



Thematic Philately Commission

FIP QUALIFYING THEMATIC SEMINAR

FIP Jury Seminar

Verona, November 23, 2019

Program

Morning schedule

10:00 – 11:30, Small break, 11:45 – 12:45

Welcome

Peter Suhadolc (50')

The new Guidelines for Judging Thematic Exhibits - general presentation and planned SREV evolution with a focus on specific aspects of the new guidelines

Koenraad Bracke (20')

Appropriate material, borderline and inappropriate material

Jari Majander (20')

Basic requirements and achievements: treatment

Paolo Guglielminetti (20')

Basic requirements and achievements: thematic & philatelic knowledge

Damian Läge (20')

Basic requirements and achievements: condition and rarity

Program

12:45 - 13:30 Lunch break

Afternoon schedule

13:30 - 15:00 Judging at the frames

Applying the new guidelines (participants will be asked to go to the frames and look for / judge specific basic requirements and achievements)

15.00–16.00 Discussion of the results

16.00–16:45 Seminar by Giancarlo Morolli

“Challenges in judging sport thematic exhibits”

16.45–17.30 Discussion on judging sport thematic exhibits



Thematic Philately Commission

THE NEW GUIDELINES FOR THEMATIC EXHIBITS

FIP Jury Seminar

Verona, November 23, 2019

Peter Suhadolc

Background

The FIP Board has regular meetings with Commission Chairmen and Secretaries. One of the matters raised a few years ago has been the different wording used in the Guidelines for definitions of the same matter e.g. Presentation, Rarity...

An FIP Working Group was established to align the Guidelines across the different classes and all Commissions have been asked to simplify their Guidelines.

The objective was to simplify the wording so that it is more easily understood, especially for non-English speaking exhibitors and judges.

For example – some of the old Guidelines refer to ‘collections’ instead of ‘exhibits’ and include words difficult to understand.

Background

At the meeting of Commission Chairmen and Secretaries at **PRAGA2018**, it was pointed out that for judging exhibits there are **three** sets of requirements:

- **GREV** – setting out the principles for judging/evaluation and applicable to most classes
- **SREV** – providing more detail and specific to each class
- **Guidelines** – explaining in detail how the SREVs are to be applied/interpreted.

Why it is necessary for jurors and exhibitors to have to refer to three documents?

The GREV should obviously remain.

But why not combine the SREV and Guidelines?

Background

The SREVs have to be approved by the FIP Congress, so it was not possible to change the SREVs in **Bangkok2018**. The Guidelines are prepared by each Commission and approved by the FIP Board – they can therefore be amended.

At the PRAGA2018 meeting it was agreed that amended Guidelines (including the content of the SREV) should be prepared by each Commission.

The existing TH Guidelines simplified, updated by current practice and with aligned wording, including now also the SREV, were presented and unanimously approved at the FIP Thematic Commission meeting in Bangkok2018.

Background

The FIP BOARD has approved the TH Commission Guidelines and those of other three Commissions at their August meeting in Buenos Aires and decided to present a motion to have them approved at the 2020 FIP Congress in Jakarta, Indonesia.

The new GUIDELINES

The next slides will present the main changes made to the TH Guidelines

NOTE

Wording in black and italics is taken from the SREV

Wording in black has remained unchanged from the Guidelines

Wording in red is new or a clearer layout

Underlined text is just introduced here to stress the most important points

Article 1: COMPETITIVE EXHIBITIONS

In accordance with Article 1.4 of the General Regulations of the FIP for the Evaluation of Competitive Exhibits at FIP Exhibitions (GREV), the Special Regulations (text in italics) have been developed to supplement those principles with regard to thematic exhibits.

These Guidelines are issued by the FIP Thematic Commission to give practical advice on how to apply the GREV and the Special Regulations for the Evaluation of Thematic Exhibits (SREV), which were approved by the 54th FIP Congress in 1985 in Rome (Revised at the 61st FIP Congress in 1992 in Granada and in Jakarta 2012).

The Guidelines have been developed to assist exhibitors in the preparation and judges in the evaluation of thematic philately exhibits. They are intended to provide guidance regarding mainly:

1. The definition of appropriate philatelic material to be used
2. The principles of exhibit composition, and
3. The judging criteria of exhibits of thematic philately.

