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2 **Enhancing and Conservation of Ecosystem**
3 **through Philatelic Education in Europe: Think**
4 **Green concept (IV) -the second research study**
5 **on First-Day Covers**

6
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19 **ABSTRACT**

20
EUROPA stamps are special stamps issued by European postal administrations and bears the official EUROPA logo, a PostEurop registered trademark under the aegis of PostEurop in which Europe is the central theme. EUROPA stamps underline cooperation in the posts domain, taking into account the promotion of thematic philately. They also build awareness of the common roots, culture and history of Europe, and its common goals. As such, EUROPA stamp issues are among the most collected and most popular stamps in the world. Europa Stamps 2016 are very special stamps with the "Think Green" theme aimed to create awareness and give a wakeup call - its time to protect our environment for the better future of the new generations, and to contribute to socio-economical development. In this paper, we propose an insight into the history of European preoccupations for natural heritage conservation and for environmental protection and bring into the discussion only the significant concerns in promoting ecological educational via thematic issues (in this case, Think green! issues). In this context, the main objective was to identify, index, and describe the main philatelic pieces - in particular first-day covers - issued in European countries (starting with Italy and ending with the Vatican), from the beginning of issuing.

21
22 **Keywords:** *philatelic education, European postal administrations, Think green!, FDCs.*

23
24 **1. INTRODUCTION**

25
26 An extremely important notion, for the following approaches, which subscribes to the modern
27 philately area, is the notion of first-day covers. As it was natural, the first-day covers
28 appeared and developed over time as a result of highlighting common features and
29 behaviors for several processes and phenomena in different areas of activity. Applied
30 ecology does not discount the use of postage stamps, first-day envelopes, and other post-
31 philatelic effects; its slogans and promotions being easy to highlight by the appearance of
32 philatelic issues and postal circulations.
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34 As expected, as a result of our concerns, for combining philately with ecology education [1],
35 since the beginning of philosophical concerns for environmental protection [2], we believe
36 that it was appropriate to continue, and to expose the elements that integrate the stamps,
37 not only in the collections of philatelists but also in the circulations or correspondence of the
38 time. This is why, we decided to continue to expose the envelopes with the mention of the
39 first day of the issue, or first-day covers (FDCs), which we consider to be the first official
40 pieces that come to include the stamps. Most of them have been issued by the postal
41 administrations, in the natural completion of the stamps, together with the other forms of
42 stamps grouping, such as blocks, philatelic cards, souvenir or commemorative colitis.

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44 We chose to approach Think green! FDCs, because they bring the additional essential
45 information about the regime of the issued parts. Moreover, FDCs capture the integrity of the
46 issuing act, promoting at a somewhat macro-level (as opposed to stamps, which are
47 generally small in size) the whole story behind the Think green! issue [3, 4]. Also, the semi-
48 illustrations with which FDCs come, most often in the same package, involve not only the
49 designer's creativity but especially the postal administration's desire to underline the theme.

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51 The Europa postage stamp (also known as Europa-CEPT until 1992) is an annual joint issue
52 of stamps with a common design or theme by postal administrations of member countries of
53 the European Communities from 1956 to 1959, the European Conference of Postal and
54 Telecommunications Administrations (namely CEPT) from 1960 to 1992, and the PostEurop
55 Association since 1993[3-5]. Europe is the central theme. EUROPA stamps underline
56 cooperation in the posts domain, taking into account the promotion of philately. They also
57 build awareness of the common roots, culture, and history of Europe and its common goals.

58
59 As such, nowadays EUROPA stamp issues are among the most collected and most popular
60 stamps in the world. Since the first issue in 1956, EUROPA stamps have been a tangible
61 symbol of Europe's desire for closer integration and cooperation. To show the EUROPA
62 stamps vital role in European states philately, this paper we proposed an insight into the
63 history of Europe preoccupations for natural heritage conservation and environmental
64 protection and bring into the discussion only the significant concerns in promoting ecological
65 educational via thematic issues (in this case, Think green! first day covers). In this context,
66 the main objective was to identify, index, and describe the main philatelic pieces - in
67 particular first-day covers - issued in European countries (starting with Italy and ending with
68 the Vatican), from the beginning of issuing in this field.

