



Ecological Studies from a Philatelic Perspective (I) - the Edelweiss in Romanian Philately

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Authors' contributions

This work was carried out in collaboration between both authors. Author BVC designed the study and wrote the first draft of the manuscript. Author ALP managed the analyses of the study. Both authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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ABSTRACT

Until the beginning of the 21st century, the concerns related to the management of protected areas were reduced only to the voluntary initiatives of nature lovers, rarely materializing in specific measures to promote the conservation of endangered biodiversity by the authorities or administrators of those areas. As the concern for the management of protected areas and biodiversity is relatively new in Romania, and information related to this subject is relatively scarce, especially those regarding the species of ecosystems under the Habitats Directive, we considered necessary this study on the edelweiss, this being a species emblematic for Romania. Through this paper, we aimed to review some aspects of the edelweiss, namely its association with thematic philately. Following the analyzes carried out, based on the data from the literature consulted (articles, catalogs, books, blogs, etc), as well as following the observations made based on philatelic

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e-commerce sites, we concluded that the edelweiss, as well as the ecosystem in which it (re)finds, have been and still are of interest, both for international philately and for that of our country; as proof the significant number of issues and philatelic circulations that we have identified, analyzed and interpreted, during over 60 years of postal activity (the first issue appeared in Romania dating from 1957). What is even more surprising is a large number of philatelic occurrences of the floristic species, in various facets, both within the reference habitat (rock at the level of alpine hollows) and outside it.

Keywords: Edelweiss; micro-ecological study; philatelic issues; postal circulations.

1. INTRODUCTION

Traveling through the natural reserves of Romania, from the plain to the lofty ridges of the Carpathian Mountains, we can meet many species of plants and flowers protected by law (such as *Paeonia Peregrina*, *Nigritella rubra*, *Dianthus callizonus*, *Leontopodium alpinum*, *Cypripedium calceolus*, *Lilium martagon*, *Soldanella montana*, *Trollius europaeus*, *Gentiana Lutea*, *Fritillaria meleagris*, *Rhododendron kotschyi*, *Nymphaea lotus* var. *Thermalis*, etc).

Unfortunately, many of the flowers that once adorned the plains and mountains of Romania have been mercilessly torn and disappeared (as a result of intensive grazing and mountain hikers collecting such plants), and others are increasingly rare [1]. These endemic plants, of great scientific and aesthetic importance, are today declared monuments of nature being protected by law, to allow their perpetuation in the Romanian flora, as well as to preserve them so that future generations can inherit them and enjoy their beauty.

The edelweiss or queen flower (*Leontopodium alpinum*) is a true pearl of our mountains, a species declared a natural monument since 1933. Herbaceous, perennial plant of the *Asteraceae* family, of special beauty and also the rarest of the whole flora, the mountain grows in limestone mountains, in meadows on steep and sunny slopes, or on rocks [2]. Specimens from Romania can be considered as the most valuable in the world, especially because they are rarely found, lately only in areas under protected areas. In this context, we want to make an index of the philatelic pieces on which the edelweiss is reproduced, as well as a short foray, in the form of an ecological study from a philatelic perspective (related to local and national studies), on the regime of the edelweiss in our country [2,3].

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The documentation for this paper started with the authors' concerns for beauty and applied ecology, for the management of protected areas. Also, because they love ecosystems, but not least the biodiversity that populates such ecosystems [4-7].

Having at hand a series of extremely relevant studies at the international level, and less national, in terms of both the management of protected areas and biodiversity itself [8-10], we decided to extrapolate these approaches to space relatively limited ecosystems in Romania, where the edelweiss is still in the foreground. This is how thematic philately reaches the lands of Romania, where few studies make direct reference to the management of terrestrial areas, in general, or of protected biodiversity, in particular.

The collection, analysis, and interpretation of the philatelic data, mostly postage stamps, first-day envelopes, maximum postcards, and other philatelic effects were done by consulting the specialized catalogs [11-13], and various websites. philatelic trade, such as Colnect, Delcampe, eBay, wopa-plus, etc. The data collection, as well as their analysis and interpretation, was done mainly taking into account the relevant mentions of specialized catalogs and various publications in the online environment, at the level of sites dedicated to philately and philatelic trade, respectively blogs and forums.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Edelweiss - Ecological and Geographical Landmarks

The edelweiss, has an unbranched and woolly-tomentose stem. In Romania, according to the observations of the specialized literature, the plant reaches only a maxim height of 20 cm but,

in other countries, can grow up to 50-80 cm [3]. The flowering stalk can grow up to 5-20 cm, the inflorescences composed of heads, surrounded by numerous long bracts, white- silver and woolly-hairy, very rare throughout the mountain flora.

The inflorescence is covered with hairy leaves, some larger, some smaller, which take the shape of a star. The corolla consists of a maximum of ten inflorescences, with numerous and tiny flowers, framed by 5-15 white bracts arranged radially, which give the whole set the appearance of a flower. The plant is covered with velvety hairs, of silver color, with a protective role, which gives it a special elegance [3]. Flowering starts between July and September.

Edelweiss can be found in the limestone mountains, in the meadows on the steep and sunny slopes, or the rocky areas of the Carpathians, usually where the access of tourists is difficult, sometimes extremely difficult. It grows at high altitudes (over 1,600 m) and can be admired in the Făgăraș, Vrancea and Maramureș Mountains, Bucovina Communes, Ceahlău and Godeanu Massifs, but also on the steep valleys of Bucegi or Retezat National Parks, Piatra Craiului and Rodna Mountains [1]-[3]. As well as in the limestone mountains, in the meadows on the steep and sunny slopes, or the rocky areas of the Carpathians, usually where the access of tourists is difficult, sometimes extremely difficult.

Other than Romanian space, the edelweiss beautifies areas in the Abruzzi, Alps, Balkans, Carpathians, Pyrenees, but also in Central and

East Asia. Edelweiss is also known as *Edelweiß* (German), *albumeală*, *albumiță*, *queen's flower*, (rarely) *edelvais*, (reg.) *flocoșele* (pl.), *steluță*, *floarea-doamnei* [3]. It is a protected species, in nature reserves, in the Piatra Craiului, Bucegi and Ciucaș Mountains, or the reserves in Alba County. In Alba Botanical Reserve, the edelweiss descends to the lowest altitude in Europe (600 m).

3.2 Edelweiss - Philatelic Perspective

The first postage stamp in the world with the image of the edelweiss was printed by the Swiss postal authority in July 1914. The postage stamp has a face value of 3 Swiss francs (Michel #CH121, Stamp number #CH181, Yvert et Tellier #CH142, Stanley Gibbons #CH294, AFA #CH139, Zumstein #CH129) is part of the *Landscapes* issue, consisting of three stamps [3].

3.2.1 Carpathian flora, 1957

In Romania, the first postage stamp with the image of the beautiful edelweiss appeared on June 22, 1957, on the stamp with a face value of 35 bani (CMR #1730, CMPR #1821, Michel #RO1650, Scott #RO1164, Yvert et Tellier #RO1520, Stanley Gibbons #RO2516) from the *Carpathian flora* issue (LP #432), which included eight stamps [11]. The series was modeled by the Brașov graphic designer Harald Meschendörfer [13], and printed in an offset system in two colors (gray and greenish-yellow), on white paper without filigree, with a lace of 14: 14½ units. The marks have the dimensions of 27x37.8 mm and white gum (as can be seen in Fig. 1. [11,14-16].