3.1 Definition of Appropriate Philatelic Material

3.1.1. A thematic exhibit uses the widest range of appropriate postal-philatelic material (ref. GREV Art 3.2.)

The appropriate postal-philatelic material is that which, for the purpose of transmitting mail or other postal communications, has been issued, intended for issue, or produced in the preparation for issue, used, or treated as valid for postage by governmental, local or private postal agencies, or by other duly commissioned or empowered authorities.

Covers and other sorts of mail usually have several characteristics: stamp(s), postmark(s), labels and markings indicating the special treatment of this mailing, and sometimes indications for postage privileges. These are the elements of postal origin and/or significance, which can be used for thematic treatment. Other characteristics of the same mailing, like sender's name and address information, decorative printings or illustrations on the envelope/card, or the message and other parts of the content, are the non-postal (= private) elements which cannot be used for thematic treatment.

This distinction between postal elements and private elements (maybe on the same item which went through the post) is the one and only rule for defining appropriate philatelic material in thematic philately. Therefore, it is fundamental for understanding the nature of “postal-philatelic material” in thematic philately, in contrast to open philately, which allows for the private elements of a mailing to be used in treatment.

All other listings in this section of the guidelines are explanations of this rule. They show the typical range of postal-philatelic material as it occurs in the leading thematic exhibits and gives some warnings in those cases in which exhibitors try to stretch the definition of appropriate material. The following lists document the very wide range of material, which is appropriate for thematic development, given that the thematic treatment refers to the mentioned elements of postal origin and/or significance.

Border-line material

The variety of postal services and regulations in different countries and their evolution over time make it impossible to define a list encompassing all possible situations. Some items only follow to a certain extent the above definitions of appropriate or inappropriate material; therefore, they should be used mainly when no other material is available to describe a specific thematic detail. When included in the exhibit, they should always be supported by a thorough philatelic justification.

Items belonging to the specific philatelic culture of a theme, a country or a region can be tolerated as much as they are justified, and their number is proportional to the degree of elaboration of the exhibit.

The jury team shall evaluate borderline material primarily with regards to its thematic significance, so it should never be shown solely for its rarity.

Inappropriate Material

*The following items **and the information made available by them** should not be used for thematic development:*

A)

- *fantasy issues from non-existent postal territories*
- *issues of exiled governments*
- *issues of organizations without postal services*
- *abusive, illegal and undesirable issues, as defined by the UPU and the FIP Philatelic Congress of 1976 (and available on the website of the FIP Fight against forgeries commission)*
- *picture postcards, unless they are postal stationery produced by a Postal Authority*
- *privately printed or manuscript annotated **military postcards and lettercards (e.g. Feldpost)** unless accepted or authorized by Postal authorities as admitted to the postal privilege without other official markings*

B)

- *private additional cancellations **and cachets** applied by a sender or a supplier before mailing the documents*
- *private additional prints on postal stationery (also known as “repiquages”)*
- *administrative marks (not postal), when they do not give any postal privilege*
- *private decorations **and decorative overprints** on envelopes and cards*
- *private vignettes (advertising labels), whatever the purpose of their use*

Aspects of category “B” are usually parts of mailings that bear postal elements like stamps and postmarks. However, these are the typical “private elements” of such mailings, which are usually not admitted for thematic treatment, as explained above.

In exceptional cases (see also 3.2.2), where no postal-philatelic material for important aspects of the theme exists, the items under B) can be considered as acceptable items if they present a significant thematic connection and are supported by a thorough philatelic justification.

Thematic Information

3.1.2. Each item must be connected to the chosen theme and present its thematic information in the clearest and most effective way.

The thematic information **used to illustrate the theme or, better, tell a story in a thematic exhibit**, is derived:

- directly from
 - the purpose of issue (or of use)
 - the design of an item,
- indirectly as
 - a result of a deeper analysis that enables the use of items that, at a first glance, do not show any connection with the theme.

