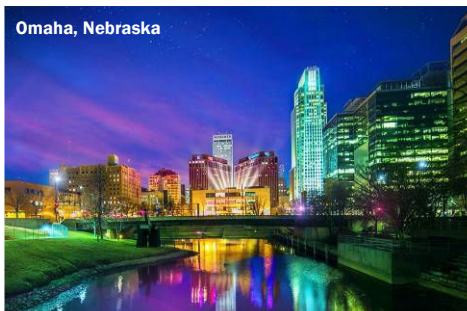




Moldova Wins Gold & Silver in North & South America



August was an extremely busy month for Moldovan philately with participation at two major national exhibitions, at each end of the New World.

It was also an extraordinarily successful month for us, winning two medals and putting Moldovan philately firmly in the top international league.

August 1-4 saw the annual national exhibition for the United States, "StampShow 2019", this year held in Omaha, Nebraska. This is a very large and very popular annual event with over 800 exhibition frames.

Whilst it is the first time that IMPS participated at an exhibition in the USA, it is not the first time that Moldovan philatelic material has been exhibited there. Our friend, Gheorghe Plugaru, exhibited at both "StampShow" and at "Chicagopex" in 2018

with his Maximaphily collections winning large vermeil and silvers medals respectively.

Gheorghe was also present at the 2019 "StampShow" event with a display dedicated to the US flag, winning a silver medal.

For our website "MoldovaStamps.org", IMPS was awarded a gold medal by the "StampShow" jury.

August 6-10 saw the annual national philatelic exhibition for Brazil, "BRAPEX 2019", held in São Paulo at the splendid building of the Centro Cultural Correios in the city's downtown area.

The exhibition was hosted by the venerable Sociedade Philatelica Paulista (SPP) who this year celebrate the 100th



anniversary of their founding.

This was the very first time the SPP accepted digital works into competition and it was also the first time that Moldovan philately was exposed in Latin America.

For our website, the "BRAPEX 2019" jury awarded us a silver medal.

Full reports for both exhibitions are inside...



Inside this month's issue...

New stamp issue:
Field Crops



Organized philately in Moldova: Permanently grounded?



Fake Material Alerts!



Exhibition Report: APS “StampShow 2019” - Omaha, Nebraska

Held between August 1 and 4 at the gigantic CHI Health Center in Omaha, the 133rd annual American Philatelic Society “StampShow” was again an enormous success.

This 800-frame show is the national exhibition for the United States where philately is alive and well and absolutely thriving. The organizers, the American Philatelic Society (APS) enjoys a membership of more than 20,000 and contrary to common belief, many of those members are foreigners who collect non-American stamps.



Having recently joined the APS, we find it to be a highly professional and efficiently-run organization where philately from all the world's countries is welcome. Within the APS, we cannot detect any evidence of national prejudices, personal politics, cliques or stamp “snobbery”, things that seems to plague many other national organizations in Europe.



CHI Health Center. Omaha

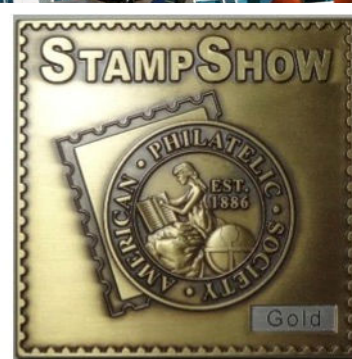
The APS annual “StampShow” exhibition has been accepting websites and other forms of digital material into it's competitions since 2017. In this regard, they are far more advanced and progressive than the FIP, whose outdated and conservative attitudes we have mentioned before in the IMPS Newsletter.

Website participation at “StampShow” was extremely straightforward. Simply complete the online application form. There is no requirement for membership of the APS, although there is a discount for members. There is no requirement for previous medals/points at other exhibitions and the application fee is very reasonable. There is also an option to pay the fee by PayPal, if you ask. Therefore you do not need to give your credit card information.

Once the forms are sent (via email) everything is handled electronically and a most efficient way.

The judging criteria are clearly laid out and your website is listed in the participant's list some weeks before the exhibition.

Your score (medal) is published online on the last day of the exhibition and provided your website is any good,



your medal, diploma and judges evaluation are sent to you in the mail about a week later. This is how website competitions at philatelic exhibitions should be run!

We were absolutely delighted to have been awarded a gold medal for the IMPS website. We consider this to be an endorsement of the many years of work that has been invested in this project.

We primarily consider this award to be a victory for Republic of Moldova and her beautiful philately and we would like to thank all the members, friends and supporters of IMPS for their various contributions to this victory.



ABOVE: IMPS prepared just 6 copies of this special exhibition cover with personalized stamps of Moldova (RIGHT). The covers were distributed to supporters of the websites in philatelic competitions.

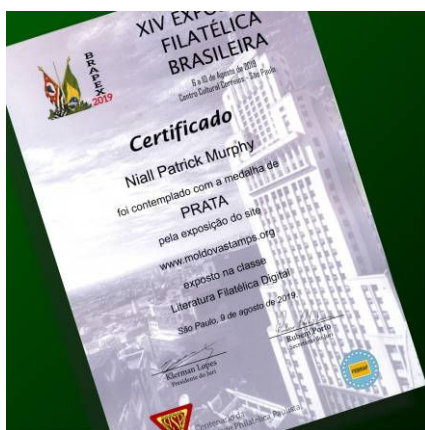


In general, we encourage all philatelists who publish websites, to participate at national and international exhibitions and to keep this beautiful hobby alive for the current and next generations.

Exhibition Report: “BRAPEX 2019” - São Paulo, Brazil

The exhibition was held at the magnificent building of the “Centro Cultural Correios”, also known as the “Post Office Palace”, in downtown São Paulo. This is the former main post office of the city and was built in an eclectic architectural style and opened in 1922. With its white marble halls, the building is now used as a cultural centre for hosting a variety of prestige exhibitions and other events.

Upon entering the exhibition, it was immediately clear that this was no small event. There were many isles of exhibition frames that were clearly the result of some exceptionally enthusiastic and dedicated work by many local philatelists.



Award certificate. “Prata” means “Silver”

It was the very first time that digital material was permitted into competition at the national exhibition. This the initiative of the young member of the organizing committee, Ygor Chrispin who, like IMPS, agrees that websites play a vital role in the future of philately and have been ignored for far too long.

But it's not clear if the jury was on-board with this revolutionary concept. Of the five websites were admitted into competition, four were awarded silver medals and one a large silver medal. All the sites were entirely different in size and topics.