(a)

(b)

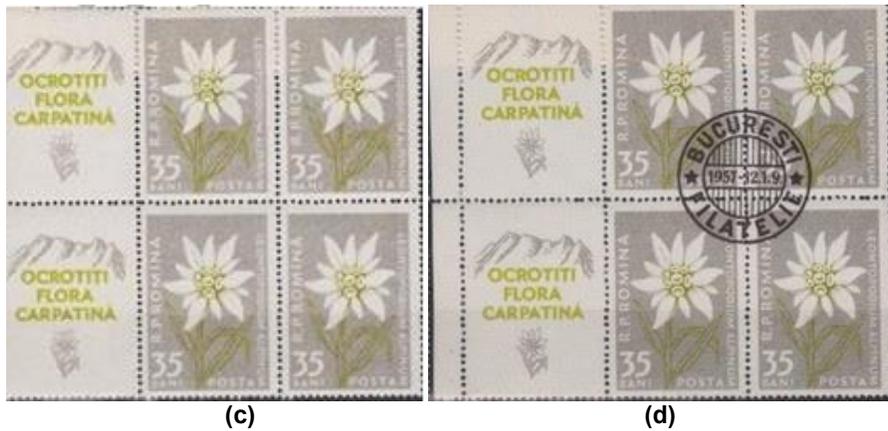


Fig. 1. Postage stamp representing the edelweiss, in various configurations: (a) without vignette [2,3],[14-16]; (b) with vignette [2,3],[14]; (c) a block of four postage stamps with vignettes [3]; (d) a block of four, with vignette, bearing the stamp "BUCHAREST, PHILATELY, 1957-12.1.9" [3]

The marks were printed in sheets of 110 pieces, of which 10 vignettes, distributed in the first vertical row to the left of the sheet. The vignette drawing represents the same flower on the postage stamp on a mountain profile with the inscription "Protect the Carpathian flora". The circulation was 500,000 copies without vignettes and 50,000 copies with vignettes [11]. The postage stamp also appears on one of the two FDCs of the issue (see Fig. 2) [17]-[22].

The large circulation of the issue allowed part of it to become part of the philatelic envelopes, the marks being thus obliterated by the complacency with the stamp "Bucharest - Philately (1957-12.1.9)" applied in a normal position. This stamp has also been used for a

long time to make several maximum postcards, some of which are reproduced below. Thus we have, among other things, a maxim obliterated with the day stamp of Post Office from Sibiu on July 13, 1957 (see Fig. 3a) [3], a maxim made with the day stamp of Sibiu P.O. on ??-??-1957 (see Fig. 3b) [3],[23], a maximum made on the occasion of the philatelic exhibition in Sibiu (??) (see Fig. 3c) [3],[24], a maximum achieved with the day stamp of the Stalin P.O. (Braşov) on 10-??-1957 (Fig. 3d) [3],[25], a maximum made on the occasion of the philatelic exhibition "Forest Month" (19.03.1991) on a illustrated postcard printed in Sweden (Fig. 3e) [3],[26] and a maximum achieved in 1978, departing from Cluj-Napoca (Fig. 3f) [27].



Fig. 2. The FDC of the issue also includes the subject to the study

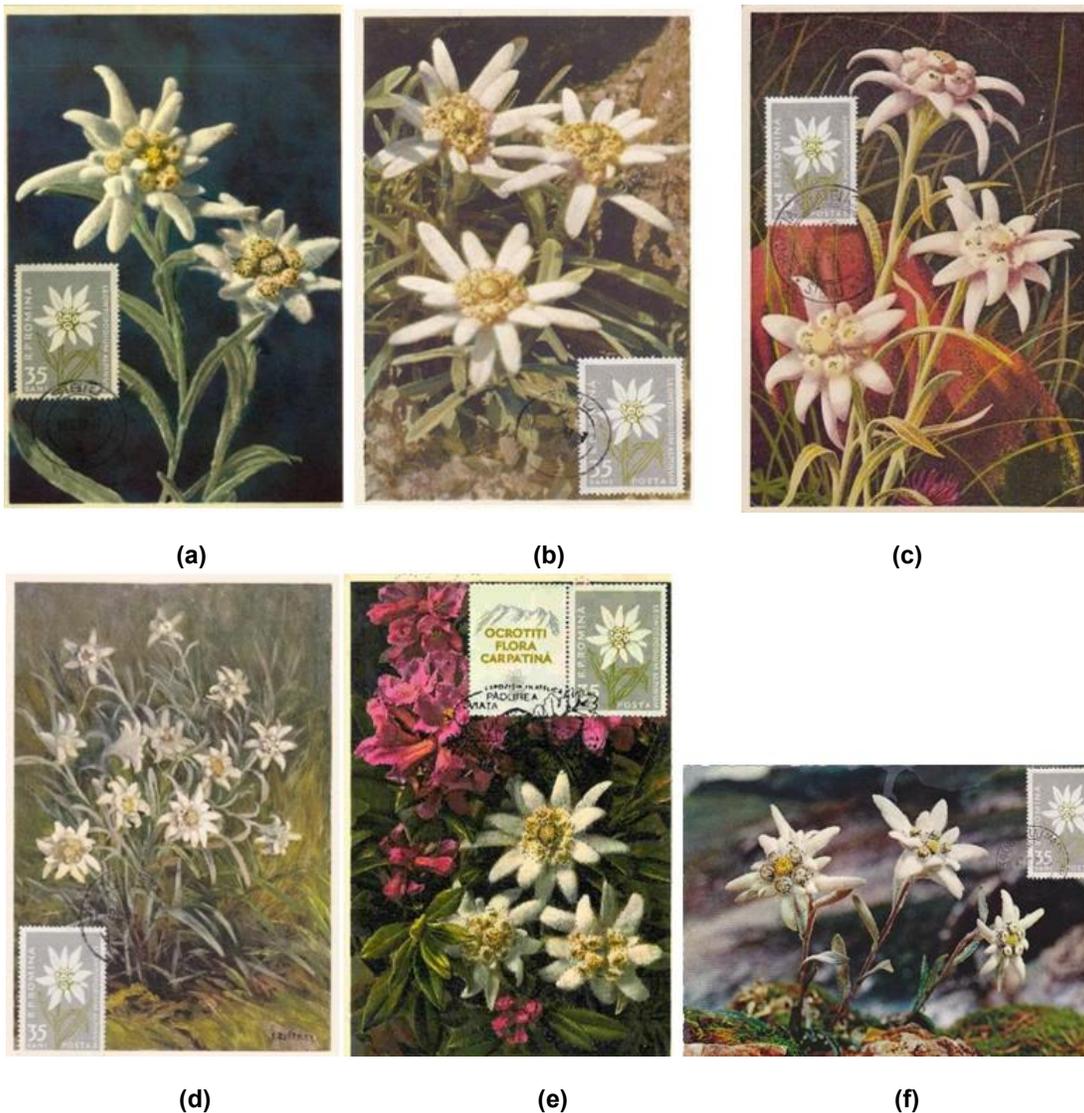


Fig. 3. Maximum postcards made with the considered stamp

3.2.2 Rare flowers - monuments of nature, 1972

Postage stamp with a face value of 55 bani (CMPR #3208, Michel #RO3025, Stamp Number #RO2333, Yvert et Tellier #RO2684, Stanley Gibbons #RO3906, Romfilatelia #RO794c) from the "Rare flowers - monuments of nature" issue (LP #794) put into circulation on June 5, 1972. The mark has a size of 27x33 mm, was printed in heliogravure on chrome paper, being laced 13½. The model belongs to Vladimir Stoianov.

