

IMHURİYETİ

TURQUE

ARTE POSTALE

memleketlere mahsus

à l'Entente Balkanique



BALKAN POSTA
BİRLİĞİ

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Balkan conferences and the Balkan Entente of 1934 played an important role in the process of constructing a unity between the Balkans states in terms of political, social, cultural, trade and economic affairs. One of the decisive aspects of Balkan conferences and the formation of the Balkan Union is inter-state postal arrangements within Turkey, Greece, Romania, Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia. The article portrays special(reduced) Balkan postal rates within the years from 1931 to 1940.

On October 20-26, 1931; the Second Balkan Conference was held in İstanbul. Albania, Bulgaria, Romania, Yugoslavia, and Greece took part in the Second Balkan Conference alongside Turkey. The conference held its meetings at Dolmabahçe and Yıldız Palaces in Istanbul and at Grand National Assembly in Ankara.¹ A telephone line was installed in the conference hall in Yıldız Palace for the use of delegates and the Turkish government also decided to open a temporary post office in Yıldız Palace during the conference which would serve to the delegates for free phone calls, letters, and telegrams.



1.1. the special postmark used in the temporary post office of the Second Balkan Conference in Yıldız Place, İstanbul between October 20-26, 1931 .²

In the opening ceremony of the conference, the president of the host country, Mustafa Kemal Pasha, has commented on the overall objectives of the conference with the following statements:

*"Balkan nations, Albania, Bulgaria, Romania, Greece, are represented today as an independent political entity like Yugoslavia and Turkey. The nations, that are the owners of all these states, have lived together for centuries. It can be said that today's Balkan states... are the outcome of the slow disintegration of the Ottoman Empire, and finally consigned to history. Therefore, Balkan nations have a common history spanning throughout centuries. If this history has sad memories, all nations commonly own them. The share of the Turks has not been less painful. Here you, the representatives of the respectable Balkan nations, will rise above the mixed feelings and interests of the past, and you will establish deep foundations of brotherhood and open broad horizons of unity. You will reveal great facts that have been ignored and forgotten."*³

¹ Akandere, O . (2003). 20-26 Ekim 1931 Tarihlerinde İstanbul'da Toplanan İkinci Balkan Konferansı ve Sonuçları . Selçuk Üniversitesi Türkiyat Araştırmaları Dergisi , (14) , 249-298 . Retrieved from <https://dergipark.org.tr/en/pub/sutad/issue/26285/276985>

² Temiz, Y. (1991). Specialized Postage Stamp Catalogue of Turkey. Burak Pul Evi Yayınları.

³ Hâkimiyet-i Milliye, 26 August 1931, retrieved and translated from: <https://www.atam.gov.tr/ataturkun-soylev-ve-demecleri/balkan-konferansi-uyeleriyle-konusma>

The very first philatelic output of the conference is the commemorative stamps. Commemorative stamps were printed in London, as a memory of the Balkan Conference, by the conference preparatory committee. On these stamps, there are figures of "an olive tree whose roots extend towards the capitals of the countries that are in the Balkan Union," symbolizing peace. These stamps were available on the first opening day of the conference.



6

1.2. printed samples of stamps issued for the Balkan conference, Bradbury Wilkinson & Co. Ltd. Surrey England (Selçuk Akar Collection)



1.3. Leather-covered stamp portfolio presented to delegates and guests attending the conference, front and back.

One of four commissions of the conference was the Telecommunication Commission which has almost completed its agenda on 23 October; by discussing railways, postal union, and air transport, and matters related to sea transport, roads, and tourism. The decisions taken by the commission were read to the members of the Conference Council by General Secretary Ruşen Eşref and was accepted with unanimity. Two of the three decisions were as follows:

1-In 1932, the invitation of a special commission with the participation of the independent representatives of all railway administrations to establish bridges for direct contact between the Balkan states and the decoration of the railway dispute.

2- The establishment of a subordinate commission to examine the issues of a contract project for post-telegraph and telephone allegiance for the acceptance of six Balkan governments and a uniform Balkan tariff with a deduction of 20-30 percent of tariff's rate and the creation of a postage stamp with the Balkan postal alliance mark.⁴

Therefore, in the conference; the formation of a Postal and Communication Unity between these five Balkan states has been agreed on. Following the decision, it was also agreed on reducing the postage rates between Balkan countries with an Inter- Balkan (valid within the Balkan countries) stamp between partner countries.

