In the area of social policy, the book *Nazism Across Borders*, edited by Sandrine Kott and Kiran Klaus Patel, highlights the influence of German social policy abroad, not just during the Nazi dictatorship and the war but also afterwards. The editors address attempts at international cooperation, for example, via the World Congress for Leisure Time and Recreation (Hamburg, 1936); however, they also point to the vigorous competition between nations that characterised internationalist Fascism.<sup>246</sup> In terms of economics, the Schlotterer committee discussed economic ideas for future cooperation in financial and monetary policy. It even concretised ideas for a customs and currency union (under German hegemony).<sup>247</sup>

Another highly specific project was Baldur von Schirach's endeavour to establish a European Youth Association<sup>248</sup> with a founding congress in Vienna in October 1942, which Hitler ultimately shut down. The federation was led by a German-Italian presidium to underline the special positions of Italy and Germany. Working groups were formed, but their discussions were limited to content prepared before the congress. Though the Italian and German delegations were symbolically equated, the German representatives were granted a prerogative regarding the interpretation of what the 'New Europe' was supposed to be.<sup>249</sup> In November 1942, reacting to Schirach's initiative, Hitler forbade any further planning or execution of European and international congresses or unions. He made clear that the *Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei* (NSDAP) and its organisations did not have a European or international mission and that foreign policy was

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243 Martin, *The Nazi-fascist new order for European culture*, p. 6.

244 *Ibid.*, p. 11.

245 *Ibid.*

246 Kott / Patel, *Nazi Social Policy*, p. 2-11.

247 Sandkühler, *Europa und der Nationalsozialismus*, p. 434-435.

248 Writer's own translation: "Europäischer Jugendverband" (Kühberger, *Europa als Strahlenbündel*, p. 14).

249 Kühberger, *Europa als Strahlenbündel*, p. 15-28.

not a field for experiments and personal projects.<sup>250</sup> This is interesting from two points of view: First, the German *Reichspost* saw the international standardisation of postal services as a part of its mission at least until 1944 and possibly even longer if the war had not prevented it. This demonstrates the heterogeneity and contradictions within the National Socialist polycracy and its plans for Europe. Second, until 1943, building a German-Italian political twin pair, as Baldur von Schirach and Renato Ricci did in the case of youth policy, had been an opportunity to profile individuals in both countries. Mussolini and Hitler's vague decision to work together triggered cooperation efforts between lower-ranking officials. The Axis was inter alia used to gain an advantage in comparison with other competitors, but the working of the Axis itself also depended on such personal connections.<sup>251</sup>

Regarding the hierarchical structures within these concrete projects, the German-Italian relationship is of great interest. The Axis' strength has been frequently questioned, and cooperation between these powers has been described as rather conflictual. Grunert has analysed the Italian-German relations concerning the ideas for a future Europe. He found that there were common features, such as the commitment to the *Volksgemeinschaft*,<sup>252</sup> and common concepts of the enemy, such as democracy, liberalism and Marxism. These concepts could be easily linked to the war opponents. German National Socialists and Italian Fascists also agreed that fascist organisation and planning would solve the problems of modernity. When discussing a united Europe, supranational approaches that still respected national sovereignty were being considered. However, as Alfred Rosenberg envisioned,<sup>253</sup> states were not to be equal within this racist federation of neighbours, as had been the case within the League of Nations. Rather, it would follow a principle of 'organic' hierarchies.<sup>254</sup> In Rosenberg's eyes, this would of course mean that 'Germany was at the top'.<sup>255</sup> Similar to the German National Socialists, the Italian Fascists saw themselves as the leaders of the 'New Europe', or at least as equal partners, counting on the Germans to accept the cultural superiority of the heirs of the Roman Empire.<sup>256</sup> As Kühberger notes, countries attempted to legitimise European unification by referencing the past, and the National Socialists viewed the Roman Empire

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250 Ibid., p. 17.

251 Cf. Fehlhaber, Netzwerke der Achse.

252 Writer's own translation: Community of the people.

253 Sandkühler, Europa und der Nationalsozialismus, p. 430.

254 Grunert, Der Europagedanke, p. 442-444.

255 Fioravanzo, Italian Fascism, p. 246.

256 Ibid., p. 252.

as a model for successful European integration.<sup>257</sup> While differences between the two powers could be ignored and side-lined initially, the war developments made them increasingly visible. For example, the two powers' expansionary goals clashed in the Mediterranean. When 'Francesco Orestano, the president of the Italian Philosophical Society, (...) criticised the concept of a super-race and claimed the spiritual superiority of Italy'<sup>258</sup> in two articles in 1942, serious diplomatic tensions arose between the Axis powers. The German National Socialists were convinced of the 'superiority of [the] German race and German blood'.<sup>259</sup> With the support of smaller allies, such as Hungary and Romania, Italy tried to convince its Axis partner to adhere to the principle of national sovereignty within a 1943 seven-point declaration for the 'New Europe'. They surely also did this to protect themselves from an exploitative Germany. However, Ribbentrop, the German Foreign minister, rejected the idea<sup>260</sup> even as his ministry was working on a plan for a European federation<sup>261</sup> that was never discussed with the Italian ally. Thus, Monica Fioravanzo describes the Axis relationship from the Italian side as follows: 'from collaboration to fear, and from competition to "resignation"'.<sup>262</sup> This supports the hypothesis that the Axis powers were unable and mostly unwilling to effectively synchronise their power.<sup>263</sup> One reason might have been that the German National Socialist plans for Europe were entirely orientated towards German needs and dominance over the continent.<sup>264</sup> Generally, it aimed to strip France of its power position on the continent and reconstruct the 'middle' of Europe into an empire of all Germans.

Finally, as Gosewinkel notes, 'illiberal concepts of Europe and Europeanisation through violence and war were possibly necessary conditions to the thorough and successful process of European integration'.<sup>265</sup> Sandkühler similarly supports the hypothesis that the view of the National Socialist

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257 Kühberger, *Europa als Strahlenbündel*, p. 18.

258 Fioravanzo, *Italian Fascism*, p. 252.

259 *Ibid.*, p. 255.

260 *Ibid.*, p. 252.

261 Post, *Hitlers Europa*, p. 284.

262 Fioravanzo, *Italian Fascism*, p. 255.

263 Behring, 2019, p. 387.

264 Mazower, *Hitler's Empire*, p. 559.

265 Writer's own translation: "antiliberale Europakonzeptionen und Europäisierung durch Gewalt und Krieg waren möglicherweise die notwendigen Bedingungen für den durchgreifenden und erfolgreichen Prozess der europäischen Integration", Gosewinkel, Dieter: *Antiliberales Europa – eine andere Integrationsge-*

Regime as anti-European and illiberal highlights a caesura where instead continuities should be discussed.<sup>266</sup> The examples of specific projects such as those in social policy also support this line of thought. Therefore, this work also examines the repercussions of the EPTU in after-war Europe.

The two internationalisms – technocratic and fascist – formed a fruitful combination for the creation of the first European PTT union. The aims of the epistemic PTT community – to work towards further harmonisation and the ‘New Europe’ propaganda – overlapped enough to legitimise this project. It can be assumed that this epistemic community with a shared belief system existed as the UPU had organised international postal relations since 1874. Moreover, the GAPU, established in 1850, showed that a union could unify a territory’s postal services before political unification. While different actors proposed plans for a European postal union, the plans were never implemented because of opposition from most administrations. Thus, the ‘new postal Europe’ was actually built on plans from an ‘old’ Europe.

By maintaining their independence from political projects, the administrations’ experts could form a community outside traditional diplomatic frameworks. One common understanding was that infrastructures could overcome national borders and bring people together, thereby creating bonds that could prevent war. However, the preference for depoliticised decision-making also opened the door for common projects within the new fascist regimes, especially when the technocratic direction and political direction could be brought together.

The conceptual emptiness of the ‘New Europe’ gave the administrations enough leeway for their European projects. As shown, all National Socialist ideas of the ‘New Europe’ reduced Europe to a tool to serve German needs and reinforce German dominance, which often made cooperation and collaboration conflictual. While transnational initiatives were started and German-Italian projects and cooperation, in particular, were politically supported until 1943, there was never a clear path for establishing a fascist Europe between the Axis partners. Italian and German Fascists did not see themselves as equals. Within the ‘New Europe’ concept, other European Fascists saw the opportunity to maintain a certain level of national independence from their occupiers. In sum, European undertakings were often volatile and required a challenging balance between hegemony and com-

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schichte, in: *Zeithistorische Forschungen/Studies in Contemporary History, Online-Ausgabe* (9), 2012, p. 351-364. Available online at <https://zeithistorische-forschungen.de/3-2012/id=4496>, checked on 6/18/2018, p. 364.

266 Sandkühler, *Europa und der Nationalsozialismus*, p. 429.

promise. The predominantly bilateral preparatory work for the first European postal union addressed both sources of conflict – namely, the balance between Italy and Germany and between the occupying forces and occupied countries.

*Chapter II: German-Italian preparations: A cooperation with conflicts (1940-1942)*

The EPTU's initiation phase began approximately in the spring of 1940. According to ministerial director Risch, Risch first discussed the project with the Peoples Commissioner for postal services and telecommunications, Sergeitschuk, during a trip where the terms of a Russian-German PTT agreement were negotiated.<sup>267</sup> As outlined above, the initiation phase is the time dedicated to draft development, problem formulation, information collection and agenda-setting. This phase also includes the first negotiations. This chapter aims to analyse these processes as comprehensively as possible, focussing on standards and standardisation processes.

The end of the initiation phase is set here in October 1942, when the provisions of EPTU were negotiated during a congress. As is described in Part II, it is debatable whether there was an initiation phase because it seems as though the German and Italian PTT administrations took and enforced many decisions that were no longer discussed in the decision phase. However, as is shown in the following, the Italian and German PTT administrations did not act alone or in unison, which led to discussions during the congress. Additionally, the other PTT administrations had higher agency in the technical committees than in the general meetings, making change possible. This is why, although the lines between the end of the EPTU's initiation phase and the beginning of its decision phase are arguably blurred, this work discusses an initiation phase.

Before considering the details of the initiation phase from different points of view, it is appropriate to view a timeline<sup>268</sup> of events from the spring of 1940 to October 1942.

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267 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. 3.

268 Unfortunately, some information could not be found in the archives. It would have been interesting to see when the occupied countries had been contacted about a bilateral agreement but due to destruction these documents are missing.

Date	Event
Spring 1940	Friedrich Risch travels to Russia and mentions the idea of creating a European Postal Union.
September 1940	In a speech during the plenipotentiary session of the <i>Reichspostministerium</i> , Kurt Timm, an advisor to the <i>Reichspostminister</i> Ohnesorge, sets down the criteria for a European Postal Union.
End of 1940	The Foreign Department in the <i>Reichspostministerium</i> is founded, and Friedrich Risch heads it.
November 1940	Italian and German telecommunications experts meet in Bolzano to discuss further cooperation before the background of the global unions not being effective anymore due to the war.
16 to 18 January 1941	Italian and German telecommunications experts meet in Munich to discuss the creation of a working group for European telecommunications administrations.
February 1941	Risch presents plans for an EPTU to the directors of the <i>Reichspost</i> .
21 June 1942	<i>Reichspostminister</i> Ohnesorge writes to Hitler to gain his approval for the project.
July 1941	<i>Reichspostminister</i> Ohnesorge informs the German Foreign Minister Ribbentrop of the plans (summer 1941). Ohnesorge contacts the Swedish and Finnish postal administrations with the plans for a bilateral agreement and a European Postal Union.
28 August to 3 September 1941	Italian and German PTT administrations meet to negotiate the terms of three bilateral agreements: one for postal services and two for telecommunications.
October 1941	Italian-German PTT agreements are signed.
December 1941 to August 1942	Bilateral agreements between the German PTT administration and eight other PTT administrations, starting with the Finnish one in December 1941, are signed.
January 1942	Ohnesorge and the Italian minister for transports (which was assigned the PTT administration), Host-Venturi, meet.
7 May 1942	An Italian-German meeting occurs in Berlin to further simplify the Italian-German PTT services and prepare the EPTU.

Date	Event
25 July 1942	A planned meeting between the Italian, German, Hungarian and Danish PTT administrations fails due to the resistance of the Italian Foreign Ministry.
End of July 1942	Risch and postal Director General Giuseppe Pession (Italy) meet in Cortina to get the project back on track.
Beginning of August 1942	German, Italian, Danish and Hungarian representatives meet in Innsbruck to prepare for the congress.
10 August 1942	Official invitations are sent to all possible participants.
19 August 1942	The German PTT administration sends preparatory documents (including drafts of the final agreements) to all administrations that had thus far agreed to participate.
September 1942	In September 1942, no bilateral meetings occurred. Yet the preparations continued, and important decisions were made, such as which administrations would participate in the congress.
12 October 1942	The European Postal congress in Vienna begins.

Table 1: Timeline 'Initiation phase'

As this shows, several processes overlapped: There is an agenda-setting process on both the German and Italian-German levels. While the German plans focussed more on postal services, the Italian-German initiative concentrated on telecommunications. Thus, it remains difficult to determine where the idea of creating a European PTT union during war times originated. The timetable suggests it was an idea of the *Reichspostministerium*; however, there is credible evidence to suggest that the Italian-German plans for a working group in telecommunications evolved into the ideas for the EPTU or were at least used to promote the project of the EPTU after finding a partner in the Italian PTT administration. As will be shown, the processes might have been simultaneous and have had different goals. Unfortunately, it is not possible to determine the exact way the project took shape.

In addition to the developments in Italy and Germany, other European PTT administrations were contacted and integrated into the preparation process to varying extents. Some of these administrations remained in the process with different intensities. The German PTT administration, in particular, worked hard to conclude bilateral agreements to prepare for the EPTU.

The next two chapters analyse the initiation phase from different perspectives to answer the following questions: Which actors were relevant in

deciding which individual PTT administration entered the process? Why did some administrations, such as the French and the Belgian ones, not participate in the congress? What standards were set in preparation for the decision phase? How did the Italian and German PTT administrations work together – was the relationship harmonious or conflictual? How can the cooperation between the German PTT administration and other administrations, particularly those in occupied countries, be described?

To address these questions and analyse the initiation phase, this chapter examines the German agenda-setting by presenting the main actors and evaluating the internal German preparatory work based on presentations by Kurt Timm and Friedrich Risch. It further assesses how the *Reichspost* presented the project outside of Germany to the expert community. After that, it focusses on the Italian-German cooperation paving the way for the realisation of the EPTU. The following chapter studies the interactions with the other administrations. To do so, it compares and analyses the content of, and changes to, the bilateral agreements between the German and other European PTT administrations from mostly occupied countries. It evaluates the contact with administrations that would later be observers before turning to the administrations that were ultimately not present at the congress yet were contacted.

*The German actors: between life-long public servants to fast climbers in the profession*

As the *Reichspost* played a vital role in establishing the EPTU and setting postal standards within it, it is important to consider those involved in the project. First and foremost are the minister, Wilhelm Ohnesorge, and the undersecretary, Friedrich Risch. Ohnesorge defended the creation of the union to Hitler and other ministers; his relationship with Hitler proved particularly important at different steps. Friedrich Risch, head of the department of foreign affairs, coordinated, organised and kept the EPTU running together with Friedrich Reiss, who was responsible for all the postal aspects within the union. This section considers other *Reichspost* staff when relevant. Furthermore, the *Reichspost* had its own ‘diplomats’, the appointees of the *Reichspost* abroad, in the occupied countries who were supposed to facilitate the relationship in the area of postal services. Their status depended on the rules of occupation within the country. When there was a



military government, an *Armeefeldpostmeister*<sup>269</sup> was responsible for cooperation with the national PTT administration. This was the case in France and Belgium. In countries where a national government was established or continued, such as Norway and Denmark, the appointees were part of the diplomatic mission to the country. Due to their importance for the EPTU project, this section also briefly discusses them.

The key question when analysing these agents is their way of connecting technocratic internationalism and National Socialism: Were they interested in implementing a ‘New Europe’ according to National Socialist ideology or simply continuing the standardising work of the prior decades? Were the aims of technocratic cooperation simply a welcome tool for the implementation of German rule over postal Europe? These questions cannot be answered definitively for everyone. Still, it is particularly interesting in the case of the *Reichspost*’s staff in comparison with the representatives of other countries because the ministry was subject to a political conformity process once Ohnesorge became minister. This led to an exchange of high functionaries in 1937 and 1938, and it became important to only promote individuals that were ideologically aligned to the National Socialist regime.<sup>270</sup>

Wilhelm Ohnesorge was born in 1872 and was the son of a civil servant in a telegraph office; he started his career within the *Reichspost* at 18.<sup>271</sup> His estate shows that he had a keen interest in technology for research and innovation; the notes from his studies show he attended a wide range of classes concerning natural sciences and postal and telecommunication services.<sup>272</sup> In 1893, just three years after entering postal and telecommunication services, he filed to obtain his first patent for a telephone he invented, and the imperial *Reichspatentamt*<sup>273</sup> granted him this patent. In the 1890s, his first publication expressed his admiration for Heinrich von Stephan. His passion for research was also visible in his time as *Reichspostminister*, where the research institute of the *Deutsche Reichspost*, later the research

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269 Military field postmaster.

270 As it is impossible to determine whether or not a single person was a convinced National Socialist, the focus will be here on the individual actions taken within the respective fields of responsibility.

271 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/25644 and Lotz, *Die Deutsche Reichspost*, p. 22.

272 Bundesarchiv, Koblenz, N1159/7.

273 Bundesarchiv, Koblenz, N1159/5, Patent 21.01.1893.

institute of the *Reichspostminister*,<sup>274</sup> was said to have researched to create the first atomic bomb<sup>275</sup>.

Ohnesorge was promoted relatively quickly, which could be evidence of his technical capabilities. These promotions moved him to Berlin.<sup>276</sup> During the First World War, he made a name for himself and became the leading telegraph director in the *Großen Hauptquartier*.<sup>277</sup> In this position, he was the first to establish a connection between Mézières in France and Constantinople (Turkey).<sup>278</sup> This was possible due to his invention, the ‘Ohnesorge-Vierdrahtschaltung’.<sup>279</sup> His position as an *Alter Kämpfer*<sup>280</sup> helped him maintain his power during the Third Reich, as Hitler had a special admiration for them. As Anja Stanciu notes, ‘the party direction stylised them as heroes and role models for the younger leading cadres’.<sup>281</sup> She furthermore describes how those *Alte Kämpfer* who the Nazi regime quickly promoted had already joined the NSDAP in the 1920s or when it was founded again in 1925.<sup>282</sup> This was also the case for Ohnesorge,<sup>283</sup> who met Hitler in Munich and proudly presented himself as the founder of the first local NSDAP group outside of Bavaria, namely in Dortmund, where he worked until 1924. During the *Ruhrkrise*, he maintained the telecommunications connection despite the prohibition of the allies, for which he was promoted. He became the head of a department in the chief post office and was again promoted in 1929 to the head of the *Reichspostzentralamt* – the centre of the telecommunications development of the *Reichspost*.<sup>284</sup>

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274 Lotz, *Die Deutsche Reichspost*, p. 31.

275 Ueberschär, *Die Deutsche Reichspost*, p. 16.

276 Lotz, *Die Deutsche Reichspost*, p. 22.

277 “Großes Hauptquartier” can be translated to ‘Great headquarters’: This was the name of the mobile command center of the German forces in the wars 1870/1871 and the First World War.

278 Vogt, Martin: Das Staatsunternehmen “Deutsche Reichspost” in den Jahren der Weimarer Republik, in: Lotz, Wolfgang (Ed.): *Deutsche Postgeschichte. Essays und Bilder*. Berlin 1989, p. 241-287, p. 265.

279 Writer’s own translation: ‘Ohnesorge – four wire link’, Lotz, *Die Deutsche Reichspost*, p. 22.

280 The term “*Alte Kämpfer*” designates individuals who had fought in the First World War.

281 Writer’s own translation: “Die Parteiführung stilisierte sie öffentlich zu Helden der Bewegung und Vorbildern für jüngere Führungskader”. Stanciu, Anja: “*Alte Kämpfer*” der NSDAP. Eine Berliner Funktionselite 1926-1949. Köln 2018 (Zeithistorische Studien, Band 59), p. 123.

282 Stanciu, *Alte Kämpfer*, p. 132.

283 Listed as member 42 of the NSDAP. (Bundesarchiv, Koblenz, R4701/25641).

284 Lotz, *Die Deutsche Reichspost*, p. 23.

Political reasons surely underpinned his promotion to the position of the state secretary of the *Reichspost* on 1 March 1933; it was a sign of the new staff policy and occurred due to his close relationship with Hitler.<sup>285</sup> He also used this close relationship to avoid the subsuming of the *Reichspost* to the transport ministry in 1937 by highlighting the important public task that the *Reichspost* had to fulfil.<sup>286</sup> However, as described above, Ohnesorge was also a long-time civil servant with vast experience in all postal services and telecommunications matters (in peace and war time) who had a deep knowledge of technical affairs. He can thus neither be classified as a pure technician nor a pure politician.

Ohnesorge became the *Reichspostminister* on 2 February 1937 after then-minister Eltz-Rübenach lost Hitler's support because he did not want to receive the golden party badge or enter the NSDAP.<sup>287</sup> His eight years in office cannot be easily summarised, the following is nevertheless an attempt to do so: He was a loyal supporter of Hitler, whom he praised whenever possible, and whom he also supported financially. Part of the sale proceeds of the *Führermarken*<sup>288</sup> went directly into the *Kulturfonds des Führers*<sup>289, 290</sup>. He also considered it important that his staff was committed to National Socialism and its mission, which meant that he highly encouraged close ties to the party and its organisations. From the sources, it is clear that the organisation had especially close ties with the SS, whose members he also employed. The *Postschutz* was even made a unit of the SS in 1944. He believed that one task of the *Reichspost* was to support the war efforts, and he was considered a 'reliable enforcer of National Socialist policies also in the area of Jewish policies'.<sup>291</sup>

Jakob Nagel was his state secretary during his time as *Reichspostminister*. Nagel was an important confidant who had entered the NSDAP in 1931. Because he appears to have had only a secondary role in the EPTU and has been described as a person with no political ideas of his own, but simply as a loyal implementer of Ohnesorge's policies<sup>292</sup>, this section does not discuss

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285 Ibid., p. 22-28.

286 Ibid., p. 76.

287 Ueberschär, Gerd R.: Die deutsche Reichspost im Zweiten Weltkrieg, in: Lotz, Wolfgang (Ed.): *Deutsche Postgeschichte. Essays und Bilder*. Berlin 1989, p. 289-320, p. 289-290.

288 Stamps depicting Hitler.

289 Cultural fund which Hitler used for personal art purchases.

290 Ueberschär, Die deutsche Reichspost im Zweiten Weltkrieg, p. 292.

291 Writer's own translation: "zuverlässige Vollstrecker nationalsozialistischer Politik auch im Bereich der Judenpolitik", Ibid., p. 293.

292 Lotz, Die Deutsche Reichspost, p. 31.

him. The next person of interest is Friedrich Risch, the head of the Foreign Department within the *Reichspostministerium* from 1940 onwards.

Born on 23 May 1895 in Bavaria, Friedrich Adolf Risch was a trained jurist when he joined the *Reichspost* in Regensburg in 1924. He was promoted in 1934 and moved to Berlin, where he became part of the *Reichspostministerium*'s staff in 1938. He was known as one of Ohnesorge's men.<sup>293</sup> In 1939, he became director within the ministry and most probably remained in this position until the end of the Second World War.<sup>294</sup> He justified his promotion exclusively by pointing to his professional achievements.<sup>295</sup>

He was member 2,531,083 of the NSDAP, which he joined on 1 May 1933.<sup>296</sup> The postal student representation in Regensburg attested that he had already shown sympathy for the NSDAP in 1930 and attended their sessions before Hitler assumed power even though this would hurt his career: 'You can absolutely rely on him also in times of crisis'.<sup>297</sup> He became a member of the SS in April 1942, and his ranking advanced as time progressed.<sup>298</sup>

Since the sources are somewhat contradictory, it remains unclear what role he played in certain decisions, such as transforming the *Postschutz* into a unit of the SS.<sup>299</sup>

What is important for this work is that he became head of the Foreign Department in 1941 after working in the central department (Min-Z)<sup>300</sup> of the *Reichspostministerium*. In his former position, he despatched orders in the name of *Reichspostminister* Ohnesorge to exclude Jews from telephone

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

294 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/39833, Haupt-Kartei Risch.

295 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. 2.

296 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R9361-II-1076436, Abschrift Fragebogen, undated.

297 Writer's own translation: "Auf ihn ist auch in Krisenzeiten unbedingt Verlaß", Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R9361-II-1076436, Brief der Fachschaft Post Regensburg, 26.10.1936.

298 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/39833, R9361-II-550656, Dienstlaufbahn des Dr. Risch.

299 Schutzstaffel.

300 The central department (Zentralabteilung, short Min-Z) was the central department within the ministry that was tasked less with technical details but with political issues and the care of the *Reichspost*'s staff. (Ueberschär, *Die Deutsche Reichspost*, p. 29).

services.<sup>301</sup> Thus, one can assume that he was well aware of the consequences of the *Reichspost*'s ideological actions.

As head of the Foreign Department within the *Reichspostministerium*, he was in charge of the development of the EPTU. In the folder concerning his denazification process, he states that he first talked to the Russian PTT administration in 1940 about the project. Furthermore, he states that the EPTU project meant 'strongly swimming against the strong stream of National Socialist power politics'<sup>302</sup> and was 'a game against all rules of diplomacy'<sup>303</sup> as Germany had left the UPU. Nevertheless, his article 'Aims and tasks of a European Postal Union' had been printed in the UPU's journal. The British General Mance had also endorsed the union in a publication according to Risch.<sup>304</sup> From his point of view, he had only been able to create this union because he remained on technical, professional and neutral ground and because 'the National Socialist politicians, (...) *Reichspostminister* Ohnesorge not excluded, understood next to nothing of the matter'.<sup>305</sup> Regarding the experience and expertise that Ohnesorge likely gathered during his decade-long career and his role in World War I, Risch's account of the depth of Ohnesorge's understanding of the project has to be questioned. Furthermore, this work shows that Ohnesorge and the entire *Reichspostministerium* appear to have stood firmly behind this project and defended it against other ministries, both in Germany and abroad. As this study shows, Risch's role reflects the areas of tension surrounding the EPTU creation and implementation: namely, the tension between technocracy and ideology and between different actors – minister, foreign ministry and military.

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301 Löw, Andrea: *Die Verfolgung und Ermordung der europäischen Juden durch das nationalsozialistische Deutschland 1933-1945. Deutsches Reich und Protektorat Böhmen und Mähren. September 1939-September 1941*. Band 3. München 2012, p. 262.

302 Writer's own translation: "schweres Schwimmen gegen den starken Strom der nationalsozialistischen Machtpolitik", 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. 3.

303 Writer's own translation: "ein Spiel gegen alle Regeln der Diplomatie", *ibid.*, p. 3.

304 In the mentioned publication, this endorsement could not be found – neither in the original English version (p. 7) nor in the German translation. (Mance, *International Telecommunications*, p. 7; German edition: p. 8.).

305 Writer's own translation: "die nationalsozialistischen Politiker, (...) den Reichspostminister Ohnesorge nicht ausschließt, von der Materie so gut wie nichts verstanden", 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. 3.

Dr. Friedrich Reiss was one member of his team; he was responsible for international postal relations during the war. Although little material on him is available, his position and role in the *Bundespost* after the war, where he became the head of the department for foreign postal services, make him important to mention.<sup>306</sup>

Friedrich Reiss was born in 1900 in Bavaria and became a postal assessor in 1928 in Frankfurt (Main). After becoming a postal director, he found his way to the *Reichspost* in Berlin via stations in Dortmund, Minden and Paderborn. He became part of the *Reichspostministerium* in 1938 and under-secretary in November 1942.<sup>307</sup>

In April 1942, he oversaw the areas of postal congress, restricted unions within the UPU, special agreements with countries and the political and general affairs of the UPU. He was also assigned to issues regarding tariffs and the implementation of provisions within the UPU.<sup>308</sup>

In July 1944, his tasks were summarised under the heading ‘European postal affairs of general nature’,<sup>309</sup> which included a total of 19 topics. For this work, the following are important: tariff policy within the global and European postal services; restricted unions; EPTU agreements and regulations of postal services; preparation and execution of first committee session;<sup>310</sup> the supervision of the bureau of the EPTU in Vienna.<sup>311</sup>

Unfortunately, this is all that could be found concerning Friedrich Reiss. Based on the sources, he likely worked on the day-to-day tasks regarding the EPTU and was intensively involved in its creation and implementation (at least for postal services). During the congress in Vienna, he participated in the committee sessions for postal services and the agreement of the union. He was also present at the 1943 postal committee meeting in Copenhagen.<sup>312</sup>

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306 Bundesarchiv, Sankt-Augustin, B257-ORG/8, Organisationsplan des Bundesministeriums für das Post- und Fernmeldewesen, Stand April 1956.

307 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/39834, Haupt-Kartei Reiss.

308 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/11256, Abteilung Min-A, p. 3, April 1942.

309 Writer’s own translation: “Europäische Postangelegenheiten allgemeiner Art”, Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/11256, Geschäftsverteilungsplan, Abteilung Min-A, Ref.1, July 1944, p. 29.

310 Committee 1 is the committee for postal service within the EPTU.

311 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/11256, Geschäftsverteilungsplan, Abteilung Min-A, Ref.1, July 1944, p. 29.

312 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/25935, Zusammensetzung des Ausschusses 1, June 1943.

Finally, this section presents the group of appointees abroad. This on-the-ground network in foreign countries maintained important direct contact with the other administrations, which was impossible from Berlin.

As elaborated further in this work, the *Reichspost*'s appointees abroad played an important role in the relations with other European PTT administrations. In total, 14 appointees accompanied the delegations to the congress in Vienna and reported back to the diplomatic representations in the different countries<sup>313</sup>. Even though the French, Belgian, Greek and Serbian PTT administration were not present in Vienna, there were appointees to France and Belgium (*Armeefeldpostmeister* Müller) and Greece and Serbia (*Armeefeldpostmeister* Derichweiler). There is not enough information in the archives to trace all of their careers,<sup>314</sup> but there are relevant documents for 10 of them. The following table gives a short overview of the development of their positions within the *Reichspost*.

Name	Position in 10/1942	With the Reichspost since (at age)	Promotion to the position in 10/1942	Appointed to
Dipl.-Ing. Wilhelm Engelhardt <sup>315</sup>	<i>Postrat</i>	1936 (27)	1940	Croatia
Dipl.-Ing. Heinrich Habig <sup>316</sup>	<i>Oberpostrat</i>	1926 (26)	1942	Bulgaria
Dipl.-Ing. Fritz Harder <sup>317</sup>	<i>Oberpostrat</i>	1925 (24)	1939	Sweden
Dr.-Dr.-Ing. Kurt Hlinak <sup>318</sup>	<i>Oberpostrat</i>	1936 <sup>319</sup> (32)	1942	Unknown

313 Politisches Archiv, Berlin, RAV Pressburg 233, Sonderbeauftragter der Reichspost Riedl an die Deutsche Gesandtschaft Pressburg, 29.10.1942.

314 The names of these appointees are: Dipl.-Ing. Burmester, Dipl.-Ing. Herzer, Dipl.-Ing. Stock and Dipl.-Ing. Fleischer (Europäischer Postkongress, p. 326).

315 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/39830 Haupt-Kartei Engelhardt.

316 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/39795, Haupt-Kartei Habig.

317 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/39829, Haupt-Kartei Harder.

318 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/39835, Haupt-Kartei Hlinak.

319 Before 1936, he worked in the Austrian PTT administration. Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R9361-II-418346, Hlinak, Kurt.

Name	Position in 10/1942	With the Reichspost since (at age)	Promotion to the position in 10/1942	Appointed to
Leo Lödige <sup>320</sup>	<i>Postrat</i>	1937 (28)	1939	Norway (probably)
Dipl.-Ing. Paul Löffler <sup>321</sup>	<i>Oberpostrat</i>	1925 (24)	1939	Italy
Dipl.-Ing. Julius Riedl <sup>322</sup>	<i>Postrat</i>	1937 (31)	1938	Slovakia
Dipl.-Ing. Friedrich Thoms <sup>323</sup>	<i>Postrat</i>	1935 (27)	1939	Spain
Dipl.-Ing. Werner (?) Tiegs <sup>324</sup>	<i>Oberpostrat</i>	1930 (25)	1942	Hungary
Wilhelm Schmidt <sup>325</sup>	<i>Postrat</i>	1933 (28)	Around 1939	Unknown

Table 2: The appointees of the Reichspost abroad

The majority of the appointees abroad had a technical background. ‘Dipl.-Ing.’ is a German degree, translated here as graduate engineer (GE). Their educational background might be related to the appointees’ mission to help export German material<sup>326</sup> and to the fact that telecommunications and telegraphy were much more reliant on material and technical support than postal services. Furthermore, seven of the ten appointees did not work for the *Reichspost* before 1930, and nine of the ten were only hired to their 1942 position during or after 1939. Their young age and relatively brief PTT careers make it very unlikely that they had international ties before their work

320 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/39795, Haupt-Kartei Lödige.

321 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/39817, Haupt-Kartei Löffler.

322 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/39826, Haupt-Kartei Riedl.

323 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/39829, Haupt-Kartei Thoms.

324 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/39810, Haupt-Kartei Tiegs (The first name is not clearly legible).

325 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/39803, Haupt-Kartei Schmidt.

326 Politisches Archiv, Berlin, RAV Zagreb 147, Aufgaben der ins Ausland entsandten Beauftragten der DRP, undated.



as appointees abroad. Nevertheless, Risch gave them important roles creating networks and maintaining close contact with the other PTT administrations:

The maintenance of the best relations is (...) of special importance, because an association of European PTT administrations in the sense of the new Europe was to be concluded according to the instructions of the Führer and to the understanding of the minister for Foreign affairs and the *Reichspostminister*.<sup>327</sup>

Their task was to continuously work with other administrations to convince them of the plans for a European PTT union. This included becoming familiar with their way of thinking and attitude towards the *Reichspost* or the Germans in general and determining whether the responsible individuals were subject to foreign influences. The appointees were to regularly report to their superiors to ensure the *Reichspost* could detect any possible hindrances to the project and intervene if necessary. Their job description also included professional consulting for the other administrations, with Germany as the model<sup>328</sup> which shows the assumed hierarchy between the *Reichspost* and the other PTT administrations. Their position within the Foreign Ministry's delegation to the other country was often vague, which led to difficulties with the delegation and the Wehrmacht and the SS,<sup>329</sup> who wanted them to contribute to their work. However, Ohnesorge and Risch insisted on the purely postal nature of their work and emphasised the importance of trust in their relationship with other administrations; the trust was not to be undercut by working for other German entities.<sup>330</sup> Here, there seems to be a slight discrepancy between the representation of the job during and after the war. During the war, the tasks included consulting with

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327 Writer's own translation: "Die Pflege bester Beziehungen kommt (...) eine ganz besondere Bedeutung zu, weil nach den Weisungen des Führers und gemäß den Abmachungen zwischen dem Reichsaußenminister und dem Reichspostminister ein enger Zusammenschluss der europäischen Post- und Telekommunikationsverwaltungen im Geiste des neuen Europas herbeigeführt werden soll." Politisches Archiv, Berlin, RAV Zagreb 147, Aufgaben der ins Ausland entsandten Beauftragten der DRP, undated.

328 Politisches Archiv, Berlin, RAV Zagreb 147, Aufgaben der ins Ausland entsandten Beauftragten der DRP, undated.

329 Bundesarchiv, Lichterfelde, R4701/11248, Stenographische Aufnahme der Berichte der Beauftragten der DRP im Ausland, 18.-23.03.1943.

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

and supporting the Wehrmacht in the communications systems by, for example, addressing adaptation problems between the German systems used by the Wehrmacht and those used abroad. This also explains the technical background of most of the appointees. The appointees were also instructed to advise the embassies with their expertise when needed and supervised the staff of the *Reichspost* abroad to technically support the Wehrmacht (without being part of the Wehrmacht) on military aspects. They also supported the Wehrmacht concerning their economic and personal affairs.<sup>331</sup> This does not mean that the appointees were actively involved in the missions of the Wehrmacht, SS or other entities, but they do not appear to have been advised to stay entirely out of affairs that were not PTT-related.

This section has presented the most important German actors as fully as possible. It is important to consider this background going forward to analyse the German *Reichspost's* preparatory work and of the EPTU's workings. Bilateral work played an important role in creating the union, and the German staff involved had little to no experience in international postal relations. Furthermore, there are few continuities from the interwar period to wartime. This is also because the position of the appointees abroad had not existed before 1936, which shows that new channels were established. The presentation of the agents reflects the entanglement of politics and technocracy; this is especially the case for the minister, Ohnesorge. Similarly, Harder's testimonial, for instance, shows that there was an insistence that postal issues be kept separate from political matters. The argument that trust could be lost by mixing politics and technocratic aspects could be related to wanting to have power in these areas – there was strong competition between different entities for control in the occupied territories. However, it also perfectly aligns with the argumentation of technocratic internationalism, according to which international infrastructure cooperation works better if only the experts are involved.

### *Setting the agenda to create a European postal union within the Reichspostministerium (1940-1941)*

With this in mind, this section now focusses on the organisational and tariff standards discussed within the *Reichspostministerium* before entering into

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331 Politisches Archiv, Berlin, RAV Zagreb 147, Aufgaben der ins Ausland entsandten Beauftragten der DRP, undated.

official negotiations with the Italian PTT administration. A Foreign Department was created within the *Reichspostministerium* at the end of 1940 under the direction of Dr. Friedrich Risch.<sup>332</sup> Its tasks included ‘all the foreign policy and colonial affairs’<sup>333</sup> that Ueberschär classified as ‘explicitly political’.<sup>334</sup> Seven other people worked for the department in April 1942, divided into five divisions. Dr. Reiss headed the division concerning international postal affairs, which covered issues regarding the UPU, restricted unions within the UPU and special agreements with other countries.<sup>335</sup> Another interesting name listed is that of *Oberposttrat* Dr. Timm. He had a quasi-double-function: contributing in the Foreign Department and being the personal advisor of *Reichspostminister* Ohnesorge. In this latter function, he also worked on the EPTU.<sup>336</sup> *Ministerialdirigent* Willi Köhn is not on the list because he was promoted to head of the Department of the East in August 1941, but *Reichspostminister* Ohnesorge mentions him as being part of the department in February 1941.<sup>337</sup> Köhn was *SS-Oberführer*; he had not been trained to be in the *Reichspost* and was part of Ohnesorge’s efforts to establish a close connection between the ministry and National Socialist organisations. Köhn was said to have monitored and controlled Risch, as Ohnesorge no longer trusted him and moved him with the whole Foreign Department to Graz during the second half of the war because he did not renounce his Christian faith.<sup>338</sup> The Foreign Department continued its work, but, probably due to the war mobilisation, it was reduced to three people working under Risch in July 1944. Dr. Reiss remained responsible for international postal affairs, which had expanded since 1942. Among

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332 Ueberschär, *Die Deutsche Reichspost*, p. 29.

333 Writer’s own translation: “gesamten auslandspolitischen und kolonialen Angelegenheiten”, Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/11263, Rede Dr. Risch über: „Gedanken zu einer Reform des Post- und Fernmeldewesens“, 12.-13.02.1941, p. 9.

334 Writer’s own translation: “eindeutig politische (Aufgaben)”, Ueberschär, *Die Deutsche Reichspost*, p. 29.

335 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/11256, Geschäftsplan Referat 1 der Abteilung Min-A, 04.1942

336 Noch zu überlegen, wie genau referenzieren.

337 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/11263, Rede Dr. Risch über: “Gedanken zu einer Reform des Post- und Fernmeldewesens” - Replik Ohnesorge, 12.-13.02.1941, p. 15.

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

other tasks, the division now addressed postal aspects of the EPTU agreement and the regulations, the work within the EPTU postal committee and the supervision of the EPTU's office.<sup>339</sup>

Based on these findings, it is appropriate to examine the accessible work of the Foreign Department as it appears to have been one of the centres of EPTU planning. The staff and tasks of this department reflect a possible intertwining of politics and postal cooperation: the tasks included the term 'foreign policy', and the undersecretary Köhn was placed on the team. Dr. Reiss' supervision of the office of the Union in Vienna does support the idea of German hegemony. However, it might be premature to conclude from this that political influences mainly determined the EPTU's project. Köhn was promoted to head of the Department of the East before the main negotiations with Italy and the other countries started. However, he was present at the congress in October 1942 as a guest of the *Reichspostminister*,<sup>340</sup> and thus he was not completely detached from the process.

Nevertheless, the task's denomination does not necessarily determine the spirit of the work conducted. Therefore, this section further examines the work of the Foreign Department concerning the EPTU. This is done using the presentations of the project during different meetings of *Reichspostministerium* officials, as no other details on the matter were found in the archives. These speeches give valuable insights not only into the technical aspects but also into its foundation in the wider political context. Two main meetings outlined the plans for the EPTU: the 'plenary meeting'<sup>341</sup> of the *Reichspostministerium* in September 1940 and the meeting of the presidents of the *Oberpostdirektionen* in February 1941. Because these speeches appear to be crucial outlines for the path envisioned by the organisation, they are discussed in detail in the following.

In August 1940, *Oberpostrat* Dr. Timm gave a speech on the 'position and tasks of the German *Reichspost* during the political and economic reorganisation of Europe after the war'.<sup>342</sup> His speech can be divided into three

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339 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/11256, Geschäftsverteilungsplan Referat 1 der Abteilung Min-A, 04.1942, 01.07.1944.

340 Europäischer Postkongress, p. 325.

341 Writer's own translation: "Gesamtsitzung", Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/11248, Reichspostminister – persönlicher Referent an die Herren Abteilungsleiter, Referenten, Hilfsreferenten, Tagesordnung für die nächste Gesamtsitzung, 26.08.1940.

342 Writer's own translation: "Stellung und Aufgaben der Deutschen Reichspost bei der politischen und wirtschaftlichen Neugestaltung Europas nach dem Kriege", Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/11248, Vortrag auf der Gesamtsitzung des RPM von Oberpostrat Dr. Timm, p. 1.

parts: historical and current context; the tasks of the new Foreign Department within the *Reichspostministerium*; the principles for a possible European postal union.

The first part, on the historical context of international postal cooperation and the current geopolitical situation, constitutes half of Timm's speech. He underlines the importance of Heinrich von Stephan in improving the international postal service, denoting his name as 'immortal'.<sup>343</sup> He explains the success of Stephan's non-theoretical and practical propositions and notes that he implemented all of his suggestions except for the abolition of the transit charges.<sup>344</sup> Afterwards, he criticises the systems of Versailles and England and sketches out possibilities for the new European political and economic order. He ends by remarking that the *Reichspost* was called upon to prepare the basis for this new order.<sup>345</sup>

In summary, the start of Timm's speech offered standard talking points about the *Reichspost* and Nazi propaganda. As is shown throughout this work, Heinrich von Stephan, the founder of the UPU, is presented as an omnipresent and idealised figure; this is also true in Timm's speech. Furthermore, the criticism of the liberal economic order or the system of Versailles matched the NSDAP's political messaging.

The second part of the speech focusses on the Foreign Department within the *Reichspostministerium*. At the very start, Timm emphasises the strong leadership of the *Reichspostminister* Ohnesorge and states that this newly found department would 'open possibilities that would have seemed utopian until recently'.<sup>346</sup> He highlights three main tasks for the department: First, the German position towards the UPU; second, reforms of the UPU; and third, the creation of a European postal union. The first task stems from the discord over Slovakia's status in the UPU during the UPU congress of Buenos Aires in 1939. The second includes finding a solution to the tariff difficulties due to the crisis currency depreciations and analysing whether the Gold franc could remain the reference currency within a National Socialist economic framework.<sup>347</sup> The third and, according to Timm, most important task is the completion of Heinrich von Stephan's work by founding a European postal union under German and Italian leadership. Comparing it to other restricted unions, such as the Pan-American and the Nordic Postal

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343 Writer's own translation: "unsterblich", *ibid.*, p. 4.

344 *Ibid.*, p. 3-5.

345 *Ibid.*, p. 5-10.

346 Writer's own translation: "eröffnen Möglichkeiten, die noch vor kurzem als völlig utopisch erschienen wären", *ibid.*, p. 11.

347 *Ibid.*, p. 11-13.

Inions, Timm stresses that political purposes, in addition to economic and postal reasons, had been crucial for their creation.<sup>348</sup>

Timm uses this second part of the speech to contextualise the *Reichspost* in its international environment. Mentioning the challenges within the UPU, he indirectly points to the fact that the German postal administration needed allies to achieve a new position within the UPU and reform it. The way forward is creating a new restricted union, a united bloc within the UPU, much like the Pan-American Postal Union. He does not mention that creating a European postal union would de facto paralyse the Nordic Postal Union, as it was foreseeable that not all of its five member administrations would join.<sup>349</sup> Timm highlights the continuity of Heinrich von Stephan's project and the European postal union; this idea is an important recurrent discursive element, as shown below. The mention that other restricted unions had political features might be a legitimising argument: through this, Timm could argue that it was partly reasonable to remove the distance between international technocratic cooperation and (high) politics.

In the third part of the speech, Timm describes 10 principles of a European postal union:

1. The most important claim is the harmonisation of the admission requirement after the German pattern. (...)
2. Harmonisation of the schedule of tariffs with the consequence that the whole of Europe is to be included into the German tariff area and zonal system.
3. Inclusion of all German services. (...)
4. The abolition of the transit charges for the entire European service should be another important demand. (...)
5. Simplified packet exchange system in the whole of Europe. (...)
6. Unimpeded circulation of railroad postal cars.
7. Expansion of a spacious European and intercontinental airmail network.

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348 Ibid., p. 14-15.

349 Sweden as neutral country but especially Island as a country occupied first by the United Kingdom and then by the United States would have had to seem unlikely candidates for membership.