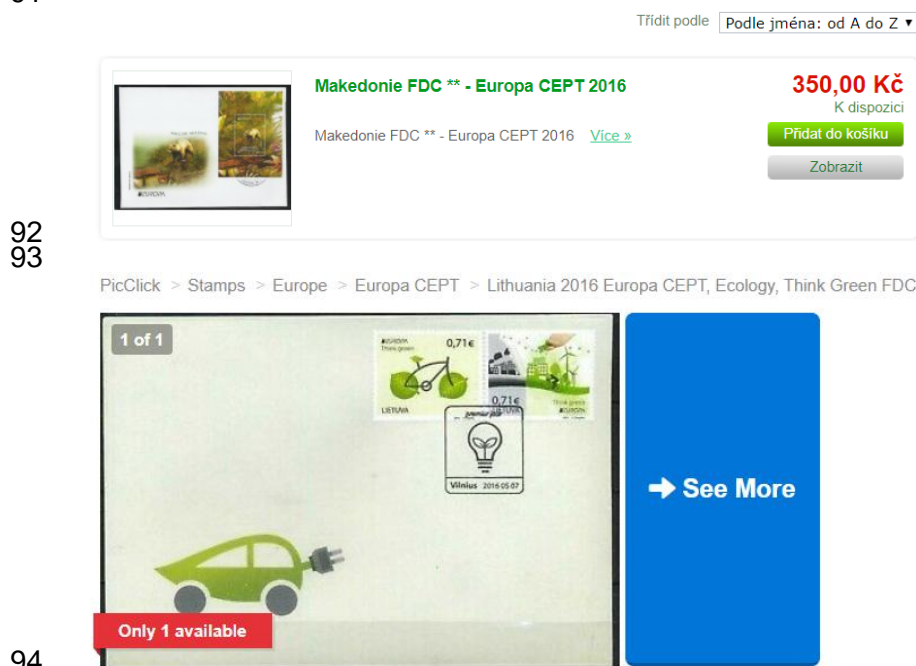
69 70 **2. MATERIAL AND METHODS**

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72 The working methodology for this study comes as an accessible concern from all points of
73 view of the current generation. As with the practice of philately, no special, long-term training
74 is required, as, in the present study, no innovative methodology, expensive equipment
75 and/or instruments is required. We analyzed and interpreted this kind of new pictorial data
76 (in the form of FDCs) based on the descriptions made by collectors and philatelists, or by
77 consulting and comparing with other documentation sources and specialized catalogs.

78
79 Beyond the passion for thematic philately, as satisfaction for aesthetic need and cultural-
80 educational development, the working methodology consisted of identifying, indexing, and
81 describing the main philatelic FDCs issued in European countries (the last half of those
82 involved in the Think green! initiative).

83
84 From the multitude of platforms with philatelic content, we identified over 10 platforms, but
85 for the present study, we limited ourselves to processing the information provided by
86 Colnect, Delcampe, and StampShop (Fig. 1), specialized catalogs, as well as other mainly

87 philatelic trade sites, like eBay and PicClick. To all these platforms are added the groups of
88 philatelist communities from various social networks through which the dissemination of new
89 information is much faster, much more efficient. Also, another source of information is to
90 browse the content of blogs/sites belonging to passionate philatelists.
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Fig. 1. Examples of First-Day Covers philatelic description via StampShop & PicClick

96 The selection criterion of the platforms was the free provision of information, and then its
97 easy structuring and indexing. Also, no ethical or other approval was required for the present
98 study, the information processed being public, and platforms with open-source regime. Based
99 on the identified pieces, technical observations were made, mainly related to the
100 characteristics of the postal-philatelic issue. The characteristics in question refer to the date
101 of issue, the size and format of the parts, the way they are arranged for printing, the number
102 of parts (where the information could be found), respectively other data that underlie the
103 description of issue.
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106 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

