

WOPA Adds Latvia to Client States

The rapidly-growing World Online Philatelic Agency (WOPA) recently added Latvia to the 26 other nations whose new issues are available from the WOPA site at face value, with a modest shipping charge worldwide. A WOPA spokesperson said “We are pleased to welcome the beautiful country of LATVIA to wopa-stamps.com...Latvia has a huge selection of stamps and related philatelic items on offer in the WOPA website....Enjoy Latvia.”

Latvia's history is very well documented on its stamps during the 150 years since its first stamp was issued. The Republic of Latvia is one of the three Baltic States on the coast of the Baltic Sea—bordered by Estonia to the north, Lithuania to the south, Russia to the east, Belarus on the south east, and the Baltic Sea on the west. The most famous city is the capital Riga, a World Heritage Site.

Stamps that can be found on the WOPA Latvia pages actually go as far back as 1991. In 2014 for the first time in its history, all Latvian stamps were issued in EURO denomination only as the country left the LATS to join the EURO currency. Of additional interest, during 2013, all stamps issued by Latvia were printed with both currencies.

Recent issues reflect the themes that are found on Latvia's stamps. For example, on May 3, Latvia issued a single with the dual theme “Freedom of Speech/UNESCO”. Anyone who knows the history of Latvia, including domination by the Soviet Union and the imprisonment of writers and journalists during this period will appreciate the significance of the design of this stamp.

A previous issue with a related theme was the “25th Anniversary of the Independence Declaration”, a single released on April 29 that features the Freedom Monument and the Parliament Building in Riga.



by a group of academic intellectuals in 1815.

Latvia has participated in the annual Europa series since 1994. This year's theme is Old Toys, and Latvia's two stamps were issued on April 4.



One of the more eye-catching stamps in Latvia's Flowers series is the Sunflowers stamp (next column) that was issued on March 6. (Some of the earlier issues or reprints in this series are still available from WOPA.)

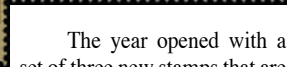
Earlier this year, on February 20, Latvia, to celebrate 170 years of operation of the Latvian Museum of Natural History, Latvia began a new series, “Unique Exhibits of Latvian Museum of



Natural History” with a stamp depicting the placoderm fish fossils that are approximately 384 million years old and are part of the Museum's Paleontology collection.



A more contemporary design was used for this single, released February 5, to celebrate the 750th anniversary of the city of Jelgava. The stamp uses a design that is being used as one of the symbols that identify the city this year.



The year opened with a set of three new stamps that are the first stamps denominated in the euro within the standard series Coats of Arms of Latvian Towns and Municipalities that is primarily aimed at provision of means of paying for mailings of different value. Each new stamp has a different denomination: one € 1 stamp has the coat of arms of Riga and the other two same-design stamps have the coat of arms of the Republic of Latvia—the € 2 in a silver frame and the € 5 in a gold frame.

Completing this review, we come back to the most recent issue, a May 17 release to mark the 150th anniversary since the Riga City Volunteer Firefighters Brigade for the first time coordinated in a response to a fire. After the 1864 establishment of the Riga City Volunteer Firefighters Brigade, similar volunteer firefighters associations started to appear in other towns and cities of Latvia. To express the gratitude and respect for the people who risk their own safety to rescue other people's lives, in 2011 the Parliament (Saeima) of Latvia declared May 17 to be the holiday, Firefighters and Rescue Workers Day.



The stamps of Latvia, as well as the issues of 26 other postal administrations offered at face value may be accessed at the World Online Philatelic Agency: <http://www.wopa-stamps.com/>