8. Issuance of harmonised European union stamps.
9. Expansion of the transfer and postal savings bank service to European countries.
10. The most difficult problem of the European postal union will without a doubt be the question of its director (...). Only the German *Reichspost* can evidently stake a claim to the leadership of the European postal union, supported and represented by the Italian postal administration. But Berlin would have to be its seat.<sup>350</sup>

This list perfectly captures the synthesis of politics and technocracy within this project. At first glance, the first seven points and the ninth concern ‘genuine’ postal questions – while still making clear the envisioned German dominance – and the eighth and tenth points are more politically motivated. A review of the 10 points shows that the main idea that existed since the creation of the UPU – namely, to remove barriers in international postal services – remained intact. The UPU continuously discusses the ideas of a harmonised schedule of tariffs, facilitating packet exchange or reducing or abolishing the transit charge.<sup>351</sup> The same applies to the European airmail network.<sup>352</sup> Here, the way this removal of barriers in postal services was envisioned is important: As points 1, 2, 3 and 9 make clear, the postal system was supposed to be harmonised by exporting the German postal system to all other countries. Point 6, the unimpeded circulation of railroad cars, would later lead to fears that Germany would ‘infiltrate’ other countries

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350 Writer’s own translation: “1. Wichtigste Forderung ist die Vereinheitlichung der Zulassungsbedingungen nach deutschem Muster. (...), 2. Vereinheitlichung der Gebührentarife mit der Folge, daß ganz Europa in das deutsche Gebührenfeld und Zonensystem einzubeziehen ist., 3. Aufnahme aller deutschen Dienste (...), 4. Als weitere wichtige Forderung soll die Abschaffung der Durchgangskosten für den gesamten europäischen Dienst aufgestellt werden. (...) 5. Vereinfachtes Paketaustauschverfahren in ganz Europa. (...) 6. Ungehinderter durchgehender Bahnpostwagenumlauf. 7. Ausbau eines großräumigen europäischen und interkontinentalen Luftpostnetzes. 8. Ausgabe einheitlicher europäischer Vereinsbriefmarken. 9. Ausdehnung des Geldüberweisungsdienstes sowie des Postsparkassendienstes auf europäische Länder. 10. Das schwierigste Problem des europäischen Postvereins wird zweifellos die Frage der Stellung des obersten Leiters des europäischen Postvereins sein (...). Anspruch auf die Führung des europäischen Vereins kann hierbei offenbar nur die Deutsche Reichspost, unterstützt und vertreten durch die italienische Postverwaltung, erheben. Sein Sitz aber hätte Berlin zu sein.” Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/11248, Vortrag auf der Gesamtsitzung des RPM von Oberposttrat Dr. Timm, p. 16-17.

351 Laborie, *L’Europe mise en réseaux*, p. 91.

352 Benz, *Integration von Infrastrukturen*, p. 171-173.

with its postal clerks and technicians and thereby intensify communication surveillance.<sup>353</sup> The question of union stamps, raised in point 8, is discussed at the end of the second part of this work. The *Reichspost*'s staff was aware of the propaganda potential of stamps,<sup>354</sup> which was likely to increase when all member administrations issued the same stamps with the same message regarding, for example, a united Europe under Nazi hegemony. According to Timm, the tenth and last point was the greatest challenge; it underpinned the *Reichspost*'s claim to leadership, which could be detected in previous points. In comparison, the proposed Italian role was a subordinate one. The choice of Berlin as the seat of the Union highlights the power asymmetry between these two allies.

Timm finishes the speech by inviting everyone in the name of *Reichspostminister* Ohnesorge to participate and by quoting Seneca: 'Ducunt fata volentem, nolentem trahunt'.<sup>355</sup> Thereby, he alluded to the *Reichspost*'s will to promote this project.

Telecommunications and telegraphy do not yet play a role in this draft. This supports the idea that the processes of planning a European Postal Union and a Working Group for telecommunications were originally separate and led by actors at different levels within the ministry but happened almost simultaneously and were only later coordinated.

As mentioned, the plans for a European postal union were also presented on another occasion, the *Präsidentenbesprechung*. This time, the head of the Foreign Department outlined the general ideas of the project.

In February 1941, Dr. Risch gave a speech entitled 'Thoughts on a reform of European postal services and telecommunications in the new Europe'<sup>356</sup> during the so-called *Präsidentenbesprechung*, which loosely translates to the 'meeting of the presidents'. These presidents were the heads of the

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353 Writer's own translation: "Infiltrierung", PTT Archiv Bern, P-00C\_0108\_01, Argus International de la Presse, Arbeiter Zeitung, Bâle, "Gefährliche Postverhandlungen", 15.10.1942.

354 Gabriel, Gottfried: Die politische Bildersprache der Briefmarken. Beispiele aus der deutschen Geschichte, in: Smolarski, Pierre / Smolarski, René / Vetter-Schultheiß, Silke (Eds.): *Gezähnte Geschichte*, 2019, p. 21-36, p. 23.

355 Writer's own translation: 'Fate leads the willing, the unwilling it drags.' Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/11248, Vortrag auf der Gesamtsitzung des RPM von Oberposttrat Dr. Timm, p. 18.

356 Writer's own translation: "Gedanken zu einer Reform des Post- und Fernmeldewesens im neuen Europa", Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/11263, Rede Dr. Risch über: "Gedanken zu einer Reform des Post- und Fernmeldewesens im neuen Europa", 12.-13.02.1941, p. 9.



*Reichspostdirektionen* and were in charge of overseeing the local PTT offices; their tasks included being ‘ambassadors’ for the ministry to the administration within the country.<sup>357</sup> During this meeting, they were informed about plans for the EPTU because they would be part of their implementation.<sup>358</sup>

The speech has an introduction, a part on the reforms within postal services and telecommunications, a part on the *Reichspost*’s appointees abroad and a conclusion. The following does not analyse the section on telecommunications.

The introduction of the speech contains two main points: First, a short, rather political outline of the future of Europe; second, a brief presentation of the Foreign Department and the current state of its work concerning the main challenges within Europe. Risch starts his speech by referencing the ongoing war and the change of power structures in Europe due to the ‘major military and diplomatic successes of the Führer’.<sup>359</sup> He then turns to the future of Europe, describing the final aim of the war as eliminating English influence, establishing the economic autarky of Europe and ensuring German leadership in a stabilised Europe. Risch continues, ‘The minister has set the new department the task of supporting the political development and, as much as possible, preparing the things to come’.<sup>360</sup> The last remarks in the introduction then focus on postal services and telecommunications. Risch identifies the two most important aspects as the creation of a ‘European postal union under German leadership’<sup>361</sup> and ‘the orientation of European telecommunication with the aim of promoting the development and the exploitation of the new Europe’.<sup>362</sup> The introduction presents the department’s work, and thus the EPTU’s development, as part of the overall war effort and simultaneously as integrated into the wider and varied dis-

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357 Ueberschär, *Die deutsche Reichspost im Zweiten Weltkrieg*, p. 296.

358 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/11263, Rede Dr. Risch über: “Gedanken zu einer Reform des Post- und Fernmeldewesens im neuen Europa”, 12.-13.02.1941, p. 9.

359 Writer’s own translation: “großen militärischen und diplomatischen Erfolge des Führers”, *ibid.*

360 Writer’s own translation: “Der Herr Minister hat der neuen Abteilung die Aufgabe gestellt, die politische Entwicklung zu unterstützen und, soweit möglich, den kommenden Dingen den Weg zu bereiten”, *ibid.*

361 Writer’s own translation: “Schaffung eines Europäischen Postvereins unter deutscher Führung”, *ibid.*, p. 10.

362 Writer’s own translation: “Ausrichtung des europäischen Fernmeldewesens mit dem Ziele, Förderer für den Aufbau und die Erschließung des neuen Europas zu sein”, *ibid.*

course of building a ‘New Europe’. This contextualisation bestows a strategic political aspect to the project of creating a European postal union. Furthermore, Risch differentiates between postal services and telecommunications; it seems that the creation of a union was only foreseen for postal services, whereas the terms for cooperation in the telecommunications sector appear less focussed on institutionalisation. This supports the impression that the German administration focussed on postal services rather than telecommunications when it came to the EPTU and its development.

The second part of the speech revolves around possible reforms in European postal services. In this part, one can determine that the Foreign Department anticipated the growth of postal services within Europe, mainly due to the higher number of letters exchanged internationally, as Risch mentions twice.<sup>363</sup> Based on this assumption, Risch discusses the need to ‘eliminate as much as possible all remaining barriers’<sup>364</sup> and to ‘provide the conditions for more fluent and fast services’<sup>365</sup> to facilitate European cooperation regarding postal services. A European postal union is found to be a way to achieve this aim, and the preparatory work was already being conducted in the Foreign Department.<sup>366</sup> Risch also emphasises that the minister had given them the idea and the direction, which also included the guideline that the European postal union should not challenge the UPU, as this would contravene the German *Reichspost*’s tradition of supporting the organisation – ‘faithful to the ideas of its genius founder Stephan’.<sup>367</sup> However, he stresses that ‘the needs of the new Europe, which Germany will give a face to and form, lead politically to special tasks and challenges that the Universal Postal Union as a whole world- (...) encompassing organisation cannot solve’.<sup>368</sup> According to Risch, restricted postal unions such as the Nordic Postal Union and the one shared by the states of the Balkan Entente proved the demand for particular rules in Europe. The main aspect of these rules

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363 Ibid.

364 Writer’s own translation: “möglichst weitgehende Beseitigung aller noch bestehenden Hemmnisse”, *ibid.*

365 Writer’s own translation: “Voraussetzungen für eine noch flüssigere und schnellere Dienstabwicklung (...) zu schaffen”, *ibid.*

366 *Ibid.*

367 Writer’s own translation: “getreu den Ideen seines genialen Begründers Stephan”, *ibid.*

368 Writer’s own translation: “die Erfordernisse des neuen Europa, dem Deutschland Gesicht und Gestalt geben wird, stellen auf politischem Gebiet Sonderaufgaben und Anforderungen, die vom Weltpostverein als eine die ganze Welt (...) umspannende Organisation nicht gelöst werden können”, *ibid.*

was tariffs, which were to be reduced to strengthen economic relations.<sup>369</sup> Risch mentions three options: the use of domestic tariffs for Europe,<sup>370</sup> a reduction of UPU tariffs by 50% and an alignment of local currencies with German domestic tariffs – ‘in other words: The German domestic letter at 12 *Reichspfennig* is in the future the European letter’.<sup>371</sup> The third option is declared to be the most expedient because significant differences in tariffs were economically undesirable but nonetheless a reality due to changes in exchange rates.<sup>372</sup> It remains unclear how fixing them with a German value would have lowered that risk, but everyone would start from the same tariff and currency, which would reduce the overall complexity of the system.

Having described these main ideas, Risch comments on the plans’ financial consequences both for Germany and other European countries. He clarifies that a reduction of mail tariffs towards other European countries would likely mean the highest financial losses for Germany<sup>373</sup> due to its geographic location, although practically every other country mentioned (i.e., Italy, Denmark, Sweden, Spain and Switzerland) – except for France – would also have to lower its tariffs. As economic growth was expected for Germany, Risch suggests that the number of incoming consignments would be inferior to outgoing ones. Even if growth would mean greater income due to a higher number of consignments, the *Reichspost* would have lower earnings. However, after the new ordering of the situation in Europe, there would be no reason to maintain different tariffs for domestic and foreign services.<sup>374</sup> Risch briefly discusses the abolishment of the transit charge for transport by sea and a reduction of tariffs for European package traffic, but he qualified these measures as currently not implementable, though desired. To conclude the section on postal services, Risch moves from more specific issues to the *Reichspost*’s contribution to the ‘New Europe’. Its efforts were guided by the ‘benefit of the whole’<sup>375</sup>, which is why the *Reichspost* proposed a reduction of tariffs despite the high financial burden put on Ger-

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369 Ibid.

370 Europe is defined here as the territory for which the contracting administrations are responsible for.

371 Writer’s own translation: mit anderen Worten: “Der deutsche Inlandsbrief zu 12 Rpf ist künftig der europäische Brief”, Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/11263, Rede Dr. Risch über: “Gedanken zu einer Reform des Post- und Fernmeldewesens im neuen Europa”, 12.-13.02.1941, p. 10.

372 Ibid.

373 Around 3.5 Mill. *Reichsmark*, *ibid.*, p. 11.

374 *Ibid.*, p. 10-11.

375 Writer’s own translation: “Nutzen der Gesamtheit”, *ibid.* p. 11.

many: ‘We hope that the other European administrations will also understand this attitude and will find the courage to overcome outdated fiscal prejudices’.<sup>376</sup> Furthermore, he emphasises that entry into the European postal union would be voluntary and that all sovereign countries of Europe could become members. Risch adds that countries that did not or did not fully belong geographically to Europe, such as Turkey, Egypt and parts of North Africa, would not be excluded from cooperation.<sup>377</sup>

Thus, it is clear that the *Reichspostministerium* tried to internally legitimise this project as one that promoted the development of the ‘New Europe’. The term appears throughout Risch’s speech, and the idea of the ‘New Europe’ and the unity between its peoples were used to justify the acceptance of high income losses in the future Europe.<sup>378</sup> It is notable that the creation of the union and the reduction of tariffs was contextualised within the technocratic cooperation between administrations in restricted unions and the UPU; Heinrich von Stephan’s name as the supposed founder of the UPU is mentioned again. The arguments put forward by Risch regarding different options for the reduction and the financial aspects of the project seem fact-based and neutral by comparison, for example, to the discourse on the integration of the union into the ‘New Europe’. Risch also highlighted the continuity of general aims behind efforts to facilitate and lower the cost of international mail services (including for economic reasons). Thus, he also legitimised the project from an administrative perspective. The voluntary nature of entry into the union must be seen from the same standpoint. A key part of technocratic internationalism was cooperation via rational decision-making rather than the coercion of others. As seen below, other national administrations had to consider joining the union not only for administrative or financial reasons but also political ones. It is thus difficult to determine whether the ideal of occupied countries’ PTT administrations voluntarily joining a union created by the occupiers was entirely achieved.

After discussing telecommunications reforms, Risch turns to the tasks of the *Reichspost*’s appointees abroad: ‘I have presented you (...) a lot on new

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376 Writer’s own translation: “Wir hoffen, daß diese Einstellung auch bei den übrigen europäischen Verwaltungen Verständnis finden wird und daß man auch dort den Mut findet, sich von überkommenden fiskalischen Vorurteilen freizumachen”, *ibid.*

377 *Ibid.*

378 “Grundsätzlich muß man bei der Prüfung der ganzen Gebührenfrage zu der Auffassung gelangen, daß namentlich nach einer Neuordnung Europas kein Grund mehr besteht, im Auslandsdienst höhere Gebühren als im inneren Dienst zu verlangen”, *ibid.*, p. 11.

ways, new aims and new designs. I would also like to say a few words about new methods'.<sup>379</sup> Based on experiences during the civil war in Spain a few years earlier, the *Reichspost* had also sent appointees to Bulgaria, Denmark, Hungary, Italy, Norway and Romania. They were attached to local embassies, and their task was to observe, advise and establish close relations with the local PTT administration to improve bilateral relations and economic benefits for the German PTT industry.<sup>380</sup>

In addition to the repetition of the word 'new' – for example a 'New Europe' also required 'new tools' according to Risch – the introduction of *Reichspost*'s appointees abroad is not to be underestimated from a strategic, economic<sup>381</sup> and technocratic internationalist perspective. The *Reichspost* knew the importance of epistemic communities in international postal relations. Through the appointees, the *Reichspostministerium* had its own foreign agents who were separate from traditional diplomatic channels, and they facilitated German dominance in postal Europe by acting as the first local contacts, in addition to ongoing war successes.

Risch ends his speech on a defiant note. Evoking bureaucratic obstacles and the occasional seemingly unsurmountable task, he underlines his department's will, discipline and morale to achieve the final vision.<sup>382</sup> After a warning to England, he closes with the following words: 'When the time comes that Germany will visibly take on the leading role in Europe in the field of communications, as well, the German *Reichspost* and all who take part in communication will be prepared'.<sup>383</sup>

Thus, Risch started and ended his speech on a political note. In particular, his comments on the hopeless battle with England greatly differed from the more technical explanations in the section on European postal services reforms. His remarks on the department's discipline and working attitude

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379 Writer's own translation: "Ich habe Ihnen (...) nun viel vorgetragen von neuen Wegen, neuen Zielen und neuen Gestaltungen. Ich erlaube mir noch ein Wort zu verlieren über neue Methoden", *ibid.*, p. 14.

380 *Ibid.*

381 The idea seems also to have been to export German technical supplies which in turn also broadened the distribution of German technique in Europe.

382 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/11263, Rede Dr. Risch über: "Gedanken zu einer Reform des Post- und Fernmeldewesens im neuen Europa", 12.-13.02.1941, p. 14.

383 Writer's own translation: "Wenn die Stunde schlägt, in der Deutschland auch auf dem Gebiet des Nachrichtenwesens offenkundig die führende Rolle in Europa übernimmt, soll sie die Deutsche Reichspost und alle, die im Nachrichtenwesen mitwirken, vorbereitet finden", *ibid.*, p. 15.

were probably directed to *Reichspostminister* Ohnesorge, who – as described above – appreciated staff who went above and beyond by overcoming the impossible, in Risch’s words.<sup>384</sup> In summary, Risch appears to have tried to answer to all possible interests in the room; the envisioned postal union’s more techno-administrative aspects and its political contextualisation, both internal and external, played a part in his speech. It is also clear that the union was not intended as an instrument of war but one of peace. Together with the appointees, the European postal union was expected to be part of the creation of a ‘New Europe’ under strong German leadership. Telecommunications were not yet envisioned as a part of the union. Italy is only mentioned as a country where an appointee was delegated, not as an actor in the establishment of the postal union. At this point, the Axis had no role in Risch’s project description for this audience.

When comparing Timm and Risch’s speeches, some common themes emerge: German hegemony in the postal union towards both the occupied countries and, more importantly, the allied Axis power of Italy. This hegemony meant not only formal leadership within the union but also in standard-setting for international postal services. Appointees of the *Reichspost* abroad were expected to facilitate the harmonisation of standards by exporting the German system to other countries. It is important to note that this standardisation strategy would entail almost no standardising costs for Germany – a possible legitimating factor of the union within the *Reichspost*. Other central arguments justifying the creation of a European postal union included the continuation of von Stephan’s work, technocratic improvements in European postal services and economic benefits. Nevertheless, political aspects continued to gain importance, as evidenced by a notice in the July 1942 edition of *Auswärtige Politik*: ‘These postal unions are an expression of togetherness in a specific political space’.<sup>385</sup> The project was compared to the British imperial Penny stamp, underlining its imperial features. The notice further reads, ‘it does not involve cheaper but rather preferential tariffs, which align with preferences and protective duties, which are of a more national-political than economic nature’.<sup>386</sup> This represents a

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384 Ibid.

385 Writer’s own translation: “Diese Postgemeinschaften sind ein Ausdruck der Zusammengehörigkeit in einem bestimmten politischen Raum”, ohne Verfasser, “Europäischer Postverein” in *Auswärtige Politik*, 7 (9), Juli 1942, p. 811.

386 Writer’s own translation: “es handelt sich nicht so sehr um billige als um Vorzugstarife, die auf der gleichen Linie liegen wie Präferenzen und Schutzzölle, die ebenfalls mehr nationalpolitischer als rein wirtschaftlicher Natur sind”, *ibid.*

notable interpretation of the harmonisation of tariff schedules and the abolition of transit charges, which are described not as a technocratic goal but a geopolitical one. The notice also contextualised the European postal union within the task of building the ‘New Europe’ after the war and within the continuity of the German-Austrian Postal Union, which preceded the UPU. The latter was connected in the notice to the idea of a Greater Germany,<sup>387</sup> which was also important in Nazi ideology. Thus, the politico-ideological foundation of the EPTU was further widened than in Timm and Risch’s speeches. This shows that the concept of a European postal union created room for interpretation. Depending on which part of the project one focused on, it could be legitimised from a technocratic, (geo)political or ideological perspective. This is also visible in a letter from Ohnesorge to Risch, in which he asked Hitler for permission to move forward with the idea of a European postal union.

On 21 June 1941, Ohnesorge wrote to Hitler under the subject: ‘Creation of a European postal union and the arrangement of the German-Dutch postal services’.<sup>388</sup> He began his letter by outlining how the construction of a European economy and the integration of annexed and occupied territories into the greater German economy entailed the challenge of eliminating obstacles in the area of postal services and telecommunications. Therefore, he sought to establish prerequisites for close cooperation between European peoples in communications, which would align with the more general European cooperation ‘that you [Hitler] strive for out of political, economic and cultural reasons’.<sup>389</sup> Moreover, Ohnesorge wrote that the UPU was unable to solve these challenges because of its global nature. Because the UPU Convention allowed for restricted unions, he wanted to create a European postal union that would establish the precondition for a ‘simple, fast, and secure and foremost cheap exchange of messages in Europe’.<sup>390</sup> Ohnesorge then legitimised the need for this restricted union by alluding to existing unions, such as the Nordic Postal Union: ‘The European postal union to be

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387 Ibid.

388 Writer’s own translation: “Schaffung eines europäischen Postvereins und Regelung des deutsch-niederländischen Postdienstes”, Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/11200, Ohnesorge and Hitler, 21.06.1941.

389 Writer’s own translation: “die Sie aus politischen, wirtschaftlichen und kulturellen Gründen erstreben”, *ibid.*

390 Writer’s own translation: “einfachen, schnellen und sicheren und vor allem billigen Nachrichtenaustausch in Europa”, *ibid.*

created should here replace all present agreements and postal unions in Europe and combine them'.<sup>391</sup> He described the envisioned union as a way to deepen political and economic relations by simplifying the calculation and reduction of tariffs; these measures have the advantage of being instantly effective, in contrast to many other infrastructure proposals, which might take years to implement. However, Ohnesorge noted that partner countries would need the financial option to decrease tariffs. Furthermore, the union should facilitate exchange between peoples 'in order to gain an understanding of, interest and trust in the new order of Europe under German leadership'.<sup>392</sup> This would support political and economic foreign propaganda. Ohnesorge briefly mentioned that the harmonisation of tariffs with domestic German tariffs still needed to be examined before emphasising once again that the project's guiding principle had to be facilitating understanding between European peoples as rapidly as possible. As a counterargument to the anticipated high financial losses, Ohnesorge mentioned the project's economic and cultural benefits: 'The development possibilities of the new Europe have to be assessed as so decidedly positive that it would be wrong if all the European postal administrations would not advocate for this in order to overcome the initial difficulties'.<sup>393</sup>

In the final part of the letter, Ohnesorge argued why the postal union should be created during the war. Due to the new demarcations of the Reich and the need to integrate the 'newly won import and export areas in the greater German economy',<sup>394</sup> it was necessary to simplify postal services to exploit them as planned for the German war economy. Thus, a European postal union would be simultaneously developed. Ohnesorge used the planned German-Dutch agreement as an example. He enumerated five points as a framework for the agreement. First, the agreement would be applicable only for postal services. Second, domestic German tariffs and sending conditions should be applied in the reciprocal postal exchange. Third, the provisions would only cover the scope of letters. Fourth, transit charges

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391 Writer's own translation: "Der zu schaffende europäische Postverein soll hierbei an die Stelle aller bisherigen Abkommen und Postvereine in Europa treten und diese zusammenfassen", *ibid.*

392 Writer's own translation: "um Verständnis, Interesse und Vertrauen für den Neuaufbau Europas unter deutscher Führung zu gewinnen", *ibid.*

393 Writer's own translation: "Die Entwicklungsmöglichkeiten des neuen Europa sind so entschieden positiv zu beurteilen, daß es falsch wäre, wenn sich nicht alle europäischen Postverwaltungen hierfür einsetzen würden, um die Anfangsschwierigkeiten zu überwinden", *ibid.*

394 Writer's own translation: "die neugewonnenen Bezugs- und Absatzgebiete in die großdeutsche Wirtschaft einzufügen", *ibid.*



would be abolished. Fifth, these regulations would be the basis of a broader simplification and harmonisation initiative in European postal services and telecommunications. The experience gained from implementing this agreement would influence the later creation of a European postal union. Ohnesorge concluded the letter by asking Hitler's approval for the German-Dutch agreement and the creation of a European postal union 'because of the general political importance of the matter'.<sup>395</sup> He also informed him that the Reichskommissar for the occupied Dutch territories had already agreed to Ohnesorge's proposal.

However, Ohnesorge's letter does not provide any new information on the postal aspects of the union. He mentioned the broad guiding ideas of the project: facilitating communication, reducing costs for European mail and the adaptation of other administrations to German postal services. His arguments largely mirrored those of Risch and Timm: the UPU could not resolve the problems at hand because it was too large and encompassed too many countries; other restricted unions already existed within the framework of the UPU; and European peoples could be brought together via communications. Ohnesorge also underlined the hegemonic aspect of the union and integrated it into the path towards a 'New Europe'. What is new, however, is that the *Reichspostminister* drew a direct link between the EPTU and the ongoing war and the exploitation of the occupied territories. Thus, the creation of a European postal union and agreements with the occupied countries were categorised under German war efforts and as ways to support the military in its mission. As mentioned in the previous chapter<sup>396</sup>, Hitler was not necessarily interested in a concrete vision for Europe but rather focused on Germany and the benefits that other countries could provide it. Ohnesorge was likely aware of this, as he was an early supporter of Hitler and relatively close to him. This new argument about economic exploitation can thus be explained by the letter's recipient. Ohnesorge needed Hitler's support and sought ways to convince him. This does not mean that the economic exploitation of other countries was contrary to the *Reichspostminister's* aims; rather, it shows that he had to convince actors with diverging perspectives and priorities and highlighted different aspects of the project to persuade them. Therefore, it is difficult to distinguish between the project's 'genuine' goals and those used to persuade actors from other fields. It is likely that this distinction is artificial and does not reflect the reality of the situation. Thus, questioning Ohnesorge's true intentions does

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395 Writer's own translation: "wegen der grundsätzlichen politischen Bedeutung der Angelegenheit", *ibid.*

396 Part I, Chapter I.

not appear to be a fruitful exercise. Instead, it is important to study the entanglement of different interests and their influence on standardisation. In this letter, the details of standards are clearly unimportant. Rather, political arguments are crucial for translating the standards envisioned in internal speeches and meetings into reality; in brief, without Hitler's approval, there would be little opportunity to begin any real standard-setting within the planned union in the first place.

In addition to the creation of a European postal union, the International Chamber of Law (ICL) presented a forum to promote the standardisation process. The following section examines the committee of postal services and telecommunications within the Chamber and its role in the EPTU.

Created on 4 April 1941 by 13 countries, the ICL had its official seat in Berlin and was tasked with gathering legal experts and practitioners from juridical organisations. It was intended as a counterweight to the Anglo-Saxon and French organisations and was 'to become the central point for the ideas of the young peoples in the area of law'.<sup>397</sup> Additionally, the ICL 'should serve mainly our [German] fight for the new order of the European living space'.<sup>398</sup> The ICL can thus be interpreted as a political umbrella organisation, and a strong German influence appeared to have permeated its organisational-administrative and content-related tasks. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the Chamber was also created as a platform for German propaganda. Within the ICL, a committee on postal services and telecommunications chaired by state secretary Nagel – the second-most important person in the *Reichspostministerium* after Ohnesorge – was planned. In contrast to the envisioned European postal union, whose work was practical and administrative, the ICL's task was defined as purely scientific preparatory work for the creation of a European postal union. After the EPTU's founding, the ICL's work included scientific promotion of the alignment of European PTT law.<sup>399</sup> This distinction was also important to the Foreign

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397 Writer's own translation: "auf dem Gebiete des Rechts die zentrale Stelle für die Ideen der jungen Völker warden", Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/13658, Begründung zum Gesetz über die Verleihung besonderer Rechte an die internationale Rechtskammer, 14.03.1942.

398 Writer's own translation: "Sie soll außerdem vor allem auch unserem Kampf um die Neuordnung des europäischen Lebensraumes dienen", Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/13658, Generalsekretär der Internationalen Rechtskammer Pfeiffer an den Reichspostminister Ohnesorge, 20.05.1941.

399 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/13658, Für die mündliche Besprechung von St mit Generalgouverneur Dr. Frank, 17.11.1942.

Department within the *Reichspostministerium*.<sup>400</sup> Although proof of payment of the *Reichspost*'s yearly contribution to the committee was found up to 1944,<sup>401</sup> sources do not contain any documentation of the actual work performed by the committee. Nonetheless, several observations from the available material are worth noting; these concern the nomination of national delegates and the overlap between people who were involved in both the EPTU and the PTT committee within the ICL.

To become a national delegate for the committee, one<sup>402</sup> needed to be approved by the *Reichspostministerium*. The personal advisor to Minister Ohnesorge, Timm, who represented the ministry to the ICL, wrote in a letter to the Foreign Department that the ICL would only appoint staffers of foreign administrations when they were proposed by the ministry.<sup>403</sup> He continued, 'Representatives of foreign postal administrations that have supported the German *Reichspost* during earlier negotiations and during preparations for the European postal union or will do so come into question'.<sup>404</sup> He outlined the advantages of this system of appointment by arguing that a third way would thus be created to facilitate future cooperation in postal services and telecommunications. The first two ways were the official channel via the administrations and the 'political way'<sup>405</sup> via the *Reichspost*'s appointees abroad. These explanations demonstrate plans for German dominance in the PTT committee within the ICL, which was intended to cooperate with EPTU committees. Furthermore, a strategy of different channels of cooperation seems to have been envisioned; however, as noted above, available documents contain no mentions of scientific results produced by the committee. It is thus difficult to evaluate the effectiveness of this method and the committee.

The committee had a difficult start, as the *Reichspostministerium* was slow to appoint representatives of the different countries. The secretariat-

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400 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/13658, Min-A an Timm, 09.1941.

401 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/13658, Reichspostminister Ohnesorge an den Herrn Präsidenten der Internationalen Rechtskammer z. Hd. des Herrn Generalsekretärs Dr. Pfeiffer, 21.06.1944.

402 No woman was proposed.

403 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/13658, Ref. Timm an Min-A, 09.09.1941.

404 Writer's own translation: "In Betracht kommen hierfür Vertreter ausländischer Postverwaltungen, die die Deutsche Reichspost bei früheren Verhandlungen und bei den Vorarbeiten zur Schaffung eines europäischen Postvereins bisher unterstützt haben oder (...) werden", *ibid*.

405 Writer's own translation: "politischer Weg", Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/13658, Ref. Timm an Min-A, 09.09.1941.

general had to wait approximately one year for a final decision from the ministry.<sup>406</sup> Thirteen delegates were appointed for the German section of the committee; under them, there were also two representatives from the companies Siemens and AEG. Given the committee's general direction, it is unsurprising that seven of the *Reichspost* appointees would also later be present at the congress of Vienna and/or involved in the creation of the EPTU: the two ministerial directors Risch and Körner, the previously mentioned Prof. Dr. Dr. Timm, Dr. Schmidt, Dr. Neugebauer, Heinrich Poppe<sup>407</sup> and Dr. Reiss.<sup>408</sup> Some international delegates would also be present at the congress:<sup>409</sup> the Danish delegate, Arne Krog, and the Finnish delegates, Gunnar Ernst Fredrik Albrecht<sup>410</sup> and Urho Talvitie.<sup>411</sup> These interconnections were intentional and demonstrate the *Reichspost*'s desire to create an epistemic community aimed at a unified PTT area in the 'New Europe'. Earlier experiences of international technocratic cooperation within the UPU and the ITU highlighted the advantages that such communities could provide in setting standards.

Additional non-German delegates members to the ICL committee remain to be mentioned: a third Finnish delegate, Matti Lisakki Aspjo; the Portuguese delegate, Dr. Manuel Fernando Braz Teixeira; and the national delegates who are missing from the list, such as those from Italy and Hungary.

The appointment of Aspjo is notable because it shows how appointees of the *Reichspost* worked abroad. Fleischer, the appointee to Finland, wrote the following on 1 April 1942:

I was told to look for a suitable person for the international chamber of postal services and telecommunications on the occasion of my last stay in

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406 First request: Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/13658, Generalsekretariat an Postrat Dr. Schmidt, 08.06.1942; final approval: Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/13658, Reichspostminister an Generalsekretariat. 12.06.1943.

407 Heinrich Poppe was the chair for the postal committee during the congress of Vienna (Europäischer Postkongress, p. 120).

408 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/13658, Ernante Mitglieder der Sektion "Post- und Fernmelderecht" der I.R.K., 26.05.1943.

409 Delegates from Denmark, Finland, Norway, Portugal and Roumania were appointed at this point, Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/13658, Ernante Mitglieder der Sektion "Post- und Fernmelderecht" der Landesvertretungen der Internationalen Rechtskammer, 26.05.1943.

410 Chairman by seniority in Vienna (Europäischer Postkongress, p. 20).

411 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/13658, Ernante Mitglieder der Sektion "Post- und Fernmelderecht" der Landesvertretungen der Internationalen Rechtskammer, 26.05.1943.

Berlin. After consulting Director General Albrecht, the only person worth considering within the local administration is the director, Aspjo. He passed the juridical state examinations and works on all the legal affairs of the Finnish PTT administration. I think that he will really contribute, too. He understands German very well, though he only speaks German poorly at this point.<sup>412</sup>

It is clear that Fleischer leveraged his relationship with Albrecht to obtain inside information on the Finnish PTT administration and identify the right person for the specific tasks within the committee of the ICL.

Additionally, it is notable that Portugal was meant to be represented in the ICL's postal committee because Portugal did not send delegates to the congress in Vienna, even as observers.<sup>413</sup> Thus, the appointment of Dr. Teixeira on 20 March 1943,<sup>414</sup> the only non-German delegate on the list officially appointed on this date, might be a case in which the three-way strategy mentioned by Timm worked. Portugal was not part of the practical or technical aspects of the union but would have been involved in its legal aspects via the ICL.

Finally, some countries are missing from the list. The most notable exception is Italy, but there were also no delegates from Hungary or five other countries whose administrations later became part of the EPTU. The intention of the *Reichspost* was that the criterion for countries' admission was their cooperation with the founding of a European postal union.<sup>415</sup> Therefore, it is unclear why no delegates from these countries were included on the June 1943 list. The EPTU was officially declared to be an Axis project, and the *Reichspost* had already agreed on three names: Dr. Giuseppe Capana, who was intended to become the vice-chair of the committee;<sup>416</sup>

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412 Writer's own translation: "Anlässlich meines letzten Berliner Aufenthalts wurde mitgeteilt, dass ich nach einer geeigneten Kraft für die Internationale Post- und Fernmeldekammer Ausschau halten solle. Nach Rücksprache mit Generaldirektor Albrecht kommt bei der hiesigen Verwaltung nur der Direktor Aspjo in Frage. Er besitzt die juristischen Staatsexamina und bearbeitet alle Rechtsangelegenheiten bei der finnischen Post- und Telegrafverwaltung. Ich glaube, dass er auch wirklich mitarbeiten wird. Er versteht deutsch sehr gut, spricht selbst jedoch noch etwas gebrochen", Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/13658, Postrat Fleischer an Fey (Min-Z), 01.04.1942.

413 Europäischer Postkongress, p. 10.

414 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/13658, Ernante Mitglieder der Sektion "Post- und Fernmelderecht" der Landesvertretungen der Internationalen Rechtskammer, 26.05.1943.

415 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/13658, Vermerk Ref Cn, 17.11.1941.

416 Ibid.

Grand Officer Benedetto Caldara; and Dr. Pasquale Vasio. All three were in Vienna as delegates.<sup>417</sup> Their absence from the list cannot be explained but casts doubt on the strength of the Axis. The same applies to Dr. Károly von Forster of the Hungarian postal administration, whose name was mentioned several times in the selection of a Hungarian delegate and whose support for the project was unquestioned.<sup>418</sup> In May 1944, von Forster wrote to Risch; he had heard from *Oberpostrat* Tiegs, appointee of the *Reichspost* to Hungary, that a second congress was being planned and he wanted to express his support.<sup>419</sup>

Switzerland and Sweden did not join the union; thus, the lack of delegates from these countries seems logical. However, two names that should not be omitted were discussed during the search for delegates to the ICL committee. Dr. Buser was mentioned for Switzerland, but it was also noted that his views on the foundation of a European postal union had yet to be reviewed.<sup>420</sup> The possible Swedish delegate, a postal director named Lange, on the other hand, was said to have a positive attitude towards a European postal union<sup>421</sup> but he was not appointed, according to the list.

In summary, the committee on postal services and telecommunications within the ICL was intended to institutionalise cooperation on legal questions to support the work of the EPTU. Sources show German dominance in the planning and organisation of the committee but contain no actual evidence of the committee's work or its results. The national delegates had a degree of personal overlap with the EPTU and their confirmation by the *Reichspostministerium*, whose Foreign Department did not seem to be entirely supportive of the committee, was slow. Thus, the committee did not appear to have played an important role in standard-setting for European postal services. However, in addition to the union itself, other channels were envisioned to promote the process. The strategic positioning and work of the *Reichspost*'s appointees abroad is exemplified by the process of identifying the right delegates. Thus, the committee's design aligned with the overall picture of the standard-setting process in European postal services, as envisioned by those responsible in the *Reichspostministerium*. The central aspect of hegemony over the European postal union, which was also relevant to Timm and Risch's speeches, reappears.

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417 Europäischer Postkongress, p. 10.

418 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/13658, Vermerk Ref Cn, 17.11.1941.

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

420 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/13658, Min-A (Pe) and Timm, 09.1941.

421 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/13658, Vermerk Ref Cn, 17.11.1941.

*Presenting the project to the world outside the Reichspost*

To increase the project's legitimacy and obtain majorities for the different European postal standards envisioned, both a professional and a civilian audience were targeted through articles. Although they cannot be examined in their entirety, it is important to highlight some examples, as they demonstrated the emphasis placed on certain aspects of standard-setting. Articles that addressed a professional audience are analysed first, as experts had to agree on the standards before the project was promoted to civilians.

While preparing for the congress, the *Reichspost* used several channels to promote the idea of a European postal union, mainly within the expert community. These included its own journals, such as the *Postarchiv* and the *Deutsche Post*, and the journal of the UPU. The following discussion contains all the articles found on the subject, but it does not necessarily represent a complete selection.

Heinrich Poppe and Friedrich Risch both wrote articles on the German-Italian agreements, which were published in November 1941. Risch's article was circulated in the *Deutsche Post*, while Poppe's was published in the *Postnachrichtenblatt* and reprinted in the *Mitteilungen der Deutschen Gruppe in der Internationalen Handelskammer*. Risch's article recounted the *Reichspostminister's* meeting with the Duce and showed pictures of the meeting and him laying a wreath at the tomb of the unknown soldier in Rome with the minister of transport, Host-Venturi.<sup>422</sup> The pictures appeared alongside technical explanations of the agreements. By contrast, Poppe's article focused solely on the details of the agreement.<sup>423</sup>

As in his previously mentioned speech, Risch began his article on a political note by integrating the agreements and the planned postal union in the wider context of a 'New Europe'. The rhetoric was typical; he wrote about a new order in Europe, the failures of foreign powers and the *Reichspost's* work towards European integration in its field of expertise. He contextualised the German-Italian agreements as a step in this direction, then explained why a restricted union was needed in addition to the UPU and the ITU. Risch argued that, for postal services, the dream of a standard charge in international services was more distant than in the era of Heinrich

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422 Both raised their arms in a "Hitler Salute" in the picture. (Risch, Friedrich: Die deutsch-italienischen Sonderabkommen über den Post- und Telegraphendienst in: Die Deutsche Post (1941), Nr. 45, p. 717-722, p. 719 as found in Politisches Archiv, Berlin, RAV Zagreb 147).

423 Politisches Archiv, Berlin, RAV Zagreb 147, Mitteilungen der Deutschen Gruppe der Internationalen Handelskammer, Januar 1942.

von Stephan. While explaining the details of the agreements and differences that had to be overcome, Risch highlighted the Italians' will to adapt to the German system. The article concluded with a description of the *Reichspostminister's* travels, which can be summarised as praise for positive Axis relations<sup>424</sup> and the achievements of the Italian Fascists.<sup>425</sup>

Similarly, Poppe explained that Heinrich von Stephan's old ideal of comparable international tariffs could no longer be achieved with international unions.<sup>426</sup> Notably, the wording of descriptions of the current situation and details of the agreement was exactly the same in several passages in Poppe and Risch's articles.<sup>427</sup> Consequently, Poppe also noted that the Italian administration adapted to German weight categories and tariff system, while the German administration simply expanded its domestic system to a wider territory.<sup>428</sup>

In the *Postarchiv*, the *Reichspostminister* Ohnesorge and Timm<sup>429</sup> published a special issue entitled 'European Postal Services'.<sup>430</sup> It was sent to all administrations that had been officially contacted regarding the bilateral agreements and the union<sup>431</sup> and included articles by the head of the Italian postal administration, Pession; his Finnish counterpart, Albrecht; and the head of the technical department at the Bulgarian PTT administration, Witscho Pissomoff. They wrote about the PTT in autocratic countries, the development of their national PTT systems and the specificities of a transit country. The articles were summarised in Italian, French and Spanish for non-German speakers. Additionally, an article by Friedrich Risch on the

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424 For instance, Ohnesorge was greeted by the Duce with 'extraordinary warmth'. (Risch, Friedrich: Die deutsch-italienischen Sonderabkommen über den Post- und Telegraphendienst in: Die Deutsche Post (1941), Nr. 45, p. 717-722, p. 722 as found in Politisches Archiv, Berlin, RAV Zagreb 147).

425 Risch writes about 'indelible impression' that the participants were left with after witnessing the efforts of the new Italy. (Ibid.).

426 Politisches Archiv, Berlin, RAV Zagreb 147, Mitteilungen der Deutschen Gruppe der Internationalen Handelskammer, Januar 1942.

427 Ibid.

428 Ibid.

429 Both were named as the official publishers. Responsible for the content were among others the ministerial directors Körner and Risch as well as the head of the research institute of the Reichspost Gladenbeck, cf. Politisches Archiv, Berlin, RAV Zagreb 147, Postarchiv: Sonderheft Europäisches Postwesen

430 Writer's own translation: "Europäisches Postwesen", ibid.

431 Politisches Archiv, Berlin, RAV Zagreb 147, Auswärtiges Amt an die Deutsche Botschaft Rom, Madrid, Ankara, die Deutsche Gesandtschaft Lissabon, Bern, Kopenhagen, Stockholm. Helsinki, Pressburg, Budapest, Agram, Sofia, Bukarest, die Dienststelle des Auswärtigen Amtes Belgrad, den Bevollmächtigten des Reichs für Griechenland, 20.06.1942.



problems and aims of a European Postal Union was published in the issue.<sup>432</sup> It provided the literary basis of the union and is presented later in more detail. It was translated in full in Italian, French and Spanish. The special issue of the *Postarchiv* also contained the wording of the bilateral agreements that had already been concluded, both for postal services and telecommunication.<sup>433</sup> It was based on an essay series in the journal *Postarchiv* that *Reichspostminister* Ohnesorge had started in the beginning of 1940.<sup>434</sup> This bringing together of administrations, albeit only in a journal, could be interpreted as an attempt to build the epistemic community needed to realise a European PTT union.

First published in April 1942, Risch's article was reprinted with English, French and Spanish translations in the official journal of the UPU, *L'Union postale*, one month before the congress in September 1942.<sup>435</sup> The article received attention outside of the PTT community. For example, the International Thrift Institute also considered discussing it in its own journal.<sup>436</sup> After the introduction, Risch dedicated the first part of the article to postal services and the second to telecommunications. Therefore, only the contents of the introduction and the first part of the article are relevant to this work. Compared to Risch's speech and article in the *Deutsche Post*, the tone of the article is neutral and technical. Risch argued that the UPU and ITU's provisions were too broad for the small continent of Europe and that earlier initiatives and the existing restricted union had demonstrated the need for a European union. He mentioned the bilateral work that had been completed to date and outlined the main results. First, the simplification and improvement of postal services were to be completed within the framework of UPU provisions. Second, a wider weight category system was preferred. Third, tariffs were adapted to a base tariff of 12 *Reichspfennig* for the 20g category. Fourth, the abolition of the transit charge was declared to be a future goal that bilateral agreements could only partly address and that a multilateral collective had to address. Fifth, the future of air mail was a frequent topic but also one that had to be postponed until after the war. Sixth, the

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432 Politisches Archiv, Berlin, RAV Zagreb 147, *Postarchiv: Sonderheft Europäisches Postwesen, Aus dem Inhalt*.

433 Ibid.

434 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/11812, *Das Nachrichtenwesen autoritärer Staaten*, Anmerkung p. 7, April 1942.

435 Risch, Friedrich: *Probleme und Ziele eines europäischen Postvereins*, in: *L'Union postale* (1942), Nr. 9, p. 246-252, as found in Staatsarchiv Hamburg, Hamburg, 211-11 C(P)774.

436 Bundesarchiv, Berlin, R4701/12129, *Direktor Ravizza and Oberposttrat Dr. Propach*, 03.12.1942.

negotiations ended with talks about the organisation of the new postal union; it was agreed that ‘the time of lengthy official congress’<sup>437</sup> was over. Instead, the work of specialists should happen in a European postal committee, similar to the international consultative committees of the ITU.<sup>438</sup> After outlining the results of the negotiations in telecommunications, Risch ended the article with the assurance that the new union was not intended to isolate Europe but to unify its forces to enable the ‘economic and cultural development’<sup>439</sup> of European peoples: ‘We are certain that this work will soon find its completion under the sign of the new Europe’.<sup>440</sup> The content of the article reprinted in the UPU and the letter received by the administrations was similar; the latter underlined technocratic continuities and the integration of the new union in existing technocratic unions. Only the mention of the ‘New Europe’ and the criticism of the UPU’s long congresses were political in tone.