The first agreement on reduced bilateral postal rates (special rates) was between Turkey and Greece's Postal Unions which came into action on the first of 1933 February.⁵

Balkan Posta Birliđi Ücret Tarifesi		
Şimdiki halde yalnız Yunanistan ile karşılıklı 1-1-1933 tarihinden itibaren tennilâhî bir posta tarifesi mevkiî tatbika vaz olunmuştur. Bu tarife mucibince Yunanistan'a gönderilecek :		
Kartpostal	5 Kuruş	Matbuâ, (beher 50 grama) 50 Para
Cevaplı kartpostal	10 "	Nümune, (beher 50 grama) 50 "
Mektup (20 grama kadar)	8 "	(asgarî 2,5 Kuruş)
Mektup 20 gramdan yukarı (beher 20 gram için)	5 "	Kıtap ve musiki notaları (beher 50 grama) 30 "
		Gazete, (beher 50 grama) 30 "
		Taahhüt ücreti 8 Kuruş
		Ücrete tabî tutulacaklardır. Bu tarife bir altın Frank 40 kuruş esas itibâz edilerek yapılmıştır.
— 423 —		

1.4. The news about this treaty was found in Ali Nusret Pulhan's *Pul Meşheri Magazine* (1934), number 38 p. 423. It was written that the treaty started with Greece on January 2, 1933. On contrary, Post Office Chief Executive Officer Şekip Eskin writes that the reduced vacation with Greece began on 1 February 1933.

The Balkan Pact (also known as the Pact of Balkan Entente) was signed in Athens on February 9th, 1934. Furthermore, with the pioneering steps of Turkey and Greece and the participation of Yugoslavia and Romania, Balkan Pact was signed on February 9th, 1934 in Athens. Bulgaria and Albania due to their revisionist policies, contradicting the pro status- quo nature of the pact, and close relationships with Italy who did not join to the Balkan Entente.⁶ Though Balkan Pact, surviving between 1934 and

⁴Akandere, O . (2003). 20-26 Ekim 1931 Tarihlerinde İstanbul'da Toplanan İkinci Balkan Konferansı ve Sonuçları . Selçuk Üniversitesi Türkiyat Araştırmaları Dergisi , (14) , 249-298 . Retrieved from <https://dergipark.org.tr/en/pub/sutad/issue/26285/276985>

⁵Eskin, Ş. (1942). *Türk Posta Tarihi*. Ulus Basımevi, Ankara, 51- 52.

⁶Türkeş, M. (1994) The Balkan pact and its immediate implications for the Balkan states, 1930–34. *Middle Eastern Studies*, 30:1, 123-144. doi: 10.1080/00263209408700986.

1941, never realized the territorial defense precisely, Turkey took an important role in maintaining the world peace by remaining true to the pact.

After the establishment of the pact, in the Balkan Entente Conference of 1935, which was held in Belgrade, the Balkan Postal Union was formally established; Turkey participated in multilateral agreements with Romania and Yugoslavia on January 1, 1936. Despite she is not a Balkan state, Czechoslovakia joined the Balkan Union and also agreed on union's special rates in May 1937. In short, by 1937 the coverage of the special Balkan postal rates was concluded to these five countries.⁷

Table I. Balkan Postal Union Rates (kuruş)⁸
1/5/1933 – 23/2/1941*

<i>Country</i>	<i>Effective dates</i>	<i>letter</i>	<i>post card</i>	<i>registration**</i>
<i>Greece</i>	1/2/1933 – 5/3/1941*	8	5	8
<i>Romania</i>	1/1/1936 – 15/11/1940	8	5	8
<i>Yugoslavia</i>	1/1/1936 – 23/2/1941*	8	5	8
<i>Czechoslovakia</i>	1/5/1937 – 1/5/1940	8	5	8

*Last recorded date. ** Notice of receipt throughout the period was the double as the registration rate

⁷ibid

⁸Akan M. & Kuran T.,(2019). Microhistory of the Turkish Posts, İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 245.

