

Austrian Airmail to 1938

Post WWI to 1923

Starting on 15th February 1922 the French-Romanian airline operated a daily flight from Paris, via Strasburg and Prague to, Vienna later extending the route to Budapest, Bucharest and Constantinople. Flights ceased for the winter on 15th November 1922.

The Austrian post office issued a set of five airmail stamps on 31st October 1922 and many items sent in November are franked with the full set and thus overpaid.

Some flights could not be operated due to adverse weather or operational difficulties. Mail accepted for cancelled flights received a 'Flug Ausgefallen' cachet and 'express' cachet or label. It would then be sent by the quickest means which was usually by rail – see items right.



Above – Letter Vienna to Prague 11th November 1922 by air.
Postage – Letter 1,200Kr, registration fee 1,500Kr, express fee 3,000 Kr, airmail fee 2,400Kr.
Stamps on the reverse totalling 1,700Kr mean this item is correctly franked.

Aside – two letters for flights that failed to go so they have the 'Flug Ausgefallen' cachet.

Top – Letter Vienna accepted for Budapest flight 2nd November 1922, an express label was added and the letter sent by rail arriving on 3rd November – arrival cancellation on reverse.
Postage – Letter 1,200Kr, registration fee 1,500Kr, airmail fee 2,400Kr.

Below – Letter Vienna accepted for Paris flight 14th November 1922, 'Express cachet applied and sent by rail arriving at den Haag 17th November.
Postage – Letter 1,500 Kr, registration 1,500Kr, airmail fee to Paris 4,800Kr, some postage on reverse.

Non-Austrian airlines



Post WWI to 1923

The French-Romanian airline resumed the daily flights to Vienna on 16th February 1923 with the flights ceasing for the winter on 16th November.

To provide for the rapidly increasing airmail surcharge due to inflation the Austrian post office issued two further high value airmail stamps on 23rd April 1923.



Above – Letter Vienna 18th February 1923 to Budapest, the cachet confirms that it was received by air. Postage – Letter 1,200Kr, registration fee 1,500Kr, airmail fee 2,400Kr.

Aside –

Top – Letter Vienna 30th March to Prague franked with the two new high value stamps. Postage – Letter 1,200Kr, airmail fee 2,400Kr.

Below – Letter 1st June to Hamburg but no flight so 'Flug Ausgefallen' cachet applied and sent by alternative route. Arrived Berlin airport 2nd June and Hamburg on 4th. Postage – Inland letter 400Kr, registration fee 1,000Kr both paid with stamps on the reverse. Airmail fee overpaid with complete set of seven airmail stamps.

Non-Austrian airlines



Austrian Airmail to 1938

Austria's new airline and Provincial airports.

In 1923 Austria having largely regained its freedom in civilian and postal matters, the formation of an Austrian Aviation company became possible and the Österreichische Luftverkehrs AG or ÖLAG was founded. The company jointly operated routes with other European airlines and on 14th May 1923 operated its first service between Vienna's Aspern airport and Munich initially only passengers but from 22nd May mail was carried.



Company logo and letter carried on the first mail carrying flight.
Postage - Letter 400Kr, airmail fee 600Kr.

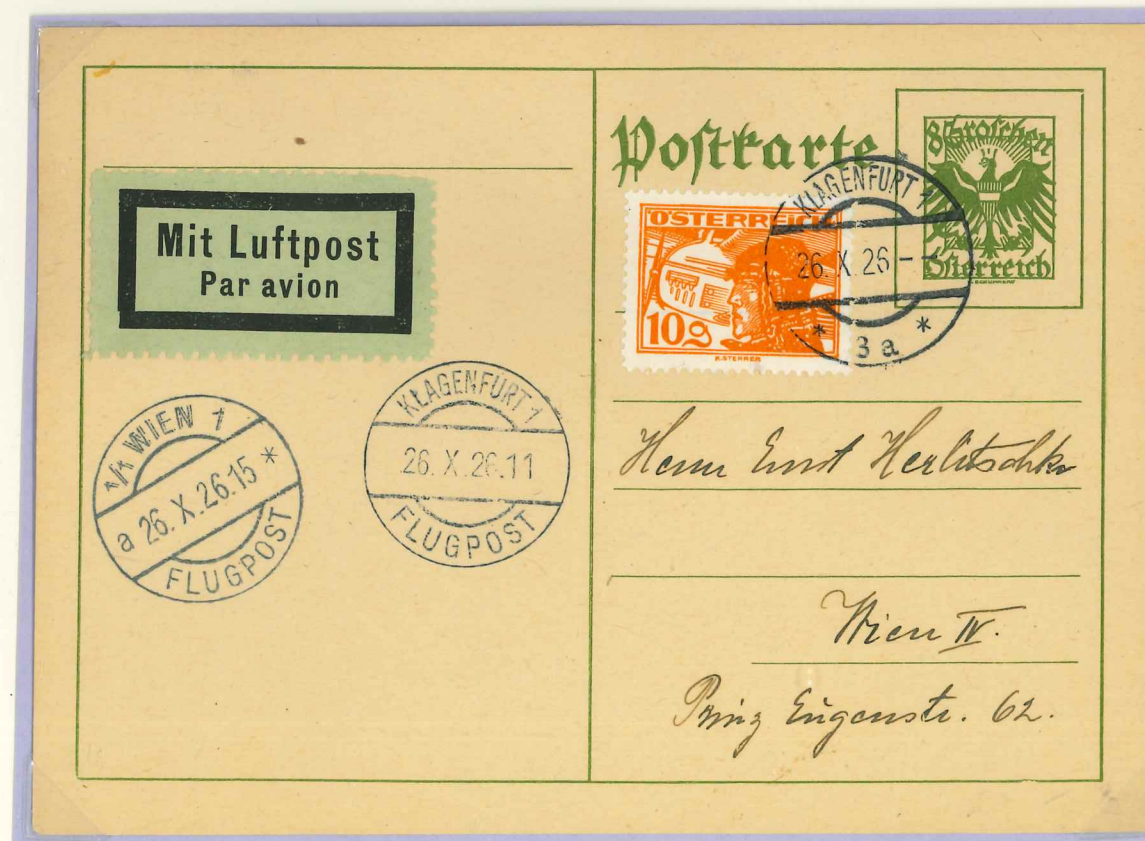
Klagenfurt

The airport at Klagenfurt was opened on 17th May 1925 with mail being received from Vienna, the first mail out being carried on the return journey next day.



Above - Letter Vienna 13th June 1925 to Klagenfurt.
Postage - Letter 15g, airmail fee 15g - 1,500Kr. Currency re-valued 1st April, new airmail stamps issued 1st August.

Below - Card Klagenfurt 26th October 1926 to Vienna.
Postage - Printed paper 8g, airmail fee 10g.



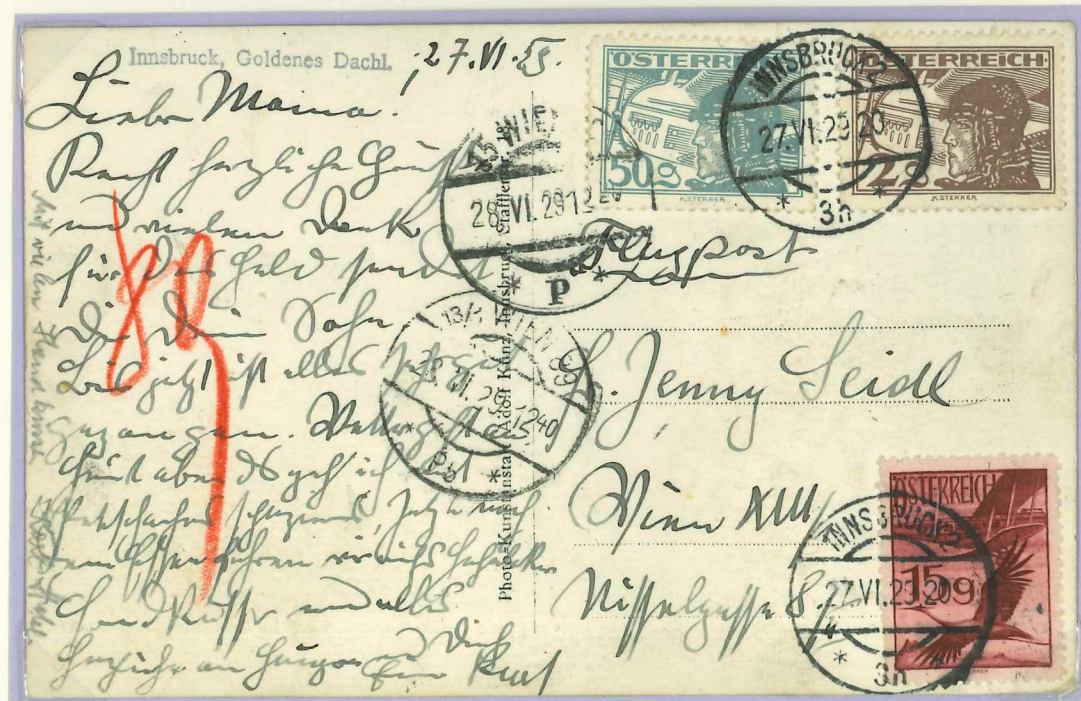
Provincial Airports – Innsbruck

Innsbruck airport opened on 1st June 1925. The first direct airmail flights to Munich started on 29th July 1925.



Above - Letter Innsbruck 27th August, Süddeutschen Aero Lloyd to Munich, Junker Luftverkehr to Frankfurt/Main. Postage - Printed paper 1g, airmail fee 5g, on revaluation of currency 100Kr became 1g.

Below - Card 27th June 1929 to Vienna, pneumatic post station 89 (red figure) - cancellation with P confirms service. Postage - Card 10g, pneumatic post fee 30g, airmail fee 10g.