Ygor Chrispin & Niall Murphy

Considering that the judging criteria are international standards, set by FIP and based on the same guidelines as printed literature, and having been previously awarded large vermeil and gold medals at “ITALIA 2018” and the APS “Stamp Show 2019” respectively, we were curious to understand why our website was downgraded by so many places.

Reading the Palmares report, it seems that the jury set unbelievably high standards for all competitors. We have never seen so many bronze medals and so few gold ones. One particular exhibit caught our attention, “Brazilian History Related to Philately, Numismatics and Telecartophilia” which was a truly wonderful piece of work, beautifully crafted and prepared with the greatest care. It was visually splendid and a fascinating blend of philately and numismatics. This superb exhibit was awarded, a mere silver-bronze medal.

But since we are not experts on Brazilian philately, we are not really in a position to comment. But it seemed that this was the pattern of judging for the majority of exhibits.

The organizing society, the Sociedade Filatélica Paulista (SPP) is a large, active and well funded organization who this year celebrate their 100th anniversary. Clearly this venerable group represents the philatelic elite of Brazil. Our impression was that there was little interest in modern philately, especially foreign material from countries that are barely known in Brazil, such as Moldova. Maybe if we had exhibited the classic “Cap de Bour” stamps of Moldavia, this



Niall Murphy outside the Centro Cultural Correios, São Paulo

might have been a more appropriate display for this auspicious event.

We also noted that no philatelic literature, digital or otherwise, was on display at the exhibition and that digital literature was mentioned in the very last part of the Palmares document, almost as a footnote.



IMPS prepared just 6 copies of this special exhibition cover for BRAPEX 2019.

We sincerely thank the SPP and Ygor Chrispin for this opportunity to participate in the national competition and for this fascinating insight into organized Brazilian philately, which surely has some of the very highest standards anywhere in the world.



New Stamp Issue: “Field Crops”

https://www.moldovastamps.org/catalogue_stamps_issue.asp?issueID=4013

Issued on August 15, this set continues the agrarian theme set in June with the “Domestic Animals” series and in July with the “Months of the Year by their Traditional Folk Names” series. The series does not represent any special commemoration but rather is a visual homage to the agricultural aspects of Moldovan life and features three of the most important national crops.



ABOVE: № 1113 (1.75L): Sunflower



ABOVE: № 1114 (2.00L): Wheat



ABOVE: № 1115 (5.75L): Maize

The designer of the series was Elena Karacenteva, a well respected Moldovan artist who has been responsible for many of the country’s stamp issues over the years.

The stamps were printed by Nova Imprim in Chisinau and in unusually small-format minisheets of only 6 (3x3) values, with an extra-wide, decorated right frame. Each stamp was printed in a quantity of 100,000 and was perforated 13 with syncopation.

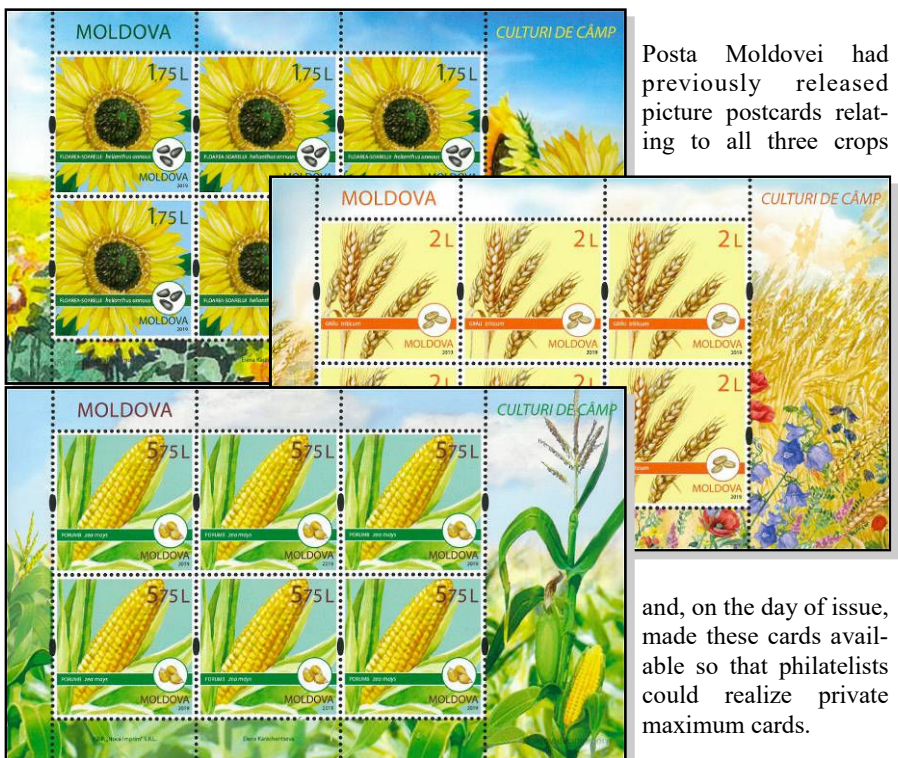
The official FDC, № 1113-1115 FDC, 162mm x 114mm, was printed in only a small quantity of 300 pieces. The cachet features a collage of all three crops. The selling price from Posta Moldovei, on the day of issue, was 32.00 MDL.



ABOVE: Official FDC № 1113-1114 FDC. Only 300 pieces were issued.



ABOVE: Local philatelists realized private maximum cards.



ABOVE: Minisheets were unusually small with only 6 (3x3) values and with highly decorated margins.

Posta Moldovei had previously released picture postcards relating to all three crops

and, on the day of issue, made these cards available so that philatelists could realize private maximum cards.

Special Editorial Article: Organized Philately in Moldova: Permanently Grounded?

Definition of “clique”: *a small group of people, with shared interests, who do not readily allow others to join them. This should not exist in philately, but absolutely does!*



The declared objective of IMPS, and my personal objective, is the promotion of awareness of Moldovan history and culture through the medium of philately and the promotion of philately in general. We achieve this, as a group, and we adopt strict policies of equality, inclusion, openness and transparency.

In truth, IMPS was formed in response to the attitudes of the other, formally incorporated philatelic organizations in Moldova, where such policies cannot be observed at all.

There seems to be a general misconception of what the word “philately” means. My personal definition is this: *“Philately”: The collection and study of postage stamps and postal history.* Literally, the word means “a stamp lover”. The word does *not* mean the *scientific* and/or *academic* study of postage stamps and postal history, as some people think. Anyone who collects stamps, regardless of their level, can call themselves a philatelist!

