

Russia Unpaid Mail to France via Prussia 1858-1871

Boxed P.35; P.33; P 38 markings

The 1847 Franco-Prussian Postal Convention allowed for mail to be received unpaid at departure. For mail from Russia, France had to pay Prussia 3fr 80c /30gm - this included the Russian postage to the border [10kopecks = 3 Sgr] plus transit postage. On receipt, the addressee had to pay these costs as well as the costs from the French border. These regulations applied to totally unpaid mail or mail endorsed or stamped "Porto" which indicated that the Russian postage was paid. The 1853 Postal Convention formalised the use of "Aus Russland" markings which were to be applied at the Prussian border.

Franco-Prussian Postal Conventions 1858-1871.

For unpaid letters from Russia and addressed to France, the French Postal authorities had to pay Prussia 77.5 centimes / 15gm. Article 22 states "The Prussian Exchange Offices have to mark in black ink on the mail described in the above accounts under articles 34 to 42 of Prussian credit a marking with the letter P [Prussia] followed by the account article. These are the **Boxed P-Numeral** markings. They were applied at Aachen and represent an accounting process between Prussia and France not Russia.

1 July 1858 - 31 December 1861	P.35.
1 January 1862 - 31 December 1865	P.33.
1 January 1866 - 31 December 1871	P.38.

This exhibit demonstrates the "Boxed P-numeral" for each of the three accounting periods 1858-1871, the route from Russia and the French entry points. The use of these "Boxed P" markings ceased with the signing of the Franco-Russian Postal Treaty effective 1 January 1872.



Map showing routings of mail from Russia via Prussia to Aachen then to France

References:

- "The mystery of P.33, P.35, P38..." Michel Lipshultz & Charles Godard, British Journal of Russian Philately 39, 1966
- "The Boxed P-numeral Marka" Part IX "A reappraisal of XIX century handling of mail from Eastern Europe" V Denys Vandervelde. The Philatelist March 1967.
- "Catalogue des Marques de Passage" J Van der Linden, 1993
- "The boxed "P-Numeral" markings on Russian mail" A R Marshall, POCHTA 28, July 2000.
- "Tables of French Postal Rates 1849 to date" Derek Richardson, 2nd edition, 1996.

With the extension of the Prussian railway network links towards Russia and Poland, transport time was significantly reduced until the Steamer route via Stettin offered no advantage. This route was established in the late 1830's as was the steamer route via Lubeck. From the mid-1850's, mail on the route St Petersburg - Stettin - Berlin required an endorsement "*via Stettin*" to be written on the letter.



St Petersburg Letter written 6/18 June 1859 and endorsed "*via Stettin*"

No Porto marking No St Petersburg datestamp
"3" = postage 3 Sgr = 10 kopecks - Russian postage to Border

Stettin 21 6 Boxed **Aus Russland** applied at Prussian Post Office in Stettin
P.35. - Aachen

Prusse 3 Valenciennes 23 Jun 59 [Paris]; Paris 23 Jun 59; Paris-Bordeaux 23 Jun 59; Bordeaux 24 Jun 59.

"1.10" on back = total collect postage. 11 decimes collect 6 days

Postal Convention 1 July 1858 - 31 December 1861. Boxed P.35.

The French postage for unpaid mail [1 January 1854 - 31 December 1861] was 30c to 7.5gm then 60c to 15gm.



Moscow Letter written 7/19 October 1858 to Bordeaux

Moscow 8 OKT 1858
PORTO handstamp
applied Moscow.

Aus Russland

MINDEN / 25 OC /
DEUTZ Prussian railway
Post No. 8]
P.35. Aachen

Prusse 3 Valenciennes
26 Oct 58 [Paris]
[Entered France at
Valenciennes]
Paris 26 Oct 58;
Paris-Bordeaux 26 Oct 58;
Bordeaux 27 Oct 58

11 decimes collect postage
7 days

Fancy boxed PORTO
handstamp applied
Moscow. [no CDS]

"3" [Russian postage to
Border = 10 Kopecks]

No Prussian TPO [Closed
mail to Aachen]

P.35. Aachen

Prusse 3 Valenciennes
22 May 59 [Paris]
Paris 22 May 59;
Paris-Bordeaux 22 May 59;
Bordeaux 23 May 59

11 decimes collect postage
9 days



Moscow Letter written 2 / 14 May 1859 to Bordeaux

Mail originating from the Odessa area for France had two possible routes - via Prussia or via Austria. Mail to Italian states was usually sent via Vienna as was some mail to the South of France - Marseilles. The majority was sent via Prussia on the expanding rail network.



