

THE FIRST EURO ISSUE, 1 JANUARY 2002.

Austria adopted the Euro currency on 1 January 2002, at 1 Euro = 13.7603 Schillings. Every Schilling-denominated stamp issued since the currency reform of 10 December 1947 remained valid by itself or in combination with Euro stamps until 30 June 2002 – philatelists had a happy six months to create ever more inventive covers.

Specimen Stamps (with a diagonal black line) were issued to editors of philatelic journals. The rates are the legally-exact conversions (eg 51 cents was defined as the conversion of 7 Schillings); for political reasons they were not rounded up. Well, not until 18 months later.



An accompanying “**Euro Commemorative**” was also issued, with a face value of 3€27, the foreign registration rate. On the back is a representation of the old currency, printed in ‘edible ink’; the designer Prof Hannes Margreiter’s concept is that as you lick the stamp, the old coinage dissolves and the new remains!



Part-franked mail



Inevitably, customers arrived at post offices with part-franked mail and wanted to pay the balance in cash. The counter staff had conversion tables, so knew how much cash to request. However there were no Euro stamps with which to frank the mail, and Schilling stamps had been withdrawn. Larger offices had an Opal machine, which could print a ‘stamp’ – label, really – of the correct amount. Smaller offices did not, so the Supplementary Stamp was issued on 1 Jan 2002. The first version was perforated and supplied to the counter staff in sheets on a self-copying backing sheet; the clerk wrote the amount on the stamp, detached it, and applied it to the letter. The backing sheet became the sales return, its total showing how much cash the clerk should have. On 24 May 2002 a self-adhesive version appeared; both were withdrawn on 1 June 2003.



This is an example of the overprintings that were done on these stamps: in 2006 there were serious floods in Austria and the Post Office issued 25c stamps revalued at 75 cents and with a 425 cent charity surcharge.

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Wörthersee,
Kärnten



Mondsee,
Ob.Öst



St Martin Kapelle,
Kleinwalsertal,
Vorarlberg



Schönlaternerstrasse,
Wien



Steyr,
Ob.Öst.



Hadres,
Weinviertel,
Nieder Öst.



Am steinernen Meer,
Salzburg



Bodensee,
Vorarlberg



Inneralpbach,
Tirol



Weststeirisches
Bauernhaus,
Rossegg



Presshaus am
Eisenberg,
Burgenland



Heiligenkreuz,
Niederöst.



Bildstock,
Hochosterwitz,
Kärnten

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On 1 June 2003, Austria Post were allowed to change the rates from the Euro-conversion ones: and of course they did. The inland letter rate rose from 51 to 55 cents, and as well as a 55c stamp (shown on the previous page) they issued a 4c makeup so that remaining 2003 stamps could be used. There were 4 other makeup, all using existing designs in changed colours.



There remained considerable stocks of 2003-denomination stamps, so a competition was held and (eventually) ten overprint designs were chosen, all denominated as 55c. They were applied to the residual stock of 2003 and makeup stamps (it is alleged that the 7c makeup value had to be reprinted before it could be overprinted!) and issued from 2004 to 2006.