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108 As a result of the searches on different platforms dedicated to philately, it was possible to
109 identify an impressive number of pieces, the first-day covers having applied the EUROPA
110 2016 postage stamps. For each of the considered pieces, the main technical characteristics
111 were exposed, culminating with the written description of the constituent elements.
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113 Regarding the analysis of the identified pieces, one can easily notice a wide variety of
114 formats, illustrations, and stamps, all of which are meant to highlight the beauty of the Think
115 green concept. In addition to the large number of features that postage stamps possess, a
116 significant addition is also brought by first-day covers. The latter indicates more than the
117 stamps, through the illustrations that complete them, how the postal office administrations
118 decided to make known all over the world the strategy to promote care for the environment,
119 as well as the adaptation to the concept of a sustainable community.
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Table 1. Technical characteristics for the “Think green!” FDCs (XVI)

59	Italy - 1		
<p>FDC in private edition made by Venetia Club (1/2) with single stamp 09-05-2016</p> <p>The pollution also affects hikers, thereby, becoming a greater cause of abandoning mountain climbs being higher because of this than that caused by physical exertion.</p>			
Reference sites:		[6]	
124	60	Italy - 2	
<p>FDC in private edition made by Venetia Club (2/2) with single stamp 09-05-2016</p> <p>Hiker climbing a slope.</p>			
Reference sites:		[6]	
125	61	Italy - 3	
<p>FDC with single stamp 09-05-2016</p> <p>Official FDC (variant 1) with the emblem of the Italian Post.</p>			
Reference sites:		[7]	
126	62	Italy - 4	
<p>FDC with single stamp 09-05-2016</p> <p>Official FDC (variant 2) with the emblem of the Italian Post.</p>			
Reference sites:		[7]	


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Table 2. Technical characteristics for the "Think green!" FDCs (XVII)


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63	Italy - 5	<p>FDC with single stamp 09-05-2016</p> <p>FDC in private edition, Capitolium (1852), "embracing a tree".</p>	
Reference sites: [8-10]			

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64	Italy - 6	<p>FDC with single stamp 09-05-2016</p> <p>FDC in private edition, Capitolium (1853), "the green city".</p>	
Reference sites: [8-10]			





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65	Jersey	<p>FDC with series</p> <p>The theme chosen to illustrate the envelope is a tree that spreads its roots over the Earth. In the lower right corner, a collage of leaves with the name of the state of Jersey.</p>	
Reference sites: [11-14]			

66	Kazachstan - 1	<p>FDC with single stamp 21-10-2016</p> <p>The logo of the "first day" stamp, a "bouquet" of six leaves, is also found in the FDC semi-illustration.</p>	
Reference sites: [15]			


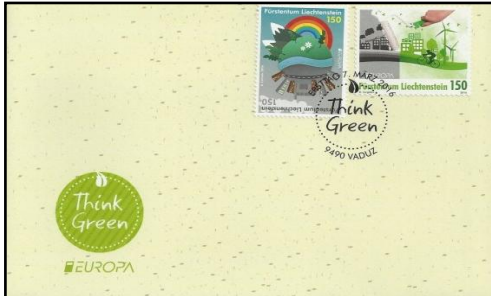
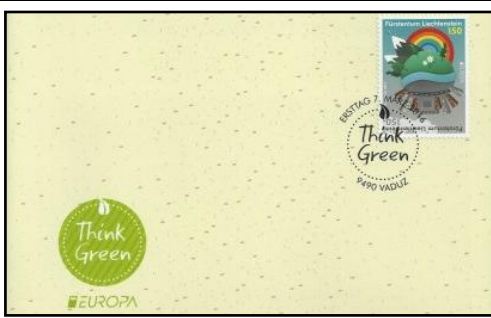
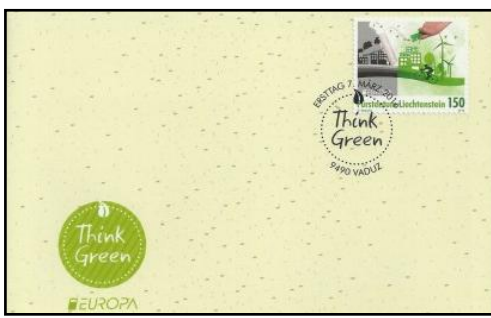
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Table 3. Technical characteristics for the "Think green!" FDCs (XVIII)