Philately is for everyone! It is not the exclusive domain of academics, scholars or historians, or those who see themselves as such. Nor is philately the exclusive domain of those who belong to formal clubs, societies or organizations, whether they be local or international, nor exclusively to the leaderships of those groups.

These might be fine words but in my experience, the world of philately, most especially in Moldova, is largely controlled by those who see themselves as belonging to a superior clique, as defined in the opening paragraph. These are the preferred elite who seem to have ordained themselves as the masters of the field and who have little if any regard for us “rank and file” mortals. If

one is not recognised as part of the clique, then one is of no consequence.

I absolutely applaud the excellent work done by philatelic researchers, writers and those who spend years preparing exceptional exhibition displays and I believe that such people are absolutely entitled to receive full recognition and medals for the work they do. But I regret to say that I often also see an attitude of superiority and exclusivity from the leaders of philatelic organizations, who seem to be motivated more by their egos and the maintenance of their personal prestige rather than what’s best for philately and too often I see examples of clique behavior where excellent philatelic work is ignored and disrespected because it was performed by outsiders, people not connected to established power structures and who are not welcome within them.

I am also very unhappy to see those who clearly have no special interest in the hobby, coming to positions of power using political influence and cajoling, simply to grant themselves honorific titles to which they are simply not entitled.

I could write a whole book about my experiences with formal philatelic organizations, but for the purposes of this article, I will focus my comments on just the situation in Moldova.



A truly bizarre situation exists in the Republic of Moldova regarding organized philately. Since the last FIP Congress in Bangkok in December 2018, RM is a member, represented by the so called “national federation”, UFRM and with its president, Andrei Adam.

Simultaneously, RM has been a member of the European federation, FEPA, since 2017 and is represented another so called “national federation”, AFMCRM with its president, Constantin Ciobanu.

Yes, that’s right! Two different national federations! Apparently, both represent the majority of philatelists in the coun-

try. Something is clearly not right with this picture. It seems that simple fact-finding is a task at which neither FIP nor FEPA are very good or perhaps they simply don’t care.

I don’t know which of these two organizations has the larger membership, but I do know that they have been in conflict for years. Even more worryingly, that conflict seems to be based on the ethnic/cultural grounds which is a reflection of the polarized nature of Moldovan society in general. Whereas the UFRM definitely has a taste for Russian and Soviet culture, the AFMCRM is fixated on Romanian history and culture. I will comment more about this further on.

“National Federation” №1 - The UFRM:

UFRM has its origins in the 1960’s when Moldova was the Moldavian Soviet Socialist Republic, a constituent part of the Soviet Union. The UFM, as it was then called, was a branch of the Union of Philatelists of the USSR.

After the declaration of independence of Moldova in 1991, the UFM continued as a separate philatelic organization and initially, it was quite active but became less and less so over the following years. In 1994, it suffered a membership split, along political/cultural lines, when one member left and formed a rival organization, the AFMCRM (see below).



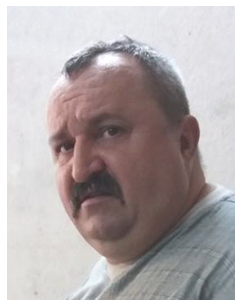
Long-term UFM/UFRM member, Vladimir Babich

Since that time, the UFM’s activities rapidly declined but the organization was kept alive by one dedicated philatelist, Vladimir Babich. Until, in 2017, having no activities, no active members and no ideas or proposals from its president, there was a change in the leadership and its current president, Andrei Adam, was voted into power.

Continued...

Special Editorial Article (Continued): Organized Philately in Moldova: Permanently Grounded?

I had been aware of the existence of this organization for some time and hoping that I could bring my enthusiasm and especially my internet skills to the table and to breathe new life into the organization, I had applied for membership in 2012 but there were never a response. I was told that a decision of the Council of Administration was needed, but it did not come.



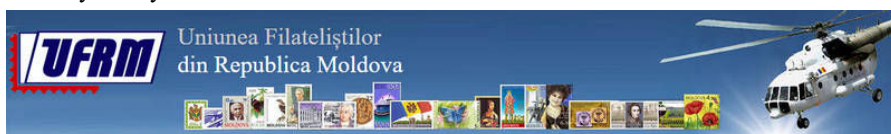
**UFRM President,
Andrei Adam**

Finally, after five years waiting, it was the newly-elected president, Andrei Adam, who responded to my application and welcomed me to the organization. Although I had never heard of this man, Adam before, I was naturally surprised and delighted. I had given up hope for UFRM (as they were now renamed) and believed that the new leadership was active, dynamic and full of new ideas. Immediately I set to work preparing a long list of ideas and suggestions for the organization and plans for their new website.

My ideas were all warmly welcomed and accepted by Adam. I began work on the new UFRM website and delivered my suggested design template within two weeks.

Believing that my website design was quite good and appropriate, I presented my work which was almost immediately rejected in favour of a "helicopters" theme. Why? Apparently Adam was once a military officer and he flew Russian "Mil" helicopters. So I was directed to re-design the website template using the precise model of helicopter he flew. Like an idiot, I agreed to this nonsense!

Within just a few days, the new template was delivered and awaited approval. I waited another six months for any reaction, but none came. Neither was there any action to my "warmly welcomed" proposals, nor any visible activity of any kind.



ABOVE: Andrei Adam's preference for a web design was simply to impress his old military comrades



ABOVE: The banner of the Facebook page for UFRM used images of Lenin and Stalin. Appropriate icons for Moldovan Philately?

ABOVE: This UFRM product makes a clear statement of the organization's affinity.

Back-channel feedback told me that the Council of Administration "could see no point" in having a website, encouraging foreign membership or making publicity on the internet (social media). This certainly accounts for the total lack of interest from my new "brothers" in UFRM for the many Facebook posts I made during this period.

Indeed, during this six month period, I experienced many aspects of UFRM that gave me grave cause for concern, including but not limited to:

- Lack of cohesion, consultation and discussion between members. No "brotherhood".
- Poor communication and lack of transparency. In general, I received "diktats", issued by faceless strangers.
- Lack of mutual support. Few (if any) responses to news items on Facebook etc.
- Non-existent public relations.
- Top-heavy organization. UFRM has many captains and no sailors.
- Antiquated attitudes to internet media channels, including website and social media.
- Generally aloof attitudes. UFRM is a classic, soviet-style committee; hidden, faceless and beyond reproach.