Berdiansk Letter written 21 January / 2 February 1860 via Odessa to Marseilles

Berdiansk 2 line 21 Jan 1860; Porto "3" indicating Russian postage paid to border
Odessa lozenge D/S 23 Jan 1860 Boxed PORTO
Breslau - Berlin TPO datestamp AUS RUSSLAND boxed marking - applied on Prussian TPO
P.35. - Aachen

Prusse 3 Erquelines [mail entered France from Prussia] - applied in Paris 21 Feb 60;
Paris 21 Feb 60; Paris-Marseilles TPO 21 Feb 60; Marseilles 22 Feb 60
11 decimes collect postage 19 days

Postal Convention 1 January 1862 - 31 December 1865. Boxed P.33.

This Postal Convention was signed 9 July 1861 to be effective from 1 January 1862. The amount to be paid by France to Prussia remained unchanged but the account number was changed from P.35 to **P.33**.

The French postage for unpaid mail [1 January 1862 - 1 September 1871] was 30c to 10gm and 60c 10-20gm letters.

This letter is apparently dated within the tenure of the previous Postal Convention [1858 - 31 December 1861]. It demonstrates a problem with the Russian calendar in use at the time. The letter is dated **27 December 1861** [Old Style] = **8 January 1862** [new Style].



St Petersburg Letter written 27 December 1861 / 8 January 1862 to Bordeaux.

St Petersburg - Warsaw TPO 27 Dec 1861 "3" - Russian postage to border

Prussian Railway Office No. 11 - Eydkuhnen - Bromberg TPO 10 II

Aus Russland in red - attributed to the Cologne-Verviers TPO

P.33. - Aachen

Prusse 3 Valenciennes 12 Jan 62; Paris 14 Jan 62; Bordeaux 14 Jan 62.

11 decimes collect postage. **6 days**

When the Eastern railway [Ostbahn] Berlin - Bromberg - Königsberg was extended on 15 August 1860 to Eydkuhnen to meet the St Petersburg - Warsaw railway, mail sorting shifted eastwards and transit times were reduced

Odessa 1862 1/22

Porto on back

"3" postage to border

Aus Russland Eisenb. Post

- Bur V 11 2

[Prussian Railway No. 5]

P.33. Aachen

Prusse 3 Valenciennes

14 Feb 62 [Paris]

[Entered France at

Valenciennes]

Paris 14 Feb 62

11 decimes collect postage

11 days



Odessa Letter written 22 January / 3 February 1862 to Paris

With the completion of the railway link between St Petersburg - Warsaw and the Prussian line to Berlin - Cologne - Verviers, Closed mail between St Petersburg and Aachen became possible - the mail was pre-sorted at St Petersburg rather than on the Prussian TPO's



St Petersburg 26 Jun 1862

Fancy boxed **PORTO**
handstamp

No Prussian TPO [Closed
mail to Aachen]

P.33. Aachen

Prusse 3 Valenciennes

12 Jul 62 [Paris]

Paris 12 Jul 62;

Paris-Bordeaux 13 Jul 62;

Bordeaux 13 Jul 62

11 decimes collect postage

5 days

St Petersburg Letter written 26 June / 8 July 1862 to Bordeaux

Rostov on Don 17 Mar 1864

Endorsed "via St
Petersburg"

No St Petersburg d/s
No Prussian TPO
Closed mail Rostov - Aachen

P.33. Aachen

Prussic 3 Erquelines
10 Apr 64 [Paris]
Paris 10 Apr 64
Marseilles 11 Apr 64

11 decimes collect postage

14 days



Rostov-on-Don letter written 17/29 March 1884 to Marseilles

Berdiansk Letter written 14/26 September 1864 to Marseilles



Berdiansk 14 SEP 1864
Porto 3 in Oval 36 x 13mm
[Payment Russian postage]