Thus, the thematic information can be drawn from:

- the purpose of issue:
 - those which follow changes in political situations
 - those which document a particular period
 - the design of the item, along with everything which is depicted or written on a stamp, postal stationery, postmark or other appropriate postal philatelic material
 - the text, art style of illustration and similar
 - the material on which the item is printed, e.g., granite (silk thread) or banknote paper, war maps
 - the watermark design
 - the perforation (e.g. "perfins")
 - the text or illustration of margins, gutters, tabs, cover and interleaving of booklets, etc.
 - functions of the postal service, which have a thematic significance (e.g. railway, telegraph, newspaper stamps, official service postal stationery, pigeon post)

3.2 Thematic Treatment

The treatment of a thematic exhibit comprises the structure of the work (title and plan) and the elaboration of each point of that structure (development).

A thematic exhibit illustrates the theme chosen by the exhibitor, or better, tells a story related to this theme. The theme or story is presented in the thematic text and illustrated with appropriate philatelic material (see Article 3.1).

In thematic philately, the plan represents the concept, as defined by the GREV. The two subdivisions Title and plan and Development represent the two aspects of an interlaced process, based on personal study and research by the collector on both the theme and the material:

- A deeper knowledge of the theme enables one to increase the number of facts and details described in the story and to look for additional items to illustrate them.
- A better knowledge of the material allows one to identify new pieces, which often must be justified through further study of the theme, which could result in a more elaborate plan.

The pages of an exhibit ought to present the chosen theme, as presented by the title and detailed in the plan, in its entirety, i.e. important parts of the chosen theme must not be omitted.

Innovation is the personal approach of the exhibitor, highlighting the results of his/her ability to create an interesting story and illustrate it with the best material available.

3.2.1 Title and Plan

The title with any subtitle defines the scope of the exhibit. The title and the plan represent a meaningful entity and reflect the specific characteristics of the chosen theme. Hence, different titles originate different plans.

The title represents the synthesis of the **exhibit**. Therefore, the title and the contents of the pages **must** match and the sequence of the philatelic items mounted on the pages should give the full details of the story **implied** by the title. Boosting titles to make the exhibit more attractive can be misleading if they deviate from **the plan and its development on** the pages.

(omissis)

The plan should, as much as possible, present the synthesis of the story told by the exhibit. It should not be a mere list (e.g. lexicon approach). The plan provides a clear and intelligible insight into all major aspects of the theme. It may:

(omissis)

The plan is supposed to present **the content of the exhibit in** a logical order of chapters (and subchapters) allowing the study of the entire exhibit without disturbing breaks between the different chapters. Ideally, the beginning of the following chapter has a logical link with that preceding. This helps to create an interesting story instead of an unconnected “list of contents”. **The best is when the chapters (and subchapters) themselves are structured like a story.**

3.3 Qualification of Philatelic Material

The material displayed should be fully consistent with the subject chosen. The selection should show the appreciation of the exhibitor as to what is available in the context of his chosen subject. It should also include the fullest range of relevant philatelic material of the highest available quality (GREV, Art. 3.4).

(omissis)

When selecting qualified material for the exhibit, preference and greater importance must be given to:

(omissis)

- correct postage frankings, preferably as multiple franking of a thematically important stamp, as opposed to overfrankings due to philatelic reasons (e.g. complete sets)

(omissis)

The use of maximum cards should be limited to a few, significant items, mainly to enhance the understanding of the thematic information, if this is too tiny to be properly seen, on the stamp. In addition to the necessary concordance of subject, time and date, defined in the principles of Maximaphily, these items should have a theme-related cancellation.

3.5 One Frame Exhibits

A One Frame exhibit of Thematic Philately is intended to be an exhibit with a very narrow theme that fits into one frame. If a theme can be shown in more than one frame, it is not suitable as a theme for a One Frame exhibit.

A selection of items from a multi-frame exhibit may be suitable only if the selection can completely treat a natural sub-theme of the exhibit within one frame. An extract of a multi-frame exhibit showing only the best items ("cherry picking") from a multi-frame exhibit is not appropriate as a One Frame exhibit.

ARTICLE 4: CRITERIA FOR EVALUATION

The general criteria, as specified in GREV Art. 4, are adapted to the peculiarities of the thematic class.

