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## ACCESS AND USE OF ARCHIVAL HOLDINGS IN THE STATE ARCHIVES OF THE REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA

**Izvleček:**

**Dostop in uporaba arhivskega gradiva v Državnem arhivu Republike Makedonije**

*Spremembe, ki so se pojavile v Makedoniji v zadnjih dveh desetletjih (njena neodvisnost in sprememba političnega sistema - opustitev enostrankarskega sistema in ustanovitev pluralistične družbe), so pripeljale do liberalizacije pri uporabi arhivskega gradiva. To je bilo še posebej pomembno za demokratizacijo družbe, odpiranje policijskih dokumentov, rehabilitacijo žrtev komunističnega režima ter spremembe lastninskih pravic - denacionalizacijo. Teme, ki so bile v preteklosti tabu, so tako postale predmet raziskav in analiz zgodovinarjev, pravnikov, političnih znanstvenikov, ekonomistov itd. Tako se je število dokumentov, ki jih je Državni arhiv Republike Makedonije prevzel od ustvarjalcev, katerih družbena in državna vloga je bila končana, ter od zasebnih ustvarjalcev, znatno povečalo. Državni arhiv Republike Makedonije se vztrajno trudi sprejemati te izzive.*

**Ključne besede:**

*dostop, uporaba, arhivsko gradivo, državni arhiv, zakonodaja, raziskava, arhivisti, sodelovanje, objava, institucija, dogovor.*

**Abstract:**

**Access and Use of Archival Holdings in the State Archives of the Republic of Macedonia**

*The changes which took place in the Republic of Macedonia in the last two decades (its independence and the changes of the political system - the abandonment of the one - party system and the establishment of a pluralist society) have lead to the liberalization in the use of the archival material. This was especially necessitated due to the democratization of the society, the opening of police records, rehabilitation of the communist regime's victims, the change of proprietary rights - denationalization and the lustration. The subjects which were taboo in the past have become an area of research and constant analysis by the historians, jurists, political scientists, economists etc. As a result, the number of documents which the State Archive acquired from the possessors whose social and state function has ended, and from private and family fonds and collections, has increased greatly. The State Archives of the Republic of Macedonia has been trying constantly to face all these challenges.*

**Key words:**

*access, use, archives, State Archives, legislation, research, archivists, publishing, cooperation, institution, agreement.*

### INTRODUCTION

The State Archives of the Republic of Macedonia is a modern archival institution, with a status of a national administrative organization. In vertical line, the State Archives is directly connected with the Government of the Republic of Macedonia and reports to it. The administration and the management of the archival

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service are focused within the central part of the State Archives, also acting as Archives Administration (Directorate) for nine regional Departments which hold competence for given territorial areas. The archival service is organized and functions in compliance with the uniformed norms and rules based on the Law on Archival Records of 1990 (amended and supplemented in 1995). The State Archives of the Republic of Macedonia is a modern archival institution, performing inspection and professional supervision over the work of the owners of archival records on expert and scientific basis, from where it acquires, protects, processes, disseminates and makes such records available for use. The State Archives, with its modern organization and program orientation is in line with the contemporary social requirements and scientific achievements, as well as with the numerous demands of the institutions of the Republic of Macedonia and its citizens. In fact, the State Archives of the Republic of Macedonia is a treasury of collective memory and national values of the Macedonian people and other peoples and ethnic groups living in Macedonia, as they are bound with common past and present.

One of the main priorities of the State Archives is to make the archival records available for use to researchers, owners of archival records, the citizens of the Republic of Macedonia and to foreign citizens. The projected assumptions and criteria which come from the law regulations, the structure of the archival service and the professional readiness of the archivists, have all been created for a successful realization of this task. The central or the administrative section of the Archives organizes and carries out the research of the archival records in the country and abroad and has built a unique policy for use and publishing of the records. All the sectors and departments within the Archives have been engaged for a successful realization of this task, but the Sector for research, use, publishing of archival records, international cooperation and automatic data processing within the State Archives of the Republic of Macedonia has played the most important role in ensuring the accessibility and use of archival records.

