Part I: The European Postal and Telecommunications Union – An Axis Initiative for the "New Postal Europe" (1940-1942)

While World War II hindered the work of the UPU and the ITU,[164] international PTT cooperation remained important; this was true not just for Europe during the war but also for the Axis vision of future peacetime Europe, namely one in which the Axis powers won the war and Fascism ruled the continent. The victory would lead to a 'new order of Europe'. While it was unclear what the 'New Europe' was supposed to look like,[165] influential individuals within the Italian and German PTT administrations, notably German *Reichspostminister* Ohnesorge, thought it should include a European restricted postal union shaped after the technocratic ideals of existing international unions. Both technical and political aims led to two German-Italian cooperation initiatives, one focused on expert telecommunication cooperation in working groups[166] and the other on creating a European organisation that would guarantee post-war influence in the UPU.[167] The latter initiative prevailed and was set up such that working groups also found a place in the organisation; this aligned with the developments of technocratic internationalism, demonstrating that the initiative unified both technocratic traditions and fascist and/or National-Socialist ideas for a 'New Europe'. Based on this ideological framework, members of the German and Italian PTT administrations cooperated to achieve the first European PTT union. While the initial meeting had a representative context, including celebrating the Axis powers, the following meetings became more technical. The cooperative efforts encountered more difficulties, described in the Chapter II of this part. In particular, the Italian side felt increasingly outplayed by and unequal to the German administration, which led the Italian

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164   PTT Archiv, Bern, P-00C_0128_11, Expédition des documents de service par le bureau international aux Administrations de l'Union, 05.1943.
165   Mazower, Hitler's Empire, p. 555.
166   Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/12284, Niederschrift über die zu gründende AG Europäischer Fernmeldeverwaltungen.
167   Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/11248, Vortrag auf der Gesamtsitzung des RPM von Oberpostrat Dr. Timm.

Foreign Ministry to intervene and bring the project to a halt.[168] More members were needed to make the union European. The German administration mainly did outreach to other European PTT administrations, and their success was mixed. While most administrations from non-occupied countries were technically interested, they were politically unwilling to join the union. The German administration consulted intensely with the German Foreign Ministry regarding which of the occupied countries could and should join. The most vibrant discussion revolved around Frances' membership, and the French administration ultimately did not participate in the congress.[169] Before delving into the inter-administrative negotiations that took place before the congress, the following chapter describes the framework in which these negotiations took place: at the intersection between technocratic internationalism and the political quests for a 'New Europe' by different fascist actors. After this, Chapter II and III of this part detail the preparations within the *Reichspostministerium*, between the German and the Italian PTT administrations and between the *Reichspost* and other European PTT administrations.

Chapter I: Technocratic traditions and the new political regime

Johan Schot and Vincent van Lagendijk coined the term 'technocratic internationalism' to describe the experts' international cooperation in the area of infrastructures. Based on their research on interwar cooperation regarding motorways and electricity networks, they argue that technocracy is a 'way of business leaders, engineers, politicians, intellectuals and their respective organisations and parties to create a new societal order for nation-states in Europe plagued by huge problems of instability, social conflict, unemployment and economic depression'.[170] They define its three main elements as 'the myth of networks, an assumed harmony between nation-states, and a preference for a working method which separates technical issues from politics'.[171] Networks are seen as a form of governance because

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168 Politisches Archiv, Berlin, R106301, an Dir. Ha Pol, 23.07.1942.
169 Europäischer Postkongress, p. 10.
170 Schot, Johan / Lagendijk, Vincent: Technocratic Internationalism in the Interwar Years. Building Europe on Motorways and Electricity Networks, in: *Journal of Modern European History* 6 (2008), p. 196-217. DOI: 10.17104/1611-8944_2008_2_196, p. 197.
171 Schot / Lagendijk, Technocratic Internationalism, p. 198.

they mirror the status and power of specific interests and can influence policies in a lasting way without entirely determining them.[172] The so-called myth of networks describes the idea that networks, for example, infrastructures, almost automatically create integration and peace. The second element, 'the denial of the dichotomy between national and international interests',[173] can be summarised as follows: politics hinder optimal network-building, as nationalism leads to inefficiencies. Instead, technical aspects should play a crucial role in coordinating international networks. Nevertheless, this does not mean that some engineers or experts were not convinced nationalists:[174] 'In contrast (to diplomats), the experts regarded themselves as generous, able to overcome prejudices and capable of seeking consensus through rational communication'.[175] Consequently, the third element of technocratic internationalism was to avoid a politicised discussion by simply not defining the issues as political, which left experts and engineers to discuss them and identify the best solution.[176] Limiting the role of politics did not mean that the experts wanted to avoid regulation; rather, they aimed at 'organised and planned capitalism'[177]. In sum, the main goal was to establish an improved international economy through technocratic cooperation and coordination to work towards prosperity and peace. This had to occur without the interference of political actors, which shows how standardisation processes can amount to governing without government. Economic integration was to precede political integration.[178]

International infrastructure cooperation and technocratism

Technocratic internationalism developed based on the evolution of international cooperation during the 19th century, when the UPU was also founded.

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172   Kaiser, Wolfram / Gehler, Michael / Leucht, Brigitte : Networks in Informal European Governance. Diachronic Perspectives on the EU as a Multi-Level-Polity, in: Gehler, Michael / Kaiser, Wolfram / Leucht, Brigitte (Eds.): *Netzwerke im europäischen Mehrebenensystem. Von 1945 bis zur Gegenwart, Networks in European multi-level governance; from 1945 to the present*. Universität Hildesheim. Institut für Geschichte. Wien 2009 (Historische Forschungen (Vienna, Austria), 6), p. 28-30.
173   Ibid.
174   Ibid.
175   Kaiser, Wolfram / Schot, Johan W.: *Writing the rules for Europe. Experts, cartels, and international organizations*. 2014 (Making Europe), p. 42.
176   Schot / Lagendijk, Technocratic Internationalism, p. 199.
177   Ibid., p. 198.
178   Ibid., p. 198.

This period is one of non-binding agreements (or arrangements) that did not have to be ratified nationally and addressed international administrative issues. The time was characterised by 'three outstanding recurring features: the periodic congress or conference, the permanent committee or commission, and the bureau'.[179] Though no binding decisions were made, opt-outs were difficult as decisions made by consensus were preferred, and peer pressure was high.[180]

While this ideology was never made public or promoted by, for example, an international movement, it was a 'very influential background ideology'[181] that gained momentum due to the instability caused by the Great Depression at the end of the 1920s. The networks were regarded as a way to surmount economic and political problems and 'restore the pre-war prestige of European "civilisation"'.[182] This thought was rather popular in interwar Europe and matched the fascist rhetoric around Europe. Technocratic internationalism did not have a clear European vision; networks were often considered larger than continental borders. According to Schot and Lagendijk, due to its hidden character, one must examine discussions of different projects to identify the technocratic internationalist discourse.[183] They note that the implementation of projects following the ideas of technocratic internationalism had long-term effects: the ideology became important again after the Second World War as it contained a 'clear vision on how to construct European infrastructures'.[184]

'Technocratic internationalism' has been used to explain and describe developments in international infrastructure cooperation and coordination. Ambrosius and Henrich-Franke have emphasised the 'increasing importance of informal cooperation in stakeholder networks'[185] during the interwar period. This led to a change in the relationship between traditional diplomats and the experts within international infrastructure organisations such as the UPU. The latter 'shared professional and pertinent convictions (and based their actions on a scientific and technological reasoning)'[186] which did not always fall in line with government directions. Ambrosius and Henrich-Franke also stress the uniting power of technical expertise

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179 Lyons, Francis S. L.: *Internationalism in Europe. 1815-1914*, Sythoff 1963, p. 29.
180 Kaiser / Schot, Writing the rules for Europe, p. 42.
181 Schot / Lagendijk, Technocratic Internationalism, p. 199.
182 Ibid.
183 Ibid., p. 199-200.
184 Ibid., p. 214.
185 Ambrosius / Henrich-Franke, Integration of infrastructures, p. 5.
186 Ibid.

within the organisation and its specific culture. Technical expertise was also used externally to distinguish the organisation from other institutions.[187]

Furthermore, Henrich-Franke argues that the organisational setting of the international infrastructure organisations reinforced the emergence of epistemic expert communities. The more political questions, such as the organisations' structure and the basic rules, were discussed in plenipotentiary; however, the experts could discuss the coordination of technical standards almost autonomously in so-called consultative committees, which depoliticised the issues and excluded foreign ministries and their diplomats from the process as much as possible. Additionally, one of the main guiding ideas was that 'scientifically informed policy-making' could guarantee the interoperability and compatibility of different national systems.[188] These consultative committees thus also fostered epistemic communities because the regular conferences gave ample opportunity for socialising, and, according to Laborie, they were quickly ritualised. Change in the higher ranks of the administrations was slow so that a steady network could develop.[189] Thus, a particular network governance in PTT developed under the umbrella of technocratic internationalism.

Laborie uses the term 'technical delegate' to describe the public officials who cooperate in these networks by finding a balance between being a national agent and a transnational public service creator. He describes the strategy used to overcome tensions as a formula of 'mutual concession'.[190] While the international infrastructure organisations may have seemed less far-reaching than political ones, they were 'more realistic'[191] and efficient due to the lack of political and diplomatic influence. For example, while Germany had already left the League of Nations by 1939, German experts still participated in the UPU congress of that year in Buenos Aires in the same year.[192] The formalisation of technocratic practices via the creation of unions gave experts a strong position that, in return, further legitimised their autonomy and role. Thereby, they created their own spheres of influence to the detriment of diplomatic and national political actors.[193]

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187   Ibid.
188   Henrich-Franke, Comparing Cultures, p. 288.
189   Laborie, L'Europe mise en réseaux, p. 115-122.
190   Laborie, Léonard: Fragile links, frozen identities: the governance of Fragile links, frozen identities: the governance of telecommunication networks and Europe (1944–53). In *History and Technology* 27 (2011), p. 311-330.; p. 313.
191   Ibid., p. 311.
192   Ibid., p. 311-314.
193   Kaiser / Schot, Writing the rules for Europe, p. 39 and 296.

Erik van der Vleuten and Arne Kaijser call these experts 'Europe's Network Builders',[194] stressing the importance of the human factor in network-building. Reinalda calls them more generally 'public system builders'.[195] This understanding of experts makes visible the conception, building, negotiation and contesting of networks. It also makes possible an analysis of the broader context in which the experts cooperated. Van der Vleuten and Kaijser underline the importance of power structures in trans-European networks: 'While Europe was increasingly integrated, it was a game of winners and losers, of successful and failed projects, of cooperation, negotiations and conflicts'.[196] They also outline that the idea of unifying Europe by building transnational infrastructure networks gained hold in the 1930s and was taken up by the National Socialists as part of their conception of a 'New Europe'. Kaiser and Schot emphasise that this period 'highlighted the ambivalence and pitfalls of the experts' preference for depoliticising policy-making'.[197] They argue that experts detached technocratic goals from their methods and served the fascist and National Socialists regimes sometimes out of ideological conviction or because authoritarian regimes promised faster processes than democratic ones. The development projects gave them room to realise their own plans.[198] With respect to this argument, Jeffrey Herf describes an 'ideal typical construct'[199] termed reactionary modernism; this was an important current of thought within conservative and National Socialist thinking that embraced both anti-modernist romanticism and modern technology. According to Herf, reactionary modernists realised that Germany needed to be technologically advanced to be a strong nation and could not just rely on being a *Kulturnation*. Joseph Goebbels talked about a 'century of (…) steel-like romanticism'.[200] Though paradoxical, reactionary modernism combined two traditional discourses on technology

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194 van der Vleuten, Erik / Kaijser, Arne: Networking Europe. *Transnational infrastructures and the shaping of Europe, 1850-2000* Sagamore Beach, Mass. 2006, p. 31.

195 Reinalda, Bob: *Routledge history of international organizations. From 1815 to the present day*. London 2009, p. 95.

196 van der Vleuten / Kaijser, Networking Europe, p. 34.

197 Kaiser / Schot, Writing the rules for Europe, p. 74.

198 Ibid., p. 74-75.

199 Herf, Jeffrey: *Reactionary modernism. Technology, culture, and politics in Weimar and the Third Reich.* Cambridge, Massachusetts 1984, p. 1.

200 Ibid., p. 3.

that are usually seen as opposites – namely romance[201] and tragedy[202,203] – allowing technocrats to become esteemed members of National Socialist society. However, there were restrictions to the compatibility of technocratic ideas with National Socialism. Renneberg and Walker state that 'the Third Reich had room for individual technocrats, not for a technocratic movement'.[204] This incompatibility also led to a disconnect of technocratic methods from technocratic aims.[205] Nevertheless, the ideological contrast between the internationalist (and rationalist) characteristics of technocracy and National Socialism might not be as automatic and drastic as sometimes described.[206] Another important element of the 'internationalist' framework of the EPTU to consider is the propaganda surrounding the term 'New Europe'; the term described an internationalist fascist Europe and gained importance at the start of the Second World War when the German *Wehrmacht* quickly occupied large parts of Europe.

The 'New Europe' propaganda

Though it might seem counterintuitive due to the nationalistic elements of National Socialist and fascist ideology, different actors within Germany actively pursued international projects and goals – especially with their Italian counterparts – that focused on the European continent. This development is described as an innovation in the history of European imperialism: 'The Nazis shared that imperial desire but did something that was unprecedented and shocking to the European mind of the early twentieth century: they tried

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201 Very briefly described: Technological development is good and leads to societal progress. For more cf. Heßler, Martina: *Kulturgeschichte der Technik*. Frankfurt am Main 2012. (Historische Einführungen, Band 13). Available online at http://www.campus.de/livebook/9783593397405/html5.html.
202 Very briefly described: Technological advancement endangers humanity. For more cf. Heßler, Kulturgeschichte
203 Heßler, Kulturgeschichte, p. 21-22.
204 Writer's own translation: "Das Dritte Reich hatte Platz für einzelne Technokraten, nicht für eine technokratische Bewegung", Renneberg, Monika / Walker, Mark: Naturwissenschaftler, Techniker und der Nationalsozialismus, in: Dirk Böndel (Ed.): *Ich diente nur der Technik. Sieben Karrieren zwischen 1940 und 1950*. Berlin 1995 (Berliner Beiträge zur Technikgeschichte und Industriekultur, Bd. 13), p. 15-24, p. 18.
205 Ibid., p. 18.
206 Ibid., p. 17.

to rebuild their Empire in Europe itself and, what is more, to do it at break-neck speed in only a few years'.[207]

It is all the more interesting as Hitler is often said to have had no interest in creating European structures and saw Europe simply as an instrument for propaganda and a region to economically exploit to benefit Germany.[208] In 1928, Mussolini declared Fascism to be a non-exportable product.[209] Similarly, Himmler and Goebbels[210] are said to have had no concrete use for 'Europe' and did not use the power-political opportunity to create a new order.[211] Thus, authors such as Wolfgang Schmale denominate the German National Socialists' ideas for Europe as being 'anti-Europe'.[212] This term highlights the difference between the Europeanism of the 1920s and the exploitation of its ideas as well as the fascist plans for Europe in the 1930s (and consequently the 1940s).[213] Recent research, however, suggests that Fascism was both a national and transnational movement that led to entanglements between fascists on different levels, from high-ranking officials to poets and composers: 'Rejecting democracy, liberalism, communism and socialism as well as the politics of compromise and negotiation, fascist parties and groups undoubtedly shared a common point of departure'.[214]

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207   Mazower, Hitler's Empire, p. XXXIX.
208   Cf. Gruchmann, Lothar: Nationalsozialistische Großraumordnung. Die Konstruktion einer "deutschen Monroe-Doktrin", in: *Schriftenreihe der Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 4 (1962), p. 7-167, p. 113-114; Kühberger, Europa als Strahlenbündel, p. 17, Sandkühler, Europa und der Nationalsozialismus, p. 430, Martin, The Nazi-fascist new order for European culture, p. 8.
209   Fioravanzo, Monica: Italian Fascism from a Transnational Perspective: The Debate on the New European Order (1930- 1945), in: Bauerkämper, Arnd / Grzegorz Rossoliński-Liebe, Grzegorz (Eds.): *Fascism without borders. Transnational connections and cooperation between movements and regimes in Europe from 1918 to 1945*. 1st.; New York 2017, p. 243-263, p. 243.
210   Benjamin Martin however shows Goebbels as an important actor in the creation of a new order for European culture (Martin, The Nazi-fascist new order for European culture, p. 6).
211   Sandkühler, Thomas: Europa und der Nationalsozialismus Ideologie. Währungspolitik, Massengewalt, in: *Zeithistorische Forschungen/Studies in Contemporary History 9* (2012), p. 428-441, p. 430.
212   Writer's own translation: "Antieuropa" Schmale, Geschichte Europas, p. 116.
213   Schmale, Geschichte Europas, p. 115.
214   Bauerkämper, Arnd / Rossoliński-Liebe, Grzegroz: Fascism without borders. Transnational Connection and Cooperation between Movements and Regimes in Europe, in: Bauerkämper, Arnd / Rossoliński-Liebe, Grzegroz (Eds.): *Fascism without borders. Transnational connections and cooperation between movements and regimes in Europe from 1918 to 1945*. 1st. New York 2017, p. 1-38, p. 3.

While research on the Nazi or Axis rule in Europe has been primarily focused on military, economic and ethnic aspects, in recent years, studies have also examined cultural, social and other policies. To fruitfully use the existing findings for this work, this section focusses on three hypotheses derived from earlier works: First, the New Order of Europe was a propaganda term, not a straightforward concept with strategic goals or milestones. Second, this ambiguity led to different strategies within internationalist fascist projects: some organisations were upheld but infiltrated, while others were 'replaced' with new, though often similar structures. Third, the German National Socialists' internationalist efforts aimed to gain hegemony in different areas of international cooperation.

The so-called 'New Order of Europe', 'New European Order' or 'New Europe'[215] cannot be described as a coherent concept or strategy.[216] A concrete policy for Europe was never established, and projects in this direction were prevented.[217] Mazower concludes, 'The more the Nazis talked about Europe, the less they actually seemed to be saying'.[218] This conceptual emptiness of the terms was also reflected in the diverging realities in occupied countries: 'German occupation policy and its enforcement in Europe were seriously uncoordinated, impeding the implementation of larger political schemes'.[219] However, the sources relevant to the EPTU frequently use these terms. This mostly occurs when the actors wanted to place the EPTU into a larger, non-PTT context and legitimise it politically, as is shown in the following parts.

Researchers have focussed on different elements of the 'New Europe': Schmale notes that the main aspects of the National Socialist concept of Europe were racism and the strong German hegemony over the continent,[220] which were also visible in the *Generalplan Ost.*[221] Sandkühler sees the heart of the concept in the anti-Bolshevism and the anti-Semitism that legitimised

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215 In German, the efforts are often summed up in the term: "Neuordnung Europas" – however, there are multiple terms in other languages.
216 Kühberger, Europa als Strahlenbündel, p. 11.
217 Schmale, Geschichte Europas, p. 115-121.
218 Mazower, Hitler's Empire, p. 555.
219 Lund, Joachim: Denmark and the 'European New Order', 1940-1942, in: *Contemporary European History* 13 (2004), p. 305-321. DOI: 10.1017/S096077-7304001742, p. 307.
220 Schmale, Geschichte Europas, p. 116-119.
221 Eichholtz, Dietrich: Der "Generalplan Ost" als genozidale Variante der imperialistischen Ostexpansion, in: Rössler, Mechtild / Schleiermacher, Sabine / Tollmien, Cordula: *Der "Generalplan Ost". Hauptlinien der nationalsozialistischen Planungs- und Vernichtungspolitik*, Berlin 1993, p. 118-121.

the war as a preventive and defensive action of Europe against Jewish Bolshevism.[222] This conception of Europe drew on interwar ideas of the continent, both spatial concepts (Lebensraum[223]) and more organisational ones (*Mitteleuropa*,[224] International Paneuropean Movement[225]).[226] The spatial concept of the Lebensraum, introduced by Friedrich Ratzel,[227] was most prominently picked up by Carl Schmitt, who coined the term *Großraum.*[228] This region was supposed to be constituted by several states and dominated by one empire. It was also to be an economic entity before becoming a political one.[229] Schmitt divided the world into different *Großräume* and claimed an interdiction against intervention by powers foreign to the region.[230] However, he did not determine the borders of this *Großraum*. This also holds for German annexation plans. It was unclear which countries were seen as Germanic enough to become part of an often-envisioned Greater Germanic Reich: for example, while Norway, Denmark, the Netherlands and Flanders could have been integrated into the Greater Germanic Reich, the integration of Finland and Sweden was less sure. Similarly, high dependence on Germany, as in the case of Hungary and Romania, could simply lead to integration into the *Großraum* but not the Reich. Since the Fascists and National Socialists did not win the war, they did not implement their ideas for a 'New Europe', so that the economic exploitation of states occupied by Germany remained the main common element of the Nazi 'New Europe'. The terms were mostly used for internal and external propaganda and mobilisation purposes and, according to Walter Post,[231] even became the cornerstone of German foreign propaganda in the autumn of

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222 Sandkühler, Europa und der Nationalsozialismus, p. 430.
223 Concept of the "living space" in the East which provided grounds for the war in the East of Europe where this living space was supposed to be established for German settlers.
224 "Middle Europe": A concept that foresaw a deeper integration within central Europe with a strong German dominance.
225 Founded in 1923 under the leadership of Richard Nikolaus Coudenhove-Kalergi, the movement envisioned a unified European state.
226 Kletzin, Birgit: *Europa aus Rasse und Raum. Die nationalsozialistische Idee der Neuen Ordnung*. Münster 2000 (Region, Nation, Europa, Bd. 2), p. 2-9.
227 Ibid., p. 11.
228 Writer's own translation: Great Space.
229 Böttcher, Winfried: *Klassiker des europäischen Denkens. Friedens- und Europavorstellungen aus 700 Jahren europäischer Kulturgeschichte*, 1. Aufl., Baden-Baden 2014, p. 584.
230 Ibid.
231 Post, Walter: *Hitlers Europa. Die europäische Wirtschaftsgemeinschaft 1940-1945*. 1. Aufl. Stegen am Ammersee 2011, p. 164.

1940. The content of the 'Europe' propaganda was not homogeneous: it varied from actor to actor and public to public, which only emphasises the term's hollowness. It remains unknown whether this was intentional or simply a leadership failure. The lack of a concrete vision for Europe caused tensions with fascists in occupied countries. Countries other than Germany and Italy also discussed the concepts for Europe: the 'to-be-created fascist Europe found (…) specific national legitimisations'.[232] Robert Grunert explains these legitimisations as aiming to guarantee a degree of national sovereignty, which he deems illusory and indicative of the dichotomy between nationalism and transnational solidarity.[233] Thus, 'pan-Europeanism was not only espoused by liberals and democrats but also exploited by the Fascists and National Socialists'[234] and had different national characteristics. Johannes Dafinger argues that all concepts defined a specific European element – culturally or biologically – that had to be defended against the common enemy, understood as the United States of America and the United Kingdom or the Soviet Union or all of them.[235] However, the German side did not fully address these ideas. As Ferenc Szálasi from the Hungarian Arrow Cross Party put it, 'I know what Moscow wants to make out of Europe, (…) I know for sure too, what London and Washington want to make out of Europe, but I do not know yet what Berlin wants to concretely make with Europe regarding its big construction'.[236] Thus, there was no concrete German plan to create a European federation under National Socialist leadership: 'Instead, Germany installed a ruling system over the continent with racist downgrading that partially followed transnational concepts, but essentially solidified and shifted hierarchies between nation states'.[237] This

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232 Writer's own translation: "zu schaffende faschistische Europa fand (…) national-spezifische Legitimationen", Grunert, Robert: *Der Europagedanke westeuropäischer faschistischer Bewegungen 1940-1945*, 2012, p. 446.

233 Grunert, Der Europagedanke, p. 447.

234 Bauerkämper / Rossoliński-Liebe, Fascism without borders, p. 13.

235 Dafinger, Johannes: The Nazi "New Europe": Transnational Concepts of a Fascist and Völkisch Order for the Continent, in: Bauerkämper, Arnd / Grzegorz Rossoliński-Liebe, Grzegorz (Eds.): *Fascism without borders. Transnational connections and cooperation between movements and regimes in Europe from 1918 to 1945*, 1st., New York 2017, p. 265-287, p. 275-277.

236 Grunert, Der Europagedanke, p. 446.

237 Writer's own translation: "Stattdessen installierte Deutschland eine rassistisch abgestufte Herrschaftsordnung über den Kontinent, die partiell transnationalen Prinzipien folgte, in wesentlichen Hinsichten aber nationalstaatliche Hierarchien befestigte und verschob", Sandkühler, Europa und der Nationalsozialismus, p. 440.

system relied heavily on military hegemony and on the will of national leaders to maintain national sovereignty. These leaders often used the system as an argument for collaboration, as was the case in France[238] and Denmark.[239] Nonetheless, it remained very clear that Germany was at the top of the hierarchy ruling over the continent.

From propaganda to concrete projects: conflict or cooperation?

Despite the absence of a clear European agenda, there were concrete projects and plans that would, in one way or another, match the 'New Europe' concept and surely also included the EPTU. Cooperation between fascist movements on a common approach to Europe was quite difficult, partially due to their nationalistic sentiment and the supposed superiority of their own group.

Madeleine Herren describes Italian, German and Japanese Fascists' internationalist strategies as reinforcing their governance beyond their own territory by copying the pattern of the international organisations that they did not accept ideologically. She points to the competitiveness of German and Italian organisations responsible for expanding Fascist rule over the continent. Herren emphasises that the war was a catalyst for the creation of new international organisations, for which a handbook was developed but never finished: the *Deutsche Kongress Zentrale* actively collected information on international organisations by accumulating the archival material of occupied countries. Herren defines three ways of dealing with international organisations: 'close (…), undercut (…) or transform and/or create'.[240] She calls the International Chamber of Law, created in 1941, the 'most striking product of fascist internationalism in its German incarnation'[241]. The Chamber's task was less to exchange expertise than to build a propaganda platform.[242]

In the area of culture, Benjamin Martin notes that the common Italian-German effort to create a new cultural European order began even before 1936 and unions such as the 'Union of International Writers (1934), the

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238   Durand, Yves: *Le Nouvel Ordre européen nazi. La collaboration politique dans l'Europe allemande, 1938-1945*. Bruxelles 1990 (Questions au XXe siècle, 20), p. 56.
239   Cf. Lund, Denmark and the European New Order.
240   Herren, Fascist Internationalism, p. 208.
241   Ibid.
242   Cf. Herren, Fascist Internationalism.