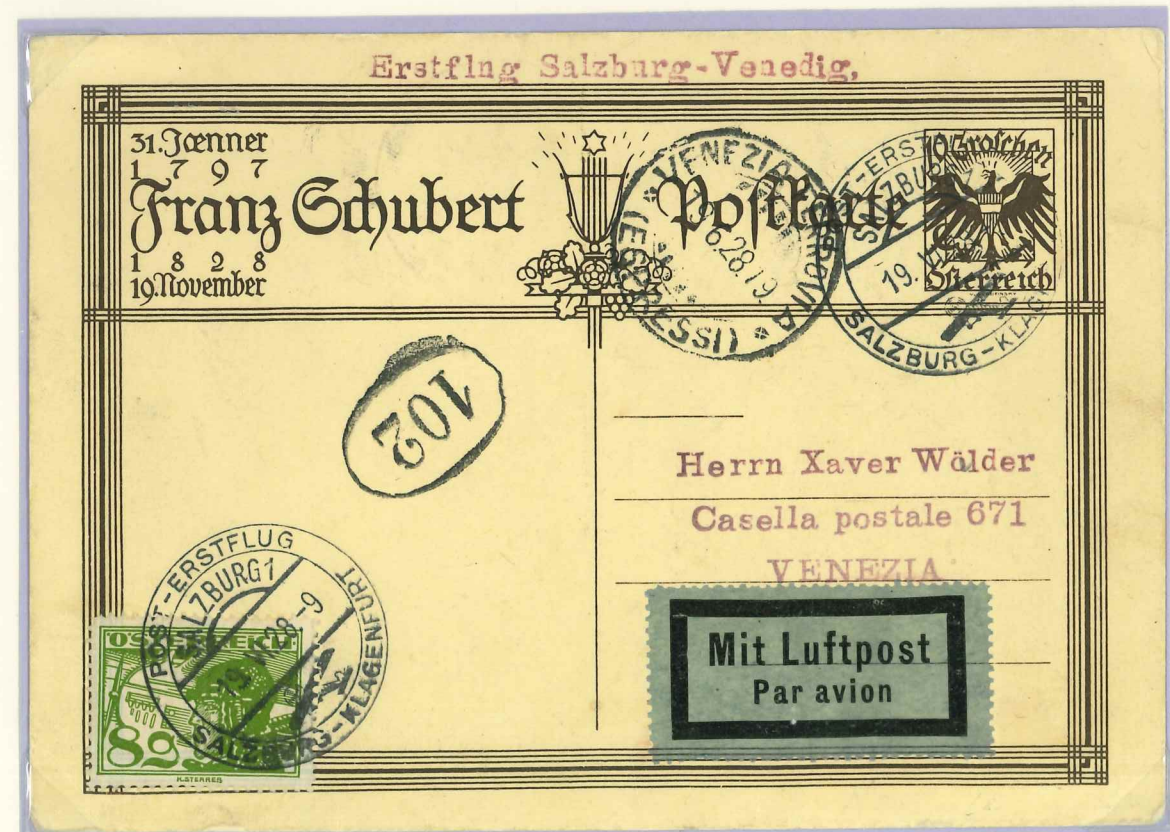
Salzburg

The ÖLAG service between Vienna and Innsbruck began landing at Salzburg in November 1926 but the first mail was not carried until 19th April 1927.



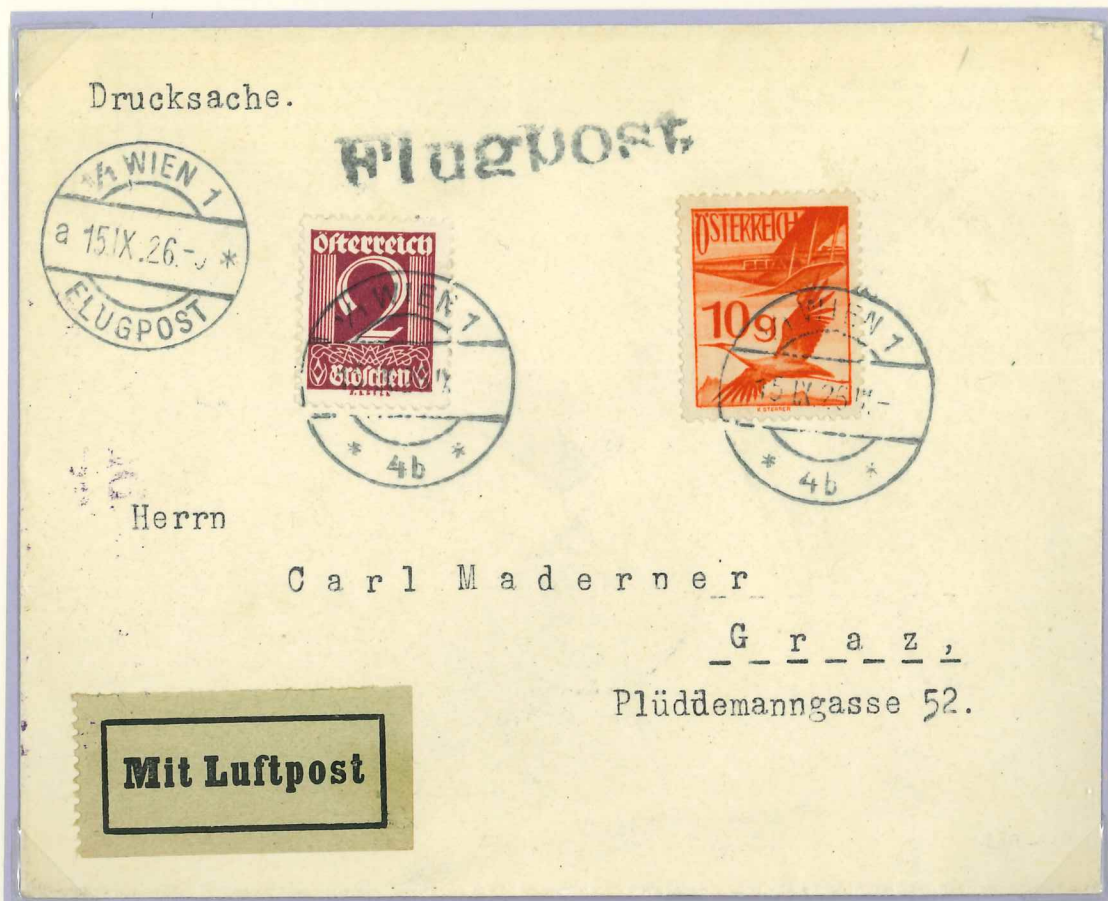
Above - Card carried on first flight Vienna to Salzburg 19th April 1927. Postage - Card 10g, airmail fee 10g

Below - Card carried on first flight Salzburg - Klagenfurt - Venice (- Rome) 19th June 1928. Postage - Card 18g, airmail fee 15g, some postage on reverse.



Provincial Airports – Graz

The airport at Graz was opened in 1926 with airmail services from 15th September.



Above - Letter first flight Vienna - Graz (- Klagenfurt - Venice) 15th September 1926
Postage - Printed paper 2g, airmail fee 10g

Below - Letter Graz 18th September 1927 arrived Vienna 20th. The special cancellation marks the 6th Austrian Philatelic Day held in Graz
Postage - Printed paper, over 10 grams, 5g, airmail fee 10g.



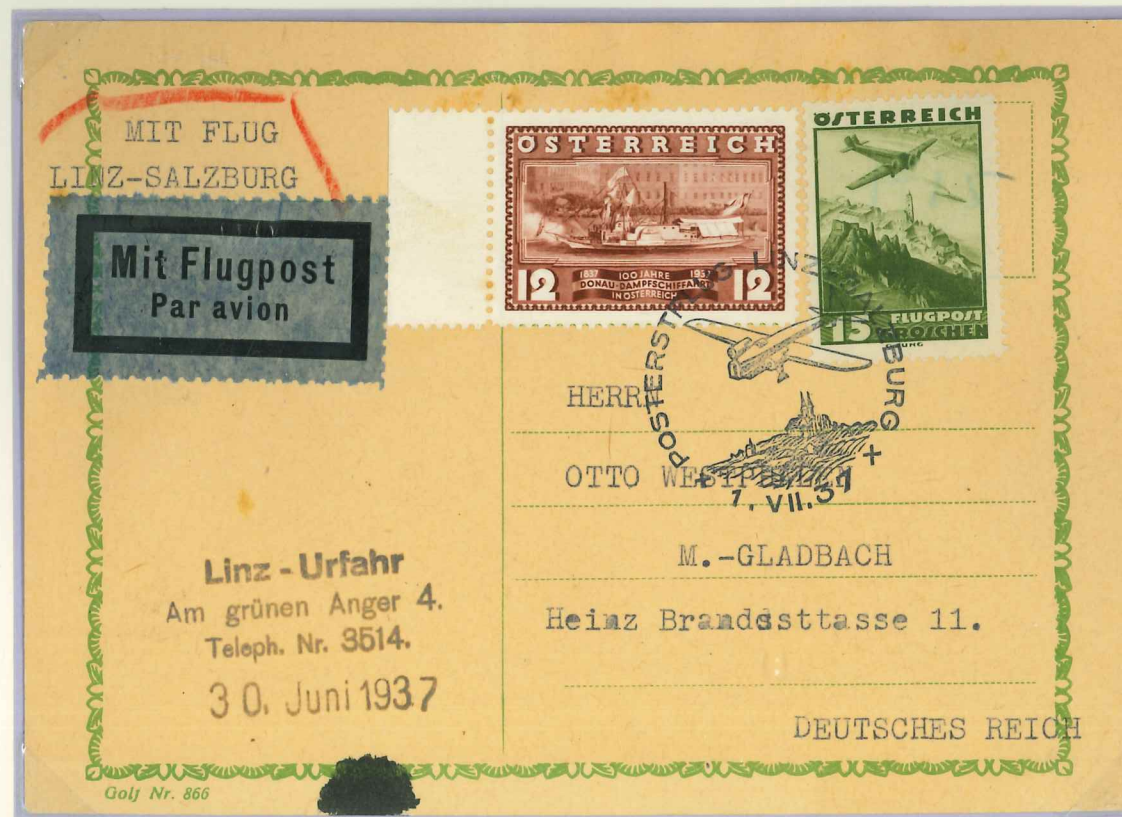
Bregenz and Linz

The airport Bregenz/St. Gallen opened on 1st July 1935 but initially operated from Altenrhein, Switzerland. Little mail is known with a Bregenz cancellation.

Letter - Innsbruck 1st July 1935 first flight to Bregenz and Bern - Postage - Printed paper 8g, airmail fee 40g,



The airport at Linz was opened on 1st July 1937,
Card - Linz 1st July 1937 Salzburg, with special first flight cancellation - Innsbruck - Munich - M. Gladbach,
Postage - Card 12g, airmail fee 15g'



Austrian Airmail to 1938

Zeppelin mail

The German airship LZ 127 'Graf Zeppelin' made many mail carrying flights throughout Europe and beyond. A surcharge was set for each flight with the letter rate at double that for a postcard.

The 'Osterreichfahrt' (Austria flight) which took place on July 12th and 13th was the parts with mail was carried on all of them.

