

## International Reply Coupons – the in and outs

**Negotiating IRCs at the USPS is so difficult, print this document and take it with you!**

This information comes directly from the Universal Postal Union web site at:

<http://www.upu.int/en/activities/international-reply-coupons/new-illustration-for-2017-2021.html>

This is the latest version, even if dated 2017.

### **New illustration for 2017–2021**

To choose a new IRC, the UPU holds an international design competition open to all member countries. This is a great way of discovering hidden artistic talents among the general public.

The theme for the new IRC illustration for 2017–2021 is "the Post and sustainable development".



Viet Nam emerged victorious from the ten countries participating in the latest competition, held on 7 October 2016 during the UPU Congress for the 2017–2021 period in Istanbul (hence the new IRC name "Istanbul model"). Graphic artist Nguyen Du's design featured a pair of hands and a dove against an Arctic backdrop to represent sustainable development in the postal sector. The image of the yellow stamp on blue represents the future of the Post.

There are 192 member countries in the UPU, including the USA. The current council consists of that shown [here](#) (41 in number). Qatar is the current chairman of the Council of Administration. The USA was a previous chairman for 5 years.

[http://www.upu.int/ca/en/ca\\_member\\_countries\\_en.pdf](http://www.upu.int/ca/en/ca_member_countries_en.pdf) UPU Members countries

<http://www.upu.int/en/activities/international-reply-coupons/countries-selling-ircs.html>  
UPU Countries which sell IRCs

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International\\_reply\\_coupon](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_reply_coupon) More about IRCs

The current IRC is called the "Istanbul Model" with a pair of hands and a dove on an Arctic backdrop

## **International Reply Coupons**

As of January 27, 2013, the U.S. Postal Service no longer sells international reply coupons. Coupons previously sold by the U.S. Postal Service may no longer be used or exchanged. The following standards apply to international reply coupons:

1. The sender of a letter may prepay a reply by purchasing reply coupons that are sold and exchangeable for postage stamps by participating postal administrations in member countries of the Universal Postal Union.
2. International reply coupons (in French, Coupons-Reponse Internationaux) are printed in blue ink on paper that has the letters “UPU” in large characters in the watermark. The front of each coupon is printed in French. The reverse side of the coupon, which has text relating to its use, is printed in German, English, Arabic, Chinese, Spanish, or Russian.

## **Previously Sold Coupons and Exchange Value**

The following standards apply to the exchange of international reply coupons:

1. International reply coupons sold by the United States Postal Service expired on December 31, 2013, or earlier, and may not be used or exchanged. Unused U.S. coupons (that is, those with the U.S. selling price stamped on them) may no longer be exchanged.
2. With the exceptions noted in, international reply coupons purchased in foreign countries are exchangeable at U.S. Post Office facilities toward the purchase of postage stamps and embossed stamped envelopes at the current maximum First-Class Mail International 1-ounce, letter-size price, per coupon, irrespective of the country where they were purchased. See [Notice 123](#), *Price List*.

## **Processing Requests**

The following standards apply when processing international reply coupons:

1. Under Universal Postal Union’s regulations, participating member countries are *not* required to place a control stamp or postmark on the international reply coupons that they sell. Therefore, some foreign issue reply coupons that are tendered for redemption may bear the name of the issuing country (generally in French) rather than the optional control stamp or postmark. Such coupons are exchangeable for U.S. postage as specified in Previously Sold Coupons and Exchange Value.
2. A Post Office facility exchanging a foreign reply coupon must postmark it. Post Office facilities must not accept foreign coupons that already bear a United States Postal Service postmark.
3. The only valid version of the international reply coupon is printed by the Universal Postal Union, bears the “Post and Sustainability/Istanbul Model” design (pair of hands and a dove with an Arctic backdrop), measures approximately 3.75 inches by 6 inches, has a bar-code on the reverse side, and has an expiration date of December 31, 2021.
4. Reply coupons formerly issued by the Postal Union of the Americas and Spain are no longer valid. These coupons are printed in green ink and bear the caption *Cupon Respuesta America-Espanol*. Customers possessing any of these coupons should return them to their correspondents in the country of issue for redemption through the selling post office.
5. Postmasters must process exchanged foreign international reply coupons as prescribed in Handbook F-101, *Field Accounting Procedures*, in section 11-6.6, “International Reply Coupons.”

*Note:* Only foreign international reply coupons are eligible for redemption — all USPS-issued international reply coupons expired December 31, 2013, or earlier.

This comes from the USPS web site at: [https://pe.usps.com/text/imm/immc3\\_020.htm#ep273813](https://pe.usps.com/text/imm/immc3_020.htm#ep273813)

This important reference is taken from the USPS International Mail Manual (IMM). In case of difficulty, ask the server or postmaster to pull out this reference and go to Section 381 as shown. The redemption price (the equivalent of the first class international letter rate) is **\$1.15**.