Permanent Council for International Cooperation among Composers (1934), the International Film Chamber (1935) and the European Writers Union (1941) (…) were built on the practices of the kind associated with precisely the internationalism that Nazis and fascists rejected'.[243] He also notes the importance of controlling international or transnational networks to gain hegemony. Although Germans and Italians approached culture differently, Martin states that divisions were put aside to achieve a common goal, which was revising 'the existing international order and (…) [the] national-imperialist expansion'.[244] However, because both partners thought of themselves as culturally superior, the cooperation was highly conflictual.[245]

In the area of social policy, the book *Nazism Across Borders,* edited by Sandrine Kott and Kiran Klaus Patel, highlights the influence of German social policy abroad, not just during the Nazi dictatorship and the war but also afterwards. The editors address attempts at international cooperation, for example, via the World Congress for Leisure Time and Recreation (Hamburg, 1936); however, they also point to the vigorous competition between nations that characterised internationalist Fascism.[246] In terms of economics, the Schlotterer committee discussed economic ideas for future cooperation in financial and monetary policy. It even concretised ideas for a customs and currency union (under German hegemony).[247]

Another highly specific project was Baldur von Schirach's endeavour to establish a European Youth Association[248] with a founding congress in Vienna in October 1942, which Hitler ultimately shut down. The federation was led by a German-Italian presidium to underline the special positions of Italy and Germany. Working groups were formed, but their discussions were limited to content prepared before the congress. Though the Italian and German delegations were symbolically equated, the German representatives were granted a prerogative regarding the interpretation of what the 'New Europe' was supposed to be.[249] In November 1942, reacting to Schirach's initiative, Hitler forbade any further planning or execution of European and international congresses or unions. He made clear that the *Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei* (NSDAP) and its organisations did not have a European or international mission and that foreign policy was

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243   Martin, The Nazi-fascist new order for European culture, p. 6.
244   Ibid., p. 11.
245   Ibid.
246   Kott / Patel, Nazi Social Policy, p. 2-11.
247   Sandkühler, Europa und der Nationalsozialismus, p. 434-435.
248   Writer's own translation: "Europäischer Jugendverband" (Kühberger, Europa als Strahlenbündel, p. 14).
249   Kühberger, Europa als Strahlenbündel, p. 15-28.

not a field for experiments and personal projects.[250] This is interesting from two points of view: First, the German *Reichspost* saw the international standardisation of postal services as a part of its mission at least until 1944 and possibly even longer if the war had not prevented it. This demonstrates the heterogeneity and contradictions within the National Socialist polycracy and its plans for Europe. Second, until 1943, building a German-Italian political twin pair, as Baldur von Schirach and Renato Ricci did in the case of youth policy, had been an opportunity to profile individuals in both countries. Mussolini and Hitler's vague decision to work together triggered cooperation efforts between lower-ranking officials. The Axis was inter alia used to gain an advantage in comparison with other competitors, but the working of the Axis itself also depended on such personal connections.[251]

Regarding the hierarchical structures within these concrete projects, the German-Italian relationship is of great interest. The Axis' strength has been frequently questioned, and cooperation between these powers has been described as rather conflictual. Grunert has analysed the Italian-German relations concerning the ideas for a future Europe. He found that there were common features, such as the commitment to the *Volksgemeinschaft,[252]* and common concepts of the enemy, such as democracy, liberalism and Marxism. These concepts could be easily linked to the war opponents. German National Socialists and Italian Fascists also agreed that fascist organisation and planning would solve the problems of modernity. When discussing a united Europe, supranational approaches that still respected national sovereignty were being considered. However, as Alfred Rosenberg envisioned,[253] states were not to be equal within this racist federation of neighbours, as had been the case within the League of Nations. Rather, it would follow a principle of 'organic' hierarchies.[254] In Rosenberg's eyes, this would of course mean that 'Germany was at the top'.[255] Similar to the German National Socialists, the Italian Fascists saw themselves as the leaders of the 'New Europe', or at least as equal partners, counting on the Germans to accept the cultural superiority of the heirs of the Roman Empire.[256] As Kühberger notes, countries attempted to legitimise European unification by referencing the past, and the National Socialists viewed the Roman Empire

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250 Ibid., p. 17.
251 Cf. Fehlhaber, Netzwerke der Achse.
252 Writer's own translation: Community of the people.
253 Sandkühler, Europa und der Nationalsozialismus, p. 430.
254 Grunert, Der Europagedanke, p. 442-444.
255 Fioravanzo, Italian Fascism, p. 246.
256 Ibid., p. 252.

as a model for successful European integration.[257] While differences between the two powers could be ignored and side-lined initially, the war developments made them increasingly visible. For example, the two powers' expansionary goals clashed in the Mediterranean. When 'Francesco Orestano, the president of the Italian Philosophical Society, (…) criticised the concept of a super-race and claimed the spiritual superiority of Italy'[258] in two articles in 1942, serious diplomatic tensions arose between the Axis powers. The German National Socialists were convinced of the 'superiority of [the] German race and German blood'.[259] With the support of smaller allies, such as Hungary and Romania, Italy tried to convince its Axis partner to adhere to the principle of national sovereignty within a 1943 seven-point declaration for the 'New Europe'. They surely also did this to protect themselves from an exploitative Germany. However, Ribbentrop, the German Foreign minister, rejected the idea[260] even as his ministry was working on a plan for a European federation[261] that was never discussed with the Italian ally. Thus, Monica Fioravanzo describes the Axis relationship from the Italian side as follows: 'from collaboration to fear, and from competition to "resignation"'.[262] This supports the hypothesis that the Axis powers were unable and mostly unwilling to effectively synchronise their power.[263] One reason might have been that the German National Socialist plans for Europe were entirely orientated towards German needs and dominance over the continent.[264] Generally, it aimed to strip France of its power position on the continent and reconstruct the 'middle' of Europe into an empire of all Germans.

Finally, as Gosewinkel notes, 'illiberal concepts of Europe and Europeanisation through violence and war were possibly necessary conditions to the thorough and successful process of European integration'.[265] Sandkühler similarly supports the hypothesis that the view of the National Socialist

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257   Kühberger, Europa als Strahlenbündel, p. 18.
258   Fioravanzo, Italian Fascism, p. 252.
259   Ibid., p. 255.
260   Ibid., p. 252.
261   Post, Hitlers Europa, p. 284.
262   Fioravanzo, Italian Fascism, p. 255.
263   Behring, 2019, p. 387.
264   Mazower, Hitler's Empire, p. 559.
265   Writer's own translation: "antiliberale Europakonzeptionen und Europäisierung durch Gewalt und Krieg waren möglicherweise die notwendigen Bedingungen für den durchgreifenden und erfolgreichen Prozess der europäischen Integration", Gosewinkel, Dieter: Antiliberales Europa – eine andere Integrationsge-

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Regime as anti-European and illiberal highlights a caesura where instead continuities should be discussed.[266] The examples of specific projects such as those in social policy also support this line of thought. Therefore, this work also examines the repercussions of the EPTU in after-war Europe.

The two internationalisms – technocratic and fascist – formed a fruitful combination for the creation of the first European PTT union. The aims of the epistemic PTT community – to work towards further harmonisation and the 'New Europe' propaganda – overlapped enough to legitimise this project. It can be assumed that this epistemic community with a shared belief system existed as the UPU had organised international postal relations since 1874. Moreover, the GAPU, established in 1850, showed that a union could unify a territory's postal services before political unification. While different actors proposed plans for a European postal union, the plans were never implemented because of opposition from most administrations. Thus, the 'new postal Europe' was actually built on plans from an 'old' Europe.

By maintaining their independence from political projects, the administrations' experts could form a community outside traditional diplomatic frameworks. One common understanding was that infrastructures could overcome national borders and bring people together, thereby creating bonds that could prevent war. However, the preference for depoliticised decision-making also opened the door for common projects within the new fascist regimes, especially when the technocratic direction and political direction could be brought together.

The conceptual emptiness of the 'New Europe' gave the administrations enough leeway for their European projects. As shown, all National Socialist ideas of the 'New Europe' reduced Europe to a tool to serve German needs and reinforce German dominance, which often made cooperation and collaboration conflictual. While transnational initiatives were started and German-Italian projects and cooperation, in particular, were politically supported until 1943, there was never a clear path for establishing a fascist Europe between the Axis partners. Italian and German Fascists did not see themselves as equals. Within the 'New Europe' concept, other European Fascists saw the opportunity to maintain a certain level of national independence from their occupiers. In sum, European undertakings were often volatile and required a challenging balance between hegemony and com-

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schichte, in: *Zeithistorische Forschungen/Studies in Contemporary History, Online-Ausgabe* (9), 2012, p. 351-364. Available online at https://zeithistorische-forschungen.de/3-2012/id=4496, checked on 6/18/2018, p. 364.
266   Sandkühler, Europa und der Nationalsozialismus, p. 429.

promise. The predominantly bilateral preparatory work for the first European postal union addressed both sources of conflict – namely, the balance between Italy and Germany and between the occupying forces and occupied countries.

Chapter II: German-Italian preparations: A cooperation with conflicts (1940-1942)

The EPTU's initiation phase began approximately in the spring of 1940. According to ministerial director Risch, Risch first discussed the project with the Peoples Commissioner for postal services and telecommunications, Sergeitschuk, during a trip where the terms of a Russian-German PTT agreement were negotiated.[267] As outlined above, the initiation phase is the time dedicated to draft development, problem formulation, information collection and agenda-setting. This phase also includes the first negotiations. This chapter aims to analyse these processes as comprehensively as possible, focussing on standards and standardisation processes.

The end of the initation phase is set here in October 1942, when the provisions of EPTU were negotiated during a congress. As is described in Part II, it is debatable whether there was an initiation phase because it seems as though the German and Italian PTT administrations took and enforced many decisions that were no longer discussed in the decision phase. However, as is shown in the following, the Italian and German PTT administrations did not act alone or in unison, which led to discussions during the congress. Additionally, the other PTT administrations had higher agency in the technical committees than in the general meetings, making change possible. This is why, although the lines between the end of the EPTU's initiation phase and the beginning of its decision phase are arguably blurred, this work discusses an initiation phase.

Before considering the details of the initiation phase from different points of view, it is appropriate to view a timeline[268] of events from the spring of 1940 to October 1942.

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267 Staatsarchiv Hamburg, Hamburg, 221-11 C(P)774, Erwin Jacobi, Fr. Gienapp, Walter Donandt an Zentralstelle für Berufungsausschüsse zur Ausschaltung Nationalsozialisten, 30.07.1947, p. 3.

268 Unfortunately, some information could not be found in the archives. It would have been interesting to see when the occupied countries had been contacted about a bilateral agreement but due to destruction these documents are missing.

Date	Event
Spring 1940	Friedrich Risch travels to Russia and mentions the idea of creating a European Postal Union.
September 1940	In a speech during the plenipotentiary session of the *Reichspostministerium*, Kurt Timm, an advisor to the *Reichspostminister* Ohnesorge, sets down the criteria for a European Postal Union.
End of 1940	The Foreign Department in the *Reichspostministerium* is founded, and Friedrich Risch heads it.
November 1940	Italian and German telecommunications experts meet in Bolzano to discuss further cooperation before the background of the global unions not being effective anymore due to the war.
16 to 18 January 1941	Italian and German telecommunications experts meet in Munich to discuss the creation of a working group for European telecommunications administrations.
February 1941	Risch presents plans for an EPTU to the directors of the *Reichspost*.
21 June 1942	*Reichspostminister* Ohnesorge writes to Hitler to gain his approval for the project.
July 1941	*Reichspostminister* Ohnesorge informs the German Foreign Minister Ribbentrop of the plans (summer 1941). Ohnesorge contacts the Swedish and Finnish postal administrations with the plans for a bilateral agreement and a European Postal Union.
28 August to 3 September 1941	Italian and German PTT administrations meet to negotiate the terms of three bilateral agreements: one for postal services and two for telecommunications.
October 1941	Italian-German PTT agreements are signed.
December 1941 to August 1942	Bilateral agreements between the German PTT administration and eight other PTT administrations, starting with the Finnish one in December 1941, are signed.
January 1942	Ohnesorge and the Italian minister for transports (which was assigned the PTT administration), Host-Venturi, meet.
7 May 1942	An Italian-German meeting occurs in Berlin to further simplify the Italian-German PTT services and prepare the EPTU.

Date	Event
25 July 1942	A planned meeting between the Italian, German, Hungarian and Danish PTT administrations fails due to the resistance of the Italian Foreign Ministry.
End of July 1942	Risch and postal Director General Giuseppe Pession (Italy) meet in Cortina to get the project back on track.
Beginning of August 1942	German, Italian, Danish and Hungarian representatives meet in Innsbruck to prepare for the congress.
10 August 1942	Official invitations are sent to all possible participants.
19 August 1942	The German PTT administration sends preparatory documents (including drafts of the final agreements) to all administrations that had thus far agreed to participate.
September 1942	In September 1942, no bilateral meetings occurred. Yet the preparations continued, and important decisions were made, such as which administrations would participate in the congress.
12 October 1942	The European Postal congress in Vienna begins.

Table 1: Timeline 'Initiation phase'

As this shows, several processes overlapped: There is an agenda-setting process on both the German and Italian-German levels. While the German plans focussed more on postal services, the Italian-German initiative concentrated on telecommunications. Thus, it remains difficult to determine where the idea of creating a European PTT union during war times originated. The timetable suggests it was an idea of the *Reichspostministerium*; however, there is credible evidence to suggest that the Italian-German plans for a working group in telecommunications evolved into the ideas for the EPTU or were at least used to promote the project of the EPTU after finding a partner in the Italian PTT administration. As will be shown, the processes might have been simultaneous and have had different goals. Unfortunately, it is not possible to determine the exact way the project took shape.

In addition to the developments in Italy and Germany, other European PTT administrations were contacted and integrated into the preparation process to varying extents. Some of these administrations remained in the process with different intensities. The German PTT administration, in particular, worked hard to conclude bilateral agreements to prepare for the EPTU.

The next two chapters analyse the initiation phase from different perspectives to answer the following questions: Which actors were relevant in

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deciding which individual PTT administration entered the process? Why did some administrations, such as the French and the Belgian ones, not participate in the congress? What standards were set in preparation for the decision phase? How did the Italian and German PTT administrations work together – was the relationship harmonious or conflictual? How can the cooperation between the German PTT administration and other administrations, particularly those in occupied countries, be described?

To address these questions and analyse the initiation phase, this chapter examines the German agenda-setting by presenting the main actors and evaluating the internal German preparatory work based on presentations by Kurt Timm and Friedrich Risch. It further assesses how the *Reichspost* presented the project outside of Germany to the expert community. After hat, it focusses on the Italian-German cooperation paving the way for the realisation of the EPTU. The following chapter studies the interactions with the other administrations. To do so, it compares and analyses the content of, and changes to, the bilateral agreements between the German and other European PTT administrations from mostly occupied countries. It evaluates the contact with administrations that would later be observers before turning to the administrations that were ultimately not present at the congress yet were contacted.

The German actors: between life-long public servants to fast climbers in the profession

As the *Reichspost* played a vital role in establishing the EPTU and setting postal standards within it, it is important to consider those involved in the project. First and foremost are the minister, Wilhelm Ohnesorge, and the undersecretary, Friedrich Risch. Ohnesorge defended the creation of the union to Hitler and other ministers; his relationship with Hitler proved particularly important at different steps. Friedrich Risch, head of the department of foreign affairs, coordinated, organised and kept the EPTU running together with Friedrich Reiss, who was responsible for all the postal aspects within the union. This section considers other *Reichspost* staff when relevant. Furthermore, the *Reichspost* had its own 'diplomats', the appointees of the *Reichspost* abroad, in the occupied countries who were supposed to facilitate the relationship in the area of postal services. Their status depended on the rules of occupation within the country. When there was a

military government, an *Armeefeldpostmeister*[269] was responsible for cooperation with the national PTT administration. This was the case in France and Belgium. In countries where a national government was established or continued, such as Norway and Denmark, the appointees were part of the diplomatic mission to the country. Due to their importance for the EPTU project, this section also briefly discusses them.

The key question when analysing these agents is their way of connecting technocratic internationalism and National Socialism: Were they interested in implementing a 'New Europe' according to National Socialist ideology or simply continuing the standardising work of the prior decades? Were the aims of technocratic cooperation simply a welcome tool for the implementation of German rule over postal Europe? These questions cannot be answered definitively for everyone. Still, it is particularly interesting in the case of the *Reichspost*'s staff in comparison with the representatives of other countries because the ministry was subject to a political conformity process once Ohnesorge became minister. This led to an exchange of high functionaries in 1937 and 1938, and it became important to only promote individuals that were ideologically aligned to the National Socialist regime.[270]

Wilhelm Ohnesorge was born in 1872 and was the son of a civil servant in a telegraph office; he started his career within the *Reichspost* at 18.[271] His estate shows that he had a keen interest in technology for research and innovation; the notes from his studies show he attended a wide range of classes concerning natural sciences and postal and telecommunication services.[272] In 1893, just three years after entering postal and telecommunication services, he filed to obtain his first patent for a telephone he invented, and the imperial *Reichspatentamt*[273] granted him this patent. In the 1890s, his first publication expressed his admiration for Heinrich von Stephan. His passion for research was also visible in his time as *Reichspostminister,* where the research institute of the Deutsche *Reichspost*, later the research

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269   Military field postmaster.
270   As it is impossible to determine whether or not a single person was a convinced National Socialist, the focus will be here on the individual actions taken within the respective fields of responsibility.
271   Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/25644 and Lotz, Die Deutsche Reichspost, p. 22.
272   Bundesarchiv, Koblenz, N1159/7.
273   Bundesarchiv, Koblenz, N1159/5, Patent 21.01.1893.

institute of the *Reichspostminister*,[274] was said to have researched to create the first atomic bomb[275].

Ohnesorge was promoted relatively quickly, which could be evidence of his technical capabilities. These promotions moved him to Berlin.[276] During the First World War, he made a name for himself and became the leading telegraph director in the *Großen Hauptquartier*.[277] In this position, he was the first to establish a connection between Mézières in France and Constantinople (Turkey).[278] This was possible due to his invention, the 'Ohnesorge-Vierdrahtschaltung'.[279] His position as an *Alter Kämpfer*[280] helped him maintain his power during the Third Reich, as Hitler had a special admiration for them. As Anja Stanciu notes, 'the party direction stylised them as heroes and role models for the younger leading cadres'.[281] She furthermore describes how those *Alte Kämpfer* who the Nazi regime quickly promoted had already joined the NSDAP in the 1920s or when it was founded again in 1925.[282] This was also the case for Ohnesorge,[283] who met Hitler in Munich and proudly presented himself as the founder of the first local NSDAP group outside of Bavaria, namely in Dortmund, where he worked until 1924. During the *Ruhrkrise*, he maintained the telecommunications connection despite the prohibition of the allies, for which he was promoted. He became the head of a department in the chief post office and was again promoted in 1929 to the head of the *Reichspostzentralamt* – the centre of the telecommunications development of the *Reichspost*.[284]

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274 Lotz, Die Deutsche Reichspost, p. 31.
275 Ueberschär, Die Deutsche Reichspost, p. 16.
276 Lotz, Die Deutsche Reichspost, p. 22.
277 "Großes Hauptquartier" can be translated to 'Great headquarters': This was the name of the mobile command center of the German forces in the wars 1870/1871 and the First World War.
278 Vogt, Martin: Das Staatsunternehmen "Deutsche Reichspost" in den Jahren der Weimarer Republik, in: Lotz, Wolfgang (Ed.): *Deutsche Postgeschichte. Essays und Bilder*. Berlin 1989, p. 241-287, p. 265.
279 Writer's own translation:'Ohnesorge – four wire link', Lotz, Die Deutsche Reichspost, p. 22.
280 The term "*Alte Kämpfer*" designates individuals who had fought in the First World War.
281 Writer's own translation: "Die Parteiführung stilisierte sie öffentlich zu Helden der Bewegung und Vorbildern für jüngere Führungskader". Stanciu, Anja: "*Alte Kämpfer" der NSDAP. Eine Berliner Funktionselite 1926-1949*. Köln 2018 (Zeithistorische Studien, Band 59), p. 123.
282 Stanciu, Alte Kämpfer, p. 132.
283 Listed as member 42 of the NSDAP. (Bundesarchiv, Koblenz, R4701/25641).
284 Lotz, Die Deutsche Reichspost, p. 23.

Political reasons surely underpinned his promotion to the position of the state secretary of the *Reichspost* on 1 March 1933; it was a sign of the new staff policy and occurred due to his close relationship with Hitler.[285] He also used this close relationship to avoid the subsuming of the *Reichspost* to the transport ministry in 1937 by highlighting the important public task that the *Reichspost* had to fulfil.[286] However, as described above, Ohnesorge was also a long-time civil servant with vast experience in all postal services and telecommunications matters (in peace and war time) who had a deep knowledge of technical affairs. He can thus neither be classified as a pure technician nor a pure politician.

Ohnesorge became the *Reichspostminister* on 2 February 1937 after then-minister Eltz-Rübenach lost Hitler's support because he did not want to receive the golden party badge or enter the NSDAP.[287] His eight years in office cannot be easily summarised, the following is nevertheless an attempt to do so: He was a loyal supporter of Hitler, whom he praised whenever possible, and whom he also supported financially. Part of the sale proceeds of the *Führermarken*[288] went directly into the *Kulturfonds des Führers*[289].[290] He also considered it important that his staff was committed to National Socialism and its mission, which meant that he highly encouraged close ties to the party and its organisations. From the sources, it is clear that the organisation had especially close ties with the SS, whose members he also employed. The *Postschutz* was even made a unit of the SS in 1944. He believed that one task of the *Reichspost* was to support the war efforts, and he was considered a 'reliable enforcer of National Socialist policies also in the area of Jewish policies'.[291]

Jakob Nagel was his state secretary during his time as *Reichspostminister*. Nagel was an important confidant who had entered the NSDAP in 1931. Because he appears to have had only a secondary role in the EPTU and has been described as a person with no political ideas of his own, but simply as a loyal implementer of Ohnesorge's policies[292], this section does not discuss

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285   Ibid., p. 22-28.
286   Ibid., p. 76.
287   Ueberschär, Gerd R.: Die deutsche Reichspost im Zweiten Weltkrieg, in: Lotz, Wolfgang (Ed.): *Deutsche Postgeschichte. Essays und Bilder*. Berlin 1989, p. 289-320, p. 289-290.
288   Stamps depicting Hitler.
289   Cultural fund which Hitler used for personal art purchases.
290   Ueberschär, Die deutsche Reichspost im Zweiten Weltkrieg, p. 292.
291   Writer's own translation: "zuverlässige Vollstrecker nationalsozialistischer Politik auch im Bereich der Judenpolitik", Ibid., p. 293.
292   Lotz, Die Deutsche Reichspost, p. 31.

him. The next person of interest is Friedrich Risch, the head of the Foreign Department within the *Reichspostministerium* from 1940 onwards.

Born on 23 May 1895 in Bavaria, Friedrich Adolf Risch was a trained jurist when he joined the *Reichspost* in Regensburg in 1924. He was promoted in 1934 and moved to Berlin, where he became part of the *Reichspostministerium*'s staff in 1938. He was known as one of Ohnesorge's men.[293] In 1939, he became director within the ministry and most probably remained in this position until the end of the Second World War.[294] He justified his promotion exclusively by pointing to his professional achievements.[295]

He was member 2,531,083 of the NSDAP, which he joined on 1 May 1933.[296] The postal student representation in Regensburg attested that he had already shown sympathy for the NSDAP in 1930 and attended their sessions before Hitler assumed power even though this would hurt his career: 'You can absolutely rely on him also in times of crisis'.[297] He became a member of the SS in April 1942, and his ranking advanced as time progressed.[298]

Since the sources are somewhat contradictory, it remains unclear what role he played in certain decisions, such as transforming the *Postschutz* into a unit of the SS.[299]

What is important for this work is that he became head of the Foreign Department in 1941 after working in the central department (Min-Z)[300] of the *Reichspostministerium*. In his former position, he despatched orders in the name of *Reichspostminister* Ohnesorge to exclude Jews from telephone

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293   Ueberschär, Die Deutsche Reichspost, p. 26.

294   Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/39833, Haupt-Kartei Risch.

295   Staatsarchiv Hamburg, Hamburg, 221-11 C(P)774, Erwin Jacobi, Fr. Gienapp, Walter Donandt an Zentralstelle für Berufungsausschüsse zur Ausschaltung Nationalsozialisten, 30.07.1947, p. 2.

296   Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R9361-II-1076436, Abschrift Fragebogen, undated.

297   Writer's own translation: "Auf ihn ist auch in Krisenzeiten unbedingt Verlaß", Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R9361-II-1076436, Brief der Fachschaft Post Regensburg, 26.10.1936.

298   Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/39833, R9361-II-550656, Dienstlaufbahn des Dr. Risch.

299   Schutzstaffel.

300   The central department (Zentralabteilung, short Min-Z) was the central department within the ministry that was tasked less with technical details but with political issues and the care of the *Reichspost*'s staff. (Ueberschär, Die Deutsche Reichspost, p. 29).

services.[301] Thus, one can assume that he was well aware of the consequences of the *Reichspost*'s ideological actions.

As head of the Foreign Department within the *Reichspostministerium*, he was in charge of the development of the EPTU. In the folder concerning his denazification process, he states that he first talked to the Russian PTT administration in 1940 about the project. Furthermore, he states that the EPTU project meant 'strongly swimming against the strong stream of National Socialist power politics'[302] and was 'a game against all rules of diplomacy'[303] as Germany had left the UPU. Nevertheless, his article 'Aims and tasks of a European Postal Union' had been printed in the UPU's journal. The British General Mance had also endorsed the union in a publication according to Risch.[304] From his point of view, he had only been able to create this union because he remained on technical, professional and neutral ground and because 'the National Socialist politicians, (…) *Reichspostminister* Ohnesorge not excluded, understood next to nothing of the matter'.[305] Regarding the experience and expertise that Ohnesorge likely gathered during his decade-long career and his role in World War I, Risch's account of the depth of Ohnesorge's understanding of the project has to be questioned. Furthermore, this work shows that Ohnesorge and the entire *Reichspostministerium* appear to have stood firmly behind this project and defended it against other ministries, both in Germany and abroad. As this study shows, Risch's role reflects the areas of tension surrounding the EPTU creation and implementation: namely, the tension between technocracy and ideology and between different actors – minister, foreign ministry and military.

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301 Löw, Andrea: *Die Verfolgung und Ermordung der europäischen Juden durch das nationalsozialistische Deutschland 1933-1945. Deutsches Reich und Protektorat Böhmen und Mähren. September 1939-September 1941.* Band 3. München 2012, p. 262.

302 Writer's own translation: "schweres Schwimmen gegen den starken Strom der nationalsozialistischen Machtpolitik", Staatsarchiv Hamburg, Hamburg, 221-11 C(P)774, Erwin Jacobi, Fr. Gienapp, Walter Donandt an Zentralstelle für Berufungsausschüsse zur Ausschaltung Nationalsozialisten, 30.07.1947, p. 3.