It became quite clear to me that Andrei Adam was simply using UFRM as a

platform to support his bragging rights and simply to impress his former military friends. In December 2017, I resigned from UFRM (I was not alone in this), much to the fury of Adam, whose angry emails screamed "I have 60 philatelists behind me!". If that is true, where are they and what do they do? There was also a boast about investors becoming involved, but who and why was never explained. In general, Mr. Adam's military style and bullying approach to management was intolerable and, added to this, his total disregard for my work and the benefits I offered to UFRM were grossly offensive to me.

My only regret about detangling myself from the UFRM regime was the inevitable falling out between myself and my old friend and mentor, Vladimir Babich. Over the previous 14 years of my original "MoldovaStamps" project, Vladimir had given me a great deal of information and support. For this I remain very grateful and, in fairness to Vladimir, he did, later offer an olive branch and tried to explore if there was any common ground between the new IMPS project and UFRM. Unfortunately, I could find none.

Since leaving UFRM, they have made some faltering and lamentable attempts to generate publicity for themselves. There was a short-lived Facebook page (in Russian) with a shockingly inappropriate banner featuring postage stamps of the USSR bearing the heads of Lenin and Stalin!

In terms of their philatelic material, there was a notorious envelope commemorating the 50th anniversary of the Gagarin flight... emblazoned with the flag of the USSR.

Continued...

Special Editorial Article (Continued): Organized Philately in Moldova: Permanently Grounded?

The UFRM activities in philately have been woefully inadequate. They hosted a series of small, local exhibitions in Chisinau, none of which were publicized and were strictly invitation-only affairs. Only their own members were permitted to participate and medals were awarded amongst themselves. In truth, these exhibitions were non-events and served only as photo opportunities to impress themselves and invited local officials.



UFRM exhibition in March 2018.
With 60 philatelists as members, one wonders where are all the exhibits!

Although my parting words to Andrei Adam indicated that I did not want to make a public fuss about the activities of UFRM, recent events have forced me to change my “live and let live” attitude and to bring these matters into public view and debate.

In September 2018, I became aware that UFRM would travel to the FIP Congress in Bangkok, Thailand and that they had applied for FIP membership of the Republic of Moldova.

Theoretically, this is impossible because RM was already a member of FEPA through the APMCRM organization. More fundamentally, in RM there exists no “national federation” and the two officially recognized organizations have been in outright conflict since 1995. The existence of a national federation of philatelic societies, in order to represent the majority of philatelists in the country, is a prerequisite for membership of the FIP.

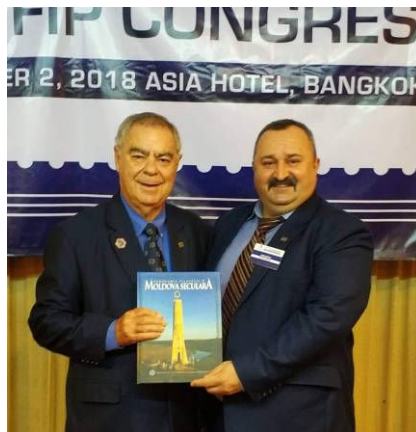
In November 2018, IMPS sent a letter to Andrée Trommer-Schiltz, Secretary General of FIP, where we clearly explained all the facts and details. This was ignored and there was no response.

So, on December 2, 2018, at the FIP Congress in Bangkok, in complete contravention of their own rules, the Republic of Moldova was warmly wel-

comed as the newest FIP member, represented by UFRM and its president, Andrei Adam.

I sent a message to Constantin Ciobanu, president of AFMCRM, asking him if he was aware of this. In typical fashion, there was no response. I am therefore forced to assume that there was a private agreement between the two organizations, to divide the world between them, with AFMCRM happy to control Europe, through their FEPA membership and UFRM taking the rest, through FIP.

It is a source of great sadness to me that certain members of UFRM, people whom I respect, would countenance such an action within their organization. Perhaps my respect for these people was misplaced?



Newly-elected President of FIP, Bernie Beston and new FIP member, Andrei Adam, congratulate each other in Bangkok.

We also discovered that UFRM would represent RM at the World stamp exhibition “Thailand 2018” in Bangkok. This was interesting because the participation of UFRM was announced six months after the deadline for applications had expired. It seems that being a prospective member of FIP grants participants at World exhibitions certain undocumented privileges, including the right to ignore application deadlines and even more, the right to bypass all the requirements for points, previously earned at national level.

Our letter to Dr Prakob Chirakiti, Chairman of the Organizing Committee of “Thailand 2018” dated November 25, 2018 included this information: “We must inform you that, under no circumstances, can Mr. Adam be considered as qualified to participate at an FIP World

Stamp Exhibition. Primarily, he does not have any FIP points to qualify”. Much other information was also provided in the letter but all was ignored and there was no reply.

Adam entered two exhibits. The first was titled “Types of Transport on the stamps and envelopes from the USSR” and was a 5-frame selection of



stamps and envelopes of the Soviet Union, mounted and with descriptions of the vehicles. At best, this illegal entry was at a junior, local club level. Nevertheless, it was awarded a silver-bronze medal. As the primary exhibit of the FIP representative of the Republic of Moldova at a World exhibition, it was entirely sub-standard and inappropriate.

Adam's other exhibit was entitled “Bulletin of Moldovan Postage Emissions: Years 2008-2017” and was an entry in the Literature category. Despite the fact that this material has never been published, either in paper form or on the Internet in digital form, and despite the fact that it was actually authored by another UFRM member, Victor Țurea, Adam was awarded a silver medal for it, effectively committing plagiarism against one of his own members.

To achieve these “victories”, the UFRM sent three people half way across the world to Thailand. It is not known who funded this expedition or what return they expect on their investments.

Andrei Adam claims to have “60 philatelists behind him” and yet, the best this organization can manage to bring to the world, is a shabby selection of common Soviet Union stamps and a plagiarized, unpublished piece of literature.

However, the good news is that philately of the Republic of Moldova was represented in Bangkok, by Gheorghe Plugaru, even if he was obliged to represent his country under the flag of the United States.

Continued...

Special Editorial Article (Continued): Organized Philately in Moldova: Permanently Grounded?

As reported in the IMPS Newsletter for January 2019, Gheorghe was awarded a large silver medal for his exhibition of Moldovan maximum cards “MOLDOVA - MY HOMELAND”.

In March 2019, UFRM held another so-called exhibition which they named “Primăvară 2019” and which was attended by the newly appointed President of FIP, Bernie Beston. Once again, this event was not publicized in any way and served only as a personal reception for the benefit of Mr Beston.