67	Kazachstan - 2	 <p>FDC with series 21-10-2016</p> <p>The logo of the "first day" stamp, a "bouquet" of six leaves, is also found in the FDC semi-illustration.</p> <p>Reference sites: [16]</p>
136		 <p>FDC with series 21-10-2016</p> <p>The logo of the "first day" stamp, a "bouquet" of six leaves, is also found in the FDC semi-illustration. The order of the stamps differs from the previous version.</p> <p>Reference sites: [17]</p>
137		 <p>FDC with series 09-05-2016</p> <p>FDC with the two stamps of the issue.</p> <p>Reference sites: [18]</p>
138		 <p>FDC with souvenir sheet 09-05-2016</p> <p>FDC with souvenir sheet of the issue.</p> <p>Reference sites: [19]</p>

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Table 4. Technical characteristics for the “Think green!” FDCs (XIX)


71	Latvia		
<p>FDC with series 09-05-2016</p> <p>Focusing on recycling, the envelope made of 100% recycled paper, features in the foreground a trunk of a young birch from which a baby squirrel greets with a leaf in his left "hand".</p>			
Reference sites:		[20, 21]	
142	72	Lichtenstein - 1	
<p>FDC with series 07-03-2016</p> <p>FDC with the two stamps of the issue.</p>			
Reference sites:		[22]	
143	73	Lichtenstein - 2	
<p>FDC with single stamp 07-03-2016</p> <p>FDC with the first stamp of the issue.</p>			
Reference sites:		[23]	
144	74	Lichtenstein - 3	
<p>FDC with single stamp 07-03-2016</p> <p>FDC with the second stamp of the issue.</p>			
Reference sites:		[23]	

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Table 5. Technical characteristics for the “Think green!” FDCs (XX)


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75	Lichtenstein - 4	
<p>FDC with block of four 07-03-2016</p> <p>FDC with a block of four stamps arranged tete-beche.</p>		
Reference sites:		[24]

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76	Lichtenstein - 5	
<p>FDC with block of four 07-03-2016</p> <p>FDC with block of four imposed stamp.</p>		
Reference sites:		[24]





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77	Lithuania	
<p>FDC with series 07-05-2016</p> <p>The electric car is the theme of this envelope dedicated to the issue.</p>		
Reference sites:		[25-27]

78	Luxembourg	
<p>FDC with series 10-05-2016</p> <p>"Green steps on the path to a green world" could be called the illustration of this envelope.</p>		
Reference sites:		[28]

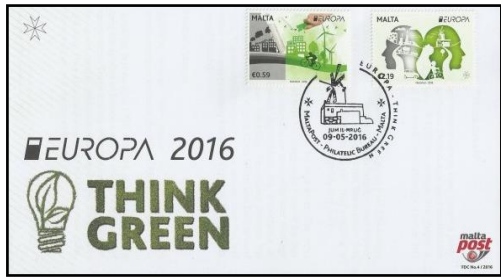


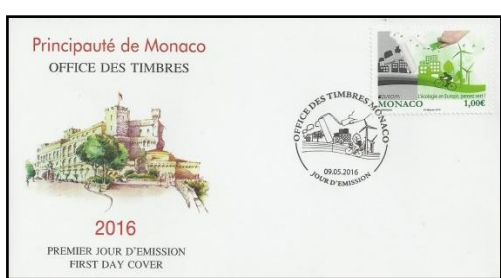
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Table 6. Technical characteristics for the “Think green!” FDCs (XXI)

79	Macedonia - 1		
<p>FDC with series 10-05-2016</p> <p>The image of an eagle in its habitat.</p>			
Reference sites:		[29]	
155	80	Macedonia - 2	
<p>FDC with souvenir sheet 10-05-2016</p> <p>The brown bear and the mountain mushrooms are the theme of this semi-illustration.</p>			
Reference sites:		[30]	
156	81	Madeira - 1	
<p>FDC with single stamp 09-05-2016</p> <p>The theme of the semi-illustration presents in an equilateral triangle the name of the show, and as graphic elements two wind turbines, a cyclist and two stylized trees.</p>			
Reference sites:		[31]	
157	82	Madeira - 2	
<p>FDC with souvenir sheet 09-05-2016</p> <p>The theme of the semi-illustration presents in an equilateral triangle the name of the show, and as graphic elements two wind turbines, a cyclist and two stylized trees.</p>			
Reference sites:		[32]	