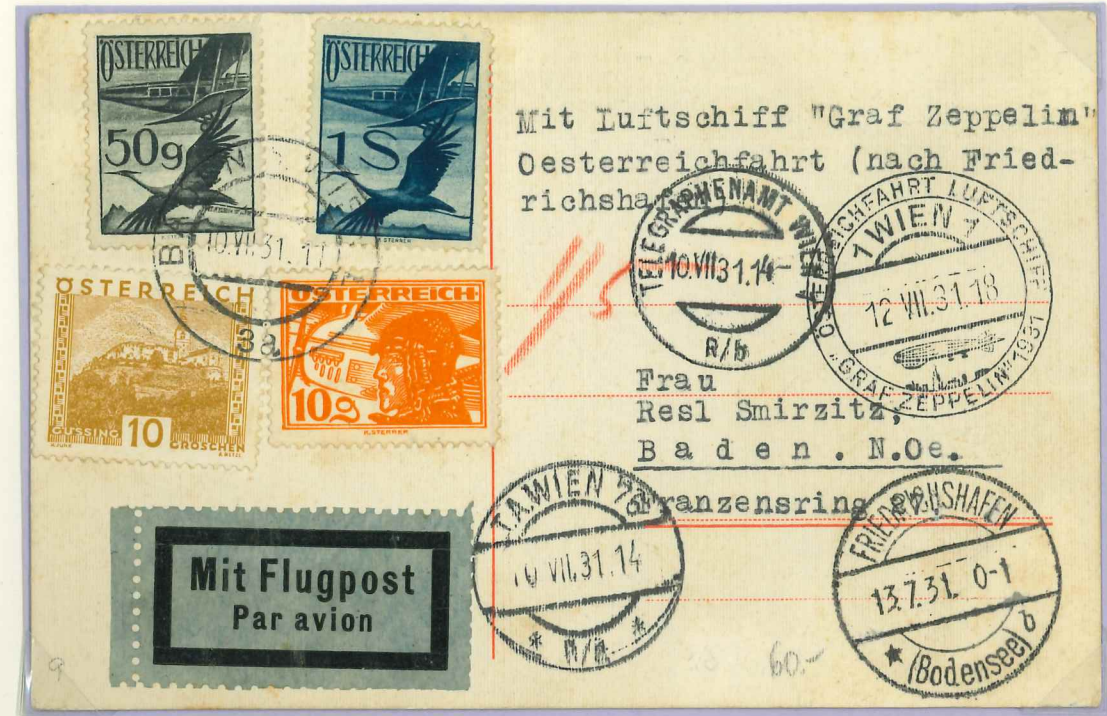
The "Graf Zeppelin" departed Friedrichshafen on July 12th day. It then took off from Vienna on July 13th day. It then returned to Friedrichshafen on July 14th day.

Austrian Post Office



Above - Letter posted Vienna 9th July, Friedrichshafen 12th, Vienna arrival 12th, surface mail to New Jersey, USA arriving 23rd received both cachets. Postage - overseas letter S 0.40, Zeppelin charge S 3.20

Below - card posted Vienna 9th July to be carried on the 'Round trip' received the Austrian cachet. Dropped at Graz where it was cancelled and sent to its destination. Postage - card S 0.10, Zeppelin charge S 1.60



Above - card sent from Baden bei Wien on 10th July with typed request for the return flight. Received the Austrian cachet dated 12th July and Friedrichshafen arrival cancel dated 13th. Postage - card S 0.10, Zeppelin charge S 1.60.

Below - card posted at Vienna airport on 12th July with printed label requesting the return flight. Received the Austrian cachet dated 12th July and Friedrichshafen arrival cancel dated 13th. Postage - card S 0.10, Zeppelin charge S 1.60.



Austrian Airmail to 1938

Glider mail

The pilot Robert Kronfeld is known for his mail carrying glider flights in 1933. The first of these was his Semmering flights in January. Planned for 27th January the quantity of mail sent to be carried on the flight was too much and a second flight was made on 31st. The glider was towed to Glognitz at the start of the Semmering pass, released and Kronfeld flew on finally landing in a snowfield in Semmering village.

Mail to be carried on the flight could be sent to an address in Vienna where it would be cancelled with the special flight cancellation on the date received and the glider flight cachet dated 'January 1933 applied'. After landing the mail was cancelled at Semmering 1 before being put into the postal system for delivery.



These two cards have been franked with a variety of stamps to pay the postage and glider surcharge [see aside] and have different flight cachets.

Kronfeld had a number of postal stationery cards printed for the flight two of which are shown below. These carried a printed message for the flight and did not receive an extra flight cachet.

The cost of inland postage was 12 groschen, overseas 24 groschen and the glider surcharge 50 groschen. Additional stamps were added as necessary to make up the total due.

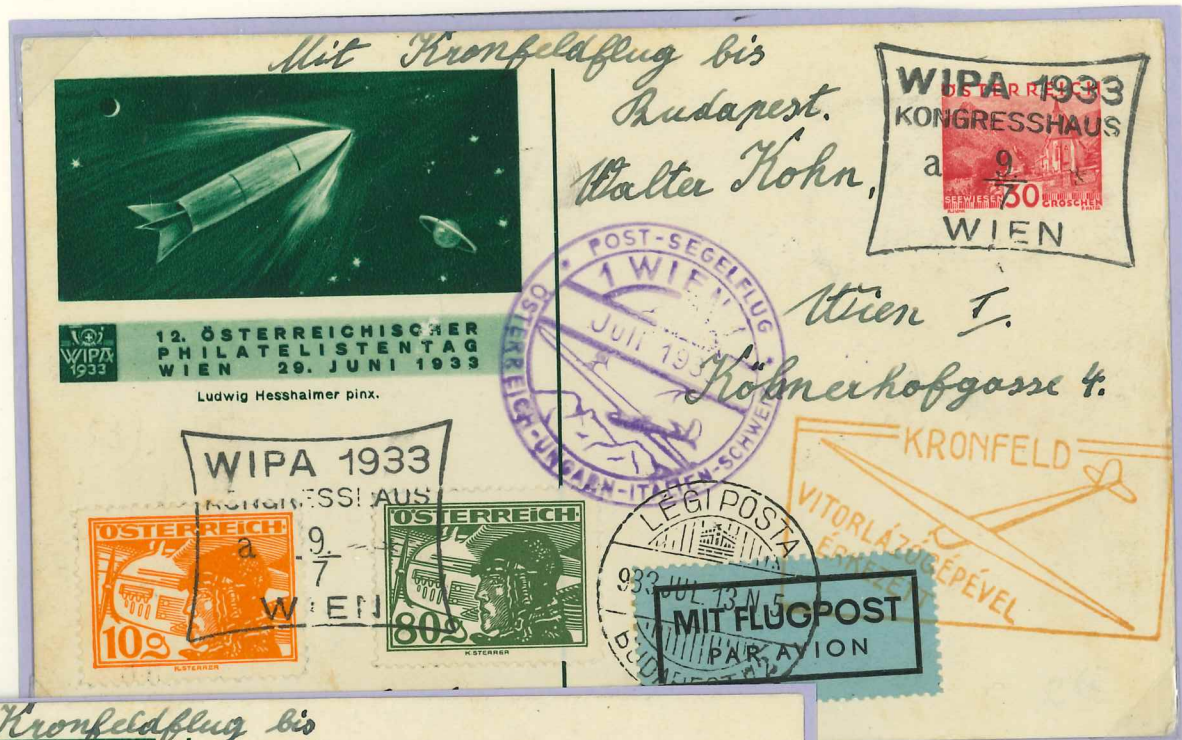


Glider mail

Kronfeld's second big glider flight in 1933 was made as part of the Vienna International Philatelic Exhibition [WIPA] held in July.

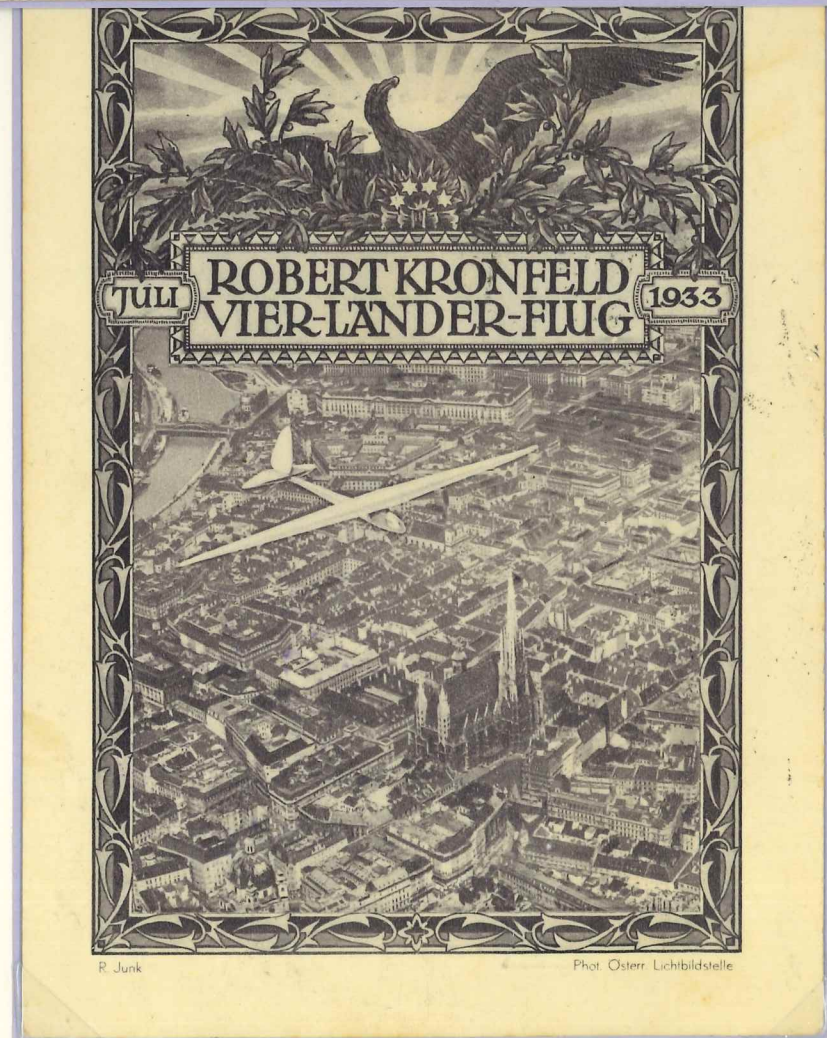
Kronfeld agreed to make a 'Four Countries' flight leaving Vienna's Aspern airfield on 14th July he flew to Budapest, Hungary, Trieste and Milan, Italy, Zurich, Switzerland, Innsbruck and Salzburg, Austria before arriving back in Vienna on 18th. Cards and letters were carried to all destinations.

