



The Arab Postal Union, three quarters of a century on from its foundation in 1952. Overview of a specialized Arab organization and its cooperative relationship with the Universal Postal Union

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Almost 70 years ago, on 12 July 1954, the Arab Postal Union (UPA) was created in Damascus, Syria. Its foundation followed the recommendations of the postal conference held in Cairo on 9 December 1946, as part of the work of the Communications Commission of the League of Arab States. Considered one of the oldest postal federations in the world, bringing together 21 affiliated members, including at least two countries, namely Egypt and Tunisia, that had joined the Universal Postal Union very early on in Geneva, the day after its founding in 1874.

On 28 July 1991, it took the name of *Arab Permanent Postal Commission* under the General Secretariat of the League of Arab States. It is based in Cairo, Egypt.

Its goals are to organize and develop postal services and to work towards the unification of services:

- Develop cooperation and solidarity and strengthen links between member countries; introduce, as far as possible, more advantageous provisions to customers in member countries than those provided for in the UPU Acts;
- Work towards cooperation between member countries and their delegations with a view to adopting a single strategy in all areas related to postal activities, particularly during international postal meetings;
- Cooperate with the League of Arab States and the UPU; develop communications between Arab peoples through the efficient operation of postal services; and promote, in this area, development and international collaboration.

During its sixth session, on 11 and 12 June 1997 in Cairo, Egypt, the Arab Permanent Postal Commission decided to celebrate *Arab Postal Day on 3 August each year*.

The purpose of this paper is to: i) provide a short background on the Arab Postal Union as one of the regional organizations of the Arab world; ii) examine the close relationship of the APU with the UPU in the field of postal legislation, administration and training; and iii) present a case study from the Arab and African geographical field, namely that of the high-performing Tunisian Post, which has been considered by the UPU as the leading postal organization in Africa and the Arab region for the third consecutive year.