As can be seen in Fig. 4a the postage stamp presents two threads of the species, which

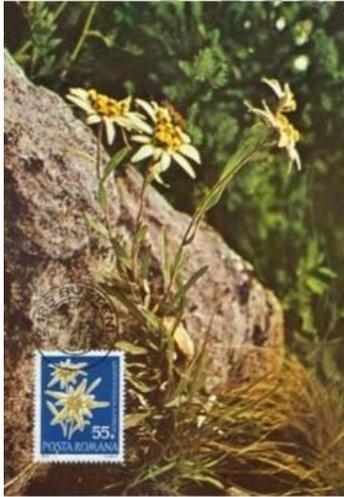
complement a dark blue background where the aspects related to the nominal value, the name of the plant in Latin (*Leontopodium alpinum*), or even the name of the layout designer are recorded. Fig. 4b reproduces one of the three envelopes with the mention "the first day of the issue", the one on which the studied postage stamp appears next to the stamp with a face value of 1.35 lei [28,29]. The semi-illustration of the envelope shows a water lily flower (*Nymphaea lotus thermalis*) under which appears the special mention "Flowers - monuments of nature protected by the U.N.E.S.C.O." [30-32].



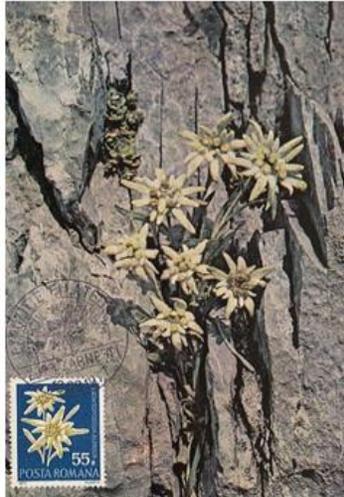
Fig. 4. Postage stamp and FDC of the issue with the studied mark

We also managed to identify a series of maximum postcards made with this stamp. Thus in Fig. 5 we have as follows:

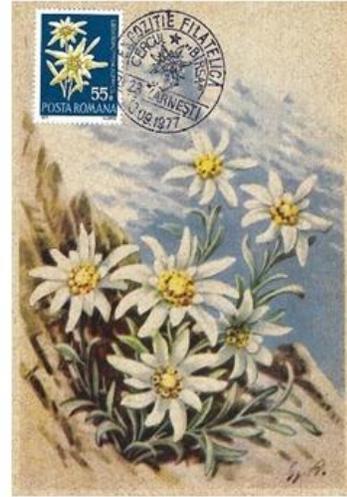
- a) a maximum postcard achieved with the day stamp of Bușteni P.O. (9.8.1972) [33];
- b) a maximum postcard achieved in 1977 on the occasion of the philatelic exhibition from Zărnești [34,35];
- c) a maximum postcard achieved in 1977, philatelic exhibition in Zărnești [36];
- d) an uncirculated illustrated postcard made by I.P. Sibiu for the Miercurea Ciuc County Museum, after a photo by R. Akoș, with the stamp applied on the face [37];
- e) a maximum achieved in April 1979, philatelic exhibition "Edelweiss" [38];
- f) a maximum postcard obliterated with the advertising stamp "Protect the alpine flora" applied at the Transit Office in Brașov on August 10, 1984 [39,40];
- g) a maximum obliterated with the day stamp of Sibiu P.O., on 11-10-1984 [41];
- h) a maximum postcard achieved in 1980 stamped with the advertising stamp "Protect the edelweiss - a monument of nature" [42];
- i) a maximum obliterated with the advertising stamp "Forest month - tourists protected the flora of the alpine meadows" applied to Gura Teghii P.O. on April 25, 1985 [43];
- j) a maximum postcard obliterated with the advertising stamp "Protect the monuments of nature" applied at the Zălești P.O. on November 28, 1989 [44];
- a) a maximum postcard obliterated with the advertising stamp "Protect the edelweiss" applied at the Porumbacu de Sus P.O. (Sibiu) on June 5, 1986 [45];
- k) a maximum obliterated with the day stamp of Brașov P.O., on 27-9-1990 [46];
- l) a maximum postcard achieved in April 1979, philatelic exhibition "Edelweiss" [47];
- b) a maximum postcard achieved by AFR Vrancea on the occasion of the Symposium and the Philatelic Exhibition "Nature protection", 23.04.1978, Adjud P.O. The graphic element of the stamp of the exhibition, as well as the illustrated postcard used as a support (made by I.P. Sibiu), are in tune with the theme [48];
- m) a maximum postcard achieved by AFR Vrancea on the occasion of the Symposium and the Philatelic Exhibition "Nature protection", 23.04.1978, Adjud P.O. [49];
- n) a maximum achieved by AFR Vrancea on the occasion of the Symposium and the Philatelic Exhibition "Nature protection", 23.04.1978, Adjud P.O. [50];
- o) a maximum postcard achieved at O.P. Cluj-Napoca on 21.08.1973, by applying the mark on an illustrated support book printed in Italy [51];
- p) a maximum postcard achieved in 1980 and stamped with the advertising stamp "Protect the edelweiss - a monument of nature" on 10.10.1980, Galda de Jos P.O. [52].



(a)



(b)



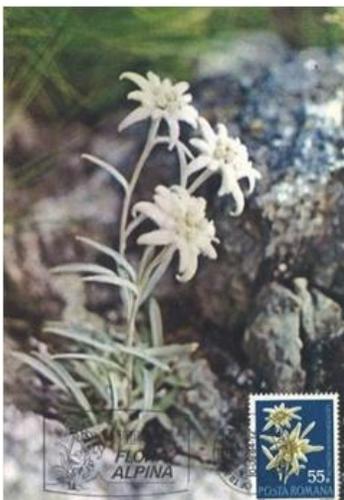
(c)



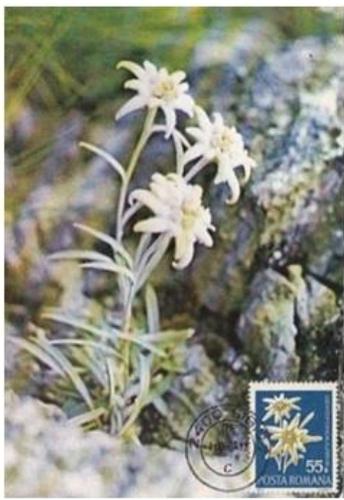
(d)