Several articles were also published in journals that focused on foreign policy. For example, plans for a European postal union were mentioned in the ‘*Auswärtige Politik*’ in September 1942 and described the union from a clearly political angle. The PTT standards were not mentioned at all. Instead, the unknown author emphasised the European unity expressed by such a potential union and the part that the union would play in the new order of Europe: the ‘great German task after the victory on the battlefield’.<sup>441</sup>

The *Reichspostministerium* planned two *Auslands-Zeitschriften*:<sup>442</sup> one for postal services and one for telecommunications. The journal for postal services was to be named *The European Post*.<sup>443</sup> Documents about the planning of this journal date from around May 1941. On the 23<sup>rd</sup> of July 1941, the *Reichspostminister* wrote to the *Reichsverband der deutschen*

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437 Writer’s own translation: “die Zeit langwieriger offizieller Kongresse”, Risch., Friedrich, Probleme und Ziele eines europäischen Postvereins, in: Postarchiv: Sonderheft Europäisches Postwesen, April 1942, p. 81-88, p. 84 as found in Politisches Archiv, Berlin, RAV Zagreb 147.

438 Ibid.

439 Writer’s own translation: “wirtschaftliche und kulturelle Entfaltung”, *ibid.*

440 Writer’s own translation: “Wir sind sicher, daß im Zeichen des neuen Europa diese Arbeit in naher Zeit ihre Vollendung finden wird”, *ibid.*

441 Writer’s own translation: “große deutsche Aufgabe hinter dem Siege auf dem Schlachtfeld”, Ohne Verfasser, Europäischer Postverein, in: *Auswärtige Politik*, Bd. 9 (1942), p. 811.

442 Writer’s own translation: Journals for foreign countries.

443 Writer’s own translation: “Die Europäische Post”, Bundesarchiv, Berlin Lichterfelde, R4701/13438.

*Zeitschriften-Verleger*,<sup>444</sup> stating that the ministry was responsible for the planning and content of the journals and that its publication was in the interest of the Reich. Its task was to lead the way to closer European cooperation in postal services which was declared to be Hitler's wish.<sup>445</sup> On the same day, he wrote to the Walter Krieg publishing house, the journal's intended publisher, to reiterate the journals' necessity.<sup>446</sup> The *Reichspost*'s appointees abroad were also informed of the project. The aim was for the two journals to become the 'decisive bodies of the European postal and telecommunications system'.<sup>447</sup> The task of the appointees was to name individuals who could contribute and/or permanently collaborate on the journals – at best, these individuals were members of the national administration. The journal was intended to be bilingual (German-Italian, German-Spanish and German-French) and to consist of three sections: general political news, a purely scientific section and an objective section.<sup>448</sup> The appointees delivered. Tiegs received three names from the Hungarian PTT administration – one each for postal services, telecommunications and technical issues. For postal services, Elemér Módos was nominated as a permanent collaborator.<sup>449</sup> Thus, the journal would have been able to gather different ideas and expertise regarding the development of a European restricted postal union. The relationships between the appointees and the collaborators could also have been leveraged to foster an epistemic community centred in Germany.

The need for a new journal – in addition to the five existing journals on PTT<sup>450</sup> – was justified as follows: 'The scientifically exact content, the targeted propaganda effect and the reproduction of factual communications (...) thus built an irrefutable necessity'.<sup>451</sup> In the application, English was

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- 444 Writer's own translation: Reich's Association of German Journal Publishers.  
 445 Bundesarchiv, Berlin Lichterfelde, R4701/13438, Min an den Reichsverband der deutschen Zeitschriften-Verleger, 23.07.1941.  
 446 Bundesarchiv, Berlin Lichterfelde, R4701/13438, Min an den Walter Krieg Verlag, 23.07.1941.  
 447 Writer's own translation: "maßgeblichen Organe des Europäische Post- und Fernmeldewesens", Bundesarchiv, Berlin Lichterfelde, R4701/13438, Min-A/Kh an den Sonderbeauftragten der Deutschen Reichspost, 24.07.1941.  
 448 Ibid.  
 449 Bundesarchiv, Berlin Lichterfelde, R4701/13438, Tiegs an Fey, 01.10.1941.  
 450 Bundesarchiv, Berlin Lichterfelde, R4701/13438, Fragebogen betr. Planung der Herausgabe einer Zeitschrift, Anlage zu 2c), 25.07.1941.  
 451 Writer's own translation: "Der wissenschaftlich exakte Inhalt, die erstrebte Propagandawirkung und die Wiedergabe sachlicher Mitteilungen (...) bilden damit eine unabweisbare Notwendigkeit", Bundesarchiv, Berlin Lichterfelde,

also listed as a publication language.<sup>452</sup> Due to paper shortages, the request was denied.<sup>453</sup> The minister himself made another plea to the *Reichsverband*, emphasising the journal's necessity and its contribution to the plan to unite PTT Europe, as the Hitler wished.<sup>454</sup> However, the answer remained negative, and the *Reichspost* had to reschedule its plans.<sup>455</sup> The new plan was to publish a special issue of the *Postarchiv* like the one mentioned above.<sup>456</sup> However, it would appear that this special issue remained the only one of these special issues completed.<sup>457</sup>

Several aspects of the envisioned journal should be mentioned. The most notable is the fact that it was exclusively planned by the *Reichspostministerium*, well before it became clear that the Italian administration had agreed to move forward with the project of creating a European union for postal services and telecommunications, as shown in the next section. The choice of languages is also significant; the journal would have not been translated into all the languages of the countries whose administrations would be members of the EPTU. However, *Signal* – the most important German journal published abroad – was.<sup>458</sup> This was undoubtedly influenced by the target audiences for the journals. While the target readers of *Signal* were the general public, *The European Post* was intended to attract experts from other administrations in occupied Europe and beyond. Thus, publishing the articles in Italian, French and Spanish would ensure that international postal experts in any administration would be able to understand them. The choice to publish a German-Italian journal likely also included an additional Axis propaganda aspect. The same holds for the exclusion of English. However, it is notable that the publication would always have been bilingual, with

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R4701/13438, Fragebogen betr. Planung der Herausgabe einer Zeitschrift, 25.07.1941, p. 2.

452 Ibid., zu Anlage 4.

453 Bundesarchiv, Berlin Lichterfelde, R4701/13438, Jux an Verlag Walter Krieg, 15.09.1941.

454 Bundesarchiv, Berlin Lichterfelde, R4701/13438, Reichspostminister an die Reichspressekammer, 17.11.1941.

455 Bundesarchiv, Berlin Lichterfelde, R4701/13438, Reichsleiter für die Presse der NSDAP an Reichspostminister, 19.01.1942.

456 Bundesarchiv, Berlin Lichterfelde, R4701/13438, Min-A an die Sonderbeauftragten der DRP im Ausland, 03.02.1942.

457 Politisches Archiv, Berlin, RAV Zagreb 147, Postarchiv: Sonderheft Europäisches Postwesen.

458 Aslangul-Rallo, Claire : *Signal (1940-1945) : propagande « universelle » ou adaptation à des publics hétérogènes ?*. L'exemple de la version francophone, in : *Matériaux pour l'histoire de notre temps*, N° 135-136 (2020), p. 56-57, p. 56.

German as the base language. This shows that the journal was also designed with the establishment of German as the lingua franca of the international postal community in mind. This meant setting a new standard, as French had been the primary language, especially during conferences and congresses. Lastly, the inclusion of non-German authors would have conferred legitimacy on the journal to facilitate the promotion of new standards and leadership for European postal services and telecommunications.

The fact that the *Reichspostministerium* planned a journal to promote standards and ideas demonstrates another aspect that was already visible in the *Reichspost's* other preparatory actions. The *Reichspost* intended to use multiple channels to achieve the intensification of European postal services, with themselves at the top. This was apparent from the installation of appointees abroad and the proposed creation of the PTT committee within the ICL.

In addition to the conclusion of bilateral agreements before the congress, German newspapers also published articles about the planned European postal union; some were even authored by the *Reichspostminister* himself. The articles did not merely report on the planned union but framed it in a political light.

The first article identified dates from April 1941 and was published in the *Berliner Börsen-Zeitung*. *Reichspostminister* Ohnesorge outlined the necessity of a European postal union for the post-war order and declared uniform tariffs for all European PTT services as the union's goal.<sup>459</sup> These statements were made before the German and Italian PTT administration reached a bilateral agreement or came to terms on a European postal union. In December 1941, another article titled 'For the postal unity of Europe' appeared in the *Kölnische Zeitung*.<sup>460</sup> It explained how the German-Italian bilateral agreement could lead to a European movement that could result in German domestic tariffs being applied within a European postal area. In the article, there was praise for the German and Italian administrations' working relationship and endeavour to form a 'New Europe' in which administration, economy and transport would be efficiently combined. The article closed with technical details about the union excerpted from another

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459 Rigsarkivet, København, Generaldirektoratet for Post- og Telegrafvesenet, Journalsager vedr. forholdet til udlandet (1884-1983): I.M.1.c (1903-1962), 13075, Afskrift Berliner Börsen-Zeitung, 26.04.1941.

460 Writer's own translation: "Für die postalische Einheit Europas", PTT Archiv, Bern, P-00C\_0108\_01, Kölnische Zeitung, 02.12.1941.

article in the *Deutsche Postzeitung*.<sup>461</sup> Praise for the *Reichspost* is a recurring theme in coverage of the *Reichspost*'s efforts to form a European postal union.<sup>462</sup> Additionally, the articles contained concrete details about the planned union and standards, and all the German newspapers positively assessed the former.<sup>463</sup> These aspects are unsurprising, as it was necessary to inform readers about the union's implications and it was rather unlikely that a German newspaper would criticise the *Reichspostminister*'s project at the time.

In the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, the efforts were described as 'the German action for a European Postal Union',<sup>464</sup> which provides further evidence that the project was externally perceived as a German one. It also led to several articles referencing Heinrich von Stephan. For example, the *Börsenzeitung* quoted him as saying, '*Si vis pacem para concordam*',<sup>465</sup> This was derived from a Latin proverb originally attributed to Plato: '*Si vis pacem para bellum*', which loosely translates to, 'If you want peace, prepare war'. The version credited to von Stephan means, 'If you want peace, prepare an agreement'. The German National Socialists did both. The idea of the agreements being a vital part of peace after the war was reiterated in speeches that highlighted the presentation of the EPTU as a project of peace and understanding between peoples. Two articles attempted to make the project more tangible for readers. The *Neues Wiener Tageblatt* used the words of the *Reichspostminister* to evoke 'connections like a giant nervous system',<sup>466</sup> and the *Frankfurter Zeitung* remarked that the union would transform Europe into one area for the purposes of PTT to ensure that the entire continent could not longer be divided into 'domestic' and 'foreign'.<sup>467</sup>

One last article must be discussed. It was written by the *Reichspostminister* himself and published in the *Europa-Kabel*. While the article's technocratic content purely repeats what was already known about the plans for a European postal union, the author stated that a restricted union within the

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461 PTT Archiv, Bern, P-00C\_0108\_01, Kölnische Zeitung, 02.12.1941.

462 Cf. PTT Archiv, Bern, P-00C\_0108\_01, Völkischer Beobachter München, 21.01.1942; Neues Wiener Tagesblatt, 19.06.1942; Börsen Zeitung, 09.07.1942.

463 PTT Archiv, Bern, P-00C\_0108\_01, Pressekommentare zum Europäischen Postkongress.

464 Writer's own translation: "die deutsche Aktion für eine europäische Postunion", PTT Archiv, Bern, P-00C\_0108\_01, Neue Zürcher Zeitung, 08.01.1942.

465 PTT Archiv, Bern, P-00C\_0108\_01, Börsen Zeitung, 09.07.1942.

466 Writer's own translation: "Verbindungen wie ein riesiges Nervensystem", PTT Archiv, Bern, P-00C\_0108\_01, Neues Wiener Tageblatt, 20.6.1942.

467 PTT Archiv, Bern, P-00C\_0108\_01, Frankfurter Zeitung, 19.6.1942.

UPU was long overdue but that only the war had made it possible. He also noted that the union would not diminish the UPU and Heinrich von Stephan's great achievement. Rather, it would align with his wishes.<sup>468</sup> Thus, the legacy of Heinrich von Stephan was used to legitimise the project to both a professional and a civilian audience. For the professional audience, the project represented technocratic continuity; for the civilian audience, it testified to the continued 'German greatness' that benefited the rest of Europe.

The above summary of available articles shows that, while the press promoted the idea of a higher German purpose or excellence, there was also objective reporting on the substance of the *Reichspost*'s activities. Although the EPTU had the potential to become an important propaganda project, there does not appear to have been an attempt to make it into one. This lack of propaganda efforts heightened the likelihood of the EPTU being implemented, as the *Reichspost* was able to play to at least two very different readerships – 'normal' and professional audiences – with almost the same material.

*The European Postal and Telecommunications Union as an Axis project – From a working group for European telecommunications to a European postal union (1940-1941)*

While the chapter has thus far focused on the German *Reichspost*, the EPTU was an international organisation and required the involvement of other national PTT administrations. In the following, the inter-administrative and diplomatic channels are examined: first cooperation with the Italian administration, then relations with administrations from other European countries.

As shown in the timetable at the beginning of this chapter, the Italian and German PTT administrations met regularly between November 1940 and July 1942. While the first two meetings in Bolzano and Munich revolved around the establishment of a working group for European telecommunications, subsequent cooperation focused on the conclusion of a bilateral treaty and preparation for the founding of the EPTU. It should be noted that the Italian and German Foreign Ministries appear to have initially been informed about the developments regarding the European postal union after the fact or when Risch judged it necessary and only became active rather than reactive during the last phase of preparations in September 1942. Their

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468 PTT Archiv, Bern, P-00C\_0108\_01, Europa-Kabel, 19.6.1942.

involvement appeared to have debilitated the Italian PTT administration more than the German one; more than once, the Italian PTT administration either could not move forward with the project or had to wait a long time until the Italian Foreign Ministry or Mussolini agreed to the measure. The situation seemed to be different on the German side, as Ohnesorge used his ties to Hitler to resolve tensions between the German Foreign Ministry and the *Reichspostministerium*. It should also be noted that the Foreign Department of the *Reichspost* took the lead in postal services matters; especially since the congress was to be held in the Reich (in Vienna), the entire onsite organisation was in its hands. However, content-wise, there also appeared to be an asymmetry between the two Axis powers. In the following, the meetings are chronologically analysed. The first two telecommunications meetings are briefly examined, followed by the agreement meeting in August 1941 and the EPTU preparation meetings in 1942.

In November 1940, representatives of the Italian and German PTT administrations met in Bolzano to discuss the future of European telecommunications cooperation amid the paralysis of global unions.<sup>469</sup> Two months later, they met again in Munich to continue the discussions and determine the basic structure of the working group.<sup>470</sup> The technical content of the meeting is of lesser importance for the present work, as it is purely concerned with telecommunications. However, the agreed-upon structure for the working group should be mentioned: an administration's entry and exit into the group needed to be signalled to the German administration. The group's official languages were German and Italian. A note to use French as a stand-in language as needed was crossed out in the minutes of the meeting. The voting system was intended to be 'one country, one vote', and the working group was to be headquartered in Berlin, where the preparation of conferences would take place, with a branch office in Rome. The working group would create specialist committees which mirrored the known working processes from the ITU. The administrations could use these committees' reports as they pleased.<sup>471</sup> These institutions are notable for several reasons. On the one hand, they are a simple continuation of long-standing working structures at global unions; on the other hand, they reflect changes in geopolitical power. This is evidenced by the decision to headquarter the

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469 Henrich-Franke / Laborie, *European Union by and for Communication Networks*, p. 85-86.

470 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/12284, Niederschrift über die zu gründende AG Europäischer Fernmeldeverwaltungen, January 1941.

471 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/12284, Ordnung einer Arbeitsgemeinschaft, January 1941.



working group in Berlin with a branch office in Rome and, more importantly, in the choice of official languages. Excluding French or including it as a secondary language represented an affront and a show of power, given that French had been the primary working language of international cooperation, not only in the ITU and the UPU. Furthermore, French was still used in bilateral communications between administrations, even between the *Reichspost* and other PTT administrations.<sup>472</sup> It was the *Reichspost*'s goal to eliminate French as the language of international postal relations in Europe<sup>473</sup> and instead to give due effect to the German language based on the new political situation entailed by the war<sup>474</sup>. These institutions were also important for persuading the staff of the Foreign Ministry and, in this case, the OKW, whose approval the Foreign Ministry required before agreeing to continue with plans for the working group.<sup>475</sup> To convince the OKW, the working group was described as a tool for reordering Europe and changing the balance of power in global technical committees, which were said to be dominated by the United States and the United Kingdom. Through the working group, German influence over neutral countries and civil questions could be strengthened. Having coordinated the working group with Italy, the *Reichspost* claimed that important individuals from the Swiss and Swedish PTT administrations had agreed to cooperate.<sup>476</sup>

During the meeting in January 1941, there was also a discussion regarding who should be invited to participate in the working group. Both the Italian and German foreign ministries had agreed to invite Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, Romania, Sweden, Slovakia and Hungary; they had not yet approved the invitation of Denmark, Finland, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Russia, Switzerland, Spain and the Vatican.<sup>477</sup> This list was clearly influenced by the war situation, given that the occupied countries – France, Belgium and Greece – were missing from the list and that Yugoslavia and Russia were still on it in January 1941, which would be unthinkable several months later. Notably, the invitation of Sweden was approved, but not the

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472 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/11574, Wiehl an Reichspostminister, 11.02.1941.

473 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/11574, Timm an Min-A, 23.09.1940.

474 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/11574, Min-A and Auswärtiges Amt, 12.03.1941.

475 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/12284, Vermerk über eine Besprechung betr. Aref beim AA, 12.09.1941.

476 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/12284, Gladenbeck an das Oberkommando der Wehrmacht, 20.10.1941.

477 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/12284, Niederschrift über die zu gründende AG Europäischer Fernmeldeverwaltungen, January 1941.

invitation of Denmark, Finland, Norway and the Netherlands. No explanation for this could be found. One possibility is that the inclusion of these four countries would have created a power imbalance between Germany and Italy, as they were occupied by or allied with the Third Reich, whereas a similar number of countries from Italy's sphere of influence were not included on the list. The possibility of inviting Switzerland, Portugal or Spain seems less surprising, although it is notable that Sweden was preferred over Switzerland, where the office of the ITU was located.

It is important to note that the head of the Foreign Department, Friedrich Risch, does not appear to have been present at either of these meetings.<sup>478</sup> Two processes seem to have coincided in 1940 and 1941: the creation of the EPTU and the creation of a working group for telecommunications. Despite the realisation of plans for a European PTT union, Gladenbeck<sup>479</sup> still promoted the working group for telecommunications and was present in Munich in January 1941. On 20 October 1941, he wrote to the OKW to obtain approval for the working group, while plans to create a European postal union also advanced with the bilateral agreements between the Italian and German PTT administrations in early October 1941. There is no obvious explanation for these parallel events; given the pattern of German-Italian cooperation, there may have been some sort of competition between Risch and Gladenbeck, and the Axis projects were used to seek attention of superiors. In addition, the telecommunications engineers may have resisted the idea of being integrated into this union. Notably, a working group represented a lower level of institutionalisation than a union. Although the term 'working group' was not present in the valid ITU convention in 1940,<sup>480</sup> it most probably mirrored committees' intention to address specific (technical) questions.<sup>481</sup> Therefore, it can be assumed that the basic ideas of the PTT projects differed from each other. A working group was more focused on technical and economic aspects, whereas a new union also almost certainly had political features. Risch's speech also shows that the merging of

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478 Ibid.

479 As has been mentioned in the previous part, Gladenbeck was also supposed to be part of the German delegation to the PTT committee within the international chamber of law.

480 International Telecommunication Convention (Madrid, 1932), as found on the official Website of the ITU: <https://search.itu.int/history/HistoryDigitalCollectionDocLibrary/5.5.61.en.100.pdf> (last access 18.03.2019).

481 This holds for both the ITU and the UPU (Universal Postal Union Convention (Buenos Aires, 1939), Art. 18).

the two administrative branches was not necessarily planned. Thus, an understanding of the working group as a preliminary stage of the EPTU's<sup>482</sup> foundation cannot be supported. Rather, the process can be described as the parallel development of two different projects. Importantly, Risch – who was first part of an Italian-German PTT meeting in August 1941 and ultimately responsible for the EPTU's organisational form – steadily promoted the ministry's plan to establish a European postal union. The working group, on the other hand, was not realised but transformed into permanent committees of the EPTU.

From 28 August to 3 September 1941, the German delegation led by Risch negotiated with the Italian delegation in Rome about an EPTU. Additionally, three agreements were arranged: one for postal services and two for telecommunications. Both the German and Italian delegations consisted of experts who would later attend the congress of Vienna.<sup>483</sup>

The minutes from the meeting show that Ohnesorge confirmed that he would travel to Rome in October 1941 to sign the agreements. These were based on German propositions that made clear in their introduction that, due to the Führer and the Duce's common plans to work towards a deeper cooperation between European peoples, it would also be desirable to conclude special arrangements between the two countries in the area of PTT: 'These agreements should – in accordance with the European programme of the two great leaders – be the basis for an association of all countries that are in compliance with the Axis powers'.<sup>484</sup> This is notable insofar that it could link membership in the future European postal union to a political criterion and thus limit possible member administrations to allies and occupied countries. This idea is also in sharp contrast to that of technocratic internationalism, which aimed to overcome precisely such political divides between nation states.

However, the above represents all the information available on the meeting. The agreements were signed in October 1941 by ministers Ohnesorge

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482 Keil, Rudi: Die Gründung des Europäischen Post- und Fernmeldevereins während des Zweiten Weltkriegs und seine Bedeutung für die Expansionspolitik des deutschen Faschismus, in: *Die Deutsche Post* 4 (1959) as found in Bundesarchiv, Koblenz, B257/343, p. 214-215.

483 The German delegation was entirely present on both occasions. 3 out of 5 members of the Italian delegation were later also present during the congress.

484 Writer's own translation: "Diese Vereinbarungen sollen – entsprechend dem europäischen Programm der beiden großen Führer – die Grundlage für einen Zusammenschluß aller Länder bilden, die sich mit den Achsenmächten in Übereinstimmung befinden", Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/12288, Hauptniederschrift, 15.09.1941.

and Host-Venturi in Rome. As the bilateral agreement differs from ones negotiated between Germany and other European administrations, it is important to discuss its most important aspects. Additionally, the administrations agreed on a meeting minute that warrants mention in this work.

In the introduction to this minute, the two administrations confirmed their desire to improve reciprocal political, cultural and economic relations through the simplification of postal services and their aim of fostering close European cooperation in the area of postal services by working towards the creation of a European postal union. Specifically, this meant that the provisions of the special agreement would first be applied in German-Italian postal services. Second, the administrations confirmed that this agreement should be the groundwork for a future European postal union: ‘All European countries should be members of this European postal union if possible’.<sup>485</sup> Third, both administrations would conclude agreements that were similar in content to the German-Italian one with other European postal administrations. They committed to communicating with each other about the administrations that they planned to establish agreements with and the wording of these agreements. Fourth, these special agreements were to be concluded within the framework of Article 5 of the UPU Convention. Fifth, a European postal committee would be created to prepare for the European postal union. The committee would consist of members from every country that had signed a special agreement. The tasks and function of the committee were to be decided during its first meeting, which the German and Italian administrations would schedule.<sup>486</sup>

The articles of the meeting minute are important because they defined the next steps towards the creation of a European postal union – namely, the bilateral agreements and a postal committee. However, the latter did not become a reality until the congress. The reasons for its failure are discussed below. By contrast, the bilateral agreements were successfully concluded and are analysed in the next chapter.<sup>487</sup> They were an important tool for integrating postal services before the congress and securing subsequently

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485 Writer’s own translation: “Dem Europäischen Postverein sollen möglichst alle europäischen Länder angehören”, Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/25935, Niederschrift über die Verhandlungen zwischen der Deutschen Reichspost und der Königl. Italienischen Post- und Telegraphenverwaltung in Rom (Post), 08.10.1941.

486 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/25935, Niederschrift über die Verhandlungen zwischen der Deutschen Reichspost und der Königl. Italienischen Post- und Telegraphenverwaltung in Rom (Post), 08.10.1941.

487 See: Part I Chapter III From bilateral to multilateral: Making the initiative “European”.

agreed-upon standards. It is also notable that Articles 2 and 5, which concern these bilateral agreements and the committee, do not feature in the minutes of the telecommunications negotiations.<sup>488</sup> This is because Risch described the ITU as having a ‘purely European character’,<sup>489</sup> which means that no new organisation was needed. It remains unclear whether this assessment included the envisioned working group. The assessment could also explain why fewer telecommunications agreements could be found and raises the question of whether it was already clear at the time that telecommunications would be part of the European union.

The postal agreement itself contained five articles. The most important is the second one, which is discussed last. The first article determined that, for German-Italian postal services<sup>490</sup>, the agreed-upon provisions in the UPU were valid unless otherwise defined in the agreement. The third article stipulated that correspondence between the administrations on telecommunications matters would be free of charge, while the fourth set the effective date of the agreement to 1 January 1942. The period of notice of the agreement was three months, and the provisions could be changed when both sides agreed. The fifth article stipulated that both the German and the Italian versions of the agreement were considered the original text. In summary, the agreement set rules for two types of standards: administrative-operative standards (Articles 3 and 4) and organisational standards (Article 5).

Article 2 regulated a third type of standard: tariffs. This meant charges for letters, postcards, printed materials, commercial documents, product samples, newspapers, journals and other mail. There was one important co-ordination problem: weight categories in Germany did not correspond to those in Italy. While the German system had categories of up to 20 grams, 20–250 grams, 250–500 grams and 500–1,000 grams, the Italian system had a continuous range of 20 grams<sup>491</sup> to 1,000 grams. This difference was not addressed by the agreement. Instead, both administrations agreed to apply their own national systems in the German-Italian postal exchange. Thus, there was no real harmonisation on this matter; a letter sent from Germany to Italy would be subject to a different tariff regime than a letter sent from Italy to Germany: ‘The Italian postal administration reserves the right to

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488 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/25935, Niederschrift über die Verhandlungen zwischen der Deutschen Reichspost und der Königl. Italienischen Post- und Telegraphenverwaltung in Rom (Telekommunikation), 08.10.1941.

489 Writer’s own translation: “rein europäischer Charakter”, Politisches Archiv, Berlin, R27628, Martius an Dir. Ha. Pol., 08.11.1941.

490 Germany including Böhmen und Mähren as well as the Generalgouvernement.

491 20-40, 40-60, 60-80 and so on.

adapt its own tariffs for letters in the traffic with Germany entirely to the stated German weight categories, once it will have introduced the same weight category system in the domestic postal services'.<sup>492</sup> For letters weighing more than 1,000 grams, the UPU's provisions were applied.

For postcards, the administrations agreed that sending a simple postcard would cost half as much as sending one with a reply coupon. They agreed on specific tariffs in this case. For printed materials, commercial documents and product samples, the same method as letters was used. The Germans expanded their system to Italy, and the Italians expanded their system to Germany. For newspapers, journals, books, printed booklets, sheet music and maps (without announcements and offers), the reduced tariffs from the UPU Convention would be applied if they were lower than the tariffs for the different mailing objects.<sup>493</sup>

Regarding the agreement's provisions, it must be noted that weight systems were not harmonised; rather, each administration kept its own national system. However, if any adaptation was to happen, it was clear that the Italian administration would adapt to the German system. This was not necessarily an expression of hegemony but simply the consequence of Italy choosing the smallest weight categories possible for international postal services, whereas the German administration wanted to apply its wider categories to European postal exchange. The result of an adaptation would have been the same weight category system for domestic and reciprocal postal services in Italy and Germany; thus, these two countries have become one fully integrated postal area for letters up to 1,000 grams. In this regard, national borders would have entirely disappeared between Italy and Germany.

Therefore, the agreement consisted of the adaptation of certain postal tariffs – namely, the expansion of one regime to the other country, but without harmonisation. It was the starting point for a series of bilateral agreements and – as the minutes stated – the model for agreements to follow. This comparison of the different bilateral agreements is in the following chapter. First, the progression of the German-Italian cooperation from October 1941 onwards is examined.

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492 Writer's own translation: "Die italienische Postverwaltung behält sich vor, den eigenen Tarif für Briefe im Verkehr mit Deutschland entsprechend den oben genannten Gewichtsstufen vollkommen anzugleichen, sobald sie in ihrem inneren Dienst das gleiche Gewichtstufensystem eingeführt haben wird", Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/25935, Abkommen zwischen der Deutschen Reichspost und der Königl. italienischen Post- und Fernmeldeverwaltung über den Postdienst zwischen dem Deutschen Reich und dem Königreich Italien.

493 Ibid.

In November 1941, Risch discussed the consequences and next steps of the creation of a European postal union with the envoy, Martius, who already had experience negotiating with international organisations. Over the course of his career with the German Foreign Office, Martius had been responsible for negotiations on international navigation and was involved with international inland navigation commissions such as the Central Commission for the Navigation on the Rhine (CCNR).<sup>494</sup> In a meeting that was originally convened to discuss the visits of the Italian and Romanian postal administrations,<sup>495</sup> Risch informed Martius that the *Reichspostminister* wished for the establishment of bilateral agreements to conclude by May 1942. Negotiations with other countries' administrations were already ongoing. The German administration took the lead on this process and would inform the Italian administration before any signings. Then, the Italian administration would decide whether it would also conclude agreements with other European administrations.<sup>496</sup> However, this is not how the minutes signed in October 1941 were formulated. They portrayed the negotiation of the agreements as more of a shared effort rather than a one-sided German initiative. The allies worked at two speeds, and the Italian administration is presented as following the *Reichspost*. From this perspective, the German administration's commitment to keeping its Italian counterpart informed and sending it the text of the agreement (Article 3) appeared more like an assurance between partners who did not necessarily trust each other rather than partners who cooperated to achieve a common goal.

The next topic on the agenda was the postal committee 'as the executing organ of the two-sided agreements'<sup>497</sup>. The details were intended to be discussed for the first time during Host-Venturi's postponed visit in February. However, according to Risch, one detail was certain: the seat of the preliminary committee would be in Berlin.<sup>498</sup> Without question, the choice of headquarters, which constitutes an organisational standard, was politically motivated in this case. Locating the new committee's seat in the capital was intended as a show of importance and power. While other restricted unions had gained importance within the UPU, the committee was the initial step in regaining some of Europe's previous power, with Germany at its head.

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494 *Biographisches Handbuch des deutschen Auswärtigen Dienstes 1871-1945*, Bd. 3, Paderborn 2008, p. 191-192.

495 Both visits had been postponed to the beginning of 1942. (Politisches Archiv, Berlin, R27628, Martius an Dir. Ha. Pol., 08.11.1941.)

496 Politisches Archiv, Berlin, R27628, Martius an Dir. Ha. Pol., 08.11.1941.

497 Writer's own translation: "als ausführendes Organ für die zweiseitigen Abmachungen", *ibid.*

498 *Ibid.*

Headquartering the committee in Berlin also showed the importance of postal services for the German administration and the influence that it hoped to obtain. No new committee was created for telecommunications, but the preparatory committee for the postal aspects of the EPTU would also be in Berlin, which was expected to fortify German leadership on PTT in Europe.<sup>499</sup>

Another organisational standard was the question of which language would be used in the new European postal order. Risch's answer also leaves little room for interpretation: the strategy was to leave open this question for as long as possible to enforce the use of German as the main language. The bilateral agreements would be in German or bilingual.<sup>500</sup> It is clear that the German administration (seemingly with the agreement of the Foreign Ministry) planned to express its hegemony through the choice of language. It was practical for the administration to have everyone speak its members' mother tongue; it also gave them a negotiation advantage and mirrored the geopolitical power of the Third Reich at the time. Language choices are never apolitical or technical, and this could be seen in the months following the German-Italian discussions and negotiations. Indeed, the cooperation became more conflicted.

In January 1942, the Italian minister of transport, Host-Venturi, was with a delegation in Berlin, Munich and Vienna. The head of postal services, Pession, was also part of the delegation. The German staff that the delegation met with consisted mostly of individuals who have already been mentioned in this work, such as Ohnesorge, Nagel, Risch, Köhn, Gladenbeck and Löffler.<sup>501</sup> The trip's programme was dominated by events that allowed the *Reichspost* to demonstrate its organisation and expertise; the most prominent staff training centre, Zeesen, and several postal offices were part of the agenda. Notably, there were also political stops, such as NSDAP houses and sites of the *Nationalsozialistische Kraftfahrkorps* (NSKK), where fallen members of the NSKK were commemorated.<sup>502</sup> According to the consulate general in Vienna, the Viennese press covered the Italian delegation's stay quite intensively.<sup>503</sup> The itinerary also indicates that there was a

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499 Ibid.

500 Ibid.

501 Archivio storico-diplomatico del Ministero degli Affari Esteri, Roma, Repubblica Sociale Italiana 1943-1945, Busta 13, Reichspostminister an die Kgl. Italienische Botschaft, 29.12.1941.

502 Archivio storico-diplomatico del Ministero degli Affari Esteri, Roma, Repubblica Sociale Italiana 1943-1945, Busta 131, Itinerario, 08.01.1942.

503 Archivio storico-diplomatico del Ministero degli Affari Esteri, Roma, Repubblica Sociale Italiana 1943-1945, Busta 13, Telespresso N. 255, 13.01.1942.



scheduled meeting with the *Reichspostminister* to discuss the ‘work of the European committee of the postal union’.<sup>504</sup> It is possible that it concerned the postal committee, which, according to the agreement, was intended to be established. Although this topic was meant to be discussed during the visit, according to Risch, no further information was found.

In April 1942, Risch informed Martius that – after the conclusion of bilateral agreements with other European administrations – the *Reichspostministerium* wanted to convene ‘the European postal union as a collective committee’.<sup>505</sup> To this end, the type of organisation was scheduled to be discussed with Italian representatives at the end of April.<sup>506</sup> A meeting in Berlin was ultimately arranged on 7 May 1942. On the German side, the entire team of the *Reichspostministerium*’s Foreign Department was present: Risch, Reiss and Ziesche. The appointee of the *Reichspost* abroad for Italy, Löffler, was also present. The Italian delegation consisted of new names, except for Dr. Vasio,<sup>507</sup> who had already appeared in the documents related to the ICL.<sup>508</sup>

Risch began the meeting by acknowledging Host-Venturi’s remarks on the bilateral German-Italian agreements in the journal *Autarchia*, which he designated as ‘a landmark example for the transport political association of the European countries’.<sup>509</sup> He reported that Germany had concluded bilateral agreements with the Netherlands, Finland and Denmark and was close to doing so with Romania, Croatia, Hungary and Slovakia. Negotiations were ongoing with Bulgaria, and talks with Switzerland and Spain had been initiated. Risch announced plans to begin discussions with Belgium and France and commented that an agreement with Spain would lead to one with Portugal. The content of these agreements was the same as that of the

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504 Writer’s own translation: “lavori del Comitato europeo dell’Union postale”, Archivio storico-diplomatico del Ministero degli Affari Esteri, Roma, Repubblica Sociale Italiana 1943-1945, Busta 131, Itinerario, 08.01.1942.

505 Writer’s own translation: “den europäischen Postverein als kollektiven Ausschuss”, Politisches Archiv, Berlin, R27634, Aufzeichnung wegen des Europäischen Postvereins, 11.04.1942.

506 Politisches Archiv, Berlin, R27634, Aufzeichnung wegen des Europäischen Postvereins, 11.04.1942.

507 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/25935, Niederschrift über die deutsch-italienischen Besprechungen in Berlin (Reichspostministerium), 07.05.1941.

508 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/13658, Vermerk Ref Cn, 17.11.1941.

509 Writer’s own translation: “ein richtungsweisendes Beispiel für den verkehrspolitischen Zusammenschluß der Länder Europas”, Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/25935, Niederschrift über die deutsch-italienischen Besprechungen in Berlin (Reichspostministerium), 07.05.1941.

German-Italian agreement. After this report, the German delegation presented its Italian counterpart with the May edition of the German journal *Postarchiv* for more information. The Italian administration also gave a report on its activities. Its representatives explained that the Italian administration's plan was to start with countries that located close to Italy before contacting the countries that Germany had agreements with. Therefore, contact with the Slovakian, Bulgarian and Romanian administrations had been established; by the date of the meeting, only the Slovakian administration had replied. An agreement with Croatia had already been concluded but would only go into effect once it had been adapted to the German-Croatian agreement.<sup>510</sup> As shown in the next chapter, the content of these bilateral agreements was not identical to that of the German-Italian agreement; differences can be found particularly with regard to the core of the agreements: new pricing for letters and the abolition of the transit charge. Regarding the pace of the concluded agreements, it is clear that the German *Reichspost* took the lead, as Risch aspired to do. On the Italian side, only an Italian-Croatian agreement had been concluded, but it had to be changed to fit to the German-Croatian template.

A discussion about bilateral package services followed. The German administration wanted greater simplification than its Italian counterpart. Thus, an agreement was postponed until after the issue was re-examined by the Italian administration.<sup>511</sup> The delegations further discussed the development of their bilateral agreements. For postal services, this included the area of package services and new talks about the abolition of the transit charge. Neither discussion appears to have ended in a decision. Regarding the abolition of the transit charge, the Italian delegation explained that Italy was 'the bridge to the middle [European]countries, the Orient and so forth'<sup>512</sup>, and that abolition would lead to high financial losses. When the German delegation argued that the aim of establishing a European postal union had to be prioritised over national interests, the Italian delegation remarked that this far-reaching question would surpass their mandate and they had to wait for the Director General, Pession, to arrive.<sup>513</sup>

These glimpses into the discussions show that the German delegation pushed for more integration and the reduction of prices and that the Italian delegation was more hesitant and did not have the authority to make certain

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510 Ibid.

511 Ibid.

512 Writer's own translation: "die Brücke nach den Mittelländern, dem Orient und so weiter", *ibid.*

513 Ibid.

decisions, which placed them in a less powerful position. The two partners did not collaborate on the same idea; rather, one side did not entirely agree with the other's measures.

After discussing telecommunication matters, Risch ended the meeting by remarking that the European Postal Union 'should be a union of the European PTT administrations within the framework of the Universal Postal and the International Telecommunications Union'.<sup>514</sup> The conclusion of the agreement was foreseen for autumn of the same year; the agreement would be an international treaty signed by representatives of the government and would only encompass the union's organisational statutes. Regulations for postal services and telecommunications were to be elaborated by the administrations, which would 'naturally'<sup>515</sup> take longer. The important aspect would not be parliamentary voting, but the landmark initiative of the two Axis powers acting by mutual agreement. A first draft of the statutes was presented.<sup>516</sup>

The fact that the portion of the meeting that revolved around the European postal union appears to have been entirely dominated by a report by Risch indicates the dynamics between the Axis powers on this subject. The minutes do not even document the Italian side's reaction to Risch's remark. It is also notable that, at the time, the plan was still to establish the union via a state treaty, which would have moved the project much further into the political sphere than an administrative agreement. As a result, more non-technical actors would have been involved in the project, which would have entirely run counter to technocratic goals, although specific technical and administrative questions would have remained in the hands of experts. It is unfortunate that the first draft of the statutes is not included in the sources because it would have enabled an analysis of the envisioned organisational standards in June 1942.

At the end of June 1942, the undersecretary of the Italian postal ministry, Marinelli, announced a 10-day visit to Berlin, which caused the rescheduling of Risch's negotiation programme. Marinelli referred to an alleged invitation and was said to have good relations with the Duce.<sup>517</sup> However, no further information about this trip was found. The next meeting was planned

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514 Writer's own translation: "solle einen Zusammenschluß der europäischen Post- und Fernmeldeverwaltungen im Rahmen des Weltpost- und des Weltnachrichtenvereins darstellen", *ibid.*

515 Writer's own translation: "naturgemäß", *ibid.*

516 *Ibid.*

517 Politisches Archiv, Berlin, R 106301, Martius an Dir. Ha. Pol, 23.06.1942.

for 20 July, but the Italian side cancelled it on 14 July. The Italian and German representatives were also scheduled to discuss the European postal union and the draft version of the protocol in the abovementioned version of the *Reichspost* and the Foreign Ministry.<sup>518</sup> As shown in the discussion on the agreement and the meeting in June, tensions loomed, but this cancellation in July 1942 represents the first open conflict between the two Axis partners on the matter of the European postal union.

According to the *Reichspost*'s appointee to Italy, Löffler, the Italian government did not want to hold any further talks about the postal union. The Italian Foreign Ministry was said to be disgruntled by the growing number of initiatives from technical departments, which were not allowed to negotiate questions of political importance without its participation or 'explicit authorisation'.<sup>519</sup> It viewed the negotiations about a European postal union as premature:

particularly, it has not been resolved whether it is practical to found a European or a global union; the existence of independent states after the end of the war cannot yet be assessed, and additionally, there is no urgent need because international postal relations continued smoothly due to the old universal postal union.<sup>520</sup>

When confronted with the fact that the Duce had confirmed that the bilateral agreement was the first step towards a European postal union, the ambassador, Giannini, answered that this could not be interpreted as a commitment to a foundation 'because the Duce was surely not aware of the questions to be solved'<sup>521</sup>. It would appear that Löffler suspected that the Italians' attitude was related to negotiations about a Greek radio station that had been inconvenient for them. However, the ambassador to Italy, von Mackensen, suggested that, in addition to independent initiatives conducted by technical departments, the Italian Foreign Ministry wanted to avoid 'international agreements where Italy is in a minority against Germany and third states

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518 Politisches Archiv, Berlin, R 106301, an Dir. Ha Pol, 23.07.1942.

519 Writer's own translation: "ausdrückliche Ermächtigung", Politisches Archiv, Berlin, R 106301, Telegramm Mackensen, 16.07.1942.

520 Writer's own translation: "zumal nicht geklärt sei, ob es zweckmäßig sei, europäische Vereinigung oder Weltvereinigung zu gründen, Bestehen selbstständiger Staaten nach Kriegsende noch keineswegs zu übersehen sei und überdies keine dringende Notwendigkeit bestehe, da internationale postalische Beziehungen auf Grund alten Weltpostvereins reibungslos weiter", *ibid.*

521 Writer's own translation: "da Duce sich sicher nicht vorher zu klärender Fragen bewusst gewesen sei", *ibid.*

belonging to the German living space and being under German influence'.<sup>522</sup> The German Foreign Ministry only decided to intervene when Host-Venturi could not allay doubts presented by the Italian Foreign Ministry. It explained its strictly internal interventions until that point by the fact that the *Reichspost* had a long-standing privilege that dated to the time of Heinrich von Stephan and that the smooth advancement of the project could only be approved from a foreign policy perspective.<sup>523</sup> The situation was ultimately resolved through the cancellation of the planned meeting with other administrations scheduled for the 25 July 1942, but Host-Venturi allowed a meeting between Pession and Risch in Cortina at the end of July. However, no minutes or other information about this meeting could be found. Nevertheless, it was so successful that the cancelled meeting between four administrations (Germany, Italy, Denmark and Hungary) was rescheduled for the beginning of August in Innsbruck. Though it was led by four parties, the report on the meeting mainly focuses on German-Italian issues. Additionally, it is difficult to separate the issues discussed in Cortina and Innsbruck. Thus, the results of the meetings are presented below.

Two types of issues were discussed: questions of equality between the Axis partners and organisational matters. Concerning Germany and Italy's equal standing, Director General Pession emphasised the Italians' wish to add Italian as an official language of the congress, where the issue should be decided. Additionally, the next congress had to take place in Rome, and the *Reichspost* had to 'finally'<sup>524</sup> assure this. The Italian representative had not been given the authority to deliberate on the protocol draft. The Italian side stopped resisting the swift implementation of the new organisation and agreed to the *Reichspostminister's* proposal to also invite other administrations to the congress on behalf of the Italian PTT administration. Regarding organisational matters, it was agreed that the congress would last 14 days; that opening speeches would be given by the *Reichspostminister*, the mayor of Vienna and the president, according to seniority; and that the invitation would be sent by the middle of August to allow all administrations to submit proposals. The German Foreign Ministry advised against using overly precise formulations in the invitation to the postal congress. Pession agreed to Vienna being the official seat of the future union. The number and type of

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522 Writer's own translation: "internationalen Vereinbarungen, in denen Italien gegenüber Deutschland und dritten zu deutschem Lebensraum gehörenden und unter deutschen Einfluß stehenden Staaten sich in der Minorität befindet", *ibid.*

523 Politisches Archiv, Berlin, R 106301, Telegramm Wiehl, 17.07.1942.

524 Writer's own translation: "endlich", Politisches Archiv, Berlin, R 106301, Aufzeichnung zum Stand der Frage des Europäischen Postvereins, 08.08.1942.

committees was determined, as well as the countries whose representatives would serve as presidents. The vice-presidencies were intended to be distributed among the participating administrations. Spain would have the vice-presidency for the entire congress.<sup>525</sup>

These developments show that (1) the relationship between the Italian PTT administrations and the Foreign Ministry was conflicted and (2) the conflicts between the Axis partners at a higher political level nearly ended the EPTU planning. It is possible that the Italian Foreign Ministry only forced its PTT administration to cancel the meeting because it wanted to pressure the German side to establish a more egalitarian regime. This reinforces the idea that the relationship was not one of trust and that the Italian Foreign Ministry did not perceive that the Germans treated the Italians as equals. This inequality between the Axis partners is a clear theme throughout the preparation process. Regarding organisational and administrative-operative standards and tariffs, the *Reichspost* wanted European postal services to be integrated more deeply than the Italian administration did. The integration was to happen under German rule. The Italians' demand to have an equal seat at the table altered the standards in favour of a more egalitarian relationship, but it did not entirely create balance between the partners.

Regarding other decisions made during these last meetings, the number of committees and the countries that took over the presidency would remain the same until October.<sup>526</sup> Instead of the mayor of Vienna, the Italian minister of transport spoke at the opening of the congress;<sup>527</sup> this reflects a stronger equality – at least symbolically – between the Axis partner than the list of speakers set out in July 1942. The vice-president of the congress was not from Spain; evidently, a larger role was envisioned for the Spanish administration, but it was not as enthusiastic about the plans as anticipated. This is also evidenced by the fact that the aforementioned negotiation of a German-Spanish bilateral agreement did not take place.<sup>528</sup> Against the *Reichspost's* expectations, Portugal did not wish to participate. A final decision had also not been made about invited and non-invited countries, as described in the next chapter. In summary, political decisions (e.g., the selection of countries to invite, official languages and opening speakers) were not necessarily long-lasting, whereas decisions about PTT expertise (e.g., committees and invitation dates) proved to be more enduring. This result is

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525 Ibid.