In addition to the normal postage a surcharge was payable depending on the number of legs carried. To Budapest this was 90 groschen for cards and 1s80 for light letters. Each subsequent leg cost an additional 30g for cards and 60g for letters.



Above - cards to Budapest, postage 30g, surcharge 90g and Zurich - postage 30g, surcharge for three extra legs 1s80.

A special postal stationery flight card was produced at WIPA in three different colours, green, red-brown and mauve. The imprinted stamps were a normal stamp for postage and 2s airmail stamp for the surcharge for mail returning to Austria. The cost of the Vienna to Vienna flight was 2s70. Examples of both sides of the card are shown.



Austrian Airmail to 1938

Expansion throughout Europe

ÖLAG and other airlines worked individually and together to extend the airmail service throughout Europe. Early aircraft had a limited range and frequent stops enabled mail to be transferred to other flights as necessary.



Above – Card Vienna 7th September Munich, Berlin 8th.
Postage – Card 300 Kr, airmail fee 300 Kr.

Below – Letter 29th April 1924 first flight via Munich, Zurich 30th.
Postage – Letter 3,000 Kr, airmail fee (provisional) 3,400 Kr – the fee was later fixed at 1,800 Kr.



The early days



Above – Letter Vienna 13th September 1924, Munich, Fürth, Leipzig, Amsterdam, train to Antwerp 15th.
Postage – Letter 3,000 Kr, Airmail to Holland 2,400 Kr.

Below – Letter 16th May 1925, Nürnberg, Fürth 16th.
Postage – Letter 2,000Kr, Registration fee 4,000Kr, airmail fee 2,000Kr, 3rd weight letter.
Note date on cover incorrect, registration receipt shows posted 15th May.



Expansion throughout Europe

The French-Romanian airline became the Compagnie International de Navigatio Aerienne on 1st January 1925 [CIDNA]. They continued to operate flights from Paris to Vienna and beyond and also introduced new services in later years.



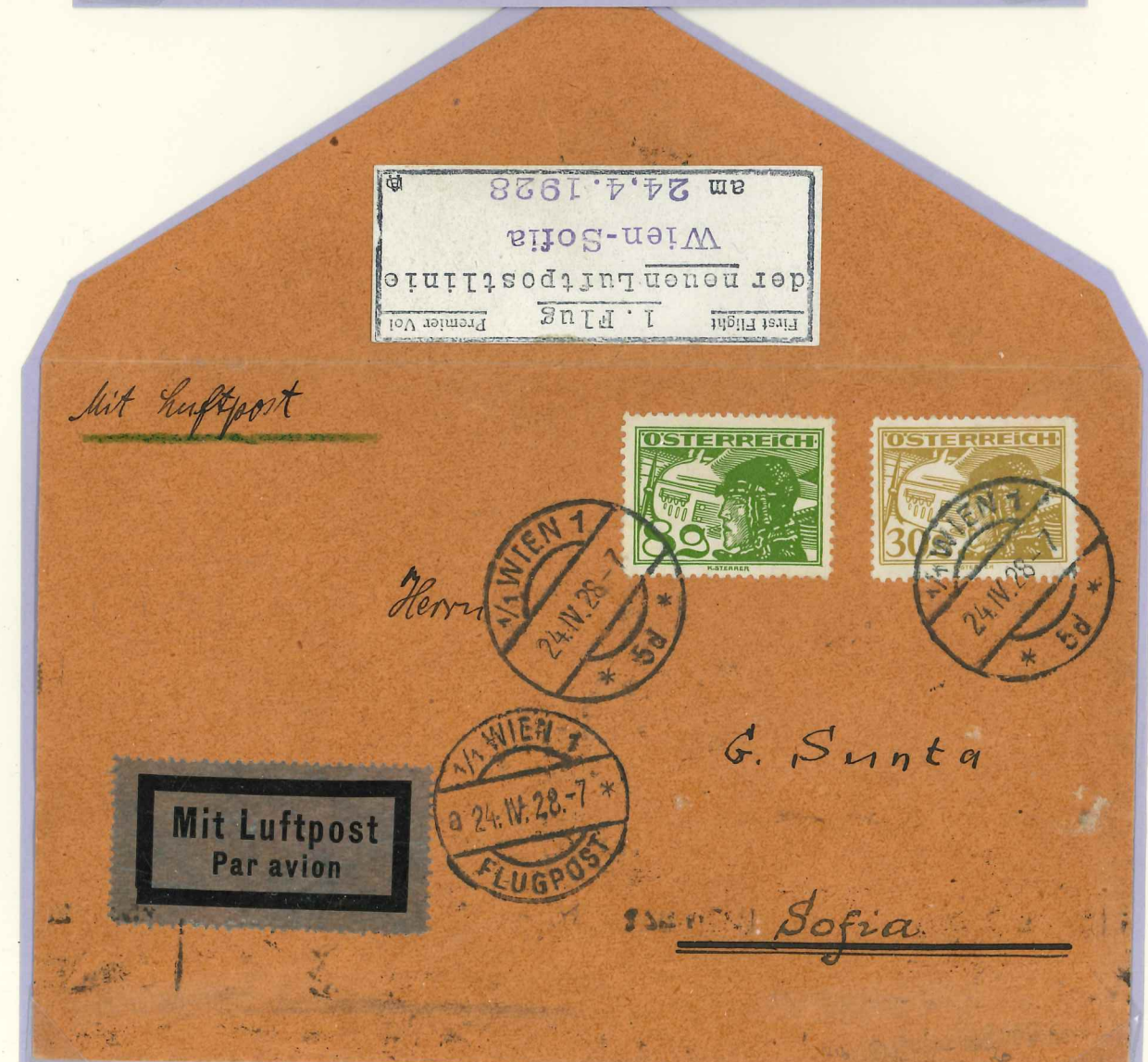
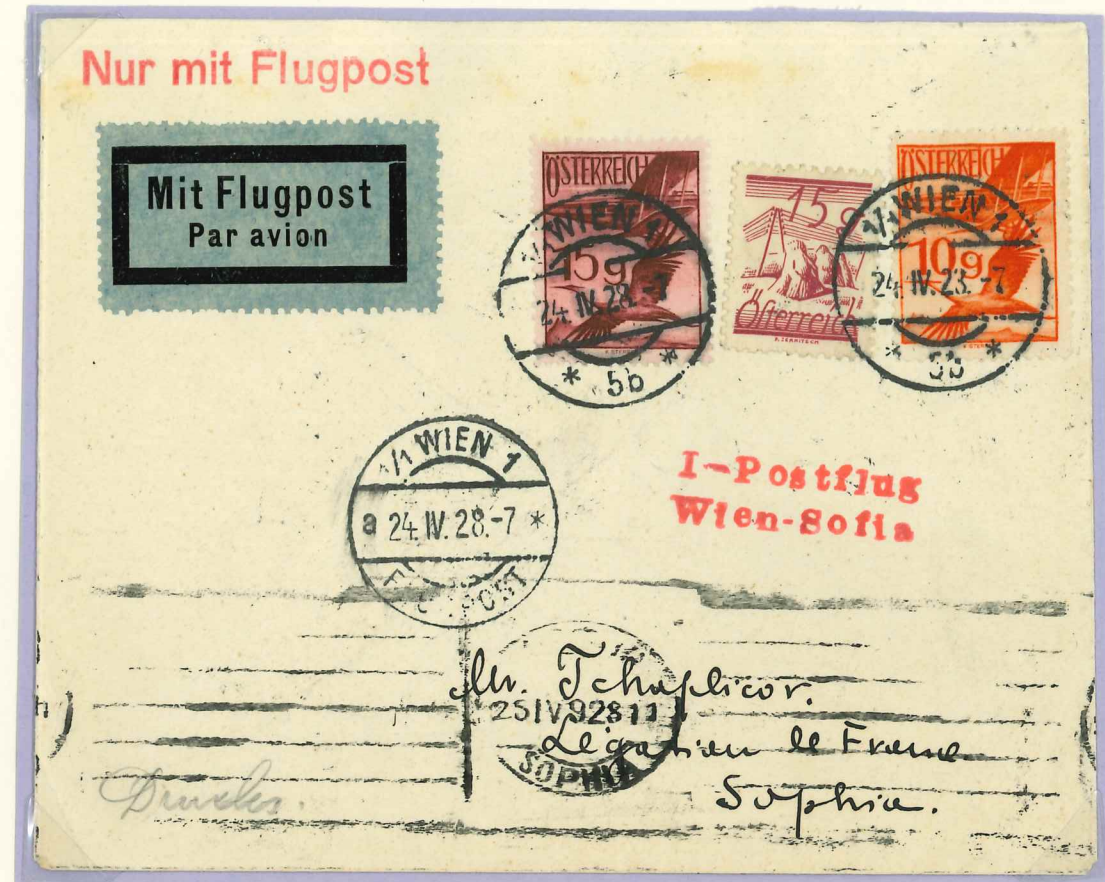
The regular CIDNA flight Paris, Strassburg, Nürnberg, Prague, Vienna and Budapest restarted on 26th April 1926 and was extended to Belgrade, Bucharest and Constantinople on 1st May. Leaving Vienna in the afternoon the mail had a stop-over in Budapest arriving in Constantinople the next evening.

Above – letter posted 6th May 1926 to Stamboul, left Vienna 7th arriving at it destination on 9th.
Postage – overseas letter 40g, airmail fee, European Turkey 30g.

Note the charity surcharge on the four special stamps is ignored for postal purposes.