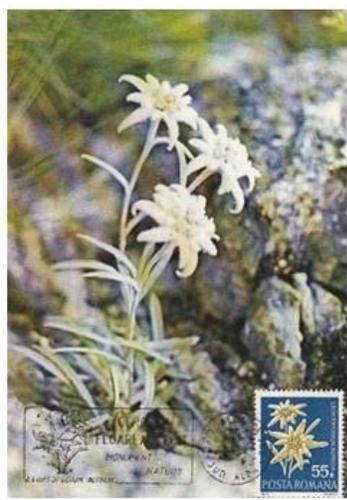
(e)



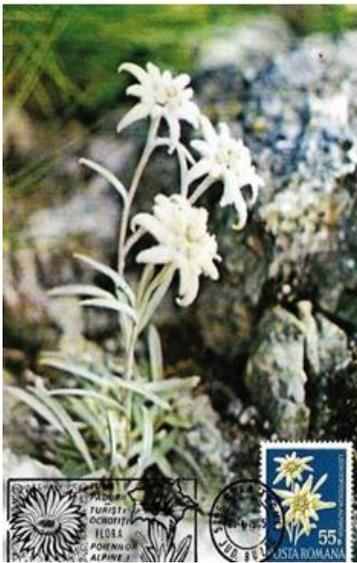
(f)



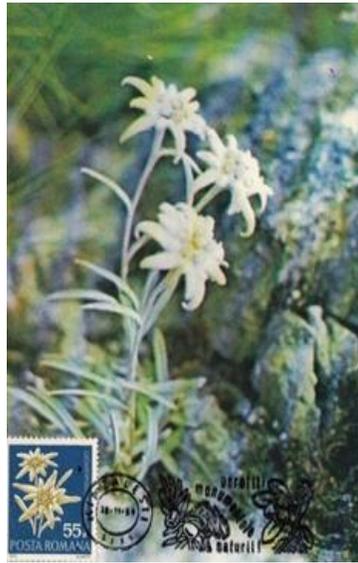
(g)



(h)



(i)



(j)



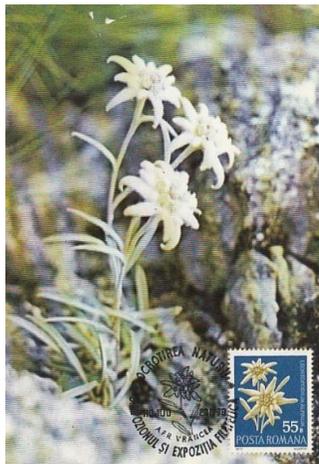
(k)



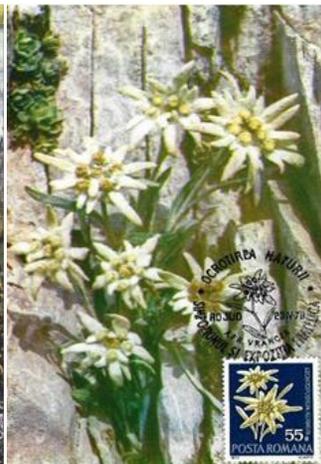
(l)



(m)



(n)



(o)



(p)

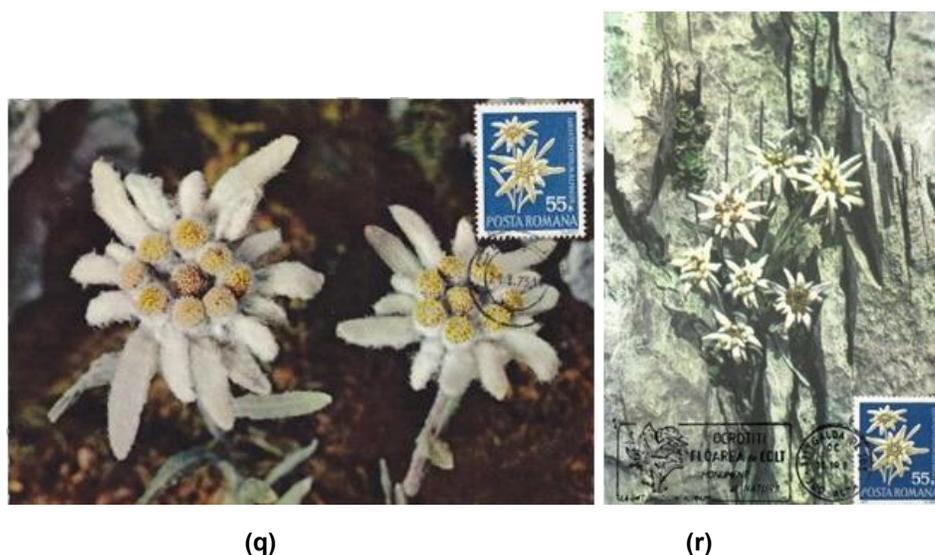


Fig. 5. Maximum postcards made with the considered stamp

3.2.3 The coats of arms of the counties from R.S. Romania, 1976

Ion Dumitrana was the one who modeled between 1976-1977 the coats of arms of the Romanian counties of that period. The issue was circulated in two installments: in December 1976 and September 1977. On the postage stamp with the face value of 55 bani (CMPR #3006, Michel #RO3396, Stamp Number #RO2672, Yvert et Tellier #RO3006, Stanley Gibbons #RO4263) from the "Coats of Arms of the counties from R.S. Romania" (LP #928) put into circulation on December 20, 1976, appears the coat of arms of Brașov County, where, at the

bottom of the shield, there are three threads of corner flower (Fig. 6) [53,54].

Regarding the maximums achieved, we have managed, so far, to identify only the following four pieces:

- a) maximum obliterated with the day stamp of Brașov P.O. 2 E, on 8-02-1978 [55];
- b) maximum obliterated with the day stamp of Brașov P.O. 1 g, on 15-11-1978 [56];
- c) maximum obliterated with the day stamp of Brașov P.O. 1 A, on 16-02-1979 [57];
- d) maximum obliterated with the day stamp of Brașov P.O. 1 M, on 12-08-1991 [58].



