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## **SOME REMARKS TO THE SYSTEM OF ARCHIVAL SERVICE IN THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC**

**Izvleček:**

***Nekaj pripomb k sistemu arhivske službe v Republiki Slovaški***

Od 1. 1. 2003 velja na Slovaškem nova arhivska zakonodaja - Zakon št. 395/2002 o arhivih in registraturah in o dopolnitvi nekaterih zakonov z dne 17. 5. 2002 in Odlok Ministrstva za notranje zadeve Republike Slovaške št. 628 z dne 29. 10. 2002, s katerim se izvajajo nekatere določbe Zakona o arhivih in registraturah. Med drugim novo določene pravne odločbe predstavljajo odlično osnovo za izboljševanje kvalitete na področju arhivske službe. Članek predstavlja kratek razvoj arhivskega sistema in trenuten centralističen sistem državnih arhivov. Avtor podaja nekaj prednosti in slabosti široke in kompleksne arhivske službe na Slovaškem. Centraliziran sistem, ki trenutno deluje, vsebuje oboje. Na splošno pa lahko rečemo, da je vsak sistem močan in učinkovit, če ga sestavljajo dovolj učinkovite pravne pristojnosti in kompetence, ki odločajo o kadrovskih in finančnih virih.

**Ključne besede:**

dostop do arhivov, arhivska zakonodaja, arhivska služba, arhivi.

**Abstract:**

***Some Remarks to the System of Archival Service in the Slovak Republic***

Since 1 January 2003, the Slovak Republic has a new archival legislation - the Act no. 395/2002 on Archives and Registries and on the Amendments of Certain Acts from 17 May 2002 and the Regulation no. 628 of the Ministry of Interior of the Slovak Republic from 29 October 2002 by which some provisions of the Act on Archives and Registries are executed. Apart from other things, the new adopted legal provisions provide an excellent base for quality improvement in the field of archival services. The development of the archival system is briefly introduced and current centralized system of state archives is presented in the paper. A few significant advantages and disadvantages are mentioned from the broad and complex activities of archival service of the state archives in the Slovak Republic. The centralized system - as it is functioning at this time - comprises both. In general it can be stated that each system is more powerful and effective if it comprises sufficient legal competencies and decision-making competencies in personal and financial resources.

**Key words:**

access to archives, archival legislation, archival service, archives, registry.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Archival system and archival service in each country have their own development and history. Formation and creation of the first archives in the territory of Slovakia go back to the 13<sup>th</sup> century. Such institutions were established by towns, noble families and their feudal manors and church institutions in order to give the

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legal documents also their credibility and power. It can be witnessed for example by the archival materials of ecclesiastical institutions in the present Slovak National Archives, exceptional also in a European context, comprises a unique complex of several fonds of credible locations (*loca credibilia*), which over five centuries served as public authority institutions on the territory of Slovakia and became irreplaceable sources of information about the development of our country in the Middle Ages.<sup>1</sup>

Inspiration for creation of future national archives was the establishment of big archives of royal administration with special personal staff containing already some archival fonds. The empress of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Marie Therese, set up the royal (provincial) archives also in Hungarian part of the monarchy in 1756, shortly after establishing the archives in Vienna. The seat of this archives until 1785 - because of the Turks presence in Hungary - was Bratislava. Until 1918, Slovakia has never been an independent state or an autonomous administrative unit. Thus it is impossible to refer to any central or national Slovak archives from that period. However, Slovakia was a country with rich archival materials, preserved in municipal, county, church and family archives, which, according to the criteria of that period, could form the core of the central archives. With the establishment of the Czechoslovak Republic in 1918, the question of the organization and management of archives and archival studies in Slovakia emerged.

