

Dear Sir/Madam,

The government of the **RUSSIAN FEDERATION** asks me to inform all member countries of the Union and their designated operators of the following:

"As a member of the Universal Postal Union, the Russian Federation issues postage stamps in accordance with the provisions of the Universal Postal Convention and the Letter Post Regulations.

"We would like to inform you that we recently learned of a growing proliferation of illegal stamps. These stamps, which have been openly offered for sale on the Internet for some time, feature animals, ships and musicians, and are distributed in the name of the Komi Republic, one of official territorial entities of the Russian Federation.

"The Russian Federation draws your attention to the fact that the Russian designated operator has never issued the above-mentioned products. In accordance with the relevant provisions of the Acts of the UPU as well as Russian Federation legislation, the Komi Republic, as an integral part of the Russian Federation, is not authorized to issue postage stamps independently. Therefore, such items are to be regarded as counterfeit stamps, and cannot be used as official means of indicating prepayment of postage.

"The distribution of illegal postage stamps does harm to philately and to the Russian Federation's reputation, and also contributes to the decline of the entire philatelic market."

Yours faithfully,

Murray Buchanan
Director of Economic and Regulatory Affairs