526 Therefore, the committee's presidency will be presented in its entirety in the Chapter I of Part II in order to avoid repetitions.

527 *Europäischer Postkongress*, p. 16-20.

528 The Spanish case will be discussed further in the next section.

unsurprising, as technocratic cooperation had been tested and institutionalised for decades. By contrast, the political handling of international congresses during Germany's occupation of many European countries was a novel situation and further complicated by a lack of clarity regarding the vision for the 'New Europe' and the individual roles that different states would play. The meetings in Cortina and Innsbruck at the end of the German-Italian meeting cycle paved the way for the EPTU, while further preparatory tasks were addressed through diplomatic channels.

*Chapter III: From bilateral to multilateral – making the initiative 'European' (1941-1942)*

After examining preparations within the German *Reichspostministerium* and between the German and Italian PTT administrations, a third and simultaneous thread requires analysis: the German *Reichspostministerium's* contacts with other European administrations. As shown in Table 1, Risch claimed to have discussed plans for a European postal union with Russian representatives in the spring of 1940. However, no further information on the content of this meeting is available. The first contact with a foreign administration can be traced to July 1941; it is important to underline that this occurred before Risch's meeting with Italian representatives about the union in August 1941 and the German-Italian agreement in October 1941. Thus, the *Reichspost* had already been working on the EPTU before gaining the full support of the Italian PTT administration, which further evidences the inequality of the Axis partnership.

In anticipation of the European postal congress in October 1942, the German *Reichspost*, particularly Dr. Friedrich Risch and his department, made extensive efforts to conclude postal agreements with potential member PTT administrations, starting with Italy. Ultimately, 10 bilateral agreements were signed before the congress. This process mirrored the approach taken to create the UPU in 1874 and the GAPU in 1851, in which the initiatives' main champion signed one agreement after another with the administrations that would later become members of the union.<sup>529</sup> It is possible that this mechanism was copied not only because it was practical but also because the idea of creating a European postal union fit into the idea of long-term development and a specific 'German' trajectory. Thus, a direct line between Heinrich von Stephan's efforts and the work of the *Reichspost* is evident.

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529 Benz, *Integration von Infrastrukturen*, p. 68.

It can be assumed that the *Reichspost*'s approach to address the proposal of a bilateral agreement and the possibility of the creation of a European postal union varied depending on the country's status. For instance, in the case of Belgium<sup>530</sup> and as will be shown later for the case of France, the contact was established through the *Armeefeldpostmeister*. There is also evidence that the appointees of the *Reichspost* abroad were informed before the first official letter from the *Reichspostminister* to the respective administration was sent<sup>531</sup>. Interestingly, the wording in these internal German letters and the letters to the PTT administrations was similar<sup>532</sup>. Unfortunately, not all the letters have been preserved, but it can be reasonably expected that they were all comparable. One difference is that in the letter to the Slovakian PTT administration the fight against Bolshevism is mentioned<sup>533</sup>, which is not the case in the letter to the Belgian administration<sup>534</sup>. This might be due to specific national contexts. The reasoning for the initiative for bilateral agreements in the letters was that the current war would have necessitated a narrower economic and cultural cooperation between the peoples of Europe which in turn meant that the PTT administration had to provide an even better working communication system. The latter could only be established through common standards. The *Reichspostminister* argued that this could only be achieved through a restricted PTT union in Europe.<sup>535</sup> This is of course the repetition of an already mentioned technocratic argument. The letter continued by a description of the next steps towards this union by the *Reichspost* – one being the series of bilateral agreements – and ended on the offer to negotiate such an agreement<sup>536</sup>.

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- 530 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/11615, Abschrift Fernschreiben SS 18/06 308, 18.06.1942.
- 531 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/11623, Reichspostminister an den Reichskommissar für die besetzten norwegischen Gebiete, 12.12.1941.
- 532 Cf. *ibid.*; Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/11615, Reichspostminister an die Generaldirektion der belgischen Posten, 21.08.1942; and Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/11627, Reichspostminister an das Ministerium für Verkehr und öffentliche Arbeiten, Postverwaltung, 03.03.1942.
- 533 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/11627, Reichspostminister an das Ministerium für Verkehr und öffentliche Arbeiten, Postverwaltung, 03.03.1942.
- 534 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/11615, Reichspostminister an die Generaldirektion der belgischen Posten, 21.08.1942.
- 535 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/11627, Reichspostminister an das Ministerium für Verkehr und öffentliche Arbeiten, Postverwaltung, 03.03.1942.
- 536 *Ibid.*



*Bilateral agreements as a tool of integrating the occupied and dependent countries into the EPTU*

Several general observations can be made about the negotiated agreements.<sup>537</sup> First, except for the agreement with the Italian PTT administration, they were only between the German *Reichspost* and the PTT administration of states occupied by Germany. No agreements were signed with member administrations of two states: Albania and San Marino. Both were occupied by Italy at the time, and the Italian PTT administration was thus responsible for concluding preliminary agreements. There were no agreements with non-occupied states, although not for lack of trying; the German *Reichspost* unsuccessfully proposed similar accords to the PTT administrations of Switzerland and Spain.<sup>538</sup> Second, some agreements were signed after the congress but did not lead to membership in the EPTU. This was the case for the Belgian and likely French PTT<sup>539</sup> administrations.<sup>540</sup> This finding indicates the influence of geopolitics on the EPTU's genesis. Third, the agreements all greatly resembled each other in terms of conclusion, structure, wording and contents. In this section, their similarities and differences are identified and examined, including general aspects, agreed-upon tariffs, and other specifications.

The following features were addressed under 'general aspects': the conclusion and structure of the agreements, references to the convention of the UPU, tariff freedom in the administrations' exchanges and language provisions. The agreements all had a similar structure; often, the same content and formulation could be found under the same articles.<sup>541</sup>

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- 537 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/25935, Bilaterale Abkommen.  
 538 Politisches Archiv, Berlin, R106301, Martius an Dir. Ha. Pol., 05.09.1942 and Archivo General de la Administracion, Alcala de Henares, 82/08588, Verbalnote, 05.08.1942.  
 539 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/25935, Abkommen zwischen der Deutschen Reichspost und der Belgischen Postverwaltung über den Postdienst zwischen dem Deutschen Reich und Belgien, 22.11.1942.  
 540 In the case of Serbia, only a table of charges could be found. This table of charges aligns with the ones of the other accords. Thus, it remains unsure whether an agreement was concluded but it seems as though the Serbian-German postal relations had been standardized according to the model of the EPTU.  
 541 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/25935, Bilaterale Abkommen.

Article	Content
1	Universal Postal Union convention applies unless otherwise specified
2	Tariff table and specification
3 <sup>542</sup>	Tariff freedom within the postal exchange of telegraph affairs
4	Abolition of transit charges
Second to last article	Entry into force, period of validity and period of notice
Last article	Languages
	Other specifications

Table 3: The Structure of the Bilateral Agreements

As the table above shows, the first article of the agreement scheme always referred to the convention of the UPU. Strictly speaking, the article accounted for the fact that UPU provisions already existed. These were intended to be applied if the bilateral agreement did not stipulate otherwise.<sup>543</sup> The exact same formulation was used in all the concluded agreements. The reasoning behind this appears logical. First, the bilateral agreements did not regulate every aspect of international postal services. Second, officials from the German *Reichspost* had repeatedly emphasised that the EPTU was only a restricted union of the UPU. Thus, this reference was inevitable.

Another general aspect concerns tariff freedom over postal exchanges in the administrations' telecommunication affairs. Essentially, this provision guaranteed that the telecommunications administrations or the parts of the administration that addressed international telecommunications relations

542 In the majority of the agreements. When there were other specifications, this article usually followed these specifications, *ibid.*

543 Exact formulation: "Im Postdienst zwischen dem Deutschen Reich und (...) [insert other country here] gelten die jeweiligen Vorschriften des Weltpostvertrags und der Nebenabkommen nebst den zugehörigen Vollzugsordnungen, soweit durch die nachstehenden Bestimmungen oder spätere Vereinbarungen nichts anderes festgesetzt ist", *ibid.*

could exchange letters free of charge.<sup>544</sup> Every PTT administration agreed to this; only the agreement with the Norwegian postal administration did not contain this provision because postal and telecommunication affairs in Norway had not been merged under the responsibility of a single administration. Rather, there were two separate administrations: one in charge of postal affairs and the other in charge of telecommunications.<sup>545</sup>

Furthermore, the agreements always contained a date of entry into force and specified the period of validity and notice. The agreement remained valid for as long as no party terminated it. To withdraw from the agreement, a three-month notice had to be sent to the other administration.<sup>546</sup> Finally, except for the Belgian-German agreement,<sup>547</sup> the bilateral agreements were all issued in the official languages of the contracting PTT administrations.

In an additional protocol to the German-Finnish agreement, the Finnish PTT administration declared that it would be open to signing similar agreements with other European administrations conditional on the agreement of the Finnish government.<sup>548</sup> In September 1942, the Finnish administration signed an agreement with the Dutch PTT administration that abolished the transit charge for postal services between the two countries.<sup>549</sup> This is notable because the German-Finnish agreement was the first bilateral agreement to be signed after the German-Italian one. However, there are no additional indications that the integration of European postal services was a common effort among more administrations. The bilateral abolition of the transit charge was generally rendered superfluous with the founding of the EPTU in October 1942.

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544 Exact formulation: “Der Schriftwechsel zwischen beiden Verwaltungen und ihren Dienststellen in Fernmeldeangelegenheiten wird im wechselseitigen Dienst gebührenfrei befördert”, Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/25935, Bilaterale Abkommen.

545 Europäischer Postkongress, p. 72.

546 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/25935, Bilaterale Abkommen.

547 The agreement was only valid in German. (Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/25935, Abkommen zwischen der Deutschen Reichspost und der Belgischen Postverwaltung über den Postdienst zwischen dem Deutschen Reich und Belgien, 22.11.1942).

548 Posti- ja Lennätinhallituksen Kiertokirjekokoelma, Sisälly No. 58, 1942, p. 4, Zusatzprotokoll zu den Abkommen zwischen der Deutschen Reichspost und der Finnischen Post- und Telegraphenverwaltung vom 12. Dezember 1941.

549 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/25935, Abkommen zwischen der Finnischen Pots- und Telegraphenverwaltung und der niederländischen Staatspost über den Wegfall der Landdurchgangsgebühren der Briefsendungen, 06.10.1942.

As tariffs (especially transit charges) were an important source of income not only for the PTT administrations but also the countries themselves, it is important to discuss this topic separately from other aspects of the agreements. Moreover, for international postal administrations, tariffs were and continue to be central in facilitating and lowering the cost of postal traffic. Thus, the abolition of transit charges was one of the key aims of German negotiations, as this meant the creation of a single postal territory. Furthermore, it was a continuation of the work of Heinrich von Stephan, a key actor in the creation of the UPU. This was the basis of the idea that the EPTU was directly linked to the UPU, which could have been used to legitimise the EPTU and the reduction of tariffs within the union. The aim may have been to create the impression of the EPTU as a technocratic project rather than a political one, both to other national administrations that had worked towards this goal with the German administration since 1874 and to the *Auswärtige Amt*, whose consent was essential for the creation of the EPTU. Finally, the tariffs established in these bilateral agreements would later be applied within the EPTU.

The current section is divided into two parts. First, the tariff tables in the agreements and the set prices are discussed. Second, the question of whether the *Reichspost* was successful in abolishing the transit charge in bilateral postal services is addressed.

Generally, the tariff tables in the agreements encompassed letters, postcards (with and without a reply), printed materials, business papers, samples, mixed post and journals.<sup>550</sup> For printed materials, business papers, samples and mixed post, the administrations agreed to use national tariffs for intrastate services;<sup>551</sup> for journals, the UPU's reduced tariffs were applied. Thus, the transit charge for the abovementioned objects was abolished. However, the analysis must end here since prices were not further specified.

By contrast, the agreements went further than the UPU Convention's provisions at the time for letters and postcards. In UPU Convention, the price per weight for letters increased in 20g increments.<sup>552</sup> The bilateral agreements – except for the German-Italian agreement – set new categories of 0–20g, 20–250g, 250–500g and 500–1,000g. For weights above 1,000g, the UPU provisions applied. The aim was to facilitate and accelerate the administrative process because the post office clerk would no longer have

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550 Plus other type of prints in some agreements.

551 This means that the prices were not harmonised but all administrations treated the other country as inland.

552 So up to 20g, 40g, 60g, 80g and so on.

to weigh every letter on the scale but could simply decide on the weight category based on weighing by hand. As previously mentioned, setting equivalent prices with the Italian administration was less successful because the German and Italian systems differed and could not be harmonised. This was different for other administrations. When examining the tariffs in the bilateral agreements, irregularities regarding the set national equivalents to the German tariffs become visible for countries where the exchange rate could be determined.<sup>553</sup>

Several difficulties arise when attempting to analyse the national equivalents of German tariffs despite exchange rates between Germany and other countries being set at a single rate after 1941.<sup>554</sup> An exchange rate could not be found for all the countries to compare the equivalents actually set in the agreements to the equivalents which would have resulted from a simple rule of three. Additionally, the calculations did not always yield exact prices; thus, the administrations had to round them to whole numbers. Setting tariffs also depended on the stamps produced until that point in the relevant country, as the tariffs had to match the face value of the stamps. Thus, equivalent rates had to be set for each country, and this process did not appear to be standardised.

This explains why there appears to be no system for comparing the setting of different prices. In the case of the Netherlands, the difference between calculated prices and real prices is not pertinent. With one exception, the deviation was always higher rather than lower.

	<b>Germany (Reichspfennig)</b>	<b>Netherlands (cents)</b>	<b>Exchange rate</b>	<b>Difference</b>
<b>Letters</b>			0.7536 <sup>555</sup>	
Up to 20g	12.0	10	9.04	0.96
20-250g	24.0	20	18.09	1.91
250-500g	40.0	30	30.14	-0.14

553 For some countries, the exchange rate between the *Reichsmark* and the national currency could not be found.

554 Länderrat des amerikanischen Satzungsgebiets: *Statistisches Handbuch von Deutschland. 1928-1944*, München 1949, p. 526.

555 Ibid.

	<b>Germany (Reichspfennig)</b>	<b>Netherlands (cents)</b>	<b>Exchange rate</b>	<b>Difference</b>
500-1,000g	60.0	50	45.21	4.79
<b>Postcards</b>				
Without reply	6.0	5	4.52	0.48
With reply	12.0	10	9.04	0.96

Table 4: Comparison between Calculated and Set Prices in the Agreement between the German and the Dutch Postal Administrations

The cases of Norway and Denmark are similar. However, the two administrations chose to lower prices in the first two weight categories, which were also the most frequently used. In addition, the difference between calculated and real prices is higher than for the Netherlands.

	<b>Germany (Reichspfennig)</b>	<b>Norway (Öre)</b>	<b>Ex- change rate</b>	<b>Differ- ence</b>	<b>Den- mark (Öre)</b>	<b>Ex- change rate</b>	<b>Dif- fer- ence</b>
<b>Letters</b>			1.7599			1.9	
Up to 20g	12.0	20	21.12	-1.12	20.0	23.1	-3.1
20-250g	24.0	40	42.24	-2.24	40.0	46.2	-6.2
250-500g	40.0	80	70.40	9.60	80.0	77.0	3.0
500- 1,000g	60.0	120	105.60	14.40	120.0	115.5	4.5
<b>Postcards</b>							
Without reply	6.0	15	10.56	4.44	15.0	11.5	3.5
With re- ply	12.0	30	21.12	8.88	30.0	23.1	6.9

Table 5: Comparison between Calculated and Set Prices in the Agreement between the German and the Norwegian as well as the Danish Postal Administrations

Exchange rates for the other countries could not be verified. Nevertheless, it is possible to see that the set tariffs did not significantly differ from the calculated ones. Overall, the prices appeared to be higher than what would have resulted from a simple calculation. This is especially the case for higher weight categories. However, such letters were sent less frequently than those in lighter weight categories; thus, for the more important category of letters, the tariffs were more or less equal throughout the envisioned European postal area.

It is important to consider these differences between tariffs because they were directly transferred to tariffs within the EPTU. Since Germany had concluded most of the bilateral agreements, the EPTU agreement's entry into force would not mean as much change for the *Reichspost* than for the other administrations. On the contrary, these agreements guaranteed the *Reichspost* the same conditions in advance. The same applies for other administrations with regard to postal services with Germany. In addition, these differences demonstrate that the unified postal area that experts sought would ultimately remain heterogeneous because users in different countries did not pay the same prices.

The abolition of the transit charge was one of the key aims of the German administration. The bilateral agreements were intended to lead the way in this regard. Based on the agreements concluded before the congress, five administrations agreed to abolish the tariff: Denmark, Finland, the Netherlands, Norway and Slovakia.<sup>556</sup> Denmark and Finland had originally only agreed to a reduction of the tariff.<sup>557</sup> Both administrations were asked whether they would consider fully abolishing it; the *Reichspost*'s argument was that other European administrations had agreed to do so,<sup>558</sup> an approach that can be described as peer pressure. It was successful, as the Danish and Finnish administrations relinquished the transit charge in postal services with Germany in August 1942.<sup>559</sup>

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556 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/25935, Bilaterale Abkommen.

557 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/25935, Abkommen zwischen der Deutschen Reichspost und der Finnischen Post- und Telegraphenverwaltung, 12.12.1942, Abkommen zwischen der Deutschen Reichspost und der Königlichen Dänischen Post- und Telegraphenverwaltung, 01.06.1942.

558 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/11616, Reichspostminister an die Generaldirektion des Dänischen Königlichen Post- und Telegraphenwesens, 05.06.1942.

559 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/11616, Reichspostminister an die Generaldirektion des Dänischen Königlichen Post- und Telegraphenwesens, 22.08.1942, Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/25935, Abkommen über

However, there is no evidence of such an agreement with the other five administrations. Most importantly, as described in the previous chapter, the issue was not mentioned at all in the German-Italian agreement. The same holds for the German-Romanian agreement. With Bulgaria,<sup>560</sup> Croatia<sup>561</sup> and Hungary,<sup>562</sup> the tariff was lowered by 50%. This shows that the *Reichspost's* success rate was only 50%. The fact that its most important partner, Italy, did not agree on this issue meant that there was still an obstacle to overcome regarding the abolishment of the transit charge during the congress.

The agreements with the Croatian, Danish, Hungarian and Dutch administrations included additional specifications that do not appear to be of interest for the current work. Documents related to the negotiation of these agreements are also missing, which makes it difficult to determine whether these additional standards were important. For Croatia, the additional specification concerned letters with contents that were subject to duties<sup>563</sup> and the division of transit charges for packages from one country to another.<sup>564</sup> This may have been necessary because Croatia only ratified the UPU Convention in May 1941; the state had only been established in April 1941.<sup>565</sup> The German-Danish agreement stipulated that provisions from the 1879 agreement on postal services in the closer border region would become invalid by the end of May 1942.<sup>566</sup> This is logical insofar as the border lost its role due to the harmonisation of weight categories and tariffs and the subsequent abolition of the transit charge. The German-Hungarian agreement contained additional standards regarding the size of postcards and contents

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- eine Änderung des Abkommens über den Postdienst zwischen der Deutschen Reichspost und der Finnischen Post- und Telegraphenverwaltung, 26.08.1942.
- 560 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/25935, Abkommen zwischen der Deutschen Reichspost und der Königlichen Bulgarischen Post- und Telegraphenverwaltung, Artikel 5-9, 01.07.1942.
- 561 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/25935, Abkommen zwischen der Deutschen Reichspost und der Kroatischen Postverwaltung, 01.06.1942.
- 562 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/25935, Abkommen zwischen der Deutschen Reichspost und der Königlichen Ungarischen Postverwaltung, 01.07.1942.
- 563 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/25935, Abkommen zwischen der Deutschen Reichspost und der Kroatischen Postverwaltung, Artikel 3, 01.06.1942.
- 564 Ibid.
- 565 Nezavisna država hrvatska, Međunarodni ugorovi, 1941, Notification No. 31/41, 26.05.1941, p. 65-66.
- 566 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/25935, Abkommen zwischen der Deutschen Reichspost und der Königlichen Dänischen Post- und Telegraphenverwaltung, Artikel 3, 01.06.1942.



that were subject to duty and packages. Like the Danish case, the agreement invalidated a previous agreement from 1926 between the German and Hungarian administrations.<sup>567</sup> The German-Dutch agreement concerned product samples and the invalidation of reduced charges for letters in the closer border region stipulated in an agreement from 1898.<sup>568</sup> The last specification mirrored the one in the Danish agreement, which reiterates the reduced role of borders due to the new agreements.

The agreements between the *Reichspost* and other national PTT administrations were made public not only in official bulletins but also newspaper announcements. The *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, for instance, reported on the German-Bulgarian agreement;<sup>569</sup> the *Frankfurter Zeitung*, the *Deutsche Bergwerks Zeitung* and the *Kölnische Zeitung* reported on the bilateral agreement with Denmark;<sup>570</sup> and the *Nachrichten für Außenhandel* announced new tariffs for German-Finnish postal services.<sup>571</sup> The *Popolo d'Italia* informed reported on the negotiations on parcel handling between the German and Italian administrations as a continuation of the coverage on the bilateral agreement.<sup>572</sup>

This section analysed bilateral agreements concluded between the *Reichspost* and other European administrations in preparation for the congress. While their overall structure is similar, national differences appeared in the agreements in the form of additional articles or paragraphs. In addition, in most of the agreements, the tariffs were not entirely set through calculations based on the exchange rate; national conditions were also considered. The German weight categories and tariffs were used as the base model which other administrations adapted to, demonstrating German hegemony. Although the Italian administration did not adopt the German system in the bilateral agreement, it would more or less be forced to do so if it wanted to be part of the European postal area. Overall, standardisation was

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

568 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/25935, Abkommen zwischen der Deutschen Reichspost und der Niederländischen Staatspost, Artikel 3-4, 01.09.1942.

569 PTT Archiv, Bern, P-00C\_0108\_01, Neue Zürcher Zeitung, 11.09.1942

570 PTT Archiv, Bern, P-00C\_0108\_01, Der Postverkehr mit Dänemark, 08.05.1942; ohne Titel, 10.05.1942; Inlandsgebühren im Postverkehr mit Dänemark, 08.05.1942.

571 PTT Archiv, Bern, P-00C\_0108\_01, Postverkehr, Deutsches Reich – Neue Gebühren für Briefsendungen nach Finnland, 06.03.1942.

572 PTT Archiv, Bern, P-00C\_0108\_01, Servizio di pacchetti postali con la Germania, 02.03.1942.

achieved by exporting the German model to other countries. However, the Germans' mission to abolish the transit charge before the congress was less successful; only five out of 10 administrations agreed to do so, three agreed to reduce it and – most importantly – Italy did not agree to any reduction. Thus, the agreements played a major role in determining standards later set within the EPTU; for example, tariffs that were bilaterally agreed-upon later became multilaterally valid. However, with regard to the transit charge, standardisation was not as extensive as in other aspects of postal services.

The descriptions of the bilateral agreements might suggest that the negotiations were free of political issues and entirely focused on standardisation. However, for bilateral agreements to be signed with the Hungarian and Slovakian PTT administrations, a bilateral agreement between these two administrations had to first be concluded. As transit countries, both Hungary and Slovakia wanted to ensure that their geographical situation would not be used to their financial disadvantage.<sup>573</sup> Thus, Risch urged the Hungarian PTT administration to initiate talks with its Slovakian counterpart.<sup>574</sup> Moreover, negotiations on the bilateral agreements enabled other aspects of PTT cooperation to be discussed. For example, the head of the Romanian PTT administration, Colonel Gheorghe Teodorescu, and the responsible minister, Constantin Bușilă, underlined the need for technical equipment from Germany and obtained the *Reichspost*'s support in this matter.<sup>575</sup> The ongoing war and the fact that the abovementioned countries were all occupied by Germany also raised additional issues. For instance, the Danish government did not want to sign the agreement in Berlin but rather in Copenhagen,<sup>576</sup> potentially out of concern that signing the treaty in Berlin would create the impression of active Danish cooperation with the Third Reich to the outside world and the Danish public. After all, Denmark also had a government-in-exile in London. Additionally, Denmark was part of the Nordic Postal Union, which the German *Reichspost* wanted to render superfluous through the creation of the EPTU.<sup>577</sup>

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573 Politisches Archiv, Berlin, R106301, Aufzeichnung Martius, 10.03.1942.

574 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/11627, Risch an Generaldirektion der Post, 12.05.1942.

575 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/11625, Vereinbarung, 29.11.1941.

576 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R901/68147, Aufzeichnung Martius, 10.03.1942.

577 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/11623, Reichspostminister (gez. Nagel) an den Reichskommissar für die besetzten norwegischen Gebiete Gauleiter Terboven, 12.12.1941.

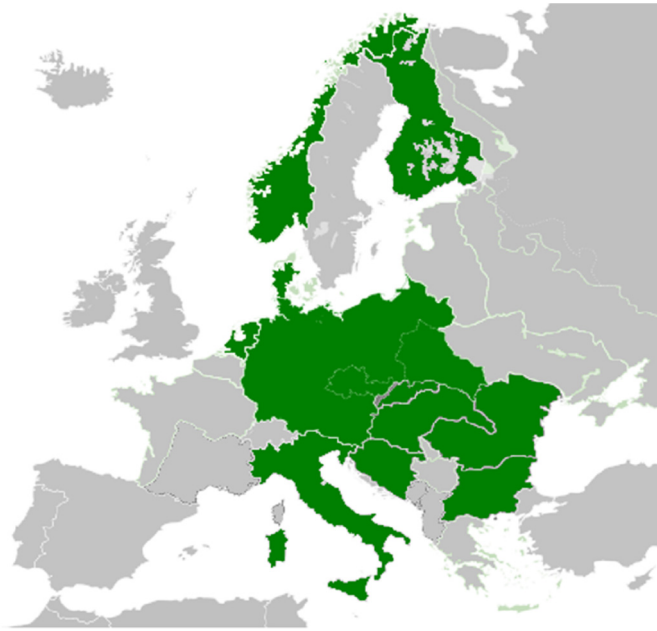


Figure 1: Bilateral agreements (1941-1942); Green: Countries involved in bilateral agreements.<sup>578</sup>

Political aspects also hindered further attempts to include other administrations in the European postal union. With regard to occupied countries under military administration, the *Reichspost* wrote to the administrations of Belgium, France, Greece and Serbia. In addition, the administrations of Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and Turkey were contacted. A Japanese observer also participated in the in the congress. The idea was to create an Asian postal union modelled on the European one; a tripartite postal union was even broached.<sup>579</sup> The current section provides an overview of the German *Reichspost*'s approach to the horizontal expansion of the area in which the new standards would be valid. This is also an aspect which the Foreign

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578 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.

579 Politisches Archiv, Berlin, R106301, Marius an Dir. Ha. Pol., 05.09.1942 und Wühl and Reichaußenminister, 10.09.1942.

Ministry was much more involved than other areas. Deciding which countries to include was not a trivial question; rather, it reflected who would be part of the ‘New Europe’ and who would be excluded. The discussion moves from the occupied countries to the non-occupied countries, addressing each in alphabetical order. Since little is known about the cases of Greece and Serbia, the two countries are jointly discussed.

The Belgian and French cases were similar insofar as it was not quite clear what status the countries should have in the eyes of the German postal and Foreign ministries. The possibility of including Belgium in the union appears to have been first raised around March 1942. In a meeting with Martius, Risch mentioned that, according to Ohnesorge, Hitler himself wished that the process surrounding the EPTU would be accelerated and that the occupied territories would be included.<sup>580</sup> The *Reichspost* was also optimistic that it could conclude an agreement with the Belgian administration.<sup>581</sup> In June 1942, Risch asked the *Heeresfeldpostmeister* of the *Wehrmacht* if he could begin negotiations via the *Armeefeldpostmeister*. The request was granted.<sup>582</sup> At the end of the same month, it was decided that Belgian membership in the union was impossible. The Foreign Ministry agreed to allow Belgian observers at the conference. They were to be experts, and ‘it could be expected that they would be sent from their administration to subsequent administrative congresses’.<sup>583</sup> For postal services, the Belgium Director General Schokaert was proposed as a delegate.<sup>584</sup> The Belgian postal director also answered the question of whether a bilateral agreement was possible in the affirmative and asked for the German proposal of such an agreement in written form.<sup>585</sup> However, in early August 1942, it was decided that the Belgian administration would not be invited as a participant with full rights. It remained to be determined whether it

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580 Politisches Archiv, Berlin, R106301, Aufzeichnung Martius, 10.03.1942.

581 Politisches Archiv, Berlin, R106301, Aufzeichnung wegen des Europäischen Post- und Fernmeldevereins, March 1942.

582 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/11615, Abschrift Fernschreiben, 18.06.1942.

583 Writer’s own translation: “sodass damit zu rechnen ist, dass sie seitens ihrer Verwaltungen auch späterhin zu den Verwaltungstagungen abgeordnet werden”, Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/11615, Reichspostminister an Armeefeldpostmeister in Belgien und Nordfrankreich, 28.08.1942.

584 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/11615, Reichspostminister an Armeefeldpostmeister in Belgien und Nordfrankreich, 28.08.1942.

585 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/11615, Armeefeldpostmeister in Belgien und Nordfrankreich and Reichspostminister, 17.07.1942.

would be allowed to participate as an observer.<sup>586</sup> At the end of September, documents from the Foreign Ministry show that German Foreign and postal ministers decided to invite a Belgian observer.<sup>587</sup> The *Armeefeldpostmeister* in Belgium was made aware of this invitation on 28 August 1942.<sup>588</sup> When the Swiss administration decided to send two ‘prominent observers’,<sup>589</sup> the German *Reichspost* also wanted to work towards the participation of two observers from Belgium.<sup>590</sup> For postal services, the administrative director De Pue was designated as a delegate.<sup>591</sup> The Belgian head of the telegraph administration rejected the invitation for political reasons, which led the head of the postal administration to declare that he wanted to make as limited an appearance as possible.<sup>592</sup> Based on this response, the *Reichspost* retracted their invitations.<sup>593</sup> In the report about the congress to the Foreign Minister, it was noted that Belgium’s non-inclusion went against the instructions of said minister but that he had been informed of the reasons.<sup>594</sup>

In the French administration’s documents, a detailed report about Franco-German talks on the EPTU was found. According to this report, the *Armeefeldpostmeister*, Müller, had contacted the French administration in July 1942 to ask about the possibility of a bilateral agreement between the German and French administrations which would be valid for the occupied and non-occupied zones. He informed them about already concluded bilateral agreements and included Risch’s article on the aims and challenges of a European postal union. The French administration contacted the Finance and Foreign Ministries as a result. At the end of August 1942, Müller stressed the importance of receiving an answer and clarified that the *Reichspost* did not want the French administration to join the union but rather its opinion. The bilateral agreement was the highest priority for the German side, but the French administration was invited to send an observer

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- 586 Politisches Archiv, Berlin, R106301, Aufzeichnung zum Stand der Frage des Europäischen Postvereins, 08.08.1942.  
 587 Politisches Archiv, Berlin, R106301, Gaus an Reichsaußenminister, 29.09.1942.  
 588 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/11615, Reichspostminister an Armeefeldpostmeister in Belgien und Nordfrankreich, 28.08.1942.  
 589 Writer’s own translation: “prominente Beobachter”, Politisches Archiv, Berlin, R106301, Martius an Dir. Ha. Pol., 03.10.1942.  
 590 Ibid.  
 591 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/11615, Claeys an Armeefeldpostmeister, 01.10.1942.  
 592 Politisches Archiv, Berlin, R106301, Wiehl an Reichsaußenminister, 08.10.1942.  
 593 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/11615, Abschrift Fernschreiben, RPMIN Berlin SS 15158 5.10. 1822.  
 594 Politisches Archiv, Berlin, R106301, Bericht Legationsrat Stahlberg, 20.10.1942.

to the congress. It was advised that this observer should know German, as most discussions would be in German. This irritated the French Foreign Ministry, which agreed to participate nevertheless. The Finance Ministry also approved the attendance. On 5 September, Müller informed General Girodet – who was the liaison between the occupiers, the *Direction des Services de l'Armistice* and the PTT administration<sup>595</sup> – that he had been instructed to invite one French delegate from the postal service and up to two delegates from telecommunications to the congress in Vienna. He also cited names that the *Reichspost* wanted to see as consulting delegates. The French report reveals the French administration's irritation at receiving no official documents and, more importantly, no invitation. At the beginning of September 1942, there was still no written invitation. Meanwhile, Müller's interventions 'had the appearance of instructions',<sup>596</sup> and the French administration began to actively prepare to participate in the congress and selected its delegation members. It clarified that the Gold franc should remain the base currency 'at all costs'<sup>597</sup>. In addition, representatives should only intervene on technical issues and avoid all political discussions. The administration also contacted French diplomats in Finland, Romania, Portugal and Sweden to learn their opinions on the matter. A Spanish delegate wanted to meet with the French delegate on his way to Vienna, but the French administration declined. At the same time, a French delegate attempted to convince representatives from other administrations to use French as the official language. On 17 September 1942, the French side started to insist on an official invitation and the specification of envisioned tariffs. Müller answered that the German government still questioned whether France would participate in the congress. Five days later, the French administration was informed that it would no longer be invited, although there would be further contact after the conference. In a meeting, Müller told Girodet that the French administration would have had to agree to certain conditions, which it interpreted as reasons for the non-invitation. First, the Reich would have covered French costs; more importantly, Müller would have accompanied the French delegation to Vienna, which the French administration refused to allow: 'It is not necessary to add that the head of the French delegation

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595 Hoover Institute: *La Vie de la France sous l'Occupation (1940-1944)*, Tome I, Paris 2013, p. 306.

596 Writer's own translation: "prenaient l'allure de directives", Archives nationales, Pierrefitte, 19870773/33, Historique des pourparlers concernant la Conférence de Vienne, p. 5.

597 Writer's own translation: "coûte que coûte", *ibid.*

could have accepted (...) neither the one nor the other of these two conditions<sup>598</sup>. Ultimately, the French administration did not regret its lack of participation in the congress. The French administration considered the congress unsuccessful on the basis of the list of participants. However, it should be noted that the administration was misinformed about the abstentions and number of delegates that some administrations sent.<sup>599</sup>

The invitation of delegates from Greece and Serbia – the other states under military administration – was also discussed at the same time as the Belgian and French cases. In a meeting between the Postal and Foreign Ministers, it was decided that the Greek and Serbian postal administrations would not be invited to the congress. In a discussion with representatives from the Foreign Office, however, Risch asked whether these doubts could be overcome. He argued that the head of the Serbian postal administration had worked for Siemens and was a Germanophile. Furthermore, ‘friendly hands’<sup>600</sup> guided the Greek postal administration, and Greek telecommunications were entirely equipped with German materials.<sup>601</sup> Ultimately, the lack of invitations for the Greek and Serbian PTT administrations was explained by the fact that no Belgian representatives would be present,<sup>602</sup> despite the German Foreign Minister’s approval to invite Serbian and Greek observers in early October 1942.<sup>603</sup>

It should be noted that the German authorities appeared to be quite indecisive with regard to the occupied states under military administration. Hitler had to grant permission to discuss these administrations’ cases. Eventually, the Foreign Ministry approved the invitation of Belgian, Greek and Serbian delegates based on more technical arguments in the case of Greece and Serbia. However, the tide turned again with the rejection of the Belgian telegraph director, likely because all occupied territories had to be treated the same way. This inconsistent positioning also seemed to put the *Armeefeldpostmeister* in a difficult position. In France’s case, insistence on the attendance of French delegates shifted from the German side to the French side. It also appears impractical to ask administrations to assemble and prepare their delegations, only to cancel their invitations shortly before the

598 Writer’s own translation: “Inutile d’ajouter que le chef de la délégation française n’aurait pas pu accepter (...) ni l’une, ni l’autre de ces deux conditions”, *ibid.*, p. 7.

599 *Ibid.*

600 Writer’s own translation: “befreundete Hände”, Politisches Archiv, Berlin, R106301, Gaus an Reichsaußenminister, 29.09.1942.

601 *Ibid.*

602 Politisches Archiv, Berlin, R106301, Wiehl an Reichsaußenminister, 08.10.1942.

603 Politisches Archiv, Berlin, R106301, Martius an Dir. Ha. Pol., 03.10.1942.

congress. It was the Armeefeldpostmeister's responsibility to inform administrations about these cancellations, which Risch asked him to undertake in an 'appropriate fashion'.<sup>604</sup> However, the cases of Belgium and France align with the lack of a clear vision for the future of Europe, as outlined above. There was no plan for whether and how to integrate certain countries. This was especially the case for France, which had a special position in this group with Belgium, Greece, and Serbia. The lack of cohesiveness in plans for the 'New Europe' is reflected in the changing position of the Foreign Ministry, which reacted to proposals from the *Reichspost*. The *Reichspost* seems to have been guided by the technocratic idea that the new union would have greater legitimacy and bring more benefits if more administrations became members.

### *Opening the envisioned union to the rest of Europe: Successes and failures*

Including as many members as possible was also the intent behind contacting administrations from ideologically similar and neutral countries, namely Portugal, Spain, Turkey, Switzerland and Sweden. However, little information could be found on Portugal. On 7 October, the Portuguese administration had not yet replied<sup>605</sup> despite the fact that the *Reichspost* expected a positive answer by the beginning of August 1942.<sup>606</sup> The Turkish administration was contacted at the beginning of August.<sup>607</sup> The German side was still waiting for a response on 3 October.<sup>608</sup> It must have eventually arrived, as a Turkish delegation was present at the congress.<sup>609</sup> More information is available on contacts with the Spanish, Swedish and Swiss administrations.

At the end of June 1942, the Spanish PTT administration received a letter from Ohnesorge regarding a bilateral agreement between Germany and Spain. The letter was the same as the one described above. An appendix to

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604 Writer's own translation: "geeigneter Weise", Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/11615, Abschrift Fernschreiben, RPMIN Berlin SS 15158 5.10.1822.

605 Politisches Archiv, Berlin, R106301, Telegramm Huene, 07.10.1942.

606 Politisches Archiv, Berlin, R106301, Aufzeichnung Martius zum Stand der Frage des Europäischen Postvereins, 08.08.1942.

607 Politisches Archiv, Berlin, R106301, Aufzeichnung zum Stand der Frage des Europäischen Postvereins, 08.08.1942.

608 Politisches Archiv, Berlin, R106301, Martius an Dir. Ha. Pol. 03.10.1942

609 Europäischer Postkongress, p. 10.



the letter contained a bilateral postal agreement, which contained the same articles as other bilateral agreements; the *Reichspost* even proposed equivalent tariffs. There was one additional specification concerning contents that were subject to duty in the proposed agreement.<sup>610</sup> The Spanish administration's answer was negative; it rejected the idea of a union, arguing that these new tariffs would run against the principle of harmonisation within the UPU. It suspected that the EPTU was intended as a rival to the UPU and considered the Spanish-Latin American Postal Union to be more important.<sup>611</sup>

It would appear that the Swedish postal administration was officially contacted for the first time about a bilateral agreement and the possible creation of a European postal union in July 1941. The head of the Swedish postal administration, Anders Örne, answered around a month later and expressed lively interest in the matter; in fact, he described the idea as 'completely natural'.<sup>612</sup> However, it was not enough to convince him (or the Swedish government) to move forward with the matter.<sup>613</sup>

Örne began his letter by praising the longstanding, positive relations between the Swedish and German administrations since 'the time of Heinrich von Stephan'.<sup>614</sup> He highlighted the fact that the Swedish-German postal relations were still in good shape despite the war, and he declared that he was ready to discuss proposals to improve reciprocal postal services and that these improvements should be shared with other countries. However, he did not see any possibility of realising these plans, as negotiations with the Swedish government had shown that an income reduction (which Örne envisioned as the result of the plans) would weaken the state's financial situation at this time. The only possible changes would be an increase in tariffs.<sup>615</sup> Thus, he concluded that a 'solid reason'<sup>616</sup> could not be found to

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610 Archivo General de la Administracion, Alcala de Henares, 82/08588, El ministro de comunicacion del Reich a la Dirrección General de Corréos y de Telecommunicaión, 05.08.1942.

611 Archivo General de la Administracion, Alcala de Henares, 83/05285, Courier Ministro de la Gobernacion, 26.09.1942.

612 Writer's own translation: „ganz natürlich” Riksarkivet, Stockholm, UD 1920 års doss HP 3258, Örne an Reichspostminister, 08.08.1941.

613 Ibid.

614 Writer's own translation: “der Zeit von Heinrich von Stephan”, *ibid*.

615 The Swedish charges for inland postal services were in fact increased in April 1942, Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/11844, Deutsche Gesandtschaft Stockholm an das Auswärtige Amt, 28.02.1942.

616 Writer's own translation: “sicheren Grund”, Riksarkivet, Stockholm, UD 1920 års doss HP 3258, Örne an Reichspostminister, 08.08.1941.

move forward with the plans and that he could only discuss ideas more intensively once the economic situation improved.<sup>617</sup> Consequently, no bilateral agreement was concluded, but Sweden was aware of Germany's plans and, later, that bilateral agreements had been signed with the other Nordic countries – Denmark, Finland and Norway.<sup>618</sup>

When the *Reichspostministerium* replied to the Swedish postal administration in July 1942 with an actual invitation, the Swedish Foreign Ministry was heavily involved in handling the Swedish reaction. The Swedish postal administration expected the Germans to send an invitation; its general-director, Örne, wrote on 22 July 1942 to Staffan Söderblom, a cabinet secretary in the Foreign Ministry, to recount the developments thus far and ask the Foreign Ministry which position the postal administration was expected to adopt. Örne emphasised that there was no need for a European postal agreement, stating that the postal exchange was currently low and that it was subject to censorship at different stages of its journey.<sup>619</sup> The same day, the Swedish Foreign Ministry sent a message to its mission in Bern to inform it of the possibility of a German invitation. The mission was advised to react in an evasive manner.<sup>620</sup> Three days later, the mission was told that telecommunications would also be discussed during the conference in Vienna.<sup>621</sup> The mission in Bern remained important in the process, as the Swedish Foreign Ministry was keen to learn how Switzerland – the other neutral country – would react. At the beginning of August 1942, Switzerland had not concluded a bilateral agreement with Germany due to the anticipated high financial losses and had not yet been invited to the congress. Moreover, the project's political aspects had not gone unnoticed in Bern, and the German proposal for a bilateral agreement had not been realised because its exact intentions seemed unclear.<sup>622</sup>

On 10 August 1942, Ohnesorge signed the official invitation for the Swedish PTT administration, and the mission in Bern was informed of its arrival on 19 August 1942. Four days later, the mission in Bern informed the For-

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617 Riksarkivet, Stockholm, UD 1920 års doss HP 3258, Örne an Reichspostminister, 08.08.1941.

618 Riksarkivet, Stockholm, UD 1920 års doss HP 3258, Örne an Söderblom, 22.07.1942

619 Ibid.

620 Riksarkivet, Stockholm, UD 1920 års doss HP 3258, Kungl. Utrikesdepartementet à Légation Suède Berne, 22.07.1942.

621 Ibid.

622 Riksarkivet, Stockholm, UD 1920 års doss HP 3258, Herr Advelingschefen Kumlin, 27.07.1942.

eign Ministry that Switzerland would send technical delegates without authorisation to sign any agreement; it stated that Switzerland was in a different situation than Sweden and that the decision had been taken ‘à contre-cœur’<sup>623</sup>, meaning reluctantly. On 28 August 1942, the mission in Bern was updated on Sweden’s response to the invitation; while the head of telecommunications administration, Helge Ericson, wanted to send technical<sup>624</sup> experts,<sup>625</sup> ‘the postal administration led by Örne reject[ed] any participation’.<sup>626</sup> The appointee to Sweden, Harder, had described Ericson as a Germanophile. Örne, on the other hand, was designated as ‘a political man, social democrat and absolutely anti-German minded’.<sup>627</sup>

In his letter to Ohnesorge on 27 August 1942, Örne outlined that, while he still agreed with the minister and was generally in favour of such a project, his position had not changed since July 1941 because the surrounding conditions had not changed, either. Once again, he emphasised that the main aim of reducing tariffs could not be accomplished, as a decrease in income due to reduced tariffs would not be expected to be compensated through increased postal exchange. Closing with thanks for the ‘kind invitation’,<sup>628</sup> he declined to send representatives from the postal administration to the congress.<sup>629</sup> Sweden’s position also sparked interest from other countries, such as Spain, which received Germany’s invitation and learned of Sweden’s answer at the end of September 1942.<sup>630</sup> The Swedish mission in Vichy also updated the Swedish Foreign Ministry on deliberations within the French PTT administration about the congress’s language provisions.<sup>631</sup>

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623 Riksarkivet, Stockholm, UD 1920 års doss HP 3258, Westrup till Kumlin, 22.08.1942.

624 Added by hand in the originally typed notification. (Riksarkivet, Stockholm, UD 1920 års doss HP 3258, Kumlin/AA till Légation Suède Berne, 28.08.1942).

625 According to his letter to Ohnesorge, the head of the telecommunications administrations, Ericson, wanted to stay informed and knew of the high importance of direct contact between the experts. That is why he wanted to send rapporteurs from his administration. (Ibid.).

626 Writer’s own translation: “Postverket avböjer allt deltag”, ibid.

627 Writer’s own translation: “politischer Mann, Sozialdemokrat und absolut deutschfeindlich eingestellt”, Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/11248, Bericht Harder, 18.-28.03.1943.

628 Writer’s own translation: “liebenswürdige Einladung”, Riksarkivet, Stockholm, UD 1920 års doss HP 3258, Örne an Reichspostminister, 27.08.1942.