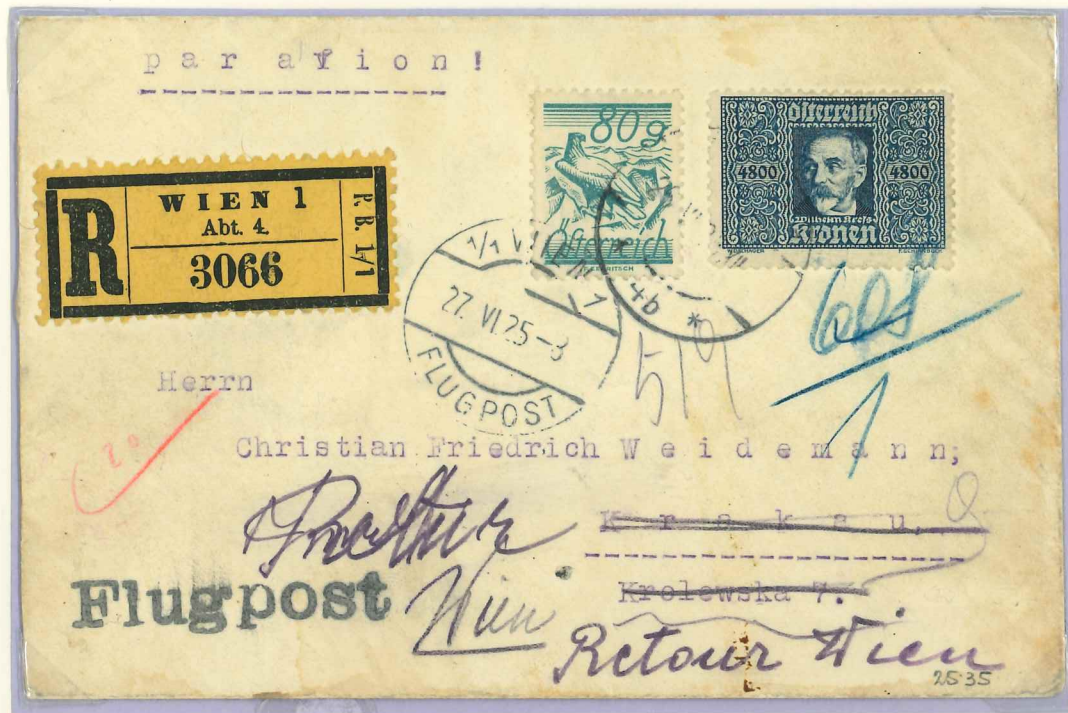
Aside – from 24th April 1928 a new service was introduced on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday with mail off-loaded at Bukarrest for a service to Sofia and Stamboul. The return flights were made on Monday, Wednesday and Friday.

Postage – both items – overseas printed paper 8g airmail fee for letter 30g.



Expansion throughout Europe

Because of hyper-inflation the Austrian Government re-valued the currency on 1st March 1925 at a rate of 1 Schilling (100 groschen) being equal to 10,000 Kronen. Mixed frankings of Kronen/Groschen stamps was allowed until 31st August 1925.



Above - Letter Vienna 27th June 1925, Cracow 27th.
Postage - Letter 30g, registration fee 40g, airmail fee 30g.- mixed franking overpaid for Poland.

Below - Letter Vienna 29th August 1925 to Klagenfurt.
Postage - Printed paper 1g, airmail fee 5g mixed franking



Currency re-valuation

New airmail stamps were introduced on 1st August with a mixture of small size depicting an airman and the Hansa Brandenburg C-1 aircraft (see previous item) and larger size depicting a De Haviland D.H. 34 with a Common Crane (see below).



Registered airmail cover dated 31st August 1925 from Vienna via Munich to Watergraafsmeer, Holland.
Postage - letter 40g, registration fee 40g (as paid in new regular stamps) airmail fee 15g or 1,500 krone.
The cover is excessively overpaid having examples of all the large size airmail stamps issued at that time plus four values from the previous issue for which this was the last day of validity.

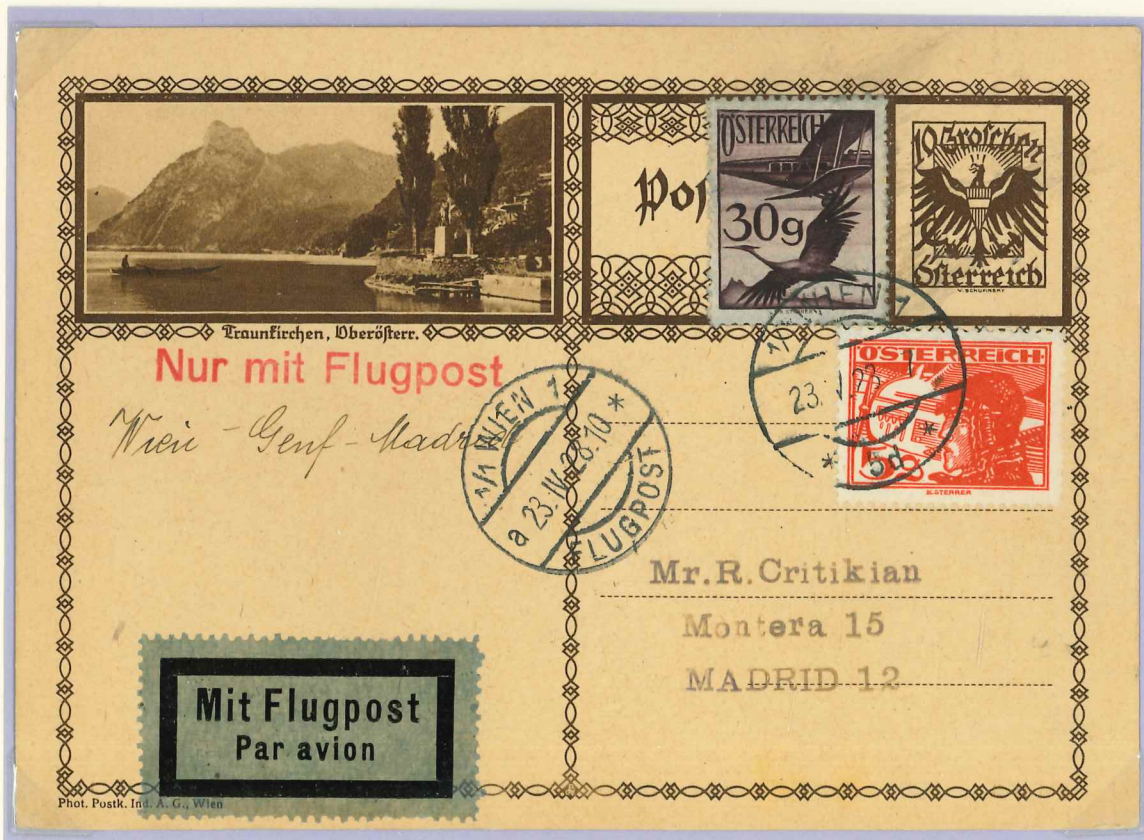
Expansion throughout Europe

ÖLAG extended their Vienna - Zürich - Geneva service to the south of France in 1927 and into Spain the following year.



Above - Card Vienna 1st July 1927, Zürich, Geneva first flight to Marseilles 2nd. Postage - Card 24g, airmail fee 20g

Below - Card Vienna 23rd April 1928 as above to Marseilles, first flight to Barcelona, Madrid 25th. Postage - as above



Switzerland and beyond

New routes from Vienna to Switzerland were opened in May 1928



Above - Card Vienna 21st May 1928 first flight (Salzburg), Innsbruck, Constance, (Zürich) by ÖLAG Postage - Printed paper 6g, airmail fee 10g, rates applicable to Germany

Below - Letter Vienna 14th May first flight Balair/AdAA Zürich, Biel, (Lausanne) Postage - Printed paper 8g, airmail fee 25g



Expansion throughout Europe

Mail was carried to Great Britain using various routes.



Above – Letter posted Vienna 31st September 1925, flown 1st October via Munich 1st, Cologne 2nd, arrived 3rd -London (red registered) and Battersea (black registered) cancels on reverse.

Postage – Letter printed paper 8g, registration fee 40g, airmail fee 15g.

Note – the sender of this letter suggested the Vienna-Zurich route but this ceased after 31st September for the 1925-26 winter season so the Munich routing was used.

Mail to Great Britain

A new weekday service to London was introduced in 1929



Above – Letter Vienna 1st June 1929, first flight on new weekday service, depart Vienna 8.30am, Berlin for KLM service Rotterdam, London arriving 9.00pm.

Postage – letter 40g, airmail fee 30g.

Below – Letter Vienna 1st June 1937, no transit or arrival marks. Sender suggested Vienna- Prague- Rotterdam- London route

Postage – letter 60g airmail fee 40g

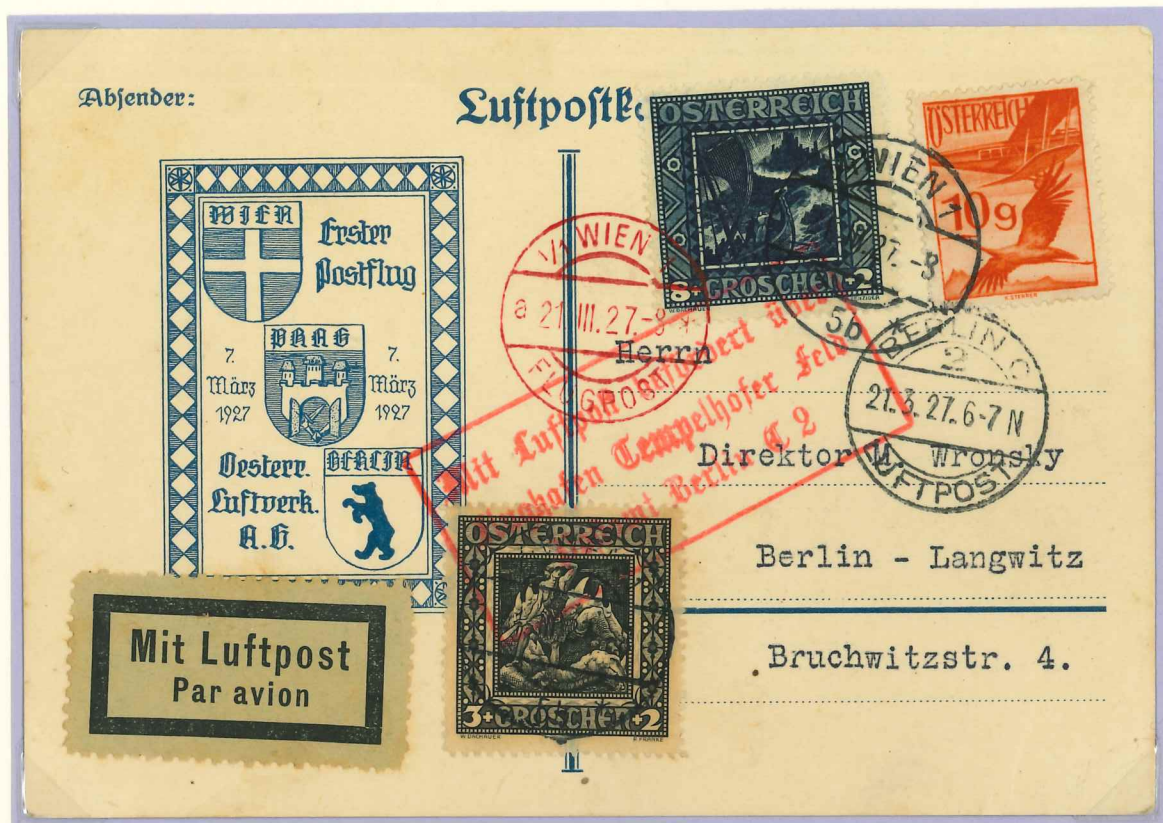


Expansion throughout Europe

A new route Vienna - Prague - Dresden - Berlin was planned by a group of airlines including ÖLAG to operate from 7th March 1927 but due to unforeseen circumstances the first flight did not take place until 21st March.