FIP President, Bernie Beston (red tie) at the closed UFRM exhibition named “Primăvară 2019” in Chisinau in March 2019. The event was organized entirely for Mr. Beston’s benefit. Members of the public were not invited.

At no level and in no way do such activities count as a contribution to philately in Moldova. This is a prime example of a clique group ordaining themselves as masters of the field, whilst totally excluding outsiders.

At the recent World exhibition in China, President of UFRM, Andrei Adam, was appointed National Commissioner for Moldova. This title grants the holder the rights to free accommodation and meals in the host country during the exhibition.

The National Commissioner is also empowered to accept or deny applications for participation from his country and is assumed to be an expert in its philately. Since the total knowledge of Andrei Adam about postage stamps from the Republic of Moldova, could be written on the back of one, it is absolutely incredible that he would be appointed as the National Commissioner.

As it currently stands, no philatelist may exhibit under the flag of Moldova at FIP World exhibitions, without the express personal permission of Andrei Adam.

But the title of National Commissioner comes with many responsibilities too.

Most importantly, he/she is responsible for promoting the exhibition and for encouraging philatelists to participate at it. I can assure you that Mr Adam did absolutely nothing in this regard. Certainly, he did not contact IMPS about the exhibition and since only members of his UFRM organization participated in China, it can be assumed that he contacted nobody other than his own friends, within his little clique.

Even within the UFRM, I know of one foreign member who owns a truly exceptional collection of RM philatelic material and who is extremely keen to participate at exhibitions, but whom has only been sent information in the Russian language and in a format that cannot be translated, and so has no idea what was being sent.

Even, Gheorghe Plugaru, winner of many medals for his country at International and World level, has indefinitely withdrawn from his activities in Moldovan Philately, in utter disgust at the empowerment of Andrei Adam by the FIP, to be the “Caesar’s thumb” for applicants who are citizens of the Republic, to represent their own country and to exhibit under their own national flag. For IMPS and for Moldovan national philately, this is a loss beyond measure, but I completely understand and empathize with Gheorghe’s position.

Once again in China, Adam presented his “world-class” exhibit of USSR stamps, for which he was awarded another silver-bronze medal. Another “triumph” for the Republic! But at least on this occasion, the correct author of the literature entry “Reviews of Postal Issues of the Republic of Moldova 2009-2018” was identified as Victor Țurea, even if this piece of literature has never actually been published anywhere and therefore does not qualify for exhibition.



The National Commissioner for RM at China World Expo in Wuhan had all the rights but none of the responsibilities!

I also discovered this month, that UFRM will participate at the next World stamp exhibition “LONDON 2020” and this time with even more Soviet Union material. I will write more about this in the next issue of the newsletter.

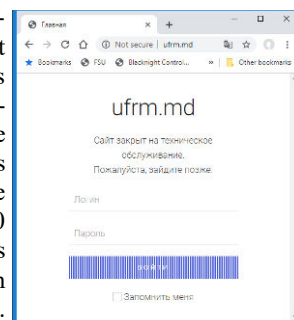
Most of the time UFRM is a totally invisible and inactive group. They have no website and publish no information about themselves. They publish no journal, articles or adverts inviting membership. Their only activity seems to be coming out of the woodwork when there is a possibility of medals being awarded, while failing to inform Moldovan philatelists from outside their clique about upcoming exhibitions, which is their absolute responsibility. And yet, according to the FIP, UFRM is a true representative of the Republic of Moldova in philately, at World level. In fact, the UFRM’s contribution to Moldovan Philately is not merely nil, it is actually an obstructive and harmful organization, under its current management.

To make my position absolutely clear: I have no objections to the study or exhibition of Soviet philately, Indeed, I myself owned a substantial collection of such material for many years. My objections are based on the fact that an organization, claiming to represent the Republic of Moldova, at World level in philately, would primarily exhibit Soviet material whilst almost ignoring philately of the country it purports to represent.

The message that UFRM is now sending to the world is this: We are the 60 philatelists from Moldova.

We all collect and study stamps from the USSR. We are not interested in stamps from Moldova and because we are members of the FIP, we speak for our country.

Continued...



The website of the UFRM. Permanently “Under Construction”

Special Editorial Article (Continued): Organized Philately in Moldova: Permanently Grounded?

“National Federation” №2 - AFMCRM:

The other “national federation” for RM is the AFMCRM. This is a really mysterious organization whose president, Constantin Ciobanu, feels sufficiently confident of his reputation that no introductions or public information about his organization is necessary. Again, there is no website and they publish no information about themselves nor invitations to join.



AFMCRM President,
Constantin Ciobanu

Constantin Ciobanu is an academic, a Doctor of historical sciences. He has a background in journalism and philatelic production and is currently a senior member of the staff at the National Museum of Ethnography and Natural History in Chisinau. He and his family have been involved in studying the philately of Moldova and the region, at a deep scientific level, for many decades.

Dr. Ciobanu is the author/co-author of countless articles, monographs and books on philatelic topics and, in the rarified world of philatelic academia, is considered one of the foremost authorities.

In the early 1990's, around the time of the declaration of independence of the Republic of Moldova, Dr. Ciobanu worked for the newly established state organization “Poșta Moldova” where he was responsible for the production of some of the early stamps and other postal effects of the state. Considering his reputation in this field, he was an obvious choice for such a role.

Unlike UFRM President Andrei Adam, Ciobanu has a long history of entering his philatelic works into competitive exhibitions, all over Europe, earning himself and his family an impressive set of medals. Until the upstart, Niall Murphy, came along, the absolute supremacy of Dr. Ciobanu's philatelic work remained unquestioned outside RM.

I met Mr Ciobanu in 2005. He was friendly and seemed interested in my website work. I was invited to join his AFMCRM, paying two years member-

ship in advance. From that day to this, I never heard another word from him. The reasons/motives... a total mystery to this day.

I did take away from the meeting, a copy of his new 2005 monograph “Poșta Moldovei”: Ștampile Tarifare de Inflație 1991-1993” (Inflation surcharge stamps of 1991/1993), which was a prime example of his expert work and for which he received many awards.

It was only some years later, when I started to deeply study this strange material, did I discover that Ciobanu was the person responsible in Poșta Moldova for it's design, production and distribution... and that the entire project was an utter fiasco from beginning to end.