629 Riksarkivet, Stockholm, UD 1920 års doss HP 3258, Örne an Reichspostminister, 27.08.1942.

630 Riksarkivet, Stockholm, UD 1920 års doss HP 3258, Söderblom till Envoyén Bern, 23.09.1942.

631 Riksarkivet, Stockholm, UD 1920 års doss HP 3258, Légation de Suède, 26.09.1942.

However, the Swedish experts from the telecommunications administration appeared to be unwelcome if no representatives from the postal administration attended the congress. Söderblom highlighted the politeness of Sweden's answer while informing the missions in different European countries of this 'unfriendly message (...) at the last minute'.<sup>632</sup> He thought that the tone of the German message and the decision were due to the Germans releasing a press statement to announce that all European countries were invited shortly before said message.<sup>633</sup>

The Swedish example clearly shows the influence of actors other than the postal administrations in standard-setting for postal services during the Second World War. The financial and geopolitical situations played an important role in Swedish decision-making in 1941 and 1942, perhaps more so than actual technocratic reasoning. This was related to Sweden's position in the war; as a neutral country, it had to weigh different arguments than an occupied or allied country. Therefore, the Swiss positioning appears to have been important. The German reaction to the different stances of PTT administration leaders was the same as its reaction to Belgium: either both branches would participate or no one would be invited. This decision is notable, as it would have been important from a propaganda perspective for the Germans to have some Swedish representation at the congress, even if only as rapporteurs.

On 11 May 1942, the *Reichspost* proposed a bilateral agreement to the Swiss administration, citing again the common fight against Bolshevism and referencing all the other bilateral agreements signed with European administrations up to that point.<sup>634</sup> Even before the arrival of the letter, experts at the Swiss administration had detailed the situation to the Director General and concluded that, due to the political situation and the state of Swiss finances, the Swiss administration could not join the union or sign the bilateral agreement – at least until after the war. However, they expected that lowering taxes would lead to higher international postal traffic.<sup>635</sup> This led the Director General and the ministry that he was part of to recommend that the federal council should not sign such a bilateral agreement and that Switzerland should only participate in the congress as an observer. In the letter,

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632 Writer's own translation: "i sista stund (...) ovänliga besked Riksarkivet", Stockholm, UD 1920 års doss HP 3258, t.f. Avdelningschefen, 07.10.1942.

633 Ibid.

634 PTT Archiv Bern, P-00C\_0108\_01, Min-A (Rs) an die Generaldirektion der Post-, Telegraphen- und Telephonverwaltung Bern, 11.05.1942.

635 PTT Archiv Bern, P-00C\_0108\_01, Schreiben an den Herrn Generaldirektor betreffend Europäischer Postverein, 27.03.1942.

it was made clear that it would be impossible for Switzerland to remain outside of such a union in the long term.<sup>636</sup>

Like in Sweden's case, the *Reichspost* was very interested in including the Swiss administration in the project for legitimisation purposes. Switzerland was not only a neutral country but also the home of the UPU. The Swiss administration's decision to participate and send 'prominent observers'<sup>637</sup> thus cannot be underestimated with regard to its external impact. As shown in the following part, the Swiss administration thoroughly prepared for the congress. It continued to take it seriously by evaluating whether it would be able to agree or disagree with the German proposals<sup>638</sup> and calculated the financial consequences of Switzerland abolishing the transit charge: a loss of around 90,943 Swiss Francs.<sup>639</sup>

This section illustrated how the participation – but mostly non-participation – of countries that the *Reichspost* could envision as part of the union occurred. The Spanish administration followed different interests and was less concerned with Europe and more with Latin America. Developments related to France, Belgium, Serbia and Greece reflect a lack of clarity regarding the 'New Europe'. It was unclear whether their inclusion in the union was politically favourable or possible. In the Foreign Ministry's sources, the question of their participation repeatedly appeared on the agenda, even if the Foreign Minister had already decided on the issue in the past.<sup>640</sup> The Belgian case is particular, because the head of telecommunications declined Germany's invitation, which led to the subsequent disinvitation of representatives from the Belgian postal services. This was also observed in the Swedish case. No information could be found on whether this rejection had any personal consequences. The French administration appears to have wanted to participate in the congress, partly to keep its status as an important power in international PTT cooperation. The case of the neutral countries, Sweden and Switzerland, constitutes a point at which technocratic and political interests did not align: while there was a vivid interest in the project from the administrations, their countries' political situations prevented them from fully participating or at all. The different decisions of Sweden and Switzerland could be explained by their geographical

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636 PTT Archiv Bern, P-00C\_0108\_01, Union postale européenne, démarche allemande, undated.

637 Writer's own translation: "prominente Beobachter", Politisches Archiv, Berlin, R106301, Aufzeichnung Martius, 03.10.1942.

638 PTT Archiv Bern, P-00C\_0108\_01, Bemerkungen zu den deutschen Vorschlägen vom 22 Sept. 1942, undated.

639 PTT Archiv Bern, P-00C\_0108\_01, Landdurchgangsgebühren, 31.10.1942.

640 Cf. Politisches Archiv, Berlin, R106301.

situation. Regardless, Switzerland's positioning corresponds to Madeleine Herren's description of Swiss 'neutrality' cited in the introduction.

### Conclusion

This part outlined the three main elements needed to prepare the EPTU and its standards: internal preparation, Axis negotiations and bilateral agreements with other European PTT administrations. It showed the importance of this phase for the entirety of the EPTU project, as most important decisions were made during this time.

The *Reichspostminister* provided the internal structures necessary to prepare for the congress by creating a Foreign Department within his ministry. Within this department, the main actors for postal services were Friedrich Risch and Friedrich Reiss. At the beginning of the process, two developments seem to have overlapped: the establishment of a working group focused mostly on telecommunications and the establishment of a European PTT organisation with specific standards. Ultimately, the latter was implemented and announced to the functionaries of the *Reichspost* through two speeches in different meetings. Although the project was presented in a way that cleanly separated its political and technocratic aspects, these aspects were not opposites but rather targeted the same goal. The number of proposed standards decreased as the European Postal and Telecommunications Union was concretised. Thus, the European postal system was planned according to a broader vision than what was actually pursued during this initiation phase.

While the Italian and German PTT administrations were ostensibly on the same side for the project, it became clear relatively quickly that the Italian administration could not succeed in simplifying and reducing the cost of bilateral postal services to the same extent as its German counterpart. Additionally, the German administration's aspirations to secure leadership of the project led to tensions. The Italian Foreign Ministry brought the project to a temporary halt in July 1942, pressuring the Germans to accept certain highly political demands, such as adding Italian as an official language in addition to German of the congress and the envisioned European postal union and holding the next congress in Rome. However, complete equality between the partners was not achieved. This was partly due to Germany's occupation of large parts of Europe; thus, it was politically in charge.

The consequences of this power imbalance can also be seen when analysing negotiations between Germany and other European administrations.

They were almost entirely conducted by the *Reichspost*, including those involving neutral countries. The EPTU was founded on relatively similar bilateral agreements. The abolition of the transit charge in bilateral land mail was achieved with some administrations, but not all. The export of German weight categories to other administrations was successful. Similarly, the introduction of the *Reichsmark*<sup>641</sup> as a reference currency in European postal services was also a de facto result of the bilateral agreements and can be considered a major achievement for the *Reichspost*.

By the time the congress in Vienna took place, a complex network of actors had been developed during the preparatory phase. This network spanned a considerable part of Europe and included several countries in different occupation situations. The archival sources are not always clear on this front; however, recreating exact relationship patterns is challenging but important to do before continuing the analysis. The following description of the network of actors represents the most accurate approximation possible.

The staff of the examined European postal administrations did not act independently. National foreign ministries and governments had to grant their approval for negotiations to take place and for a delegation to be sent to Vienna. They were also essential in deciding which powers the delegation had at the congress. As demonstrated later, members of some delegations were only observers, whereas others had the power to sign agreements with reservations; however, the government had the final say. Especially in the cases of Italy and Germany, diplomatic channels between the Foreign Ministries were used for negotiations and status updates. As such, not only were the administrations in contact with their respective foreign ministries, but the foreign ministries were also in contact with each other. As Germany had embassies in most capitals of EPTU member countries, it can be assumed that these channels were also used, although little information on this topic was found in the archives. Nevertheless, as experts in the field, the postal administrations had the power to influence national governing bodies. In some cases, such as Belgium, Sweden and Switzerland, national governments followed the advice and conclusions of the postal administrations.

As decisions in Vienna would have strong repercussions on national budgets, it is likely that finance ministries were also involved in the decision-making process. However, this link was only explicitly found in certain cases, such as France. In terms of inter-ministerial communication in

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641 Currency in Germany from 1924 to 1948.

Germany, the finance minister received internal information on the subject of the planned European postal union, but no recorded communications on budget matters were found. The postal administrations themselves appear to have completed most budget calculations.

Based on the identified sources, the German postal administration appeared to be at the centre of preparations for the congress, which was facilitated by the fact that most countries were occupied by or dependent on the Third Reich at the time. The question of whether the German administration retained this position throughout the establishment and activities of the EPTU is answered in the following parts. Within the *Reichspost*, the main actors were in the Foreign Department of the *Reichspostministerium*. Minister Ohnesorge appears to have mainly acted as the official face of the project, but he also intervened at important points (e.g., obtaining support from Hitler or discussing matters with the Foreign Ministry). Furthermore, the appointees abroad represented an important link between the *Reichspost* and other PTT administrations. In summary, the *Reichspost* dominated the initial phase of the project and tried to rapidly create a European postal union.



## Part II: The European Postal Congress (October 1942)

While the question of who would participate in the congress was still being debated, the *Reichspost* took the next steps in preparing for the event. Most of the standardising work had been done via the bilateral agreements. However, the transferral of these provisions from a bilateral to a multilateral scale was still pending. To ensure the success of this mission, the *Reichspost* sent two letters to the other administrations. The first outlined the project and the aims, while the second contained the German proposals for concrete standards.

At the beginning of August 1942, the first official invitation letter from *Reichspostminister* Ohnesorge was sent to the PTT administrations of Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, Spain, Hungary, Slovakia and Finland. An invitation was probably also sent to Portugal and Turkey, but this could not be verified in the archives. The contents of the letter can be summarised as a description of past work by the *Reichspost*, an invitation to the congress, a list of tasks for the congress and an enumeration of preparatory documents that the *Reichspost* intended to deliver to the other administrations.<sup>642</sup>

Ohnesorge began the letter by reporting the results of the *Reichspost*'s contact with other European administrations in 1941: 'This reaching out has caused very lively interest with all administrations and has shown that the intensification of post and telecommunications between the aforementioned countries [European and neighbouring] is urgently needed'.<sup>643</sup> 'Neighbouring' was added to accommodate Turkey's wishes and facilitate the Turkish postal administration's participation in the congress and, potentially, in the union.<sup>644</sup>

Ohnesorge continued by mentioning the conclusion of bilateral agreements with several countries and by mentioning that restricted unions were

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642 Riksarkivet, Stockholm, UD 1920 års doss HP 3258, Reichspostminister an die Königlich Schwedische General-Postverwaltung, 10.08.1942.

643 Writer's own translation: "Diese Fühlungnahme hat bei allen Verwaltungen ein sehr lebhaftes Interesse ausgelöst und gezeigt, dass eine Intensivierung des Post- und Fernmeldewesen zwischen den vorbezeichneten Ländern im dringenden Bedürfnis liegt", *ibid*.

644 Politisches Archiv, Berlin, R106301, Aufzeichnung zum Stand der Frage des Europäischen Postvereins, 08.08.1942, and Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, B4701/11631, Hlinak an Risch, 23.07.1942.

allowed according to Article 5 of the UPU Convention and Article 13 of the ITU convention and had already been implemented with the creation of the Nordic Postal Union, for example.

He then informed the letter recipient about the starting date, 1 October 1942, and the location and aim of the event. The congress was to take place in Vienna, and the aim was to create a restricted union with the other European administrations that would unite postal services and telecommunications based on the conventions of the global unions. He described the union further:

This 'European Postal Union' should work out the provisions that are beyond the rule of the global unions' conventions adapted to the special conditions of the European service on the basis of comprehensive studies and decisions which respond to the interests of all countries.<sup>645</sup>

The final protocol of the union was to result in regulations for the individual services.

Ohnesorge next defined the tasks of the congress. These were to discuss and decide on the organisational frame of the cooperation, to formulate – in committees – problems of the service in practice and to create the necessary (permanent) committees to solve the problems. To prepare for the congress further, the *Reichspost* announced it would send the draft of the procedural rules the congress was to adopt and the 'provisional protocol on a European Postal and Telecommunications convention',<sup>646</sup> which would serve as a template for the congress and had been discussed with other administrations. The *Reichspost* would provide questions deemed important for the advancement of European postal services and telecommunications. Sending the German questions would be used as an opportunity to solicit questions from the other administrations.

Finally, 'in agreement with the royal Italian postal administration',<sup>647</sup> the German postal administration invited the other administrations to take part

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645 Writer's own translation: "Dieser 'Europäische Postverein' soll auf Grund umfassender Studien und eingehender, den Interessen aller Länder Rechnung tragender Entschliessungen die Vorschriften ausarbeiten, die über die allgemeine Regelung der Weltvereinsverträge hinaus den besonderen Verhältnissen des europäischen Dienstes angepasst sind", Riksarkivet, Stockholm, UD 1920 års doss HP 3258, Reichspostminister an die Königlich Schwedische General-Postverwaltung, 10.08.1942.

646 Writer's own translation: "Vorläufiges Protokoll über einen europäischen Post- und Fernmeldevertrag", *ibid.*

647 Writer's own translation: "Im Einvernehmen mit der Königlichen Italienischen Postverwaltung", *ibid.*

in the congress in Vienna, which was planned to last 14 days. The invited administrations were asked to participate and to swiftly communicate which members of their staff would be sent to Vienna. In the last sentence, Ohnesorge informed the invitation recipient that he would contact the offices of the global unions in Bern.<sup>648</sup>

References to technocratic organisations and institutions are evident in the letter. Not only was the union presented as simply a restricted union of the relevant global unions, but a typical committee structure was presented as though there was no alternative. The same applies to the proposed procedure, meaning the prepared texts and questions. The letter, thus, highlighted a technocratic character and left no place for Axis ideology. It is also strikingly clear in the letter that the *Reichspost* claimed the lead of this organisation and set the standards within it. The major proposals appear to have come from the German administration – an impression only reinforced because the Italian administration played virtually no role in the letter except at the end. While one can assume that the Italian administration was among those with whom the *Reichspost* discussed the provisional protocol, the German administration was presented as being in charge of the process.

Nine days after the official invitation letter, the *Reichspost* sent a letter containing the drafts for the rules of procedure, a protocol for a European postal and telecommunications agreement, and proposals on how to improve European PTT services. All texts came from the German *Reichspost*; there was no mention of previous talks with the Italian administration.<sup>649</sup> The contents of the drafts are discussed in Chapter II of this part. The drafts are compared to the final versions that the administrations agreed upon during the congress. Proposals for the improvement of European postal services were not discussed<sup>650</sup> during the congress, however, and are, therefore, only briefly mentioned and not examined. Due to the brevity of the congress, there was no time to officially discuss questions beyond those raised in the drafts. The same situation held for the Italian proposals sent for the congress but, unlike the German proposals, these were sent without the invitation documents.

Seven German proposals were presented to the invited administrations. They concerned lowering the tariffs for journals and books, permission to

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648 Ibid.

649 Riksarkivet, Stockholm, UD 1920 års doss HP 3258, Reichspostminister an die Königlich Schwedische General-Postverwaltung, 10.08.1942 and PTT Archiv Bern, P-00C\_0108\_01, Tagung der europäischen Post- und Fernmeldeverwaltungen in Wien, 19.08.1942.

650 Europäischer Postkongress, p. 104-140.

send samples of goods with low commercial value and packages, abolishing tariffs for transferring and delivering packages, the authorisation of dutiable items in letters and samples, issuing special reply coupons for the European Postal Union and shortening the deadline for inquiries.<sup>651</sup> All these proposals were based on provisions within the UPU Conventions and, according to the Swiss administration's assessment, were logical; for example, the proposal regarding packages was not an improvement but a continuation of the status quo. The Swiss administration concluded that it could support six of the seven proposals. The only proposal where the Swiss advised caution was lifting restrictions on journals and books.<sup>652</sup> The German administration argued this change would 'promote the spread of ideas between the European peoples and thus the common culture'.<sup>653</sup> This raised doubts for the Swiss administration, which feared that Switzerland would 'be flooded with foreign press'.<sup>654</sup> Switzerland might not be able to produce the same amount of content in the same period of time.<sup>655</sup> While the other German proposals do not appear to have had political intentions, this first proposal can easily be linked to the aim of promoting National Socialist ideas at lower cost and facilitating German propaganda efforts. This political intent explains the Swiss reservation on the issue, while all other 'technocratic' issues were agreed to. It also shows how the German National Socialists and the Italian Fascists could have used the EPTU to attempt to install ideological rule over the European continent. These hegemonic tendencies were not omnipresent in the proposals, which showed an interest in simply facilitating the European postal services by the German *Reichspost*. Overall, the proposals simply appeared rational and apolitical.

Risch sent the letter accompanying the drafts on behalf of the *Reichspostminister*. The letter was divided into three points. First, the *Reichspost* presented the draft rules of the procedure for an orderly discussion of the form of the organisation to be founded, which would be the frame for the work

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651 Europäischer Postkongress, p. 106-110.

652 PTT Archiv Bern, P-00C\_0108\_01, Bemerkungen zu den deutschen Vorschlägen vom 22. September 1942 betreffend Verbesserungen des europäischen Postdienstes zu Händen der Wiener Tagung, undated.

653 Writer's own translation: "die Verbreitung des Gedankengutes unter den europäischen Völkern erleichtern und damit die gemeinsame Kultur fördern", Europäischer Postkongress, p. 106.

654 Writer's own translation: "mit ausländischer Presse überschwemmt werden", PTT Archiv Bern, P-00C\_0108\_01, Bemerkungen zu den deutschen Vorschlägen vom 22. September 1942 betreffend Verbesserungen des europäischen Postdienstes zu Händen der Wiener Tagung, undated, p. 1.

655 Ibid.

built upon this general agreement. The *Reichspost* suggested applying the same procedural rules as the international unions, at least where this was appropriate. Thus, committees for specialist work were to play an important role during the congress. The task of the committees was to define the questions that would determine the work of the coming years. It was announced that the postal committee ‘would elaborate recommendations and statements that will develop into decisions by the general assembly that will point the way ahead’.<sup>656</sup> Second, the congress was defined as giving the union the ‘necessary organisational form’<sup>657</sup> based on the regulations of the UPU and the ITU. This aspect was to be carried out by a committee for the union agreement. Risch remarked that the *Reichspost* was well aware that the name ‘European Postal Union’ would not do the union justice, as it excluded telecommunications. He justified the omission with the argument that a shorter term would have a better chance of becoming widely known and used. Such wide use would be necessary once the new union became important in people’s daily lives. The proposed organisational form foresaw two types of organs: the congress and the committee. While the committees were to work regularly after the model of the CCIF,<sup>658</sup> the administrations would meet less frequently to make the results of the committee work legally binding. The *Reichspost* asked the other administrations to submit proposals to improve the services for the congress in October.<sup>659</sup>

The third and last part of the letter was dedicated to ‘some basic thoughts [of the *Reichspost*] to improve European postal services (...) that in its [the *Reichspost*’s] view could be the beginning of the standardisation and development about to be carried out.’<sup>660</sup> The basic thoughts were separated into two main points: the first was the standardisation of the tariffs, and the second was the transit charges. Regarding the content of these thoughts, nothing new was added compared to what had been discussed. Concerning the standardisation of the tariffs, the *Reichspost* not only aimed to lower costs but also to harmonise the tariffs and the weight categories. This was to be realised by the other administrations that adopted the German system for

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656 PTT Archiv Bern, P-00C\_0108\_01, Reichspostminister an Generaldirektion der Post-, Telegraphen-, und Telephonverwaltung, 19.08.1942.

657 Writer’s own translation: “erforderliche organisatorische Form”, *ibid.*

658 Proposals by the administrations were discussed in smaller expert groups.

659 PTT Archiv Bern, P-00C\_0108\_01, Reichspostminister an Generaldirektion der Post-, Telegraphen-, und Telephonverwaltung, 19.08.1942.

660 Writer’s own translation: “einige Grundgedanken zur Verbesserung des europäischen Postdienstes (...), die ihrer Auffassung nach dazu bestimmt sein könnten, am Anfang der durchzuführenden Vereinheitlichung und Weiterentwicklung zu stehen”, *ibid.*

the postal services with the other participating European administrations. The Gold franc would cease to be the reference currency. While the *Reichspost* acknowledged the challenges that would result from the currency conditions, the administrations' financial needs and the division of the stamps' face values, it believed the time was right and that the European administrations had expressed their wish to realise such harmonisation. The second thought concerned abolishing the transit charge for any service from and through Europe. While this had not been possible within the UPU, the *Reichspost* considered it implementable 'for the European cultural environment that was so much more limited<sup>661</sup> and closely intertwined through traditional bonds of every kind'<sup>662</sup>. The abolition of the transit charge was, thus, the second piece of the puzzle of a unified European postal area after harmonising the tariffs and tariff structure according to the German model. While the abolition meant revenue losses for the administrations, the costs – calculating the money every administration was entitled to – would no longer exist. According to the *Reichspost*, those costs had risen because of the war.<sup>663</sup>

With the bilateral agreements, the introductory words and the drafts, the *Reichspost* established the basis for the subsequent congress. The letter was phrased rather openly, allowing the possibility of rejecting its basic premises. It foregrounded the *Reichspost's* goal of achieving consensus among the administrations by argument rather than force. This approach gave the administrations from non-occupied, neutral or allied countries a permission structure to participate in the congress, as it had a traditional, technocratic form in which administrations made decisions based on rational discussions. However, this is evidence that force was not involved. Most participating administrations represented countries occupied by or depending on Germany (and Italy), and their decision to sign bilateral agreements and agree to these basic ideas was not made purely on technical terms, but on geopolitical ones, as can be seen in the Danish case. The German administration had clearly taken the organisational lead. This is not surprising given that the congress was to be held in Vienna. The leading role of the German postal administration in postal affairs – most importantly in comparison with the Italian administration – became even clearer throughout

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661 Territorially, that is.

662 Writer's own translation: "für den so viel eingeschränkteren und durch traditionelle Bande aller Art aufs engste ineinander verflochtenen europäischen Kulturkreis", *ibid.*

663 *Ibid.*

the preparation process. This is most evident in Germany sending basic proposals regarding the future of European postal services to administrations beyond those the Italian administration had agreed upon. For instance, the bilateral agreement with Italy did not include the adaptation of the German domestic system or the abolition of the transit charge. The Axis relationship and cooperation were rather competitive in this case, and this is also clear in the Italian Foreign Ministry's decision to halt the preparation process in June. The proposals in the letter went beyond what the *Reichspost* had achieved in the bilateral agreements concerning the abolition of the transit charge. The letter provided a clear picture of how the *Reichspost* envisioned the future of European postal services and expressed its wish for other European PTT administrations to join this vision.

The following chapter examines standard-setting during the congress and compares this process with the preparation phase. The beginning of the congress on 12 October 1942 was the start of the decision phase, and the phase concluded on 1 April 1943 with the enactment date of the agreements. The end of the decision phase could have coincided with signing the agreements during the congress, but some administration representatives, including the Italian representatives, were not authorised by their governments to definitively sign the agreements. Because the final decision was in the hands of the governments, this interim period was included in the decision phase.

As with the initiation phase, the chronology of the decision phase is first summarized and then analysed. First, the framework of the congress is described and evaluated. Second, standard-setting for organisation building and postal affairs is examined. This chapter follows a chronological structure, studying the opening session of the congress and negotiations concerning the general agreement, and then reviewing the postal committee sessions and the closing session of the congress. Third, the promotion of the new standards to professional and civilian audiences is analysed.

### *Chapter I: Hosting a European postal congress with Europe at war*

This chapter examines the external conditions for the standard-setting process. These conditions are important for understanding the limitations and possibilities for the individuals present at the congress. The conditions reviewed include the timetable, accompanying programme, and venue for the congress and how the opening of the congress set the tone for the sessions to come.

Seventeen delegations participated in the congress and the committee sessions during 12–24 October 1942. Twelve days was comparatively short duration for a congress. In comparison, the UPU congresses often lasted more than a month.<sup>664</sup> As was customary<sup>665</sup>, the congress was accompanied by a social programme that included a reception, concert, opera visit, excursion, sport and banquets.<sup>666</sup> The preparation of a congress at war was a difficult administrative task<sup>667</sup>. Only the German and Italian ministers, Ohnesorge and Host-Venturi, were present, while the other delegations were all composed of (high-ranking) administrative staff.<sup>668</sup> However, Ohnesorge and Host-Venturi were not involved in the substantive negotiations during the congress.<sup>669</sup> The *Reichspostminister*, Ohnesorge, had initially planned to invite all responsible ministers of the participating administrations to the congress. However, the German Foreign Ministry prevented this because such an invitation would have – from the viewpoint of the ministry – overemphasised the importance of the congress and led to diplomatic challenges because of the different staffing regimes. The Foreign Ministry also wanted to forego Host-Venturi's participation. Here, however, Ohnesorge's wishes prevailed.<sup>670</sup>

*A technocratic congress in buildings with war stories*

The congress was held in the *Palais der Deutschen Reichspost*, 22 Prinzen-Eugen Street. This address is important because it was the Palais of Louis Rothschild. Built between 1879 and 1884, it was the residence of the 'Viennese' Rothschilds. Louis Rothschild was arrested on the day of the Anschluss and his property (both financial and material) was expropriated. He was released and allowed to leave the country after lengthy negotiations

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664 Laborie, L'Europe mise en réseaux, p. 122.

665 Ibid., p. 116-120.

666 Nationaal Archief, Den Haag, Staatsbedrijf der PTT: Archief van W.L.Z. van der Vegte Directeur-Generaal der PTT, nummer toegang 2.16.78.03, inventarisnummer 61, and PTT-Archiv, Bern, P-00C\_0108\_01, Bericht über den europäischen Postkongress, 04.11.1942.

667 Cf. Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/11631.

668 Europäischer Postkongress, p. 52-55.

669 Ibid., p. 40-45.

670 Politisches Archiv, Berlin, R106301, Weizsäcker an Reichsaußenminister, 17.09.1942.



between his brothers and the National Socialists in May 1939.<sup>671</sup> The ‘central agency for Jewish emigration’<sup>672</sup> used the Palais in Prinz-Eugen Street from August 1938 until the summer of 1942, under the direction of Adolf Eichmann. Its task was, first, to organise the expulsion and later the deportation of the Austrian Jewish population,<sup>673</sup> and it quickly became the model for other ‘central agencies’ in Berlin and Prague.<sup>674</sup> Thus, it can be said that the history of the location of the congress was far from apolitical; rather, it was at the heart of National Socialist ideology, policy, and war crimes. This deviation from the declared purely technical aims of the hosts and participants can be observed elsewhere. The honorary delegation of the SS Postal Protection, which greeted Ohnesorge and Host-Venturi before they welcomed the delegates, did not appear to be technocratic. Although the press reported that the delegates were not in the same room as the SS Postal Protection,<sup>675</sup> this staging conveyed a strong political tone in October 1942.

At the train station and congress location in Vienna, the flags of all participating member administration countries were displayed. This decision was questioned during the preparatory session led by Risch and Martius. It reflected the wishes of *Reichspostminister* Ohnesorge, but both Risch and Martius agreed it would not reinforce the technocratic nature of the congress. From a foreign policy viewpoint, the display of the national flags of the participating administrations created several problems. The Norwegian and Dutch administrations were seen as only formally equal to the others as they were under the control of the *Armeefeldpostmeister*. Risch was told that it was out of the question to raise the Belgian, Serbian or Greek flags. A comparison to the European Youth Congress was drawn, where the Norwegian flag had been raised. That congress had taken place shortly before, in September 1942, in Vienna.<sup>676</sup> Ultimately, Hitler himself allowed *Reichspostminister* Ohnesorge to display the participants’ flags, going

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671 Anderl, Gabriele / Hecht-Aichholzer, Doris / Lichtenberger, Sabine: *Orte der Täter. Der NS-Terror in den "arisierten" Wiener Rothschild-Palais*. Aktualisierte und erw. Neuaufl. Wien 2007 (Bd. 15 der Schriftenreihe des Instituts zur Erforschung der Geschichte der Gewerkschaften und Arbeiterkammern).

672 Writer’s own translation: “Zentralstelle für jüdische Auswanderung”, *ibid.*, p. 22.

673 *Ibid.*, p. 22.

674 *Ibid.*, p. 31.

675 PTT Archiv, Bern, P-00C\_0108\_01, *Neues Wiener Tageblatt*, 13.10.1942.

676 Politisches Archiv, Berlin, R106301, Notiz für den Reichsaußenminister, 29.09.1942, p. 3-4.

against the instructions of the Foreign Minister.<sup>677</sup> As with the conference venue, this decision represented a break with the technocratic character of the congress as the *Reichspostminister* used his connection to Hitler to pass over the instructions of the Foreign Minister. Given that the flags would draw more attention to the congress venue itself, this again shows how the ambiguity surrounding plans for the ‘New Europe’ caused problems within the administrations due to the unclear status of the occupied territories. It is also notable that the French case was not mentioned during these discussions, despite the fact that a French delegation was still supposed to be invited at this point.

The delegates were accommodated in Hotel Bristol, the Grand Hotel and Hotel Imperial, which are all next to or opposite each other on the same street in Vienna, Kärntner Ring (Fig. 2). They were also close to the congress venue. The Swiss delegate, Ernest Bonjour, noted that being hosted in the best hotels in Vienna contributed to making the stay pleasant.<sup>678</sup>



Figure 2: The Congress Hotels; from left to right: Hotel Bristol, the Grand Hotel and Hotel Imperial. (Source: WStLA)<sup>679</sup>

The choice of hotels both emphasised the desire of the *Reichspost* to make their guests welcome and uphold the image of a normal congress and reinforced the influence of the political situation. Samuel Schallinger, an Austrian Jew, held shares in both Hotel Bristol and Hotel Imperial until 1938 and became a member of the board of Hotel Bristol in 1921.<sup>680</sup> In 1938, after the Anschluss of Austria to the German Reich, the boards of the hotels

677 Politisches Archiv, Berlin, R106301, Bericht Martius an Wiedl 20.10.1942, p. 2.

678 PTT Archiv, Bern, P-00C\_0108\_01, PTT-Archiv, Bern, P-00C\_0108\_01, Rapport Congrès postal européen de Vienne, 12.11.1942, p. 16.

679 Wiener Stadt und Landesarchiv, Wien, 3.3.2.FC1.6460M; 3.3.2.FC1.6449M; 3.3.2.FC1.9544M.

680 Wiener Stadt und Landesarchiv, Wien, 2.3.3.B77.9.86, Eintrag 15.03.1921.

were Aryanised, and Schallinger was replaced.<sup>681</sup> He had to sell his shares<sup>682</sup> and was later deported to the concentration camp Theresienstadt and murdered.<sup>683</sup>

The congress and the decision phase were organised as shown in Table 6. A ceremonial opening was followed by a discussion on the organisation of the union to be founded before delegates could deliberate common standards in postal and telecommunications matters. Afterwards, the general assembly confirmed the results.

Date	Event
12 October 1942	Opening of the congress
13 October 1942	First general assembly
14–17 October 1942	Sessions of the agreement committee
17–19 October 1942	Second and third general assembly
16–22 October 1942	Sessions of the postal committee
24 October 1942	Closure of the congress

Table 6: Congress Timetable

### *The opening session and the discursive framework of the congress*

The opening session held on 12 October 1942 comprised three speeches. The first was by the German postal minister, Ohnesorge, followed by the Italian transport minister, Host-Venturi, and the senior chairperson, Albrecht, who was the Finnish Director General.

Ohnesorge welcomed the participants on behalf of the German and Italian governments and the PTT administrations of the Axis powers. After describing the preparation process, he stated that the work during this congress would usually require the more favourable conditions of peace, but he noted that the post, ‘like no other institution of the world, is called to serve the

681 Wiener Stadt und Landesarchiv, Wien, 2.3.3.B77.9.86, Eintrag 01.04.1938.

682 Erlanger, Steven: Vienna Skewered as a Nazi-Era Pillager of Its Jews, in: *The New York Times*, NYTimes.com, 7. März 2002.

683 Nationalarchiv Prag; Institut Theresienstädter Initiative: Schallinger, Samuel: Todesfallanzeige, Ghetto Theresienstadt, available online: <https://www.holocaust.cz/de/datenbank-der-digitalisierten-dokumenten/dokument/91981-schallinger-samuel-todesfallanzeige-ghetto-theresienstadt/> (last access 23.07.2021).

understanding of peoples, their cooperation and their progress'.<sup>684</sup> Ohnesorge emphasised the necessity and obviousness of a European Postal Union: 'Furthermore, the universal, significant advantages that all the peoples of Europe could enjoy when our continent (...) would be treated as a unified postal area were apparent.'<sup>685</sup>

Host-Venturi framed the congress in a broader geopolitical context by saying it showed the certainty of Italy and Germany concerning the victorious end of the ongoing war and that it would contribute to the larger task of preparing a new order in Europe despite its technocratic character:<sup>686</sup>

'For that very reason, the technical discussions (...) will be guided by the reality which is inspired by the camaraderie, agreement and faith that is practised by the Axis powers every day on the fields of honour and emerges primarily from the indestructible friendship of the two great Führers.'<sup>687</sup>

The congress would also contribute to the overarching aim that Mussolini, Hitler and other heads of state were working on: 'true European solidarity'.<sup>688</sup>

Finally, Albrecht gave the last and the shortest speech to open the congress. The speech had been prepared in cooperation with the Reichspostministerium in which Albrecht made it clear, he did not want to take a prominent or too visible role at the Congress.<sup>689</sup> His focus was the argument for the idea of a European postal union, whose emergence he attributed solely

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684 Writer's own translation: "wie kaum eine andere Institution in der Welt dazu berufen ist, der Verständigung ihrer Völker, ihrer Zusammenarbeit und ihrem Fortschritt zu dienen", *Europäischer Postkongress*, p. 12.

685 Writer's own translation: "Darüber hinaus zeigten sich eindringlich die großen Vorteile, die alle Völker Europas genießen könnten, wenn unser Kontinent (...) wie ein möglichst einheitliches Postgebiet behandelt werden würde", *ibid.*, p. 13.

686 *Ibid.*, p. 16-19.

687 Writer's own translation: "Gerade deshalb werden sich die technischen Erörterungen (...) von jener Wirklichkeit leiten lassen, die beseelt ist von Kameradschaft, Übereinstimmung und Glauben, wie sie von den Achsenmächten tagtäglich auf den Feldern der Ehre geübt werden und wie sie in erster Linie hervorgehen aus der unzerstörbaren Freundschaft der beiden großen Führer", *ibid.*, p. 20.

688 Writer's own translation: "wirklichen europäischen Solidarität", *ibid.*, p. 20.

689 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/11631, Min-A (Wg) an Fleischer, 01.09.1942.

to Germany.<sup>690</sup> He noted the idea of reconstructing Europe behind the project of a European union and the wish for a more united and peaceful Europe: ‘Next to the purely logistical use (...) such a restricted postal union would bring about a feeling of togetherness between the contracting states’.<sup>691</sup> Albrecht closed his speech by proposing to send a telegram of well wishes to Hitler, the German Reich and its people, to which the congress participants – unsurprisingly – agreed.<sup>692</sup>

The discursive framework of the congress reflects the abovementioned synthetic character of the EPTU. While Ohnesorge and Albrecht mentioned the war, it played a subordinate role in their speeches. The primary message was rooted in the ideals of technocratic internationalism, such as connecting people. It is interesting that Albrecht used the term ‘reconstruction of Europe’<sup>693</sup> instead of, for example, ‘building a New Europe’. This alternative term allowed him to avoid any ideological spin, and indeed, Europe would need to be reconstructed after the war. Ohnesorge also refrained from typical Nazi talking points frequently used within the German Reich to legitimate the project. Host-Venturi gave a comparatively political speech whose contents focussed much more on the common war of the Axis powers and the cooperation of their leadership, not just at the top, but also at the administrative level. The inclusion of the concept of the ‘New Order of Europe’ further shows the ideological component of his speech. Hitler’s telegram completed the intertwining of political and technocratic elements. Thus, from the beginning, the congress was influenced by both aspects, but different actors stressed them differently. One can only speculate why Ohnesorge, Host-Venturi and Albrecht weighted different points as they did.

For the German minister, it was important to project a purely technocratic congress free from ideology and geopolitics. This need resulted from (1) the German Foreign Ministry insisting on the absence of politics during the congress and (2) the path dependency of technocratic internationalism, which led to certain expectations from the other delegations. The minister wanted to emphasise to the other delegations that they were part of a common technocratic project rather than a propaganda or geopolitical endeavor.

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690 Ibid., p. 20.

691 Writer’s own translation: “abgesehen von dem rein verkehrstechnischen Nutzen (...) würde durch solch einen engeren Postverein das Gefühl der Zusammengehörigkeit zwischen den Vertragsstaaten zustande gebracht.“, *ibid.*, p. 22.

692 *Ibid.*

693 Writer’s own translation: “Wiederaufbau Europas”, *ibid.*, p. 22.

our in which Germany was using its hegemonic status to impose its standards upon them. The Italian minister had to prove why this project was important for Italy, as the support of the Italian government and, more importantly, Mussolini did not appear to be guaranteed at this point. Albrecht, as the head of the Finnish PTT administration and a technocrat with a long international career, also had an interest in emphasising continuity. All three, however, underlined that the EPTU was a union for the future rather than for the moment, as the benefits of one European postal area could only be fully enjoyed in peace times.

Hints about how the participants evaluated the atmosphere and setting of the congress can be found in the testimonies of the Danish delegation and the two Swiss delegates. The Danish minister for public works wrote in his diary that the Danish delegation – which he was not part of – had been received cordially and that tensions were not felt: ‘This is very strange but this is thus the real situation’.<sup>694</sup> The courtesies exchanged included presenting stamp collections to the other delegations.<sup>695</sup> The Swiss delegates also reported the cordial atmosphere.<sup>696</sup> However, the telecommunications expert Keller further noted that private conversations with experts whom he had met before but who were now from occupied countries were ‘quite delicate’.<sup>697</sup> Keller also noted that the congress was shaped by what he called ‘congress discipline’,<sup>698</sup> which consisted of avoiding larger discussions by creating sub-committees for these questions. These were mostly filled with experts raising the questions, plus a German and Italian expert – a procedure that had ‘a certain authoritarian flair’,<sup>699</sup> according to Keller. Decisions were made unanimously, and the Italian delegation had reduced its propositions seemingly without tension. He concluded: ‘Despite all friendliness and form, one had the feeling of an invisible power that steered the congress from beginning to end’.<sup>700</sup> The postal delegate, Ernest Bonjour, agreed with

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694 Writer’s own translation: “Dette er jo højest mærkeligt, men sådan er de faktiske forhold altså”, Blüdnikow, *Post og Tele*, p. 357.

695 Cf. Nationaal Archief, Den Haag, Staatsbedrijf der PTT: Archief van W.L.Z. van der Vegte Directeur-Generaal der PTT, nummer toegang 2.16.78.03, inventarisnummer 61.

696 PTT-Archiv, Bern, P-00C\_0108\_01, Bericht über den europäischen Postkongress, 04.11.1942, p. 12-13

697 Writer’s own translation: “recht heikel”, *ibid.* p. 12.

698 Writer’s own translation: “Kongressdisziplin”, *ibid.*, p. 11.

699 Writer’s own translation: “einen gewissen autoritären Anstrich”, *ibid.*, p. 12.

700 Writer’s own translation: “Trotz aller Freundlichkeit und Form hatte man das Gefühl einer unsichtbaren Macht, die den Kongress von Anfang bis Ende beherrschte”, *ibid.*, p. 12-13.

the remarks of his colleague regarding the German friendliness but remarked that discussions about postal service regulations were rather difficult.<sup>701</sup> He also saw the *Reichspost* as the leading administration. He attributed the successes of the congress in postal affairs solely to the German administration.<sup>702</sup> Though the neutrality of the Swiss delegates can be questioned, they were both experienced and internationally respected experts.<sup>703</sup> Their assessment of the course of the congress is examined in the following chapters, which analyse the decision-making during the congress.

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701 PTT-Archiv, Bern, P-00C\_0108\_01, Rapport Congrès postal européen de Vienne, 12.11.1942, p. 16.

702 Ibid., p. 2.

703 Politisches Archiv, Berlin, R106301, Martius an Dir.Ha.Pol., 03.10.1942.

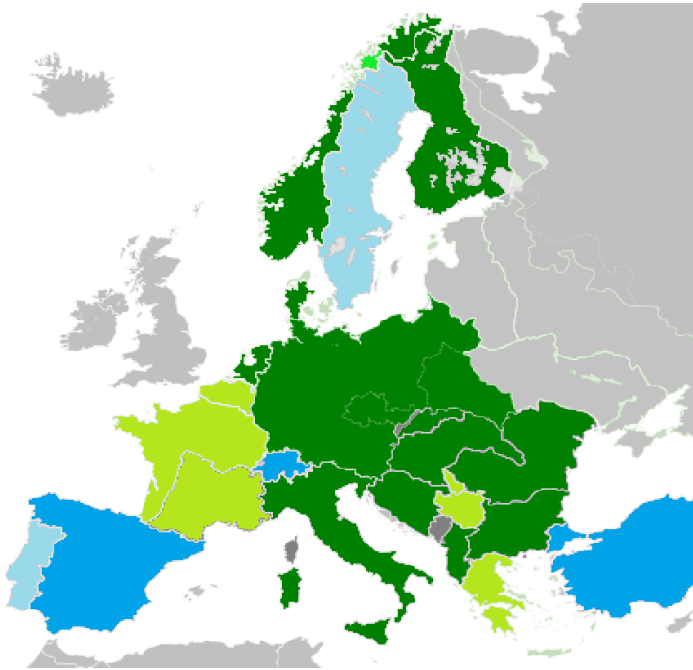


Figure 3: Congress (October 1942); dark green: Participants and later member administrations, light green: occupied countries that were in the end not invited to the congress, dark blue: observers, light blue: invitation declined.<sup>704</sup>

### *The first general assembly and the organisational frame of the congress*

The course of the first general assembly is analysed in the following discussion. This aspect of the congress is important insofar as the assembly created the institutions and bodies necessary to continue the standardisation work of the preparation phase in an ordered surrounding, namely the committees. This section also more closely examines the actors who were put in charge of the committees.

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704 In the case of Sweden, the head of telecommunications wanted to send delegates as unofficial observers but Germany disinformed them as the Swedish head of postal services declined the invitation. 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.



After the formal opening, including the three speeches discussed above, Albrecht opened the first general assembly. He began by reading out the answer that Hitler sent via telegram. The assembled delegates rose from their seats to listen to the two-sentence telegram from Hitler, in which he thanked them for their greetings and wished them success with their congress. According to the minutes, the delegates reacted with ‘passionate, long-lasting applause’.<sup>705</sup> Applause was the reoccurring theme of the session, as most decisions were made by acclamation. The applause appeared to have been so lively and fervent that the counter-question (that is, those who opposed it) was not needed. According to the transcript, all decisions were made unanimously.<sup>706</sup>

By acclamation, the two presidents of the congress, Ohnesorge and Host-Venturi, were appointed, as were the deputy presidents Nagel and Pession.<sup>707</sup> The four were from Germany and Italy, and the pairing was a symbol of the cooperation of the Axis powers. No other administration was considered for the posts of the presidency, which clearly marks hegemonic borders.

Subsequently, the assembly established six committees, one for postal services, two for telecommunications, one for preparing the union agreement, one for the verification of the powers of attorney of the delegations and one for editing the minutes.<sup>708</sup> Only the workings of the postal services and union agreement committees are important for this research. Installing committees to work on more specific questions had been part of the PTT experts’ international cooperation since the ITU and the UPU were first created and, thus, represented a continuity in organisational standards. Having completed this step, the delegates determined the presidents, vice-presidents and the recording secretaries for these committees. For the postal services committee, these were Poppe (Germany), van Goor (Netherlands) and Gruschka (Slovakia). For the committee preparing the union agreement, these were von Forster (Hungary), Krog (Denmark) and Pissomoff (Bulgaria).<sup>709</sup> The distribution of posts in the committees among the administrations was as depicted in the following table (Table 7).

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705 Writer’s own translation: “stürmischer, langanhaltender Beifall”, *Europäischer Postkongress*, p. 24.

706 *Europäischer Postkongress*, p. 26-30.

707 *Ibid.*, p. 24.

708 *Ibid.*, p. 26.

709 *Ibid.*

<b>Committees</b>	<b>President</b>	<b>Vice-President</b>	<b>Recording Secretary</b>
Postal services	Germany	Netherlands	Slovakia
Telecommunications services and tariffs	Italy	Norway	Croatia
Telecommunications engineering	Germany	Hungary	Italy
Union agreement	Hungary	Denmark	Bulgaria
Power of attorney	Romania	Albania	Netherlands
Editing	Spain	Germany	Italy

Table 7: Distribution of Committee Posts

Almost every administration was represented, with the exceptions of San Marino and Finland. The latter had the honour of sending the president by seniority. Two German delegates presided over one committee each, and an Italian, a Hungarian, a Romanian and a Spanish delegate presided over one committee each. It is notable that a Spanish delegate was expected to preside over the editing committee, as Spain was only present as an observer, which could also be a sign that the Germans and Italians wanted to include them more than others. This wish, however, was denied. The Spanish delegation declined the presidency since the head of the Spanish delegation arrived late, and the presidency of that committee was left vacant as a result.<sup>710</sup> Overall, the German delegation appears to have had more of a steering position than the Italians, who were represented more than other administrations. This distribution can, thus, be described as a reflection of relations already observed before. It is interesting that a German or an Italian delegate did not lead the committee for the preparation of the union agreement. This committee appears to be significant, as the union agreement would provide the framework for the workings of the EPTU. There could be two reasons for this significance. First, the *Reichspost* prepared the congress intensively and asked for feedback from the other administrations in advance. They might have been sure that disagreements would have been discussed beforehand and did not expect major discussions about the drafts. Second, the Axis powers trusted those leading the committee to share the

710 PTT Archiv, Bern, P-00C\_0108\_01, PTT Archiv, Bern, P-00C\_0108\_01, Rapport Congrès postal européen de Vienne, 12.11.1942, p. 4.

same interests and goals. Therefore, the individuals appointed to this committee might be of further interest.