Odessa 1864 9 19
Boxed **PORTO**

Breslau - Gortitz 11 10
section Prussian TPO

P.33. Aachen

Prussic 3 Erquelines
13 Oct 64 [Paris]
Paris 13 Oct 64
Marseilles 14 Oct 64

11 decimes collect postage

19 days from Berdiansk
13 days from Odessa

Moscow 16 Sep 1864

"*Pro*" = Porto

"3" postage to border

Aus Russland in red sorted
on Cologne - Verviers TPO

P.33. Aachen

Prusse 3 Valenciennes

3 Oct 64 [Paris]

Paris 3 Oct 64

Bordeaux 4 Oct 64

11 decimes collect postage

6 days



Moscow Letter written 16/28 September 1864 to Bordeaux



Odessa Letter written 18 December 1864 [N.S.] to Marseilles

Odessa rhomboid datestamp with *Porto 3* in oval on reverse. Bromberg 25 12 Berlin TPO;

P.33. - Aachen; Prusse 3 Erquelines 27 Dec 64; Paris 27 Dec 64; Marseilles 28 Dec 64

11 decimes collect postage. 10 days

The usual route for mail from South Russia was via Myslowitz and Breslau to Berlin. The Postal treaties allowed for mail to be sent on other routes if that would be faster. This letter has been carried via Warsaw connecting to Otloczyn and Thorn to Bromberg. This route was completed during 1861.

With the extension of the Prussian railway Berlin - Königsberg via Eydkuhnen to join the St Petersburg - Warsaw railway, Russian mail could be in France in 4-5 days.



St Petersburg Letter written 27 January / 8 February 1865 to Bordeaux

St Petersburg - Warsaw Postwagon No. 5 - 27 Jan 1862
PORTO applied on Russian TPO; "3" = Russian postage paid

Aus Russland in red and Eydkuhnen 10-2 II Bromberg Prussian TPO

P.33. - Aachen

Prusse 3 Erquelines 12 Feb 65; Paris 12 Feb 65; Paris-Bordeaux TPO 12 Feb 65; Bordeaux 13 Feb 65

11 decimes collect; 5 days

Odessa 1864 12/24

Porto 3 in elongated oval

No Berdiansk cancellation
privately carried to Odessa

Aus Russland in black
Breslau-Berlin TPO 17 1

P.33. Aachen

Prusse 4 Forbach [entered

France via Forbach]

19 Jan 65 [Paris]

Paris 19 Jan 65

Marseilles 20 Jan 65

11 decimes collect postage

11 days



Berdiansk Letter written 24 December / 9 January 1865 to Marseilles



Odessa Letter written 14/26 April 1865 to Marseilles

Odessa rhomboid datestamp with Porto in circle on reverse. "3" postage paid to border
Aus Russland Eis: Post Bureau V 15 [Kattowitz - Breslau section];

P.33. - Aachen;

Prusse 3 Erquelines 4 May 65; Paris 4 May 65; Lyon-Marseilles TPO 5 May 65 Marseilles 5 may 65
11 decimes collect postage. 9 days

Postal Convention 1 January 1866 - 31 December 1871. Boxed P.38.

This Postal Convention was signed in July 1865 to be effective from 1 January 1866. The amount to be paid by France to Prussia remained unchanged but the account number was changed from P.33 to P.38.

The French postage for unpaid mail [1 January 1862 - 1 September 1871] was 30c to 10gm and 60c 10-20gm letters. From 1 September the unpaid letter rate to 10gm increased to 40c while the 10-20gm remained at 60c.



Odessa letter written 6/18 March 1866 to Marseilles

Odessa rhomboid d/s 1866 Mar 7; PORTO. In 30mm circle [Odessa] "3"
Aus Russland 27 3 Breslau Berlin Prussian TPO P.38. - Aachen

Prusse 4 Forbach 29 Mar 66 [to France at Forbach cancel applied in Paris]; Paris 29 Mar 66; Marseilles 30 Mar 66.
11 decimes collect postage 11 days.



St Petersburg Letter written 15 / 27 October 1866 to Bordeaux

St Petersburg 16 Oct 1866; **Porto** St Petersburg-Warsaw Postwagon 5 16 Oct 1866

Aus Russland uber Bur. XI Edk.Brg Porto 29 10 66 - Eydkuhen - Bromberg Railway Post No. 11
P.38. - Aachen

Prusse 3 Erquelines 31 Oct 66 [Paris]; Paris - Bordeaux TPO 2 Nov 66
11 decimes collect; 5 days

Outer letter-sheet of double weight letter. It has been charged 2fr 20 centimes in France [22] so the letter is in the second weight band of 10-20gm. There is no indication that it was treated as double weight in Russia so weighed 10-15gm. The French internal rate for unpaid letters 10-20gm was 60c. The French Post Office paid Prussia 77.5 centimes / 15gm. Collect postage was 22 centimes leaving a French profit of 82.5c



