

# Expertising Stamps and Other Philatelic Items

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The F.I.P. "Fakes and Forgeries" Commission met in Madrid last year to elect its Bureau Members and to establish the key criteria required in expertising a stamp or a philatelic item. The Malta Philatelic Society was represented at the Congress by Anthony Fenech, a Member on this Commission.

Mr. Paolo Vollmeier, the outgoing President, pointed out that the rules for expertising varied considerably between National Federations. He stated that many certificates are little more than Auction descriptions. Mr. Vollmeier recommended that strong efforts should be made to standardise the criteria and descriptions to be used on certificates on a world-wide basis.

The newly elected President, Mr. Patrick Pearson promised that he and the Bureau Members would tackle this problem wholeheartedly. Dr. Helena Obermuller Wilen, the Swedish Delegate was asked to be the point of contact with individual experts. She very kindly distributed among the Commission Members a sample of certification where the **standard** is based on **figures**.

## Expertising Criteria

1. The **first figure** refers to the **quality** of the stamp or philatelic item:
  - \*5\*\* • Highest possible luxury
  - \*4\*\* • Extra Fine
  - \*3\*\* • Very Fine
  - \*2\*\* • Fine
  - \*1\*\* • Average
  - \*0\*\* • Inferior copy
2. The **second figure** refers to the **centering**:
  - \*5\* • Perfect centering
  - \*4\* • Extra Fine centering
  - \*3\* • Fine/Medium Fine centering
  - \*2\* • Nearly off centering
  - \*1\* • Off centered
  - \*0\* • Error of perforation
3. The **third figure** refers to the **gum** or the **cancellation**:
  - \*\*5 • Unmounted Mint (never hinged) or luxury cancellation
  - \*\*4 • First hinge or excellent cancellation
  - \*\*3 • At least half of the original gum intact or a very good cancellation
  - \*\*2 • Less than half of the stamp with original gum or good cancellation
  - \*\*1 • Without gum or with acceptable cancellation
  - \*\*0 • Inferior cancellation



*SG 96 - JB 65*

Would you be more than happy to have your next acquisition certified as 4\*\*; \*\*5; \*5\* that is: "An Extra Fine copy, Unmounted Mint and having Perfect Centering?"

Good Luck and Happy Hunting!