Little is known about the persons leading the two committees of interest here. This is especially the case for the Bulgarian and Slovakian delegates. Starting with the committee for postal services, Heinrich Poppe first became part of the *Reichspost* in 1932. He was promoted to several positions in Berlin over the years. In December 1942, shortly after the congress, he was named undersecretary within the ministry.<sup>711</sup> It is unfortunately unclear where exactly Poppe had worked while in Berlin, but he was present during the German-Italian preparatory meetings, as discussed above, and was, thus, involved in the preparations of the congress. More importantly, he had experience with international congresses because he had participated in the UPU congress in Buenos Aires in 1939 as part of the German delegation.<sup>712</sup> He was, therefore, accustomed to technocratic congresses, which may have contributed to his selection as president of the committee for postal services. W.R. van Goor was Inspector General within the Dutch administrations.<sup>713</sup> Georg Gruschka was a ministerial secretary in the Slovakian administration.<sup>714</sup> The evidence on the Dutch administration's stance towards the EPTU is not ample, but it suggests support for the project of the leading individuals. The Dutch administration created a stamp commemorating the congress and the foundation of the union.<sup>715</sup> Only four of 13 administrations produced stamps commemorating the congress. The head of the Dutch delegation and Director General of the Dutch PTT administration, Willem van der Vegte, planned a motion for the final session of the congress. According to the minutes of the congress, he did not put this motion to a vote and his reasons are unknown. He wanted the congress to meet yearly despite the permanent committees doing the majority of the work because meeting only every five years, for example, would lead to not reaching the ideational goal of the union. This was the idea that Europe was an 'unbreakable whole'.<sup>716</sup>

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711 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/39833, Haupt-Kartei Poppe.

712 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/11582, Abschlage auf Reisekosten der Mitglieder der deutschen Abordnung zum Weltpostkongre in Buenos Aires, 01.02.1939.

713 Europischer Postkongress, p. 54.

714 Ibid., p. 55.

715 Michel Europa 2017/2018. Band 6. *Westeuropa*, 102. Aufl., Unterschleißheim 2017, p. 1228.

716 Writer's own translation: "ein unverbrliches Ganzes", Nationaal Archief, Den Haag, Staatsbedrijf der PTT: Archief van W.L.Z. van der Vegte Directeur-Generaal der PTT, nummer toegang 2.16.78.03, inventarisnummer 61, Antrag

and that Europe would become one. He would have noted the history of the PTT administrations overcoming borders and that everyone knew that this union was indispensable, especially once there was peace. Although a war was raging in Europe – in which, according to him, Germany had the most difficult role – he sought the right time to think about the after-war situation: ‘Luckily, it becomes more and more clear what the outcome of this big fight will be’.<sup>717</sup> Van der Vegte never gave this speech, yet it gives a glimpse into the general mind-set of the leader of the Dutch delegation and could indicate the instructions that guided him and his delegation. Van der Vegte joined the Dutch National Socialist party *Nationaal-Socialistische Beweging* (NSB) in 1933. His membership bears out the conclusion that the Dutch delegation, including the vice-president of the postal services committee, W.R. van Goor, would not be a hindrance in the Axis power project. The recording secretary, Georg Gruschka, was from Slovakia, which had been an ally of the Axis since the creation of the state in 1939. The Slovakian administration created a stamp commemorating the congress. The appointments of the presiding individuals of the postal services committee explain the rather smooth course of the sessions.

The personnel roster of the committee preparing the union agreement also appears to have been made to avoid difficulties. The president of the committee, Károly von Forster, was the head of the Hungarian delegation. Hungary had been an ally of Germany since 1938, as the National Socialists helped them regain territories they had lost after the First World War, and the country joined the Axis pact in 1940. However, von Forster was also an ally concerning the technocratic aspects of the project. He had been in favour of the creation of a European postal union in the 1930s and continued to support the EPTU in 1944. He was familiar with international postal services, as he had taken part in previous UPU congresses. He was a trained jurist and had started his career in postal services in 1909. In 1914, he worked for the Department of International Affairs before the war began. He was imprisoned by Russian soldiers and returned to Budapest as a decorated war veteran in 1918 and resumed his pre-war position. He was promoted during the 1920s and 1930s, eventually leading the Department of International Affairs and becoming the Head of Postal Services. In 1940, he

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des Herrn Generaldirektors Willem van der Vegte der niederländischen Staatspost für die Abschlussvollsitzung des Europäischen Postkongresses im Kongreßhaus am Samstag, den 24. Oktober 1942.

717 Writer’s own translation: “Glücklicherweise wird es stets deutlicher, welchen Ausgang der große Streit nehmen wird”, *ibid.*

was put in charge of organising the enlargement of the Hungarian PTT system into the newly annexed territories. He had several other positions related to postal services.<sup>718</sup> He had accumulated over 24 years of experience in international postal services at the time that he participated in the congress in 1942. The Axis powers had, thus, put the presidency of the committee in the hands of an experienced proponent of a European postal union who represented the postal administration of an allied country that depended, in particular, on Germany.

There is little information on the Danish delegate, Krog. The Danish government had been practising an appeasement policy, hoping that the Germans would not treat Denmark as poorly as other countries if the Danish government made as many concessions as possible. The Danish PTT administration anticipated economic benefits from the agreement. Krog could, thus, be expected to act to help ensure smooth negotiations, eventually leading to the desired outcome. Pissomoff was the head of the Bulgarian delegation and led the technical department of the Bulgarian PTT administration.<sup>719</sup> He had written an article in the series on European PTT initiated by *Reichspostminister* Ohnesorge, as described above.<sup>720</sup> It can be assumed that Pissomoff also supported the general direction of the envisioned postal union.

With all these appointments, the duties of the president by seniority, Albrecht, were fulfilled, and he gave the chair over to Ohnesorge and Host-Venturi. Ohnesorge thanked him and the delegates for the election and continued with the final task of the session: the assembly had to approve the rules of procedure. These rules were prepared by the German *Reichspost* and had been sent to the other PTT administrations beforehand, as mentioned above. Therefore, the Bulgarian delegate, Pissomoff, proposed putting all the rules to a vote at once instead of considering each one separately. This proposition was unanimously accepted.<sup>721</sup>

The proposed rules of procedure contained 14 articles determining different issues, including the purpose of the congress, the installation of a congress office, voting rules and the official languages of the congress. The

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718 Ibolya, Bartók: Dr. Forster Károly beszámolója az 1939. évi postakongresszusról, in: Postai és Távközlési Múzeumi Alapítvány (Ed.): *Évkönyve 2002*. Budapest 2003, p. 118-137, p. 118-121 (This is the only biographical information found. The article appears sometimes questionable in the interpretation but the general information seems to be trustworthy).

719 Europäischer Postkongress, p. 52.

720 See section The European Postal and Telecommunications Union as an Axis project.

721 Europäischer Postkongress, p. 28-30.

following aspect of the rules seems important. The rules of procedure stated that the congress was to discuss the creation of a union,<sup>722</sup> as if there was a possibility that the EPTU would not have been founded during this congress. This openness appears purely tactical, as the overall impression is that the congress was summoned to decide how, rather than whether, a European postal union was to be created. It was stipulated that the results of the committees were provisional and had to be approved by the general assembly.<sup>723</sup> This is important for how standards were set. Although it appears to be a formality that the assembly would agree to the standards set within the committees, it is noteworthy that the last word was with the heads of delegations in the general assembly and not with the experts in the committees. The standard-setting, thus, went through a two-step process at least, and its national implementation was an additional step.

The rules regulated the creation of the abovementioned six committees, who could be part of the committees and that the committees themselves could create sub-committees to facilitate and accelerate their work. Voting was to be the last resort if no common solution could be found during the discussion. If no consensus could be reached, a simple majority decided. With a tied vote, the committee president's voice was the decisive one.<sup>724</sup> This decision-making procedure, with its focus on rational consensus, represented a continuity in international postal services cooperation. The coordination of standards would be discussed until everyone agreed, which also guaranteed fewer negotiations in the general assembly. The following articles (12 to 14) determined that the sessions were recorded as a results report that gave a summary of the negotiations. Any information regarding the congress could only be sent to the press if the presidents of the congress, Host-Venturi and Ohnesorge, approved.<sup>725</sup> This gave the Axis powers the possibility of steering the coverage of the congress.

However, the most interesting article concerned the languages of the congress. The German draft stated, 'The official language of the congress is German. During the first general assembly, the congress will decide which other languages are admitted as additional official languages'.<sup>726</sup> The Italian delegation moved to add Italian to the official languages of the congress –

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722 Ibid., p. 22.

723 Ibid., p. 33.

724 Ibid., p. 34.

725 Ibid., p. 34-35.

726 Writer's own translation: "Die Verhandlungssprache auf der Tagung ist die deutsche Sprache. In der ersten Vollsitzung wird die Tagung beschließen, welche Sprachen als Verhandlungssprachen noch zugelassen sind", *ibid.*, p. 35.

a proposition that the Slovakian delegate, Gruschka, countered. He argued that a second official language would not lead to the facilitation of European postal services, but would only make the negotiations and the work of the office more difficult. He stated that German would be so commonly understood there was no need for another official language. He introduced a motion to leave the article as proposed. The minister Ohnesorge interjected, saying these worries did not appear serious to him and that a second language would promote a smoother congress: 'I support the motion of the Italian delegation for the reason that two friends have initiated this matter'.<sup>727</sup> With this, he saw the Slovakian counter-motion overruled and asked for any further contradictions, otherwise, the Italian motion would be accepted. As no other delegation raised objections, the new formulation of the last article stated that both German and Italian were the official languages, and that statements in one language would immediately be translated into the other. If any delegate wanted to use another language, they would have to provide their own translation. The minutes had to be drawn up in German and Italian.<sup>728</sup>

It is interesting to trace how this organisational standard was set. The *Reichspost* wanted to impose German as the official language and prioritised this over the notion of two equal partners. Within the German Foreign Ministry, the use of two official languages was described as an unwanted but necessary precedent.<sup>729</sup> Martius stated in his summary of a report from the congress to the Secretary of State of the German Foreign Ministry that this change in language provisions was the only change of importance that occurred during the entire congress, and that the Foreign Ministry could not complain about it from a parity perspective.<sup>730</sup> That this discussion occurred in this committee meeting at all is surprising insofar as the *Reichspost* should have been well aware of the importance of having both languages as the official ones, as the topic had come up in the German-Italian negotiations described in the previous part. It can, thus, be said that the German *Reichspost* appears to have attempted to express its hegemonic status via a language agreement to the detriment of Italian 'friends', as Ohnesorge put it. It remains questionable whether the German representatives saw the Italian delegates as their equals.

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727 Writer's own translation: "Ich unterstütze den Antrag der italienischen Delegation aus dem Grunde, weil eben zwei Freunde diese Sache angeregt haben", *ibid.*, p. 30.

728 *Ibid.*, p. 40.

729 Politisches Archiv, Berlin, R106301, Gaus an Reichsaußenminister, 29.09.1942.

730 Politisches Archiv, Berlin, R106301, Martius an Staatssekretär, 20.10.1942.

This was the context in which further standardisation took place. For this work, the standardisation processes within the committee preparing the union agreement and the postal services agreement are important. The committee working on the subsequently adopted EPTU agreement had its session first, and this session is, therefore, analysed first.

*Chapter II: Building a post, telegraphy and telecommunications organisation for the 'New Europe' and defining the standards of the 'New Postal Europe': Old wine in new bottles?*

The union agreement determined the general frame of the EPTU. The standards decided within this agreement are largely organisational. They were discussed over three and a half days in the 40-member committee. While Albania would become a member administration of the union, there was no Albanian delegate on the committee. Spain, however, participated with five delegates, while the other observer delegations, namely Switzerland, Turkey and the Vatican, sent no delegates to the committee. The Spanish interest could have stemmed from the experience of the Pan-American Postal Union and the interest in postal provisions that could apply to its neighbour, France, at some point. Otherwise, there is little explanation as to why Spain would have as many delegates on the committee as Germany, Denmark and Croatia and even more than Italy. This chapter traces the negotiations to better understand the standardisation process.

*The organisation of the European Postal and Telecommunications Union between continuities and discontinuities with the Universal Postal Union*

On day one of the committee's sessions, the president, von Forster, started with a rather lengthy speech in which he highlighted the legacy of the UPU and the ITU and the successes of international technocratic cooperation. He then mentioned that the UPU Convention included provisions for the establishment of restricted unions and that some already existed. Furthermore, von Forster noted that, directly after the First World War, in 1927 and in 1931, efforts were made towards more European harmonisation in the areas of postal services and creating a European postal union with Italy, the Netherlands and the International Chamber of Commerce. All these attempts symbolised the need for a European postal union in his eyes. In particular, he posited that air mail promised a united Europe. A European postal union,



thus, had the task of lowering tariffs and facilitating provisions. Von Forster also mentioned that the standards implemented within a European postal union could be transferred to international unions. He finished his speech by expressing loyalty to the international unions but also ‘to the tasks our highly developed postal services and telecommunications imperatively stipulate for us’.<sup>731</sup> According to the minutes, his speech was followed by substantial applause.<sup>732</sup> It is not surprising that von Forster, a proponent of a European postal union during the interwar period, mentioned previous attempts, even though the Germans and Italians avoided doing so. However, von Forster omitted mention of the attempt within the Briand Plan. This omission was presumably because the French postal administration was not present, and the Germans would not have taken it well had he mentioned French involvement. The constant references to the international unions bear witness to a strong sense of belonging to a special technocratic community, but transferring European accomplishments to the international union also shows a certain intent to install European dominance in the organisations. After his speech, the work on the agreement began.

Two drafts were available to the committee, one from the German *Reichspost*, which had been sent to the administrations beforehand, and the changes proposed by the Italian administration. Instead of presenting the German drafts, the German representative asked the other delegates to voice criticisms directly to respond to them quickly. The Norwegian representative wanted to discuss the possibility of two unions, one for postal services and one for telecommunications. In Norway, these PTT branches had not been merged into one administration but remained separate. The representative argued this separation was the norm in international services and was due to postal services using existing infrastructures, such as rail and waterways, while telecommunications built their own networks. However, the Norwegian delegation would only introduce a motion if other representatives shared this opinion. The president led a round of general statements by the administrations, who all declared themselves in favour of creating a union. Only the Croatian administration also preferred two agreements. After that, the German representative explained how the initiative came about and noted that the directors of the international union understood the plans. This report was followed by a short break, after which the Croatian delegate

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731 Writer’s own translation: “den Aufgaben, die uns unser hochentwickeltes europäisches Post- und Fernmeldewesen gebieterisch vorschreibt”, Europäischer Postkongress, p. 72.

732 Ibid., p. 71-72.

corrected his previous statement and declared his approval of one agreement. Since no one else supported its proposal, the Norwegian representative agreed to one agreement. This decision was met with applause, and the president thanked the delegation for this ‘nice gesture’.<sup>733</sup> He proposed a title change of the agreement from ‘preliminary protocol’<sup>734</sup> to ‘agreement’.<sup>735</sup> The Italian delegation preferred ‘preliminary agreement’<sup>736</sup> but withdrew that request when the president said that the administration or higher authorities would have to approve the agreement. Next, there was a separate discussion that only Hungary, Romania, Italy and Croatia participated in regarding the formulation expressing the need for approval that the PTT administrations would still have to obtain from their governments. The formula agreed upon was ‘with the reservation of approval’. After a pause, the title ‘Agreement on the European Postal and Telecommunications Union’ was adopted. Even though the prologue from the German and Italian drafts differed – the Italian draft suggested mentioning the articles in the ITU and UPU Convention that allowed for restricted unions – the German version was used without discussion.

Before discussing the negotiation of the other articles, it is important to give a short overview of the topics they addressed (Table 8).

Article	Content
1	Definition of the EPTU
2	Regulations
3	Union congresses
4	Permanent committees
5	Office of the EPTU
6	Arbitration
7	Accession to the EPTU
8	Withdrawal from the EPTU
9	Application UPU and ITU conventions
10	Entry into force of the agreement
11	Validity of the texts

Table 8: Article Contents

733 Writer’s own translation: “schöne Geste”, *ibid.*, p. 74.

734 Writer’s own translation: “Vorläufiges Protokoll”, *ibid.*

735 Writer’s own translation: “Übereinkommen”, *ibid.*

736 Writer’s own translation: “Vorläufiges Übereinkommen”, *ibid.*

Regarding Article 1 of the EPTU agreement, the two propositions of the Italian delegation were not to name the union simply ‘European Postal Union’, as was designated in the German draft, but to change the name to ‘European Postal and Telecommunications Union’ because the two branches were so different. Like the preceding issues, this difference was not discussed further, leading to the conclusion that the Italian and German delegations might have discussed some issues beforehand. Alternatively, the German administration may not have wanted to have long discussions about this change. As the Swiss delegate Bonjour points out in his report, the *Reichspost* – which only has postal services in its name but covered all PTT services – would have preferred an analogical naming of the union. Bonjour notes, ‘the concession made is of some importance’.<sup>737</sup> The Italian side also objected to another formulation in the German draft that stipulated that the area of validity of the union would represent one PTT area. After a discussion between the two, the German side agreed to leave the passage out of the agreement.<sup>738</sup> The final version of Article 1 affirmed the will of the administrations to build the EPTU to facilitate and perfect their mutual services.

The two delegations again had to discuss Article 2 but apparently could not find a solution. The president suggested that the two delegations reach agreement with his help outside the official session. The Italian changes again foresaw the inclusion of a reference to the ITU and UPU Convention to make sure that changes would only be made within their limits. This was to guarantee continuity in the mutual services with countries outside of the union. The separate discussion resulted in the Italian proposal not being adopted. The Dutch delegation asked for a change in the expression ‘European area’ to ‘union area’, which was adopted.<sup>739</sup>

There was little discussion on the changes to Articles 3 and 4, as the German delegation supported the Italian changes. This holds true especially for the language question. The Italian delegation suggested determining the official languages in the agreement, and the Dutch delegation thought this belonged in the rules of procedure. After a supportive statement by the German delegation, the committee agreed to make German and Italian the two official languages of the union. Finally, Article 3 also stipulated that the

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737 Writer’s own translation: “la concession faite revêt une certaine importance”, PTT Archiv, Bern, P-00C\_0108\_01, Rapport Congrès postal européen de Vienne, 12.11.1942, p. 6.

738 Europäischer Postkongress, p. 76.

739 Ibid.

congress would decide when and where to meet next – which was also a common procedure within the global unions.<sup>740</sup>

A mixed version of the German and Italian drafts was adopted for Article 5, which specified the tasks of the office of the EPTU. The new office took over tasks similar to the UPU's office, such as informing, publishing and connecting the member administrations. Concerning the costs of the union, different proposals were introduced. The committee finally decided on seven classes of payment to avoid disadvantaging the smaller countries. The payment by classes was the same principle used in the UPU, while the division of classes was different. Afterwards, the language question came up again but was quickly solved by a) ignoring the Norwegian statement that an office using two languages might be difficult and b) that the agreement would not determine which languages were to be used in the bilateral relations between the administrations. The German proposal to make Vienna the official site of the union's office was accepted and integrated into Article 5.<sup>741</sup>

Articles 6 and 7 were agreed upon with little discussion, as they mirrored the UPU's provisions. In order to enter the union, an administration (European or neighbouring) had to send the declaration to the union office, which would then inform the other member administrations. Exiting the union (Article 8) was to be conducted in the same way. The Italian administration wanted to introduce an Article 8 that declared the UPU and ITU conventions valid where this agreement did not address them (first paragraph) and that member administrations could still make bilateral agreements (second paragraph). The German administration declared this provision superfluous, as the agreement already built on these conventions, and it noted that the second paragraph was covered under these same conventions. While the German administration argued this could endanger the newly founded European unity, the Italian administration stated this proposal would support unity. In the end, the administrations agreed to accept the first paragraph as the new Article 9 and omitted the second one. Articles 10 and 11 were adopted with minor changes; for instance, the official document of the EPTU would be archived not by the office, but by the German postal administration. In the last session of the committee, only editorial changes were discussed and accepted.<sup>742</sup>

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740 Ibid.

741 Ibid., p. 78-80.

742 Ibid., p. 84-86.

The results of the committee session were confirmed and signed in the third plenary session of the congress on 19 October 1942. *Reichspostminister* Ohnesorge and the president by seniority, Albrecht, gave the last speeches. Ohnesorge emphasised the importance of the newly founded union as a tool for exchange and cooperation that would lead to improvement in the European postal services. After communicating his joy regarding the choice of Vienna as the site of the new office of the EPTU, Ohnesorge addressed possible critics, stating that the union was founded because it was time and that he was sure its work would be fruitful for Europe. He also said that the union was only possible because the war had brought so many countries to one front and had disclosed the ‘European community of fate’<sup>743</sup>, which led him to the conclusion that nothing in history – including the ongoing war – happened in vain. His speech ended by loosely quoting a part of Albrecht’s opening speech:

That it [the EPTU] would go a part of the way to a reconstruction of Europe and contribute to waking, strengthening and revealing the feeling of solidarity between the peoples of the contracting states. May it be a good sign for a new, happier and better Europe.<sup>744</sup>

Albrecht followed with similar hopes for the new union, noting his wish that more administrations would join. The final issue of the plenary session was a declaration proposed by the Hungarian delegate von Forster. This declaration expressed the will of the congress that the administrations would propose that their governments turn the administrative agreement into a state treaty. The declaration was accepted unanimously.<sup>745</sup> The last plenary session attempted to situate the union within the larger context of the war, but more important, into the prospect of a future Europe, in which it would be part of the peace-building efforts through connecting peoples. The final declaration underlined the will of the administrations to leave the purely technocratic world and be part of higher-level policy-making.

This analysis of the sessions shows that the principal actors in setting the organisational standards were Germany and Italy. The Hungarian delegate, von Forster, was the only one whose role appears to have been almost as

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743 Writer’s own translation: “Europäische Schicksalsgemeinschaft”, *ibid.*, p. 92.

744 Writer’s own translation: “Daß es ein Stück des Weges sei im Wiederaufbau Europas und mit dazu beitrage, das Zusammengehörigkeitsgefühl zwischen den Völkern der Vertragsländer zu erwecken, zu stärken und kundzutun. Möge es ein günstiges Vorzeichen sein für ein neues, glücklicheres und besseres Europa”, *ibid.*, p. 92-94.

745 *Ibid.*, p. 94-96.

important. Italy and Germany did not need to have a representative in the chairing of the committee; they were the leading figures anyway, and many Italian motions were accepted. Their cooperation appears rather conflictual. It is surprising that the two ‘friends’, as Ohnesorge called them, did not coordinate to propose a common draft. Instead, they let a situation arise in which they needed to discuss differences in front of the delegates from the other administrations regarding each article. The two partners appeared out of step. On multiple occasions, the Italian administration seemed to introduce changes that created security for them, such as the frequent references to the international unions and the determination of official languages in the agreement. It seems as though only the written word would convince the Italian side of the German *Reichspost*'s loyalty towards the unions. The Italian delegation was not allowed to sign the agreement definitively and, based on the behaviour of the Foreign Ministry before this congress, there is a possibility that integrating languages as a clear sign of equality between the partners needed to be in the agreement for it to be approved. Having to take all these precautions does not evidence much trust between the Axis partners.

The standards set are mainly similar to those of the global unions, with the major exceptions of the official languages. The *Reichspost* adhered to a central German foreign policy aim, the revision of the international order stipulated by the Versailles treaty. These revisionist aims, especially towards France, are reflected here. As mentioned above, the *Reichspost* aimed at installing German as the general language in Europe PTT cooperation. Both the German and the Italian administrations could manifest their hegemonic status through their respective national language being the official language of the union. This of course, was not entirely to the liking of the *Reichspost* but had to be accepted in order for the EPTU to come into existence.

It is noteworthy that the other delegations had little to say; the only major proposal for change came from Norway and was more or less quickly shut down. All other input appears rather minor. In three committee sessions, no aspect of the agreement needed to be put to a vote, which attests to a high level of consensus between the participating administrations. This may not be due to the power hierarchies and the war situation; it could also result from the German *Reichspost*'s intense preparation, which sought to discern differences in opinion as early as possible. This makes the lack of agreement with the Italian administration mentioned above all the more atypical.

The fact that six of 13 delegations had to gain the approval of their governments meant that seven could set standards definitively. That only just

over half of the administrations could give approval is even more significant because one of these administrations was Italian, and this project was presented as an Axis initiative. Fittingly, the other administrations that signed with reservations were, except for Hungary, all linked to Italy. The *Reichspost* had asked the administrations to obtain the approval of their governments beforehand where possible.<sup>746</sup> This request was linked to the desire to present a result that was – on a formal level – as unified as possible. However, not all administrations complied with this request. Although a union was founded on 19 October 1942, Italy and the other administrations were not yet officially members, even if the newspapers reported that they were. At this point, horizontal standardisation and, therefore, the European postal area included only seven countries.

### *The 'New Postal Europe' as a 'German Postal Europe'?*

Having set these organisational standards, the work of the specialist committees could begin. In the committee for postal services, all participating administrations (except the Vatican) had delegates, with a total of 31. In contrast to the committee working on the union agreement, the delegates from Spain and Switzerland used their right to speak in this more specialised committee. The committee had received a draft for the regulations, the final transcript and nine proposals from Germany and five from Italy.<sup>747</sup> Aspects of the proposals, such as the tariffs and the abolition of the transit charge, were also included in the draft of the regulations and discussed during the sessions. However, the committee deferred these proposals to a later date and, in the four sessions from 16 until 22 October 1942, focussed on the regulations and the final transcript. The German *Reichspost* had sent proposals for these two documents to all participating administrations. The committee was headed by the German Heinrich Poppe.

The first session addressed the two topics most important to the German *Reichspost*: new weight categories and the abolition of the transit charge. Standards regarding these two issues were to be set in the regulation. In a

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746 Rigsarkivet, København, Generaldirektoratet for Post- og Telegrafvesenet, Journalsager vedr. forholdet til udlandet (1884-1983);, I.N (1933-1974), 13078, Abschrift Postrat Dietrich an Generaldirektor, 21.08.1942.

747 The content of these proposals has been discussed in more detail in the introduction to this chapter (Part II Chapter II).

first step, the president opened the discussion on the new, larger weight categories. It quickly became clear that the five proposed categories<sup>748</sup> were uncontested. Representatives from several administrations attempted to widen the provisions to heavier letters, packages and printed materials. Notably, the Italian representative requested limiting the discussion to the proposal at hand. The statements of the administrations regarding the different proposals followed a short sub-committee session. The Finnish, Dutch, Hungarian and Slovakian representatives (all of whom had proposed widening the range of sending covered by the regulations), the Italian delegate and the German president took part in this sub-committee session. The president proposed transferring the question of weight categories for letters heavier than 1,000 g to the permanent committee. The committee unanimously agreed to the proposed weight categories and the transfer.<sup>749</sup>

The next topic of discussion was the tariffs accorded to these weight categories. The German representative explained that the German *Reichspost* and the partners with whom they had negotiated bilateral agreements shared the view that a simple reduction of the UPU tariffs would not lead to the desired harmonisation. Therefore, the proposal was that all administrations apply the equivalents to the German domestic tariffs in the reciprocal postal relations. In response to the clarifications, the Italian delegation noted that it agreed to the German proposal, but that a harmonisation of the respective national inland tariffs in a similar way was out of the question. The (German) president answered these tariffs were not up for debate during this congress. The Danish delegate, Arne Krog, proposed introducing the German domestic tariffs (regardless of possible later changes) to limit the deviation of the equivalents of these tariffs under the UPU Convention and to avoid forcing any administration to introduce lower tariffs in European postal services than in its domestic services.<sup>750</sup>

The German, Dutch, Finnish and Norwegian delegations agreed to the Danish proposal, but the Italian delegation questioned whether the option to deviate was necessary, and the Hungarian delegation worried that no administration could foresee the financial consequences of the envisioned tariffs, as the question of transit charges and the costs for air mail had not yet been discussed. The Italian delegation judged these worries unnecessary because the total costs would be relatively low.<sup>751</sup> The president added that,

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748 0-20 g, 20-100 g, 100-250 g, 250 g-500 g, and 500-1,000 g.

749 Europäischer Postkongress, p. 120-122.

750 Ibid. pp. 120-124.

751 This statement is surprising as the costs of abolishing the transit charge, e.g., were high.



regardless, Germany would apply the German domestic tariffs to European postal services and abolish the transit charge. Norway asked how to calculate the equivalents, a question which was left open. The Danish delegate proposed postponing the discussion about tariffs and following the Hungarian delegate by deliberating on the proposal concerning the transit charge first. The committee supported this proposition. The Italian delegation started by explaining that it did not agree to abolishing the transit charge<sup>752</sup> but was now willing – despite its doubts – to forego the transit charges if the other countries would do so. This statement appears to have shortened the discussion considerably, as the majority of the other delegations spoke in favour of the German proposal. The Danish delegate added that abolishing the sea transit charges was desirable, too. This aspect was quickly abandoned due to objections from the Italian delegation and a remark from the president to focus the discussion on the issue at hand. In the end, only the Croatian and the Italian delegations did not agree to abolish the land transit charges. The Croatian delegation explained that, for financial reasons, it could only reduce the transit charges by 50%. When asked by the president, the Spanish observers declared they did not have the authority to discuss this question, but that it would be easier for the Spanish delegation to agree to such a proposal if France and Belgium joined the union.<sup>753</sup>

Based on the results of the first session, the second session began with a return to the discussion of the exact level of the tariffs for the new weight categories for letters. Three lines of discussion can be detected. First, the question was how to set the limits for the option to deviate from the equivalents of the German domestic tariffs. While Italy had thought it unnecessary in the first session, it now agreed to the general necessity. Two proposals were on the table, one from Denmark (40% up, 20% down) and one from Hungary (50% up, 30% down). An adapted Hungarian proposal (50% up, 25% down) was adopted. Second, the remarks on how to make the implementation of the standards decided upon feasible can be summarised as one line of discussion. Several administrations expressed concern that they could not introduce the new tariffs in the manner proposed. The Hungarian delegation mentioned that the integration into the UPU's system was difficult because the percentage ratio between the individual rates for letters and postcards differed significantly from the system within the UPU. The Hungarian delegation also suggested that administrations should be allowed to postpone the introduction of the new tariffs from 1 April 1943 to 1 April

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752 *Europäischer Postkongress*, p. 126.

753 *Ibid.*, p. 124-126.

1944. This was not really a new proposal, as the final transcript already foresaw this. The Croatian delegation explained that if it adopted the tariffs as proposed for European postal services, they would be lower than the Croatian domestic tariffs. The delegation stated that it could apply the tariffs determined in the Croatian-German agreement and asked for this exception to be part of the final transcript. The Romanian delegation shared the same concerns. Third, the question of the reference currency came up and was first mentioned by the Romanian delegation.<sup>754</sup>

Unfortunately, the protocol left out the explanation of why the delegation preferred the Gold franc. The second delegation to raise the issue was the Croatian representatives, who stated that the Croatian currency was built on gold. In response to both queries, the president and the Hungarian delegation reacted with different arguments. The president said that setting the Gold franc as the reference currency would contradict the Romanian-German agreement and that the German delegation would insist on the basic tariffs in *Reichsmark*. He added that no problems should arise from this new reference currency because every European country had a fixed exchange rate to the *Reichsmark*. If the exchange rate changed, Croatia would be allowed to adapt the tariffs. The president and the Hungarian delegation emphasised that the currency discussion had already been difficult during the congress in Buenos Aires, showing that the Gold franc would not resolve all issues. Hungary noted that, for the European postal services, a contemporary currency would be the most useful, and that the German proposition was ‘the most appropriate’.<sup>755</sup> Denmark tried to avoid the discussion by stating that the committee had already agreed that the basic tariffs would be set in *Reichsmark*. The session thus ended with an agreement on the deviation limits and an unspoken agreement on the *Reichsmark* as the reference currency.<sup>756</sup>

Four hours later, the third session began. Its task was to finalise the regulations and the final transcripts. The results of the discussions meant that the regulations for the postal services were agreed upon in the version that the *Reichspost* had proposed. As the president saw an agreement on the *Reichsmark* as reference currency, the only question left to discuss, according to him, was the date of the new tariffs’ implementation. However, the session during which this three-article regulation was discussed lasted almost two and a half hours – although the Italian delegation declared at the outset that it had no authority to agree to the abolition of the transit charges.

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754 Ibid., p. 128-130.

755 Writer’s own translation: “am zweckmäßigsten”, *ibid.*, p. 130.

756 *Ibid.*, p. 130-132.

Article 1 of the regulations stipulated this abolition and Albanian doubts regarding the implementation due to expected higher transport costs were ruled out by the president and the Hungarian delegation so that the Albanian delegation could refrain from adding a country-specific reservation to the final transcript. The Romanian delegation raised another point. If a new administration joined the agreement but did not agree to abolish the transit charge, Romania would also have to forego the transit charge in the services with that country. The president and the Hungarian delegation noted that a country could only join if it agreed to all the articles of the regulations. Romania wanted the country-specific regulations due to the fact that Croatia had only approved lowering the transit charge by 50%. When the Italian delegation argued that Romania could raise the tariffs in its postal relations with Croatia, it was met with opposition from the Dutch, Danish, Slovakian, Norwegian and Hungarian delegations, and the presidents, who stressed that the tariffs for the letters and the postcards would have to be the same in the services with all union members. After this discussion, Article 1 was decided on in the proposed version.<sup>757</sup>

The deliberation around Article 2 of the regulations, 'Basic tariffs for letters and postcards', took an unexpected turn when the Italian delegation asked that, in addition to the basic tariffs in *Reichsmark*, the equivalents in *Lira*, the Italian currency, should be added to the regulations. The counter-arguments of the Danish, Norwegian and Hungarian delegations centred around the unsuitability of the proposal because the exchange rate for the *Reichsmark* and the *Lira* varied, which would mean that the tariffs would not be set uniformly. However, the Italian delegation insisted on this point. The president joined the other delegations in rejecting the Italian demand but suggested that the Italian delegation content itself with a remark in the session's protocol. The issue had to be postponed, as the Italian delegation did not have the authority to make a final decision. Subsequently, the provision that the administrations would report their equivalent tariffs to the office of the EPTU was discussed, as the relation to the UPU office in Bern and the competences of the EPTU office were not clear. The Dutch delegation did not consider it suitable for the EPTU office to be responsible for the publication of the new tariffs, as the UPU office could do so. The Hungarian delegation raised doubts that the office could not check the tariffs and ask the administrations for changes if necessary, as the Swiss administration did with the UPU. The Danish delegation proposed giving that task to the *Reichspostministerium*, while the president remarked there had not

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757 Ibid., p. 134-138.

been a plan for the office to take on that duty. After Italy declared it would approve the proposed version, the president declared that Germany would do the same, which led to the committee members agreeing on the second Article – though the currency question remained open.<sup>758</sup>

Last, the committee agreed to Article 3 of the regulations concerning the entry into force, even though Italy remarked that the possible postponing (determined in the final transcript) of the implementation until April 1944 did not appear useful. On the contrary, the new tariffs should be introduced as quickly as possible. The Hungarian delegation and the president also expressed their wish for a swift implementation of the new standards, but commented that the provision would not prevent any administration from doing so.<sup>759</sup>

The administrations quickly agreed on the final transcript. Article 1 (deviation from the basic tariffs) and 2 (there was no obligation to introduce lower tariffs in European than in domestic postal services) had already been discussed and adopted without dissent. The same applies to Article 3 (postponing the entry into force). The reservation of the Croatian delegation was not yet included, as the delegation could not make the final decisions without permission from the government.<sup>760</sup>

The fourth and last session of the committee revolved around the open questions described and the common motion of the three committees<sup>761</sup> to convert them into permanent committees of the EPTU. Article 4 of the EPTU agreement allowed for such permanent committees. The outstanding issues were resolved quickly. The Italian delegation no longer insisted on the *Lira* being equated to the *Reichsmark* in the regulations and contented itself with a remark in the minutes of the committee sessions that the relation between the tariffs was that 1 *Lira* was equal to 12 *Reichspfennig*. The Romanian delegation similarly asked for the inclusion of its decision to not abolish the transit charge for letters in the postal relations with countries who also did not agree to the abolition. Regarding the Croatian reservations, the president suggested adding an article to the final transcript that the option for the Croatian administration to sign the regulations would remain open until 1 April 1943. This solution would be better than a more detailed addition, as it could be expected that the Croatian government would agree to it. Last, the motion regarding building permanent committees was briefly discussed. It determined how the permanent committees were established,

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758 Ibid., p. 138-140.

759 Ibid., p. 140.

760 Ibid.

761 Postal services, telecommunications and telecommunications engineering.

who could participate in them, the framework of their work and who would preside over the committees between congresses. The shape of the committees was the same as those in other technocratic unions. Following the proposal of Hungary, Denmark, the Netherlands and Norway, the motion was changed insofar as the congress would no longer determine which persons would be president, vice-president and secretary of the committees, rather, these positions would be assigned to countries. The Bulgarian delegate would have preferred to nominate persons, as this gave more chances to experts from smaller delegations. He could not convince the majority of the other delegations of his point of view. It was decided that one delegate could only represent one administration in addition to its own. The two last orders of business were the referral of the remaining proposals to the permanent postal committee and the expression of gratitude to everyone involved.<sup>762</sup>

#### *The closing session and the return of political rhetoric*

The provisions agreed upon during the committee meetings had to be confirmed in the fourth and last plenary session of the congress on 24 October 1942. First, the abovementioned motion to create three permanent committees was adopted unanimously. The same holds for the assignment of countries to the presidency, vice-presidency and secretary of the committees. For the permanent postal committee, these were Germany (presidency), Hungary (vice-presidency) and Denmark (secretary). Afterwards, the presidents of the congressional committees reported the results of their negotiations. Poppe asked that the regulations and final transcript be accepted in the reported form. The plenary assembly followed his wish unanimously and also did so in the case of the two telecommunications committees. Pession proposed that the next congress could take place in Rome in 1943, which was not put to a vote but was agreed upon unanimously due to the loud applause that Ohnesorge interpreted as assent. This decision was followed by four speeches from Ohnesorge, Pession, Albrecht and Ohnesorge again, who closed the congress. In his first speech, Ohnesorge stated that the successes of the congress had exceeded his expectations. He enumerated the achievements in postal services (one European standard tariff, abolition of the transit charge and larger weight categories) and those in telecommunications. He described the lack of agreements on packages and letters larger

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762 Ibid., p. 142-146.

than 1,000 g as a ‘blemish’<sup>763</sup> and emphasised this was outweighed by the success that the administrations had been able to ‘safeguard voluntary co-operation and create a transition period that guarantees a gradual and organisational adjustment for the PTT administrations’.<sup>764</sup> In the end, he thanked everyone involved, including thanking Risch by name. Pession and Albrecht joined him in expressing their gratitude to all participants and organisers. Pession spoke for Host-Venturi, who had already left, and also pointed to the technical agreements and to the larger context of the congress, saying it proved that the participants believed ‘in a higher destiny of the nations in a new Europe’<sup>765</sup> and that the new union was their ‘contribution to promoting the European future’.<sup>766</sup> In a shorter speech, Albrecht more or less repeated his words from the opening of the congress, including his portrayal of Ohnesorge as its initiator.<sup>767</sup> After the speeches from Pession and Albrecht, Ohnesorge stated that he felt inclined to add more thoughts. He announced an article about to be published in the *Völkische Beobachter* that he had written but also addressed the assembly on a more personal level. He noted that, with this congress, one of his dearest wishes had been fulfilled. Everyone believing in a ‘New Europe’ would share that wish:

‘I see now the era of the new Europe already rising slowly as something so wonderful, that we could not think of for so, so long, that finally the doubts, confusions and mistakes can, after 2,000 years, finally be removed (...) I am now going back to Berlin with a happy heart; I do not want to say as a European, this word is holy to us and should not be used at every opportunity, but as a man who believes with all his heart in this community of fate and will stay loyal to it.’<sup>768</sup>

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763 Writer’s own translation: “Schönheitsfehler”, *ibid.*, p. 306.

764 Writer’s own translation: “die Freiwilligkeit zu wahren und eine Übergangszeit zu schaffen, die eine allmähliche und organisatorische Umstellung für alle Post- und Fernmeldeverwaltungen gewährleistet”, *ibid.*

765 Writer’s own translation: “an eine höhere Bestimmung der Nationen im neuen Europa”, *ibid.*, p. 310.

766 Writer’s own translation: “dazu beigetragen haben, die europäische Zukunft zu fördern”, *ibid.*

767 *Ibid.*

768 Writer’s translation: “Ich sehe nun die Ära des neuen Europa schon langsam heraufsteigend als etwas so Wunderbares, das wir uns so lange, lange gar nicht denken konnten, daß endlich nach 2000 Jahren alle Zweifel, Wirnisse und Irrtümer beseitigt werden können. (...) Ich gehe nun mit frohem Herzen nach Berlin zurück; ich möchte nicht sagen als Europäer, dieses Wort ist uns heilig und soll nicht bei jeder Gelegenheit gebraucht werden, aber als ein Mann, der an diese

Here, Ohnesorge was referencing the Roman Empire, a frequent trait in National Socialist thought. He contextualised the EPTU again in the concept of the ‘New Europe’. It seems surprising that the word ‘European’ could be holy to a German National Socialist. Ohnesorge might have been playing to the audience here. The community of fate, however, corresponds to the remarks on the common fight against the Soviet Union in the first letters regarding the bilateral agreements.

The last plenary session was important on a formal level. The agreements had to be confirmed. From the perspective of technical standards and tariffs, nothing surprising happened. After the negotiations in the committees, it was unlikely that any administration would use this last plenary session to disagree with previously made decisions. The assignment of the postal committee’s position is also not necessarily surprising. The *Reichspost* kept its leading role in postal services with the presidency. The highly active Hungarian administration obtained the vice-presidency. Denmark had played a more important role than other administrations during the postal negotiations. The decision to have the secretary come from the Danish administration was nevertheless due to the next permanent postal committee meeting in Copenhagen. The three administrations would consequently have to prepare this conference. The pattern of the opening session was repeated in the speeches, with Albrecht almost repeating the same words. While technical aspects were highlighted, both Ohnesorge and Pession also put the EPTU in the context of a ‘New Europe’ to be built, thus making the project political and closing the circle on the opening speeches. This shows again that the goals of technocratic internationalism and the German and Italian aim to rule the continent did not necessarily oppose each other but could also concretise in the same goals. The real discrepancies were only visible regarding certain details. After the congress, the next step was to seek the support of the governments so that all administrations would definitively sign and the agreement, regulations and the final transcript could come into force. Additionally, news about the new organisation had to reach a broader public.

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Schicksalsgemeinschaft glaubt mit der vollen Überzeugung seines Herzens, und der ihr die Treue halten wird von ganzem Herzen”, *ibid.*, p. 312.

Chapter III: Promoting post, telegraphy and telecommunications cooperation beyond the Vienna congress

Knowledge about the standards decided upon during the congress was not supposed to stay within the circles of participating administrations but become accessible to a wider and not only professional public. This aim was made possible through different channels: the bulletin of the UPU, its journal for the other administrations, the German journals for other experts in the postal field, newspapers and stamps for a broader public.

*Informing the experts and the users of the new postal regime*

Regarding the professional audience, the number of articles appears to have decreased after the congress. Two articles were found in the *Postarchiv*. One was Bilfinger's article containing his theory that the agreement of Vienna could be seen as a state treaty.<sup>769</sup> As mentioned, this caused irritation within the Foreign Ministry. The *Reichspostminister* wrote an article for the *Deutsche Post*.<sup>770</sup> Károly von Forster wrote about the tasks of a European Postal Union in the *Auswärtige Politik*, but only in 1944. In it, he recounted the emergence of the union, its necessity and the technical tasks ahead.<sup>771</sup>

The article in the *Postarchiv* summarises the results of the congress. Nothing stands out regarding the contents presented in the author's summary of the decisions taken in Vienna. It is a highly objective summary of the progress achieved. In the beginning and the end – a familiar construction at this point – the political aspects were mentioned. The article begins by mentioning that the countries belonging to one living space were fighting together for their future amidst the separation of countries and continents due to the war. It ends with the assessment that this union could precede more European unity, much as the German-Austrian postal union had preceded German unification in 1871. It also mentions that this union would

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769 Cf. Bilfinger, Völkerrechtliche Betrachtungen.

770 Ohnesorge, Wilhelm, Der europäische Post- und Fernmeldeverein, in: *Die Deutsche Post*, v. 7.11.1942.

771 Von Forster, Karl, Die Aufgaben des europäischen Post- und Fernmeldevereins, in: Berber, Friedrich (Hrsg.), *Auswärtige Politik*, Bd. 11 (1944), Nr. 5/6, p. 352-358.



have been impossible under the ‘spirit of Versailles’.<sup>772</sup> This draws on common National Socialist propaganda and clearly puts the EPTU in the context of the ‘New Europe’. The priorities in this article mirror those in the articles before the congress: a longer presentation of technocratic advantages and advances framed by political aspects. These two areas were never mixed in the articles. Rather, the authors cautiously separated them, duplicating the strategy of project presentation used within the German *Reichspost*.<sup>773</sup> This approach is also true for the articles in the civilian press.

In addition to the PTT experts, there was also interest in communicating the creation of the union to a wider, civilian public, not just from a ‘New Europe’ propaganda point of view, but also from a service perspective. After all, the union meant that sending letters and postcards to other countries became much cheaper and easier. Companies might have benefitted from the new rules, and access to telecommunications became increasingly restricted – especially towards other countries. There were two main channels to reach this audience: the press and stamps.

The news of the foundation of the EPTU appeared in several newspapers in different countries. Fortunately, the Swiss PTT administration built an extensive collection of mainly German published articles, which give insight into the information circulated to the public. As the congress was in Vienna, the German *Reichspost*, in the person of the president of the congress, *Reichspostminister* Ohnesorge, had control over the information it gave to the press.<sup>774</sup> The press in Germany was ‘gleichgeschaltet’.<sup>775</sup> It is not surprising that the majority of German articles are similar, which is why an overview is given here before discussing certain articles in detail. The Swiss archives document that the *Frankfurter Zeitung* and the *Völkische Beobachter* reported on the congress almost daily. Unsurprisingly, the newspapers in Vienna showed great interest in the congress. The majority of newspapers did not comment on the union but reported the results.<sup>776</sup> This characterisation also holds for the two articles published in the Danish

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772 Writer’s own translation: “Geist von Versailles”, Ohne Verfasser, Der erste Europäische Postkongreß und seine Ergebnisse, in: *Postarchiv*, Bd. 70 (1941/42), p. 468-503, p. 502.