303 Writer's own translation: "ein Spiel gegen alle Regeln der Diplomatie", ibid., p. 3.

304 In the mentioned publication, this endorsement could not be found – neither in the original English version (p. 7) nor in the German translation. (Mance, International Telecommunications, p. 7; German edition: p. 8.).

305 Writer's own translation: "die nationalsozialistischen Politiker, (…) den Reichspostminister Ohnesorge nicht ausschließt, von der Materie so gut wie nichts verstanden", Staatsarchiv Hamburg, Hamburg, 221-11 C(P)774, Erwin Jacobi, Fr. Gienapp, Walter Donandt an Zentralstelle für Berufungsausschüsse zur Ausschaltung Nationalsozialisten, 30.07.1947, p. 3.

Dr. Friedrich Reiss was one member of his team; he was responsible for international postal relations during the war. Although little material on him is available, his position and role in the *Bundespost* after the war, where he became the head of the department for foreign postal services, make him important to mention.[306]

Friedrich Reiss was born in 1900 in Bavaria and became a postal assessor in 1928 in Frankfurt (Main). After becoming a postal director, he found his way to the *Reichspost* in Berlin via stations in Dortmund, Minden and Paderborn. He became part of the *Reichspostministerium* in 1938 and undersecretary in November 1942.[307]

In April 1942, he oversaw the areas of postal congress, restricted unions within the UPU, special agreements with countries and the political and general affairs of the UPU. He was also assigned to issues regarding tariffs and the implementation of provisions within the UPU.[308]

In July 1944, his tasks were summarised under the heading 'European postal affairs of general nature',[309] which included a total of 19 topics. For this work, the following are important: tariff policy within the global and European postal services; restricted unions; EPTU agreements and regulations of postal services; preparation and execution of first committee session;[310] the supervision of the bureau of the EPTU in Vienna.[311]

Unfortunately, this is all that could be found concerning Friedrich Reiss. Based on the sources, he likely worked on the day-to-day tasks regarding the EPTU and was intensively involved in its creation and implementation (at least for postal services). During the congress in Vienna, he participated in the committee sessions for postal services and the agreement of the union. He was also present at the 1943 postal committee meeting in Copenhagen.[312]

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306 Bundesarchiv, Sankt-Augustin, B257-ORG/8, Organisationsplan des Bundesministeriums für das Post- und Fernmeldewesen, Stand April 1956.
307 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/39834, Haupt-Kartei Reiss.
308 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/11256, Abteilung Min-A, p. 3, April 1942.
309 Writer's own translation: "Europäische Postangelegenheiten allgemeiner Art", Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/11256, Geschäftsverteilungsplan, Abteilung Min-A, Ref.1, July 1944, p. 29.
310 Committee 1 is the committee for postal service within the EPTU.
311 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/11256, Geschäftsverteilungsplan, Abteilung Min-A, Ref.1, July 1944, p. 29.
312 Bundesarchiv, Berlin Lichterfelde, R4701/25935, Zusammensetzung des Ausschusses 1, June 1943.

Finally, this section presents the group of appointees abroad. This on-the-ground network in foreign countries maintained important direct contact with the other administrations, which was impossible from Berlin.

As elaborated further in this work, the *Reichspost*'s appointees abroad played an important role in the relations with other European PTT administrations. In total, 14 appointees accompanied the delegations to the congress in Vienna and reported back to the diplomatic representations in the different countries[313]. Even though the French, Belgian, Greek and Serbian PTT administration were not present in Vienna, there were appointees to France and Belgium (*Armeefeldpostmeister* Müller) and Greece and Serbia (*Armeefeldpostmeister* Derichweiler). There is not enough information in the archives to trace all of their careers,[314] but there are relevant documents for 10 of them. The following table gives a short overview of the development of their positions within the *Reichspost*.

Name	Position in 10/1942	With the Reichspost since (at age)	Promotion to the position in 10/1942	Appointed to
Dipl.-Ing. Wilhelm Engelhardt[315]	*Postrat*	1936 (27)	1940	Croatia
Dipl.-Ing. Heinrich Habig[316]	*Ober-postrat*	1926 (26)	1942	Bulgaria
Dipl.-Ing. Fritz Harder[317]	*Ober-postrat*	1925 (24)	1939	Sweden
Dr.-Dr.-Ing. Kurt Hlinak[318]	*Ober-postrat*	1936[319] (32)	1942	Unknown

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313   Politisches Archiv, Berlin, RAV Pressburg 233, Sonderbeauftragter der Reichspost Riedl an die Deutsche Gesandschaft Pressburg, 29.10.1942.

314   The names of these appointees are: Dipl.-Ing. Burmester, Dipl.-Ing. Herzer, Dipl.-Ing. Stock and Dipl.-Ing. Fleischer (Europäischer Postkongress, p. 326).

315   Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/39830 Haupt-Kartei Engelhardt.

316   Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/39795, Haupt-Kartei Habig.

317   Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/39829, Haupt-Kartei Harder.

318   Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/39835, Haupt-Kartei Hlinak.

319   Before 1936, he worked in the Austrian PTT administration. Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R9361-II-418346, Hlinak, Kurt.

Name	Position in 10/1942	With the Reichspost since (at age)	Promotion to the position in 10/1942	Appointed to
Leo Lödige[320]	*Postrat*	1937 (28)	1939	Norway (probably)
Dipl.-Ing. Paul Löffler[321]	*Ober-postrat*	1925 (24)	1939	Italy
Dipl.-Ing. Julius Riedl[322]	*Postrat*	1937 (31)	1938	Slovakia
Dipl.-Ing. Friedrich Thoms[323]	*Postrat*	1935 (27)	1939	Spain
Dipl.-Ing. Werner (?) Tiegs[324]	*Ober-postrat*	1930 (25)	1942	Hungary
Wilhelm Schmidt[325]	Postrat	1933 (28)	Around 1939	Unknown

Table 2: The appointees of the Reichspost abroad

The majority of the appointees abroad had a technical background. 'Dipl.-Ing.' is a German degree, translated here as graduate engineer (GE). Their educational background might be related to the appointees' mission to help export German material[326] and to the fact that telecommunications and telegraphy were much more reliant on material and technical support than postal services. Furthermore, seven of the ten appointees did not work for the *Reichspost* before 1930, and nine of the ten were only hired to their 1942 position during or after 1939. Their young age and relatively brief PTT careers make it very unlikely that they had international ties before their work

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320   Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/39795, Haupt-Kartei Lödige.
321   Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/39817, Haupt-Kartei Löffler.
322   Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/39826, Haupt-Kartei Riedl.
323   Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/39829, Haupt-Kartei Thoms.
324   Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/39810, Haupt-Kartei Tiegs (The first name is not clearly legible).
325   Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/39803, Haupt-Kartei Schmidt.
326   Politisches Archiv, Berlin, RAV Zagreb 147, Aufgaben der ins Ausland entsandten Beauftragten der DRP, undated.

as appointees abroad. Nevertheless, Risch gave them important roles creating networks and maintaining close contact with the other PTT administrations:

> The maintenance of the best relations is (…) of special importance, because an association of European PTT administrations in the sense of the new Europe was to be concluded according to the instructions of the Führer and to the understanding of the minister for Foreign affairs and the *Reichspostminister*.[327]

Their task was to continuously work with other administrations to convince them of the plans for a European PTT union. This included becoming familiar with their way of thinking and attitude towards the *Reichspost* or the Germans in general and determining whether the responsible individuals were subject to foreign influences. The appointees were to regularly report to their superiors to ensure the *Reichspost* could detect any possible hindrances to the project and intervene if necessary. Their job description also included professional consulting for the other administrations, with Germany as the model[328] which shows the assumed hierarchy between the *Reichspost* and the other PTT administrations. Their position within the Foreign Ministry's delegation to the other country was often vague, which led to difficulties with the delegation and the Wehrmacht and the SS,[329] who wanted them to contribute to their work. However, Ohnesorge and Risch insisted on the purely postal nature of their work and emphasised the importance of trust in their relationship with other administrations; the trust was not to be undercut by working for other German entities.[330] Here, there seems to be a slight discrepancy between the representation of the job during and after the war. During the war, the tasks included consulting with

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327   Writer's own translation: "Die Pflege bester Beziehungen kommt (…) eine ganz besondere Bedeutung zu, weil nach den Weisungen des Führers und gemäss den Abmachungen zwischen dem Reichsaußenminister und dem Reichspostminister ein enger Zusammenschluss der europäischen Post- und Telekommunikationsverwaltungen im Geiste des neuen Europas herbeigeführt werden soll." Politisches Archiv, Berlin, RAV Zagreb 147, Aufgaben der ins Ausland entsandten Beauftragten der DRP, undated.
328   Politisches Archiv, Berlin, RAV Zagreb 147, Aufgaben der ins Ausland entsandten Beauftragten der DRP, undated.
329   Bundesarchiv, Lichterfelde, R4701/11248, Stenographische Aufnahme der Berichte der Beauftragten der DRP im Ausland, 18.-23.03.1943.
330   Staatsarchiv Hamburg, Hamburg, 221-11 C(P)774, Erklärung Harder, 21.04.1947.

and supporting the Wehrmacht in the communications systems by, for example, addressing adaptation problems between the German systems used by the Wehrmacht and those used abroad. This also explains the technical background of most of the appointees. The appointees were also instructed to advise the embassies with their expertise when needed and supervised the staff of the *Reichspost* abroad to technically support the Wehrmacht (without being part of the Wehrmacht) on military aspects. They also supported the Wehrmacht concerning their economic and personal affairs.[331] This does not mean that the appointees were actively involved in the missions of the Wehrmacht, SS or other entities, but they do not appear to have been advised to stay entirely out of affairs that were not PTT-related.

This section has presented the most important German actors as fully as possible. It is important to consider this background going forward to analyse the German *Reichspost*'s preparatory work and of the EPTU's workings. Bilateral work played an important role in creating the union, and the German staff involved had little to no experience in international postal relations. Furthermore, there are few continuities from the interwar period to wartime. This is also because the position of the appointees abroad had not existed before 1936, which shows that new channels were established. The presentation of the agents reflects the entanglement of politics and technocracy; this is especially the case for the minister, Ohnesorge. Similarly, Harder's testimonial, for instance, shows that there was an insistence that postal issues be kept separate from political matters. The argument that trust could be lost by mixing politics and technocratic aspects could be related to wanting to have power in these areas – there was strong competition between different entities for control in the occupied territories. However, it also perfectly aligns with the argumentation of technocratic internationalism, according to which international infrastructure cooperation works better if only the experts are involved.

Setting the agenda to create a European postal union within the
Reichspostministerium (1940-1941)

With this in mind, this section now focusses on the organisational and tariff standards discussed within the *Reichspostministerium* before entering into

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331   Politisches Archiv, Berlin, RAV Zagreb 147, Aufgaben der ins Ausland entsandten Beauftragten der DRP, undated.

official negotiations with the Italian PTT administration. A Foreign Department was created within the *Reichspostministerium* at the end of 1940 under the direction of Dr. Friedrich Risch.[332] Its tasks included 'all the foreign policy and colonial affairs'[333] that Ueberschär classified as 'explicitly political'.[334] Seven other people worked for the department in April 1942, divided into five divisions. Dr. Reiss headed the division concerning international postal affairs, which covered issues regarding the UPU, restricted unions within the UPU and special agreements with other countries.[335] Another interesting name listed is that of *Oberpostrat* Dr. Timm. He had a quasi-double-function: contributing in the Foreign Department and being the personal advisor of *Reichspostminister* Ohnesorge. In this latter function, he also worked on the EPTU.[336] *Ministerialdirigent* Willi Köhn is not on the list because he was promoted to head of the Department of the East in August 1941, but *Reichspostminister* Ohnesorge mentions him as being part of the department in February 1941.[337] Köhn was *SS-Oberführer*; he had not been trained to be in the *Reichspost* and was part of Ohnesorge's efforts to establish a close connection between the ministry and National Socialist organisations. Köhn was said to have monitored and controlled Risch, as Ohnesorge no longer trusted him and moved him with the whole Foreign Department to Graz during the second half of the war because he did not renounce his Christian faith.[338] The Foreign Department continued its work, but, probably due to the war mobilisation, it was reduced to three people working under Risch in July 1944. Dr. Reiss remained responsible for international postal affairs, which had expanded since 1942. Among

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332   Ueberschär, Die Deutsche Reichspost, p. 29.
333   Writer's own translation: "gesamten auslandspolitischen und kolonialen Angelegenheiten", Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/11263, Rede Dr. Risch über: „Gedanken zu einer Reform des Post- und Fernmeldewesens", 12.-13.02.1941, p. 9.
334   Writer's own translation: "eindeutig politische (Aufgaben)", Ueberschär, Die Deutsche Reichspost, p. 29.
335   Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/11256, Geschäftsplan Referat 1 der Abteilung Min-A, 04.1942
336   Noch zu überlegen, wie genau referenzieren.
337   Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/11263, Rede Dr. Risch über: "Gedanken zu einer Reform des Post- und Fernmeldewesens" - Replik Ohnesorge, 12.-13.02.1941, p. 15.
338   Ueberschär, Die Deutsche Reichspost, p. 26.

other tasks, the division now addressed postal aspects of the EPTU agreement and the regulations, the work within the EPTU postal committee and the supervision of the EPTU's office.[339]

Based on these findings, it is appropriate to examine the accessible work of the Foreign Department as it appears to have been one of the centres of EPTU planning. The staff and tasks of this department reflect a possible intertwining of politics and postal cooperation: the tasks included the term 'foreign policy', and the undersecretary Köhn was placed on the team. Dr. Reiss' supervision of the office of the Union in Vienna does support the idea of German hegemony. However, it might be premature to conclude from this that political influences mainly determined the EPTU's project. Köhn was promoted to head of the Department of the East before the main negotiations with Italy and the other countries started. However, he was present at the congress in October 1942 as a guest of the *Reichspostminister,*[340] and thus he was not completely detached from the process.

Nevertheless, the task's denomination does not necessarily determine the spirit of the work conducted. Therefore, this section further examines the work of the Foreign Department concerning the EPTU. This is done using the presentations of the project during different meetings of *Reichspostministerium* officials*,* as no other details on the matter were found in the archives. These speeches give valuable insights not only into the technical aspects but also into its foundation in the wider political context. Two main meetings outlined the plans for the EPTU: the 'plenary meeting'[341] of the *Reichspostministerium* in September 1940 and the meeting of the presidents of the *Oberpostdirektionen* in February 1941. Because these speeches appear to be crucial outlines for the path envisioned by the organisation, they are discussed in detail in the following.

In August 1940, *Oberpostrat* Dr. Timm gave a speech on the 'position and tasks of the German *Reichspost* during the political and economic reorganisation of Europe after the war'.[342] His speech can be divided into three

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339   Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/11256, Geschäftsverteilungsplan Referat 1 der Abteilung Min-A, 04.1942, 01.07.1944.

340   Europäischer Postkongress, p. 325.

341   Writer's own translation: "Gesamtsitzung", Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/11248, Reichspostminister – persönlicher Referent an die Herren Abteilungsleiter, Referenten, Hilfsreferenten, Tagesordnung für die nächste Gesamtsitzung, 26.08.1940.

342   Writer's own translation: "Stellung und Aufgaben der Deutschen Reichspost bei der politischen und wirtschaftlichen Neugestaltung Europas nach dem Kriege", Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/11248, Vortrag auf der Gesamtsitzung des RPM von Oberpostrat Dr. Timm, p. 1.

parts: historical and current context; the tasks of the new Foreign Department within the *Reichspostministerium*; the principles for a possible European postal union.

The first part, on the historical context of international postal cooperation and the current geopolitical situation, constitutes half of Timm's speech. He underlines the importance of Heinrich von Stephan in improving the international postal service, denoting his name as 'immortal'.[343] He explains the success of Stephan's non-theoretical and practical propositions and notes that he implemented all of his suggestions except for the abolition of the transit charges.[344] Afterwards, he criticises the systems of Versailles and England and sketches out possibilities for the new European political and economic order. He ends by remarking that the *Reichspost* was called upon to prepare the basis for this new order.[345]

In summary, the start of Timm's speech offered standard talking points about the *Reichspost* and Nazi propaganda. As is shown throughout this work, Heinrich von Stephan, the founder of the UPU, is presented as an omnipresent and idealised figure; this is also true in Timm's speech. Furthermore, the criticism of the liberal economic order or the system of Versailles matched the NSDAP's political messaging.

The second part of the speech focusses on the Foreign Department within the *Reichspostministerium*. At the very start, Timm emphasises the strong leadership of the *Reichspostminister* Ohnesorge and states that this newly found department would 'open possibilities that would have seemed utopian until recently'.[346] He highlights three main tasks for the department: First, the German position towards the UPU; second, reforms of the UPU; and third, the creation of a European postal union. The first task stems from the discord over Slovakia's status in the UPU during the UPU congress of Buenos Aires in 1939. The second includes finding a solution to the tariff difficulties due to the crisis currency depreciations and analysing whether the Gold franc could remain the reference currency within a National Socialist economic framework.[347] The third and, according to Timm, most important task is the completion of Heinrich von Stephan's work by founding a European postal union under German and Italian leadership. Comparing it to other restricted unions, such as the Pan-American and the Nordic Postal

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343   Writer's own translation: "unsterblich", ibid., p. 4.
344   Ibid., p. 3-5.
345   Ibid., p. 5-10.
346   Writer's own translation: "eröffnen Möglichkeiten, die noch vor kurzem als völlig utopisch erschienen wären", ibid., p. 11.
347   Ibid., p. 11-13.

Inions, Timm stresses that political purposes, in addition to economic and postal reasons, had been crucial for their creation.[348]

Timm uses this second part of the speech to contextualise the *Reichspost* in its international environment. Mentioning the challenges within the UPU, he indirectly points to the fact that the German postal administration needed allies to achieve a new position within the UPU and reform it. The way forward is creating a new restricted union, a united bloc within the UPU, much like the Pan-American Postal Union. He does not mention that creating a European postal union would de facto paralyse the Nordic Postal Union, as it was foreseeable that not all of its five member administrations would join.[349] Timm highlights the continuity of Heinrich von Stephan's project and the European postal union; this idea is an important recurrent discursive element, as shown below. The mention that other restricted unions had political features might be a legitimising argument: through this, Timm could argue that it was partly reasonable to remove the distance between international technocratic cooperation and (high) politics.

In the third part of the speech, Timm describes 10 principles of a European postal union:

> 1. The most important claim is the harmonisation of the admission requirement after the German pattern. (…)
>
> 2. Harmonisation of the schedule of tariffs with the consequence that the whole of Europe is to be included into the German tariff area and zonal system.
>
> 3. Inclusion of all German services. (…)
>
> 4. The abolition of the transit charges for the entire European service should be another important demand. (…)
>
> 5. Simplified packet exchange system in the whole of Europe. (…)
>
> 6. Unimpeded circulation of railroad postal cars.
>
> 7. Expansion of a spacious European and intercontinental airmail network.

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348 Ibid., p. 14-15.
349 Sweden as neutral country but especially Island as a country occupied first by the United Kingdom and then by the United States would have had to seem unlikely candidates for membership.

8. Issuance of harmonised European union stamps.

9. Expansion of the transfer and postal savings bank service to European countries.

10. The most difficult problem of the European postal union will without a doubt be the question of its director (…). Only the German *Reichspost* can evidently stake a claim to the leadership of the European postal union, supported and represented by the Italian postal administration. But Berlin would have to be its seat.[350]

This list perfectly captures the synthesis of politics and technocracy within this project. At first glance, the first seven points and the ninth concern 'genuine' postal questions – while still making clear the envisioned German dominance – and the eighth and tenth points are more politically motivated. A review of the 10 points shows that the main idea that existed since the creation of the UPU – namely, to remove barriers in international postal services – remained intact. The UPU continuously discusses the ideas of a harmonised schedule of tariffs, facilitating packet exchange or reducing or abolishing the transit charge.[351] The same applies to the European airmail network.[352] Here, the way this removal of barriers in postal services was envisioned is important: As points 1, 2, 3 and 9 make clear, the postal system was supposed to be harmonised by exporting the German postal system to all other countries. Point 6, the unimpeded circulation of railroad cars, would later lead to fears that Germany would 'infiltrate' other countries

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350 Writer's own translation: "1.Wichtigste Forderung ist die Vereinheitlichung der Zulassungsbedingungen nach deutschem Muster. (…), 2. Vereinheitlichung der Gebührentarife mit der Folge, daß ganz Europa in das deutsche Gebührenfeld und Zonensystem einzubeziehen ist., 3. Aufnahme aller deutschen Dienste (…), 4. Als weitere wichtige Forderung soll die Abschaffung der Durchgangskosten für den gesamten europäischen Dienst aufgestellt werden. (…) 5. Vereinfachtes Paketaustauschverfahren in ganz Europa. (…) 6. Ungehinderter durchgehender Bahnpostwagenumlauf. 7. Ausbau eines großräumigen europäischen und interkontinentalen Luftpostnetzes. 8. Ausgabe einheitlicher europäischer Vereinsbriefmarken. 9. Ausdehnung des Geldüberweisungsdienstes sowie des Postsparkassendienstes auf europäische Länder. 10. Das schwierigste Problem des europäischen Postvereins wird zweifellos die Frage der Stellung des obersten Leiters des europäischen Postvereins sein (…). Anspruch auf die Führung des europäischen Vereins kann hierbei offenbar nur die Deutsche Reichspost, unterstützt und vertreten durch die italienische Postverwaltung, erheben. Sein Sitz aber hätte Berlin zu sein." Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/11248, Vortrag auf der Gesamtsitzung des RPM von Oberpostrat Dr. Timm, p. 16-17.
351 Laborie, L'Europe mise en réseaux, p. 91.
352 Benz, Integration von Infrastrukturen, p. 171-173.

with its postal clerks and technicians and thereby intensify communication surveillance.[353] The question of union stamps, raised in point 8, is discussed at the end of the second part of this work. The *Reichspost*'s staff was aware of the propaganda potential of stamps,[354] which was likely to increase when all member administrations issued the same stamps with the same message regarding, for example, a united Europe under Nazi hegemony. According to Timm, the tenth and last point was the greatest challenge; it underpinned the *Reichspost*'s claim to leadership, which could be detected in previous points. In comparison, the proposed Italian role was a subordinate one. The choice of Berlin as the seat of the Union highlights the power asymmetry between these two allies.

Timm finishes the speech by inviting everyone in the name of *Reichspostminister* Ohnesorge to participate and by quoting Seneca: 'Ducunt fata volentem, nolentem trahunt'.[355] Thereby, he alluded to the *Reichspost*'s will to promote this project.

Telecommunications and telegraphy do not yet play a role in this draft. This supports the idea that the processes of planning a European Postal Union and a Working Group for telecommunications were originally separate and led by actors at different levels within the ministry but happened almost simultaneously and were only later coordinated.

As mentioned, the plans for a European postal union were also presented on another occasion, the *Präsidentenbesprechung*. This time, the head of the Foreign Department outlined the general ideas of the project.

In February 1941, Dr. Risch gave a speech entitled 'Thoughts on a reform of European postal services and telecommunications in the new Europe'[356] during the so-called *Präsidentenbesprechung*, which loosely translates to the 'meeting of the presidents'. These presidents were the heads of the

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353 Writer's own translation: "Infiltrierung", PTT Archiv Bern, P-00C_0108_01, Argus International de la Presse, Arbeiter Zeitung, Bâle, "Gefährliche Postver-handlungen", 15.10.1942.

354 Gabriel, Gottfried: Die politische Bildersprache der Briefmarken. Beispiele aus der deutschen Geschichte, in: Smolarski, Pierre / Smolarski, René / Vetter-Schultheiß, Silke (Eds.): *Gezähnte Geschichte*, 2019, p. 21-36, p. 23.

355 Writer's own translation: 'Fate leads the willing, the unwilling it drags.' Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/11248, Vortrag auf der Gesamtsitzung des RPM von Oberpostrat Dr. Timm, p. 18.

356 Writer's own translation: "Gedanken zu einer Reform des Post- und Fernmelde-wesens im neuen Europa", Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/11263, Rede Dr. Risch über: "Gedanken zu einer Reform des Post- und Fernmeldewe-sens im neuen Europa", 12.-13.02.1941, p. 9.

Reichspostdirektionen and were in charge of overseeing the local PTT offices; their tasks included being 'ambassadors' for the ministry to the administration within the country.[357] During this meeting, they were informed about plans for the EPTU because they would be part of their implementation.[358]

The speech has an introduction, a part on the reforms within postal services and telecommunications, a part on the *Reichspost*'s appointees abroad and a conclusion. The following does not analyse the section on telecommunications.

The introduction of the speech contains two main points: First, a short, rather political outline of the future of Europe; second, a brief presentation of the Foreign Department and the current state of its work concerning the main challenges within Europe. Risch starts his speech by referencing the ongoing war and the change of power structures in Europe due to the 'major military and diplomatic successes of the Führer'.[359] He then turns to the future of Europe, describing the final aim of the war as eliminating English influence, establishing the economic autarky of Europe and ensuring German leadership in a stabilised Europe. Risch continues, 'The minister has set the new department the task of supporting the political development and, as much as possible, preparing the things to come'.[360] The last remarks in the introduction then focus on postal services and telecommunications. Risch identifies the two most important aspects as the creation of a 'European postal union under German leadership'[361] and 'the orientation of European telecommunication with the aim of promoting the development and the exploitation of the new Europe'.[362] The introduction presents the department's work, and thus the EPTU's development, as part of the overall war effort and simultaneously as integrated into the wider and varied dis-

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357 Ueberschär, Die deutsche Reichspost im Zweiten Weltkrieg, p. 296.
358 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/11263, Rede Dr. Risch über: "Gedanken zu einer Reform des Post- und Fernmeldewesens im neuen Europa", 12.-13.02.1941, p. 9.
359 Writer's own translation: "großen militärischen und diplomatischen Erfolge des Führers", ibid.
360 Writer's own translation: "Der Herr Minister hat der neuen Abteilung die Aufgabe gestellt, die politische Entwicklung zu unterstützen und, soweit möglich, den kommenden Dingen den Weg zu bereiten", ibid.
361 Writer's own translation: "Schaffung eines Europäischen Postvereins unter deutscher Führung", ibid., p. 10.
362 Writer's own translation: "Ausrichtung des europäischen Fernmeldewesens mit dem Ziele, Förderer für den Aufbau und die Erschließung des neuen Europas zu sein", ibid.

course of building a 'New Europe'. This contextualisation bestows a strategic political aspect to the project of creating a European postal union. Furthermore, Risch differentiates between postal services and telecommunications; it seems that the creation of a union was only foreseen for postal services, whereas the terms for cooperation in the telecommunications sector appear less focussed on institutionalisation. This supports the impression that the German administration focussed on postal services rather than telecommunications when it came to the EPTU and its development.