In 1928 the dissolution of the old county structure and the re-organization of public administration resulted in the establishment of the provincial system in Slovakia. Slovakia became a province of Czechoslovakia; a political and administrative subject represented by the Provincial Office and presided over by the Provincial President. Pursuant to the Decree 19355 issued by Presidium of the Provincial Office on 28 September 1928, the Provincial Archives was established. It took custody of the archival fonds of the former counties, which remained stored on their former physical location, non-current records of the former Minister of the Czechoslovak Republic with Full Authorization for Administration of Slovakia, branch offices of ministries then functioning within the territory of Slovakia, and the newly created registry of the Provincial Office. The Provincial Archives was abolished on 31 December 1939. Its responsibilities and managing of Bratislava and Komárno county archives were temporarily taken over by the department of the Presidium of the Ministry of Interior called the Archives of the Ministry of Interior. The Archives of the Ministry of Interior co-operated with the archives in Vienna and Budapest with the aim to propose a bill for the establishment of a central state archives in Slovakia.<sup>2</sup>

After the Second World War significant attention was devoted to preservation of archives. In 1947 the Agricultural Archives and its six branches and in 1950 the Central Mining Archives in Banská Štiavnica, were established. By a government decision of 9 January 1951, the State Archives Board was established under the Ministry of Interior. At its first session, the board discussed proposals for the constitution of the Slovak Central Archives and its organizational structure. Pursuant to Decree of the Board of Commissioners of 20 May 1952, the Slovak Central Archives was constituted. Its organizational structure and activities were determined by the Commissioner of Interior on 29 December 1952. In addition to its primary aim - to acquire and facilitate the most effective use of the records of national-wide importance - the Archives was required to manage, control, and offer methodological guidance to all regional, district, and municipal archives in Slovakia. Archives

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<sup>1</sup> *Slovak National Archives*, p. 11-12.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid 1*, p. 6.

temporarily took over the function of the executive body of the Slovak Archives Board.<sup>3</sup>

Moreover, in 1950 the first specialized course of archival science was opened at the Philosophical Faculty of the Comenius University in Bratislava thus creating basic conditions for formation of archivists with specialized education. A government Decree on Archives of 7 May 1954, the first legislative regulation with the power of an act, was an important turning point in the process of establishing an organizational structure of archives in Slovakia. Based on this government Decree, the Central Slovak State Archives, as the successor of the Slovak Central Archives, was established on 1 October 1954. In accordance with a government Decree, the Slovak Archives Administration was constituted as well, and took over tasks related to the organization and management of archives in Slovakia. The system of state archives (from the former regional archives) controlled by Ministry of Interior and the United archival fond of the Slovak Republic were established as well. Since 1 January 1956, the Central Slovak State Archives undertook the administration of the archival fonds of the Agricultural Archives, originally established in 1947 under the Commission of Agriculture and Land Reform.

In 1960-1968 the Archives Administration and state archives were under the competency of the Slovak National Council. After federative organization of the Czech-Slovak Republic in 1969 the archives' system both in Slovakia and Czech Republic was again incorporated into the competency of the Ministry of Interior. It was a continuance of a tradition to control the archives by a governmental department of interior to which competency belonged also the authorities of local state administration - these had the competency to establish state district archives. At that stage two central archives - the State Slovak Central Archives and the State Central Mining Archives - and seven state regional archives created a network of state archives. Ministry of Interior started a methodical control of state district archives as well. The system of specialized and enterprise archives started its development supported by the Regulation on enterprise archive issued in 1973.

The Act of the Slovak National Council No 149/1975 Coll. on Archives completed the efforts aimed at creation of an organized archival structure. In principle, it was a modern act comparable to other European acts at that time. One of its ambitions was to shift the system of Slovak archives to a scientific level. It proclaimed - in concordance with the Czech Act - some archival documents to become cultural monuments and national cultural monuments. Into the archival system it also brought provisions concerning pre-archival care, provided detail conception of definition of the United archival fond of the Slovak Republic and defined the system of state archives governed by the Ministry of Interior and by district authorities of local state administration. It confirmed also the establishment of enterprise archives and archives of organizations of a special significance.<sup>4</sup>

According to this Act, the Central Slovak State Archives was re-named to the Central State Archives of the Slovak Socialist Republic. The Act considered the Central State Archives of the SSR the main scientific research institute in archival studies. The Archives was integrated into the state research planning system in co-ordination with the Historical Institute of the Slovak Academy of Science. From 1 January 1978, as a budgetary organization, the Archives acquired full independence

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<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* 1, p. 7.