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Table 7. Technical characteristics for the “Think green!” FDCs (XXII)

83	Malta	
<p>FDC with series 09-05-2016</p> <p>The semi-illustration of this envelope shows a light bulb with a leaf inside</p>		
Reference sites:		[33, 34]
84	Moldova - 1	
<p>FDC with series 05-04-2016</p> <p>The semi-illustration of this envelope shows a child urged to think freely, ecologically.</p>		
Reference sites:		[35]
85	Moldova - 2	
<p>FDC with block of six stamps 05-04-2016</p> <p>Envelope equipped with the package-block of the issue.</p>		
Reference sites:		[36]
86	Monaco	
<p>FDC with single stamp 09-05-2016</p> <p>The Royal Palace of the Principality of Monaco is present in the semi-illustration of the envelope.</p>		
Reference sites:		[37, 38]

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In addition to the philatelic documents issued by the postal administration of the Republic of Moldova we found, searching on different platforms, the issues that are presented in Fig. 2[39], Fig 3[40] and Fig. 4[41].



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Fig. 2. Privately First Day Cover with series



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Fig. 3. Privately First Day Cover with block of six stamps







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Fig. 4. Privately First Day Cover with series, like a postcard

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Table 8. Technical characteristics for the “Think green!” FDCs (XXIII)

87	Montenegro	
<p>FDC with single stamp 09-05-2016</p> <p>Green city is the theme of the envelope. Stylized, windows of the blocks, a cup, the blades of wind turbines and a flying bird can be seen.</p>		
Reference sites:		[42]
88	Nagorno-Karabakh - 1	
<p>FDC with series 20-05-2016</p> <p>"Green wreath" could be the theme of the envelope chosen by the postal administration.</p>		
Reference sites:		[43]
89	Nagorno-Karabakh - 2	
<p>Circulated FDC with series 20-05-2016</p> <p>"Green wreath" could be the theme of the envelope chosen by the postal administration.</p>		
Reference sites:		[44]
90	Nagorno-Karabakh - 3	
<p>Circulated FDC with series 20-05-2016</p> <p>"Green wreath" could be the theme of the envelope chosen by the postal administration.</p>		
Reference sites:		[45]





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Table 9. Technical characteristics for the “Think green!” FDCs (XXIV)

91	Nederland	
<p>FDC with series 21-04-2016</p> <p>The transition from an industrial city to an ecological one is framed by a heart-shaped bicycle chain.</p>		
Reference sites:		[46]
92	Norway	
<p>FDC with series 09-05-2016</p> <p>The leaves are the main theme of this envelope.</p>		
Reference sites:		[47]
93	Poland	
<p>FDC with single stamp 09-05-2016</p> <p>Just green energy sources, such as solar and wind panels.</p>		
Reference sites:		[48]
94	Portugal - 1	
<p>FDC with single stamp 09-05-2016</p> <p>The theme of the semi-illustration presents in an equilateral triangle the name of the show, and as graphic elements two wind turbines, a cyclist and two stylized trees.</p>		
Reference sites:		[49]

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Table 10. Technical characteristics for the “Think green!” FDCs (XXV)


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95	Portugal - 2	
<p>FDC with souvenir sheet 09-05-2016</p> <p>The theme of the semi-illustration presents in an equilateral triangle the name of the show, and as graphic elements two wind turbines, a cyclist and two stylized trees.</p>		
Reference sites:		[50]

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96	Romania	
<p>FDC with series 04-05-2016</p> <p>Mechanized agriculture bordered by renewable energy sources.</p>		
Reference sites:		[51]

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97	Russian Federation - 1	
<p>FDC with set of 4 perforated stamps 05-08-2016</p> <p>Wreath of leaves on the head of a young Slav.</p>		
Reference sites:		[52]

98	Russian Federation - 2	
<p>FDC with perforated S/S 05-08-2016</p> <p>Wreath of leaves on the head of a young Slav.</p>		
Reference sites:		[53]