Table 2. Balkan Postal Union Rates (para)⁹
1/5/1933 – 23/2/1941*

Country	Effective dates	printed matter/ greeting 50g	sample**business paper *** 50g.	book 50g.	newspaper 50g.
Greece	1/2/1933-13/10/1939	50	50	30	30
	13/10/1939-5/3/1941*	70	70	30	30
Romania	1/1/1936-13/10/1939	50	50	30	30
	13/10/1939-15/11/1940	70	70	30	30
Yugoslavia	1/1/1936-13/10/1939	50	50	30	30
	13/10/1939-23/2/1941*	70	70	30	30
Czechoslovakia	1/5/1937-13/10/1939	50	50	30	30
	13/10/1939-1/5/1940	70	70	30	30

9

* Last recorded date **minimum 2,5 krş. *** minimum 6 krş.

Table 3. (kırış)

Country	Effective dates	Reply Coupon
Greece	28/10/1940 – 5/3/1941*	10
Romania	28/10/1940 15/11/1940	10
Yugoslavia	28/10/1940 23/2/1941*	10

⁹Decree No. 12145 from September 19,1939.

“On May 1, 1940, following the German occupation of Czechoslovakia, UPU rates and rules were reinstated for mail to that country. Soon thereafter, German armies marched into Yugoslavia and Greece, prompting the Romanian postal administration to propose termination of the Balkan Postal Union. Alas, the express permission of all member postal administrations was required. Under the circumstances, the union was simply treated as inoperative. The reduced rates ceased to apply to Romania on 15 November 1940. It is unknown when they became inoperative with respect to Greece and Yugoslavia. What is clear from the PTT rate tables issued on 1 July 1940, and from a Prime Minister’s Decision Office document dated 28 September 1940, is that the reduced rates were enforced through 1940.”¹⁰

Examples of Philatelic Materials

The examples of Balkan Postal Union reduced tariffs have been shared. Any special discounts on additional airmail that is part of the postal service could not be found. The main reason for this, must be that the international airmail is in the hands of the international companies like Aero Espresso Italiana, CIDNA and Lufthansa. Parcel Post for the Balkan Postal Union discount arranged according to the list no.3 in the 1936 Bucharest Contract. List 3 defined in the annex of the contract could not be found.



2.1. Postcard: 5 krş.-valued.(A&K A12)Balkan Postal Union postal card mailed on 27 May 1938 from Istanbul to Athens, the earliest known date of use. (Mehmet Akan Collection)

¹⁰Akan M. & Kuran T., (2019). Microhistory of the Turkish Posts, İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 243



2.2. Postcard: (A&K A15) Beyoğlu İstanbul departure: 13 June 1939. Sent to Bucharest Romania on 16 June 1939. Added franking of 2 krş. completed the 5 krş. special rate for Romania. One of the few known use of the special Balkan rate on postal stationery. (Firat Akan collection)



2.3. Postcard: Malatya Bez ve İplik Fabrikası departure: 22 December 1939. Sent to Praha franking the 5 krş. special postcard rate for Czechoslovakia. One of the few known pieces. (Firat Akan collection)



2.4. Letter: Galata İstanbul departure: 6 December 40 Sent to Maneutzi Romania on 12 December 1940. Franking of 8 krş. stamp for special letter rate for Romania . Latest known use of the special Balkan rate on letter. (Firat Akan collection)



2.5. Letter: İstanbul departure: 31 May 1938 Sent to Praha Czechoslovakia Franking of 8 krş. stamp special letter rate for Czechoslovakia. (Firat Akan collection)



2.8. Printed Matter /Greeting: Galata İstanbul departure: 23 July 1937. Sent to Praha franking the 50-para special printed matter & greeting rate for Czechoslovakia. One of the few known pieces. (Emre Utku Collection)



2.9. Reply Coupon: 12 krş. (A&K R Lo6): The reply coupons sold from 12 krş. reduced to 10 krş. for the Balkan Postal Union.

¹¹ Akan M. & Kuran T.,(2019). Microhistory of the Turkish Posts, İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 541.

¹² TC.Cumhurbaşkanlığı Devlet Arşivi. September 28, 1940 Decree No. 14460.

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