

# Express stamps, 1916-1922

The 1916 Postordnung (RGB 317) introduced a new service: express delivery of printed matter, which began on 1 October 1916. Details are given in sections 55-56 of the Postordnung. The item had to be flat not rolled, fully franked, and sent to an inland address (which included Bosnia, Herzegovina, Germany and Liechtenstein). A surcharge of 2h was applied irrespective of the item's weight, payment thereof was shown by a red triangular stamp. For items up to 50 grams, the normal postage was 3h and a green triangular 5h stamp was also issued to pay both charges. No triangular stamp meant no express handling! The new stamps, and a description of the design, were announced in Postverordnungsblatt (PVOB) 1916/79 Nr 82 of 24 Sept, sales beginning on 1 October.



The triangular stamps were printed head-to-tail, with 8 rows of 13 stamps; however since  $8 \times 13 = 104$  while the currency was 1Kr=100h, the right-hand 4 stamps in the bottom row were omitted. See Ferchenbauer II p.319. [Paper suited to 10 rows of 10 wasn't available.] This example could either be the express sending of 4 newspapers, or a later using-up of the stamps for ordinary postage



The illustration on page 319 of Ferchenbauer II shows that this mint pair plus blank triangle comes from the left-hand side of the printed sheet. The designer's name - Alfred Cossmann - is cunningly concealed below the value digit!



The triangular shape irritated the users, so the design was rearranged into a rectangular shape, and these were used from May 1917 as the triangular stamps ran out. PVOB 1917/35 Nr 31 of 14th May gave the details. The existing triangular stamps remained valid till 31st October 1917, and could be exchanged for new ones at Post Offices during November. On 1st September 1918, as part of a general rates rise, the postage rate for an inland postcard with an imprinted stamp was raised from 8h to 10h to match the rate for an adhesive-franked card. The original red triangular 2h stamp was resurrected on the same date and used to officially uprate the 8h postal stationery card to the new rate of 10h. PTVOB 1918/48 gives the details. Later, the rectangular 2h was also used in this way.



The post-war Austrian government amalgamated Post and Telegraphs, so it was PTVOB 1918/67 that announced on 2nd December 1918 that "until new stamps were ready" all existing stamps would be diagonally overprinted with Deutschösterreich; those already 'out there' remained valid and would be used up. The printed sheets had been arranged as 8



columns of 13 rows, presumably to fit the available paper.

Since  $8 \times 13 = 104$ , the middle 4 positions of the bottom row contained St Andrew's Crosses - so stamps with crosses are found. The earliest recorded usage of these Deutschösterreich express stamps is May 1919. The overprinting had many imperfections, described below.



In 1919 Posts and Telegraphs were separated again. By the end of 1921 the express surcharge had risen to 50h, and the rectangular red 2h Deutschösterreich over-printed stamp was further overprinted with 50, as described in PVOB 1921/59 of 26th November. Kroiss quotes Die Postmarke as stating that the stamp sold out immediately, hence genuinely-used examples are rare. He illustrates the use of ordinary adhesives as a substitute.



The first example is cancelled in Vienna on 21.2.1922, so could be genuine. The second is St. Polten on 15.3.1922, and there is no combination of printed matter rates at that date that comes to  $7\frac{1}{2}$ Kr to which to add an express surcharge. A numerical possibility is using the 50h express surcharge stamp plus the  $7\frac{1}{2}$ Kr to pay 8Kr for a 200-gram flat printed-matter item!



PVOB 1921/64 of 22 Dec announced the redesigned "Posthorn and arrow" 50k design, which would replace the previous Deutschösterreich overprinted stamps as these were used up. Plausibly-cancelled specimens exist.

However, on 1st May 1922, the inexorable rise of inflation saw the end of the printed matter express delivery stamp.

## The stamps

Nr	Face	Issued	Description	Notes
217	2h	1.10.1916	Red triangle on yellow paper	The paper is creamy-yellow throughout; shades are found. Perforations include $11\frac{1}{2}$ , $12\frac{1}{2}$ , and the higher-priced $11\frac{1}{2} \times 12\frac{1}{2}$ and $12\frac{1}{2} \times 11\frac{1}{2}$ ; imperf-between pairs exist. Proofs exist in other values eg 3h, 6h and in other colours.
218	5h	1.10.1916	Green triangle on yellow paper	
219	2h	15.5.1917	Red rectangle on yellow paper	
220	5h	15.5.1917	Green rectangle on yellow paper	
252	2h	15.5.1919	219 with diagonal overprint Deutschösterreich	A wide range of faults are found in the overprint position, and of damage to the capital D - see later.
253	5h	15.5.1919	220 with diagonal overprint Deutschösterreich	
254	50h	15.12.1921	252 further overprinted '50'	Overprint in blue-black ink.
417	50h	21.12.1921	Rectangle: arrow & posthorn	Printed in sheets of 80 (says PVOB 1921/64) by typography, in lilac ink on yellow paper

## The dates

The various references give (as usual!) different dates for the introduction and invalidation of the stamps. Some at least of this is confusion between decision, announcement, printing, issue to Post offices, and first-use dates.