Fig. 6. Postage stamp of Brașov County

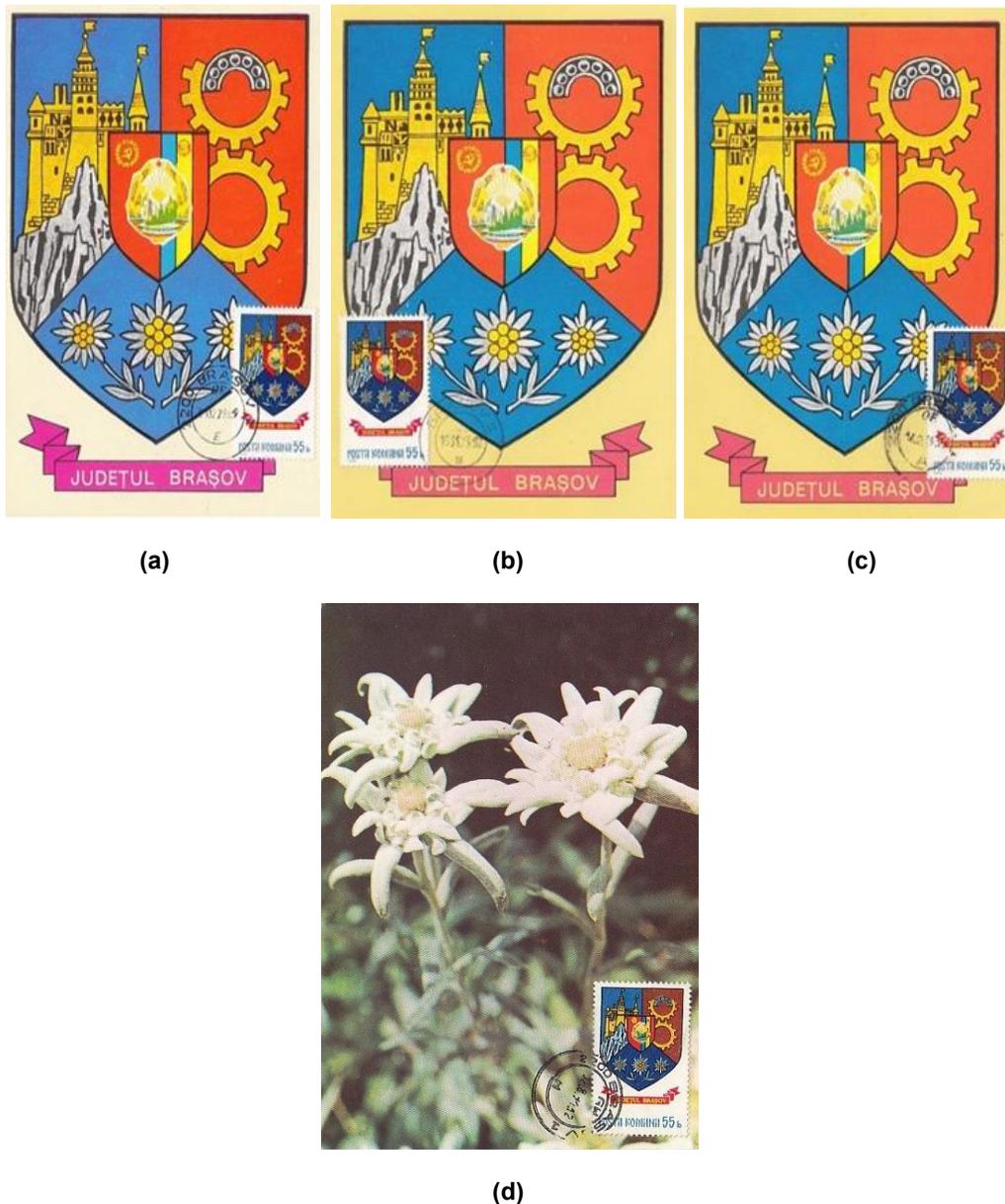


Fig. 7. Maximum postcards made with the considered stamp

3.2.4 Flowers from protected areas, 2009

On March 28, 2009, the issue "*Flowers from protected areas*" (LP #1830) modeled by Mihai and Vlad Vămășescu was put into circulation. Composed of six values, the stamps had the size of 24x24 mm, were printed on chrome-gummed paper (from England), in offset system in four colors and 13½ lace (see Fig. 8a) [59,60].

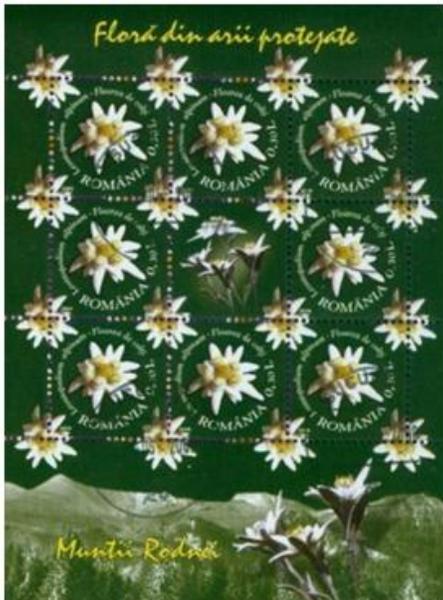
The edelweiss (on the stamp written "corners") appears on the postage stamp with a face value

of 30 bani (CMPR #6532, Michel #RO6350, Stanley Gibbons #RO6954, WADP Numbering System - WNS #RO015.09, Romfilatelia #RO1830). It was paginated in a sheet of 50 stamps and a mini-sheet of 8 stamps with a centrally positioned vignette (see Fig. 8c) [61]. The total circulation of this brand was 259,440 copies. At the same time, the postage stamp enters the franking of one of the two FDCs (Fig. 8b) [62], respectively of a maximum postcard reproduced in Fig. 8d [63].



(a)

(b)



(c)



(d)

Fig. 8. Philatelic effects of the "Flowers from protected areas", 2009, Bucharest (a) the postmark; (b) the FDC of the issue on which the analyzed stamp appears; (c) the mini-stamp of 8 stamps with a vignette, stamped with compliment; (d) a maximum obliterated with the day stamp of Cluj-Napoca P.O., on 09-09-2009

3.2.5 Ceahlau National Park, 2016

Romfilatelia, a consistent promoter of philatelic themes of Romania, introduced stamps with the images of rare flora and fauna found in Ceahlau National Park, into circulation. The uniqueness of the park is defined not only by the great diversity of plants and animals but also by their rarity. As an example, it is worth mentioning that from the glacial period, plants not found

elsewhere have survived on the mountain. There are also rare birds adapted to the alpine environment. Over thirty species of orchids, three of which are protected by law, also adorn Ceahlău National Park.

The conservation of the nature of the Ceahlău National Park started in 1997, when a team of Danish specialists, amazed by the beauty and richness of Ceahlau, contributed decisively to the

establishment of a Scientific Council of the Park, through the Ministry of Environment. Meanwhile, Ceahlău has acquired the status of a protected area through the establishment of the Avifauna Protection Area, the National Park and the declaration as a Site of Community Importance. The twelve postage stamps of the issue illustrate images of the flora and fauna existing in the perimeter of the Ceahlău National Park.

On September 1, 2016, the "Ceahlău National Park" (LP #2118) was put into circulation, composed of 12 values modeled by Mihail Vămășescu. The edelweiss was illustrated on

the postage stamp with a face value of 80 bani (CMPR #7299, Michel #RO7111, Stamp Number #RO5836, Yvert et Tellier #RO6047, Romfilatelia #RO2118 (1), WADP Numbering System - WNS #RO093.16), as seen in Fig. 9a [64,65]. It has the dimensions of 33x24 mm, was printed on chrome-gummed paper (from England), in a 4-color offset system, in 486,540 copies paged in sheets of 80 stamps with a vignette and in a block of 4 stamps with illustrated cuff (see Fig. 9c) [64]. The studied postage stamp also enters the configuration of the franking of one of the two FDCs (Fig. 9b) [66], respectively the configuration of a superb maximum postcard (Fig. 9d) [67].