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Table 11. Technical characteristics for the “Think green!” FDCs (XXVI)

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99	San Marino - 1	
<p>FDC with single stamp 10-03-2016</p> <p>Envelope with the coat of arms of the Republic of San Marino.</p>		
Reference sites:		[54]


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100	San Marino - 2	
<p>FDC with single stamp 10-03-2016</p> <p>Palazzo Pubblico, seat of government of the Republic of San Marino.</p>		
Reference sites:		[55]

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101	Serbia - 1	
<p>FDC with series 09-05-2016</p> <p>Child blowing in a mill whose petals are rendered by the sign of recycling.</p>		
Reference sites:		[56]

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102	Serbia - 2	
<p>FDC with block of six stamps 09-05-2016</p> <p>Envelope stamped with six postal stamps of the issue canceled with the "first day" stamp arranged horizontally.</p>		
Reference sites:		[57]

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Table 12. Technical characteristics for the “Think green!” FDCs (XXVII)

103	Serbia - 3	
<p>FDC with block of six stamps 09-05-2016</p> <p>Envelope stamped with six postal stamps of the issue canceled with the "first day" stamp arranged vertically.</p>		
Reference sites:		[58]
104	Slovenia - 1	
<p>FDC with single stamp 05-05-2016</p> <p>The planet embraced by leaves.</p>		
Reference sites:		[59]
105	Slovenia - 2	
<p>FDC with single stamp 27-05-2016</p> <p>Amazing creativity, seems like thought are disseminating in the air in the form of green leaves.</p>		
Reference sites:		[60, 61]
106	Spain - 1	
<p>FDC with single stamp 22-04-2016</p> <p>A green envelop, the color of leaves, a leaf with petiole and veins can be seen.</p>		
Reference sites:		[62]

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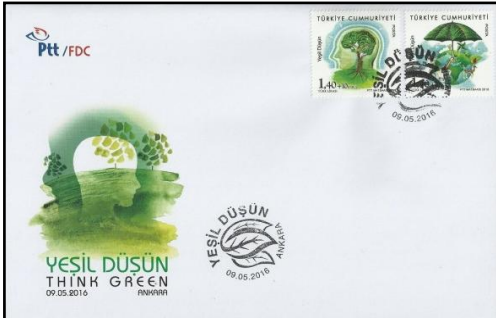
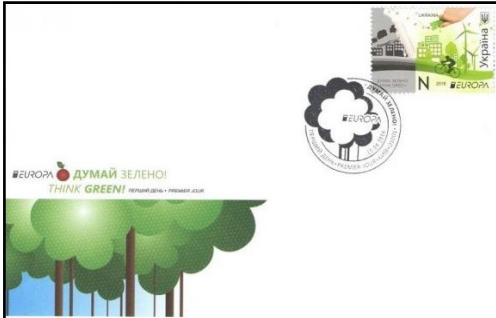

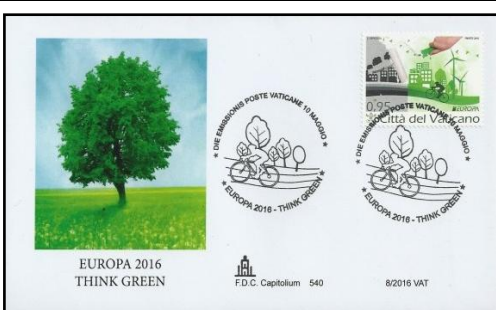
Table 13. Technical characteristics for the “Think green!” FDCs (XXVIII)

<p>107</p> <p>Spain - 2</p>	<p>FDC with single stamp 22-04-2016</p> <p>Planet Earth full of life.</p>	
<p>Reference sites: [63]</p>		
<p>108</p> <p>Sweden</p>	<p>FDC with single stamp and another issue 14-01-2016</p> <p>Envelope in the semi-illustration of which is reproduced the Museum of Natural History made on the occasion of the 100th anniversary.</p>	
<p>Reference sites: [64]</p>		
<p>109</p> <p>Switzerland - 1</p>	<p>FDC with series 12-05-2016</p> <p>The slogan of the issue is framed by three different kinds of leaves.</p>	
<p>Reference sites: [65]</p>		
<p>110</p> <p>Switzerland - 2</p>	<p>FDC with block of four stamps 12-05-2016</p> <p>The slogan of the issue is framed by three different species of leaves.</p>	
<p>Reference sites: [66]</p>		