The second part of the speech revolves around possible reforms in European postal services. In this part, one can determine that the Foreign Department anticipated the growth of postal services within Europe, mainly due to the higher number of letters exchanged internationally, as Risch mentions twice.[363] Based on this assumption, Risch discusses the need to 'eliminate as much as possible all remaining barriers'[364] and to 'provide the conditions for more fluent and fast services'[365] to facilitate European cooperation regarding postal services. A European postal union is found to be a way to achieve this aim, and the preparatory work was already being conducted in the Foreign Department.[366] Risch also emphasises that the minister had given them the idea and the direction, which also included the guideline that the European postal union should not challenge the UPU, as this would contravene the German *Reichspost*'s tradition of supporting the organisation – 'faithful to the ideas of its genius founder Stephan'.[367] However, he stresses that 'the needs of the new Europe, which Germany will give a face to and form, lead politically to special tasks and challenges that the Universal Postal Union as a whole world- (…) encompassing organisation cannot solve'.[368] According to Risch, restricted postal unions such as the Nordic Postal Union and the one shared by the states of the Balkan Entente proved the demand for particular rules in Europe. The main aspect of these rules

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363   Ibid.
364   Writer's own translation: "möglichst weitgehende Beseitigung aller noch bestehenden Hemmnisse", ibid.
365   Writer's own translation: "Voraussetzungen für eine noch flüssigere und schnellere Dienstabwicklung (…) zu schaffen", ibid.
366   Ibid.
367   Writer's own translation: "getreu den Ideen seines genialen Begründers Stephan", ibid.
368   Writer's own translation: "die Erfordernisse des neuen Europa, dem Deutschland Gesicht und Gestalt geben wird, stellen auf politischem Gebiet Sonderaufgaben und Anforderungen, die vom Weltpostverein als eine die ganze Welt (…) umspannende Organisation nicht gelöst werden können", ibid.

was tariffs, which were to be reduced to strengthen economic relations.[369] Risch mentions three options: the use of domestic tariffs for Europe,[370] a reduction of UPU tariffs by 50% and an alignment of local currencies with German domestic tariffs – 'in other words: The German domestic letter at 12 *Reichspfennig* is in the future the European letter'.[371] The third option is declared to be the most expedient because significant differences in tariffs were economically undesirable but nonetheless a reality due to changes in exchanges rates.[372] It remains unclear how fixing them with a German value would have lowered that risk, but everyone would start from the same tariff and currency, which would reduce the overall complexity of the system.

Having described these main ideas, Risch comments on the plans' financial consequences both for Germany and other European countries. He clarifies that a reduction of mail tariffs towards other European countries would likely mean the highest financial losses for Germany[373] due to its geographic location, although practically every other country mentioned (i.e., Italy, Denmark, Sweden, Spain and Switzerland) – except for France – would also have to lower its tariffs. As economic growth was expected for Germany, Risch suggests that the number of incoming consignments would be inferior to outgoing ones. Even if growth would mean greater income due to a higher number of consignments, the *Reichspost* would have lower earnings. However, after the new ordering of the situation in Europe, there would be no reason to maintain different tariffs for domestic and foreign services.[374] Risch briefly discusses the abolishment of the transit charge for transport by sea and a reduction of tariffs for European package traffic, but he qualified these measures as currently not implementable, though desired. To conclude the section on postal services, Risch moves from more specific issues to the *Reichspost*'s contribution to the 'New Europe'. Its efforts were guided by the 'benefit of the whole'[375], which is why the *Reichspost* proposed a reduction of tariffs despite the high financial burden put on Ger-

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369 Ibid.
370 Europe is defined here as the territory for which the contracting administrations are responsible for.
371 Writer's own translation: mit anderen Worten: "Der deutsche Inlandsbrief zu 12 Rpf ist künftig der europäische Brief", Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/11263, Rede Dr. Risch über: "Gedanken zu einer Reform des Post- und Fernmeldewesens im neuen Europa", 12.-13.02.1941, p. 10.
372 Ibid.
373 Around 3.5 Mill. *Reichsmark*, ibid., p. 11.
374 Ibid., p. 10-11.
375 Writer's own translation: "Nutzen der Gesamtheit", ibid. p. 11.

many: 'We hope that the other European administrations will also understand this attitude and will find the courage to overcome outdated fiscal prejudices'.[376] Furthermore, he emphasises that entry into the European postal union would be voluntary and that all sovereign countries of Europe could become members. Risch adds that countries that did not or did not fully belong geographically to Europe, such as Turkey, Egypt and parts of North Africa, would not be excluded from cooperation.[377]

Thus, it is clear that the *Reichspostministerium* tried to internally legitimise this project as one that promoted the development of the 'New Europe'. The term appears throughout Risch's speech, and the idea of the 'New Europe' and the unity between its peoples were used to justify the acceptance of high income losses in the future Europe.[378] It is notable that the creation of the union and the reduction of tariffs was contextualised within the technocratic cooperation between administrations in restricted unions and the UPU; Heinrich von Stephan's name as the supposed founder of the UPU is mentioned again. The arguments put forward by Risch regarding different options for the reduction and the financial aspects of the project seem fact-based and neutral by comparison, for example, to the discourse on the integration of the union into the 'New Europe'. Risch also highlighted the continuity of general aims behind efforts to facilitate and lower the cost of international mail services (including for economic reasons). Thus, he also legitimised the project from an administrative perspective. The voluntary nature of entry into the union must be seen from the same standpoint. A key part of technocratic internationalism was cooperation via rational decision-making rather than the coercion of others. As seen below, other national administrations had to consider joining the union not only for administrative or financial reasons but also political ones. It is thus difficult to determine whether the ideal of occupied countries' PTT administrations voluntarily joining a union created by the occupiers was entirely achieved.

After discussing telecommunications reforms, Risch turns to the tasks of the *Reichspost*'s appointees abroad: 'I have presented you (…) a lot on new

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376 Writer's own translation: "Wir hoffen, daß diese Einstellung auch bei den übrigen europäischen Verwaltungen Verständnis finden wird und daß man auch dort den Mut findet, sich von überkommenen fiskalischen Vorurteilen freizumachen", ibid.

377 Ibid.

378 "Grundsätzlich muß man bei der Prüfung der ganzen Gebührenfrage zu der Auffassung gelangen, daß namentlich nach einer Neuordnung Europas kein Grund mehr besteht, im Auslandsdienst höhere Gebühren als im inneren Dienst zu verlangen", ibid., p. 11.

ways, new aims and new designs. I would also like to say a few words about new methods'.[379] Based on experiences during the civil war in Spain a few years earlier, the *Reichspost* had also sent appointees to Bulgaria, Denmark, Hungary, Italy, Norway and Romania. They were attached to local embassies, and their task was to observe, advise and establish close relations with the local PTT administration to improve bilateral relations and economic benefits for the German PTT industry.[380]

In addition to the repetition of the word 'new' – for example a 'New Europe' also required 'new tools' according to Risch – the introduction of *Reichspost*'s appointees abroad is not to be underestimated from a strategic, economic[381] and technocratic internationalist perspective. The *Reichspost* knew the importance of epistemic communities in international postal relations. Through the appointees, the *Reichspostministerium* had its own foreign agents who were separate from traditional diplomatic channels, and they facilitated German dominance in postal Europe by acting as the first local contacts, in addition to ongoing war successes.

Risch ends his speech on a defiant note. Evoking bureaucratic obstacles and the occasional seemingly unsurmountable task, he underlines his department's will, discipline and morale to achieve the final vision.[382] After a warning to England, he closes with the following words: 'When the time comes that Germany will visibly take on the leading role in Europe in the field of communications, as well, the German *Reichspost* and all who take part in communication will be prepared'.[383]

Thus, Risch started and ended his speech on a political note. In particular, his comments on the hopeless battle with England greatly differed from the more technical explanations in the section on European postal services reforms. His remarks on the department's discipline and working attitude

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379 Writer's own translation: "Ich habe Ihnen (…) nun viel vorgetragen von neuen Wegen, neuen Zielen und neuen Gestaltungen. Ich erlaube mir noch ein Wort zu verlieren über neue Methoden", ibid., p. 14.

380 Ibid.

381 The idea seems also to have been to export German technical supplies which in turn also broadened the distribution of German technique in Europe.

382 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/11263, Rede Dr. Risch über: "Gedanken zu einer Reform des Post- und Fernmeldewesens im neuen Europa", 12.-13.02.1941, p. 14.

383 Writer's own translation: "Wenn die Stunde schlägt, in der Deutschland auch auf dem Gebiet des Nachrichtenwesens offenkundig die führende Rolle in Europa übernimmt, soll sie die Deutsche Reichspost und alle, die im Nachrichtenwesen mitwirken, vorbereitet finden", ibid., p. 15.

were probably directed to *Reichspostminister* Ohnesorge, who – as described above – appreciated staff who went above and beyond by overcoming the impossible, in Risch's words.[384] In summary, Risch appears to have tried to answer to all possible interests in the room; the envisioned postal union's more techno-administrative aspects and its political contextualisation, both internal and external, played a part in his speech. It is also clear that the union was not intended as an instrument of war but one of peace. Together with the appointees, the European postal union was expected to be part of the creation of a 'New Europe' under strong German leadership. Telecommunications were not yet envisioned as a part of the union. Italy is only mentioned as a country where an appointee was delegated, not as an actor in the establishment of the postal union. At this point, the Axis had no role in Risch's project description for this audience.

When comparing Timm and Risch's speeches, some common themes emerge: German hegemony in the postal union towards both the occupied countries and, more importantly, the allied Axis power of Italy. This hegemony meant not only formal leadership within the union but also in standard-setting for international postal services. Appointees of the *Reichspost* abroad were expected to facilitate the harmonisation of standards by exporting the German system to other countries. It is important to note that this standardisation strategy would entail almost no standardising costs for Germany – a possible legitimating factor of the union within the *Reichspost*. Other central arguments justifying the creation of a European postal union included the continuation of von Stephan's work, technocratic improvements in European postal services and economic benefits. Nevertheless, political aspects continued to gain importance, as evidenced by a notice in the July 1942 edition of '*Auswärtige Politik*': 'These postal unions are an expression of togetherness in a specific political space'.[385] The project was compared to the British imperial Penny stamp, underlining its imperial features. The notice further reads, 'it does not involve cheaper but rather preferential tariffs, which align with preferences and protective duties, which are of a more national-political than economic nature'.[386] This represents a

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384   Ibid.

385   Writer's own translation: "Diese Postgemeinschaften sind ein Ausdruck der Zusammengehörigkeit in einem bestimmten politischen Raum", ohne Verfasser, "Europäischer Postverein" in *Auswärtige Politik*, 7 (9), Juli 1942, p. 811.

386   Writer's own translation: "es handelt sich nicht so sehr um billige als um Vorzugstarife, die auf der gleichen Linie liegen wie Präferenzen und Schutzzölle, die ebenfalls mehr nationalpolitischer als rein wirtschaftlicher Natur sind", ibid.

notable interpretation of the harmonisation of tariff schedules and the abolition of transit charges, which are described not as a technocratic goal but a geopolitical one. The notice also contextualised the European postal union within the task of building the 'New Europe' after the war and within the continuity of the German-Austrian Postal Union, which preceded the UPU. The latter was connected in the notice to the idea of a Greater Germany,[387] which was also important in Nazi ideology. Thus, the politico-ideological foundation of the EPTU was further widened than in Timm and Risch's speeches. This shows that the concept of a European postal union created room for interpretation. Depending on which part of the project one focused on, it could be legitimised from a technocratic, (geo)political or ideological perspective. This is also visible in a letter from Ohnesorge to Risch, in which he asked Hitler for permission to move forward with the idea of a European postal union.

On 21 June 1941, Ohnesorge wrote to Hitler under the subject: 'Creation of a European postal union and the arrangement of the German-Dutch postal services'.[388] He began his letter by outlining how the construction of a European economy and the integration of annexed and occupied territories into the greater German economy entailed the challenge of eliminating obstacles in the area of postal services and telecommunications. Therefore, he sought to establish prerequisites for close cooperation between European peoples in communications, which would align with the more general European cooperation 'that you [Hitler] strive for out of political, economic and cultural reasons'.[389] Moreover, Ohnesorge wrote that the UPU was unable to solve these challenges because of its global nature. Because the UPU Convention allowed for restricted unions, he wanted to create a European postal union that would establish the precondition for a 'simple, fast, and secure and foremost cheap exchange of messages in Europe'.[390] Ohnesorge then legitimised the need for this restricted union by alluding to existing unions, such as the Nordic Postal Union: 'The European postal union to be

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387   Ibid.
388   Writer's own translation: "Schaffung eines europäischen Postvereins und Regelung des deutsch-niederländischen Postdienstes", Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/11200, Ohnesorge and Hitler, 21.06.1941.
389   Writer's own translation: "die Sie aus politischen, wirtschaftlichen und kulturellen Gründen erstreben", ibid.
390   Writer's own translation: "einfachen, schnellen und sicheren und vor allem billigen Nachrichtenaustausch in Europa", ibid.

created should here replace all present agreements and postal unions in Europe and combine them'.[391] He described the envisioned union as a way to deepen political and economic relations by simplifying the calculation and reduction of tariffs; these measures have the advantage of being instantly effective, in contrast to many other infrastructure proposals, which might take years to implement. However, Ohnesorge noted that partner countries would need the financial option to decrease tariffs. Furthermore, the union should facilitate exchange between peoples 'in order to gain an understanding of, interest and trust in the new order of Europe under German leadership'.[392] This would support political and economic foreign propaganda. Ohnesorge briefly mentioned that the harmonisation of tariffs with domestic German tariffs still needed to be examined before emphasising once again that the project's guiding principle had to be facilitating understanding between European peoples as rapidly as possible. As a counterargument to the anticipated high financial losses, Ohnesorge mentioned the project's economic and cultural benefits: 'The development possibilities of the new Europe have to be assessed as so decidedly positive that it would be wrong if all the European postal administrations would not advocate for this in order to overcome the initial difficulties'.[393]

In the final part of the letter, Ohnesorge argued why the postal union should be created during the war. Due to the new demarcations of the Reich and the need to integrate the 'newly won import and export areas in the greater German economy',[394] it was necessary to simplify postal services to exploit them as planned for the German war economy. Thus, a European postal union would be simultaneously developed. Ohnesorge used the planned German-Dutch agreement as an example. He enumerated five points as a framework for the agreement. First, the agreement would be applicable only for postal services. Second, domestic German tariffs and sending conditions should be applied in the reciprocal postal exchange. Third, the provisions would only cover the scope of letters. Fourth, transit charges

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391 Writer's own translation: "Der zu schaffende europäische Postverein soll hierbei an die Stelle aller bisherigen Abkommen und Postvereine in Europa treten und diese zusammenfassen", ibid.

392 Writer's own translation: "um Verständnis, Interesse und Vertrauen für den Neuaufbau Europas unter deutscher Führung zu gewinnen", ibid.

393 Writer's own translation: "Die Entwicklungsmöglichkeiten des neuen Europa sind so entschieden positiv zu beurteilen, daß es falsch wäre, wenn sich nicht alle europäischen Postverwaltungen hierfür einsetzen würden, um die Anfangsschwierigkeiten zu überwinden", ibid.

394 Writer's own translation: "die neugewonnenen Bezugs- und Absatzgebiete in die großdeutsche Wirtschaft einzufügen", ibid.

would be abolished. Fifth, these regulations would be the basis of a broader simplification and harmonisation initiative in European postal services and telecommunications. The experience gained from implementing this agreement would influence the later creation of a European postal union. Ohnesorge concluded the letter by asking Hitler's approval for the German-Dutch agreement and the creation of a European postal union 'because of the general political importance of the matter'.[395] He also informed him that the Reichskommissar for the occupied Dutch territories had already agreed to Ohnesorge's proposal.

However, Ohnesorge's letter does not provide any new information on the postal aspects of the union. He mentioned the broad guiding ideas of the project: facilitating communication, reducing costs for European mail and the adaptation of other administrations to German postal services. His arguments largely mirrored those of Risch and Timm: the UPU could not resolve the problems at hand because it was too large and encompassed too many countries; other restricted unions already existed within the framework of the UPU; and European peoples could be brought together via communications. Ohnesorge also underlined the hegemonic aspect of the union and integrated it into the path towards a 'New Europe'. What is new, however, is that the *Reichspostminister* drew a direct link between the EPTU and the ongoing war and the exploitation of the occupied territories. Thus, the creation of a European postal union and agreements with the occupied countries were categorised under German war efforts and as ways to support the military in its mission. As mentioned in the previous chapter[396], Hitler was not necessarily interested in a concrete vision for Europe but rather focused on Germany and the benefits that other countries could provide it. Ohnesorge was likely aware of this, as he was an early supporter of Hitler and relatively close to him. This new argument about economic exploitation can thus be explained by the letter's recipient. Ohnesorge needed Hitler's support and sought ways to convince him. This does not mean that the economic exploitation of other countries was contrary to the *Reichspostminister*'s aims; rather, it shows that he had to convince actors with diverging perspectives and priorities and highlighted different aspects of the project to persuade them. Therefore, it is difficult to distinguish between the project's 'genuine' goals and those used to persuade actors from other fields. It is likely that this distinction is artificial and does not reflect the reality of the situation. Thus, questioning Ohnesorge's true intentions does

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395   Writer's own translation: "wegen der grundsätzlichen politischen Bedeutung der Angelegenheit", ibid.
396   Part I, Chapter I.

not appear to be a fruitful exercise. Instead, it is important to study the entanglement of different interests and their influence on standardisation. In this letter, the details of standards are clearly unimportant. Rather, political arguments are crucial for translating the standards envisioned in internal speeches and meetings into reality; in brief, without Hitler's approval, there would be little opportunity to begin any real standard-setting within the planned union in the first place.

In addition to the creation of a European postal union, the International Chamber of Law (ICL) presented a forum to promote the standardisation process. The following section examines the committee of postal services and telecommunications within the Chamber and its role in the EPTU.

Created on 4 April 1941 by 13 countries, the ICL had its official seat in Berlin and was tasked with gathering legal experts and practitioners from juridical organisations. It was intended as a counterweight to the Anglo-Saxon and French organisations and was 'to become the central point for the ideas of the young peoples in the area of law'.[397] Additionally, the ICL 'should serve mainly our [German] fight for the new order of the European living space'.[398] The ICL can thus be interpreted as a political umbrella organisation, and a strong German influence appeared to have permeated its organisational-administrative and content-related tasks. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the Chamber was also created as a platform for German propaganda. Within the ICL, a committee on postal services and telecommunications chaired by state secretary Nagel – the second-most important person in the *Reichspostministerium* after Ohnesorge – was planned. In contrast to the envisioned European postal union, whose work was practical and administrative, the ICL's task was defined as purely scientific preparatory work for the creation of a European postal union. After the EPTU's founding, the ICL's work included scientific promotion of the alignment of European PTT law.[399] This distinction was also important to the Foreign

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397 Writer's own translation: "auf dem Gebiete des Rechts die zentrale Stelle für die Ideen der jungen Völker warden", Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/13658, Begründung zum Gesetz über die Verleihung besonderer Rechte an die internationale Rechtskammer, 14.03.1942.

398 Writer's own translation: "Sie soll außerdem vor allem auch unserem Kampf um die Neuordnung des europäischen Lebensraumes dienen", Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/13658, Generalsekretär der Internationalen Rechtskammer Pfeiffer an den Reichspostminister Ohnesorge, 20.05.1941.

399 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/13658, Für die mündliche Besprechung von St mit Generalgouverneur Dr. Frank, 17.11.1942.

Department within the *Reichspostministerium.*[400] Although proof of payment of the *Reichspost*'s yearly contribution to the committee was found up to 1944,[401] sources do not contain any documentation of the actual work performed by the committee. Nonetheless, several observations from the available material are worth noting; these concern the nomination of national delegates and the overlap between people who were involved in both the EPTU and the PTT committee within the ICL.

To become a national delegate for the committee, one[402] needed to be approved by the *Reichspostministerium*. The personal advisor to Minister Ohnesorge, Timm, who represented the ministry to the ICL, wrote in a letter to the Foreign Department that the ICL would only appoint staffers of foreign administrations when they were proposed by the ministry.[403] He continued, 'Representatives of foreign postal administrations that have supported the German *Reichspost* during earlier negotiations and during preparations for the European postal union or will do so come into question'.[404] He outlined the advantages of this system of appointment by arguing that a third way would thus be created to facilitate future cooperation in postal services and telecommunications. The first two ways were the official channel via the administrations and the 'political way'[405] via the *Reichspost*'s appointees abroad. These explanations demonstrate plans for German dominance in the PTT committee within the ICL, which was intended to cooperate with EPTU committees. Furthermore, a strategy of different channels of cooperation seems to have been envisioned; however, as noted above, available documents contain no mentions of scientific results produced by the committee. It is thus difficult to evaluate the effectiveness of this method and the committee.

The committee had a difficult start, as the *Reichspostministerium* was slow to appoint representatives of the different countries. The secretariat-

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400   Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/13658, Min-A an Timm, 09.1941.
401   Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/13658, Reichspostminister Ohnesorge an den Herrn Präsidenten der Internationalen Rechtskammer z. Hd. des Herrn Generalsekretärs Dr. Pfeiffer, 21.06.1944.
402   No woman was proposed.
403   Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/13658, Ref. Timm an Min-A, 09.09.1941.
404   Writer's own translation: "In Betracht kommen hierfür Vertreter ausländischer Postverwaltungen, die die Deutsche Reichspost bei früheren Verhandlungen und bei den Vorarbeiten zur Schaffung eines europäischen Postvereins bisher unterstützt haben oder (…) warden", ibid.
405   Writer's own translation: "politischer Weg", Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/13658, Ref. Timm an Min-A, 09.09.1941.

general had to wait approximately one year for a final decision from the ministry.[406] Thirteen delegates were appointed for the German section of the committee; under them, there were also two representatives from the companies Siemens and AEG. Given the committee's general direction, it is unsurprising that seven of the *Reichspost* appointees would also later be present at the congress of Vienna and/or involved in the creation of the EPTU: the two ministerial directors Risch and Körner, the previously mentioned Prof. Dr. Dr. Timm, Dr. Schmidt, Dr. Neugebauer, Heinrich Poppe[407] and Dr. Reiss.[408] Some international delegates would also be present at the congress:[409] the Danish delegate, Arne Krog, and the Finnish delegates, Gunnar Ernst Fredrik Albrecht[410] and Urho Talvitie.[411] These interconnections were intentional and demonstrate the *Reichspost*'s desire to create an epistemic community aimed at a unified PTT area in the 'New Europe'. Earlier experiences of international technocratic cooperation within the UPU and the ITU highlighted the advantages that such communities could provide in setting standards.

Additional non-German delegates members to the ICL committee remain to be mentioned: a third Finnish delegate, Matti Lisakki Aspio; the Portuguese delegate, Dr. Manuel Fernando Braz Teixeira; and the national delegates who are missing from the list, such as those from Italy and Hungary.

The appointment of Aspio is notable because it shows how appointees of the *Reichspost* worked abroad. Fleischer, the appointee to Finland, wrote the following on 1 April 1942:

> I was told to look for a suitable person for the international chamber of
> postal services and telecommunications on the occasion of my last stay in

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406   First request: Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/13658, Generalsekretariat an Postrat Dr. Schmidt, 08.06.1942; final approval: Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/13658, Reichspostminister an Generalsekretariat. 12.06.1943.

407   Heinrich Poppe was the chair for the postal committee during the congress of Vienna (Europäischer Postkongress, p. 120).

408   Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/13658, Ernannte Mitglieder der Sektion "Post- und Fernmelderecht" der I.R.K., 26.05.1943.

409   Delegates from Denmark, Finland, Norway, Portugal and Roumania were appointed at this point, Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/13658, Ernannte Mitglieder der Sektion "Post- und Fernmelderecht" der Landesvertretungen der Internationalen Rechtskammer, 26.05.1943.

410   Chairman by seniority in Vienna (Europäischer Postkongress, p. 20).

411   Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/13658, Ernannte Mitglieder der Sektion "Post- und Fernmelderecht" der Landesvertretungen der Internationalen Rechtskammer, 26.05.1943.

Berlin. After consulting Director General Albrecht, the only person worth considering within the local administration is the director, Aspio. He passed the juridical state examinations and works on all the legal affairs of the Finnish PTT administration. I think that he will really contribute, too. He understands German very well, though he only speaks German poorly at this point.[412]

It is clear that Fleischer leveraged his relationship with Albrecht to obtain inside information on the Finnish PTT administration and identify the right person for the specific tasks within the committee of the ICL.

Additionally, it is notable that Portugal was meant to be represented in the ICL's postal committee because Portugal did not send delegates to the congress in Vienna, even as observers.[413] Thus, the appointment of Dr. Teixeira on 20 March 1943,[414] the only non-German delegate on the list officially appointed on this date, might be a case in which the three-way strategy mentioned by Timm worked. Portugal was not part of the practical or technical aspects of the union but would have been involved in its legal aspects via the ICL.

Finally, some countries are missing from the list. The most notable exception is Italy, but there were also no delegates from Hungary or five other countries whose administrations later became part of the EPTU. The intention of the *Reichspost* was that the criterion for countries' admission was their cooperation with the founding of a European postal union.[415] Therefore, it is unclear why no delegates from these countries were included on the June 1943 list. The EPTU was officially declared to be an Axis project, and the *Reichspost* had already agreed on three names: Dr. Giuseppe Capana, who was intended to become the vice-chair of the committee;[416]

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412 Writer's own translation: "Anlässlich meines letzten Berliner Aufenthalts wurde mitgeteilt, dass ich nach einer geeigneten Kraft für die Internationale Post- und Fernmeldekammer Ausschau halten solle. Nach Rücksprache mit Generaldirektor Albrecht kommt bei der hiesigen Verwaltung nur der Direktor Aspio in Frage. Er besitzt die juristischen Staatsexamina und bearbeitet alle Rechtsangelegenheiten bei der finnischen Post- und Telegrafenverwaltung. Ich glaube, dass er auch wirklich mitarbeiten wird. Er versteht deutsch sehr gut, spricht selbst jedoch noch etwas gebrochen", Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/-13658, Postrat Fleischer an Fey (Min-Z), 01.04.1942.

413 Europäischer Postkongress, p. 10.

414 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/13658, Ernannte Mitglieder der Sektion "Post- und Fernmelderecht" der Landesvertretungen der Internationalen Rechtskammer, 26.05.1943.

415 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/13658, Vermerk Ref Cn, 17.11.1941.