<sup>4</sup> *Kartous: Slovenská archivistika*, p. 3.

guaranteed by the Act when, in 1979, its new status was issued, and its organizational structure changed as well. The political and social changes after 1989, splitting of the former Czech-Slovak Republic and creation of the new, independent Slovak Republic on 1 January 1993, presented a new period also for the Slovak archives. They reflected also in the archival legislation and resulted in the amendment of the Slovak National Council Act on Archives by Act 571/1991 (full worded under No. 332/1992). The reason for adopting a new legislation was the fact that the previous Act on Archives from 1975 - despite its three revisions during the past years - could not ensure proper fulfilling of all tasks connected with the archives and registries in new social and political conditions any more.

## LEGISLATIVE BACKGROUND

With effect from 1 January 2003, the Slovak Republic has a new archival legislation - *the Act no. 395/2002 on Archives and Registries and on the Amendments of Certain Acts*<sup>5</sup>, which was adopted by the National Council of the Slovak Republic on 17 May 2002 and *the Regulation no. 628 of the Ministry of Interior of the Slovak Republic* from 29 October 2002 by which some provisions of the Act on Archives and Registries are executed<sup>6</sup> (in the wording of later regulations<sup>7</sup>).

This Act shall „regulate the organization and competence of state administration authorities in the field of Archives and registries, organization of Archives, rights and obligations of Archives founders, Archives, possessors of archives, access to archives, as well as the rights and obligations of registry creators“.

Archives shall mean “records with a permanent documentary value important for knowledge of the history of Slovakia and the Slovak nation. Film records or audio records originating from before 1950 are archives. Library documents and collection items are not archives”.

Archival heritage of the Slovak Republic shall mean “a complex of archives, archive fonds and archive collections, except for foreign archives recorded in the Archival Heritage Register of the Slovak Republic”.

The main changes brought by the new legislation (*The Act no. 395/2002*) can be summarized as follows:<sup>8</sup>

- The system of archives in the Slovak Republic is centralized, the right to establish and dissolve archives is given to the state via the Ministry of Interior of the Slovak Republic.

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<sup>5</sup> Zákon NR SR č. 395/2002 Z.z.

<sup>6</sup> Vyhláška Ministerstva vnútra Slovenskej republiky č. 628/2002 Z. z.

<sup>7</sup> Zákon o archívoch a registratúrach.

<sup>8</sup> Kartous: Slovenská archivistika, p. 6.

## Article 5

### *Establishment and dissolution of archives*

*(1) The Ministry of Interior of the Slovak Republic (hereinafter referred to as "Ministry") shall establish state central archives and state archives with regional territorial competence as institutions without legal personality, intended for the performance of state administration duties in the area of archives and registries.*

- The previous structure of the state archives have been changed in such a way that previous seven state regional archives (under the competency of the Ministry of Interior of the Slovak Republic) and 38 district archives (the competency of the local state district authorities) are unified into a system of state archives with regional territorial competence and previous district archives have become branches of regional archives; neither number of archives nor their competence have been changed;
- It gives the possibility to establish an archives not only to legal persons but also to a physical person (private archives) and provide them certain rights and obligations as well.

## Article 5

### *Establishment and dissolution of archives*

*(2) Archives shall only be established or dissolved upon approval given by the Ministry. Archives shall be established or dissolved by:*

- a) state authorities and legal persons established or founded by them,*
- b) municipalities that represent a town or a self-government region;*
- c) other legal persons;*
- d) physical persons.*

*(3) The Ministry shall decide on the dissolution of archives, if its founder:*

- a) has ceased without any legal successor;*
  - b) does not rectify a breach of obligations pursuant to Article 6 par. 2 letters a), b) and d), even after the repeated award of a fine.*
- 30 years protection period for access to archival documents is abolished - especially this provision of the Act is highly appreciated by experts of the European Union and thus the Slovak Act belongs to the most liberal laws in the Europe from this point of view;
  - registry administration is processed in its complexity and from the point of view of present real situation; the creator of registry can ask an appropriate company to take care of his registry administration as provided service;
  - the access rights and obligations to archival documents are dealt with in detail:

## ACCESS TO ARCHIVAL DOCUMENTS

### Article 12

#### Conditions for access to archival documents

(1) Everyone shall be allowed to access the archival documents located in archives and the archival information system (hereinafter referred to as “access to archival documents”), if not otherwise stipulated by this act.

