

Mail between Sweden and France before the UPU

Background

The first recorded mail between Sweden and France are from around 1700. The mail exchange between Sweden and France was small, but after 1750 the volumes increased. The Napoleonic wars (1803 – 1814) disrupted the mail routes and the mail exchange decreased. After the wars the volumes picked up.

Purpose and Structure

The purpose of this exhibit is to show the mail exchange between Sweden and France from 1700, with the earliest recorded letter from France to Sweden, to the creation of the UPU in 1878, when France adjusted its class 1 foreign postage to 25 centimes.

The exhibit is five frames and illustrates the mail exchange between Sweden and France of the period and it makes it possible to treat the subject in a broad and comprehensive way.

Content

Initially mail between Sweden and France was transited via Thurn & Taxis. The first postal convention between France and Thurn & Taxis appeared in 1716. It was replaced by several conventions. In 1830 Sweden decided to forward letters to France via Prussia. France and Prussia entered into a Convention in 1818 which was replaced a couple of times. Thus, mail between Sweden and France was forwarded under the conditions different conventions between France and Thurn & Taxis/the Netherlands/Prussia and Sweden and Denmark/Prussia. Mail forwarded under all these conventions are exhibited and the routes, postage (due), post marks, handstamps and inscriptions are explained.

The first Postal Convention came into force on 1 February 1855. A second Postal Convention with lower rates came into force on 1 February 1868 and was valid until 31 December 1875. The exchange of mail under the conventions was made in mail pouches, which were opened and closed at the exchange post offices. The sender could ask for a letter to be sent in open transit through Prussia (later North Germany and the German Reich) to France. However, the vast majority of the mail between Sweden and France was forwarded under the regulations of the Postal Conventions.

Finally, transit mail through France to and from countries in Europe, North and South America and Asia are exhibited.

Rarity statements

For letters from Sweden Ferdén's Census, Sören Andersson's compilation of Swedish letters to foreign destinations before 1 July 1855 and Gunnar Nilsson's exhibit of Swedish letters to foreign destinations before the UPU are invaluable. For hand-

stamps and post marks the compilations made by Van den Linden and Hughmark & Halpern are essential. Furthermore, auction catalogues and the experience of the exhibitor, and of other exhibitors, are import sources.

Throughout the exhibit the objects are of high quality. Objects within a red frame are very rare and important.

Personal Study and Research

There are no exhibits covering this extended period of mail and transit mail exchange between Sweden and France. Therefore, substantial personal study and research has been required. Not only secondary sources in published literature, but also primary sources, such as postal conventions and their execution regulations, legislation and circulars and postal rates in Sweden, France and Germany have been studied and researched.

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Important references

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2. Vår andra konvention med Frankrike, dess särdrag och specialstämplar, Bertil Larsson, Posttryttaren 1998.
3. Krigens konsekvenser för postförbindelserna mellan Sverige och Frankrike från 1700 till 1875, Rikard Azelius, Hand out to Swedes @ The RPSL, 2020.
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5. Xponat IX, Svenska brev till utlandet från 1700-talet till U.P.U, Gunnar Nilsson.
6. Marques de Passage, James van der Linden, 1993.
7. Stampless Mail to and from Scandinavia to 1868, Gordon A. Hughmark & Don Halpern, 1999.
8. La Poste Maritime Française, Band I - VIII, Raymond Salles, 1961 - 1972.
9. Census of Swedish mail until 1940, Staffan Ferdén, 2019.