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IMPLEMENTATION OF INTERNATIONAL PROJECTS IN THE SLOVAK STATE ARCHIVES

Abstract:

Archives and archival science did not avoid the process of globalization in all areas of human activity. Internet is a place where different results of creative human activities can be presented. It is only logical that archivists around the world try to use this area. Thanks to the participation of different countries in various international projects, it is possible for people all over the world, regardless of space, time and social status, to access archival documents online. International projects involve an ever increasing number of partners that require the cooperation of geographically diverse teams, which has influence on the management, organizational competencies and impact on the actual success of the project.

Slovak State Archives participates in three international projects: CrArc - Crossborderarchives, ENArC - European Network on Archival Cooperation and APEX - Archives Portal Europe network of eXcellence.

The paper presents this project from the perspective of management, project activities, outputs, growing partnerships and overall contribution.

Key words:

archives, archival document, digitization, information exchange, international project, website

Izvleček:

Implementacija mednarodnih projektov v Slovaškem državnem arhivu

Proces globalizacije na vseh področjih človeškega delovanja ni obšel arhivov in arhivske znanosti. Internet je prostor, kjer je možno predstaviti različne rezultate kreativnih dejavnosti. Logično je, da ga za svojo uporabo poskušajo uporabiti tudi arhivisti po svetu. S sodelovanjem različnih držav v mnogih mednarodnih projektih je možno, da ljudje po vsem svetu dostopajo do arhivskega gradiva preko spleta. Mednarodni projekti vključujejo vedno večje število partnerjev, kar zahteva sodelovanje geografsko različnih ekip in vpliva na upravljanje, organizacijo in uspeh projekta.

Slovaški državni arhiv sodeluje v treh mednarodnih projektih CrArc - Crossborderarchives, ENArC - European Network on Archival Cooperation in APEX - Archives Portal Europe network of eXcellence.

Prispevek podaja informacijo o teh projektih s perspektive upravljanja, projektnih dejavnosti, rezultatov, naraščajočega partnerstva ter celotnega prispevka.

Ključne besede:

arhiv, arhivsko gradivo, digitalizacija, izmenjava informacij, mednarodni projekti, spletna stran

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INTRODUCTION

Archival institutions are organizations or organizational units that manage archival materials as their primary function. Their main purpose is to acquire, preserve and provide access to collections of archival materials. Development of information technology in the last ten years has greatly influenced also the "life in archives". All European archives are trying to implement and carry out internationalization and be involved in international projects. These are undoubtedly features that are becoming more and more common and popular nowadays in archives, when compared to some years ago.

There are, however, different concepts on how these international projects should be carried out, what consequently leads to different levels of involvement and different approaches towards the idea of internationalization. These concepts and ways of participating in what concerns the involvement of archives in international projects differ not only from country to country but also from type of archives and their legal form in the same country.

SITUATION IN SLOVAK ARCHIVES

The leaders of archives in the Slovak Republic have decided that in the field of archival documents the State Archives will be actively involved and will participate in international projects. Unfortunately, the State Archives in the Slovak Republic is not a legal person; its founder is the Ministry of Interior of the Slovak Republic, located in Bratislava. This may appear as a trivial fact, but it had a huge impact on the type of projects in which the State Archives could participate. We can summarize that all international projects in the Slovak Republic are oriented to the digitization of archives in order to make access to them more comfortable for broader public and to preserve originals at the same time. Digitization as a new technology often raises expectations of benefits, cost reductions and efficiencies that can be sometimes illusory. Over the past decade there has been tremendous growth in the number of digitization projects initiated by cultural heritage organizations. These organizations have long been the stewards of our creative and scientific outputs and have been taking advantage of digital technologies to make their content broadly available.

Nevertheless, all steps in the field of digitization of archives lead to two main goals - to find and provide proper and right information for the users and - at the same time - to preserve original "classical" documents.¹

INTERNATIONAL PROJECTS

1) ENArC - European Network on Archival Cooperation (November 2010 - April 2015)²

There are 14 partners from 10 European countries participating in the project under the leading partner ICARUS - International Centre for Archival Research from Austria. ICARUS was born as a new initiative complementing the activities of already

¹ Hanus, J. (2006). *Digitization of archives - routine or strictly selected process*. In: *Archives and Non-Traditional Carriers of Information. Papers of the International Conference, Warsaw, May 19, 2005, Toruń, May 20-21, 2005*. Eds. A. Biernat, W. Stępniaak. Warszawa, p. 213 - 225.

² [Http://enarc.icar-us.eu/](http://enarc.icar-us.eu/).

existing institutions such as the International Council on Archives and many other national archival institutions.

Due to the ever progressing development in the area of digitization and the electronic presentation of cultural assets combined with consequent demands on modern service providers - which definitely include archives - the latter have to increasingly connect and coordinate not only within their national markets for internet services, but at the European level as well.

The main aim of ENArC initiatives is to offer a wide range of programmes which share the intention of encouraging and supporting multinational and cross-border work and development in area of acquainted with new technology methods on how to preserve cultural heritage, exchange knowledge and working techniques, creating public awareness of shared European cultural history.