## LAW REGULATIONS IN FUNCTION OF THE ACCESS AND USE OF ARCHIVAL RECORDS

The current normative regulations and rules which refer to the access and use of archival records have been based on the Law on Archival Records from 1990<sup>1</sup> and the Amendments of the Law on Archival Records from 1995.<sup>2</sup> The Rulebooks and Decrees on the access and use of archival records, which have been issued after the above mentioned Laws were enacted, provide the procedures and rules for the use of the archival records. One of them is the Rulebook on the general and special requirements for the use of archival records at the State Archives of the Republic of Macedonia from 1995.<sup>3</sup> According to the Rulebook the general terms for the archival records transferring and their making available for use have been changed at 20 years after creation. By this, the Republic of Macedonia has joined the group of more liberal countries.

Everyone is allowed to access archival documents, to the extent secrecy rules and physical conditions allow. Foreign users have equal rights as Macedonian citizens. Restrictions of access are made mostly to protect national security and privacy of

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<sup>1</sup> *The Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia, No. 36/1990.*

<sup>2</sup> *The Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia, No. 36/1995.*

<sup>3</sup> *Rulebook on the general and special requirements for the use of the archival records at the State Archives of the Republic of Macedonia ( No. 1-488/1) from 1995.*

individuals. The reasons for denial of access to documents may be the following: it will cause damage to national interests; it will cause damage to private interests of citizens; other infringements of the national legislation will follow.

The archival records can be used, if the archival fonds of interest for the users are in archival proper classified or processed condition. In principle, copies of the records are used (Xerox copies or microfilms). In all of its buildings, the State Archives has special premises - reading rooms intended for archival records use.

The use of archival records is initiated through Application for use. The research and the selection of documents are conducted by means of finding aids. A file with appropriate documentation is established on each user of archival records.

There are about 12.000 editions in the Library of the State Archives, out of which 881 are rare books.

Based on the law, in the period 1996-2005 several Decrees and Guidelines have been issued regulating the issues of the conditions, accessibility and use of archival records: *Decree on the criteria for extended terms for the use of archival records*<sup>4</sup> and *Guidelines for the way and procedure of marking the documents with extended terms of use*.<sup>5</sup>

Foreign researchers can conduct their research at the State Archives under the conditions regulated by the Law on Archival Work, the international agreements and a special Rulebook.<sup>6</sup> Foreign citizens may conduct their research at the Archives if they are invited by the Archives, on the suggestion of the State Organs of the Republic of Macedonia or upon their request for which they need consent from the State Archives.

One of the main characteristics of the Archival Legislation of the Republic of Macedonia, which enables a high level of accessibility and use of archival records, is that it is a completed legal system.<sup>7</sup>

## RESEARCH ACTIVITY, USE OF ARCHIVAL RECORDS AND PUBLISHING ACTIVITY

The quantity of the archival records in the State Archives of the Republic of Macedonia increased due to the extraordinary conditions after the abandonment of the one-party system, the disintegration of the Yugoslav Federation and the acquisition of national independence of the Republic of Macedonia. A great quantity of archival material was transferred to the State Archives after the abrogation of the League of Communists of Macedonia and other social and political organizations related to the one-party system.<sup>8</sup> The interest for the archival records of these owners has been great. The establishment of pluralism and democratization of the society have reflected on the accessibility and use of archival records, and on the

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<sup>4</sup> *The Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia, No. 3/1996; Saso Jankulovski, Normativno-pravnoto utvrduvanje na kriteriumite za podolgi rokovi na koristenje na arhivskata gragja, Zbornik: Aktuelnite zadaci na arhivite vo vremeto na tranzicijata, Megjunarodna trkalezna masa, Ohrid 10-12 juni, 1996, str. 205-208.*

<sup>5</sup> *The Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia, No. 59/1998.*

<sup>6</sup> *Pravilnik za prestop na stranci vo Arhivot na Makedonija od 1995 godina.*

<sup>7</sup> *Drzaven arhiv na Republika Makedonija 1951-2006, Avtor na tekstot, izbor na dokumenti i redakcija dr. Ivan Aleksov, Drzaven Arhiv na Republika Makedonija, Skopje 2006, str. 28.*