(2) Archives shall enable access to archival documents by the execution of transcripts, abstracts, certificates, copies, as well as by the study and public exhibition of archival documents.

(3) Archives shall only submit an original of an archival document for its study in exceptional cases, whilst it shall always submit a copy of an archival document, if:

- a) it concerns an archival document created before 1526;
- b) it contains information with restricted access;
- a) any damage or possibility of damage could occur upon its study.

(4) Access to archival documents shall be executed upon a written application, apart from access to archival documents by their public exhibition. In an application for access to archival documents in the form of its transcripts, abstracts, certificates or copies, an applicant shall specify:

- a) name and surname;
- b) birth number;
- c) address of permanent residency or address of temporary residency;
- d) type and number of identification card; the applicant proves his identity by identification card, travel document (passport), military identification card, sailor's book or a document permitting residence in the form of an identification card;
- e) information about the required archival document that he is aware of;
- f) purpose of use;
- g) name, surname and address of a physical person or the name, seat and identification number of a legal person, for needs of whom he asks for access to the archival documents;
- h) declaration stating whether he is the creator of the archival documents, his legal successor or the possessor of archival documents.

(5) A research list, in which the applicant specifies the information pursuant to par. 4, the subject of study and a declaration stating that he will only use the information taken from archival documents for the purposes specified in the research list and specifies the name of the archives, the name of the archive fonds and the title and name of the processor of the finding aid from which he gained the information, shall represent the application for access to archival documents in the form of study.

(6) If the archive allows the applicant to access archival documents upon his application, it shall not issue any decision.

(7) Archives shall only allow access to archival documents in the form of public exhibition in exceptional cases, upon a contract and the settlement of the cost incurred in the execution of copies of archival documents and their transport. The exhibitor shall be obliged to insure the archive documents.

(8) Archives shall execute a duplicate, abstract or certificate of an archival document and a copy of an archival document for the settlement of costs. On the execution of a duplicate, abstract, certificate or copy, the archives shall authenticate its conformity with the original archival document. A transcript, abstract, certificate or copy, authenticated by the archives, shall substitute the original of the archival document.

(9) The Ministry shall deliver a duplicate, abstract, certificate of an archival document, or a copy of an archival document, for which the applicant pays an administrative fee, abroad through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Slovak Republic.

On the other hand there also exist some access restrictions to archives. They are stipulated in the Article 13 of the mentioned Act and are connected with possible endanger of safety and state interests, protection of rights and personal data of living persons, possible damage of archival documents or if the documents are not processed and accessible from the archival point of view. Access to personal data in archival documents is protected by the expiry of 90 years from the day when the record was created.

### Article 13

#### Access restriction

(1) The right of access shall not refer to access to the accession book, book of deposits and information about the proprietorship of an archival document and the place of its location stated in the register card of archival documents or to personal data stated in a finding aid.

(2) Archives shall restrict access to archival documents if:

- a) upon their use, the safety of the state, its defence, foreign, political, economic or financial interests could be endangered or if it results from international treaties by which the Slovak Republic is bound, or from obligations resulting from its membership in international organisations;
- b) upon their use, the rights or legally protected interests of living persons could be endangered;
- c) upon their use, damage or the possibility of damage to them could occur;
- d) it is specified in the conditions under which these were placed in the archives;
- e) the applicant seriously breached the research rules of the archives.

(3) Archives shall restrict access to archival documents if the archival documents are not processed and accessible from archival point of view.