Project activities include:

- supporting international cooperation between Archives and other historical and scientific institutions,
- effectively establishing and expanding the existing network of European archival institutions,
- digitizing and indexing activities,
- integrating digital content into existing national and supranational portals,
- creating online access to important European cultural assets,
- further developing collaborative tools (web 2.0) for the indexing of individual archival records,
- developing standards for indexing activities regarding certain archival collections,
- exemplary implementation of project results in scientific sub-projects,
- developing and arranging training courses for archivists with a focus on IT, digitization, and preservation/ restoration,
- disseminating project results on a large scale in order to reach as many European citizens.

Within the framework of the project, Ministry of Interior of the Slovak Republic - the Slovak National Archives:

- designs the data collection, analysis and digitization of archival material, ensures the implementation of all the data into the Slovak archives portal,
- organized an international workshop "Presentation and preservation of archival heritage - possibilities and reality" in Bratislava in October 2011,³
- ensures the translation and dissemination of relevant project material in Slovakia, organizes the translation of main contents of the website,
- ensures the local management of the project.

³ "Presentation and preservation of archival heritage - possibilities and reality." International workshop, Slovak National Archives, Drotárska cesta 42, 817 01 Bratislava, October 13, 2011.

For the project purposes digitalization of 10 000 archival documents - medieval charters with their metadata - from 32 state Slovak archives and their branches was performed. Thanks not only to this project we can state that all medieval charters until 1526 from all state Slovak archives have already been digitized and part of them are accessible at the Monasterium web site.

2) APEX - "Archives Portal Europe network of eXcellence" (01. 03. 2012 - 28. 02. 2015)⁴

The APEX-consortium, comprised of 28 European National Archives plus a trans-European knowledge partner ICARUS, aims at establishing an Internet portal for documents and Archives in Europe and additionally functions as Archives aggregator for Europeana. APEX will extend on the APEnet project by widening and deepening, improving and sustaining the delivery of archival content to a central European gateway. Furthermore, APEX will drive and facilitate the transfer of the (digitized and digital) archival material to Europeana. This enables Europeana's end users to access it as part of the common European cultural heritage of libraries, museums, archives and audio-visual institutions, thus making the Archives Portal Europe an important domain aggregator for Europeana.

This goal comprises actions in various domains:

- expansion of the network of archives in Europe itself,
- substantial improvements in the interoperability with Europeana,
- stabilization of the Archives Portal Europe infrastructure & hosting and improvement of its throughput capacity, availability of more standards & guidelines as well as tooling & support to the content providers to help them deliver more and better structured content,
- dissemination & training programmes to drive aggregation on the national level and raise awareness of archival content in Europe,
- innovation in usability and Web 2.0 functionality to modernize content delivery,
- sustainability of this effort.

In more detail APEX will take on board more European institutions (widening) and will help these institutions with aggregation on the national level (deepening). APEX will work actively with the Europeana portal on interoperability of metadata formats and rights management of the archival material. All this will serve the main goal of preparing as much archival content of European institutions as possible to a European gateway and channel the digitized and digital archival material therein to the Europeana portal.

As a follow-up to the current APEnet project, the work in APEX centres around two main processes: expansion of the network (more countries, more institutions involved) and deepening of the network (organize activities necessary for facilitating effective connection of institutions to the network: lobbying, informing, communicating, coaching, training and education, development of tools, etc.).

⁴ [Http://www.apex-project.eu/](http://www.apex-project.eu/).

The Department of Archives, Ministry of Interior of the Slovak Republic as the highest archival authority in Slovakia is one of the partners participating in the APEX project.

All consortium partners - except ICARUS - act as content providers. Six participants act as work package leaders and all other participants actively participate in one or more of the eight work packages.

The European National Archivists and the national archives in Europe are increasingly joining forces in a common digital agenda. This is among other witnessed by their cooperation in the current APENet project, which aims to provide shared access to European archives through a common gateway and to provide means to make information on digitized and digital archival material available in Europeana.

APEX will be the follow-up of the current APENet project, which has recently released the pilot of the Archives Portal Europe. The Archives Portal Europe will allow citizens, researchers, governments and businesses to browse through archival material of 18 national archives through one online access point.

The expected impact of APEX is that it takes all key indicators of APENet to a next much higher level whilst also taking measures to guarantee the sustainability of this effort. APEX will work to provide access to as much archival material of as many institutions holding archival content in EU Member States as possible, for as many users as possible, in the easiest possible way and to aggregate as much digitized content as possible to Europeana.

The Slovak Archives will provide for the APEX project their "masterpieces" from different archives, mostly from the Slovak National Archives in 25.000 descriptive units: 25.000 medieval charters, maps, which will be provided as 50.000 digital objects (scans, recto and verso).