773 Ohne Verfasser, Der erste Europäische Postkongreß und seine Ergebnisse, in: *Postarchiv*, Bd. 70 (1941/42), p. 468-503.

774 Europäischer Postkongress, p. 38.

775 The contents of newspapers were synchronised and the freedom of the press was abolished.

776 Cf. PTT Archiv, Bern, P-00C\_0108\_01, Pressekommentare zum Europäischen Postkongress.

newspaper *Nationaltidende*<sup>777</sup> found during the research for this work. Even though the articles also included information on the changes in telecommunications, the sections on postal services were often longer,<sup>778</sup> and the headlines in most articles only used the term ‘European Postal Union’ or something similar.<sup>779</sup> The role of the post must also be understood within the context of a telecommunications system that, because of the war, was much more limited for civilians than the postal services were.<sup>780</sup> An important number of articles also contained a summary of Ohnesorge’s opening speech, which was, as described above, not overtly political. The primary emphasis of the articles is the EPTU’s role in the reconstruction of Europe after the war, in which Germany was to play a leading role, and the dream of a letter that cost the same in all of Europe.<sup>781</sup> Some newspapers also used the occasion to praise the *Reichspost* for its work, not just in this case, but in general, and to remind readers of the German role in the history of creating postal unions, especially in the person of Heinrich von Stephan.<sup>782</sup> That the union was to prepare and work for peace, thus, found its way into the newspapers.

Minister Ohnesorge also wrote an article himself that was published by the *Völkischer Beobachter* and the *Westdeutscher Beobachter*<sup>783</sup>. In it, he highlighted the same points as in his speeches,<sup>784</sup> which the newspapers also captured. In addition to the statement that the union was an old idea that could not be implemented due to the political conflicts<sup>785</sup> in Europe before the war, only one sentence stands out:

Now that the string between the old and the new world is torn, and the universal postal convention is only a fragment or – when we underline the

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- 777 Rigsarkivet, København, Udenrigsministeriet, 1909-1945 Gruppenordene sager, 92.C.1-D.6, C.9, *Nationaltidende*, 20.10.1942 and 26.10.1942.
- 778 Cf. PTT Archiv, Bern, P-00C\_0108\_01, Pressekommentare zum Europäischen Postkongress.
- 779 Writer’s translation: “Europäischer Postverein”, *ibid.*
- 780 Even the delegates to the congress needed special permission to send international telegrams.
- 781 Cf. PTT Archiv, Bern, P-00C\_0108\_01, *Völkischer Beobachter*, 14.10.1942, *Frankfurter Zeitung*, 20.10.1942.
- 782 Cf. PTT Archiv, Bern, P-00C\_0108\_01, *Nationalzeitung Essen*, 22.10.1942.
- 783 PTT Archiv, Bern, P-00C\_0108\_01, *Westdeutscher Beobachter*, 14.12.1942.
- 784 Such as that the EPTU constituted an important point in European PTT history, underlined the feeling of togetherness between the European peoples, continued the legacy of Heinrich von Stephan, and was a union for a future, peaceful Europe.
- 785 An idea which was repeated by a member of the Reichspost, Schollwoeck, who wrote the exact same sentence in his article in the *Nationalzeitung Essen*.

practice – a matter of habit (...), what has been a necessity for a long time could become reality.<sup>786</sup>

In the missing part of the quote, Ohnesorge repeats that the war had brought European peoples together in a common front. This sentence is important because it conflicts with the general representation of the union until this point. During the congress and its preparation, integrating the EPTU was emphasised often, while the UPU is described here as a relic of the past. This again shows how a different audience changed the interpretation and presentation of the EPTU.

Reporting on the congress in Germany entailed propaganda, but not to the extent one might have imagined. The project was also not tied to any grand plans Hitler had for the future of Europe. Instead, much simple information is given – sometimes going as far as comparing prices between the situation before and after. The German *Reichspost* is shown as an administration leading the way to a new postal Europe, one in which Europe could be seen as one postal area. Integrating the congress and the EPTU into the rhetoric around the ‘New Europe’ was achieved. However, the ‘New Europe’ was not connected with feelings of unity among European peoples or similar concepts, but with German leadership in Europe. The notion of German leadership contrasts with the rhetoric of common purpose within the epistemic community of PTT experts that Ohnesorge and Host-Venturi also forwarded with their speeches during the congress – a sentiment that was apparently not supposed to be transferred to the German public.

### *The view on the European Postal and Telecommunications Union from the outside*

In addition to the German press, domestic and abroad, the newspapers in Switzerland, for example, also reported on the congress. They took interest in the Swedish position<sup>787</sup> because Sweden was, along with Switzerland, the other neutral country. The articles available all rejected the union more

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786 Writer’s own translation: “Jetzt, da das Band zwischen der alten und der neuen Welt zerrissen und der Weltpostvertrag nur noch ein Bruchstück oder – wenn wir die Praxis betonen – Gewohnheitssache geblieben ist (...), konnte Wirklichkeit werden, was längst Notwendigkeit war”, PTT Archiv, Bern, P-00C\_0108\_01, *Völkischer Beobachter*, undated.

787 PTT Archiv, Bern, P-00C\_0108\_01, *Luzerner Neuste Nachrichten*, 17.09.1942; *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* 06.09.1942.

or less directly. The *Luzerner Neue Nachrichten* talked of ‘postal Gleichschaltungen’,<sup>788</sup> and the *Avantguardia Lugano* noted that the new organisation was a rival to the UPU.<sup>789</sup> The *Volksrecht Zürich* directly declared that Switzerland should not join a union created during a war and there were larger current and future issues than the state of European postal services.<sup>790</sup> The already-mentioned *Arbeiter Zeitung Basel* described the negotiations as dangerous, fearing that Germany might use them to control the occupied countries even further.<sup>791</sup> The Swiss press thus emphasised the political aspects of the union and Switzerland’s role as a neutral country. The actual standards set were of lesser interest, and the reporters did not share Bonjour’s assessment that Switzerland had to eventually join the union or at least adopt its provisions. In Sweden, harsh criticism of Germany appeared in the *Göteborg Tidningen*. According to the article, in recent years, Germany had contributed more to the disorganisation of European postal services than to their organisation and was now at the forefront of the new order.<sup>792</sup>

While no information was found regarding how the British government assessed the EPTU, the British General Mance mentioned the enemy’s new European PTT union in his book on international telecommunications. He also described the initiative as a German one, emphasising that the new union consisted mainly of ‘satellite or occupied countries’<sup>793</sup> and that the aim was that the territory within the union would be treated as one state. Otherwise, he mentioned not knowing how the union worked and did not judge it – neither from a technocratic nor a political point of view.<sup>794</sup>

The German reporting around the congress and the union was a clear continuation of the reporting before the congress. There was an objective of passing on information regarding the standards set. Not surprisingly, newspapers such as the *Völkischer Beobachter*, put the EPTU into the context of the political project of a ‘New Europe’, as the paper was a National Socialist propaganda tool. In fact, the press in Switzerland, for example, was much

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788 Writer’s own translation: “Postalische Gleichschaltungen”, PTT Archiv, Bern, P-00C\_0108\_01, *Luzerner Neuste Nachrichten*, 29.10.1942.

789 PTT Archiv, Bern, P-00C\_0108\_01, *Avantguardia Lugano*, 24.10.1942.

790 PTT Archiv, Bern, P-00C\_0108\_01, *Volksrecht Zürich*, 17.10.1942.

791 PTT Archiv, Bern, P-00C\_0108\_01, *Arbeiter Zeitung Basel*, 15.10.1942.

792 Keil, Rudi: Die Gründung des Europäischen Post- und Fernmeldevereins während des Zweiten Weltkriegs und seine Bedeutung für die Expansionspolitik des deutschen Faschismus, in: *Die Deutsche Post* 4 (1959) as found in Bundesarchiv, Koblenz, B257/343, p. 221.

793 Mance, International Telecommunications, p. 7.

794 Ibid.

more interested in the (geo)political questions and consequences of the union. Next to newspapers, there was one other way to promote the union specific to the postal services: stamps.

### *Stamps as messengers of the European Postal and Telecommunications Union*

The motif on a stamp was, much like those on the currency, ‘a visual object of sovereign status emitted by states’.<sup>795</sup> Thus, a stamp also documents discourses, power relations and interests.<sup>796</sup> The political potential of stamps and their ability to easily cross and transport statements through pictures made them an interesting propaganda medium, not just during World War II. Special stamps, issued on chosen occasions, expanded the possibilities of communicating political messages and were used for agenda-setting.<sup>797</sup> Stamps can transport values and visions for the future and project ideology.<sup>798</sup> The art historian, Aby Warburg, has described them as the ‘imagery of global transport’.<sup>799</sup>

The *Reichspost* was well aware of the impact of stamps and their political meaning. Under the headline ‘The stamp bears witness to the work of the Führer too’, an article in the *Deutsche Postzeitung* states: ‘More and more, this little stamp has become a cultural document, an announcer of German willingness to act and of successful German works. Often and often, the great happenings of our great times are reflected in the stamp’s picture.’<sup>800</sup>

While the *Reichspost* also published stamps with no political meaning, multiple stamps pursued a propaganda aim either via the occasion (e.g., the

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795 Writer’s own translation: “von Staaten ausgegeben bildliche Objekte mit hoheitlichem Status”, Gabriel, *Die politische Bildersprache*, p. 25.

796 Smolarski, Pierre / Smolarski, René / Vetter-Schultheiß, Silke (2019): *Gezähnte Geschichte. Die Briefmarke als historische Quelle: Zur Einführung*, in: Smolarski, Pierre / Smolarski, René / Vetter-Schultheiß, Silke (Eds.): *Gezähnte Geschichte*, 2019, p. 13-20, p. 14.

797 Smolarski, Pierre: *Die Briefmarke als Herrschaftsinstrument und Mittel politischer Legitimation: Zur Einführung*, in: Smolarski, Pierre / Smolarski, René / Vetter-Schultheiß, Silke (Eds.): *Gezähnte Geschichte*, 2019, p. 227-230, p. 228-229.

798 Gabriel, *Die politische Bildersprache*, p. 27.

799 Writer’s own translation: “Bildersprache des Weltverkehrs”, *Ibid.*, p. 22.

800 Writer’s own translation: “Mehr und mehr ist diese kleine Marke zu einem Kulturdokument geworden, einem Kündler deutschen Tatenwillens und erfolgreichen deutschen Schaffens. Oft und oft spiegelt sich im Bilde der Briefmarke das große Geschehen unserer großen Zeit”, *ibid.*, p. 23.

Olympic games) or via the motif (e.g., Hitler).<sup>801</sup> In the occupied territories, the motifs on stamps were important, even though different dynamics had to be respected. This meant, for instance, not issuing stamps that might not succeed with the population. In the Netherlands, the *Reichskommissar* abandoned printing over existing stamps with the lettering ‘German occupation’ or Nazi symbols. Instead, stamps with the queen were withdrawn from circulation and replaced with so-called neutral ones.<sup>802</sup> Stamps could even play a role in censoring letters. In 1944, the *Reichspostministerium* advised against stamps with fascist symbols in the region around Ljubljana, stating that it had been ordered not to deliver mail with stamps that ‘contained a political tendency averse to the Reich’.<sup>803</sup> They expected the other side to know of this policy and to have implemented a similar one.<sup>804</sup>

The occasion of the foundation of the EPTU was commemorated through special stamps and postcards.<sup>805</sup> One German aim formulated in Timm’s speech in August 1940 was that harmonised European union stamps would be issued. While this goal was not reached, four national postal administrations – the *Reichspost* (Germany), the *Generaldirektoratet for Postverkeret* (Norway), the *Správa pôšt a telekomunikácií* (Slovakia) and the *Staatsbedrijf der posterijen* (Netherlands) released stamps on the occasion of the congress and the new union. These stamp releases came at different times. The German, Norwegian and Slovakian stamps were issued on 12 October 1942 – before the actual signing of the treaty – and the Dutch stamp release took place on 15 January 1943. The last date seems relatively arbitrarily set, as it was approximately three months after the congress and three months before the treaty went into effect. Six different stamps were issued with five motifs depicted, which are described briefly below. As motifs on stamps are not random, it seems vital to analyse them and their origins. Unfortunately, the archives in Norway and the Netherlands visited for this study contained no information on the creative process around the stamps, and no Slovakian sources were available. Thus, this development could be sketched only for Germany. The stamps are analysed separately under the

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801 Tröger, Franz: Die Propaganda und die Vielen. Briefmarken in der politischen Kommunikation des NS, in: Smolarski, Pierre / Smolarski, René / Vetter-Schultheiß, Silke (Eds.): *Gezähnte Geschichte*, 2019, p. 339-418, p. 418.

802 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/11512, Leiter der DDP in den besetzten niederländischen Gebieten an den Reichspostminister, 23.08.1940.

803 Writer’s own translation: “eine dem Reich abträgliche politische Tendenz enthalten”, Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4710/11446, Ref Sch (Ab), 12.10.1944.

804 Ibid.

805 Writer’s own translation: “Sonderwertzeichen und Sonderpostkarten”.

national postal administration that issued them, starting with the German stamps and postcards, and then turning to the Norwegian and Dutch stamps.

The Foreign Department of the *Reichspost* initially suggested creating one stamp that the other administrations would then use:

An acceptable solution would be one where the country and face value overprint were arranged in such a way that the face value of other countries could be in its place in order to give this stamp a European meaning.<sup>806</sup>

However, this had already been judged inexpedient<sup>807</sup> by the staff of Min-Z<sup>808</sup> in previous talks about a stamp. In the end, one common stamp was not issued by all the member administrations of the EPTU. This shows that Risch and his department wanted to take the lead on representing the EPTU to a more general public, as described in Timm's speech, but were prevented from doing so by the department the minister himself headed. This decision should not be over interpreted. It is normal for some aims to be momentarily lost sight of or not prioritised in creating unions.

The quest for a common motif on a stamp of the EPTU did not entirely end there. In November 1942, the *Reichspost* received a suggestion to create a stamp that would not only show the same motif but also be valid in all member administrations' countries. This stamp would have symbolised a European 'community sharing the same fate'.<sup>809</sup> This proposal was not taken up, and reference was made to financial and technical difficulties<sup>810</sup> – the same reason that, according to Risch, had also impeded a common stamp of the UPU. However, he mentioned the special reply coupons for the EPTU that would be put into practice once the conditions were right.<sup>811</sup>

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806 Writer's own translation: "Besonders schön wäre eine Lösung, bei der der Länder- und Wertzeichenaufdruck so vorgesehen wäre, dass an seiner Stelle auch der anderer Länder treten könnte, um dieser Marke eine europäische Bedeutung zu schaffen", Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/11444, Risch an Min-Z, 16.06.1942.

807 Writer's own translation: "unzweckmäßig", Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/11444, Vermerk, undated.

808 Central department within the Reichspost which was directly headed by the minister.

809 Writer's own translation: "Schicksalsverbundenheit", Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/11448, Rittmeister z.V v.d. Gabelentz an Reichspostminister, 26.11.1942.

810 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/11448, Min – Z (Cn) an Rittmeister. 18.01.1943.

811 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/11448, Risch an Min – Z (Cn), 19.12.1942.

One can assume that he was referring to the ongoing war hindering such an action.

Issuing the stamps was put on hold between 2 July and 6 August 1942. Then however, Minister Ohnesorge himself gave the order to produce the stamps as quickly as possible.<sup>812</sup> This episode is interesting insofar as there was political interest regarding the quantity of special stamps that the *Reichspost* issued. It was not extraordinary for a postal administration to spread propaganda or to make money via stamps, yet the *Reichspost* did not stop producing special stamps with the start of the war, when it became costly, which created tensions with other ministries. Instead, their number increased steadily, and the special stamps were issued until May 1945.<sup>813</sup> The last stamps were issued on 21 April 1945 and honoured the *Sturmabteilung* (SA) and the SS. Two more stamps were planned but ultimately not made.<sup>814</sup> As mentioned, the stamps were probably a way to earn favour with Hitler. Via the supplement on stamps (e.g., 12+38 on the stamps for the European Postal Congress), the *Reichspost* also could give money to the *Kulturfonds*, which meant that the money went directly to Hitler.<sup>815</sup> This also happened with the EPTU stamps.<sup>816</sup>

The *Reichspost* issued three motifs on four stamps, as well as one postcard with the motif of one stamp.<sup>817</sup> Three stamps at prices of 6+14, 12+38 and 6+4 were scheduled to be issued in runs of 50,000, 40,000 and 400,000 copies, respectively.<sup>818</sup> At the end of September 1942, the decision was made to produce an additional 60,000 3+7 stamps.<sup>819</sup> While the production was originally supposed to be in Vienna, it had to be moved to Berlin due to technical difficulties at the beginning of October 1942.

In a message to the postal presidents, the minister pointed to possible delays and emphasised the importance of promoting the sale of these special

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812 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/11444, Min-Z(Cn) an den Herrn Direktor der Staatsdruckerei, 21.07.1942 und Min-Z(Cn), 31.08.1942.

813 Tröger, *Die Propaganda*, p. 339-340.

814 Michel® *Deutschland 2019/2020*, 106. Aufl., Germering 2019, p. 171-172.

815 Ueberschär, *Die Deutsche Reichspost*, p. 148.

816 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/11444, Min-Z (Cn), 07.10.1942.

817 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/11444, Beilage zur AmtsblVf. Nr.507/1942, p. 747.

818 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/11444, Verteilungsplan, 05.09.1942.

819 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/11444, Verteilungsplan 3+7 Rpf., 30.09.1942.



stamps, which were the first in a two-colour format.<sup>820</sup> It is difficult to assess the effectiveness of this promotion. The news of the stamps issue, however, reached Sweden.<sup>821</sup>

In the motifs of the stamps, reoccurring elements can be found. In all four cases, the frame of the motifs consists of oak leaves on the right and left sides. The bottom lettering reads, 'Deutsches Reich', and the top lettering reads, 'European Postal Congress Vienna 1942'. The 'main' motif, which would also be part of the official badge of the congress, comprises a man on horseback with a post horn. At the hooves of the horse, there is a globe, which shows the silhouette of Europe. This picture is framed by oak leaves, lightning and the view of Vienna. The lettering on the top reads 'European Postal Congress' and the lettering on the bottom reads 'Vienna 1942'.<sup>822</sup> The same postman on horseback was used for two other stamps. The second stamp shows him floodlit from the left and right above a globe. The third stamp also shows the postman on horseback, but without the globe underneath him and the horse. In the left corner of the stamp, there are rays of sunshine.<sup>823</sup> A fourth motif shows a postman blowing a post horn. He stands on the right side of the stamp. Most of this stamp is covered by a depiction of the 'continent of Europe' and the northern coast of Africa, and a small part of Eastern Asia. The postman stands with his lower body in the middle of what is Turkey today, and his upper body forms the vertical limit of the map at approximately the height of Moscow. It is a rounded representation of these parts of the earth on a globe.

On 19 November, the stamps were supposed to be appended with the overprint '19.10.1942' according to the order of the *Reichspostminister*; the date was that of the signature of the agreement establishing the EPTU. The fact this order was made on 9 October<sup>824</sup> shows that the *Reichspostministerium* was not expecting a failure of the negotiations.

At first glance, these stamps seem free of obvious propaganda. It was common for a postal administration to depict a postman on horseback or with a post horn. The blowing of the horn can be interpreted as the postman delivering the news of the congress, while lightning is a symbol of telecommunications. The lettering is also descriptive. These elements can, thus, be

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820 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/11304, Reichspostminister (Min-Z (Cn)) an die Herren Präsidenten der Reichspostdirektionen, 08.10.1942.

821 Svenska Dagbladet, 29.10.1942, p. 15.

822 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/11631, Briefmarke Europäischer Postkongress.

823 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/11444, Beilage zur AmtsblVf. Nr.507/1942, p. 747.

824 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/11444, Min-Z (Cn), 09.10.1942.

categorised as technical rather than ideological. Concerning other important elements, such as the depiction of Europe, the interpretation is not as clear. The depiction of Europe is not political, as it appears to be one whole continent. This might point to the dream of establishing one European postal area in which national borders do not matter, which would be a common theme of technocratic internationalism. A unified Europe under German leadership was also part of National Socialist propaganda. The hegemonic aspect could also potentially be seen in the size of the postman. In the main motif, he and his horse are above the globe, and on another stamp, he is taller than Europe. The rays of sunshine could be interpreted as signs of glory or enlightenment. The depiction reminds one of more religious images. The congress and the newly found union would bring light into postal Europe. However, overall, the impression remains that, in the eyes of a normal user, the potentially ideological elements would not stand out. This is also because horses were often used on *Reichspost* stamps due to ministerial preference.<sup>825</sup>

The missing ideological symbols can be explained by the ideas guiding the creative process of the stamps. The aim was to choose a motif ‘that ideally would not hurt any participant of the congress’<sup>826</sup> and that, thus, would represent the foundation of a union and its postal significance.<sup>827</sup> In his letter to the central department, Risch, as the head of the Foreign Department of the *Reichspost*, suggested four possible solutions: ‘1) Europa on a bull, 2) a dove with a letter in its beak, 3) a part of the globe,<sup>828</sup> 4) *Wappeneiche*<sup>829</sup> in the colours of the contracting countries or similar representations’.<sup>830</sup>

The first proposal, ‘Europa on a bull’, stems from Greek mythology and is still used today by some proponents of a united Europe. When the *Illustrirte Zeitung Leipzig* published an issue focussing on the ‘New Europe’ in 1944, the editors chose this depiction of Europe,<sup>831</sup> indicating this symbolism was not uncommon. It is interesting that this founding myth was judged to be a useable symbol for Europe, especially since Greece was occupied at

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825 Tröger, *Die Propaganda*, p. 408.

826 Writer’s own translation: “die möglichst keinem Kongressteilnehmer wehrt”, Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/11444, Vermerk, undated.

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

828 It seems justified to assume that the European part is meant here.

829 Writer’s own translation: oak as a coat of arms.

830 Writer’s own translation: “1) Europa auf dem Stier, 2) eine Taube mit Brief im Schnabel, 3) Teilausschnitt der Karte des Globus, 4) Wappeneiche mit den Farben der Vertragsländer oder ähnliche Darstellungen”, Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/11444, Risch an Min-Z, 16.06.1942.

831 Dafinger, *The Nazi New Europe*, p. 264.

the time and the Greek administration was not invited.<sup>832</sup> There are handwritten comments on all four suggestions, and the note for this idea reads: ‘Not even 20% of the users will understand it’.<sup>833</sup> This can be interpreted as the proposition being too elitist, which highlights the wish for the stamp to have an accessible meaning. The second proposal, ‘a dove with a letter in its beak’, clearly relates to postal services, as doves were once commonly used as mail carriers. However, the dove is also a symbol for peace, and one of the stated aims of the EPTU was to promote understanding between people. There might be a double meaning in this proposal. The reader in the Min-Z understood it differently, however, and noted: ‘Holy Spirit?!’<sup>834</sup> Given that the National Socialist ideology rejected religion, this possible connection might have been a reason not to use this motif. The third proposition, ‘a part of the globe’ appears relatively neutral and was later used in the final motifs, as described above. The handwritten note, however, says: ‘No effect of the picture!’<sup>835</sup> It is even more interesting that a part of the globe was part of the official sign of the congress. However, the globe was under the postman on horseback, which might have been the effect demanded in the written comment. The fourth and last proposal, ‘*Wappeneiche* in the colours of the contracting countries or similar representations’ was evaluated as ‘possibly conceivable’<sup>836</sup> but did not make it into the final motif. This proposal was the only one which would have given particular space to the participating countries by including their national colours. The oak tree itself is noteworthy, as trees were a symbol for European PTT cooperation after the war: When the countries of the CEPT also chose a tree as the motif of the ‘Europe stamp’, it represented ‘a factor of peace, source of prosperity’<sup>837</sup> in the case of the ‘Europe stamp’ of 1957, whereas it depicted the common efforts of the administrations within the CEPT on the ‘Europe stamp’ of 1962.<sup>838</sup> Here, it might be a depiction of having the same roots (the union) but developing into different branches

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832 Politisches Archiv, Berlin, R106301, Wiehl an Reichsaußenminister, 08.10.1942.

833 Writer’s own translation: “Verstehen keine 20% der Benutzer”, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/11444, Risch an Min-Z, 16.06.1942.

834 Writer’s own translation: “Heiliger Geist?!”, *ibid*.

835 Writer’s own translation: “Keine Bildwirkung!”, *ibid*.

836 Writer’s own translation: “Evtl. denkbar!”, *ibid*.

837 Writer’s own translation: “Fraktor des Friedens, Quelle des Friedens”, Rötzel, Werner: *Europamarken Gemeinschaftsausgaben*, in: *Archiv für deutsche Postgeschichte* (1979), p. 58-65, p. 59.

838 Rötzel, *Europamarken*, p. 61.

(the administrations/countries). Trees also grow, which was something that the German *Reichspost* wanted the EPTU to do.

In a second step, the *Reichspost* asked for proposals from three artists. Their task was to visualise the ‘European Postal Congress, which means the specialist cooperation of all European countries in all areas of postal services’.<sup>839</sup> The focus on the technocratic character of the cooperation, and the exclusion of telecommunications and, consequently, the highlighting of postal services, is interesting here. It shows again that the overall aim was not to make this stamp political. The postal services were a focus of the German promotion of the founding of the EPTU.

The artist Ranzoni suggested using a post horn and a map of Europe ‘in the absence of a universally comprehensible symbol’.<sup>840</sup> Mythological figures were not used to avoid misinterpretations. The cord of the post horn would create an ornament framing the motif to represent cooperation, union and a sense of belonging.<sup>841</sup> The second artist, Professor Puchinger, also delivered a draft which is unfortunately not described in the sources. Both artists remarked that they were about to take recreational holidays at the beginning of July 1942.<sup>842</sup> It is, thus, uncertain that the drafts of the artist Erich Meerwald were chosen due to his design ideas or for reasons of time. In any case, his idea of the postman on horseback jumping over the globe would become the main motif of the congress, featuring on one stamp and the stamp on the official postcards that could be sent from the congress. The design convinced the Foreign Department of the *Reichspostministerium*. They ordered several changes to the proposal. The first change was that the silhouette of Vienna would be put at the bottom of the motif instead of a dove and the value of the stamp. The second change was replacing the lettering ‘Deutsches Reich’ with ‘Wien 1942’, and the third change consisted of two new fields in the bottom corners of the stamp, where lightning would represent telecommunications. Fourth, the remaining space in the stamp’s frame was to be filled with oak leaves.<sup>843</sup>

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839 Writer’s own translation: “Europäischer Postkongress, d.h. die fachliche Kooperation aller Länder Europas auf allen Gebieten der Post”, Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/11444, Legende zu zwei Vorentwürfen für eine Marke “Europäischer Postkongress”, 30.06.1942.

840 Writer’s own translation: “in Ermangelung eines allgemein verständlichen Symbols”, *ibid.*

841 *Ibid.*

842 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/11444, Direktor der Staatsdruckerei Wien an den Reichspostminister, zu Händen des OPR Dr. Conrad, 11.07.1942.

843 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/11444, Ref Ty and Ref Cn, 22.07.1942.

The motifs chosen represent a mixture of different proposals that all fulfilled the higher aim of remaining comparatively neutral and apolitical. The Norwegian postal administration took a different approach (Fig. 4).

The Norwegian stamp issued in October 1942 was only the second stamp issue since Vidkun Quisling had become the leader of the country. He was a convinced National Socialist who collaborated on building a Norwegian state after the model of the Third Reich to integrate Norway into a European federation of National Socialist states.<sup>844</sup> This historical frame is the basis for the following hypothesis: the stamp on the foundation of the EPTU was used to promote the new leader and the new government and, thus, reinforce its legitimacy with the help of the ‘New Europe’.

The motif of the *Postforeningsfrimerke*<sup>845</sup> was ‘a combination of the first Norwegian stamp (...) and the last Norwegian stamp (...) both reproduced in facsimile’<sup>846</sup>. This means that, on the left side of the stamp, the head of Vidkun Quisling (the last Norwegian stamp) was portrayed, and the right side of the stamp displayed a lion with a double-paw. Both images were framed by the text ‘12 October – European Postal Union – Vienna 1942’<sup>847</sup>. This choice of motif caused discussions within the philatelist community, even more so because the first Norwegian stamp was not depicted in the exact way it had been in October 1855. Four printing errors had crept in and sent the philatelists into ‘madness’<sup>848</sup>, according to one newspaper. These mistakes did not prevent the stamps from being valid.<sup>849</sup>

The stamps were issued in red and blue at 20 øre and 30 øre, respectively. Originally, around 3.1 million red ones and 1.5 million blue ones were

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844 Durand, *Le nouvel orde européen nazi*, p. 33-37.

845 Official name of the stamp in Norwegian that translates vaguely to “Postal union stamp”.

846 Writer’s own translation: “blir en kombinasjon av det første norske frimerker (...) og det siste norske frimerke (...) begge gjengitt i facsimile”, Riksarkivet, Oslo, S-4958 - Postens sentralledelse, Postmuseet (PM), Norgeskatalogen, L008- 300-318, 0005 - 12. oktober 1942. Europeisk postforening. 309-310, Merknader, not dated.

847 Writer’s own translation: “12 oktober – Europeisk Postforening – Wien 1942”, *ibid.*

848 Writer’s own translation: “pussighet”, Riksarkivet, Oslo, S-4958 - Postens sentralledelse, Postmuseet (PM), Norgeskatalogen, L008- 300-318, 0005 - 12. oktober 1942. Europeisk postforening. 309-310, *Aftenposten*: “Filatelisk pussighet ved gjenvelsen av Norge nr. 1 på de nye frimerker”, 14.10.1942.

849 *Ibid.*

planned, but due to destruction, the number of stamps brought into distribution was lower, namely 1.9 million and 1.1 million.<sup>850</sup> The sale of the stamps ended on 1 January 1943,<sup>851</sup> and in 1944, the decision was made to destroy the rest of the stamps, which had not been sold.<sup>852</sup>



Figure 4: Stamps Issued by the Norwegian Postal Administration Commemorating the European Postal Congress of 1942 in Vienna in Red and Blue, © Posten Norge.

The motif of the Norwegian stamp issued on the occasion of the European Postal Congress of 1942 is interesting insofar as neither post and telecommunications nor the achievements of the congress played a role in the design. Integrating the Norwegian administration into this European organisation was represented by a frame around the two actual motifs of the stamp, which, as noted above, were copies of the first and last stamps of Norway. This combination aligned Vidkun Quisling's government with the previous regimes, which can be interpreted as an attempt to legitimise the new leader. That the first Norwegian stamp was not used accurately is interesting, but as no more information could be found about how these errors occurred, it is unwise to speculate about the reasons for them. This Norwegian motif illustrates that while the *Reichspost* was careful to remain apolitical in the choice of motif, the *Poststyret* used the creation of an organisation for technocratic cooperation to make a very political point. Before discussing the Dutch administration's approach to the stamp, it should be noted that the

850 Riksarkivet, Oslo, S-4958 - Postens sentralledelse, Postmuseet (PM), Norgeskatalogen, L008- 300-318, 0005 - 12. oktober 1942. Europeisk postforening. 309-310, Frimerkeforvalterens prøvemapper, not dated.

851 Riksarkivet, Oslo, S-4958 - Postens sentralledelse, Postmuseet (PM), Norgeskatalogen, L008- 300-318, 0005 - 12. oktober 1942. Europeisk postforening. 309-310, Poststyret Rundskriv Nr.141, 20.11.1942.

852 Riksarkivet, Oslo, S-4958 - Postens sentralledelse, Postmuseet (PM), Norgeskatalogen, L008- 300-318, 0005 - 12. oktober 1942. Europeisk postforening. 309-310, Jnr. 146/1944, 03.04.1944.

geopolitical situation of the Netherlands and Norway differed. Both countries had governments in exile in London. In 1942, Norway had its own government under the leadership of a convinced National Socialist, whereas the Dutch territory was under the control of the *Reichskommissar* Arthur Seyß-Inquart and did not have its own government. This difference might have translated into the choice of motif for the Dutch stamp.

The Slovakian postal administration issued three stamps with the same motif but in different colours (dark blue-green, olive green, blue) on 12 October 1942. The date was also noted in the upper right corner of the stamp. The motif consisted of a large carrier pigeon with a petal of linden in its beak. The Vienna Stephan's dome was visible but smaller than the pigeon and slightly in the background. In the bottom left corner of the stamp is a series of coats of arms, which were probably supposed to represent the countries of the participating administrations. The first coat of arms was Slovakian, and is represented on the flag and the 1 and 2 euro coins of Slovakia. The second appears to have been from Germany, as one can see parts of a swastika. The third most probably represented Italy, as the coat of arms might have shown fasces. The fourth has a diamond pattern and can thus be assigned to Croatia. The following coats of arms were not visible.<sup>853</sup>

It remains unclear how this stamp was supposed to inform its reader of a postal congress or union. One could understand that something had happened in Vienna if he or she recognised St. Stephan's dome. An individual could have also deduced that it was related to postal relations due to the carrier pigeon, and that several countries were involved because of the coats of arms. However, one would have had to take the time to interpret the stamp to know what it referred to. The use of the coat of arms is clearly political. As the existence of Slovakia was guaranteed by the Reich, and the country had signed the Axis pact in 1940, it appears logical to highlight the cooperation in such a way.

The three stamps were issued in editions of around 1.5 million, 1.1 million and 0.75 million. Together, they made up 16.7% of all the special stamps published in Slovakia in 1942.<sup>854</sup> This was, thus, a stamp that the public, or at least philatelists, could have noticed.

The fourth and last administration to issue a stamp was the *Staatsbedrijf der posterijen* on 15 January 1943 (Fig. 5).<sup>855</sup> The Netherlands also reused a motif. In 1923, a stamp showing a post horn with a lion inside had been

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853 Michel® Europa 2018. Band 1. *Mitteleuropa*, 103. Aufl., Unterschleißheim 2018, p. 555-556

854 Ibid.

855 Michel® Europa, Westeuropa, p. 1228.

issued in a blue-green colour.<sup>856</sup> The same motif – although larger and in chrome yellow – was used to commemorate the founding of the EPTU.

An overprint reading ‘European PTT union, 19 October 1942, 10 cents’ connected the stamp to the congress.<sup>857</sup> The reuse of the motif might have been due to financial issues. A new motif would have meant paying an artist. In addition, the old motif contained the face value of the stamp (2.5 cents), which was overprinted by the new face value, 10 cents. This suggests that finding a motif for this stamp did not take as long as it did in Germany, for example. The focus was on postal relations; no ideological symbols can be found. There were slightly fewer than 7.1 million copies, which represented about 1% of the special stamps issued that year. Thus, the stamp could not have been very visible to the public.



Figure 5: Stamp issued by the Dutch Postal Administration on the Occasion of the European Postal Congress of 1942 in Vienna.

In conclusion, the stamps issued by four of 13 member administrations of the EPTU vary in motif and degree of politicisation. All stamps required lettering to explain the occasion of the issuance, which could only have harmed the chances of the news of the new union spreading further. From this perspective, the mistake made in the motif of the Norwegian stamp might have led to bad press, but at least it was press. The number of copies issued also does not appear to have contributed to their publicity. The elements of the motifs have little in common with the exception of the post horn, which is central in the Dutch stamp but not prevalent in the German ones.

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856 Ibid., p. 1216.

857 Ibid., p. 1228.



While the German and the Dutch stamps appear rather technical, and the German one has at best a passive political meaning, the Norwegian and Slovakian stamps have a clearly propaganda-motivated message for users. The promotion via stamps of the organisational standards and improvements decided upon in Vienna was, thus, far from united. The national contexts of the stamps contradict the more European dimension that the Foreign Department had in mind at the beginning of the stamp design process. Nine administrations – including Italy – did not publish stamps, the other four administrations did not work towards a common message but stayed within their own contexts. This was not necessarily a purely national context, as in the German case. The staff of the *Reichspost* knew the stamp would be noticed abroad and that it had to be carefully designed. The other administrations were likely also aware that the German administration (as well as the *Armeefeldpostmeister* in the occupied Netherlands and Norway) would notice what stamps were issued. There are no signs, however, that any administration was forced to publish the stamps. Philatelists do not consider these stamps to be so-called ‘occupation stamps’.<sup>858</sup> In addition, the Dutch administration was headed by a convinced Dutch National Socialist<sup>859</sup> and the Norwegian and the Slovakian governments were both allies of the German National Socialists.<sup>860</sup> It is surprising that neither the Hungarian nor the Danish postal administrations issued stamps despite being involved in the development of the EPTU.

From a German point of view, the stamps fit into the general promotion of the EPTU within Germany, which focussed on a ‘New Europe’, but also on long-lasting technocratic cooperation, the heritage of Heinrich von Stephan and the postal services. From a Norwegian and Slovakian point of view, their own national regimes could present their cooperation within the ‘New Europe’ and attempt to maintain or strengthen their legitimacy. The exact use of the Dutch stamp remains unclear. The only interpretation possible seems that the administration wanted to illustrate its cooperative will towards the German administration.

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858 Michel® Deutschland, Deutschland, p. 353-402.

859 He joined the Nationaal-Socialistische Beweging in 1933. PDC Informatie Architectuur, 2020, [https://www.parlement.com/id/vh7x2txd1azs/w\\_1\\_z\\_van\\_der\\_vegte](https://www.parlement.com/id/vh7x2txd1azs/w_1_z_van_der_vegte) (last access 05.03.2021).

860 Schmidt, *Der Zweite Weltkrieg*, p. 144 and p. 110.

## Conclusion

This part has examined the negotiations during the congress that led to the conclusion of a union agreement, the passing of regulations and the final protocol. The analysis focussed on who set the standards, how they were decided and what was finally adopted. Finally, the promotion of those new standards was studied.

As to the question of who set the standards, the preparation of the *Reichspost* proved fruitful. It achieved its main aims and was dominant in the negotiations around the agreement, postal regulations and the final protocol. Its main ‘rival’ was the Italian administration, which did not appear willing to implement all the standards the *Reichspost* proposed. The other individuals responsible in the committees seem to have been chosen based on loyalty to the Axis powers and to the project itself. In addition to the German and Italian administration, the Danish and Hungarian delegates played a major role.

Concerning how standards were decided, despite preparation, several issues were (somewhat) openly debated. This issue was exacerbated by the lack of German-Italian agreement even on important questions, such as the abolition of the transit charge. Exceptions were made as needed to decide on the new standards unanimously. The convincing was done either during the sessions via arguments or during the breaks, the events of which remain unknown due to their informal nature.

Regarding the content of the standardisation, the organisational standards were orientated towards those of the UPU, as seen in the payment system, the entry and exit provisions and the general working structure (e.g., the union office, general assembly, permanent committees). The important differences were the official languages of German and Italian and the new reference currency of the *Reichsmark*, which expressed the German and Italian hegemony over the other administrations. But it also reflected the difference in power between Germany and Italy. This became clear in the discussion surrounding the reference currency. The clarification of this question was not only a practical but also a power question, both within the proposed international organisation and outside of it. Germany aimed to make the *Reichsmark* the leading currency in the economic area of the ‘New Europe’. Therefore, it was impossible for the *Reichspost* to cater to any requests by Italy for equality between the Axis powers on this issue. Concerning tariffs, the *Reichspost* achieved its two main goals: imposing the German weight categories and the respective tariffs, and the abolition of the transit charge.

While this was not possible without discussion and exceptions for two administrations, this was nevertheless a great success. Thus, all three scenarios proposed by Ambrosius were present in this standardisation process. There were standards that every administration could agree on (e.g., adhesion conditions to the EPTU). However, there were also moments where every administration supported a common standard but not in its specifics (e.g., language provisions). There were also situations in which not everyone wanted a common standard (e.g., abolition of the transit charge for sea mail). During the decision phase, the coordination problems were mostly overcome by concluding bilateral agreements beforehand, postponing certain issues and reducing the number of possible problems, engaging in interim negotiations between groups of administrations, and the *Reichspost* utilising its leading position, based on Germany occupying large parts of the European continent.

Finally, the German promotion of the new standards was carried out with a strong focus on ‘objective’ information, such as the details of the agreements. The project was also considered within its political context, with obvious differences in the German and Swiss reporting. The German stamps issued to commemorate the congress and the foundation of the union mirror the entire promotional pattern in their lack of overtly political and ideological elements. The Slovakian and Norwegian stamps show how, as a part of the ‘New Europe’, the EPTU could represent national positioning within this Europe, while the Dutch stamp was almost neutral.



### 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.

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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.

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- 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.

<b>October 1942–April 1943</b>	<b>Government approval of the agreement</b>
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 Marinese 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

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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

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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

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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

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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.

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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.

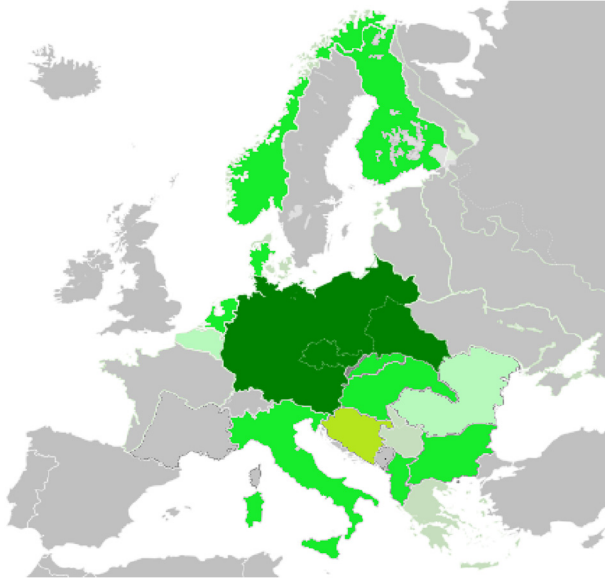


Figure 6: Implementation of the EPTU agreement on the 1st of April 1943; the darker the green, the more integrated a country was. In Germany, the same tariffs applied for the EPTU territory as for Germany. In the majority of the countries, the EPTU tariffs (equivalent to inner German tariffs) applied 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

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894 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

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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, Vorsitzter des 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

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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, Vorsitzter des 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

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906 Riksarkivet, Oslo, S-1342 - Samferdselsdepartementet, 1. postadministrasjonskontor A, Dd - Journalsaker (emneordnet), L0022 - Div. journalsaker. Den europeiske post- og fjernmeldeforening, Vorsitzter 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 Gnome and Cipriano Cipriani.<sup>912</sup> Gnome 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

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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

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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>

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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

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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

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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

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

938 Rigsakriviet, København, Generaldirektoratet for Post- og Telegrafvesenet, Journalsager vedr. forholdet til udlandet (1884-1983): LO (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. Tiegs, 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 Tiegs 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

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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>

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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

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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

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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

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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.

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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 post-cards 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

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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

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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*

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

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

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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

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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 Generaldirektin 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

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- 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

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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.

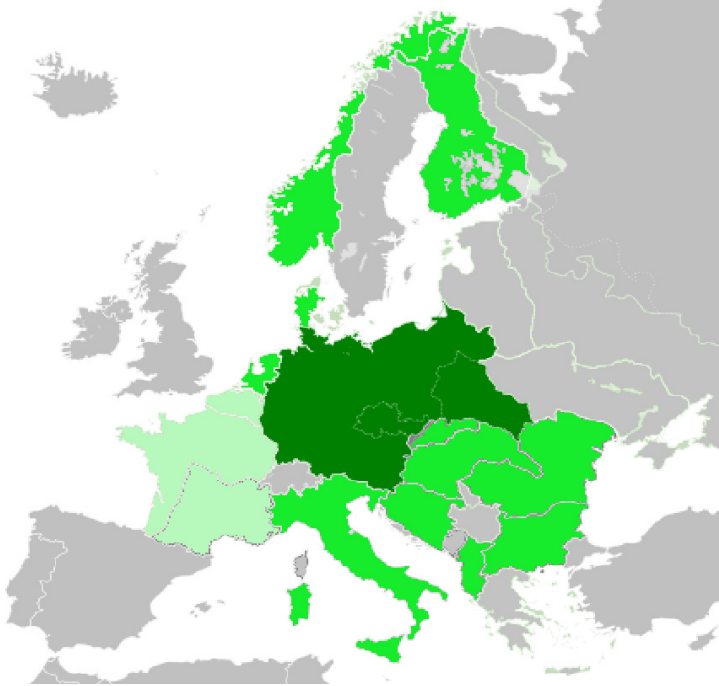
1010 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R901/116970, Aufzeichnung Martius, 17.05.1944.

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

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

1017 Rigsarkivet, København, Generaldirektoratet for Post- og Telegrafvesenet, Journalsager vedr. forholdet til udlandet (1884-1983): I.O (1942-1950), 13079, Afskrift til 3. Ekspeditionskontor, 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, Journalsager vedr. forholdet til udlandet (1884-1983), I.M.5.c (1942-1955), 13076, Generaldirektoratet for Post-og Telegrafvaesenet 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 cooperating 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

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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 Schubert 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

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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

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

1034 Archives nationales, Pierrefitte, 19870773/33, Premier rapport du Secretariat provisoire des Groupes européens de travail des Postes et des Télécommunications créées 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.

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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

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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.

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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

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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

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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-Chappelle) 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,

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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-Chappelle, 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

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1072 Bundesarchiv, Koblenz, B257/6819, Generaldirektor des Post- und Telgraphenwesens 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

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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 Fédéraliste 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

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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 Wirtschaft- 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 cooperation 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

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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

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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

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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

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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

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1106 Trautsch, Japer M.: European Integration by Mail: European Symbols and Subjects 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,

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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

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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>

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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

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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

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- 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*

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- 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/vh7x2txd1azs/w\\_1\\_z\\_van\\_der\\_vegte](https://www.parlement.com/id/vh7x2txd1azs/w_1_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

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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

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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

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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, Juni 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

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- 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

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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.

