

GEOLOGY AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: COULD THIS BE PICTURED ON A POSTAL STAMP?

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Philately plays a fundamental role as an educational and teaching tool. Besides the stamps' commercial and services purposes, the pictured message they carry must be considered. People collect stamps because of their beauty, the illustrated theme or, simply, because of the remote country they come. Even for a youth philatelist, a name like *Bosnia-Herzegovina* would never sound extraneous. Stamps collecting started as soon as they were invented, by Rowland Hill. In this century, since the first *red-cross* and *pro-juventute* issues in the early forties, till now, the interest on thematic stamps grew enormously. Sports, racing cars, airplanes, pictures, flowers, fauna, philanthropic campaigns, as well as scientific meetings, rank among the commonness. Stamps focusing geological features are of relatively recent years, but they bring all the acquired experience of this nearly 160 years of stamps history. From a simple landscape or waterfall view, to an exotic mineral, today's stamps feature geological maps, rock samples, thin sections and, even, optical interference figures. Others explore the mineral potential of their mother-country or a geologic process of global significance, like the sea level oscillation during the past centuries. In this paper we intend to show a retrospective of the main geological issues, their educational worth an comment about the suggestions made by the Organizing Committee, for the 31st IGC Commemorative Issue.