(4) Archives shall decide on the restriction of access to archival documents pursuant to par. 2 and 3 and about its duration. In cases specified in par. 2 letters a)

and b), the archives shall restrict access on the basis of the previous decision of the creator or possessor of archival documents, which he made when submitting them to the archives.

(5) Access to personal data in archival documents shall be possible:

- a) after the expiry of 90 years from the day that the record was created, if not otherwise stipulated by a special act or international treaty; or
- b) after submission of a written consent with the certified signature of a physical person, the personal data of whom it concerns or, if this physical person is no longer living, that of his legal representative or a close person.

(6) Access to archival documents cannot be restricted to:

- a) the creator, legal successor or possessor of archival documents;
- b) state authorities, municipalities, self-government regions, other legal persons and physical persons in conjunction with their activity pursuant to special regulations;
- c) an applicant, to whom the data contained in an archival document, refers.

(7) An applicant may lodge an appeal against a decision on the restriction of access to archival documents. If the decision on the restriction of access to archive documents refers to archival documents placed in archives kept by:

- a) a legal person established or founded by a state authority, this state authority shall decide in respect of this appeal; if it does not represent an authority of state administration, the Ministry shall decide in respect of the appeal;
- b) other legal persons or physical persons, the Ministry shall decide about the appeal;
- c) a municipality, a self-government region or a court shall decide about the legal remedy against the decision.

A possibility also exists to give a special permission for access to archival documents under the conditions stipulated in Article 14 of the Act.

#### Article 14

##### Special permission for access to archival documents

(1) A creator of archival documents, his legal successor or the possessor of archival documents, shall be allowed to grant a special permission for access to archival documents, which are not otherwise accessible (hereinafter referred to as "special permission").

(2) If it is not possible to identify the creator of archival documents, his legal successor or the possessor of archival documents, the archives grant the special permission.

(3) The special permission shall be granted to:

- a) archival documents or
- b) physical person.



*(4) The special permission shall clearly state who grants it, to whom and to which archival documents it refers. If the special permission is not granted by archives, it shall contain the verified signature of the physical person that grants it.*

*(5) Archival documents, for access to which special permission was granted, shall become constantly accessible to any applicant.*

*(6) Upon the granting of a special permission to a physical person, the archival documents shall not become accessible to another physical person. The person that granted the special permission to a physical person shall be obliged to enable access to any other physical person, to whom it grants it under equal conditions.*

*(7) The creator of archival documents, the legal successor, possessor of archival documents or archives, may condition the granting of a special permission, by the signature of an applicant's declaration stating that he shall not disclose information gained that could damage public interest or private interest.*

The Act contains also some other legislative provisions, which are worth mentioning at least very briefly:

- export, import and return of archival documents is established as a special process in accordance with existing European standards;
- protection and preservation of archives and registries belong to the main activities of all archival institutions, the tasks and activities in this field are also strongly stressed in the Act and the following Regulation as public interest;
- the Act contains also a strong requirement for record and registry creators concerning use of appropriate permanent paper (ISO 9706) and inks to be used in formation of records, which can potentially become archival documents and their protection;
- the Regulation no. 628 of the Ministry of Interior of the Slovak Republic from 29 October 2002 by which some provisions of the Act on Archives and Registries are executed, covers also the field of protection and preservation of archival documents and registry records;
- in its second part "PROTECTION / PRESERVATION OF ARCHIVAL DOCUMENTS AND REGISTRY RECORDS" the above mentioned Regulation specifies in detail the subject and types of preservation, protection as well as rooms and storage space of archives and different precautions connected with them;
- one of the most important articles within the Regulation is Article 24 defining the most important external and internal degradation factors (physical, chemical, microbiological), which may cause deterioration of physical conditions of archival documents and deals with protection against them;
- exhibitions are a powerful tool for communication with a large public and enable attract people by displaying selected attractive archival documents. They should be educational and enjoyable. Exhibiting works of art or artifacts, especially the unique, the rare, and the wonderful, is an important part of the educational mission of many institutions. It is also an effective way of attracting the attention and support of the public. Although exhibitions can complicate or even compromise preservation efforts, it is nearly impossible to avoid exhibiting original documents. Therefore it is inevitable to take and apply some measures and precautions to minimize risk or their damage - especially by the influence of light and humidity - in the process of exhibition. The