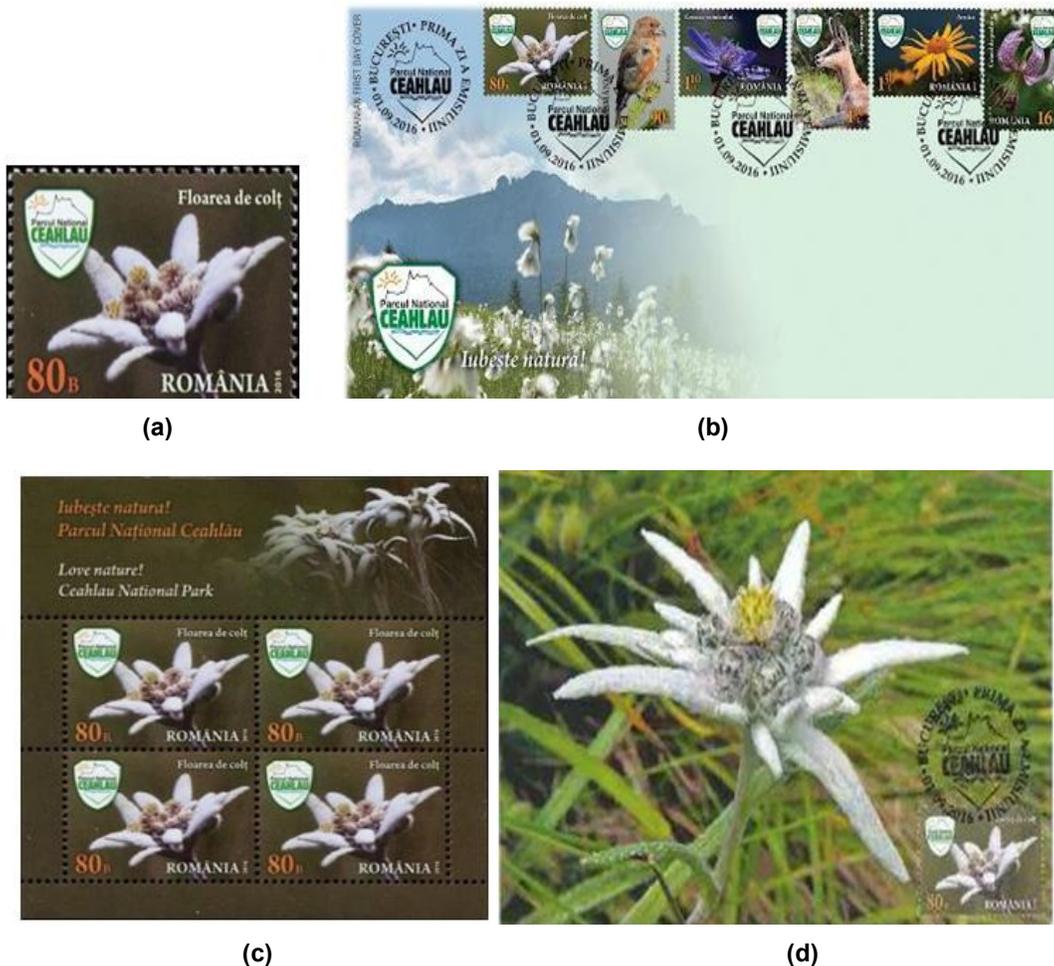


Fig. 9. Philatelic effects of the "Ceahlău National Park" issue, 01.09.2016, Bucharest (a) the postmark; (b) FDC of the issue on which the stamp under study appears (circulation - approx. 200 copies); (c) the block of 4 stamps (print run 1,195 pieces); (d) maximum made by Alexandru Antonache using as support the illustrated postcard edited by Alex Collection, canceled with the stamp of the first day of the Bucharest issue, 01.09.2016, located at the Post Office 37

3.2.6 The flowers of the mountains - Mount Cozia, 2019

Another postage stamp contained the image of "Flowers of the Mountains - Mount Cozia" (LP #2252) was introduced by M. Vămășescu in 2019. The stamp with a face value of 1.40 lei (Romfilatelia #RO2252 (1), Michel #RO7595A, Stamp Number #RO6311), came into circulation on August 23. It was first in the series, illustrates the beautiful edelweiss which, on this stamp, appears with the

name of "Queen's flower" (Fig. 10a-b) [68,69].

The postage stamp was modeled and arranged in a good mini-print; an example is shown in Fig. 10d [68], where we find the mini souvenir sheet with four stamps and illustrated cuff, indexed Michel #RO7595AKB, Stamp Number #RO6311a, Romfilatelia #RO2252 (1) MS). We also found both the FDC of the issue with the stamp under study (see Fig. 10c), and the block of six unlined stamps (see Fig. 10e) [70].

