

UPU International Competition Class

Philatelists of all ages, whether they have a prestigious collection or simply one they're proud of, have always wanted to show it off, and measure it against others. Competitions were therefore organized for collectors and individuals. And since only comparable things can be compared, philately was classified as collection classes.

In 2008, giving the fact that no class existed for modern philately, or for postal administrations, the UPU and the Fédération Internationale de Philatélie (FIP) decided to join forces to develop a competition class for designated operators, each vying with the other in creativity to present their novelties. The newly-created competition was immediately approved by philately's highest authorities, and judged by FIP-accredited jurors.

The first competition took place in 2008 in Bucharest (Romania), and has continued ever since, with at least one competition every year. These competitions naturally find their place at major world exhibitions, where they complement historical exhibits by offering an up-to-date view of contemporary philately. The public, collectors and dealers all love modern philately, and appreciate the opportunity to learn about and compare the expertise of postal operators.

For the designated operators, a UPU international competition class is an opportunity to showcase their philatelic expertise at a lower cost, and to promote the "made in" of each country worldwide. From 2024 onwards, the UPU and FIP have taken a major step forward, increasing their visibility even further. The 19th competition class has travelled the world and exhibited at various international philatelic exhibitions throughout the year. Presented on four continents, it has been displayed in Asia, Europe and North America, raising the profile of modern philately. Organized according to traditional sixteen-page panels, each operator highlights the themes of their choice, reflecting their issue programs over the last three years. Each stamp includes full technical information (value, use, date of issue, etc.).

The 19th philately competition class brought together 28 participants across three categories according to annual volume of stamp issues. The presentations were judged by three international judges, who were official members of jury panels accredited by the FIP, alongside the International Bureau at CHINA 2024. The results of the competition were as follows:

- Group A: 1) Slovakia; 2) Morocco; 3) Bosnia and Herzegovina – BH Post, Sarajevo;
- Group B: 1) Macao, China; 2) Belarus; 3) Türkiye;
- Group C: 1) Greece; 2) Romania and United Nations Postal Administration (tied); 3) France.

To make competition classes more attractive and interactive, the International Bureau introduced QR codes, displayed beneath each exhibition frame. One of these codes takes visitors to the participant's e-shop, while the other links to the WNS website. This means that visitors are now able not only to buy the stamps directly from designated operators' e-shops, but also to access these operators' entire philatelic output. This initiative also helps to raise the profile of the WNS and reinforce the link between traditional philately and e-commerce, while also promoting the development of e-commerce in philately.

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