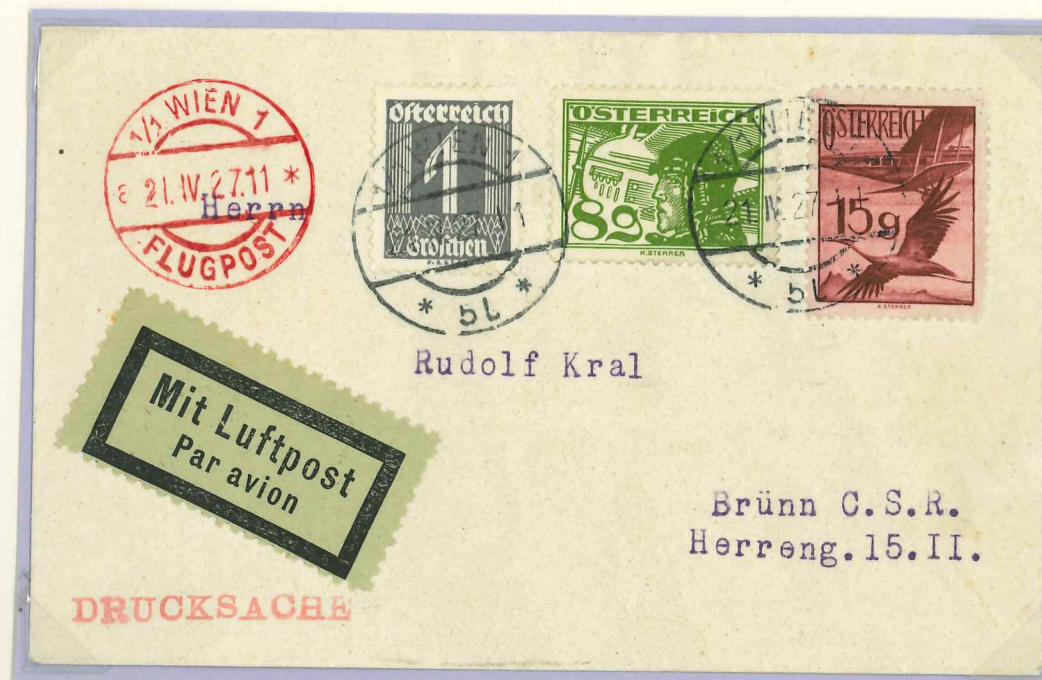
New routes to Berlin

On 21st April 1927 Deutsche Luft Hansa A.G. (DLH) opened up a second Vienna - Berlin service via Brünn, Gleiwitz and Breslau.



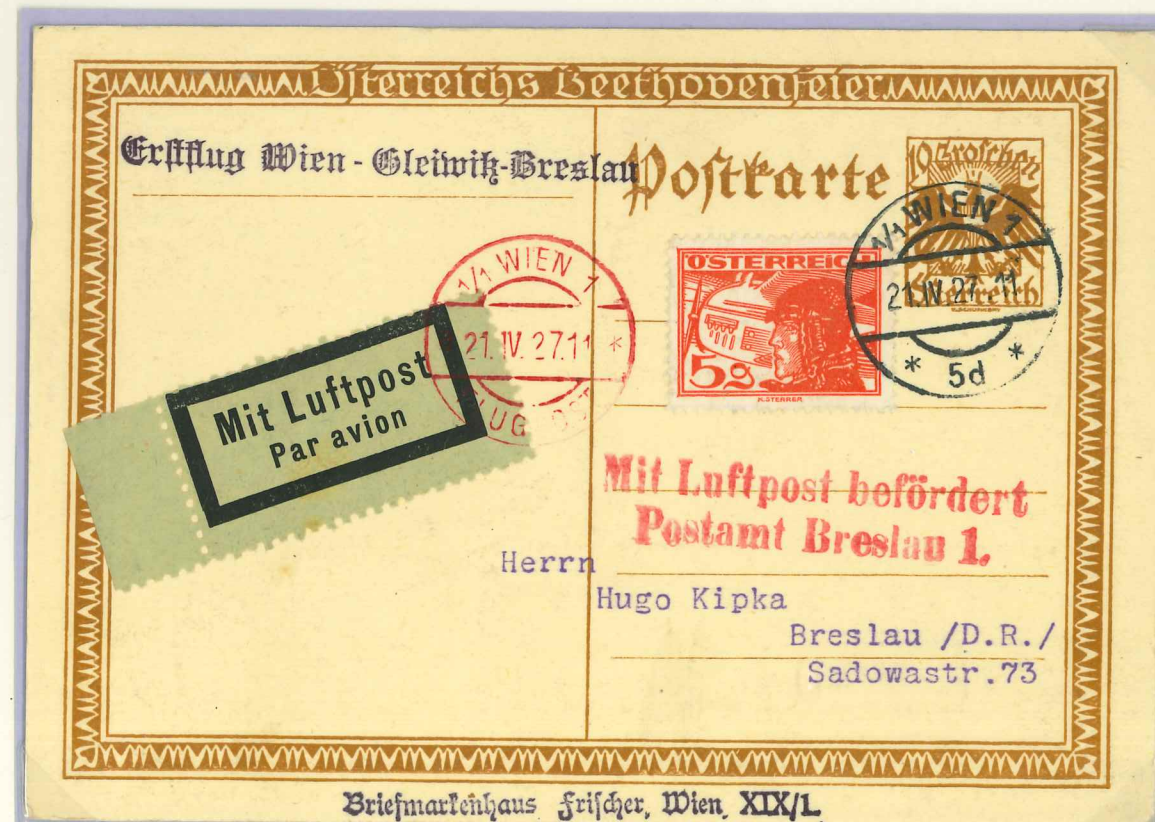
Top - Blue First Flight card prepared for 7th March Vienna - Berlin carried 21st March.

Below - Red First Flight card prepared for and carried 21st March Vienna - Berlin - Danzig 22nd. Postage both flights - Card 10g, airmail fee 10g.



Above - Letter Vienna - Brünn, Postage - Printed paper 8g, airmail fee 16g.

Below - Card Vienna - Breslau. Both carried on the first day. Postage - Printed paper 5g, airmail fee 10g.



Briefmarkenhaus Freischer, Wien, XIX/L

Expansion throughout Europe

Berlin became a transfer hub for mail from Austria to Scandinavia.



Above - Card Vienna 19th April 1927, Berlin, first flight on extended route to Copenhagen and Malmö (Sweden). Postage - Card 24g, airmail fee to Germany 10g, supplement to Sweden 10g.

Below - Card Vienna 30th April 1928 above route extended via Stockholm to Helsinki 1st May (returned 3rd May) Postage - Card 24g, airmail fee 20g.



Beyond Berlin

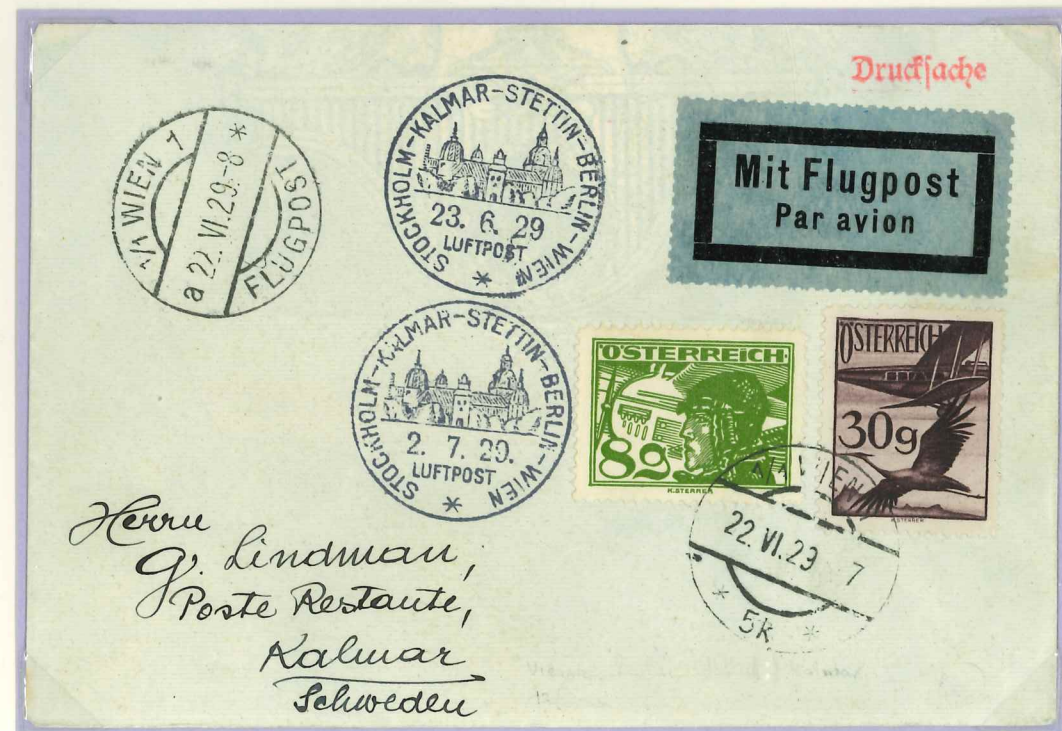


Above - Card Vienna 21st April 1927 DLH to Berlin, DNL to Stettin, Copenhagen, Göteborg, Oslo 23rd. [Address on reverse]

Postage - Card 24g, airmail fee to Germany 10g supplement to Norway 10g.

Below - Letter Vienna 22nd June 1929 first DLH flight Berlin, Stettin, Kalmar 23rd, poste restante and sent back on first return flight Stockholm 2nd July Stettin, Stressed, then train to Berlin, air to Vienna.