Working together with philatelist, Vladimir Babich and with the cooperation of Poșta Moldovei, it was discovered that Ciobanu's activities included the production of stamps without any official order, stamps being released into circulation before the correct printed stock quantities, as directed in the official order, had been achieved, missed delivery deadlines specified in the official orders, stamps with expired postal rates still being put into circulation, stamps were being *falsely produced* on covers with pre-cancelled postmarks bearing dates earlier than their official dates of issuance.

The final conclusion of the Poșta Moldovei report was that the information monograph “*did not concur with reality*”.

In effect, the report, published in 2012, exposed Ciobanu's work for what it really was, the chronicles of a man who believed that his years of erudition ordained him as the sole authority on the topic of philately in RM and that anything he did, made (officially or privately) or wrote, was automatically valid, as if touched by the hand of God. He acted as he pleased and when he pleased and nobody would dare to question him.

Not surprisingly, there was absolutely no reaction to the report since Ciobanu's clique exist almost entirely within the sphere of the Romanian/Balkan philatelic elite. Even in 2016, at the “BALKANFILA” exhibition in Tirana, Albania, Ciobanu exhibited some extraordinary examples of his “personal” material, including a really amazing maximum card with an inflation surcharge stamp. I can only assume the Ciobanu keeps a private collection of all the franks needed to realize such material, as and when needed.

Dr. Ciobanu takes a dim view of philatelists who are outside his personal domain and actively blocks anyone attempting to exhibit RM in Europe.

Continued...



Inflation surcharge stamps of 1991/1993.
The nightmare of Moldovan Philately - The dream of Constantin Ciobanu

Special Editorial Article (Continued): Organized Philately in Moldova: Permanently Grounded?



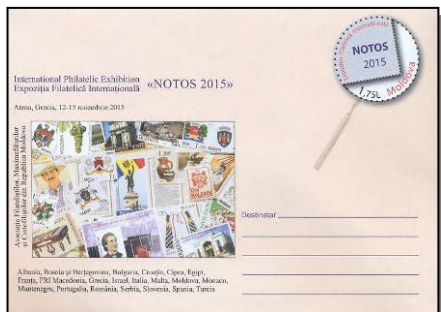
Three members of the Ciobanu dynasty.

Specifically, I refer to the ghastly events surrounding the Athens exhibition “NOTOS 2015”. The organizers had made several attempts to contact Mr Ciobanu to invite him to be the National Commissioner for RM. But Mr Ciobanu did not respond.

Keen to have Moldovan participation, the organizers contacted me, inviting direct participation, outside the usual FEPA regime. In response, I arranged for a close Moldovan colleague to participate, thus giving representation for RM at this important regional exhibition.

Only upon discovering this information did Mr Ciobanu respond to the original invitation to be the National Commissioner. He was duly appointed and his very first action was to try to disqualify my colleague and have his exhibit replaced with one of his own. The reason given, none!

Moreover, Ciobanu requested Posta Moldovei to issue a special postal stationery envelope for the “NOTOS 2015” exhibition and to include his organization’s name, but he did not inform them about the fact that not all participants belonged to AFMCRM.



2015 postal stationery envelope for “NOTOS 2015” issued by Posta Moldovei.

This outrage led to an instant demand by Vladimir Babich to either withdraw the envelope or at least to issue another philatelic item which would recognize

all Moldovan participants at the exhibition. Posta Moldovei issued a special postmark that same day.



Posta Moldovei were forced to apologize for Constantin Ciobanu’s actions and issued a special postmark recognizing all Moldovan philatelists’ participation at “NOTOS 2015”



Mr. Babich used the special postmark (above), but inverted and with the AFMCRM texts obliterated, to realize a personal protest cover.

This shameful episode makes it absolutely clear to me that Mr Ciobanu considers himself the only true philatelist in RM and that all others, not belonging to his clique, are unworthy. Well, in the end, the “NOTOS 2015” jury did not agree with Constantin Ciobanu and my colleague was awarded a vermeil medal.

Incredibly, the problem was com-

pounded the very next year at the “BALKANFILA 2016” exhibition in Tirana, Albania, where Ciobanu pre-served all the exhibition frames allocated to RM, thus excluding any possibility of participation by philatelists from Moldova who were not members of AFMCRM. It seems that the BALKANFILA organization were more than happy to oblige such a request from their fellow clique member. What a totally poisonous attitude from all concerned!

Ciobanu’s inclusion in the Balkan clique and their powerful connections to the FEPA organization guaranteed AFMCRM’s acceptance for membership and they have has represented RM at European level through FEPA, since 2017. But what benefits this has brought to Moldovan philately are not evident. No national exhibition has been organized or indeed any other events under FEPA patronage.

Reading the official website of FEPA at <https://fepanews.com>, I see that Mr Ciobanu is organizing an exhibition “Literature for Collectors” in Chisinau in September 2019. This is interesting because it is the first time that I have seen him actually publicize an event and invite outsiders. I also noticed some publicity on the website of the International Association of Philatelic Journalists (AIJP). But both of these websites have tiny audiences and are aimed exclusively at elite members of the philatelic establishment. By restricting his notices to these websites, Mr Ciobanu indicates his preference for the caliber of material he prefers.

Moreover, by failing to invite IMPS members, Mr Ciobanu sends a clear message the he considers IMPS (and all its members by association) to be an irrelevancy and not worthy of participating. That’s a pity because we count among our members, the President of FEPA, José Ramón Moreno.

Whilst IMPS absolutely supports philatelic exhibitions and will participate at many in the coming months and years, I absolutely cannot accept to be judged by a man who considers my work and the work of IMPS members, to be so worthless, that a simple email invitation could not be sent.

Continued...

Special Editorial Article (Continued): Organized Philately in Moldova: Permanently Grounded?

In any case, Mr Ciobanu's behavior with regard to the "NOTOS 2015" and "BALKANFILA 2016" exhibitions totally disqualifies him as a suitable person to judge the work of any other philatelist.

Well, I don't imagine that this newsletter would win any awards at Mr Ciobanu's literature exhibition anyway!

The Role of Posta Moldovei

Whilst we cannot expect Posta Moldovei to intercede in this debacle which is essentially between us philatelists, the leadership of Posta Moldovei cannot wash its hands of the problem and must accept some responsibility for it, having all but ignored philately for the past 28 years. Successive administrations have failed to realize that philately is an important aspect of the history of the nation and of its cultural life and that these aspects are under its direct control.

In the history of RM, the leadership of the postal administration has merely fulfilled its legal obligations to produce postage stamps but it has never taken any active role in philately or taken steps to promote the hobby nationally.