Mariupol Letter written 7 / 19 May 1868 to Marseilles

Mariupol 7 May 1868; No Porto marking but endorsed "*unpaid*" No transit Russian markings

Aus Russland uber Eisenb. Post Bur XI Porto 29 5 68 - Bromberg - Alexandovo section Railway Post No. 11
P.38. - Aachen

Prusse 3 Erquelines 30 May 68 [Paris]; Lyon - Marseilles TPO 1 Jun 68; Marseilles 1 Jun 68
22 decimes collect; 12 days



St Petersburg outer letter-sheet 14/28 May 1868 to Rheims

St Petersburg - Warsaw
day train 14 May 1868

PORTO

"6" deleted

Aus Russland Bur.XI
EDK.BRG PORTO 27 5
68

P.38. Aachen

Prussie Strasbourg

29 May 68

Reference records this
only used 1848

Strasbourg - Paris 29 May
68

Rheims 20 May 68

"11" decimes collect
postage



Moscow Letter written 27 October / 9 November 1868 to Bordeaux

Moscow 27 Oct 1868 Sender C.Depret Moscow; "**PJ**" postage paid to border;
No Russian or Prussian TPO markings - Closed mail Moscow to Aachen - P.38.

Prusse 3 Erquelines 12 Nov 68 [Paris]; Paris - Bordeaux TPO 12 Nov 68; Bordeaux 13 Nov.
11 decimes collect; 4 days

St Petersburg 11 Jan 1870

Boxed Cyrillic
UNFRANKED

St Petersburg - Warsaw day
train 11 Jan 1868

"3"

Aus Russland Bur.XI
EDK.BRG PORTO 24 1 70

P.38. Aachen

Prussic 3 Erquelines
26 Jan 70 [Paris]

Reference records this only
used 1867

Bordeaux 27 Jan 70

"11" decimes collect

4 days



St Petersburg Letter written 11/23 January 1870 to Bordeaux



St Petersburg Letter written 7 / 19 December 1871 to Bordeaux

St Petersburg 7 Dec 1871; Endorsed "porto" St Petersburg - Warsaw day train 7 Dec 1871
Aus Russland Bur.XI EDK.BRG PORTO 20 12 71; P.38. Aachen

Prussic 3 Erquelines 20 Dec 71 [Paris] Reference records this only used 1867
Bordeaux 23 Dec 71 "11" decimes collect postage

4 days

The treatment of unpaid mail from Russia via Prussia to France between July 1, 1858 and December 31, 1871 was governed by a series of postal Conventions. All mail was to receive a Boxed P Number [35, 33, 38] at Aachen [Border office] to indicate that correct accounting procedures had been followed.

Of the 336 Russian unpaid letters to France during Postal Conventions of which I have records - I record one [from 1870] without a Boxed P Number - should have had P.38.



Moscow letter written 15 April 1870 [N.S.] to Bordeaux

Moscow datestamp and dated lozenge 5 Apr 1870; Oval Cyrillic **UNFRANKED** "3" postage to border
Closed mail to Aachen as no Russian or Prussian TPO **No Boxed P.38. marking applied**
Prusse 3 Erquelines 21 Apr 70; Paris - Bordeaux TPO 21 Apr 70; Bordeaux 22 Apr 70.
 11 collect postage 4 days

French Entry mark	Van der Linden use	Exhibit dates	% of records
Prusse 3 Valenciennes [Paris]	1848-1856	26/10/58 - 3/10/64	29
Prusse 3 Erquelines Double circle [Paris]	1863 & 1870	10/4/64 - 31/10/66	47
Prusse 3 Erquelines Single circle [Paris]	1867	30/5/68 - 20/12/71	
Prusse 4 Forbach [Paris]	1867-1869	19/1/65 - 29/3/66	24
Prusse Strasbourg	1848	29/5/68	0.3

From the records it appears that the mail in this period entered France via Valenciennes initially then the major route changed during 1864 to Erquelines then to Paris. Mail via Strasbourg is rare

A Franco-Russian Postal Treaty was signed during 1871 to come into effect January 1, 1872. This Treaty brought to a close the Boxed P Number markings on unpaid Russian mail to France via Prussia replacing the Postal Conventions 1858-1871 with a closed mail system direct to Paris.