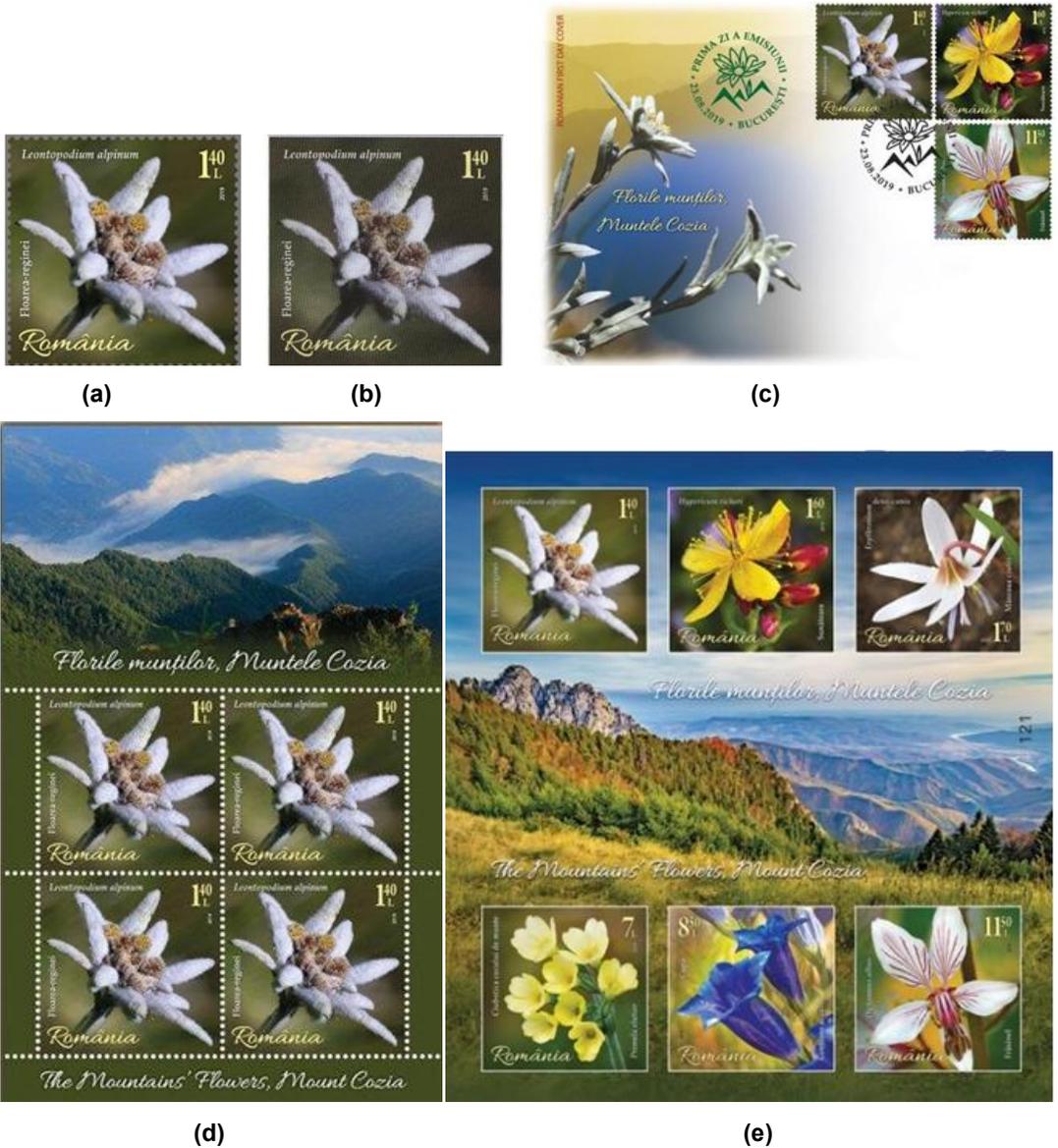


Fig. 10. Philatelic effects of the "Ceahlău National Park", 01.09.2016, Bucharest (a) the lace mark; (b) the toothless mark; (c) the FDC of the issue with the stamp subject to the study; (d) the mini-stamp with four stamps and the illustrated cuff; (e) the block of six unlined stamps

3.3 Edelweiss - Post-Philatelic Landmarks and Circulations

We wanted to promoted to the public a series of materials that promoted the corner flower in the regime of mass postal activity. For starters, in Fig. 11a [71], it is reproduced a recommended philatelic (the value of the postage slightly exceeds the postal one) sent to Timișoara (loco) on 24.10.1957, on which were applied 5 of the 8 marks of the "Carpathian flora" issue (LP #432).

The second reference to the postal circulation of postage stamps with the corner flower can be found in Fig. 11b, where on the entire postcard and the stamp studied from the "Rare flowers - monuments of nature" issue appears the day stamp, August 1, 1974, of O.P. from Bușteni [72].

Furthermore, we reproduced a series of circulations related to the pieces representing the corner flower issued in the period 2009-2016, for the "Flowers from protected areas" issue - in Fig. 12a-b [73,74], respectively the "Ceahlău National Park" - see Fig. 12c-h [75]-[80].

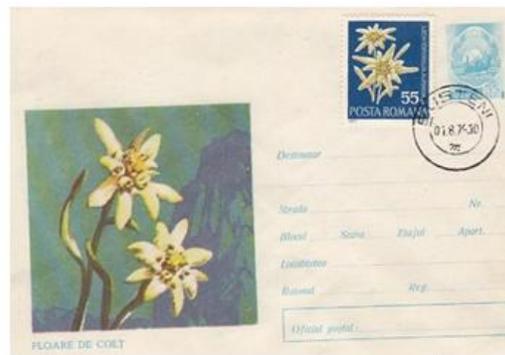
3.4 Edelweiss - Other Notable Philatelic Mentions

During our intense search, we managed to identify and index some other pieces of the philatelic invoice that we consider worth mentioning here. For example, in 1964 the semi-illustrated postcard with a fixed mark (30 bani), monochrome (black), made by I.P.F.T. under order 451, in a circulation of 39,000 copies, code 17/1964, as seen in the first 4 images included in Fig. 13 [81]-[85].

In 1966, approx. 150,000 copies of the entire postcard appeared, with the fixed mark R.S.R. Stema, and a face value of 55 bani blue, code 138, under order 1430, at the sale price of 1 leu (see Fig. 13e) [86]. Also, to commemorate the International Year of Nature Conservation (1970), A.F.R. the Maramureș county branch made a whole special postcard, within the event "Documentary exhibition for nature protection", 29.11-30.12.1970, from Baia Mare (Fig. 13f) [87].



(a)



(b)

Fig. 11. Circulations of edelweiss pieces issued during 1957-2009



(a)



(b)



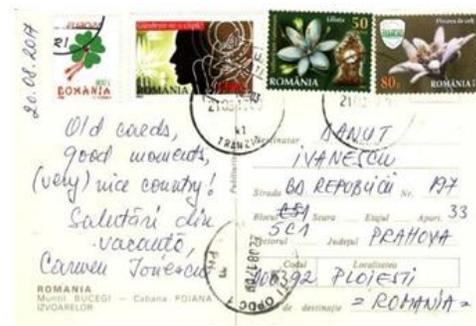
(c)



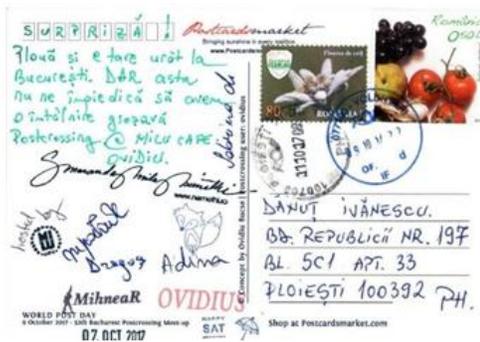
(d)



(e)



(f)



(g)



(h)



(i)

Fig. 12. Circulations of edelweiss pieces issued during 2009-2016



Fig. 13. The edelweiss presence in the semi-illustration of the postcards, 1964-1970

Other pieces we found during our search are presented in Fig. 14a-f [88-93]. Their semi-illustration present the edelweiss as a species of inestimable value, which must be protected at all costs, this is also the motivation of the special envelopes. In addition to the semi- illustration, a specific message can be noticed on each envelope. One can also notice the contribution brought to the promotion and conservation of the species by the County Guidance Council for nature protection, respectively the Association of Philatelists from R.S. Romania through the branch of Suceava county.

Another special material is the occasional envelope made by the Borșa Philatelic Club - A.F.R. Maramureș Branch, on the occasion of the anniversary of "50 years since the establishment of the Pietrosul Rodnei nature reserve", numbered individually. In the semi- illustration of the envelopes it can be seen, in the medallion, a specimen of the edelweiss.

The envelopes were later stamped on the front with a copy of the series of stamps "Environmental protection" (LP #1096) published on April 16, 1984 and circulated by mail in 1990,

the tariff being completed on the back (see Fig. 15) [94-96].

Other references to the edelweiss have also been taken into account, some of which are reproduced in the Appendix section. As can be

seen, the most diverse pieces are included, from postcards to semi-illustrated postcards, but also stamps or even drawings (see Fig. 16) [97-103], which illustrates and implicitly promotes the edelweiss, especially in terms of various exhibitions and profile events.