Introduction						Invalidation			
Nr	face	Netto	Karasek	F'bauer	Kroiss	Netto	Karasek	F'bauer	Kroiss
217	2h	1.10.1916	1.10.1916	1.10.1916	1.10.1916	31.10.1920	28.2.1918	28.2.1918	End 2.1918
			1.9.1918	1.9.1918	1.9.1918		14.1.1920	31.10.1920	14.1.1920
218	5h	1.10.1916	1.10.1916	1.10.1916	--	28.2.1918	28.2.1918	28.2.1918	--
219	2h	15.5.1917	15.5.1917	5.1917	5.1917	31.10.1920	14.1.1920	31.10.1920	14.1.1920
220	5h	15.5.1917	15.5.1917	5.1917	5.1917	31.10.1920	31.10.1920	31.10.1920	31.10.1920
252	2h	15.5.1919	12.1918	--	5.1919	31.10.1920	14.1.1920	--	14.1.1920
253	5h	15.5.1919	12.1918	--	5.1919	30.4.1922	30.4.1922	--	30.4.1922
254	50h	15.12.1921	1.12.1921	--	31.12.1921	30.4.1922	30.4.1922	--	30.4.1922
417	50h	21.12.1921	1.1922	--	(but see note)	30.4.1922	30.4.1922	--	30.4.1922

217 was resurrected on 1.9.1918 to officially uprate the 8h-imprinted postal stationery card to 10h, the existing rate for franking with adhesives, because the "8h concession" ceased on that date. The inland postcard rate rose to 25h on 15.1.1920; 217 probably remained valid as a component of ordinary franking but few ordinary senders would wish to do this!  
Note: Kroiss records Die Postmarke as suggesting that the actual issue of 254 and 417 was in February 1922.

### The rates [for inland printed matter only]

Period	From	To	Express surcharge	Postage for 50 grams	Express + postage	Registration
--	1.10.1916	11.11.1918	2h	3h	5h	25h
1	12.11.1918	14.1.1920				
2	15.1.1920	14.4.1920	5h	10h	15h	60h
3	15.4.1920	31.1.1921	10h	20h	30h	120h
4	1.2.1921	31.7.1921	10h	40h	50h	2K
5	1.8.1921	30.11.1921	20h	80h	1K	5K
6	1.12.1921	30.4.1922	50h	2K	2K50	10K



23.1.1919: Köflach to Frankfurt in Germany; inland rates; dual-language canceller; 2h triangle uprating.

### 1919 Deutschösterreich overprints



Stamps with St Andrew's Crosses, so from second-bottom row of the printed sheet.



Many imperfections can be found in the positioning of the Deutschösterreich overprint; and the capital D seems to have been especially prone to damage.



Left: a high overprint, with a gap of 2.2mm between the bottom of the D and the thin green line above the O O H.

Right: a low overprint, only 0.2mm above the thin line. This gap comes in all sizes, from 2.5mm to minus 0.2mm!



The overprint also varies in its left-right alignment

A selection of damaged Ds, as seen through a digital microscope.



Extraneous piece in middle

Extraneous piece in middle

Extraneous piece in middle

Top & bottom of main stroke damaged





Leading edge of D broken off;  
main stroke damaged

Chip missing from bottom of  
D; extraneous piece in middle

Main stroke damaged; whole  
letter looks vertically squashed

## Express stamps in use



22.9.1918: Freiwaldau to Vienna. 2h triangle used to uprate imprinted-8h card to the new 10h rate.



5.12.1918: Hruschau to Jauernig, both in Silesia so by then in Czechoslovakia. Dual-language canceller; 2h triangle uprating: all as if still Austrian. Message (in German) includes "we now belong to the Czechoslovak state - hopefully (USA President) Wilson will change that". (Spoiler alert - he didn't.) Yvonne Wheatley comments: "Austrian stamps could be used in Czechoslovakia until 28 February 1919 and postal stationery until 14 October 1919. Changing the dual-language cancellers began immediately but took a long time to convert in some areas because of resistance from the local population. There is no cut-off date because the existing ones continued to be used until there was a replacement."



12.1.1919: Prague (to Prague). Dual-language canceller; 2h triangle uprating. YW's note applies.





13.1.1919: Pöchlarn to Freilassing, 2h rectangle used to uprate imprinted-8h card.



29.4.1919: St Johann to Vienna. 2h rectangle used to uprate imprinted-8h card.



8.11.1919: Vienna to Villach. 5h rectangle express stamp plus 5h Deutschösterreich overprinted definitive to pay the 10h postcard rate.