Postage - Printed paper 8g, airmail fee 30g.



Expansion throughout Europe

During 1927 the routes via Berlin were extended to more distant destinations with the first flight via Latvia to Moscow taking place on 6th September 1927.



Above – Letter Vienna 6th September 1927 DHL to Berlin, DERLUFT to Danzig, Riga, Moscow 7th September (Russian calendar)
Postage – Letter 40g, airmail fee to Germany 15g, supplement to Moscow 50g (all paid with normal stamps).



And into Russia

Airmail routes extended from Moscow into central Russia in 1929 and Afghanistan in 1934.



Above – Card Vienna 1st July 1929, Berlin, Riga, Moscow, first flight to Swediowsk, Omsk and Irkutsk 9th July
Postage – Card 24g, registration fee 60g, airmail fee 100g.

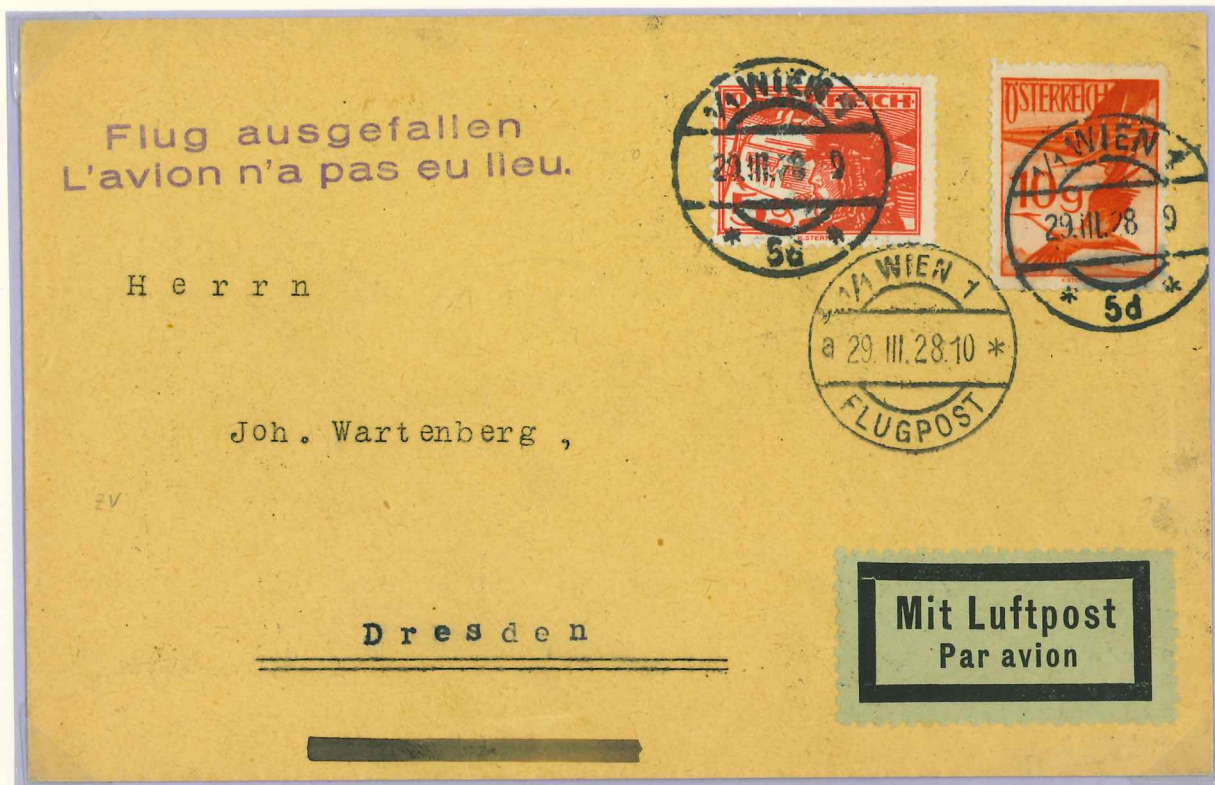
Below – Card – Graz 26th November 1934, Vienna 27th, Berlin, Moscow, first flight to Tashkent, Tschita and Kabul.
Postage – Card 30g, airmail fee 55g (on reverse)



Austrian Airmail to 1938

Expansion throughout Europe

A number of cachets, usually in German and French, were applied to mail accepted for a flight that did not go for operational reasons and some examples are shown.

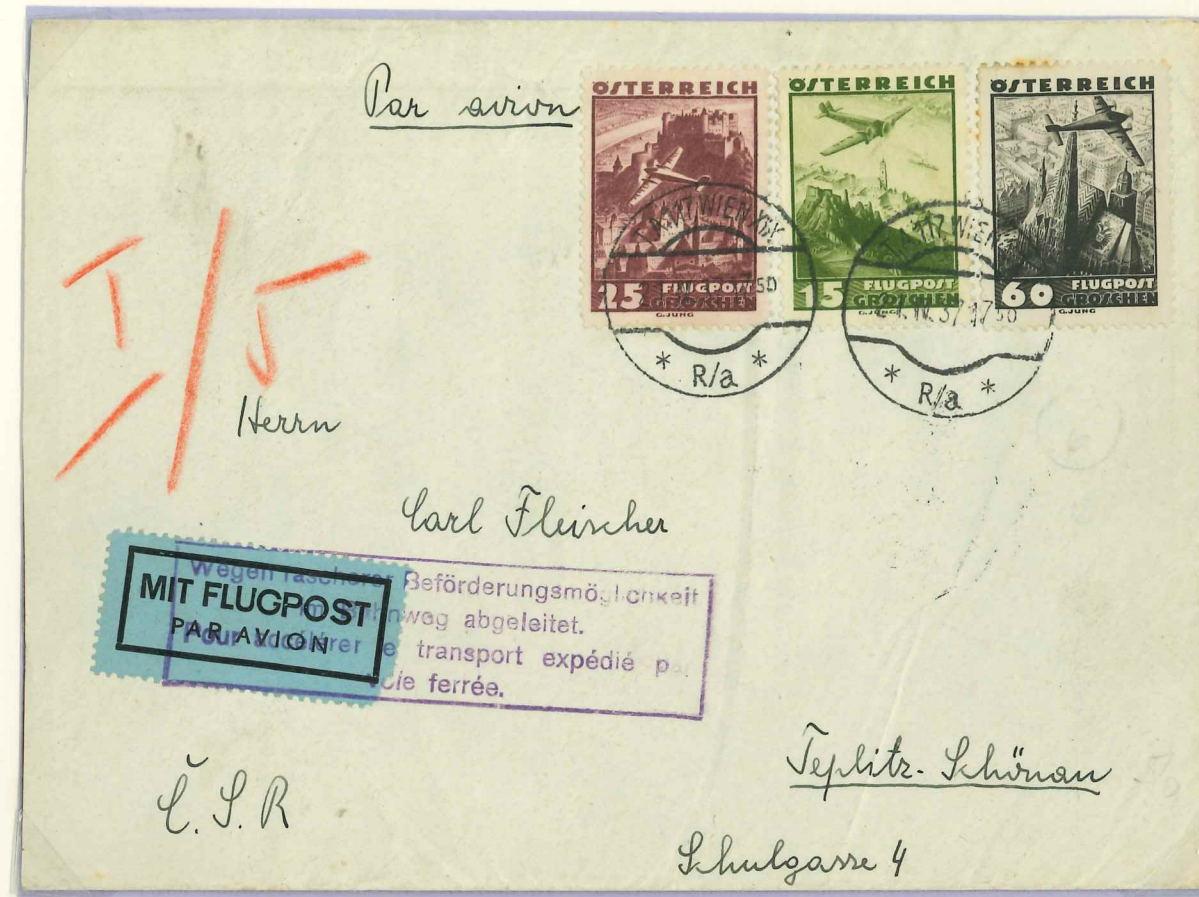


Above – printed paper envelope posted Vienna 29th March 1928, Cachet 'Flight failed' Postage – inland printed paper 5g, airmail fee printed paper to Germany 10g.

Below - letter posted Klagenfurt 29th November 1930. Cachet 'No flights on Sunday' so would have been sent by rail to Lindau. Postage - inland letter 20g, airmail fee 20g.



Additional markings



Above – letter posted Vienna 21st April 1937. Cachet 'It will be quicker by rail' sent to Teplitz, CSR. Postage – special rate 45g, airmail fee 30g.

Below - card posted Vienna 28th July 1936. Cachet 'Arrived after departure of flight' so would have been sent by rail to Warsaw. Postage – special rate card 25g, airmail fee 20g.



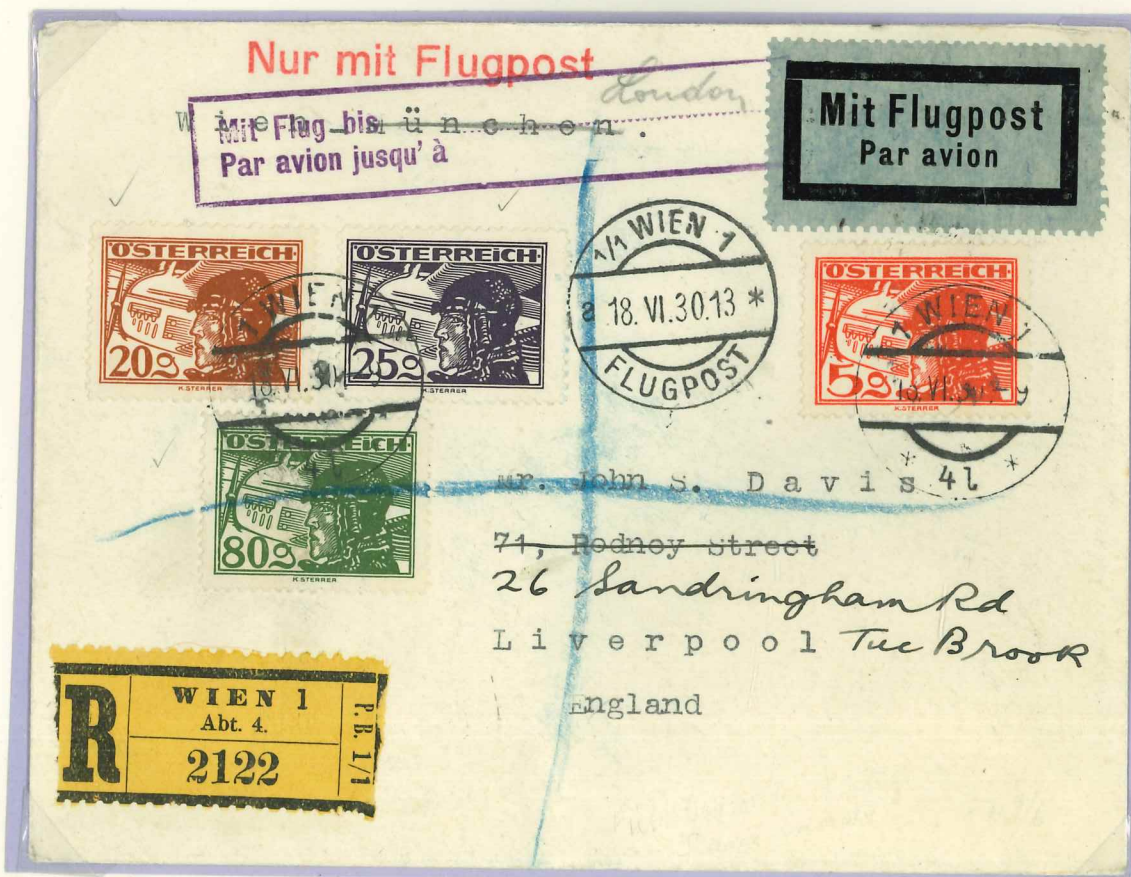
Expansion throughout Europe

The nature of aircraft meant that they could only travel relatively short distances and this meant mail was often transferred from one aircraft or route to another. A cachet was sometimes applied to indicate the transit point.