(a)



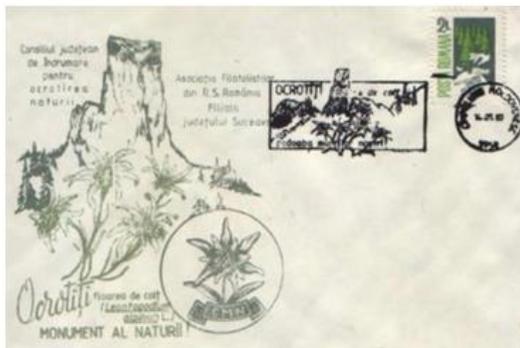
(b)



(c)



(d)



(e)



(f)

Fig. 14. Envelopes dedicated to "Protect the edelweiss - a monument of nature" issue



Fig. 15. Envelopes dedicated to the anniversary of "50 years since the establishment of the Pietrosul Rodnei nature reserve"

4. CONCLUSIONS

The edelweiss coexists with an intense anthropogenic activity that poses special problems for the survival of the species. The stress created by the unlimited access of sheep and goats, as well as of tourists in its living environment leads to the reduction of its intrinsic value. At the same time, the non-observance of the legal framework for carrying out anthropic activities causes disturbing elements to amplify their negative contribution to the degradation of the ecosystem.

Concerning the management of the species, it involves in particular recommendations for combating disruptive elements by limiting tourist access to the Alpine area, as well as taking specific precautionary measures, enforcing

legislation and regulations on the loading of alpine pastures with domestic animals. As such, it is very likely appropriate management measures can ensure the conservation of the species, without endangering the natural dynamic balance of the habitat where these valuable flora species occur.

As is probably known, the alpine edelweiss is currently recognized as being divided into two subspecies, *Leontopodium nivale* subsp. *alpinum* and *Leontopodium nivale* subsp. *nivale*. Of the two species, more frequently on the edelweiss stamps has appeared the *Leontopodium nivale* subsp. *alpinum*. In this context, combining a series of elements in a certain equation, under the format - history + art-design + message + ecology = edelweiss-based thematic philately, we wanted to emphasize the idea that edelweiss

is a European mountain flower, protected species in nature.

Also, it is necessary to remember that philately messages were anticipated with the worldwide movement for the preservation of nature, of ecosystems. Thus, this work shows the face of the ecological movement through stamps and postcards. This work, accurately, presents the participation of the art-design of stamps and postcards in the preservation of this iconic species over time (the dominant theme on the edelweiss stamps): "Protect the alpine flora", "Protect the edelweiss - a monument of nature", "Forest month - tourists protected the flora of the alpine meadows", "Protect the monuments of nature", "Protect the edelweiss", and so on.

What we tried through this paper was to highlight, through the rich philatelic material identified, indexed, analyzed, and interpreted, the concern of the national philately for the fragile edelweiss, it is known that postage stamps are more than an ambassador of natural and cultural values of a country. In addition to promoting the policy of protecting the edelweiss, we can also speak of an affinity for ecology and ecological education, as specific suggestions for using postage stamps.

This was the short foray into Romanian philately, in terms of the wonderful edelweiss. We hope that we haven't forgotten any stamps that have appeared so far. We expect that in the years to come the subject will not be bypassed by the issuing authority of Romanian postage stamps. Until then, let's not forget one thing: being extremely adapted to the alpine climate, the edelweiss will not adapt to growing in pots! It is good not to encourage trade in such flowers either, whether they are broken and sold in bouquets, or dried and mounted on different frames. Better to admire them on stamps, in binders, or philatelic exhibitions.

COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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APPENDIX



(a)



(b)



(c)



(d)

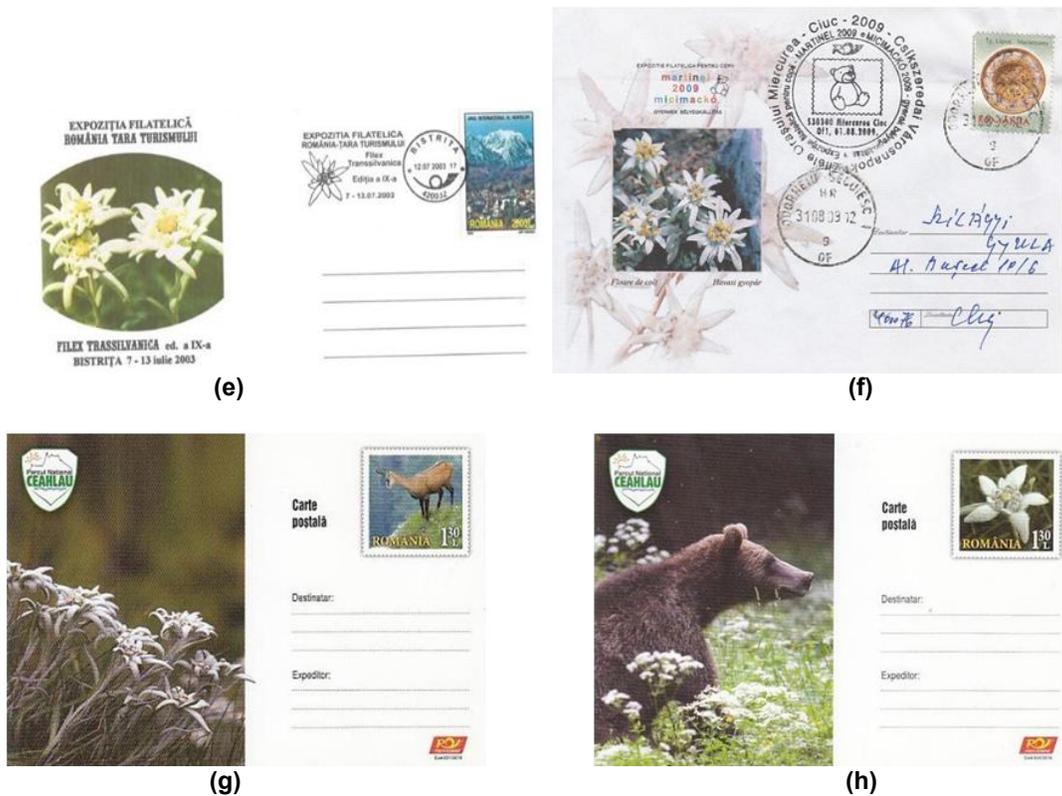


Fig. 16. The edelweiss presence in other filatelic materials, 1976-2016 (a) cover stationery - „The coats of arms of the counties from R.S. Romania”, 16.08.1976, Braşov; (b) special cover - „Philately and Tourism” philatelic exhibition, 26-30.03.1977, Timișoara; (c),(d) special postmark on cover - „Edelweiss” philatelic exhibition, 01.04.1979, Suceava; (e) special cancellation - „Romania - the country of tourism” philatelic exposition, 7-13.07.2003, Bistrița; (f) special cover - „Martinel” philatelic exhibition for children, 01.08.2009, Miercurea Ciuc (g),(h) postcard stationery - „Ceahlău National Park”, 01.09.2016, București

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