When I refer to the leadership of Posta Moldovei, I refer to the chief directors and not to the philatelic bureau, with whom IMPS have formed a friendly and highly successful, informal relationship, based on mutual respect and a love for philately. But the philatelic bureau must work within the constraints imposed upon it by the leadership and there is hardly any room for autonomy.

The leadership of Posta Moldovei should have been actively involved in philatelic promotion from the beginning. It should have fostered and nourished the hobby in an effort to develop a national movement and encouraged the formation of local clubs and societies, that could later form a genuine national federation, free from personal politics, vested interests and ethnic divisions. This should have been done in cooperation with the FIP.

Now, 28 years since the founding of the Republic, the opportunity has been lost and we are left with a small, aging, diminishing and fractured local community that is firmly in the grip of those who are only interested in retaining their personal prestige.

Solutions/Conclusions?

It is very clear that both so-called "national federations" in RM do not really exist to promote national philately, but rather to serve as platforms to support the egos and personal prestige of their respective leaders and to actively obstruct anyone trying entering the field, who is not a member of one or the other of these little cliques. On this basis, neither organization should be representing RM at ANY level, national or international, and both are in direct contravention of their respective obligations under FIP and FEPA rules.

While this ludicrous situation persists, no meaningful national exhibitions will ever be possible in RM and development of the hobby at national level can never proceed. In effect, national philately is as permanently grounded as the former presidential helicopter!

Solutions? Yes... hit the "restart" button!

I call upon both FEPA and FIP to carefully consider the contents of this article and decide if either of the "national federations" in Moldova are truly worthy of being members of your respective organizations. To my mind, clearly they are not, and both need to be expelled for their total failure to comply with their sworn obligations. Such an action will force both of them to re-evaluate their motives and the motives of their leaders. No re-admittance to FEPA or FIP should be permitted until a genuine national federation has been formed, which truly represents the majority of philatelists in the country and internationally.

My personal motives and the motives of IMPS are simple: to bring awareness and recognition for the Republic of Moldova, I country that I love, to the whole world and let Moldova take her rightful place among the world's great nations. I am not a stamp dealer or trader and I have absolutely no financial or political interests in philately. In this article, I have not spoken one word of a lie.

I don't care about personal glory or prestige. I never had any and I don't



On a visit to Chisinau in March 2019, FIP President, Bernie Beston poses at the display of the former Moldovan presidential helicopter which has been set into concrete blocks. One can only hope that organized philately in Moldova is not so permanently grounded.



A historic event! 2005: The very first meeting with Constantin Ciobanu and members of the AFMCRM... and the very last meeting.

need it now. Whatever I achieve, I dedicate to Moldova and I call upon others to adopt the same attitude.

*Niall Murphy, São Paulo, Brazil
August 2019.*

Note:

This is an editorial article that represents the views of the author and not necessarily those of other members of IMPS.

Comments and feedback should be emailed to info@moldovastamps.org

Fake Material **Alert!** - Counterfeit Postmarks

We regret to report that, earlier this month, one of our members was defrauded by a seller on Delcampe.net, making and selling covers from Moldova using counterfeit postmarks.

Our member sent us high-resolution scans of his new purchases, for inclusion in the IMPS catalogue. However, when we examined the material, we noticed some strange things.

Genuine postmarks (date stamps) from the Chisinau-12 mail centre typically use blue ink (not always) but the date is always printed in a rounded, sans-serif typeface, separated by dots. See Fig. 1.

In the case of the offending material, various typefaces were used, with and without dot separators. Additionally, the operator identifier "j" was used in all cases. See examples at Fig. 2 and Fig. 3.

The seller is identified as Gavril Sergheiciuc from Bender in Transnistria. He trades on Delcampe.net under the account name "ilic41". We examined all the material he had for sale and we discovered many counterfeit covers.

In some cases we also noticed registered mail stickers, but after entering the numbers into the



**Gavril Sergheiciuc,
selling on Delcampe as
"ilic41"**

numbers into the Posta Moldovei Track and Trace system, the sending dates do not concord with the postmark dates and are therefore also counterfeit.

We sent a report to Posta Moldovei who confirmed that the

postmarks are indeed fake counterfeits.

The covers feature genuine postage stamps and first day cancellations but the fake date stamps and registration marks were added to fool buyers into believing that the covers were actually sent through the postal system on first day of issue. By adding the fake items to the covers, the seller has totally invalidated the material and it is worthless.

We advise everyone to avoid this seller and we suggest that anyone who bought this material demand a full refund.



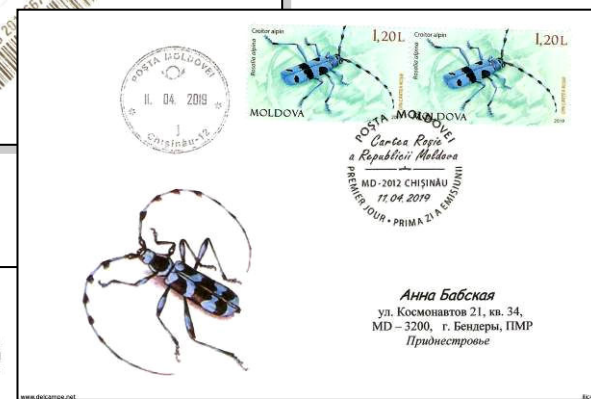
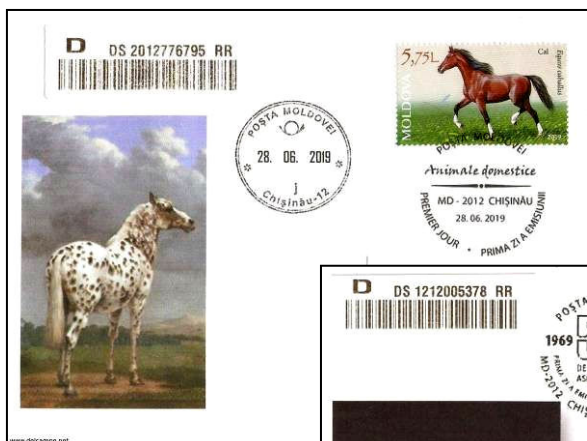
Fig 1: Genuine postmark



Fig 2: Fake (counterfeit)



Fig 3: Fake (counterfeit)

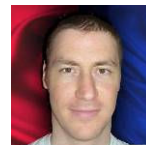


**A selection of the offerings of
Gavril Sergheiciuc. These
privately made covers feature
fake registration marks and
fake date postmarks.**

From the Blog Site of Eric Contesse: 1989 : Restoration of Latin Alphabet in Moldova

Eric Contesse (Lyon, France) has written over 300 blog articles about philatelic material from Moldova since 2011. Each month, we will present one (or more) of his articles.