In order to help consistent judging, within all the following evaluation criteria, except for Presentation, there is a distinction between Basic requirements and Achievements.

Basic requirements. *When all of them are fulfilled a score equal to 80% of the maximum is assigned. When any of them is not fulfilled, a mistake occurs, and the 80% score is reduced accordingly.*

Achievements. *These requirements are gradual goals on the road to make the exhibit outstanding. They are worth >80% of the maximum and the fulfillment of all of them implies the top score.*

4.1 Thematic Treatment

Treatment will be evaluated according to the title and the plan, the development, and the innovation shown in the exhibit.

Treatment is the presentation of the story for the theme chosen and its development throughout the pages, both showing an innovative approach.

In assessing treatment judges are looking for:

- A logical development that is easy to follow
- A clear and concise write up
- A balanced exhibit for the theme chosen
- The degree to which the plan tells a story

They will check that the exhibit:

- Reflects the theme implied by the title
- Is developed in accordance with the plan
- Has new aspects and new approaches for known themes

4.1.1 Title and Plan

The title and the plan will be evaluated considering the:

- *consistency between the plan and the title*
- *presence of the plan page*
- *adequacy of the plan page*
- *correct, logical and balanced structure (divisions and subdivisions)*
- *coverage of all major aspects necessary to develop the theme.*

(omissis)

The best plans are those in which the chapters (and subchapters) themselves are structured to tell a story and are evaluated much higher than those structured like a “list of contents”.

Title and plan will be evaluated considering the:

Basic requirements

- presence of the plan page
- adequacy of the plan page
- consistency between the plan and the title
- correct, logical and balanced structure (divisions and subdivisions)
- coverage of all major aspects necessary to develop the theme

Achievements

- the degree to which the plan tells a story

4.1.2 Development

(omissis)

The storyline as presented by the plan should be developed on the single pages and written as a continuous story flowing through each page and through all pages. It should be read as in a book from top left to bottom right.

For an easy-to-follow development, each page should have at the top the numbered chapter or subchapter that indicates which part of the plan is being developed on the page. An additional page title summarizing the content of the page is also helpful.

The correct assembly and position of the items, including the individual ones on each page, is demonstrated by a well understood, correct, and fluent thread of development. Misplaced items make development confused and hard to understand. Items should be placed near the thematic text related to them.

The balance is demonstrated by giving the appropriate depth and size to the various thematic details, according to their significance within the theme. This also applies to philatelic studies.

Development will be evaluated considering the:

Basic requirements

- correct assembly and positioning of the items in conformity with the plan
- a connection between the items and the thematic text
- elaboration of all aspects of the plan
- presence of a “red thread” that connects the single pages and chapters into a continuous story

Achievements

- balance, by giving to each thematic point the importance corresponding to its significance within the theme
- depth, shown through connections, cross-references, ramifications, causes and effects

4.2.1 Thematic Knowledge and its related Personal Study and Research

Thematic Knowledge and its related Personal Study and Research will be evaluated considering the

- *appropriateness, conciseness and correctness of the thematic text*
- *correct thematic use of the material*
- *presence of new thematic findings for the theme.*

Thematic knowledge refers to the **general** knowledge of the theme as shown in the choice of the items, **their mutual relationship** and the degree of appropriateness of the accompanying text; the correct thematic use of the material is reflected by the degree of appropriateness to cover specific thematic details.

(omissis)

Basic requirements

- appropriate, concise and correct thematic text
- correct use of thematic material

Achievements

- thematic details in text and material
- presence of new thematic findings for the chosen theme
- “surprising” material (which does not belong to the subject, but thematically fits into the story of that page)

4.2.2 Philatelic Knowledge, and its related Personal Study and Research

Philatelic Knowledge, Personal Study and Research will be evaluated considering the

- *full compliance with the rules of postal philately*
- *presence of the widest possible range of postal-philatelic material and its balanced use*
- *appropriateness of postal documents*
- *appropriateness and correctness of the philatelic text, when required*
- *presence of philatelic studies and related skilful use of important philatelic material.*

(omissis)

Postal-philatelic items (e.g. stamps, postal stationery, proofs, sketches..) should be shown in their entirety. Overlapping is allowed when showing varieties of postal stationery, in a way that the detail with the variety itself is clearly visible. Windowing of cancellation and imprint on a postal stationery is allowed when the thematic text refers to the cancellation. Windowing or folding is allowed for very large items such as large telegrams, complete sheets of stamps etc.