416 Ibid.

Grand Officer Benedetto Caldara; and Dr. Pasquale Vasio. All three were in Vienna as delegates.[417] Their absence from the list cannot be explained but casts doubt on the strength of the Axis. The same applies to Dr. Károly von Forster of the Hungarian postal administration, whose name was mentioned several times in the selection of a Hungarian delegate and whose support for the project was unquestioned.[418] In May 1944, von Forster wrote to Risch; he had heard from *Oberpostrat* Tiegs, appointee of the *Reichspost* to Hungary, that a second congress was being planned and he wanted to express his support.[419]

Switzerland and Sweden did not join the union; thus, the lack of delegates from these countries seems logical. However, two names that should not be omitted were discussed during the search for delegates to the ICL committee. Dr. Buser was mentioned for Switzerland, but it was also noted that his views on the foundation of a European postal union had yet to be reviewed.[420] The possible Swedish delegate, a postal director named Lange, on the other hand, was said to have a positive attitude towards a European postal union[421] but he was not appointed, according to the list.

In summary, the committee on postal services and telecommunications within the ICL was intended to institutionalise cooperation on legal questions to support the work of the EPTU. Sources show German dominance in the planning and organisation of the committee but contain no actual evidence of the committee's work or its results. The national delegates had a degree of personal overlap with the EPTU and their confirmation by the *Reichspostministerium,* whose Foreign Department did not seem to be entirely supportive of the committee, was slow. Thus, the committee did not appear to have played an important role in standard-setting for European postal services. However, in addition to the union itself, other channels were envisioned to promote the process. The strategic positioning and work of the *Reichspost*'s appointees abroad is exemplified by the process of identifying the right delegates. Thus, the committee's design aligned with the overall picture of the standard-setting process in European postal services, as envisioned by those responsible in the *Reichspostministerium*. The central aspect of hegemony over the European postal union, which was also relevant to Timm and Risch's speeches, reappears.

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417   Europäischer Postkongress, p. 10.
418   Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/13658, Vermerk Ref Cn, 17.11.1941.
419   Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/11630, Forster an Risch, 06.05.1944.
420   Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/13658, Min-A (Pe) and Timm, 09.1941.
421   Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/13658, Vermerk Ref Cn, 17.11.1941.

Presenting the project to the world outside the Reichspost

To increase the project's legitimacy and obtain majorities for the different European postal standards envisioned, both a professional and a civilian audience were targeted through articles. Although they cannot be examined in their entirety, it is important to highlight some examples, as they demonstrated the emphasis placed on certain aspects of standard-setting. Articles that addressed a professional audience are analysed first, as experts had to agree on the standards before the project was promoted to civilians.

While preparing for the congress, the *Reichspost* used several channels to promote the idea of a European postal union, mainly within the expert community. These included its own journals, such as the *Postarchiv* and the *Deutsche Post*, and the journal of the UPU. The following discussion contains all the articles found on the subject, but it does not necessarily represent a complete selection.

Heinrich Poppe and Friedrich Risch both wrote articles on the German-Italian agreements, which were published in November 1941. Risch's article was circulated in the *Deutsche Post*, while Poppe's was published in the *Postnachrichtenblatt* and reprinted in the *Mitteilungen der Deutschen Gruppe in der Internationalen Handelskammer*. Risch's article recounted the *Reichspostminister*'s meeting with the Duce and showed pictures of the meeting and him laying a wreath at the tomb of the unknown soldier in Rome with the minister of transport, Host-Venturi.[422] The pictures appeared alongside technical explanations of the agreements. By contrast, Poppe's article focused solely on the details of the agreement.[423]

As in his previously mentioned speech, Risch began his article on a political note by integrating the agreements and the planned postal union in the wider context of a 'New Europe'. The rhetoric was typical; he wrote about a new order in Europe, the failures of foreign powers and the *Reichspost*'s work towards European integration in its field of expertise. He contextualised the German-Italian agreements as a step in this direction, then explained why a restricted union was needed in addition to the UPU and the ITU. Risch argued that, for postal services, the dream of a standard charge in international services was more distant than in the era of Heinrich

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422   Both raised their arms in a "Hitler Salute" in the picture. (Risch, Friedrich: Die deutsch-italienischen Sonderabkommen über den Post- und Telegraphendienst in: Die Deutsche Post (1941), Nr. 45, p. 717-722, p. 719 as found in Politisches Archiv, Berlin, RAV Zagreb 147).

423   Politisches Archiv, Berlin, RAV Zagreb 147, Mitteilungen der Deutschen Gruppe der Internationalen Handelskammer, Januar 1942.

von Stephan. While explaining the details of the agreements and differences that had to be overcome, Risch highlighted the Italians' will to adapt to the German system. The article concluded with a description of the *Reichspost-minister*'s travels*,* which can be summarised as praise for positive Axis relations[424] and the achievements of the Italian Fascists.[425]

Similarly, Poppe explained that Heinrich von Stephan's old ideal of comparable international tariffs could no longer be achieved with international unions.[426] Notably, the wording of descriptions of the current situation and details of the agreement was exactly the same in several passages in Poppe and Risch's articles.[427] Consequently, Poppe also noted that the Italian administration adapted to German weight categories and tariff system, while the German administration simply expanded its domestic system to a wider territory.[428]

In the *Postarchiv*, the *Reichspostminister* Ohnesorge and Timm[429] published a special issue entitled 'European Postal Services'.[430] It was sent to all administrations that had been officially contacted regarding the bilateral agreements and the union[431] and included articles by the head of the Italian postal administration, Pession; his Finnish counterpart, Albrecht; and the head of the technical department at the Bulgarian PTT administration, Witscho Pissomoff. They wrote about the PTT in autocratic countries, the development of their national PTT systems and the specificities of a transit country. The articles were summarised in Italian, French and Spanish for non-German speakers. Additionally, an article by Friedrich Risch on the

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424   For instance, Ohnesorge was greeted by the Duce with 'extraordinary warmth'. (Risch, Friedrich: Die deutsch-italienischen Sonderabkommen über den Post- und Telegraphendienst in: Die Deutsche Post (1941), Nr. 45, p. 717-722, p. 722 as found in Politisches Archiv, Berlin, RAV Zagreb 147).

425   Risch writes about 'indelible impression' that the participants were left with after witnessing the efforts of the new Italy. (Ibid.).

426   Politisches Archiv, Berlin, RAV Zagreb 147, Mitteilungen der Deutschen Gruppe der Internationalen Handelskammer, Januar 1942.

427   Ibid.

428   Ibid.

429   Both were named as the official publishers. Responsible for the content were among others the ministerial directors Körner and Risch as well as the head of the research institute of the Reichspost Gladenbeck, cf. Politisches Archiv, Berlin, RAV Zagreb 147, Postarchiv: Sonderheft Europäisches Postwesen

430   Writer's own translation: "Europäisches Postwesen", ibid.

431   Politisches Archiv, Berlin, RAV Zagreb 147, Auswärtiges Amt an die Deutsche Botschaft Rom, Madrid, Ankara, die Deutsche Gesandtschaft Lissabon, Bern, Kopenhagen, Stockholm. Helsinki, Pressburg, Budapest, Agram, Sofia, Bukarest, die Dienststelle des Auswärtiges Amtes Belgrad, den Bevollmächtigten des Reichs für Griechenland, 20.06.1942.

problems and aims of a European Postal Union was published in the issue.[432] It provided the literary basis of the union and is presented later in more detail. It was translated in full in Italian, French and Spanish. The special issue of the *Postarchiv* also contained the wording of the bilateral agreements that had already been concluded, both for postal services and telecommunication.[433] It was based on an essay series in the journal *Postarchiv* that *Reichspostminister* Ohnesorge had started in the beginning of 1940.[434] This bringing together of administrations, albeit only in a journal, could be interpreted as an attempt to build the epistemic community needed to realise a European PTT union.

First published in April 1942, Risch's article was reprinted with English, French and Spanish translations in the official journal of the UPU, *L'Union postale*, one month before the congress in September 1942.[435] The article received attention outside of the PTT community. For example, the International Thrift Institute also considered discussing it in its own journal.[436] After the introduction, Risch dedicated the first part of the article to postal services and the second to telecommunications. Therefore, only the contents of the introduction and the first part of the article are relevant to this work. Compared to Risch's speech and article in the *Deutsche Post*, the tone of the article is neutral and technical. Risch argued that the UPU and ITU's provisions were too broad for the small continent of Europe and that earlier initiatives and the existing restricted union had demonstrated the need for a European union. He mentioned the bilateral work that had been completed to date and outlined the main results. First, the simplification and improvement of postal services were to be completed within the framework of UPU provisions. Second, a wider weight category system was preferred. Third, tariffs were adapted to a base tariff of 12 *Reichspfennig* for the 20g category. Fourth, the abolition of the transit charge was declared to be a future goal that bilateral agreements could only partly address and that a multilateral collective had to address. Fifth, the future of air mail was a frequent topic but also one that had to be postponed until after the war. Sixth, the

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432   Politisches Archiv, Berlin, RAV Zagreb 147, Postarchiv: Sonderheft Europäisches Postwesen, Aus dem Inhalt.

433   Ibid.

434   Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/11812, Das Nachrichtenwesen autoritärer Staaten, Anmerkung p. 7, April 1942.

435   Risch, Friedrich: Probleme und Ziele eines europäischen Postvereins, in: L'Union postale (1942), Nr. 9, p. 246-252, as found in Staatsarchiv Hamburg, Hamburg, 211-11 C(P)774.

436   Bundesarchiv, Berlin, R4701/12129, Direktor Ravizza und Oberpostrat Dr. Propach, 03.12.1942.

negotiations ended with talks about the organisation of the new postal union; it was agreed that 'the time of lengthy official congress'[437] was over. Instead, the work of specialists should happen in a European postal committee, similar to the international consultative comittees of the ITU.[438] After outlining the results of the negotiations in telecommunications, Risch ended the article with the assurance that the new union was not intended to isolate Europe but to unify its forces to enable the 'economic and cultural development'[439] of European peoples: 'We are certain that this work will soon find its completion under the sign of the new Europe'.[440] The content of the article reprinted in the UPU and the letter received by the administrations was similar; the latter underlined technocratic continuities and the integration of the new union in existing technocratic unions. Only the mention of the 'New Europe' and the criticism of the UPU's long congresses were political in tone.

Several articles were also published in journals that focused on foreign policy. For example, plans for a European postal union were mentioned in the '*Auswärtige Politik*' in September 1942 and described the union from a clearly political angle. The PTT standards were not mentioned at all. Instead, the unknown author emphasised the European unity expressed by such a potential union and the part that the union would play in the new order of Europe: the 'great German task after the victory on the battlefield'.[441]

The *Reichspostministerium* planned two *Auslands-Zeitschriften*:[442] one for postal services and one for telecommunications. The journal for postal services was to be named *The European Post*.[443] Documents about the planning of this journal date from around May 1941. On the 23rd of July 1941, the *Reichspostminister* wrote to the *Reichsverband der deutschen*

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437 Writer's own translation: "die Zeit langwieriger offizieller Kongresse", Risch., Friedrich, Probleme und Ziele eines europäischen Postvereins, in: Postarchiv: Sonderheft Europäisches Postwesen, April 1942, p. 81-88, p. 84 as found in Politisches Archiv, Berlin, RAV Zagreb 147.
438 Ibid.
439 Writer's own translation: "wirtschaftliche und kulturelle Entfaltung", ibid.
440 Writer's own translation: "Wir sind sicher, daß im Zeichen des neuen Europa diese Arbeit in naher Zeit ihre Vollendung finden wird", ibid.
441 Writer's own translation: "große deutsche Aufgabe hinter dem Siege auf dem Schlachtfeld", Ohne Verfasser, Europäischer Postverein, in: Auswärtige Politik, Bd. 9 (1942), p. 811.
442 Writer's own translation: Journals for foreign countries.
443 Writer's own translation: "Die Europäische Post", Bundesarchiv, Berlin Lichterfelde, R4701/13438.

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Zeitschriften-Verleger,[444] stating that the ministry was responsible for the planning and content of the journals and that its publication was in the interest of the Reich. Its task was to lead the way to closer European cooperation in postal services which was declared to be Hitler's wish.[445] On the same day, he wrote to the Walter Krieg publishing house, the journal's intended publisher, to reiterate the journals' necessity.[446] The *Reichspost*'s appointees abroad were also informed of the project. The aim was for the two journals to become the 'decisive bodies of the European postal and telecommunications system'.[447] The task of the appointees was to name individuals who could contribute and/or permanently collaborate on the journals – at best, these individuals were members of the national administration. The journal was intended to be bilingual (German-Italian, German-Spanish and German-French) and to consist of three sections: general political news, a purely scientific section and an objective section.[448] The appointees delivered. Tiegs received three names from the Hungarian PTT administration – one each for postal services, telecommunications and technical issues. For postal services, Elemér Módos was nominated as a permanent collaborator.[449] Thus, the journal would have been able to gather different ideas and expertise regarding the development of a European restricted postal union. The relationships between the appointees and the collaborators could also have been leveraged to foster an epistemic community centred in Germany.

The need for a new journal – in addition to the five existing journals on PTT[450] – was justified as follows: 'The scientifically exact content, the targeted propaganda effect and the reproduction of factual communications (…) thus built an irrefutable necessity'.[451] In the application, English was

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444   Writer's own translation: Reich's Association of German Journal Publishers.
445   Bundesarchiv, Berlin Lichterfelde, R4701/13438, Min an den Reichsverband der deutschen Zeitschriften-Verleger, 23.07.1941.
446   Bundesarchiv, Berlin Lichterfelde, R4701/13438, Min an den Walter Krieg Verlag, 23.07.1941.
447   Writer's own translation: "maßgeblichen Organe des Europäische Post- und Fernmeldewesens", Bundesarchiv, Berlin Lichterfelde, R4701/13438, Min-A/Kh an den Sonderbeauftragten der Deutschen Reichspost, 24.07.1941.
448   Ibid.
449   Bundesarchiv, Berlin Lichterfelde, R4701/13438, Tiegs an Fey, 01.10.1941.
450   Bundesarchiv, Berlin Lichterfelde, R4701/13438, Fragebogen betr. Planung der Herausgabe einer Zeitschrift, Anlage zu 2c), 25.07.1941.
451   Writer's own translation: "Der wissenschaftlich exakte Inhalt, die erstrebte Propagandawirkung und die Wiedergabe sachlicher Mitteilungen (…) bilden damit eine unabweisbare Notwendigkeit", Bundesarchiv, Berlin Lichterfelde,

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also listed as a publication language.[452] Due to paper shortages, the request was denied.[453] The minister himself made another plea to the *Reichsverband,* emphasising the journal's necessity and its contribution to the plan to unite PTT Europe, as the Hitler wished.[454] However, the answer remained negative, and the *Reichspost* had to reschedule its plans.[455] The new plan was to publish a special issue of the *Postarchiv* like the one mentioned above.[456] However, it would appear that this special issue remained the only one of these special issues completed.[457]

Several aspects of the envisioned journal should be mentioned. The most notable is the fact that it was exclusively planned by the *Reichspostministerium*, well before it became clear that the Italian administration had agreed to move forward with the project of creating a European union for postal services and telecommunications, as shown in the next section. The choice of languages is also significant; the journal would have not been translated into all the languages of the countries whose administrations would be members of the EPTU. However, *Signal* – the most important German journal published abroad – was.[458] This was undoubtedly influenced by the target audiences for the journals. While the target readers of *Signal* were the general public, *The European Post* was intended to attract experts from other administrations in occupied Europe and beyond. Thus, publishing the articles in Italian, French and Spanish would ensure that international postal experts in any administration would be able to understand them. The choice to publish a German-Italian journal likely also included an additional Axis propaganda aspect. The same holds for the exclusion of English. However, it is notable that the publication would always have been bilingual, with

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R4701/13438, Fragebogen betr. Planung der Herausgabe einer Zeitschrift, 25.07.1941, p. 2.

452 Ibid., zu Anlage 4.

453 Bundesarchiv, Berlin Lichterfelde, R4701/13438, Jux an Verlag Walter Krieg, 15.09.1941.

454 Bundesarchiv, Berlin Lichterfelde, R4701/13438, Reichspostminister an die Reichspressekammer, 17.11.1941.

455 Bundesarchiv, Berlin Lichterfelde, R4701/13438, Reichsleiter für die Presse der NSDAP an Reichspostminister, 19.01.1942.

456 Bundesarchiv, Berlin Lichterfelde, R4701/13438, Min-A an die Sonderbeauftragten der DRP im Ausland, 03.02.1942.

457 Politisches Archiv, Berlin, RAV Zagreb 147, Postarchiv: Sonderheft Europäisches Postwesen.

458 Aslangul-Rallo, Claire : Signal (1940-1945) : propagande « universelle » ou adaptation à des publics hétérogènes ?. L'exemple de la version francophone, in : *Matériaux pour l'histoire de notre temps*, N° 135-136 (2020), p. 56-57, p. 56.

German as the base language. This shows that the journal was also designed with the establishment of German as the lingua franca of the international postal community in mind. This meant setting a new standard, as French had been the primary language, especially during conferences and congresses. Lastly, the inclusion of non-German authors would have conferred legitimacy on the journal to facilitate the promotion of new standards and leadership for European postal services and telecommunications.

The fact that the *Reichspostministerium* planned a journal to promote standards and ideas demonstrates another aspect that was already visible in the *Reichspost's* other preparatory actions. The *Reichspost* intended to use multiple channels to achieve the intensification of European postal services, with themselves at the top. This was apparent from the installation of appointees abroad and the proposed creation of the PTT committee within the ICL.

In addition to the conclusion of bilateral agreements before the congress, German newspapers also published articles about the planned European postal union; some were even authored by the *Reichspostminister* himself. The articles did not merely report on the planned union but framed it in a political light.

The first article identified dates from April 1941 and was published in the *Berliner Börsen-Zeitung*. *Reichspostminister* Ohnesorge outlined the necessity of a European postal union for the post-war order and declared uniform tariffs for all European PTT services as the union's goal.[459] These statements were made before the German and Italian PTT administration reached a bilateral agreement or came to terms on a European postal union. In December 1941, another article titled 'For the postal unity of Europe' appeared in the the *Kölnische Zeitung*.[460] It explained how the German-Italian bilateral agreement could lead to a European movement that could result in German domestic tariffs being applied within a European postal area. In the article, there was praise for the German and Italian administrations' working relationship and endeavour to form a 'New Europe' in which administration, economy and transport would be efficiently combined. The article closed with technical details about the union excerpted from another

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459 Rigsarkivet, København, Generaldirektoratet for Post- og Telegrafenvesenet, Journalsager vedr. forholdet til udlandet (1884-1983): I.M.1.c (1903-1962), 13075, Afskrift Berliner Börsen-Zeitung, 26.04.1941.

460 Writer's own translation: "Für die postalische Einheit Europas", PTT Archiv, Bern, P-00C_0108_01, Kölnische Zeitung, 02.12.1941.

article in the *Deutsche Postzeitung*.[461] Praise for the *Reichspost* is a reccurring theme in coverage of the *Reichspost*'s efforts to form a European postal union.[462] Additionally, the articles contained concrete details about the planned union and standards, and all the German newspapers positively assessed the former.[463] These aspects are unsurprising, as it was necessary to inform readers about the union's implications and it was rather unlikely that a German newspaper would criticise the *Reichspostminister*'s project at the time.

In the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, the efforts were described as 'the German action for a European Postal Union',[464] which provides further evidence that the project was externally perceived as a German one. It also led to several articles referencing Heinrich von Stephan. For example, the *Börsenzeitung* quoted him as saying, '*Si vis pacem para concordam'*.[465] This was derived from a Latin proverb originally attributed to Plato: '*Si vis pacem para bellum'*, which loosely translates to, 'If you want peace, prepare war'. The version credited to von Stephan means, 'If you want peace, prepare an agreement'. The German National Socialists did both. The idea of the agreements being a vital part of peace after the war was reiterated in speeches that highlighted the presentation of the EPTU as a project of peace and understanding between peoples. Two articles attempted to make the project more tangible for readers. The *Neues Wiener Tageblatt* used the words of the *Reichspostminister* to evoke 'connections like a giant nervous system',[466] and the *Frankfurter Zeitung* remarked that the union would transform Europe into one area for the purposes of PTT to ensure that the entire continent could not longer be divided into 'domestic' and 'foreign'.[467]

One last article must be discussed. It was written by the *Reichspostminister* himself and published in the *Europa-Kabel*. While the article's technocratic content purely repeats what was already known about the plans for a European postal union, the author stated that a restricted union within the

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461   PTT Archiv, Bern, P-00C_0108_01, Kölnische Zeitung, 02.12.1941.
462   Cf. PTT Archiv, Bern, P-00C_0108_01, Völkischer Beobachter München, 21.01.1942; Neues Wiener Tagesblatt, 19.06.1942; Börsen Zeitung, 09.07.1942.
463   PTT Archiv, Bern, P-00C_0108_01, Pressekommentare zum Europäischen Postkongress.
464   Writer's own translation: "die deutsche Aktion für eine europäische Postunion", PTT Archiv, Bern, P-00C_0108_01, Neue Zürcher Zeitung, 08.01.1942.
465   PTT Archiv, Bern, P-00C_0108_01, Börsen Zeitung, 09.07.1942.
466   Writer's own translation: "Verbindungen wie ein riesiges Nervensystem", PTT Archiv, Bern, P-00C_0108_01, Neues Wiener Tageblatt, 20.6.1942.
467   PTT Archiv, Bern, P-00C_0108_01, Frankfurter Zeitung,19.6.1942.

UPU was long overdue but that only the war had made it possible. He also noted that the union would not diminish the UPU and Heinrich von Stephan's great achievement. Rather, it would align with his wishes.[468] Thus, the legacy of Heinrich von Stephan was used to legitimise the project to both a professional and a civilian audience. For the professional audience, the project represented technocratic continuity; for the civilian audience, it testified to the continued 'German greatness' that benefited the rest of Europe.

The above summary of available articles shows that, while the press promoted the idea of a higher German purpose or excellence, there was also objective reporting on the substance of the *Reichspost*'s activities. Although the EPTU had the potential to become an important propaganda project, there does not appear to have been an attempt to make it into one. This lack of propaganda efforts heightened the likelihood of the EPTU being implemented, as the *Reichspost* was able to play to at least two very different readerships – 'normal' and professional audiences – with almost the same material.

The European Postal and Telecommunications Union as an Axis project –
From a working group for European telecommunications to a European
postal union (1940-1941)

While the chapter has thus far focused on the German *Reichspost*, the EPTU was an international organisation and required the involvement of other national PTT administrations. In the following, the inter-administrative and diplomatic channels are examined: first cooperation with the Italian administration, then relations with administrations from other European countries.

As shown in the timetable at the beginning of this chapter, the Italian and German PTT administrations met regularly between November 1940 and July 1942. While the first two meetings in Bolzano and Munich revolved around the establishment of a working group for European telecommunications, subsequent cooperation focused on the conclusion of a bilateral treaty and preparation for the founding of the EPTU. It should be noted that the Italian and German Foreign Ministries appear to have initially been informed about the developments regarding the European postal union after the fact or when Risch judged it necessary and only became active rather than reactive during the last phase of preparations in September 1942. Their

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468   PTT Archiv, Bern, P-00C_0108_01, Europa-Kabel, 19.6.1942.

involvement appeared to have debilitated the Italian PTT administration more than the German one; more than once, the Italian PTT administration either could not move forward with the project or had to wait a long time until the Italian Foreign Ministry or Mussolini agreed to the measure. The situation seemed to be different on the German side, as Ohnesorge used his ties to Hitler to resolve tensions between the German Foreign Ministry and the *Reichspostministerium*. It should also be noted that the Foreign Department of the *Reichspost* took the lead in postal services matters; especially since the congress was to be held in the Reich (in Vienna), the entire onsite organisation was in its hands. However, content-wise, there also appeared to be an asymmetry between the two Axis powers. In the following, the meetings are chronologically analysed. The first two telecommunications meetings are briefly examined, followed by the agreement meeting in August 1941 and the EPTU preparation meetings in 1942.

In November 1940, representatives of the Italian and German PTT administrations met in Bolzano to discuss the future of European telecommunications cooperation amid the paralysis of global unions.[469] Two months later, they met again in Munich to continue the discussions and determine the basic structure of the working group.[470] The technical content of the meeting is of lesser importance for the present work, as it is purely concerned with telecommunications. However, the agreed-upon structure for the working group should be mentioned: an administration's entry and exit into the group needed to be signalled to the German administration. The group's official languages were German and Italian. A note to use French as a stand-in language as needed was crossed out in the minutes of the meeting. The voting system was intended to be 'one country, one vote', and the working group was to be headquartered in Berlin, where the preparation of conferences would take place, with a branch office in Rome. The working group would create specialist committees which mirrored the known working processes from the ITU. The administrations could use these committees' reports as they pleased.[471] These institutions are notable for several reasons. On the one hand, they are a simple continuation of long-standing working structures at global unions; on the other hand, they reflect changes in geopolitical power. This is evidenced by the decision to headquarter the

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469   Henrich-Franke / Laborie, European Union by and for Communication Networks, p. 85-86.

470   Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/12284, Niederschrift über die zu gründende AG Europäischer Fernmeldeverwaltungen, January 1941.

471   Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/12284, Ordnung einer Arbeitsgemeinschaft, January 1941.

working group in Berlin with a branch office in Rome and, more importantly, in the choice of official languages. Excluding French or including it as a secondary language represented an affront and a show of power, given that French had been the primary working language of international cooperation, not only in the ITU and the UPU. Furthermore, French was still used in bilateral communications between administrations, even between the *Reichspost* and other PTT administrations.[472] It was the *Reichspost*'s goal to eliminate French as the language of international postal relations in Europe[473] and instead to give due effect to the German language based on the new poltician situation entailed by the war[474]. These institutions were also important for persuading the staff of the Foreign Ministry and, in this case, the OKW, whose approval the Foreign Ministry required before agreeing to continue with plans for the working group.[475] To convince the OKW, the working group was described as a tool for reordering Europe and changing the balance of power in global technical committees, which were said to be dominated by the United States and the United Kingdom. Through the working group, German influence over neutral countries and civil questions could be strengthened. Having coordinated the working group with Italy, the *Reichspost* claimed that important individuals from the Swiss and Swedish PTT administrations had agreed to cooperate.[476]

During the meeting in January 1941, there was also a discussion regarding who should be invited to participate in the working group. Both the Italian and German foreign ministries had agreed to invite Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, Romania, Sweden, Slovakia and Hungary; they had not yet approved the invitation of Denmark, Finland, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Russia, Switzerland, Spain and the Vatican.[477] This list was clearly influenced by the war situation, given that the occupied countries – France, Belgium and Greece – were missing from the list and that Yugoslavia and Russia were still on it in January 1941, which would be unthinkable several months later. Notably, the invitation of Sweden was approved, but not the

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472 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/11574, Wiehl an Reichspostminister, 11.02.1941.
473 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/11574, Timm an Min-A, 23.09.1940.
474 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/11574, Min-A and Auswärtiges Amt, 12.03.1941.
475 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/12284, Vermerk über eine Besprechung betr. Aref beim AA, 12.09.1941.
476 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/12284, Gladenbeck an das Oberkommando der Wehrmacht, 20.10.1941.
477 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/12284, Niederschrift über die zu gründende AG Europäischer Fernmeldeverwaltungen, January 1941.

invitation of Denmark, Finland, Norway and the Netherlands. No explanation for this could be found. One possibility is that the inclusion of these four countries would have created a power imbalance between Germany and Italy, as they were occupied by or allied with the Third Reich, whereas a similar number of countries from Italy's sphere of influence were not included on the list. The possibility of inviting Switzerland, Portugal or Spain seems less surprising, although it is notable that Sweden was preferred over Switzerland, where the office of the ITU was located.