Regulation specifies technical conditions under which archival documents can be exhibited;

- conservation and restoration treatment of archival documents are an inevitable part of their active preservation, which are provided by specialized workplaces. Archival documents cannot be treated by conservation and restoration processes outside the network of the state archival system. The Regulation contains the basic rules also for this field of work.<sup>9</sup>

## MAIN ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF THE CENTRALIZED SYSTEM

There are different systems of archival service in different countries. Systems of archives and archival service in each country have their own development and history. They have different backgrounds in their creation and formation, mostly closely connected with the development of state, public and self-government administration. It is rather difficult to predict that one system, excellently functioning in one country, will be able to perform the same effects in another country with different administrative, cultural, traditional, personal and financial background. This is also the reason that the views and opinions expressed in this paper are exclusively referred to the archival service in the Slovak Republic.

The organizational structure of the Ministry of Interior is rather complicated.<sup>10</sup> The archival system is included in the Section of Public Administration; Department of Archives in this section is the highest archival authority in Slovakia. Archivists employed in the state archives are ranked as civil servants within the state administration according to the specific Act stipulating their status.<sup>11</sup> Also the system of employees' selection for the archives is governed by this Act on the basis of competitive examination.

The system of state's archives in Slovakia comprises of two central archives:

- Slovak National Archives in Bratislava and the State Central Mining Archives in Banská Štiavnica,

and seven state archives with regional territorial competence:

- State Archives in Banská Bystrica with its branches (former district archives) in Banská Bystrica, Banská Štiavnica, Kremnica, Lučenec, Rimavská Sobota, Veľký Krtíš, Zvolen;
- State Archives in Bratislava, branches in Modra, Skalica, Šaľa, Trenčín, Trnava;
- State Archives in Bytča, branches in Čadca, Dolný Kubín, Liptovský Mikuláš, Martin, Považská Bystrica, Žilina,
- State Archives in Košice, branches Košice, Michalovce, Rožňava, Trebišov,
- State Archives in Levoča, branches Levoča, Poprad, Spišská Nová Ves, Stará Ľubovňa,
- State Archives in Nitra, branches Nitra, Bojnice, Komárno, Levice, Nové Zámky, Topoľčany

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<sup>9</sup> Hanus, J.: *Preservation of Archives in the New Slovak Archival Legislation*, p. 191-209.

<sup>10</sup> *Organizačný poriadok MV SR*.

<sup>11</sup> *Zákon 400/2009 Z.z.*

- State Archives in Prešov, branches Prešov, Bardejov, Humenné, Svidník, Vranov nad Topľou,
- and Archives of Capital of the SR Bratislava.

The unified methodology of work, rules, regulations, etc. as well as the use of information systems for all state archives can be considered as one of the main advantages of the centralized system. The provisions issued by the Minister of Interior, General Director of Public Administration Section as well by the Director of Archives Department must be respected and followed by all state archives. According to the above-mentioned Act 395/2002 on Archives and Registries there is also the network of specialized public archives (archives of legal persons stipulated by law), which are out of the state archival system controlled by the Ministry of Interior. Among them there are e.g. Archives of the Office of the President of Slovak Republic, Parliamentary Archives, Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Military Historical Archives, Central Archives of the Slovak Academy of Science, etc. - altogether 24 specialized archives for the time being. Despite the fact that they do not belong to the state archival system controlled by the Ministry of Interior, from the methodological point of view of archival work they are controlled by the Ministry of Interior, Department of Archives and respect unified rules concerning processing and accessing of archives. The same situation is also valid for the only municipal archives in Slovakia - Archives of the City of Košice.