(omissis)

Very limited exceptions (at most one per frame on average) to this general rule are admitted, when the selected philatelic material significantly enhances the relation to the thematic text or is the only way to illustrate it. This refers to the inclusion of both borderline items or items of non-postal nature (e.g. commercially used old repiquages, revenue stamps, covers with addresses sent to personalities subject of the theme, private prints, marks, vignettes and other similar material, if on postally travelled cover or document). In such cases the items must be fully justified as exceptions, thus proving the philatelic knowledge of the exhibitor.

Basic requirements

- Full compliance with the rules of postal philately
- Appropriateness of postal documents
- Appropriateness and correctness of the philatelic text, when needed
- Presence of good range of postal-philatelic material throughout the exhibit and on single pages

Achievements

- Presence of widest possible range of postal-philatelic material and its balanced use
- Presence of material which has not yet been researched for that theme, or where there has been very little research
- Presence of philatelic studies and skilful use of important philatelic material

4.3.1 Rarity

The rarity is based on objective criteria such as recognised absolute scarcity and difficulty of acquisition.

(omissis)

Judges will primarily be looking for:

- rarities of general significance in philately, if available for the theme
- rarities of specific significance for the chosen theme known to exist
- how easy it is to duplicate the exhibit

Judges will also be looking for:

- scarce and uncommon items, particularly from traditional philately, postal history and postal stationery

Basic requirements

- Normal and modern material plus unusual and scarce items

Achievements

- Presence of rare items

4.3.2 Condition

The condition is based on the usual overall criteria for evaluation in philately and is related to the degree of rarity of the items present in the exhibit.

All items should be in the best possible condition. The condition of items is evaluated as if they were stamps: No tears, no missing corners, no bends, no stains, no missing perforations (if present), etc.

- The condition of common material should be impeccable.
- Exhibitors are encouraged to show unique or very rare material that does not occur in fine condition but are cautioned from including other items in a condition that may reduce the perceived overall condition of the exhibit.
- It is important to remember that the actual condition obtainable will vary according to the country and period.

- Commercially used items are to be preferred to philatelic produced ones.
- Cancellations should be as clear as possible with all essential wording complete and allow the stamp design, where thematically relevant, to be clearly visible.
- Booklets should be presented complete with stamps.
- If an item has been restored or manipulated, it must be described as such.

Basic requirements

- Normal and modern material in excellent quality, plus all unusual in good quality and rare material in average condition

Achievements

- Rarities in above average up to the best quality

4.4 Presentation

The criterion of “Presentation” requires an evaluation of the clarity of the display, the text as well as the overall aesthetic balance of the exhibit.

The method of presentation should show the material to the best effect and in a balanced way.

The efforts of the exhibitor are demonstrated by the arrangement of the items and the text on appropriate exhibition pages in order to effectively communicate the story and to highlight the philatelic material in an attractive and aesthetic way.

The presentation of the exhibit is evaluated on:

- Overall aesthetic balance on the frames and the individual pages
- Good use of the page – with not too much white space on the pages
- The write-up is clear and concise, i.e. enough write-up – but not too much text
- Any photocopies/scans must be a minimum of 25% different in size from the original
- Careful and neat mounting

Other factors:

- No advantage or disadvantage shall apply as to whether the text is handwritten, typewritten or computer printed.
- Brightly coloured inks and coloured album pages should be avoided.
- Mounting of long covers at an angle should be avoided.

Scoring in TH Philately

1. Treatment	35	
<i>Title and Plan</i>		15
<i>Development</i>		15
<i>Innovation</i>		5
2. Knowledge, Personal Study and Research	30	
<i>Thematic</i>		15
<i>Philatelic</i>		15
3. Condition and Rarity	30	
<i>Condition</i>		10
<i>Rarity</i>		20
4. Presentation	5	
Total		100

*THANK YOU
FOR YOUR ATTENTION !!*