It is important to note that the head of the Foreign Department, Friedrich Risch, does not appear to have been present at either of these meetings.[478] Two processes seem to have coincided in 1940 and 1941: the creation of the EPTU and the creation of a working group for telecommunications. Despite the realisation of plans for a European PTT union, Gladenbeck[479] still promoted the working group for telecommunications and was present in Munich in January 1941. On 20 October 1941, he wrote to the OKW to obtain approval for the working group, while plans to create a European postal union also advanced with the bilateral agreements between the Italian and German PTT administrations in early October 1941. There is no obvious explanation for these parallel events; given the pattern of German-Italian cooperation, there may have been some sort of competition between Risch and Gladenbeck, and the Axis projects were used to seek attention of superiors. In addition, the telecommunications engineers may have resisted the idea of being integrated into this union. Notably, a working group represented a lower level of institutionalisation than a union. Although the term 'working group' was not present in the valid ITU convention in 1940,[480] it most probably mirrored committees' intention to address specific (technical) questions.[481] Therefore, it can be assumed that the basic ideas of the PTT projects differed from each other. A working group was more focused on technical and economic aspects, whereas a new union also almost certainly had political features. Risch's speech also shows that the merging of

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478   Ibid.
479   As has been mentioned in the previous part, Gladenbeck was also supposed to be part of the German delegation to the PTT committee within the international chamber of law.
480   International Telecommunication Convention (Madrid, 1932), as found on the official Website of the ITU: https://search.itu.int/history/HistoryDigital CollectionDocLibrary/5.5.61.en.100.pdf (last access 18.03.2019).
481   This holds for both the ITU and the UPU (Universal Postal Union Convention (Buenos Aires, 1939), Art. 18).

the two administrative branches was not necessarily planned. Thus, an understanding of the working group as a preliminary stage of the EPTU's[482] foundation cannot be supported. Rather, the process can be described as the parallel development of two different projects. Importantly, Risch – who was first part of an Italian-German PTT meeting in August 1941 and ultimately responsible for the EPTU's organisational form – steadily promoted the ministry's plan to establish a European postal union. The working group, on the other hand, was not realised but transformed into permanent committees of the EPTU.

From 28 August to 3 September 1941, the German delegation led by Risch negotiated with the Italian delegation in Rome about an EPTU. Additionally, three agreements were arranged: one for postal services and two for telecommunications. Both the German and Italian delegations consisted of experts who would later attend the congress of Vienna.[483]

The minutes from the meeting show that Ohnesorge confirmed that he would travel to Rome in October 1941 to sign the agreements. These were based on German propositions that made clear in their introduction that, due to the Führer and the Duce's common plans to work towards a deeper co-operation between European peoples, it would also be desirable to conclude special arrangements between the two countries in the area of PTT: 'These agreements should – in accordance with the European programme of the two great leaders – be the basis for an association of all countries that are in compliance with the Axis powers'.[484] This is notable insofar that it could link membership in the future European postal union to a political criterion and thus limit possible member administrations to allies and occupied countries. This idea is also in sharp contrast to that of technocratic internationalism, which aimed to overcome precisely such political divides between nation states.

However, the above represents all the information available on the meeting. The agreements were signed in October 1941 by ministers Ohnesorge

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482 Keil, Rudi: Die Gründung des Europäischen Post- und Fernmeldevereins während des Zweiten Weltkriegs und seine Bedeutung für die Expansionspolitik des deutschen Faschismus, in: Die Deutsche Post 4 (1959) as found in Bundesarchiv, Koblenz, B257/343, p. 214-215.

483 The German delegation was entirely present on both occasions. 3 out of 5 members of the Italian delegation were later also present during the congress.

484 Writer's own translation: "Diese Vereinbarungen sollen – entsprechend dem europäischen Programm der beiden großen Führer – die Grundlage für einen Zusammenschluß aller Länder bilden, die sich mit den Achsenmächten in Übereinstimmung befinden", Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/12288, Hauptniederschrift, 15.09.1941.

and Host-Venturi in Rome. As the bilateral agreement differs from ones negotiated between Germany and other European administrations, it is important to discuss its most important aspects. Additionally, the administrations agreed on a meeting minute that warrants mention in this work.

In the introduction to this minute, the two administrations confirmed their desire to improve reciprocal political, cultural and economic relations through the simplification of postal services and their aim of fostering close European cooperation in the area of postal services by working towards the creation of a European postal union. Specifically, this meant that the provisions of the special agreement would first be applied in German-Italian postal services. Second, the administrations confirmed that this agreement should be the groundwork for a future European postal union: 'All European countries should be members of this European postal union if possible'.[485] Third, both administrations would conclude agreements that were similar in content to the German-Italian one with other European postal administrations. They committed to communicating with each other about the administrations that they planned to establish agreements with and the wording of these agreements. Fourth, these special agreements were to be concluded within the framework of Article 5 of the UPU Convention. Fifth, a European postal committee would be created to prepare for the European postal union. The committee would consist of members from every country that had signed a special agreement. The tasks and function of the committee were to be decided during its first meeting, which the German and Italian administrations would schedule.[486]

The articles of the meeting minute are important because they defined the next steps towards the creation of a European postal union – namely, the bilateral agreements and a postal committee. However, the latter did not become a reality until the congress. The reasons for its failure are discussed below. By contrast, the bilateral agreements were successfully concluded and are analysed in the next chapter.[487] They were an important tool for integrating postal services before the congress and securing subsequently

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485 Writer's own translation: "Dem Europäischen Postverein sollen möglichst alle europäischen Länder angehören", Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/25935, Niederschrift über die Verhandlungen zwischen der Deutschen Reichspost und der Königl. Italienischen Post- und Telegraphenverwaltung in Rom (Post), 08.10.1941.

486 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/25935, Niederschrift über die Verhandlungen zwischen der Deutschen Reichspost und der Königl. Italienischen Post- und Telegraphenverwaltung in Rom (Post), 08.10.1941.

487 See: Part I Chapter III From bilateral to multilateral: Making the initiative "European".

agreed-upon standards. It is also notable that Articles 2 and 5, which concern these bilateral agreements and the committee, do not feature in the minutes of the telecommunications negotiations.[488] This is because Risch described the ITU as having a 'purely European character',[489] which means that no new organisation was needed. It remains unclear whether this assessment included the envisioned working group. The assessment could also explain why fewer telecommunications agreements could be found and raises the question of whether it was already clear at the time that telecommunications would be part of the European union.

The postal agreement itself contained five articles. The most important is the second one, which is discussed last. The first article determined that, for German-Italian postal services[490], the agreed-upon provisions in the UPU were valid unless otherwise defined in the agreement. The third article stipulated that correspondence between the administrations on telecommunications matters would be free of charge, while the fourth set the effective date of the agreement to 1 January 1942. The period of notice of the agreement was three months, and the provisions could be changed when both sides agreed. The fifth article stipulated that both the German and the Italian versions of the agreement were considered the original text. In summary, the agreement set rules for two types of standards: administrative-operative standards (Articles 3 and 4) and organisational standards (Article 5).

Article 2 regulated a third type of standard: tariffs. This meant charges for letters, postcards, printed materials, commercial documents, product samples, newspapers, journals and other mail. There was one important co-ordination problem: weight categories in Germany did not correspond to those in Italy. While the German system had categories of up to 20 grams, 20–250 grams, 250–500 grams and 500–1,000 grams, the Italian system had a continuous range of 20 grams[491] to 1,000 grams. This difference was not addressed by the agreement. Instead, both administrations agreed to apply their own national systems in the German-Italian postal exchange. Thus, there was no real harmonisation on this matter; a letter sent from Germany to Italy would be subject to a different tariff regime than a letter sent from Italy to Germany: 'The Italian postal administration reserves the right to

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488 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/25935, Niederschrift über die Verhandlungen zwischen der Deutschen Reichspost und der Königl. Italienischen Post- und Telegraphenverwaltung in Rom (Telekommunikation), 08.10.1941.
489 Writer's own translation: "rein europäischer Charakter", Politisches Archiv, Berlin, R27628, Martius an Dir. Ha. Pol., 08.11.1941.
490 Germany including Böhmen und Mähren as well as the Generalgouvernement.
491 20-40, 40-60, 60-80 and so on.

adapt its own tariffs for letters in the traffic with Germany entirely to the stated German weight categories, once it will have introduced the same weight category system in the domestic postal services'.[492] For letters weighing more than 1,000 grams, the UPU's provisions were applied.

For postcards, the administrations agreed that sending a simple postcard would cost half as much as sending one with a reply coupon. They agreed on specific tariffs in this case. For printed materials, commercial documents and product samples, the same method as letters was used. The Germans expanded their system to Italy, and the Italians expanded their system to Germany. For newspapers, journals, books, printed booklets, sheet music and maps (without announcements and offers), the reduced tariffs from the UPU Convention would be applied if they were lower than the tariffs for the different mailing objects.[493]

Regarding the agreement's provisions, it must be noted that weight systems were not harmonised; rather, each administration kept its own national system. However, if any adaptation was to happen, it was clear that the Italian administration would adapt to the German system. This was not necessarily an expression of hegemony but simply the consequence of Italy choosing the smallest weight categories possible for international postal services, whereas the German administration wanted to apply its wider categories to European postal exchange. The result of an adaptation would have been the same weight category system for domestic and reciprocal postal services in Italy and Germany; thus, these two countries have become one fully integrated postal area for letters up to 1,000 grams. In this regard, national borders would have entirely disappeared between Italy and Germany.

Therefore, the agreement consisted of the adaptation of certain postal tariffs – namely, the expansion of one regime to the other country, but without harmonisation. It was the starting point for a series of bilateral agreements and – as the minutes stated – the model for agreements to follow. This comparison of the different bilateral agreements is in the following chapter. First, the progression of the German-Italian cooperation from October 1941 onwards is examined.

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492 Writer's own translation: "Die italienische Postverwaltung behält sich vor, den eigenen Tarif für Briefe im Verkehr mit Deutschland entsprechend den oben genannten Gewichtsstufen vollkommen anzugleichen, sobald sie in ihrem inneren Dienst das gleiche Gewichtstufensystem einegführt haben wird", Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/25935, Abkommen zwischen der Deutschen Reichspost und der Königl. italienischen Post- und Fernmeldeverwaltung über den Postdienst zwischen dem Deutschen Reich und dem Königreich Italien.

493 Ibid.

In November 1941, Risch discussed the consequences and next steps of the creation of a European postal union with the envoy, Martius, who already had experience negotiating with international organisations. Over the course of his career with the German Foreign Office, Martius had been responsible for negotiations on international navigation and was involved with international inland navigation commissions such as the Central Commission for the Navigation on the Rhine (CCNR).[494] In a meeting that was originally convened to discuss the visits of the Italian and Romanian postal administrations,[495] Risch informed Martius that the *Reichspostminister* wished for the establishment of bilateral agreements to conclude by May 1942. Negotiations with other countries' administrations were already ongoing. The German administration took the lead on this process and would inform the Italian administration before any signings. Then, the Italian administration would decide whether it would also conclude agreements with other European administrations.[496] However, this is not how the minutes signed in October 1941 were formulated. They portrayed the negotiation of the agreements as more of a shared effort rather than a one-sided German initiative. The allies worked at two speeds, and the Italian administration is presented as following the *Reichspost*. From this perspective, the German administration's commitment to keeping its Italian counterpart informed and sending it the text of the agreement (Article 3) appeared more like an assurance between partners who did not necessarily trust each other rather than partners who cooperated to achieve a common goal.

The next topic on the agenda was the postal committee 'as the executing organ of the two-sided agreements'[497]. The details were intended to be discussed for the first time during Host-Venturi's postponed visit in February. However, according to Risch, one detail was certain: the seat of the preliminary committee would be in Berlin.[498] Without question, the choice of headquarters, which constitutes an organisational standard, was politically motivated in this case. Locating the new committee's seat in the capital was intended as a show of importance and power. While other restricted unions had gained importance within the UPU, the committee was the initial step in regaining some of Europe's previous power, with Germany at its head.

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494   *Biographisches Handbuch des deutschen Auswärtigen Dienstes 1871-1945*, Bd. 3, Paderborn 2008, p. 191-192.

495   Both visits had been postponed to the beginning of 1942. (Politisches Archiv, Berlin, R27628, Martius an Dir. Ha. Pol., 08.11.1941.).

496   Politisches Archiv, Berlin, R27628, Martius an Dir. Ha. Pol., 08.11.1941.

497   Writer's own translation: "als ausführendes Organ für die zweiseitigen Abmachungen", ibid.

498   Ibid.

Headquartering the committee in Berlin also showed the importance of postal services for the German administration and the influence that it hoped to obtain. No new committee was created for telecommunications, but the preparatory committee for the postal aspects of the EPTU would also be in Berlin, which was expected to fortify German leadership on PTT in Europe.[499]

Another organisational standard was the question of which language would be used in the new European postal order. Risch's answer also leaves little room for interpretation: the strategy was to leave open this question for as long as possible to enforce the use of German as the main language. The bilateral agreements would be in German or bilingual.[500] It is clear that the German administration (seemingly with the agreement of the Foreign Ministry) planned to express its hegemony through the choice of language. It was practical for the administration to have everyone speak its members' mother tongue; it also gave them a negotiation advantage and mirrored the geopolitical power of the Third Reich at the time. Language choices are never apolitical or technical, and this could be seen in the months following the German-Italian discussions and negotiations. Indeed, the cooperation became more conflicted.

In January 1942, the Italian minister of transport, Host-Venturi, was with a delegation in Berlin, Munich and Vienna. The head of postal services, Pession, was also part of the delegation. The German staff that the delegation met with consisted mostly of individuals who have already been mentioned in this work, such as Ohnesorge, Nagel, Risch, Köhn, Gladenbeck and Löffler.[501] The trip's programme was dominated by events that allowed the *Reichspost* to demonstrate its organisation and expertise; the most prominent staff training centre, Zeesen, and several postal offices were part of the agenda. Notably, there were also political stops, such as NSDAP houses and sites of the *Nationalsozialistische Kraftfahrkorps* (NSKK), where fallen members of the NSKK were commemorated.[502] According to the consulate general in Vienna, the Viennese press covered the Italian delegation's stay quite intensively.[503] The itinerary also indicates that there was a

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499 Ibid.
500 Ibid.
501 Archivio storico-diplomatico del Ministero degli Affari Esteri, Roma, Repubblica Sociale Italiana 1943-1945, Busta 13, Reichspostminister an die Kgl. Italienische Botschaft, 29.12.1941.
502 Archivio storico-diplomatico del Ministero degli Affari Esteri, Roma, Repubblica Sociale Italiana 1943-1945, Busta 131, Itinerario, 08.01.1942.
503 Archivio storico-diplomatico del Ministero degli Affari Esteri, Roma, Repubblica Sociale Italiana 1943-1945, Busta 13, Telespresso N. 255, 13.01.1942.

scheduled meeting with the *Reichspostminister* to discuss the 'work of the European committee of the postal union'.[504] It is possible that it concerned the postal committee, which, according to the agreement, was intended to be established. Although this topic was meant to be discussed during the visit, according to Risch, no further information was found.

In April 1942, Risch informed Martius that – after the conclusion of bilateral agreements with other European administrations – the *Reichspostministerium* wanted to convene 'the European postal union as a collective committee'.[505] To this end, the type of organisation was scheduled to be discussed with Italian representatives at the end of April.[506] A meeting in Berlin was ultimately arranged on 7 May 1942. On the German side, the entire team of the *Reichspostministerium*'s Foreign Department was present: Risch, Reiss and Ziesche. The appointee of the *Reichspost* abroad for Italy, Löffler, was also present. The Italian delegation consisted of new names, except for Dr. Vasio,[507] who had already appeared in the documents related to the ICL.[508]

Risch began the meeting by acknowledging Host-Venturi's remarks on the bilateral German-Italian agreements in the journal *Autarchia*, which he designated as 'a landmark example for the transport political association of the European countries'.[509] He reported that Germany had concluded bilateral agreements with the Netherlands, Finland and Denmark and was close to doing so with Romania, Croatia, Hungary and Slovakia. Negotiations were ongoing with Bulgaria, and talks with Switzerland and Spain had been initiated. Risch announced plans to begin discussions with Belgium and France and commented that an agreement with Spain would lead to one with Portugal. The content of these agreements was the same as that of the

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504   Writer's own translation: "lavori del Comitato europeo dell'Union postale", Archivio storico-diplomatico del Ministero degli Affari Esteri, Roma, Repubblica Sociale Italiana 1943-1945, Busta 131, Itinerario, 08.01.1942.

505   Writer's own translation: "den europäischen Postverein als kollektiven Ausschuss", Politisches Archiv, Berlin, R27634, Aufzeichnung wegen des Europäischen Postvereins, 11.04.1942.

506   Politisches Archiv, Berlin, R27634, Aufzeichnung wegen des Europäischen Postvereins, 11.04.1942.

507   Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/25935, Niederschrift über die deutsch-italienischen Besprechungen in Berlin (Reichspostministerium), 07.05.1941.

508   Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/13658, Vermerk Ref Cn, 17.11.1941.

509   Writer's own translation: "ein richtungsweisendes Beispiel für den verkehrspolitischen Zusammenschluß der Länder Europas", Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/25935, Niederschrift über die deutsch-italienischen Besprechungen in Berlin (Reichspostministerium), 07.05.1941.

German-Italian agreement. After this report, the German delegation presented its Italian counterpart with the May edition of the German journal *Postarchiv* for more information. The Italian administration also gave a report on its activities. Its representatives explained that the Italian administration's plan was to start with countries that located close to Italy before contacting the countries that Germany had agreements with. Therefore, contact with the Slovakian, Bulgarian and Romanian administrations had been established; by the date of the meeting, only the Slovakian administration had replied. An agreement with Croatia had already been concluded but would only go into effect once it had been adapted to the German-Croatian agreement.[510] As shown in the next chapter, the content of these bilateral agreements was not identical to that of the German-Italian agreement; differences can be found particularly with regard to the core of the agreements: new pricing for letters and the abolition of the transit charge. Regarding the pace of the concluded agreements, it is clear that the German *Reichspost* took the lead, as Risch aspired to do. On the Italian side, only an Italian-Croatian agreement had been concluded, but it had to be changed to fit to the German-Croatian template.

A discussion about bilateral package services followed. The German administration wanted greater simplification than its Italian counterpart. Thus, an agreement was postponed until after the issue was re-examined by the Italian administration.[511] The delegations further discussed the development of their bilateral agreements. For postal services, this included the area of package services and new talks about the abolition of the transit charge. Neither discussion appears to have ended in a decision. Regarding the abolition of the transit charge, the Italian delegation explained that Italy was 'the bridge to the middle [European]countries, the Orient and so forth'[512], and that abolition would lead to high financial losses. When the German delegation argued that the aim of establishing a European postal union had to be prioritised over national interests, the Italian delegation remarked that this far-reaching question would surpass their mandate and they had to wait for the Director General, Pession, to arrive.[513]

These glimpses into the discussions show that the German delegation pushed for more integration and the reduction of prices and that the Italian delegation was more hesitant and did not have the authority to make certain

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510   Ibid.
511   Ibid.
512   Writer's own translation: "die Brücke nach den Mittelländern, dem Orient und so weiter", ibid.
513   Ibid.

decisions, which placed them in a less powerful position. The two partners did not collaborate on the same idea; rather, one side did not entirely agree with the other's measures.

After discussing telecommunication matters, Risch ended the meeting by remarking that the European Postal Union 'should be a union of the European PTT administrations within the framework of the Universal Postal and the International Telecommunications Union'.[514] The conclusion of the agreement was foreseen for autumn of the same year; the agreement would be an international treaty signed by representatives of the government and would only encompass the union's organisational statutes. Regulations for postal services and telecommunications were to be elaborated by the administrations, which would 'naturally'[515] take longer. The important aspect would not be parliamentary voting, but the landmark initiative of the two Axis powers acting by mutual agreement. A first draft of the statutes was presented.[516]

The fact that the portion of the meeting that revolved around the European postal union appears to have been entirely dominated by a report by Risch indicates the dynamics between the Axis powers on this subject. The minutes do not even document the Italian side's reaction to Risch's remark. It is also notable that, at the time, the plan was still to establish the union via a state treaty, which would have moved the project much further into the political sphere than an administrative agreement. As a result, more non-technical actors would have been involved in the project, which would have entirely run counter to technocratic goals, although specific technical and administrative questions would have remained in the hands of experts. It is unfortunate that the first draft of the statutes is not included in the sources because it would have enabled an analysis of the envisioned organisational standards in June 1942.

At the end of June 1942, the undersecretary of the Italian postal ministry, Marinelli, announced a 10-day visit to Berlin, which caused the rescheduling of Risch's negotiation programme. Marinelli referred to an alleged invitation and was said to have good relations with the Duce.[517] However, no further information about this trip was found. The next meeting was planned

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514 Writer's own translation: "solle einen Zusammenschluß der europäischen Post-
     und Fernmeldeverwaltungen im Rahmen des Weltpost- und des Weltnachrich-
     tenvereins darstellen", ibid.
515 Writer's own translation: "naturgemäß", ibid.
516 Ibid.
517 Politisches Archiv, Berlin, R 106301, Martius an Dir. Ha. Pol, 23.06.1942.

for 20 July, but the Italian side cancelled it on 14 July. The Italian and German representatives were also scheduled to discuss the European postal union and the draft version of the protocol in the abovementioned version of the *Reichspost* and the Foreign Ministry.[518] As shown in the discussion on the agreement and the meeting in June, tensions loomed, but this cancellation in July 1942 represents the first open conflict between the two Axis partners on the matter of the European postal union.

According to the *Reichspost*'s appointee to Italy, Löffler, the Italian government did not want to hold any further talks about the postal union. The Italian Foreign Ministry was said to be disgruntled by the growing number of initiatives from technical departments, which were not allowed to negotiate questions of political importance without its participation or 'explicit authorisation'.[519] It viewed the negotiations about a European postal union as premature:

> particularly, it has not been resolved whether it is practical to found a European or a global union; the existence of independent states after the end of the war cannot yet be assessed, and additionally, there is no urgent need because international postal relations continued smoothly due to the old universal postal union.[520]

When confronted with the fact that the Duce had confirmed that the bilateral agreement was the first step towards a European postal union, the ambassador, Giannini, answered that this could not be interpreted as a commitment to a foundation 'because the Duce was surely not aware of the questions to be solved'[521]. It would appear that Löffler suspected that the Italians' attitude was related to negotiations about a Greek radio station that had been inconvenient for them. However, the ambassador to Italy, von Mackensen, suggested that, in addition to independent initiatives conducted by technical departments, the Italian Foreign Ministry wanted to avoid 'international agreements where Italy is in a minority against Germany and third states

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518   Politisches Archiv, Berlin, R 106301, an Dir. Ha Pol, 23.07.1942.

519   Writer's own translation: "ausdrückliche Ermächtigung", Politisches Archiv, Berlin, R 106301, Telegramm Mackensen, 16.07.1942.

520   Writer's own translation: "zumal nicht geklärt sei, ob es zweckmäßig sei, europäische Vereinigung oder Weltvereinigung zu gründen, Bestehen selbstständiger Staaten nach Kriegsende noch keineswegs zu übersehen sei und überdies keine dringende Notwendigkeit bestehe, da internationale postalische Beziehungen auf Grund alten Weltpostvereins reibungslos weiter", ibid.

521   Writer's own translation: "da Duce sich sicher nicht vorher zu klärender Fragen bewusst gewesen sei", ibid.

belonging to the German living space and being under German influence'.[522] The German Foreign Ministry only decided to intervene when Host-Venturi could not allay doubts presented by the Italian Foreign Ministry. It explained its strictly internal interventions until that point by the fact that the *Reichspost* had a long-standing privilege that dated to the time of Heinrich von Stephan and that the smooth advancement of the project could only be approved from a foreign policy perspective.[523] The situation was ultimately resolved through the cancellation of the planned meeting with other administrations scheduled for the 25 July 1942, but Host-Venturi allowed a meeting between Pession and Risch in Cortina at the end of July. However, no minutes or other information about this meeting could be found. Nevertheless, it was so successful that the cancelled meeting between four administrations (Germany, Italy, Denmark and Hungary) was rescheduled for the beginning of August in Innsbruck. Though it was led by four parties, the report on the meeting mainly focuses on German-Italian issues. Additionally, it is difficult to separate the issues discussed in Cortina and Innsbruck. Thus, the results of the meetings are presented below.

Two types of issues were discussed: questions of equality between the Axis partners and organisational matters. Concerning Germany and Italy's equal standing, Director General Pession emphasised the Italians' wish to add Italian as an official language of the congress, where the issue should be decided. Additionally, the next congress had to take place in Rome, and the *Reichspost* had to 'finally'[524] assure this. The Italian representative had not been given the authority to deliberate on the protocol draft. The Italian side stopped resisting the swift implementation of the new organisation and agreed to the *Reichspostminister*'s proposal to also invite other administrations to the congress on behalf of the Italian PTT administration. Regarding organisational matters, it was agreed that the congress would last 14 days; that opening speeches would be given by the *Reichspostminister*, the mayor of Vienna and the president, according to seniority; and that the invitation would be sent by the middle of August to allow all administrations to submit proposals. The German Foreign Ministry advised against using overly precise formulations in the invitation to the postal congress. Pession agreed to Vienna being the official seat of the future union. The number and type of

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522 Writer's own translation: "internationalen Vereinbarungen, in denen Italien gegenüber Deutschland und dritten zu deutschem Lebensraum gehörenden und unter deutschen Einfluß stehenden Staaten sich in der Minorität befindet", ibid.
523 Politisches Archiv, Berlin, R 106301, Telegramm Wiehl, 17.07.1942.
524 Writer's own translation: "endlich", Politisches Archiv, Berlin, R 106301, Aufzeichnung zum Stand der Frage des Europäischen Postvereins, 08.08.1942.

committees was determined, as well as the countries whose representatives would serve as presidents. The vice-presidencies were intended to be distributed among the participating administrations. Spain would have the vice-presidency for the entire congress.[525]

These developments show that (1) the relationship between the Italian PTT administrations and the Foreign Ministry was conflicted and (2) the conflicts between the Axis partners at a higher political level nearly ended the EPTU planning. It is possible that the Italian Foreign Ministry only forced its PTT administration to cancel the meeting because it wanted to pressure the German side to establish a more egalitarian regime. This reinforces the idea that the relationship was not one of trust and that the Italian Foreign Ministry did not perceive that the Germans treated the Italians as equals. This inequality between the Axis partners is a clear theme throughout the preparation process. Regarding organisational and administrative-operative standards and tariffs, the *Reichspost* wanted European postal services to be integrated more deeply than the Italian administration did. The integration was to happen under German rule. The Italians' demand to have an equal seat at the table altered the standards in favour of a more egalitarian relationship, but it did not entirely create balance between the partners.