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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 to 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>

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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

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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.



## General Conclusion

Although it is counterintuitive, the first European postal union was created through an initiative driven by the Axis powers under National Socialist leadership. The EPTU's creation was only possible because several elements came together, including a desire to continue cooperation by PTT experts, early territorial wins by Germany and Italy at the beginning of the Second World War and Germany's (and Italy's) goal of establishing policy hegemony over the European continent. The war can thus be understood as a catalyst for the institutionalisation of European technocratic PTT cooperation. The war resulted in a union with standards that were largely adapted from the German postal system and went further than what had been achieved by the UPU before or after the war or by the CEPT or OCSC. This work retraced the context which made possible the union and its preparation, implementation and operation. Finally, it illustrated that the idea of and necessity for a European postal union continued beyond the Second World War. Numerous initiatives in the Western bloc failed prior to the establishment of the CEPT, which occurred relatively quickly after the OCSC was created in the Eastern bloc. Here also a war – albeit a cold one – influenced the institutionalisation of cooperation. Though the CEPT and OCSC were different organisations, their structures and standards were relatively similar.

This work began by contextualising the EPTU and retracing the various developments that shaped it. The decades-long history of international cooperation between national PTT administrations in the UPU provided a clearly defined set of common goals and values of the administration experts consisting mainly of the conviction that communication should be as borderless as possible. Overcoming national borders was easier when rationality dominated and politics were left out of the technical discussions. Regarding the governance of postal services, the experts aimed at technocracy. Schot and Lagendijk summarised these ideas in the term 'technocratic internationalism'. Decades of working together gave them a certain set of tools for cooperation such as congresses, committees and sub-committees which functioned as sites to discuss the harmonisation of international postal services. Standards were continuously developed and reviewed with the aim of facilitating and lowering the costs for users of international postal services as much as possible. As such, international

postal cooperation was shaped by fixed traditions and a specific habitus when the war began; these included the general depiction of the German Postmaster General Heinrich von Stephan as the founding father of the UPU. This representation gave the *Reichspost* a reference point and legitimisation for the project of a European postal union.

Moreover, the call for a European postal union was not new and had already been intensively discussed during the interwar period. It was integrated into the Briand Plan for a federal European Union but failed due to the PTT administrations' aversion to ties with political projects. The Axis powers did not have a similar European political project either alone or together. Instead, the term 'New Europe' was drawn from German propaganda to describe the reconstruction of Europe according to National Socialist ideals after the war was won. Because Hitler did not propose a clearly defined vision, this propaganda was based on a conglomerate of different ideas that, in a German context, always ended with German hegemony over the continent. It remains open to debate whether this ambiguity was due to a lack of interest, strategy or leadership. However, this lack of a clear concept of a 'New Europe' does not mean that the international sphere was not important to Fascists or National Socialists. Despite their ideological hatred of international organisations, they understood their importance. The vagueness of the term 'New Europe' also allowed different actors to develop concrete projects that could be tied to it, thus legitimising the idea of a future Europe in Germany. Therefore, while the EPTU was rhetorically connected to the 'New Europe', this had little actual meaning as the ideal could not be translated into concrete actions or consequences, giving the administration room for a presentation of the project as purely technocratic. It was purely used as a talking point to legitimise the project politically.

The standardisation was divided using a simple policy cycle model consisting of initiation, decision and working phases. The initiation phase included the steps of draft development, problem formulation, information collection and agenda setting. The decision phase consisted of resolving content issues as well as finding compromises and gaining consensus. As its name implies, this phase was decisive in the adoption or rejection of a policy. The working phase included the implementation of the decisions made in the previous phase as well as their further development. These phases could not always be clearly delineated. For instance, many important decisions were made during the initiation phase in the case of the EPTU as the majority of standards agreed upon later were fixed in this phase. If one

follows the model strictly, these decisions should only be made in the decision phase.

While it remains unclear who or what initially began the process of creating a European postal union during a world war, it can be said that two different projects developed almost simultaneously. Italian and German telecommunications experts met to discuss the idea of establishing a working group to continue cooperation amidst paralysed international organisations. Within the *Reichspostministerium*, a Foreign Department was created by *Reichspostminister* Ohnesorge, who was put in charge of creating a European postal union. The department was headed by Friedrich Risch, who was supported in the area of postal services by Friedrich Reiss. The plans developed within this department were later implemented, though not all the initial aims were achieved. Three out of the ten aims can be seen as realised: the harmonisation of European postal services on the German schedule of tariffs, the abolition of the transit charge for land mail, and German leadership in the EPTU. On the basis of these original plans, the *Reichspost* contacted the Italian PTT administration to make the EPTU a reality. Hence, the EPTU was an Axis initiative and project. At the same time, the *Reichspost* contacted other European PTT administrations to enquire about their position on the plans. The *Reichspost* had established a system of appointees abroad tasked with maintaining positive relations with the national PTT administration in order to simplify cooperation. These relationships were to be fostered via other channels as well, such as a committee within the ICL. The *Reichspost's* strategy was to conclude bilateral agreements with these administrations which would be blueprints for the standards agreed upon within the EPTU.

The negotiations between the German and Italian administrations led to a bilateral agreement in October 1941; this was the starting point for other bilateral agreements that followed. However, for technical reasons, the German-Italian agreement was the least far-reaching of all the bilateral agreements. The Italian postal system differed from the German one and could not be easily adapted. Nonetheless, this discrepancy between the Axis partners was a clear theme throughout the development of the EPTU and cannot be explained by technical issues alone. Indeed, the Italian Foreign Ministry was bothered by the inequality between the two administrations and halted the project by forcing the cancellation of a meeting between the German, Italian, Hungarian and Danish PTT administrations. The inequality between the powers stemmed from the *Reichspost's* goal of pushing through standards to institutionalise German dominance in PTT affairs. This aim was evident in the initial choice of location for the union

office (Berlin), the proposal of German as the only official language, the *Reichsmark* becoming the new reference currency and German insistence on abolishing the transit charge for land mail, which the Italian PTT administration did not fully support. That said, neither the Italian nor German Foreign Ministries were invested in specifically postal questions. However, when it came to organisational standards such as language provisions, they were highly involved. The German Foreign Ministry was also adamant that the EPTU agreement would only be inter-administrative and not a state treaty. Despite the tensions between the two Axis partners, preparations continued to advance.

From October 1941 to August 1942, the *Reichspost* negotiated nine additional bilateral agreements with the national PTT administrations of Bulgaria, Croatia, Denmark, Finland, Hungary, the Netherlands, Norway, Romania and Slovakia. All these administrations would later join the EPTU. The agreements were constructed according to modularity, and the wording of different modules was exactly the same in all the agreements. Most importantly, the agreements allowed the *Reichspost* to export its weight system for letters with the respective German domestic tariffs to the other country's postal services with Germany. The agreements also represented the first opportunity to abolish the transit charge for land mail. Some administrations agreed to this quickly (the Dutch, Norwegian and Slovakian administrations); others agreed to it in a re-negotiation of the agreement (the Danish and Finnish administrations); others agreed to a 50% reduction of the tariff (the Bulgarian, Croatian and Hungarian administrations), and two administrations did not agree to the abolition at all (the Italian and Romanian administrations). Thus, half the administrations bilaterally agreed to the abolition. The arguments against the abolition were mainly financial as the transit charge was an important source of income for the administrations. The tariffs were also an important point of discussion during the congress in October 1942. The national administrations with which the *Reichspost* did not sign bilateral agreements, but which later became part of the EPTU, were Albania and San Marino, which is logical given their dependence on Italy. The Italian administration also played a role in the following with regard to the bilateral agreements, while the *Reichspost* led the process.

The *Reichspost* took charge of contacting other potential member administrations including Belgium, France, Greece, Portugal, Serbia, Spain, Switzerland, Sweden and Turkey. While the Spanish, Swiss and Turkish administrations did not sign bilateral agreements, they accepted the invitation to the congress and participated as observers. The Portuguese

administration did not answer at all, while the Swedish postal administration declined the invitation. Swedish telecommunication experts were disinvented as a result. The Belgian head of telecommunications declined the invitation as well, causing the Belgian head of postal services to be disinvented. Although the German Foreign Ministry and the *Reichspost* had initially agreed to invite the French, Greek and Serbian administrations as observers of the congress, the invitations were ultimately withdrawn. In the case of the occupied territories in this group, the question of who would participate and who would not was discussed repeatedly and changed. This aspect was especially important to the German Foreign Ministry, which did not intervene in the setting of postal standards. From a technocratic viewpoint, the more administrations that joined the union, the more the union would be effective due to economy of scale. More members would also increase the union's legitimacy. From a foreign policy viewpoint, this decision was part of a larger context. What role would France play in the 'New Europe'? Which territories would be included or even annexed in a potential Greater Germanic Reich? The fact that the German leadership had no answers to these questions is reflected in this back-and-forth discussion regarding the list of participating administrations.

Finally, the PTT administrations from 17 European countries gathered in Vienna in October 1942; 14 of them would later be founding members of the EPTU. All administrations could submit specific proposals for standards, but this was only done by the Italian and German administrations. These proposals were not negotiated during this congress as the congress was focussed on deciding organisational standards. The only concrete postal standards agreed upon – the abolition of the transit charge and the adoption of the German weight system for European postal services – were German priorities. The preparatory drafts discussed during this congress were all provided by the German administration, which had discussed them beforehand with the Italian administration. Nevertheless, German was proposed as the only official language. Italian was added during the congress, but it is surprising that this source of conflict was not resolved beforehand given the tensions before the congress; this again demonstrates that the Axis powers did not have a united front, and national aspirations for hegemony continued to complicate cooperation. In summary, the organisational standards were mostly adopted as proposed. The standards were derived from longstanding international cooperation standards and thus were quickly accepted. The major change was that the official languages. In this respect, the geopolitical situation was also used to disempower France.

Concerning specific postal standards, the postal committee created during the congress agreed on new tariffs and an administrative-operative standard. The latter does not need to be addressed here. Regarding the new tariffs, the export of the German domestic weight system to the postal services between members was finalised. Even the Italian administration agreed to this system after initially stating that it was unsure whether this would be possible. The new basic tariffs were the German domestic tariffs in *Reichsmark*. When converted into the other national currencies, the tariffs agreed upon in the bilateral agreements were used. Similarly, the abolition of the transit charge for land mail was agreed upon after the Italian administration changed its position from opposition to approval. The Croatian administration negotiated an exemption from these new standards for one year. For the other members, the agreements of the congress went into force on 1 April 1943. These decisions represented a great success for the *Reichspost* not only because they significantly lowered the prices of postal services between the countries but also because they manifested German hegemony and power. These two standards had been the cornerstones of the German campaign regarding postal services within the EPTU, and they had been agreed upon during the congress in October 1942 in Vienna. With the enforcement of the agreement in April 1943, an important portion of Europe began using the German weight system and the *Reichsmark* as a reference currency. Additionally, the abolition of the transit charge for land mail represented a major step in establishing a unified postal area. In effect, land borders between countries were erased for letters and postcards. The only trace of bitterness was that a significant number of administrations, including the Italian, could only sign with reservation; they still needed their governments' approvals for the agreements, and consequently the new standards, to be implemented. Over the course of the following months, all governments approved the agreement, assuring their entry into force at the beginning of April 1943.

Meanwhile, the German administration had signed a bilateral agreement with the Belgian postal administration. As a result, German postal services were the centre of the EPTU's postal area. This was due to the fact that the bilateral agreements consisted of greater simplifications and lower prices regarding aspects of postal services (such as journals and packages) beyond letters and postcards. These provisions were agreed to bilaterally but not multilaterally. As Croatia and Romania were scheduled to implement the provisions in 1944, the unity of the postal area was graded according to the respective national state of implementation of the EPTU agreement.

After the successes during the initiation and decision phases, the working phase proved to be the moment when the war caught up with the EPTU. Regarding standard-setting, this meant that there were more and more cases in which the PTT administrations did not want or could not negotiate a common standard. The other two scenarios of the coordination problem, namely everyone wants the same standard or everyone wants a standard but not the same one, occurred less frequently. This is particularly visible at the 1943 postal committee conference, where many issues were postponed, and there was little agreement. Germany's relationship with Italy fully deteriorated during this time due to Italian military losses. The Axis partners thus became even more unequal. The Hungarian and Danish postal administrations, particularly the Hungarian von Forster, became more important, as reflected in the dynamics of the 1942 congress. While there was still a postal committee conference in June 1943, the congress envisioned for Rome in October 1943 had to be postponed, a planned congress in Vienna in 1944 to which the *Reichspost* still invited the member administrations had to be cancelled. Some administrations even accepted the invitation to the planned congress in Vienna. It is difficult to explain why the EPTU continued, and not just with the German administration, after the loss of Stalingrad at the beginning of 1943. Some acted out of ideological conviction, and it is possible that some did not realise that this was the beginning of the end. From the German administration's viewpoint, giving up may not have been an option. There may also have been hope that the technocratic and non-political aspects of the EPTU would somehow allow the organisation and its postal standards to survive. From the perspective of an occupied country, even if the war was lost, the German occupier could still do substantial harm but could be appeased by continued cooperation. Whatever the reasons for its continued operation after 1943, the organisation itself did not survive the war, but its basic ideas were taken up again.

In the working phase itself, few standards were agreed upon. Most proposals had to be delayed until a more convenient time. With the exception of one recommendation regarding insufficiently franked mail, the standards decided upon were never implemented because the congress that would have approved them never took place. With regard to tariffs, it was decided that the German domestic system for letters would be applied to letters heavier than 1,000g. The same applied to printed materials, mail in braille, business papers, samples and mixed mailing, even though the tariffs agreed upon were higher than the domestic German tariffs. During the working phase, the *Reichspost* did not negotiate any confirmed new

accessions to the EPTU. It remains unclear whether the French administration finally applied the provisions of the EPTU agreements without actually joining the union. The French administration was the focus of German efforts to enlarge the union largely due to its expertise; the presumption that the Spanish administration would have been more likely to join if France was part of the EPTU also played a role.

The preparation and the founding of the EPTU were accompanied by promotional efforts by the *Reichspost* via articles in newspapers and specialist journals as well as stamps. All these efforts express the fact that the political aspects of the EPTU were cleanly separated from the technocratic aspects. The latter were more emphasised, especially in the presentation of the project to a professional audience, potentially out of a desire to legitimise the project as much as possible. There seems to have been no coordinated effort by the Axis powers or the other PTT administrations to promote the EPTU. While four administrations issued stamps on the occasion of the founding of the union – with the notable exception of the Italian administration – these stamps appear to have been placed in a specific national context. Without explanation or lettering, none of them had an obvious connection to the EPTU. Their quantity also does not indicate that they reached a wide national audience, let alone an international one.

Though the EPTU ended, the idea of a European postal union and its technocratic necessity survived the war; this is evident in that discussions towards building another union were quickly revived. The result was not one but two restricted PTT unions that included European countries, the CEPT (Western bloc) and the OCSC (Eastern bloc). The division was a consequence of the Cold War. In the Western bloc, several attempts to create a European postal union failed because they were attached to a political project for European unification (the ECSC, ECC and CoE). The CEPT, which was completely detached from any political organisation, was ultimately founded in 1959, shortly after the socialist states created the OCSC in 1957. The history of the emergence of the EPTU and the strong hegemony of the *Reichspost* more closely mirror the history of the OCSC and the Soviet administration's domination of its organisational process. A similarly leading administration cannot be detected in the case of the CEPT. The organisational standards of the EPTU were partially close to those of the CEPT and OCSC, which underlines technocratic continuity despite regime changes during the war. Like the EPTU, both organisations combined postal services and telecommunications, which was not the case on the level of global organisations. However, some standards such as



membership provisions became more political. The OCSC accepted only administrations from socialist countries. The main aim of the EPTU, the CEPT and the OCSC was the same: facilitating communication. This meant that the contents of standardisation were similar to the ones in the EPTU in the beginning. Some standards became political: preferential tariffs for ECC members were supported by the German Foreign Ministry while the *Bundespostministerium* was hesitant. During the EPTU, the German Foreign Ministry was not involved in negotiating or implementing such specific postal standards. Stamps remained a main tool for promoting international postal cooperation. In this respect, the continuities are in some ways evident. The number of copies of a stamp does not indicate that a national or international audience was reached, and it is unlikely that the meaning of the stamps and their connection to the PTT organisations would have been easily understood. In the Western bloc, the countries of the ECSC started the 'Europe stamp' series in 1956, and the CEPT took it over in 1959. This change caused the stamps to become even less political or connected to an idea of a unified Europe. In the series, the administrations issued stamps with the same motif, which had not been the case in 1942. The OCSC did not create such a stamp series, and the first stamps in 1958 varied greatly in design. In 1965, the administrations apparently agreed to portray the heads of Marx and Lenin but not to connect the stamp to the conference of the PTT administrations. The actors involved in the CEPT and OCSC were mostly individuals with no traceable connection to the EPTU, with three exceptions: Friedrich Reiss, who was head of the department for international mail within the *Bundespostministerium*; Kristjan Johannes Jensen, who was Director General of the Danish PTT administration in 1942 and 1959; and Simbri Ahola, who was Director General of the Finnish PTT administration during the war. Otherwise, the discontinuities clearly outweigh the continuities.

In conclusion, the EPTU demonstrates that the war did not per se cause a rupture in European postal cooperation. Although there were discontinuities in the inter- and post-war periods, the basic organisational and administrative-operative standards were continued in new organisations, and discussions of tariffs proceeded. The major issues of the EPTU, including conflicts between the Italian and German partners, were due to (geo)political and financial rather than technocratic reasons. The *Reichspost* took advantage of the fact that in this specific case of infrastructure integration, technocratic and political aspects overlapped. It profited from the ambiguous conceptualisation of the 'New Europe' to gain support for its European project, even though the lack of clarity on the issue

of Europe also presented hindrances from time to time. The EPTU was thus – in contrast to the term ‘New Europe’ – not at all ambiguous but instead serves as an important example of how concrete structures evolved to build the ‘New Europe’ independently of precise political guidelines. The EPTU’s founding and development also indicates that the implementation of the idea of a ‘New Europe’ was often realised through the installation of a German Europe by actors within the *Reichspost*, at least in the case of postal services. The *Reichspost* utilised the benefits of German hegemony over the continent to export aspects of the domestic German postal system to the rest of Europe. However, this does not mean that the standards did not make sense from a technocratic point of view, as the assessment of Swiss congress delegate Ernest Bonjour has shown. Rather, it means that the ‘New Europe’ of postal services, if standardisation had continued in this way, would have been a German Europe because the other European administrations would have harmonised their postal systems with Germany’s. If Germany had won the war, the EPTU would have guaranteed the *Reichspost* a significant amount of control over European postal services and thus increased Germany’s influence within the UPU. The momentum of the early territorially wins of the *Wehrmacht* was used to launch an Axis initiative to create the first European postal union with 13 other European PTT administrations. It can therefore be said that without the Second World War, the EPTU would not have existed. This may represent another continuity between the CEPT and the OCSC, the creation of which was highly influenced by the Cold War.

# Appendix

## 1. Complete Timeline

Date	Event
Spring 1940	Friedrich Risch travels to Russia and mentions the idea of creating a European Postal Union.
September 1940	During the plenipotentiary session of the <i>Reichspostministerium</i> , Kurt Timm, an advisor to the <i>Reichspostminister</i> Ohnesorge, describes the criteria for a European Postal Union in a speech.
End of 1940	The Foreign Department in the <i>Reichspostministerium</i> is founded and headed by Friedrich Risch.
November 1940	Italian and German telecommunications experts meet in Bolzano to discuss further cooperation before the background of the global unions not being effective anymore.
16 to 18 January 1941	Italian and German telecommunications experts meet in Munich to discuss the creation of a working group for European telecommunications administrations.
February 1941	Risch presents plans for an EPTU to the directors of the <i>Reichspost</i> .
21 June 1942	<i>Reichspostminister</i> Ohnesorge writes to Hitler to gain his approval for the project.
July 1941	<i>Reichspostminister</i> Ohnesorge informs the German Foreign Minister Ribbentrop of the plans (Summer 1941). Ohnesorge contacts the Swedish and Finnish postal administrations with the plans for a bilateral agreement and a European Postal Union.
28 August to 3 September 1941	Meeting of members of the Italian and German PTT administrations to negotiate the terms of three bilateral agreements: one for postal services and two for telecommunications.
October 1941	Italian-German PTT agreements are signed.
December 1941 to August 1942	Bilateral agreements between the German PTT administration and eight other PTT administrations, starting with the Finnish one in December 1941, are signed.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Event</b>
January 1942	Ohnesorge and the Italian minister for transports (to which the PTT administration was assigned), Host-Venturi, meet.
7 May 1942	An Italian-German meeting occurs in Berlin to continue simplifications within the Italian-German PTT services and further prepare the EPTU.
25 July 1942	A planned meeting between the Italian, German, Hungarian and Danish PTT administration fails due to the resistance of the Italian Foreign Ministry.
End of July 1942	Risch and postal Director General Giuseppe Pession (Italy) meet in Cortina to get the project back on track.
Beginning of August 1942	German, Italian, Danish and Hungarian representatives meet in Innsbruck to prepare the congress.
10 August 1942	Official invitations are sent to all possible participants.
19 August 1942	The German PTT administration sends preparatory documents (including drafts of the final agreements) to all administrations that had thus far agreed to participate.
September 1942	In September 1942, no bilateral meetings occurred. Yet the preparations continued, and important decisions were made, such as which administrations would participate in the congress.
12 October 1942	The European Postal congress in Vienna begins.
12 October 1942	Opening of the congress
13 October 1942	First general assembly
14-17 October 1942	Sessions of the agreement committee
17-19 October 1942	Second and third general assembly
16-22 October 1942	Sessions of the postal committee
24 October 1943	Closure of the congress
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

Date	Event
8 and 9 May 1945	Surrender of the Wehrmacht
24 November 1945	Denmark orders the suspension of the EPTU provisions

## 2. Comparison bilateral agreements – Overview according to articles

	Bulgaria	Belgium	Croatia	Denmark
<b>Date Signature Germany</b>	unknown	22.11.1942	unknown	25.04.1942
<b>Date Signature other country</b>	unknown	02.12.1942	unknown	02.05.1942
<b>Date Entry into Force</b>	01.09.1942	01.01.1943	01.06.1942	01.06. bzw. 01.09.1942
<b>WPC applies unless otherwise specified</b>	Art. 1	Art. 1	Art. 1	Art. 1
<b>Fee table and specification</b>	Art. 2	Art. 2	Art. 2	Art. 2
<b>Fee freedom within the postal exchange of Telegraph affairs</b>	Art. 3	Art. 4	Art. 4	Art. 5
<b>Abolition transit fees</b>	Art. 4*	Art. 5	Art. 5*	Art. 4*
<b>Entry into force, period of validity, period of notice</b>	Art. 5	Art. 6	Art. 7	Art. 6
<b>Languages</b>	Art. 6	Art. 7 **		Art. 7
<b>Other specifications</b>	-	Art. 3	Art. 3, Art.6	Art. 3
<b>Additional notes</b>	*not abolition but reduction	** Only the German version is the original one	*not abolition but reduction	*reduction at first, complete abolition 'negotiated' later

	<b>Finland</b>	<b>Hungary</b>	<b>Italy</b>	<b>Netherlands</b>
<b>Date Signature Germany</b>	12.12.1941	unknown	08.10.1941	30.08.1942
<b>Date Signature other country</b>	12.12.1941	unknown	08.10.1941	14.08.1942
<b>Date Entry into Force</b>	01.04.1942	01.07.1942	01.01.1942	01.09.1942
<b>WPC applies unless otherwise specified</b>	Art. 1	Art. 1	Art. 1	Art. 1
<b>Fee table and specification</b>	Art. 2	Art. 2	Art. 2	Art. 2
<b>Fee freedom within the postal exchange of Telegraph affairs</b>	Art. 3	Art. 3	Art. 3	Art. 5
<b>Abolition transit fees</b>	Art. 4*	Art. 4*		Art. 4
<b>Entry into force, period of validity, period of notice</b>	Art. 5	Art. 9	Art. 4	Art. 6
<b>Languages</b>	Art. 6	Art. 10	Art. 5	
<b>Other specifications</b>	-	Art. 5-9	-	Art. 3-4
<b>Additional notes</b>	*not abolition but reduction	*not abolition but reduction	Transit fees are missing.	

	<b>Norway</b>	<b>Romania</b>	<b>Slovakia</b>
<b>Date Signature Germany</b>	unknown	26.06.1942	unknown
<b>Date Signature other country</b>	unknown	04.07.1942	unknown
<b>Date Entry into Force</b>	01.09.1942	15.07.1942	01.09.1942
<b>WPC applies unless otherwise specified</b>	Art. 1	Art. 1	Art. 1
<b>Fee table and specification</b>	Art. 2	Art. 2	Art. 2
<b>Fee freedom within the postal exchange of Telegraph affairs</b>		Art. 3	Art. 3
<b>Abolition transit fees</b>	Art. 3		Art. 4
<b>Entry into force, period of validity, period of notice</b>	Art. 4	Art. 4	Art. 7
<b>Languages</b>	Art. 5	Art. 5	Art. 8
<b>Other specifications</b>			Art. 5-6
<b>Additional notes</b>			

## 3. Europe Stamps – Statistics

## 3.1 Belgium

(Currency: Franc)

Europe Stamp of the year	Postage value	Publication date	Edition	Total special stamps
1956	2 Fr.	15.09.1956	21.403.000	77.103.938
1956	4 Fr.	15.09.1956	5.258.000	
1957	2 Fr.	16.09.1957	6.436.000	56.073.669
1957	4 Fr.	16.09.1957	2.708.000	
1958	2,50 Fr.	13.09.1958	11.374.000	58.398.445
1958	5 Fr.	13.09.1958	3.315.000	
1959	2,50 Fr.	19.09.1959	5.981.000	34.705.990
1959	5 Fr.	19.09.1959	2.275.000	
1960	3 Fr.	17.09.1960	7.626.000	54.952.800
1960	6 Fr.	17.09.1960	1.990.000	
1961	3 Fr.	16.09.1961	3.533.000	34.242.972
1961	6 Fr.	16.09.1961	3.533.000	
1962	3 Fr.	15.09.1962	9.000.000	89.001.765
1962	6 Fr.	15.09.1962	6.000.000	
1963	3 Fr.	14.09.1963	9.000.000	87.308.128
1963	6 Fr.	14.09.1963	4.500.000	
1964	3 Fr.	12.09.1964	8.400.000	87.479.350
1964	6 Fr.	12.09.1964	3.300.000	
1965	1 Fr.	25.09.1965	7.500.000	185.426.831
1965	3 Fr.	25.09.1965	9.240.000	
1966	3 Fr.	24.09.1966	10.500.000	147.128.304
1966	6 Fr.	24.09.1966	2.500.000	
1967	3 Fr.	29.04.1967	7.000.000	113.837.030
1967	6 Fr.	29.04.1967	2.750.000	
1968	3 Fr.	27.04.1968	9.000.000	101.254.242
1968	6 Fr.	27.04.1968	2.750.000	
1969	3 Fr.	26.04.1969	10.500.000	156.101.880
1969	6 Fr.	26.04.1969	2.750.000	
1970	3,50 Fr.	01.05.1970	10.500.000	140.586.981
1970	7 Fr.	01.05.1970	2.750.000	
1971	3,50 Fr.	01.05.1971	10.500.000	149.924.402
1971	7 Fr.	01.05.1971	2.750.000	
1972	3,50 Fr.	29.04.1972	10.500.000	114.103.406
1972	7 Fr.	29.04.1972	2.750.000	
1973	4,50 Fr.	28.04.1973	10.500.000	118.152.011
1973	8 Fr.	28.04.1973	2.750.000	



<b>Year</b>	<b>Total Europe Stamps</b>	<b>Total special stamps</b>	<b>Share</b>
1956	26.661.000	77.103.938	34,6 %
1957	9.144.000	56.073.669	16,3 %
1958	14.689.000	58.398.445	25,2 %
1959	8.256.000	34.705.990	23,8 %
1960	9.616.000	54.952.800	17,5 %
1961	7.066.000	34.242.972	20,6 %
1962	15.000.000	89.001.765	16,9 %
1963	13.500.000	87.308.128	15,5 %
1964	11.700.000	87.479.350	13,4 %
1965	16.740.000	185.426.831	9,0 %
1966	13.000.000	147.128.304	8,8 %
1967	9.750.000	113.837.030	8,6 %
1968	11.750.000	101.254.242	11,6 %
1969	13.250.000	156.101.880	8,5 %
1970	13.250.000	140.586.981	9,4 %
1971	13.250.000	149.924.402	8,8 %
1972	13.250.000	114.103.406	11,6 %
1973	13.250.000	118.152.011	11,2 %

(Michel® Europa, Westeuropa, p. 63-103.)

## 3.2 France

(Currency: Franc)

Europe Stamp of the year	Postage value	Publication date	Edition	Total special stamps
1956	15 Fr.	15.09.1956	43.500.000	348.975.000
1956	30 Fr.	15.09.1956	13.300.000	
1957	20 Fr.	16.09.1957	12.630.000	1.844.495.000
1957	35 Fr.	16.09.1957	9.335.000	
1958	20 Fr.	13.09.1958	19.805.000	829.949.000
1958	35 Fr.	13.09.1958	9.210.000	
1959	25 Fr.	19.09.1959	10.000.000	1.460.026.000
1959	50 Fr.	19.09.1959	8.500.000	
1960	25 Fr.	17.09.1960	17.050.000	564.722.000
1960	50 Fr.	17.09.1960	11.735.000	
1961	25 Fr.	16.09.1961	19.725.000	615.381.000
1961	50 Fr.	16.09.1961	14.395.000	
1962	25 Fr.	15.09.1962	18.975.000	420.485.000
1962	50 Fr.	15.09.1962	10.380.000	
1963	25 Fr.	14.09.1963	19.435.000	469.241.500
1963	50 Fr.	14.09.1963	10.765.000	
1964	25 Fr.	12.09.1964	28.990.000	487.425.500
1964	50 Fr.	12.09.1964	10.225.000	
1965	30 Fr.	25.09.1965	23.890.000	624.426.000
1965	60 Fr.	25.09.1965	11.225.000	
1966	30 Fr.	24.09.1966	31.310.000	239.543.000
1966	60 Fr.	24.09.1966	8.200.000	
1967	30 Fr.	29.04.1967	40.600.000	260.577.500
1967	60 Fr.	29.04.1967	10.310.000	
1968	30 Fr.	27.04.1968	30.290.000	345.161.000
1968	60 Fr.	27.04.1968	11.165.000	
1969	40 Fr.	26.04.1969	24.920.000	292.392.500
1969	70 Fr.	26.04.1969	11.925.000	
1970	40 Fr.	02.05.1970	20.375.000	271.393.500
1970	80 Fr.	02.05.1970	15.900.000	
1971	50 Fr.	08.05.1971	20.000.000	294.989.000
1971	80 Fr.	08.05.1971	10.100.000	
1972	50 Fr.	22.04.1972	21.550.000	293.611.000
1972	90 Fr.	22.04.1972	10.500.000	
1973	50 Fr.	28.04.1973	20.000.000	322.489.000
1973	90 Fr.	28.04.1973	10.200.000	

<b>Year</b>	<b>Total Europe Stamps</b>	<b>Total special stamps</b>	<b>Share</b>
1956	56.800.000	348.975.000	16,3 %
1957	21.965.000	1.844.495.000	1,2 %
1958	29.015.000	829.949.000	3,5 %
1959	18.500.000	1.460.026.000	1,3 %
1960	28.785.000	564.722.000	5,1 %
1961	34.120.000	615.381.000	5,5 %
1962	29.355.000	420.485.000	7,0 %
1963	30.200.000	469.241.500	6,4 %
1964	39.215.000	487.425.500	8,0 %
1965	35.115.000	624.426.000	5,6 %
1966	39.510.000	239.543.000	16,5 %
1967	50.910.000	260.577.500	19,5 %
1968	41.455.000	345.161.000	12,0 %
1969	36.845.000	292.392.500	12,6 %
1970	36.275.000	271.393.500	13,4 %
1971	30.100.000	294.989.000	10,2 %
1972	32.050.000	293.611.000	10,9 %
1973	30.200.000	322.489.000	9,4 %

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

## 3.3 Germany

(Currency: Deutsche Mark, Pf. = Pfenning)

Europe Stamp of the year	Postage value	Publication date	Edition	Total special stamps
1956	10 Pf.	15.09.1956	68.000.000	96.000.000
1956	40 Pf.	15.09.1956	28.000.000	
1957	10 Pf.	16.09.1957	60.000.000	85.000.000
1957	40 Pf.	16.09.1957	25.000.000	
1958	10 Pf.	13.09.1958	100.000.000	127.000.000
1958	40 Pf.	13.09.1958	27.000.000	
1959	10 Pf.	19.09.1959	90.000.000	115.000.000
1959	40 Pf.	19.09.1959	25.000.000	
1960	10 Pf.	19.09.1960	100.000.000	150.000.000
1960	20 Pf.	19.09.1960	30.000.000	
1961	40 Pf.	19.09.1960	20.000.000	
1961	10 Pf.	18.09.1961	109.090.500	129.090.500
1962	40 Pf.	18.09.1961	20.000.000	
1962	10 Pf.	17.09.1962	85.000.000	105.000.000
1963	40 Pf.	17.09.1962	20.000.000	
1963	15 Pf.	14.09.1963	30.000.000	140.000.000
1964	20 Pf.	14.09.1963	110.000.000	
1964	15 Pf.	14.09.1964	30.000.000	100.000.000
1965	20 Pf.	14.09.1964	70.000.000	
1965	15 Pf.	27.09.1965	30.000.000	100.000.000
1966	20 Pf.	27.09.1965	70.000.000	
1966	20 Pf.	24.09.1966	30.000.000	100.000.000
1967	30 Pf.	24.09.1966	70.000.000	
1967	20 Pf.	02.05.1967	30.000.000	115.000.000
1968	30 Pf.	02.05.1967	85.000.000	
1968	20 Pf.	29.04.1968	50.000.000	120.000.000
1969	30 Pf.	29.04.1968	70.000.000	
1969	20 Pf.	28.04.1969	50.000.000	121.500.000
1970	30 Pf.	28.04.1969	71.500.000	
1970	20 Pf.	04.05.1970	50.000.000	145.000.000
1971	30 Pf.	04.05.1970	95.000.000	
1971	20 Pf.	03.05.1971	50.000.000	121.600.000
1972	30 Pf.	03.05.1971	71.600.000	
1972	25 Pf.	02.05.1972	50.000.000	101.200.000
1973	30 Pf.	02.05.1972	51.200.000	
1973	30 Pf.	30.04.1973	50.000.000	123.450.000

<b>Year</b>	<b>Total Europe Stamps</b>	<b>Total special stamps</b>	<b>Share</b>
1956	96.000.000	332.300.000	28,9 %
1957	85.000.000	445.700.000	19,1 %
1958	127.000.000	440.710.000	28,8 %
1959	115.000.000	7.838.320.000	1,5 %
1960	150.000.000	489.250.000	30,7 %
1961	129.090.500	15.521.240.500	0,8 %
1962	105.000.000	304.100.000	34,5 %
1963	140.000.000	508.000.000	27,6 %
1964	100.000.000	6.444.247.000	1,6 %
1965	100.000.000	818.572.000	12,2 %
1966	100.000.000	21.945.852.000	0,5 %
1967	115.000.000	461.988.000	24,9 %
1968	120.000.000	865.008.000	13,9 %
1969	121.500.000	822.551.000	14,8 %
1970	145.000.000	4.141.697.000	3,5 %
1971	121.600.000	6.309.407.000	1,9 %
1972	101.200.000	895.625.030	11,3 %
1973	123.450.000	1.131.725.000	10,9 %

(Michel® Deutschland, Deutschland, p. 825-862.)

## 3.4 Italy

(Currency: Lire)

Europe Stamp of the year	Postage value	Publication date	Edition	Total special stamps
1956	25 L.	15.09.1956	50.000.000	236.790.000
1956	60 L.	15.09.1956	15.000.000	
1957	25 L.	16.09.1957	18.625.000	225.600.000
1957	60 L.	16.09.1957	10.800.000	
1958	25 L.	13.09.1958	50.000.000	413.000.000
1958	60 L.	13.09.1958	15.000.000	
1959	25 L.	19.09.1959	50.000.000	375.000.000
1959	60 L.	19.09.1959	15.000.000	
1960	30 L.	17.09.1960	50.000.000	480.000.000
1960	70 L.	17.09.1960	15.000.000	
1961	30 L.	18.09.1961	49.882.000	179.251.214
1961	70 L.	18.09.1961	14.538.000	
1962	30 L.	17.09.1962	39.954.957	187.761.337
1962	70 L.	17.09.1962	9.393.338	
1963	30 L.	16.09.1963	29.925.055	169.494.229
1963	70 L.	16.09.1963	9.342.462	
1964	30 L.	14.09.1964	29.857.638	138.019.185
1964	70 L.	14.09.1964	9.573.373	
1965	40 L.	27.09.1965	34.721.085	255.676.618
1965	90 L.	27.09.1965	14.105.063	
1966	40 L.	24.09.1966	24.304.635	277.851.246
1966	90 L.	24.09.1966	11.016.392	
1967	40 L.	10.04.1967	25.000.000	471.000.000
1967	90 L.	10.04.1967	15.000.000	
1968	50 L.	29.04.1968	20.000.000	347.000.000
1968	90 L.	29.04.1968	12.000.000	
1969	50 L.	28.04.1969	20.000.000	126.000.000
1969	90 L.	28.04.1969	12.000.000	
1970	50 L.	04.05.1970	16.000.000	338.000.000
1970	90 L.	04.05.1970	10.000.000	
1971	50 L.	01.05.1971	15.000.000	242.000.000
1971	90 L.	01.05.1971	8.000.000	
1972	50 L.	29.04.1972	15.000.000	365.000.000
1972	90 L.	29.04.1972	8.000.000	
1973	50 L.	30.06.1973	15.000.000	601.000.000
1973	90 L.	30.06.1973	8.000.000	

<b>Year</b>	<b>Total Europe Stamps</b>	<b>Total special stamps</b>	<b>Share</b>
1956	65.000.000	236.790.000	27,5 %
1957	29.425.000	225.600.000	13,0 %
1958	65.000.000	413.000.000	15,7 %
1959	65.000.000	375.000.000	17,3 %
1960	65.000.000	480.000.000	13,5 %
1961	64.420.000	179.251.214	35,9 %
1962	49.348.295	187.761.337	26,3 %
1963	39.267.517	169.494.229	23,2 %
1964	39.431.011	138.019.185	28,6 %
1965	48.826.148	255.676.618	19,1 %
1966	35.321.027	277.851.246	12,7 %
1967	40.000.000	471.000.000	8,5 %
1968	32.000.000	347.000.000	9,2 %
1969	32.000.000	126.000.000	25,4 %
1970	26.000.000	338.000.000	7,7 %
1971	23.000.000	242.000.000	9,5 %
1972	23.000.000	365.000.000	6,3 %
1973	23.000.000	601.000.000	3,8 %

(Michel® Europa, Südeuropa, p. 396-424.)

## 3.5 Netherlands

(Currency: Dutch Guilder, C = Cents)

Europe Stamp of the year	Postage value	Publication date	Edition	Total special stamps
1956	10 C.	15.09.1956	44.517.700	84.376.932
1956	25 C.	15.09.1956	5.339.500	
1957	10 C.	16.09.1957	32.542.250	91.557.236
1957	30 C.	16.09.1957	3.743.800	
1958	12 C.	13.09.1958	48.789.050	101.834.346
1958	30 C.	13.09.1958	4.494.350	
1959	12 C.	19.09.1959	24.252.000	113.250.212
1959	30 C.	19.09.1959	3.203.300	
1960	12 C.	17.09.1960	23.497.000	89.830.792
1960	30 C.	17.09.1960	2.746.500	
1961	12 C.	18.09.1961	35.601.500	76.020.614
1961	30 C.	18.09.1961	5.265.500	
1962	12 C.	17.09.1962	34.736.400	393.863.633
1962	30 C.	17.09.1962	4.568.600	
1963	12 C.	16.09.1963	34.073.500	1.076.283.840
1963	30 C.	16.09.1963	3.823.200	
1964	15 C.	14.09.1964	29.770.300	248.502.308
1964	20 C.	14.09.1964	4.842.100	
1965	18 C.	27.09.1965	30.713.900	161.106.093
1965	20 C.	27.09.1965	4.558.900	
1966	20 C.	24.09.1966	30.949.400	91.736.842
1966	40 C.	24.09.1966	4.919.900	
1967	20 C.	02.05.1967	31.923.000	112.859.680
1967	45 C.	02.05.1967	5.801.200	
1968	20 C.	29.04.1968	31.322.000	168.821.882
1968	45 C.	29.04.1968	5.654.300	
1969	25 C.	28.04.1969	31.577.230	209.675.336
1969	45 C.	28.04.1969	3.550.400	
1970	25 C.	04.05.1970	33.307.210	278.786.813
1970	45 C.	04.05.1970	4.519.400	
1971	25 C.	01.05.1971	32.807.480	181.822.942
1971	45 C.	01.05.1971	5.302.000	
1972	30 C.	29.04.1972	19.000.000	197.729.467
1972	45 C.	29.04.1972	3.000.000	
1973	35 C.	30.06.1973	24.630.000	143.677.296
1973	50 C.	30.06.1973	3.392.000	



<b>Year</b>	<b>Total Europe Stamps</b>	<b>Total special stamps</b>	<b>Share</b>
1956	49.857.200	84.376.932	59,1 %
1957	36.286.050	91.557.236	39,6 %
1958	53.283.400	101.834.346	52,3 %
1959	27.455.300	113.250.212	24,2 %
1960	26.243.500	89.830.792	29,2 %
1961	40.867.000	76.020.614	53,8 %
1962	39.305.000	393.863.633	10,0 %
1963	37.896.700	1.076.283.840	3,5 %
1964	34.612.400	248.502.308	13,9 %
1965	35.272.800	161.106.093	21,9 %
1966	35.869.300	91.736.842	39,1 %
1967	37.724.200	112.859.680	33,4 %
1968	36.976.300	168.821.882	21,9 %
1969	35.127.630	209.675.336	16,8 %
1970	37.826.610	278.786.813	13,6 %
1971	38.109.480	181.822.942	21,0 %
1972	22.000.000	197.729.467	11,1 %
1973	28.022.000	143.677.296	19,5 %

(Michel® Europa, Westeuropa, p. 1238-1255.)

## 3.6 Luxembourg

(Currency: Franc)

Europe Stamp of the year	Postage value	Publication date	Edition	Total special stamps
1956	2 Fr.	15.09.1956	1.145.000	2.315.000
1956	3 Fr.	15.09.1956	425.000	
1957	4 Fr.	15.09.1956	745.000	
1957	2 Fr.	16.09.1957	1.070.000	1.867.500
1958	3 Fr.	16.09.1957	380.000	
1958	4 Fr.	16.09.1957	417.500	
1959	2,50 Fr.	13.09.1958	2.010.000	3.552.500
1959	3,50 Fr.	13.09.1958	765.000	
1960	5 Fr.	13.09.1958	777.500	
1960	2,50 Fr.	19.09.1959	1.537.000	2.544.500
1961	5 Fr.	19.09.1959	1.007.500	
1961	2,50 Fr.	19.09.1960	1.542.100	2.594.200
1962	5 Fr.	19.09.1960	1.052.100	
1962	2,50 Fr.	18.09.1961	2.892.500	5.032.500
1963	5 Fr.	18.09.1961	2.140.000	
1963	2,50 Fr.	17.09.1962	3.100.000	5.200.000
1964	5 Fr.	17.09.1962	2.100.000	
1964	3 Fr.	16.09.1963	2.575.000	4.125.000
1965	6 Fr.	16.09.1963	1.550.000	
1965	3 Fr.	14.09.1964	2.580.000	4.120.000
1966	6 Fr.	14.09.1964	1.540.000	
1966	3 Fr.	27.09.1965	2.075.000	3.345.000
1967	6 Fr.	27.09.1965	1.270.000	
1967	3 Fr.	26.09.1966	1.800.000	2.800.000
1968	6 Fr.	24.09.1966	1.000.000	
1968	3 Fr.	02.05.1967	1.050.000	2.100.000
1969	6 Fr.	02.05.1967	1.050.000	
1969	3 Fr.	29.04.1968	1.000.000	2.000.000
1970	6 Fr.	29.04.1968	1.000.000	
1970	3 Fr.	28.04.1969	1.000.000	2.000.000
1971	6 Fr.	28.04.1969	1.000.000	
1971	3 Fr.	04.05.1970	1.000.000	2.000.000
1972	6 Fr.	04.05.1970	1.000.000	
1972	3 Fr.	03.05.1971	1.000.000	2.000.000
1973	6 Fr.	03.05.1971	1.000.000	
1973	3 Fr.	02.05.1972	1.000.000	2.000.000

<b>Year</b>	<b>Total Europe Stamps</b>	<b>Total special stamps</b>	<b>Share</b>
1956	2.315.000	7.729.756	29,9 %
1957	1.867.500	5.837.309	32,0 %
1958	3.552.500	8.915.849	39,8 %
1959	2.544.500	10.764.754	23,6 %
1960	2.594.200	8.962.328	28,9 %
1961	5.032.500	9.840.389	51,1 %
1962	5.200.000	10.141.993	51,3 %
1963	4.125.000	14.627.625	28,2 %
1964	4.120.000	12.536.620	32,9 %
1965	3.345.000	7.896.468	42,4 %
1966	2.800.000	14.957.106	18,7 %
1967	2.100.000	10.765.397	19,5 %
1968	2.000.000	13.164.060	15,2 %
1969	2.000.000	10.447.196	19,1 %
1970	2.000.000	10.416.404	19,2 %
1971	2.000.000	8.923.675	22,4 %
1972	2.000.000	12.569.040	15,9 %
1973	2.000.000	12.037.895	16,6 %

(Michel® Europa, Westeuropa, p. 1118-1133.)



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