Another advantage of centralized system should exist in the possibility of significant staff reducing for organizational, economical, technical and personal affairs and services provided centrally by the ministry. Among these activities are for example administration, maintenance and cleaning of buildings provided by outsourcing company for the whole ministry. As the financial means are also centralized they can be easier redistributed in the case of necessity and urgent needs. Reducing personnel staff for above-mentioned activities should allow using these vacancies for specialized archival activities. However, this possibility exists in reality only on a theoretical level at this time. As the archivists are ranked among the civil servants their number can be sometimes influenced by the total reduction of the state administration despite the significant quantity increase in the same period. It seems that the relative advantage of being a civil servant can be sometimes double-edged. This situation can be illustrated by the following figures.

Figure 1.

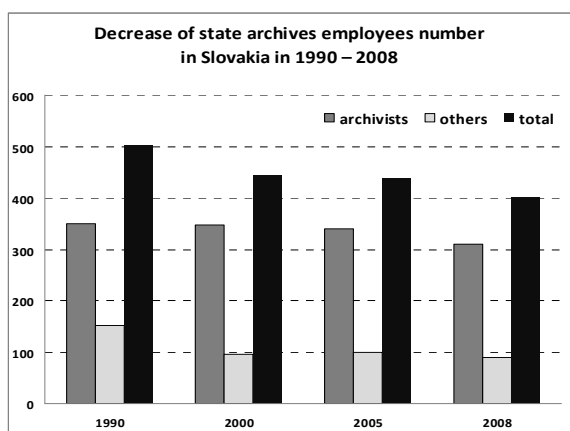
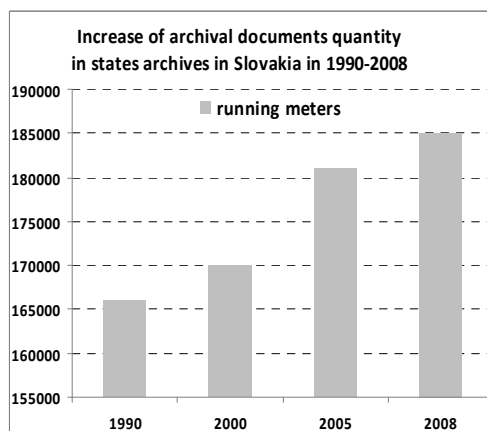


Figure 2.



Supply of archives by different materials and equipment is also centralized and performed via so called central commodity managers at the ministry. According to Slovak legislation tenders are necessary for materials, equipment and commodities exceeding a certain amount of money. On the one hand - if all these processes connected with selection and shopping of commodities are fast and flexible - it can be very helpful and time saving for all archives. On the other hand - if this system does not run properly (and in such an enormous system as the ministry of interior is, can sometimes happen) - it can be a nightmare for normal functioning of archives. Another significant disadvantage can be the fact that neither any of the state archives, nor Department of Archives are independent legal units and the only statutory representative of them is either the minister or general director of public administration section. Some limited competencies in special cases can be delegated to directors of archives as well. These are only a few of significant advantages and disadvantages mentioned from the broad and complex activities of the archival service of the state archives in the Slovak Republic. The centralized system - as it is functioning at this time - comprises both. In general it can be stated that each system is more powerful and effective if it comprises sufficient legal competencies and decision-making competencies in personal and financial resources.

## CONCLUSION

New Slovak legislative provisions - the Act no. 395/2002 on Archives and Registries and on the Amendments of Certain Acts adopted on 17 May 2002 and the Regulation no. 628 of the Ministry of Interior of the Slovak Republic from 29 October 2002 by which some provisions of the Act on Archives and Registries are executed - with the effect from 1 January 2003 create the basic legislative background for archival service in the Slovak Republic. Selected articles from the Act 395/2002 illustrate the main goals, changes and the scope of application. Apart from other things, the new adopted legal provisions provide an excellent basis for quality improvement also in the field of archives preservation. As the state archives and archivists belong to the sphere of state administration and service, practical application of archival services in real life is influenced and limited by the overall economical, political and cultural situation in the country. It will be necessary to devote a lot of effort, energy, personal and financial resources and support in order to meet all the requirements given by the law and to improve archival service in Slovakia in its quality despite the results achieved until nowadays.

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