Regarding other decisions made during these last meetings, the number of committees and the countries that took over the presidency would remain the same until October.[526] Instead of the mayor of Vienna, the Italian minister of transport spoke at the opening of the congress;[527] this reflects a stronger equality – at least symbolically – between the Axis partner than the list of speakers set out in July 1942. The vice-president of the congress was not from Spain; evidently, a larger role was envisioned for the Spanish administration, but it was not as enthusiastic about the plans as anticipated. This is also evidenced by the fact that the aforementioned negotiation of a German-Spanish bilateral agreement did not take place.[528] Against the *Reichspost*'s expectations, Portugal did not wish to participate. A final decision had also not been made about invited and non-invited countries, as described in the next chapter. In summary, political decisions (e.g., the selection of countries to invite, official languages and opening speakers) were not necessarily long-lasting, whereas decisions about PTT expertise (e.g., committees and invitation dates) proved to be more enduring. This result is

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525   Ibid.
526   Therefore, the committee's presidency will be presented in its entirety in the Chapter I of Part II in order to avoid repetitions.
527   Europäischer Postkongress, p. 16-20.
528   The Spanish case will be discussed further in the next section.

unsurprising, as technocratic cooperation had been tested and institutionalised for decades. By contrast, the political handling of international congresses during Germany's occupation of many European countries was a novel situation and further complicated by a lack of clarity regarding the vision for the 'New Europe' and the individual roles that different states would play. The meetings in Cortina and Innsbruck at the end of the German-Italian meeting cycle paved the way for the EPTU, while further preparatory tasks were addressed through diplomatic channels.

Chapter III: From bilateral to multilateral – making the initiative 'European' (1941-1942)

After examining preparations within the German *Reichspostministerium* and between the German and Italian PTT administrations, a third and simultaneous thread requires analysis: the German *Reichspostministerium*'s contacts with other European administrations. As shown in Table 1, Risch claimed to have discussed plans for a European postal union with Russian representatives in the spring of 1940. However, no further information on the content of this meeting is available. The first contact with a foreign administration can be traced to July 1941; it is important to underline that this occurred before Risch's meeting with Italian representatives about the union in August 1941 and the German-Italian agreement in October 1941. Thus, the *Reichspost* had already been working on the EPTU before gaining the full support of the Italian PTT administration, which further evidences the inequality of the Axis partnership.

In anticipation of the European postal congress in October 1942, the German *Reichspost*, particularly Dr. Friedrich Risch and his department, made extensive efforts to conclude postal agrements with potential member PTT administrations, starting with Italy. Ultimately, 10 bilateral agreements were signed before the congress. This process mirrored the approach taken to create the UPU in 1874 and the GAPU in 1851, in which the initiatives' main champion signed one agreement after another with the administrations that would later become members of the union.[529] It is possible that this mechanism was copied not only because it was practical but also because the idea of creating a European postal union fit into the idea of long-term development and a specific 'German' trajectory. Thus, a direct line between Heinrich von Stephan's efforts and the work of the *Reichspost* is evident.

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529   Benz, Integration von Infrastrukturen, p. 68.

It can be assumed that the *Reichspost*'s approach to address the proposal of a bilateral agreement and the possibility of the creation of a European postal union varied depending on the country's status. For instance, in the case of Belgium[530] and as will be shown later for the case of France, the contact was established through the *Armeefeldpostmeister*. There is also evidence that the appointees of the *Reichspost* abroad were informed before the first official letter from the *Reichspostminister* to the respective administration was sent[531]. Interestingly, the wording in these internal German letters and the letters to the PTT administrations was similar[532]. Unfortunately, not all the letters have been preserved, but it can be reasonably expected that they were all comparable. One difference is that in the letter to the Slovakian PTT administration the fight against Bolshevism is mentioned[533], which is not the case in the letter to the Belgian administration[534]. This might be due to specific national contexts. The reasoning for the initiative for bilateral agreements in the letters was that the current war would have necessitated a narrower economic and cultural cooperation between the peoples of Europe which in turn meant that the PTT administration had to provide an even better working communication system. The latter could only be established through common standards. The Reichpostminsister argued that this could only be achieved through a restricted PTT union in Europe.[535] This is of course the repetition of an already mentioned technocratic argument. The letter continued by a description of the next steps towards this union by the *Reichspost* – one being the series of bilateral agreements – and ended on the offer to negotiate such an agreement[536].

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530 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/11615, Abschrift Fernschreiben SS 18/06 308, 18.06.1942.
531 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/11623, Reichspostminister an den Reichskommissar für die besetzten norwegischen Gebiete, 12.12.1941.
532 Cf. ibid.; Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/11615, Reichspostminister an die Generaldirektion der belgischen Posten, 21.08.1942; and Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/11627, Reichspostminister an das Ministerium für Verkehr und öffentliche Arbeiten, Postverwaltung, 03.03.1942.
533 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/11627, Reichspostminister an das Ministerium für Verkehr und öffentliche Arbeiten, Postverwaltung, 03.03.1942.
534 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/11615, Reichspostminister an die Generaldirektion der belgischen Posten, 21.08.1942.
535 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/11627, Reichspostminister an das Ministerium für Verkehr und öffentliche Arbeiten, Postverwaltung, 03.03.1942.
536 Ibid.

Bilateral agreements as a tool of integrating the occupied and dependent countries into the EPTU

Several general observations can be made about the negotiated agreements.[537] First, except for the agreement with the Italian PTT administration, they were only between the German *Reichspost* and the PTT administration of states occupied by Germany. No agreements were signed with member administrations of two states: Albania and San Marino. Both were occupied by Italy at the time, and the Italian PTT administration was thus responsible for concluding preliminary agreements. There were no agreements with non-occupied states, although not for lack of trying; the German *Reichspost* unsuccessfully proposed similar accords to the PTT administrations of Switzerland and Spain.[538] Second, some agreements were signed after the congress but did not lead to membership in the EPTU. This was the case for the Belgian and likely French PTT[539] administrations.[540] This finding indicates the influence of geopolitics on the EPTU's genesis. Third, the agreements all greatly resembled each other in terms of conclusion, structure, wording and contents. In this section, their similarities and differences are identified and examined, including general aspects, agreed-upon tariffs, and other specifications.

The following features were addressed under 'general aspects': the conclusion and structure of the agreements, references to the convention of the UPU, tariff freedom in the administrations' exchanges and language provisions. The agreements all had a similar structure; often, the same content and formulation could be found under the same articles.[541]

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537   Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/25935, Bilaterale Abkommen.
538   Politisches Archiv, Berlin, R106301, Martius an Dir. Ha. Pol., 05.09.1942 and Archivo General de la Administracion, Alcala de Henares, 82/08588, Verbalnote, 05.08.1942.
539   Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/25935, Abkommen zwischen der Deutschen Reichspost und der Belgischen Postverwaltung über den Postdienst zwischen dem Deutschen Reich und Belgien, 22.11.1942.
540   In the case of Serbia, only a table of charges could be found. This table of charges aligns with the ones of the other accords. Thus, it remains unsure whether an agreement was concluded but it seems as though the Serbian-German postal relations had been standardized according to the model of the EPTU.
541   Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/25935, Bilaterale Abkommen.

Article	Content
1	Universal Postal Union convention applies unless otherwise specified
2	Tariff table and specification
3[542]	Tariff freedom within the postal exchange of telegraph affairs
4	Abolition of transit charges
Second to last article	Entry into force, period of validity and period of notice
Last article	Languages
	Other specifications

Table 3: The Structure of the Bilateral Agreements

As the table above shows, the first article of the agreement scheme always referred to the convention of the UPU. Strictly speaking, the article accounted for the fact that UPU provisions already existed. These were intended to be applied if the bilateral agreement did not stipulate otherwise.[543] The exact same formulation was used in all the concluded agreements. The reasoning behind this appears logical. First, the bilateral agreements did not regulate every aspect of international postal services. Second, officials from the German *Reichspost* had repeatedly emphasised that the EPTU was only a restricted union of the UPU. Thus, this reference was inevitable.

Another general aspect concerns tariff freedom over postal exchanges in the administrations' telecommunication affairs. Essentially, this provision guaranteed that the telecommunications administrations or the parts of the administration that addressed international telecommunications relations

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542 In the majority of the agreements. When there were other specifications, this article usually followed these specifications, ibid.

543 Exact formulation: "Im Postdienst zwischen dem Deutschen Reich und (…) [insert other country here] gelten die jeweiligen Vorschriften des Weltpostvertrags und der Nebenabkommen nebst den zugehörigen Vollzugsordnungen, soweit durch die nachstehenden Bestimmungen oder spätere Vereinbarungen nichts anderes festgesetzt ist", ibid.

could exchange letters free of charge.[544] Every PTT administration agreed to this; only the agreement with the Norwegian postal administration did not contain this provision because postal and telecommunication affairs in Norway had not been merged under the responsibility of a single administration. Rather, there were two separate administrations: one in charge of postal affairs and the other in charge of telecommunications.[545]

Furthermore, the agreements always contained a date of entry into force and specified the period of validity and notice. The agreement remained valid for as long as no party terminated it. To withdraw from the agreement, a three-month notice had to be sent to the other administration.[546] Finally, except for the Belgian-German agreement,[547] the bilateral agreements were all issued in the official languages of the contracting PTT administrations.

In an additional protocol to the German-Finnish agreement, the Finnish PTT administration declared that it would be open to signing similar agreements with other European administrations conditional on the agreement of the Finnish government.[548] In September 1942, the Finnish administration signed an agreement with the Dutch PTT administration that abolished the transit charge for postal services between the two countries.[549] This is notable because the German-Finnish agreement was the first bilateral agreement to be signed after the German-Italian one. However, there are no additional indications that the integration of European postal services was a common effort among more administrations. The bilateral abolition of the transit charge was generally rendered superfluous with the founding of the EPTU in October 1942.

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544 Exact formulation: "Der Schriftwechsel zwischen beiden Verwaltungen und ihren Dienststellen in Fernmeldeangelegenheiten wird im wechselseitigen Dienst gebührenfrei befördert", Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/25935, Bilaterale Abkommen.
545 Europäischer Postkongress, p. 72.
546 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/25935, Bilaterale Abkommen.
547 The agreement was only valid in German. (Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/25935, Abkommen zwischen der Deutschen Reichspost und der Belgischen Postverwaltung über den Postdienst zwischen dem Deutschen Reich und Belgien, 22.11.1942).
548 Posti- ja Lennätinhallituksen Kiertokirjekokoelma, Sisälly No. 58, 1942, p. 4, Zusatzprotokoll zu den Abkommen zwischen der Deutschen Reichspost und der Finnischen Post- und Telegraphenverwaltung vom 12. Dezember 1941.
549 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/25935, Abkommen zwischen der Finnischen Pots- und Telegraphenverwaltung und der niederländischen Staatspost über den Wegfall der Landdurchgangsgebühren der Briefsendungen, 06.10.1942.

As tariffs (especially transit charges) were an important source of income not only for the PTT administrations but also the countries themselves, it is important to discuss this topic separately from other aspects of the agreements. Moreover, for international postal administrations, tariffs were and continue to be central in facilitating and lowering the cost of postal traffic. Thus, the abolition of transit charges was one of the key aims of German negotiations, as this meant the creation of a single postal territory. Furthermore, it was a continuation of the work of Heinrich von Stephan, a key actor in the creation of the UPU. This was the basis of the idea that the EPTU was directly linked to the UPU, which could have been used to legitimise the EPTU and the reduction of tariffs within the union. The aim may have been to create the impression of the EPTU as a technocratic project rather than a political one, both to other national administrations that had worked towards this goal with the German administration since 1874 and to the *Auswärtige Amt,* whose consent was essential for the creation of the EPTU. Finally, the tariffs established in these bilateral agreements would later be applied within the EPTU.

The current section is divided into two parts. First, the tariff tables in the agreements and the set prices are discussed. Second, the question of whether the *Reichspost* was successful in abolishing the transit charge in bilateral postal services is addressed.

Generally, the tariff tables in the agreements encompassed letters, postcards (with and without a reply), printed materials, business papers, samples, mixed post and journals.[550] For printed materials, business papers, samples and mixed post, the administrations agreed to use national tariffs for intrastate services;[551] for journals, the UPU's reduced tariffs were applied. Thus, the transit charge for the abovementioned objects was abolished. However, the analysis must end here since prices were not further specified.

By contrast, the agreements went further than the UPU Convention's provisions at the time for letters and postcards. In UPU Convention, the price per weight for letters increased in 20g increments.[552] The bilateral agreements – except for the German-Italian agreement – set new categories of 0–20g, 20–250g, 250–500g and 500–1,000g. For weights above 1,000g, the UPU provisions applied. The aim was to facilitate and accelerate the administrative process because the post office clerk would no longer have

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550   Plus other type of prints in some agreements.
551   This means that the prices were not harmonised but all administrations treated the other country as inland.
552   So up to 20g, 40g, 60g, 80g and so on.

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to weigh every letter on the scale but could simply decide on the weight category based on weighing by hand. As previously mentioned, setting equivalent prices with the Italian administration was less successful because the German and Italian systems differed and could not be harmonised. This was different for other administrations. When examining the tariffs in the bilateral agreements, irregularities regarding the set national equivalents to the German tariffs become visible for countries where the exchange rate could be determined.[553]

Several difficulties arise when attempting to analyse the national equivalents of German tariffs despite exchange rates between Germany and other countries being set at a single rate after 1941.[554] An exchange rate could not be found for all the countries to compare the equivalents actually set in the agreements to the equivalents which would have resulted from a simple rule of three. Additionally, the calculations did not always yield exact prices; thus, the administrations had to round them to whole numbers. Setting tariffs also depended on the stamps produced until that point in the relevant country, as the tariffs had to match the face value of the stamps. Thus, equivalent rates had to be set for each country, and this process did not appear to be standardised.

This explains why there appears to be no system for comparing the setting of different prices. In the case of the Netherlands, the difference between calculated prices and real prices is not pertinent. With one exception, the deviation was always higher rather than lower.

	Germany (*Reichspfennig*)	Netherlands (cents)	Exchange rate	Difference
Letters			0.7536[555]	
Up to 20g	12.0	10	9.04	0.96
20-250g	24.0	20	18.09	1.91
250-500g	40.0	30	30.14	-0.14

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553 For some countries, the exchange rate between the *Reichsmark* and the national currency could not be found.

554 Länderrat des amerikanischen Satzungsgebiets: *Statistisches Handbuch von Deutschland. 1928-1944*, München 1949, p. 526.

555 Ibid.

	Germany (*Reichspfennig*)	Nether-lands (cents)	Exchange rate	Difference
500-1,000g	60.0	50	45.21	4.79
Postcards				
Without reply	6.0	5	4.52	0.48
With reply	12.0	10	9.04	0.96

Table 4: Comparison between Calculated and Set Prices in the Agreement between the German and the Dutch Postal Administrations

The cases of Norway and Denmark are similar. However, the two administrations chose to lower prices in the first two weight categories, which were also the most frequently used. In addition, the difference between calculated and real prices is higher than for the Netherlands.

	Germany (*Reichspfennig*)	Nor-way (*Öre*)	Ex-change rate	Differ-ence	Den-mark (*Öre*)	Ex-change rate	Dif-fer-ence
Letters			1.7599			1.9	
Up to 20g	12.0	20	21.12	-1.12	20.0	23.1	-3.1
20-250g	24.0	40	42.24	-2.24	40.0	46.2	-6.2
250-500g	40.0	80	70.40	9.60	80.0	77.0	3.0
500-1,000g	60.0	120	105.60	14.40	120.0	115.5	4.5
Postcards							
Without reply	6.0	15	10.56	4.44	15.0	11.5	3.5
With reply	12.0	30	21.12	8.88	30.0	23.1	6.9

Table 5: Comparison between Calculated and Set Prices in the Agreement between the German and the Norwegian as well as the Danish Postal Administrations

Exchange rates for the other countries could not be verified. Nevertheless, it is possible to see that the set tariffs did not significantly differ from the calculated ones. Overall, the prices appeared to be higher than what would have resulted from a simple calculation. This is especially the case for higher weight categories. However, such letters were sent less frequently than those in lighter weight categories; thus, for the more important category of letters, the tariffs were more or less equal throughout the envisioned European postal area.

It is important to consider these differences between tariffs because they were directly transferred to tariffs within the EPTU. Since Germany had concluded most of the bilateral agreements, the EPTU agreement's entry into force would not mean as much change for the *Reichspost* than for the other administrations. On the contrary, these agreements guaranteed the *Reichspost* the same conditions in advance. The same applies for other administrations with regard to postal services with Germany. In addition, these differences demonstrate that the unified postal area that experts sought would ultimately remain heterogeneous because users in different countries did not pay the same prices.

The abolition of the transit charge was one of the key aims of the German administration. The bilateral agreements were intended to lead the way in this regard. Based on the agreements concluded before the congress, five administrations agreed to abolish the tariff: Denmark, Finland, the Netherlands, Norway and Slovakia.[556] Denmark and Finland had originally only agreed to a reduction of the tariff.[557] Both administrations were asked whether they would consider fully abolishing it; the *Reichspost*'s argument was that other European administrations had agreed to do so,[558] an approach that can be described as peer pressure. It was successful, as the Danish and Finnish administrations relinquished the transit charge in postal services with Germany in August 1942.[559]

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556 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/25935, Bilaterale Abkommen.
557 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/25935, Abkommen zwischen der Deutschen Reichspost und der Finnischen Post- und Telegraphenverwaltung, 12.12.1942, Abkommen zwischen der Deutschen Reichspost und der Königlichen Dänischen Post- und Telegraphenverwaltung, 01.06.1942.
558 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/11616, Reichspostminister an die Generaldirektion des Dänischen Königlichen Post- und Telegraphenwesens, 05.06.1942.
559 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/11616, Reichspostminister an die Generaldirektion des Dänischen Königlichen Post- und Telegraphenwesens, 22.08.1942, Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/25935, Abkommen über

However, there is no evidence of such an agreement with the other five administrations. Most importantly, as described in the previous chapter, the issue was not mentioned at all in the German-Italian agreement. The same holds for the German-Romanian agreement. With Bulgaria,[560] Croatia[561] and Hungary,[562] the tariff was lowered by 50%. This shows that the *Reichspost*'s success rate was only 50%. The fact that its most important partner, Italy, did not agree on this issue meant that there was still an obstacle to overcome regarding the abolishment of the transit charge during the congress.

The agreements with the Croatian, Danish, Hungarian and Dutch administrations included additional specifications that do not appear to be of interest for the current work. Documents related to the negotiation of these agreements are also missing, which makes it difficult to determine whether these additional standards were important. For Croatia, the additional specification concerned letters with contents that were subject to duties[563] and the division of transit charges for packages from one country to another.[564] This may have been necessary because Croatia only ratified the UPU Convention in May 1941; the state had only been established in April 1941.[565] The German-Danish agreement stipulated that provisions from the 1879 agreement on postal services in the closer border region would become invalid by the end of May 1942.[566] This is logical insofar as the border lost its role due to the harmonisation of weight categories and tariffs and the subsequent abolition of the transit charge. The German-Hungarian agreement contained additional standards regarding the size of postcards and contents

eine Änderung des Abkommens über den Postdienst zwischen der Deutschen Reichspost und der Finnischen Post- und Telegraphenverwaltung, 26.08.1942.

560 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/25935, Abkommen zwischen der Deutschen Reichspost und der Königlichen Bulgarischen Post- und Telegraphenverwaltung, Artikel 5-9, 01.07.1942.

561 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/25935, Abkommen zwischen der Deutschen Reichspost und der Kroatischen Postverwaltung, 01.06.1942.

562 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/25935, Abkommen zwischen der Deutschen Reichspost und der Königlichen Ungarischen Postverwaltung, 01.07.1942.

563 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/25935, Abkommen zwischen der Deutschen Reichspost und der Kroatischen Postverwaltung, Artikel 3, 01.06.1942.

564 Ibid.

565 Nezavisna država hrvatska, Međunarodni ugorovi, 1941, Notification No. 31/41, 26.05.1941, p. 65-66.

566 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/25935, Abkommen zwischen der Deutschen Reichspost und der Königlichen Dänischen Post- und Telegraphenverwaltung, Artikel 3, 01.06.1942.

that were subject to duty and packages. Like the Danish case, the agreement invalidated a previous agreement from 1926 between the German and Hungarian administrations.[567] The German-Dutch agreement concerned product samples and the invalidation of reduced charges for letters in the closer border region stipulated in an agreement from 1898.[568] The last specification mirrored the one in the Danish agreement, which reiterates the reduced role of borders due to the new agreements.

The agreements between the *Reichspost* and other national PTT administrations were made public not only in official bulletins but also newspaper announcements. The *Neue Zürcher Zeitung,* for instance, reported on the German-Bulgarian agreement;[569] the *Frankfurter Zeitung*, the *Deutsche Bergwerks Zeitung* and the *Kölnische Zeitung* reported on the bilateral agreement with Denmark;[570] and the *Nachrichten für Außenhandel* announced new tariffs for German-Finnish postal services.[571] The *Popolo d'Italia* informed reported on the negotiations on parcel handling between the German and Italian administrations as a continuation of the coverage on the bilateral agreement.[572]

This section analysed bilateral agreements concluded between the *Reichspost* and other European administrations in preparation for the congress. While their overall structure is similar, national differences appeared in the agreements in the form of additional articles or paragraphs. In addition, in most of the agreements, the tariffs were not entirely set through calculations based on the exchange rate; national conditions were also considered. The German weight categories and tariffs were used as the base model which other administrations adapted to, demonstrating German hegemony. Although the Italian administration did not adopt the German system in the bilateral agreement, it would more or less be forced to do so if it wanted to be part of the European postal area. Overall, standardisation was

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567 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/25935, Abkommen zwischen der Deutschen Reichspost und der Königlichen Ungarischen Postverwaltung, 01.07.1942.

568 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/25935, Abkommen zwischen der Deutschen Reichspost und der Niederländischen Staatspost, Artikel 3-4, 01.09.1942.

569 PTT Archiv, Bern, P-00C_0108_01, Neue Zürcher Zeitung, 11.09.194.2

570 PTT Archiv, Bern, P-00C_0108_01, Der Postverkehr mit Dänemark, 08.05.1942; ohne Titel, 10.05.1942; Inlandsgebühren im Postverkehr mit Dänemark, 08.05.1942.

571 PTT Archiv, Bern, P-00C_0108_01, Postverkehr, Deutsches Reich – Neue Gebühren für Briefsendungen nach Finnland, 06.03.1942.

572 PTT Archiv, Bern, P-00C_0108_01, Servizio di pacchetti postali con la Germania, 02.03.1942.

achieved by exporting the German model to other countries. However, the Germans' mission to abolish the transit charge before the congress was less successful; only five out of 10 administrations agreed to do so, three agreed to reduce it and – most importantly – Italy did not agree to any reduction. Thus, the agreements played a major role in determining standards later set within the EPTU; for example, tariffs that were bilaterally agreed-upon later became multilaterally valid. However, with regard to the transit charge, standardisation was not as extensive as in other aspects of postal services.

The descriptions of the bilateral agreements might suggest that the negotiations were free of political issues and entirely focused on standardisation. However, for bilateral agreements to be signed with the Hungarian and Slovakian PTT administrations, a bilateral agreement between these two administrations had to first be concluded. As transit countries, both Hungary and Slovakia wanted to ensure that their geographical situation would not be used to their financial disadvantage.[573] Thus, Risch urged the Hungarian PTT administration to initiate talks with its Slovakian counterpart.[574] Moreover, negotiations on the bilateral agreements enabled other aspects of PTT cooperation to be discussed. For example, the head of the Romanian PTT administration, Colonel Gheorghe Teodorescu, and the responsible minister, Constantin Bușilă, underlined the need for technical equipment from Germany and obtained the *Reichspost*'s support in this matter.[575] The ongoing war and the fact that the abovementioned countries were all occupied by Germany also raised additional issues. For instance, the Danish government did not want to sign the agreement in Berlin but rather in Copenhagen,[576] potentially out of concern that signing the treaty in Berlin would create the impression of active Danish cooperation with the Third Reich to the outside world and the Danish public. After all, Denmark also had a government-in-exile in London. Aditionally. Denmark was part of the Nordic Postal Union, which the German *Reichspost* wanted to render superfluous through the creation of the EPTU.[577]

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573 Politisches Archiv, Berlin, R106301, Aufzeichnung Martius, 10.03.1942.
574 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/11627, Risch an Generaldirektion der Post, 12.05.1942.
575 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/11625, Vereinbarung, 29.11.1941.
576 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R901/68147, Aufzeichnung Martius, 10.03.1942.
577 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/11623, Reichspostminister (gez. Nagel) an den Reichskommissar für die besetzten norwegischen Gebiete Gauleiter Terboven, 12.12.1941.

Figure 1: Bilateral agreements (1941-1942); Green: Countries involved in bi-lateral agreements.[578]

Political aspects also hindered further attempts to include other administrations in the European postal union. With regard to occupied countries under military administration, the *Reichspost* wrote to the administrations of Belgium, France, Greece and Serbia. In addition, the administrations of Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and Turkey were contacted. A Japanese observer also participated in the in the congress. The idea was to create an Asian postal union modelled on the European one; a tripartite postal union was even broached.[579] The current section provides an overview of the German *Reichspost*'s approach to the horizontal expansion of the area in which the new standards would be valid. This is also an aspect which the Foreign

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578   Own illustration. Template from: Wikimedia Commons: Axis Occupation of Europe (1942), https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/5/58/Axis_Occupation_of_Europe_%281942%29.svg/450px-Axis_Occupation_of_Europe_%281942%29.svg.png (last access: 20.01.2022), GNU Free Document License.
579   Politisches Archiv, Berlin, R106301, Marius an Dir. Ha. Pol., 05.09.1942 und Wiehl and Reichaußenminister, 10.09.1942.

Ministry was much more involved than other areas. Deciding which countries to include was not a trivial question; rather, it reflected who would be part of the 'New Europe' and who would be excluded. The discussion moves from the occupied countries to the non-occupied countries, addressing each in alphabetical order. Since little is known about the cases of Greece and Serbia, the two countries are jointly discussed.