<http://timbredujura.blogspot.com>



This article was originally published on September 21, 2014

The Post of Moldova had already issued a stamp in 1999 to commemorate the 10th anniversary of the official adoption of the Latin alphabet for the Moldovan language, two years before the country's independence in 1991. Cyrillic alphabet was previously used during the Soviet era between 1940 and 1989 (this alphabet is however still used in the separatist region of Transnistria).

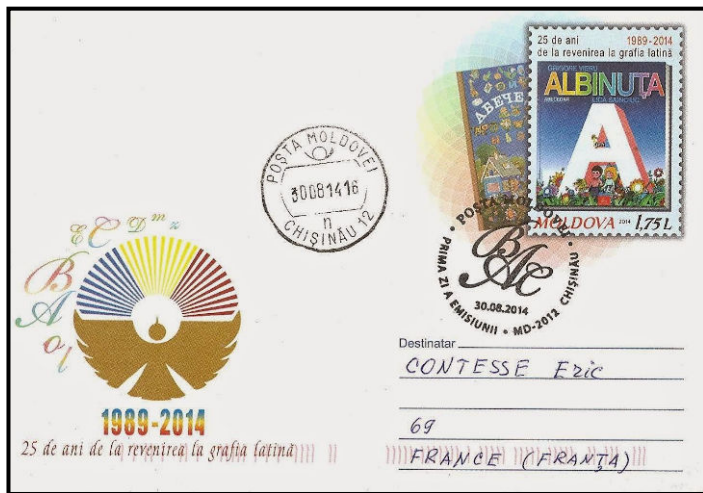
On August 30, 2014, it is this time a pre-paid envelope that was issued to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the restoration of the Latin alphabet ("25 de ani de la revenirea la grafia latină").

Thank you very much Nicolae for this

cover below with a FDC postmark from Chisinau :-)

This illustrated envelope (domestic postal rate : L 1.75) was designed by Alevtina Cojocari and printed in 10,000 copies.

The illustration on the left, an allegory showing a stylized phoenix and the colors of the Moldovan flag, was already



depicted on the stamp issued in 1999.

The stamp shows the cover of a primer and children's book, a work by Moldovan poet and educator Grigore Vieru (1935-2009), entitled "Albinuța" ("Bee"), with illustrations by Lică Sainciuc.

Grigore Vieru wrote many books and poems for young people as well as textbooks and primers for learning to

read with Latin characters ("Steluța" or "Albinuța" here).

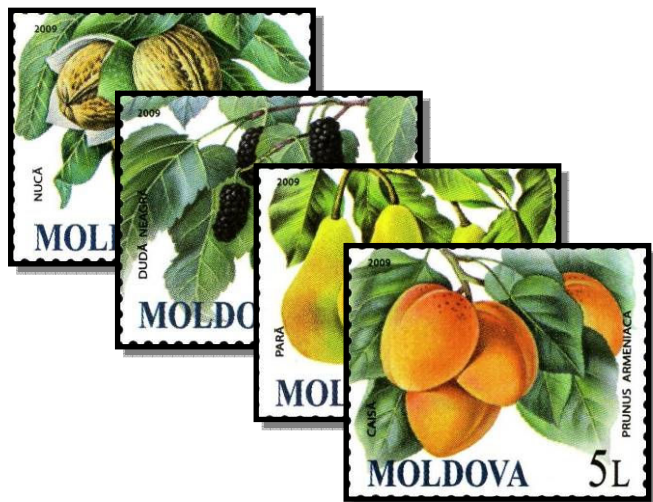
Nicolae has used two stamps on the other side of his envelope above, including one (L 2.50) being part of the EUROPA series (3 stamps) issued on June 18, 1994, whose theme was devoted to great discoveries, the 25th anniversary of the first lunar module (Apollo 9 Mission in 1969) here.

The other stamp (L 0.25) is part of a definitive series issued on February 15, 2011, devoted to different rural buildings, the manor of the family Mirzoian "Manuc-Bei" (19th century) located in Hîncești here.



10 Years Ago...

August 28, 2009 saw the release of the definitive series "Fruits".



Full technical details at https://www.moldovastamps.org/catalogue_stamps_issue.asp?issueID=223

20 Years Ago...

As per the article above, the stamp commemorating the 10th anniversary of the restoration of the Latin Alphabet in Moldova was issued on August 31, 1999.



Full technical details at https://www.moldovastamps.org/catalogue_stamps_issue.asp?issueID=98



**THE INTERNATIONAL MOLDOVAN
PHILATELIC SOCIETY**

**CHIȘINĂU
LYON
SÃO PAULO**

Letters: IMPS, PO Box 1024, MD-2028 Chișinău
REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA
Email: info@moldovastamps.org
Web: www.moldovastamps.org
Facebook: www.facebook.com/impsmoldova

Editor: Niall Murphy
All articles and news should be sent to the Editor at the
email address above.

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**IMPS is founded on Friendship,
Equality and Passion.**

New Envelope Issue: 25th Anniversary of the Constitution

This prepaid (postal stationery) envelope was issued on July 29, 2019, too late for inclusion in the July edition of the IMPS Newsletter.

The envelope, № U412, was designed by well-known artist, Vitaliu Pogolșa and printed in 10,000 copies.



Envelope № U412 (1.75L), issued in 10,000 copies.



The fixed postage stamp (1.75L) is a collage of the national flag and a law book.

The cachet on the envelope is a representation of the Constitution of the Republic in book form, on a background of a meeting of the national parliament. A special first day postmark as also issued for this envelope.

The current Constitution of Moldova was adopted on 29 July 1994 by the Moldovan Parliament and published in the Moldovan official gazette on 12 August 1994. It came into force on 27 August 1994, abrogating the previous Constitution of 1978 in its entirety. Since 1994, the Constitution has been successfully amended 8 times. There have also been unsuccessful attempts to amend it, such as the 2010 constitutional referendum.

Next Month...

Special Exhibition Report:

“BELPHILA 2019” - Belarus

New Stamp Issue:

International Opera and Ballet Festival
“Maria Bieșu”

Special Report:

Moldovan Participation at the “LONDON 2020” World Exhibition

New Cancellation Issues

Articles from the Blog Archives

Fake Material Alerts!

And lots more...

Newsletters Archive...



The archive of previous IMPS newsletters is now on the site.

www.moldovastamps.org/info-newsletters.asp