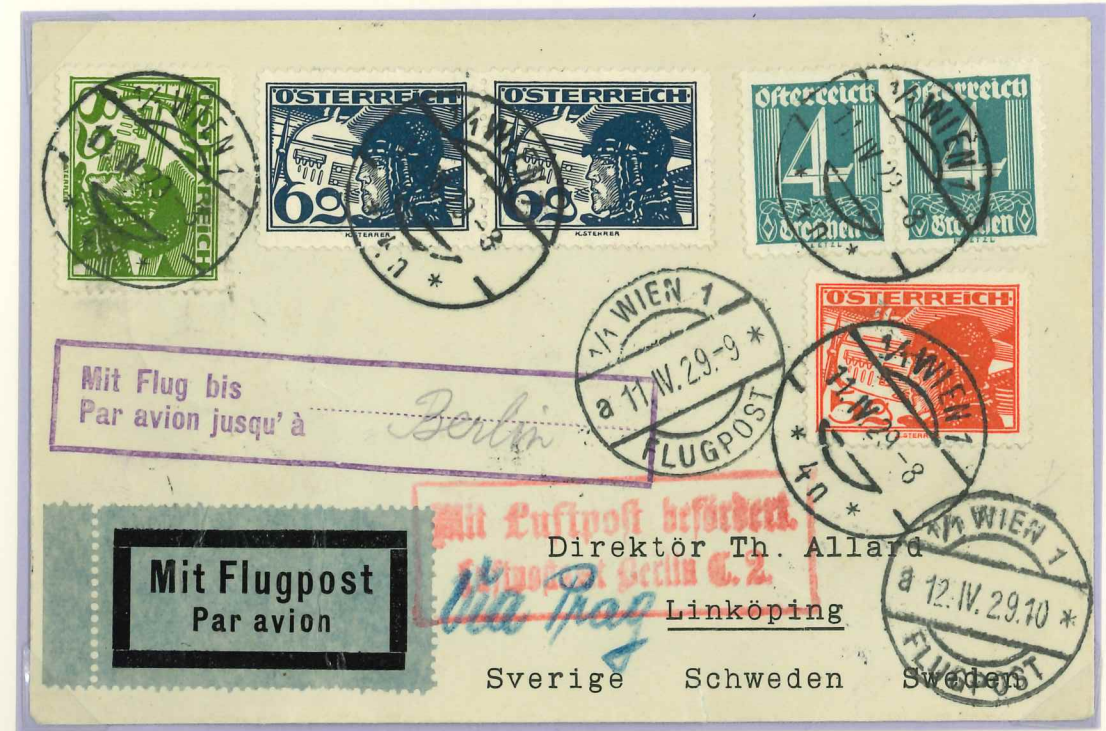
Above – card posted Salzburg 1st September 1930. Cachet suggests via Berlin. Card sent via Vienna [airport cancel] to Berlin, arrival cachet and cancellation, probably continue to Stockholm by air. Postage – overseas card 24g, airmail fee 20g.

Below – letter posted Vienna 18th June 1930. Cachet suggests via Munich then London, arrived Liverpool 12th June. Postage – overseas letter 40g, registration fee 60g, airmail fee 30g.



Additional markings

Alternatively there might be two routes from A to B and the most suitable, or the earliest flight is indicated.



Above – printed paper letter posted Vienna 11th April 1929. Cachet suggests via Berlin and blue mark the flight via Prague to Berlin. The daily direct flight having left before the letter was received. Postage – overseas printed paper 5g airmail printed paper fee 30g [as letters].

Below – letter posted Vienna 17th May 1930. Cachet indicates via Innsbruck rather than Munich. Postage – 2nd weight overseas letter 64g, registration fee 60g, special delivery fee 80g, airmail fee 50g



Expansion throughout Europe

The provincial airports did not have air links to all countries in Europe so mail often had to be routed via Vienna and this could add an extra day to the journey.

The covers shown here have additional transit markings on the reverse.



Above – letter posted Graz 10th September 1931, arrived Vienna 10th at 17.00, flown to Berlin on 11th at 10.00am, arrived 16.00. Flown onto Stockholm, arrived 12th and reached Norrbystrand 13th.
Postage – overseas letter 40g, airmail fee 30g

Aside –

Top – letter posted Innsbruck 30th August 1932, flown to Vienna 31st where it arrived at 10.00am, flown on at 16.00 to Berlin. Flown on to Riga and arrived Limbasch, Latvia 2nd September.
Postage – overseas letter 40g, overseas registration fee 60g, airmail fee 30g.

Bottom – letter posted Graz 29th December 1936, transit Vienna 30th. Sent via Paris arrived St. Just-Ardèche, southern France 2nd January 1937.
Postage – overseas letter 60g, overseas registration fee 70g, airmail fee 40g.

Transit markings



Expansion throughout Europe

Because of the limited services airmail did not always provide the quickest service.



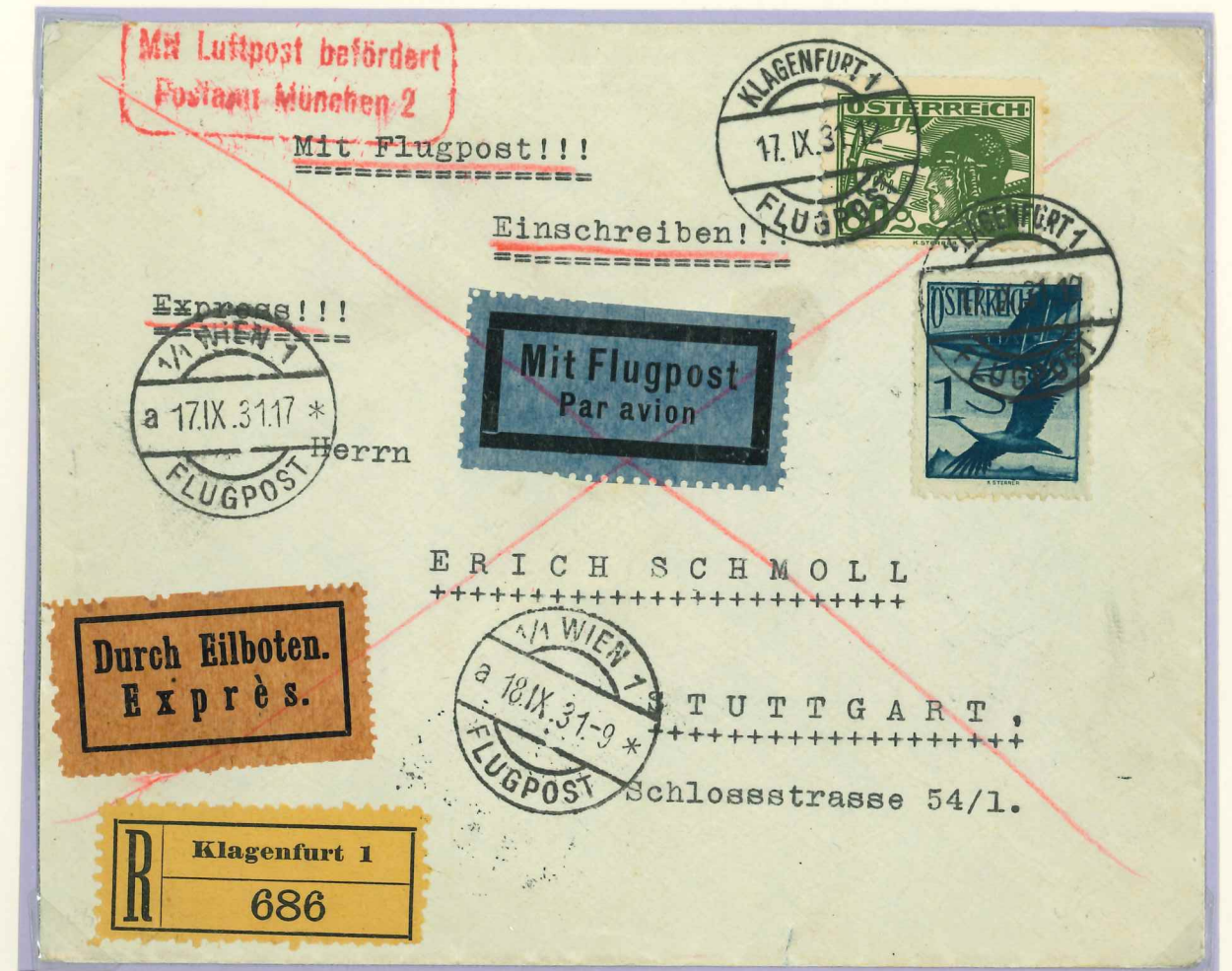
Above – Letter Klagenfurt 12th August 1931, Vienna 13th, Stuttgart 14th.
Postage – Letter 20g, registration fee 30g, airmail fee 40g.

Below – copy of reverse



Is airmail quickest?

A second item from the same correspondence as aside.



Above – letter Klagenfurt 17th September, Vienna 17th, Munich 18th, train to Stuttgart arrival 18th.
Postage – as aside plus express fee 100% of charges 90g.

Below – copy of reverse.