<sup>8</sup> *Mr. Snezana Spirkovska, Arhivskata gragja na Komunistickata partija na Makedonija/Sojuzot na komunistite na Makedonija po transformacijata na politickiot sistem vo Republika Makedonija, Zbornik: Aktuelnite zadaci na arhivite vo vremeto na tranzicijata, Megjunarodna trkalezna masa, Ohrid 10-12 juni, 1996, str. 218-219.*

clarification of certain subjects, processes, events and people, which was not the case during the one-party system. This has led to a more comprehensive scientific research of the Macedonian national and political program during the National Liberation and Antifascist struggle in the World War II.

The State Archives has acquired over 14.500 police records from the Prison Idrizovo and the Ministry of Internal Affairs. There are special regulations and restrictions for their access and use, because of their content and personal data. Whether the content of these records can be used as an objective historical source is a question which the critique of sources deals with, as a methodological procedure in the historical science.<sup>9</sup>

After the enactment of the Law on Denationalization and the Law regulations which refer to the transformation of the social capital, the interest for the use of archival records has increased considerably. The interest for the technical documentation has also increased. The archival fonds such as: Geologic Institute of the Republic of Macedonia; Agency for transformation of the companies with social capital of the Republic of Macedonia; Geodesic Institute - cadastre have been processed and made available for use for the citizens of the Republic of Macedonia.

The accessibility and use of archival records depends on the fast and accurate information which are necessary for the researcher. In this context, the Archives have built its own, unique information system. The reorganization of the State Archives in line with the changes induced by electronic facilities and digitalization of the archival heritage is in progress.

The State Archives has an extensive publishing production of issues and collections of documents that are important for the history of the Macedonian people and Macedonia. The Archives have published collections of documents (series), and monographs prepared on the basis of archival records kept both in the Archives and in foreign archives, brought in a form of copies resulting from the completed researches. The goal of publishing the documents on the history of Macedonia is to make them accessible to general public and to preserve them by avoiding the use of original documents.

The State Archives initiated the activity of publishing documents in 1963. Prominent series include Turkish, Serbian, British, French, Italian, Austrian and German documents related to the history of the Macedonian people, as well as the series of documents on the state and legal evolution of Macedonia.

As of 1964, the State Archives issued its "Bulletin of Historical Archives of SRM", and in the period 1972-1991, the magazine "Macedonian Archivist" was published (19 editions). In the period between 1993 and 1996, the internal Archives Newsletter "Informator" was published, restored again in 2005.

## INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AND ARCHIVAL RESEARCH

The independence of the Republic of Macedonia in 1991 and its recognition as a full member of the international community posed the necessity before the State Archives of the Republic of Macedonia to apply for membership in international archival organizations and to establish cooperation with national archives of other

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<sup>9</sup> Prof. dr. Darinka Petreska, prof. dr. Violeta Ackoska, *Osoznavanje na istorijata, Univerzitet Sv. Kiril i Metodij, Filozofski fakultet, Skopje 2007, str. 184.*

states. In this context, new forms of effective cooperation were initiated in relation to foreign archives, such as: mutual archival research and publishing activities, exchange of exhibitions of documents etc.

In 1992, in Montreal, Canada, the State Archives of the republic of Macedonia became a full member of the International Council on Archives - ICA. Since then, interactive cooperation between the two institutions has been established and maintained.<sup>10</sup>

For the purpose of supplementing archival fonds in the State Archives of the Republic of Macedonia, research activities have been carried out in order to identify, record and copy the documents of relevance for the Macedonian people and Macedonia, which are private property of owners in the Republic of Macedonia or kept in the foreign archives.

The research in the country is performed through involvement of the archivists from the State Archives. In relation to owners, correspondence and personal contacts are maintained, and conditions under which the archival records may be transferred to the State Archives are negotiated.