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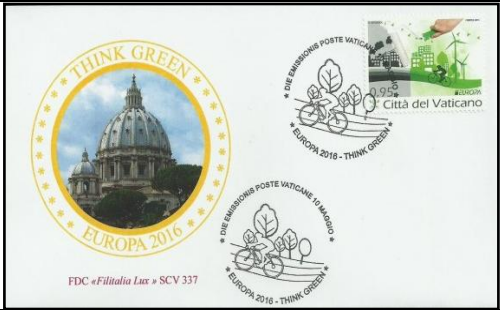
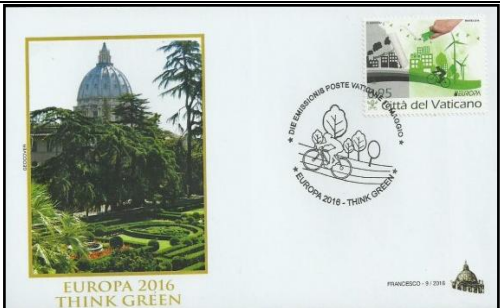
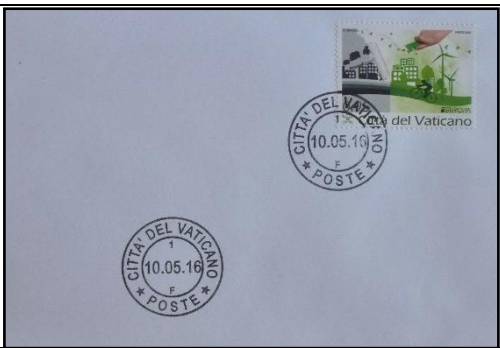
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Table 14. Technical characteristics for the “Think green!” FDCs (XXIX)

111	Turkey		
<p>FDC with series 09-05-2016</p> <p>Abstract composition consisting of leaves and leafy trees.</p>			
Reference sites:		[67]	
222	112	Ukraine	
<p>FDC with single stamp 15-04-2016</p> <p>Just leafy trees</p>			
Reference sites:		[68]	
223	113	Vatican - 1	
<p>FDC with block of six stamps 10-05-2016</p> <p>The medallion shows the Vatican Museum.</p>			
Reference sites:		[69]	
224	114	Vatican - 2	
<p>FDC with single stamp 10-05-2016</p> <p>A tree in the middle of the field.</p>			
Reference sites:		[70]	

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Table 15. Technical characteristics for the “Think green!” FDCs (XXX)

115	Vatican - 3	
Reference sites: [71]		
116	Vatican - 4	
Reference sites: [72]		
117	Vatican - 5	
Reference sites: [73]		

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4. CONCLUSION

Through the philatelic pieces, in a very large number of pictorial data (in form of postal stamps applied on official and privately edition FDCs), we exposed, something that has not been included in philatelic studies so far. By publishing this study we hope that we will make available to all those interested useful tools of information, and philatelic orientation in the European environmental protection activity. This study is mainly addressed to passionate philatelists, but can also be of interest to other professional categories that can develop similar studies starting only from their hobbies. It can be highlighted that philately, especially in this study, is capable of being a true embassy of culture and environmental protection.

242 **COMPETING INTERESTS**

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244 Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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246 **AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS**

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248 This work was carried out in collaboration between authors. BVC designed the study and
249 performed the literature searches. ALP managed the analyses of the study, and also,
250 managed its own literature searches. BVC and MC wrote the first draft of the manuscript. All
251 authors read and approved the final manuscript.

252

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406

407 **DEFINITIONS, ACRONYMS, ABBREVIATIONS**

408

409 **FDC (First day cover):** document with a first day cancellation, not necessarily the one with
410 the special illustration.

411

412 **Joint issues:** stamps released by two or more countries on a common event or anniversary
413 and are characterized either by a common design or the same date of issue.

414