The Belgian and French cases were similar insofar as it was not quite clear what status the countries should have in the eyes of the German postal and Foreign ministries. The possibility of including Belgium in the union appears to have been first raised around March 1942. In a meeting with Martius, Risch mentioned that, according to Ohnesorge, Hitler himself wished that the process surrounding the EPTU would be accelerated and that the occupied territories would be included.[580] The *Reichspost* was also optimistic that it could conclude an agreement with the Belgian administration.[581] In June 1942, Risch asked the *Heeresfeldpostmeister* of the *Wehrmacht* if he could begin negotiations via the *Armeefeldpostmeister*. The request was granted.[582] At the end of the same month, it was decided that Belgian membership in the union was impossible. The Foreign Ministry agreed to allow Belgian observers at the conference. They were to be experts, and 'it could be expected that they would be sent from their administration to subsequent administrative congresses'.[583] For postal services, the Belgium Director General Schokaert was proposed as a delegate.[584] The Belgian postal director also answered the question of whether a bilateral agreement was possible in the affirmative and asked for the German proposal of such an agreement in written form.[585] However, in early August 1942, it was decided that the Belgian administration would not be invited as a participant with full rights. It remained to be determined whether it

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580   Politisches Archiv, Berlin, R106301, Aufzeichnung Martius, 10.03.1942.
581   Politisches Archiv, Berlin, R106301, Aufzeichnung wegen des Europäischen Post- und Fernmeldevereins, March 1942.
582   Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/11615, Abschrift Fernschreiben, 18.06.1942.
583   Writer's own translation: "sodass damit zu rechnen ist, dass sie seitens ihrer Verwaltungen auch späterhin zu den Verwaltungstagungen abgeordnet warden", Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/11615, Reichspostminister an Armeefeldpostmeister in Belgien und Nordfrankreich, 28.08.1942.
584   Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/11615, Reichspostminister an Armeefeldpostmeister in Belgien und Nordfrankreich, 28.08.1942.
585   Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/11615, Armeefeldpostmeister in Belgien und Nordfrankreich und Reichspostminister, 17.07.1942.

would be allowed to participate as an observer.[586] At the end of September, documents from the Foreign Ministry show that German Foreign and postal ministers decided to invite a Belgian observer.[587] The *Armeefeldpostmeister* in Belgium was made aware of this invitation on 28 August 1942.[588] When the Swiss administration decided to send two 'prominent observers',[589] the German *Reichspost* also wanted to work towards the participation of two observers from Belgium.[590] For postal services, the administrative director De Pue was designated as a delegate.[591] The Belgian head of the telegraph administration rejected the invitation for political reasons, which led the head of the postal administration to declare that he wanted to make as limited an appearance as possible.[592] Based on this response, the *Reichspost* retracted their invitations.[593] In the report about the congress to the Foreign Minister, it was noted that Belgium's non-inclusion went against the instructions of said minister but that he had been informed of the reasons.[594]

In the French administration's documents, a detailed report about Franco-German talks on the EPTU was found. According to this report, the *Armeefeldpostmeister*, Müller, had contacted the French administration in July 1942 to ask about the possibility of a bilateral agreement between the German and French administrations which would be valid for the occupied and non-occupied zones. He informed them about already concluded bilateral agreements and included Risch's article on the aims and challenges of a European postal union. The French administration contacted the Finance and Foreign Ministries as a result. At the end of August 1942, Müller stressed the importance of receiving an answer and clarified that the *Reichspost* did not want the French administration to join the union but rather its opinion. The bilateral agreement was the highest priority for the German side, but the French administration was invited to send an observer

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586   Politisches Archiv, Berlin, R106301, Aufzeichnung zum Stand der Frage des Europäischen Postvereins, 08.08.1942.

587   Politisches Archiv, Berlin, R106301, Gaus an Reichsaußenminister, 29.09.1942.

588   Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/11615, Reichspostminister an Armeefeldpostmeister in Belgien und Nordfrankreich, 28.08.1942.

589   Writer's own translation: "prominente Beobachter", Politisches Archiv, Berlin, R106301, Martius an Dir. Ha. Pol., 03.10.1942.

590   Ibid.

591   Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/11615, Claeys an Armeefeldpostmeister, 01.10.1942.

592   Politisches Archiv, Berlin, R106301, Wiehl an Reichaußenminister, 08.10.1942.

593   Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/11615, Abschrift Fernschreiben, RPMIN Berlin SS 15158 5.10. 1822.

594   Politisches Archiv, Berlin, R106301, Bericht Legationsrat Stahlberg, 20.10.1942.

to the congress. It was advised that this observer should know German, as most discussions would be in German. This irritated the French Foreign Ministry, which agreed to participate nevertheless. The Finance Ministry also approved the attendance. On 5 September, Müller informed General Girodet – who was the liaison between the occupiers, the *Direction des Services de l'Armistice* and the PTT administration[595] – that he had been instructed to invite one French delegate from the postal service and up to two delegates from telecommunications to the congress in Vienna. He also cited names that the *Reichspost* wanted to see as consulting delegates. The French report reveals the French administration's irritation at receiving no official documents and, more importantly, no invitation. At the beginning of September 1942, there was still no written invitation. Meanwhile, Müller's interventions 'had the appearance of instructions',[596] and the French administration began to actively prepare to participate in the congress and selected its delegation members. It clarified that the Gold franc should remain the base currency 'at all costs'[597]. In addition, representatives should only intervene on technical issues and avoid all political discussions. The administration also contacted French diplomats in Finland, Romania, Portugal and Sweden to learn their opinions on the matter. A Spanish delegate wanted to meet with the French delegate on his way to Vienna, but the French administration declined. At the same time, a French delegate attempted to convince representatives from other administrations to use French as the official language. On 17 September 1942, the French side started to insist on an official invitation and the specification of envisioned tariffs. Müller answered that the German government still questioned whether France would participate in the congress. Five days later, the French administration was informed that it would no longer be invited, although there would be further contact after the conference. In a meeting, Müller told Girodet that the French administration would have had to agree to certain conditions, which it interpreted as reasons for the non-invitation. First, the Reich would have covered French costs; more importantly, Müller would have accompanied the French delegation to Vienna, which the French administration refused to allow: 'It is not necessary to add that the head of the French delegation

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595   Hoover Institute: *La Vie de la France sous l'Occupation* (1940-1944), Tome I, Paris 2013, p. 306.

596   Writer's own translation: "prenaient l'allure de directives", Archives nationales, Pierrefitte, 19870773/33, Historique des pourparlers concernant la Conférence de Vienne, p. 5.

597   Writer's own translation: "coûte que coûte", ibid.

could have accepted (…) neither the one nor the other of these two conditions'[598]. Ultimately, the French administration did not regret its lack of participation in the congress. The French administration considered the congress unsuccessful on the basis of the list of participants. However, it should be noted that the administration was misinformed about the abstentions and number of delegates that some administrations sent.[599]

The invitation of delegates from Greece and Serbia – the other states under military administration – was also discussed at the same time as the Belgian and French cases. In a meeting between the Postal and Foreign Ministers, it was decided that the Greek and Serbian postal administrations would not be invited to the congress. In a discussion with representatives from the Foreign Office, however, Risch asked whether these doubts could be overcome. He argued that the head of the Serbian postal administration had worked for Siemens and was a Germanophile. Furthermore, 'friendly hands'[600] guided the Greek postal administration, and Greek telecommunications were entirely equipped with German materials.[601] Ultimately, the lack of invitations for the Greek and Serbian PTT administrations was explained by the fact that no Belgian representatives would be present,[602] despite the German Foreign Minister's approval to invite Serbian and Greek observers in early October 1942.[603]

It should be noted that the German authorities appeared to be quite indecisive with regard to the occupied states under military administration. Hitler had to grant permission to discuss these administrations' cases. Eventually, the Foreign Ministry approved the invitation of Belgian, Greek and Serbian delegates based on more technical arguments in the case of Greece and Serbia. However, the tide turned again with the rejection of the Belgian telegraph director, likely because all occupied territories had to be treated the same way. This inconsistent positioning also seemed to put the *Armeefeldpostmeister* in a difficult position. In France's case, insistence on the attendance of French delegates shifted from the German side to the French side. It also appears impractical to ask administrations to assemble and prepare their delegations, only to cancel their invitations shortly before the

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598 Writer's own translation: "Inutile d'ajouter que le chef de la délégation française n'aurait pas pu accepter (…) ni l'une, ni l'autre de ces deux conditions", ibid, p. 7.
599 Ibid.
600 Writer's own translation: "befreundete Hände", Politisches Archiv, Berlin, R106301, Gaus an Reichsaußenminister, 29.09.1942.
601 Ibid.
602 Politisches Archiv, Berlin, R106301, Wiehl an Reichaußenminister, 08.10.1942.
603 Politisches Archiv, Berlin, R106301, Martius an Dir. Ha. Pol., 03.10.1942.

congress. It was the Armeefeldpostmeister's responsibility to inform administrations about these cancellations, which Risch asked him to undertake in an 'appropriate fashion'.[604] However, the cases of Belgium and France align with the lack of a clear vision for the future of Europe, as outlined above. There was no plan for whether and how to integrate certain countries. This was especially the case for France, which had a special position in this group with Belgium, Greece, and Serbia. The lack of cohesiveness in plans for the 'New Europe' is reflected in the changing position of the Foreign Ministry, which reacted to proposals from the *Reichspost*. The *Reichspost* seems to have been guided by the technocratic idea that the new union would have greater legitimacy and bring more benefits if more administrations became members.

Opening the envisioned union to the rest of Europe: Successes and failures

Including as many members as possible was also the intent behind contacting administrations from ideologically similar and neutral countries, namely Portugal, Spain, Turkey, Switzerland and Sweden. However, little information could be found on Portugal. On 7 October, the Portuguese administration had not yet replied[605] despite the fact that the *Reichspost* expected a positive answer by the beginning of August 1942.[606] The Turkish administration was contacted at the beginning of August.[607] The German side was still waiting for a response on 3 October.[608] It must have eventually arrived, as a Turkish delegation was present at the congress.[609] More information is available on contacts with the Spanish, Swedish and Swiss administrations.

At the end of June 1942, the Spanish PTT administration received a letter from Ohnesorge regarding a bilateral agreement between Germany and Spain. The letter was the same as the one described above. An appendix to

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604 Writer's own translation: "geeigneter Weise", Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichter-felde, R4701/11615, Abschrift Fernschreiben, RPMIN Berlin SS 15158 5.10. 1822.
605 Politisches Archiv, Berlin, R106301, Telegramm Huene, 07.10.1942.
606 Politisches Archiv, Berlin, R106301, Aufzeichnung Martius zum Stand der Frage des Europäischen Postvereins, 08.08.1942.
607 Politisches Archiv, Berlin, R106301, Aufzeichnung zum Stand der Frage des Europäischen Postvereins, 08.08.1942.
608 Politisches Archiv, Berlin, R106301, Martius an Dir. Ha. Pol. 03.10.1942
609 Europäischer Postkongress, p. 10.

the letter contained a bilateral postal agreement, which contained the same articles as other bilateral agreements; the *Reichspost* even proposed equivalent tariffs. There was one additional specification concerning contents that were subject to duty in the proposed agreement.[610] The Spanish administration's answer was negative; it rejected the idea of a union, arguing that these new tariffs would run against the principle of harmonisation within the UPU. It suspected that the EPTU was intended as a rival to the UPU and considered the Spanish-Latin American Postal Union to be more important.[611]

It would appear that the Swedish postal administration was officially contacted for the first time about a bilateral agreement and the possible creation of a European postal union in July 1941. The head of the Swedish postal administration, Anders Örne, answered around a month later and expressed lively interest in the matter; in fact, he described the idea as 'completely natural'.[612] However, it was not enough to convince him (or the Swedish government) to move forward with the matter.[613]

Örne began his letter by praising the longstanding, positive relations between the Swedish and German administrations since 'the time of Heinrich von Stephan'.[614] He highlighted the fact that the Swedish-German postal relations were still in good shape despite the war, and he declared that he was ready to discuss proposals to improve reciprocal postal services and that these improvements should be shared with other countries. However, he did not see any possibility of realising these plans, as negotiations with the Swedish government had shown that an income reduction (which Örne envisioned as the result of the plans) would weaken the state's financial situation at this time. The only possible changes would be an increase in tariffs.[615] Thus, he concluded that a 'solid reason'[616] could not be found to

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610   Archivo General de la Administracion, Alcala de Henares, 82/08588, El ministro de communicacion del Reich a la Dirreción General de Corréos y de Telecommunicaión, 05.08.1942.

611   Archivo General de la Administracion, Alcala de Henares, 83/05285, Courrier Ministro de la Gobernacion, 26.09.1942.

612   Writer's own translation: „ganz natürlich" Riksarkivet, Stockholm, UD 1920 års doss HP 3258, Örne an Reichspostminister, 08.08.1941.

613   Ibid.

614   Writer's own translation: "der Zeit von Heinrich von Stephan", ibid.

615   The Swedish charges for inland postal services were in fact increased in April 1942, Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/11844, Deutsche Gesandschaft Stockholm an das Auswärtige Amt, 28.02.1942.

616   Writer's own translation: "sicheren Grund", Riksarkivet, Stockholm, UD 1920 års doss HP 3258, Örne an Reichspostminister, 08.08.1941.

move forward with the plans and that he could only discuss ideas more intensively once the economic situation improved.[617] Consequently, no bilateral agreement was concluded, but Sweden was aware of Germany's plans and, later, that bilateral agreements had been signed with the other Nordic countries – Denmark, Finland and Norway.[618]

When the *Reichspostministerium* replied to the Swedish postal administration in July 1942 with an actual invitation, the Swedish Foreign Ministry was heavily involved in handling the Swedish reaction. The Swedish postal administration expected the Germans to send an invitation; its general-director, Örne, wrote on 22 July 1942 to Staffan Söderblom, a cabinet secretary in the Foreign Ministry, to recount the developments thus far and ask the Foreign Ministry which position the postal administration was expected to adopt. Örne emphasised that there was no need for a European postal agreement, stating that the postal exchange was currently low and that it was subject to censorship at different stages of its journey.[619] The same day, the Swedish Foreign Ministry sent a message to its mission in Bern to inform it of the possibility of a German invitation. The mission was advised to react in an evasive manner.[620] Three days later, the mission was told that telecommunications would also be discussed during the conference in Vienna.[621] The mission in Bern remained important in the process, as the Swedish Foreign Ministry was keen to learn how Switzerland – the other neutral country – would react. At the beginning of August 1942, Switzerland had not concluded a bilateral agreement with Germany due to the anticipated high financial losses and had not yet been invited to the congress. Moreover, the project's political aspects had not gone unnoticed in Bern, and the German proposal for a bilateral agreement had not been realised because its exact intentions seemed unclear.[622]

On 10 August 1942, Ohnesorge signed the official invitation for the Swedish PTT administration, and the mission in Bern was informed of its arrival on 19 August 1942. Four days later, the mission in Bern informed the For-

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617 Riksarkivet, Stockholm, UD 1920 års doss HP 3258, Örne an Reichspostminister, 08.08.1941.
618 Riksarkivet, Stockholm, UD 1920 års doss HP 3258, Örne an Söderblom, 22.07.1942
619 Ibid.
620 Riksarkivet, Stockholm, UD 1920 års doss HP 3258, Kungl. Utrikesdepartementet à Légation Suède Berne, 22.07.1942.
621 Ibid.
622 Riksarkivet, Stockholm, UD 1920 års doss HP 3258, Herr Advelingschefen Kumlin, 27.07.1942.

eign Ministry that Switzerland would send technical delegates without authorisation to sign any agreement; it stated that Switzerland was in a different situation than Sweden and that the decision had been taken 'à contre-coeur'[623], meaning reluctantly. On 28 August 1942, the mission in Bern was updated on Sweden's response to the invitation; while the head of telecommunications administration, Helge Ericson, wanted to send technical[624] experts,[625] 'the postal administration led by Örne reject[ed] any participation'.[626] The appointee to Sweden, Harder, had described Ericson as a Germanophile. Örne, on the other hand, was designated as 'a political man, social democrat and absolutely anti-German minded'.[627]

In his letter to Ohnesorge on 27 August 1942, Örne outlined that, while he still agreed with the minister and was generally in favour of such a project, his position had not changed since July 1941 because the surrounding conditions had not changed, either. Once again, he emphasised that the main aim of reducing tariffs could not be accomplished, as a decrease in income due to reduced tariffs would not be expected to be compensated through increased postal exchange. Closing with thanks for the 'kind invitation',[628] he declined to send representatives from the postal administration to the congress.[629] Sweden's position also sparked interest from other countries, such as Spain, which received Germany's invitation and learned of Sweden's answer at the end of September 1942.[630] The Swedish mission in Vichy also updated the Swedish Foreign Ministry on deliberations within the French PTT administration about the congress's language provisions.[631]

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623 Riksarkivet, Stockholm, UD 1920 års doss HP 3258, Westrup till Kumlin, 22.08.1942.
624 Added by hand in the originally typed notification. (Riksarkivet, Stockholm, UD 1920 års doss HP 3258, Kumlin/AA till Légation Suède Berne, 28.08.1942).
625 According to his letter to Ohnesorge, the head of the telecommunications administrations, Ericson, wanted to stay informed and knew of the high importance of direct contact between the experts. That is why he wanted to send rapporteurs from his administration. (Ibid.).
626 Writer's own translation: "Postverket avböjer allt deltag", ibid.
627 Writer's own translation: "politischer Mann, Sozialdemokrat und absolut deutschfeindlich eingestellt", Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, R4701/11248, Bericht Harder, 18.-28.03.1943.
628 Writer's own translation: "liebenswürdige Einladung", Riksarkivet, Stockholm, UD 1920 års doss HP 3258, Örne an Reichspostminister, 27.08.1942.
629 Riksarkivet, Stockholm, UD 1920 års doss HP 3258, Örne an Reichspostminister, 27.08.1942.
630 Riksarkivet, Stockholm, UD 1920 års doss HP 3258, Söderblom till Envoyén Bern, 23.09.1942.
631 Riksarkivet, Stockholm, UD 1920 års doss HP 3258, Légation de Suède, 26.09.1942.

However, the Swedish experts from the telecommunications administration appeared to be unwelcome if no representatives from the postal administration attended the congress. Söderblom highlighted the politeness of Sweden's answer while informing the missions in different European countries of this 'unfriendly message (…) at the last minute'.[632] He thought that the tone of the German message and the decision were due to the Germans releasing a press statement to announce that all European countries were invited shortly before said message.[633]

The Swedish example clearly shows the influence of actors other than the postal administrations in standard-setting for postal services during the Second World War. The financial and geopolitical situations played an important role in Swedish decision-making in 1941 and 1942, perhaps more so than actual technocratic reasoning. This was related to Sweden's position in the war; as a neutral country, it had to weigh different arguments than an occupied or allied country. Therefore, the Swiss positioning appears to have been important. The German reaction to the different stances of PTT administration leaders was the same as its reaction to Belgium: either both branches would participate or no one would be invited. This decision is notable, as it would have been important from a propaganda perspective for the Germans to have some Swedish representation at the congress, even if only as rapporteurs.

On 11 May 1942, the *Reichspost* proposed a bilateral agreement to the Swiss administration, citing again the common fight against Bolshevism and referencing all the other bilateral agreements signed with European administrations up to that point.[634] Even before the arrival of the letter, experts at the Swiss administration had detailed the situation to the Director General and concluded that, due to the political situation and the state of Swiss finances, the Swiss administration could not join the union or sign the bilateral agreement – at least until after the war. However, they expected that lowering taxes would lead to higher international postal traffic.[635] This led the Director General and the ministry that he was part of to recommend that the federal council should not sign such a bilateral agreement and that Switzerland should only participate in the congress as an observer. In the letter,

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632 Writer's own translation: "i sista stund (...) ovänliga besked Riksarkivet", Stockholm, UD 1920 års doss HP 3258, t.f. Avdelningschefen, 07.10.1942.
633 Ibid.
634 PTT Archiv Bern, P-00C_0108_01, Min-A (Rs) an die Generaldirektion der Post-, Telegraphen- und Telephonverwaltung Bern, 11.05.1942.
635 PTT Archiv Bern, P-00C_0108_01, Schreiben an den Herrn Generaldirektor betreffend Europäischer Postverein, 27.03.1942.

it was made clear that it would be impossible for Switzerland to remain outside of such a union in the long term.[636]

Like in Sweden's case, the *Reichspost* was very interested in including the Swiss administration in the project for legitimisation purposes. Switzerland was not only a neutral country but also the home of the UPU. The Swiss administration's decision to participate and send 'prominent observers'[637] thus cannot be underestimated with regard to its external impact. As shown in the following part, the Swiss administration thoroughly prepared for the congress. It continued to take it seriously by evaluating whether it would be able to agree or disagree with the German proposals[638] and calculated the financial consequences of Switzerland abolishing the transit charge: a loss of around 90,943 Swiss Francs.[639]

This section illustrated how the participation – but mostly non-participation – of countries that the *Reichspost* could envision as part of the union occurred. The Spanish administration followed different interests and was less concerned with Europe and more with Latin America. Developments related to France, Belgium, Serbia and Greece reflect a lack of clarity regarding the 'New Europe'. It was unclear whether their inclusion in the union was politically favourable or possible. In the Foreign Ministry's sources, the question of their participation repeatedly appeared on the agenda, even if the Foreign Minister had already decided on the issue in the past.[640] The Belgian case is particular, because the head of telecommunications declined Germany's invitation, which led to the subsequent disinvitation of representatives from the Belgian postal services. This was also observed in the Swedish case. No information could be found on whether this rejection had any personal consequences. The French administration appears to have wanted to participate in the congress, partly to keep its status as an important power in international PTT cooperation. The case of the neutral countries, Sweden and Switzerland, constitutes a point at which technocratic and political interests did not align: while there was a vivid interest in the project from the administrations, their countries' political situations prevented them from fully participating or at all. The different decisions of Sweden and Switzerland could be explained by their geographical

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636   PTT Archiv Bern, P-00C_0108_01, Union postale européenne, démarche allemande, undated.
637   Writer's own translation: "prominente Beobachter", Politisches Archiv, Berlin, R106301, Aufzeichnung Martius, 03.10.1942.
638   PTT Archiv Bern, P-00C_0108_01, Bemerkungen zu den deutschen Vorschlägen vom 22 Sept. 1942, undated.
639   PTT Archiv Bern, P-00C_0108_01, Landdurchgangsgebühren, 31.10.1942.
640   Cf. Politisches Archiv, Berlin, R106301.

situation. Regardless, Switzerland's positioning corresponds to Madeleine Herren's description of Swiss 'neutrality' cited in the introduction.

Conclusion

This part outlined the three main elements needed to prepare the EPTU and its standards: internal preparation, Axis negotiations and bilateral agreements with other European PTT administrations. It showed the importance of this phase for the entirety of the EPTU project, as most important decisions were made during this time.

The *Reichspostminister* provided the internal structures necessary to prepare for the congress by creating a Foreign Department within his ministry. Within this department, the main actors for postal services were Friedrich Risch and Friedrich Reiss. At the beginning of the process, two developments seem to have overlapped: the establishment of a working group focused mostly on telecommunications and the establishment of a European PTT organisation with specific standards. Ultimately, the latter was implemented and announced to the functionaries of the *Reichspost* through two speeches in different meetings. Although the project was presented in a way that cleanly separated its political and technocratic aspects, these aspects were not opposites but rather targeted the same goal. The number of proposed standards decreased as the European Postal and Telecommunications Union was concretised. Thus, the European postal system was planned according to a broader vision than what was actually pursued during this initiation phase.

While the Italian and German PTT administrations were ostensibly on the same side for the project, it became clear relatively quickly that the Italian administration could not succeed in simplifying and reducing the cost of bilateral postal services to the same extent as its German counterpart. Additionally, the German administration's aspirations to secure leadership of the project led to tensions. The Italian Foreign Ministry brought the project to a temporary halt in July 1942, pressuring the Germans to accept certain highly political demands, such as adding Italian as an official language in addition to German of the congress and the envisioned European postal union and holding the next congress in Rome. However, complete equality between the partners was not achieved. This was partly due to Germany's occupation of large parts of Europe; thus, it was politically in charge.

The consequences of this power imbalance can also be seen when analysing negotiations between Germany and other European administrations.

They were almost entirely conducted by the *Reichspost*, including those involving neutral countries. The EPTU was founded on relatively similar bilateral agreements. The abolition of the transit charge in bilateral land mail was achieved with some administrations, but not all. The export of German weight categories to other administrations was successful. Similarly, the introduction of the *Reichsmark*[641] as a reference currency in European postal services was also a de facto result of the bilateral agreements and can be considered a major achievement for the *Reichspost*.

By the time the congress in Vienna took place, a complex network of actors had been developed during the preparatory phase. This network spanned a considerable part of Europe and included several countries in different occupation situations. The archival sources are not always clear on this front; however, recreating exact relationship patterns is challenging but important to do before continuing the analysis. The following description of the network of actors represents the most accurate approximation possible.

The staff of the examined European postal administrations did not act independently. National foreign ministries and governments had to grant their approval for negotiations to take place and for a delegation to be sent to Vienna. They were also essential in deciding which powers the delegation had at the congress. As demonstrated later, members of some delegations were only observers, whereas others had the power to sign agreements with reservations; however, the government had the final say. Especially in the cases of Italy and Germany, diplomatic channels between the Foreign Ministries were used for negotiations and status updates. As such, not only were the administrations in contact with their respective foreign ministries, but the foreign ministries were also in contact with each other. As Germany had embassies in most capitals of EPTU member countries, it can be assumed that these channels were also used, although little information on this topic was found in the archives. Nevertheless, as experts in the field, the postal administrations had the power to influence national governing bodies. In some cases, such as Belgium, Sweden and Switzerland, national governments followed the advice and conclusions of the postal administrations.

As decisions in Vienna would have strong repercussions on national budgets, it is likely that finance ministries were also involved in the decision-making process. However, this link was only explicitly found in certain cases, such as France. In terms of inter-ministerial communication in

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641   Currency in Germany from 1924 to 1948.

Germany, the finance minister received internal information on the subject of the planned European postal union, but no recorded communications on budget matters were found. The postal administrations themselves appear to have completed most budget calculations.

Based on the identified sources, the German postal administration appeared to be at the centre of preparations for the congress, which was facilitated by the fact that most countries were occupied by or dependent on the Third Reich at the time. The question of whether the German administration retained this position throughout the establishment and activities of the EPTU is answered in the following parts. Within the *Reichspost*, the main actors were in the Foreign Department of the *Reichspostministerium*. Minister Ohnesorge appears to have mainly acted as the official face of the project, but he also intervened at important points (e.g., obtaining support from Hitler or discussing matters with the Foreign Ministry). Furthermore, the appointees abroad represented an important link between the *Reichspost* and other PTT administrations. In summary, the *Reichspost* dominated the initial phase of the project and tried to rapidly create a European postal union.