Particular attention is paid to the conclusion of bilateral agreements for cooperation with the respective archival services in countries demonstrating their interest in mutual research. So far, the State Archives of the Republic of Macedonia has concluded such agreements with the archival administrations and directorates of more than 20 countries: Bulgaria, Turkey, Serbia, France, United Kingdom, Austria, Italy, Russian Federation, Albania, Poland, Sweden, Hungary, Romania, Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo, as well as with several specialized archives in USA and Russia.<sup>11</sup> In 2010, the State Archives of the Republic of Macedonia concluded a Cooperation Contract with the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

The interest for research and transfer of archival material from Macedonian emigrants and their organizations, societies and other associations in the European countries, the USA and Australia has also increased.<sup>12</sup>

As a result of the enthusiasm and the efforts of the current Director of the State Archives of the Republic of Macedonia dr. Zoran Todorovski, a number of editions have been published in the last few years: *Macedonian Refugees in Poland 1948-1975, Vol. I and II, the State Archives of the Republic of Macedonia and the General Directorate of the State Archives of the Republic of Poland, Skopje 2008; Czechoslovakian Diplomatic Documents about Macedonia, 1919-1933, vol. 1, 1933-1939, Vol. 2, 1939-1975, Vol. 3, 1976-1989, Vol. 4, the State Archives of the Republic of Macedonia, edited by dr. Novica Veljanovski and dr. Jan Rihlik, Skopje, 2006-2007-2008-2010; K.P. Misirkov, Diary 05. 07-30. 07. 1913, edited by: dr. Zoran Todorovski and Coco Biljarski, the State Archives of the Republic of Macedonia and the State Agency "Archives" of the Republic of Bulgaria, Sofia, Skopje 2008; These joint editions of the State Archives of the Republic of Macedonia and the archival institutions of other countries are in favor of making the archival material containing testimonies about the history of these counties or about certain events and people*

<sup>10</sup> Violeta Gerasimova, *Arhivot na Makedonija i negovata megjunarodna sorabotka, Zbornik: Aktuelnite zadaci na arhivite vo vremeto na tranzicijata, Megjunarodna trkalezna masa, Ohrid 10-12 juni, 1996.*

<sup>11</sup> *Drzaven arhiv na Republika Makedonija 1951-2006, str. 41.*

<sup>12</sup> *Drzaven arhiv na Republika Makedonija, Fond Makedonska patriotska organizacija - MPO (neobraboten fond).*

available for use. Thus a number of researchers and scientists have consulted these publications by the State Archives or by other scientific and cultural institution and publishers, when writing their articles, monographs, studies, memoirs, papers etc.

I will name only those editions published by the State Archives in accordance with its publishing activity program in the last few years: *Macedonia in the International Agreements, Vol. 1, 1913-1941, Vol. 2, 1941-1991, edited by dr. Mihajlo Minoski, the State Archives of the Republic of Macedonia, Skopje, 2006, 2008; Turkish Documents about the Affair Miss Stone, edited by dr. Dragi Gjorgiev, the State Archives of the Republic of Macedonia, Skopje 2008; The Macedonian Question in the Ottoman Parliament 1909, edited by dr. Dragi Gjorgiev, the State Archives of the Republic of Macedonia, Skopje, 2009; The Political Court Processes in Skopje during the Bulgarian Occupation 1941-1944, edited by dr. Vlado Ivanoski, the State Archives of the Republic of Macedonia, Skopje, 2009; Memories by Dimitar Mircev, translated and edited by dr. Zoran Todorovski, the State Archives of the Republic of Macedonia, Skopje, 2010; The Ohrizade Family, 600 Years Old History, dr. Dragi Gjorgiev and Ilinka Janeva, the State Archives of the Republic of Macedonia, Skopje, 2010.*

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- *Drzaven arhiv na Republika Makedonija, Fond Makedonska patriotska organizacija - MPO (neobraboten fond).*
- *Gerasimova Violeta, Arhivot na Makedonija i negovata megjunarodna sorabotka, Zbornik: Aktuelnite zadaci na arhivite vo vremeto na tranzicijata, Megjunarodna trkalezna masa, Ohrid 10-12 juni, 1996.*
- *The Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia, No. 36/1990.*
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