3) CrArc - Archives without borders - Historical documents as a base for raising cross-border awareness of the public (February 2012 - June 2014)⁵

Austrian and Slovakian history is characterized by numerous cultural roots which both countries have in common. This mutual identity was disconnected for a long time, especially by the so called "Iron Curtain". Just a few years ago, especially since Middle - European countries joined the European Union, those formerly created barriers are disappearing and new room for cultural exchange is arising. Numerous important documents and written sources of historical development of the border region Austria-Slovakia are kept in the national, regional and clerical archives of both countries. These mutual historical sources compose an essential part of both countries. For a long time important historical documents of European cultural beneficiary from the Slovak-Austrian border region were not accessible. The values of those documents for cultural and touristic activities have been hardly promoted nor actively utilized in the past. With the help of a close cooperation network of Austrian and Slovakian archives, conditions for an uncomplicated access to historical sources of the common history on both sides of the borders are established. Through the virtual access to historical data of both countries experts and the interested public can use this pool of information for several cultural purposes like: cultural heritage, local history, tourism, school lessons, and further education for adults etc.

⁵ [Http://crossborderarchives.eu/?lang=en](http://crossborderarchives.eu/?lang=en).

"Memory without borders" is part of the European Union's cross border cooperation program "Creating the future" between the Slovak Republic and Austria. The main goals of the project "Memory without borders" is to get over hurdles like language or restricted access and make historical documents available for the population of both countries, independently of space, time and social status.

Other goals of the project are:

- digitization of cultural heritage,
- creating a common historical identity through cross border networking of Austrian and Slovak archives,
- free online access to historical sources.

PROJECT PARTNERS

A. Ministry of Interior of the Slovak Republic

The State Archive in Bratislava

The State Archives of Bratislava hosts documents from the 13th century onwards and will digitize over 180.000 documents. Project activities will focus on the digitization of the collection "District Bratislava I" from the years 1398 to 1922. The historical counties had many responsibilities which affected nearly all parts of social life like: protocols of the meetings of the districts aristocracy, documents about military activities, data about taxes or architecture, information about commercial activities and contacts between Slovakia and Austria, migratory movements, ownerships of manors, military movements and information about deserters, river transports and border controls, flooding of the Danube and March, information on Craft activities etc.

The Archives of the Capital City of the Slovak Republic

The Archives of the capital city of the Slovak Republic will digitize around 120.000 documents until the end of project in June 2014. The scans contain the complete collection of official documents of the city administration in Bratislava, just like, meeting protocols of different communal authorities from 1402 until 1900, accounting-books, documents concerning court issues etc.

B. The Austrian State Archives

The Austrian State Archives will accomplish the digitization of military church registers related to the border region of the Slovakian Republic (including Vienna). In the course of liquidation of the "k. u. k. Wehrmacht" the army of the Austro-Hungarian imperial and royal dual monarchy, the greatest bulk of military church registers from the troop body - like official birth, marriage and death registers - were brought to the military vicariate in Vienna, especially in the years 1918-1920. Digitization of these books, which cover important historical information about the Slovakian-Austrian border region, and their publication in the web, will induce an essential advancement in cross-border information exchange.

Until the end of the project in June 2014 around 350.000 documents will be digitized.

C. The Lower Austrian State Archives, Network History of Lower Austria

The Lower Austrian State Archives is the centre of competence for exploring the Lower Austrian History. The Network History of Lower Austria will be a vital part in the project, closely coordinating with the Lower Austrian State Archives and will provide its regional histories expertise to the other project partners of Slovakia and Austria. Network History of Lower Austria will edit already digitized sources relating to Austrian-Slovak border region for online availability. Also existing databases about regional background studies of project relevance will be made accessible.

D. ICARUS

The international archives network ICARUS dedicates itself to selected register books of catholic parishes in the period 1938 and earlier, which are significant sources for cross-border activities par excellence. Until the Second World War nearly 95% of people living in the Slovak-Austrian border regions were Catholics. For example nearly all of Viennese population from 16th century until 20th century is registered with years of birth, marriage or year of death in the church registers. No other historical sources show those data in such a comprehensive way. Vienna as the former capital and residential city of the Habsburg monarchy domiciled a large amount of immigrants from many parts of the empire, especially from former upper-Hungarian and today's Slovak part of the Habsburg monarchy. Many people living nowadays in Vienna or the surrounding countryside have their roots beyond the borders. Now it is possible for them to use Slovakian historical sources and documents to explore their Slovakian roots as well as it is possible for Slovak people to explore their roots in Vienna. Until the end of the project in June 2014 around 350.000 documents will be digitized.

Common activities

Cross border archives invite all interested people, experts, pupils or students to visit upcoming activities.

Courses - for all interested people, hobby historians, pupils and students. The courses are organized alternately in Bratislava and Vienna. The courses are free of costs.

Workshops - for experts and the interested public offer the possibility to get the latest news about project results and take place alternately in Vienna and Bratislava.

Guided tours - free guided tours in Austrian State Archives or in the State Archives in Bratislava.

CONCLUSION

The participation of Slovak State Archives in various international or national projects is influenced by numerous factors. The basic factor which has a negative effect on participation in the projects is the absence of legal subjectivity of the State Archives. Despite of this fact some State Archives are participating in projects whose main goal is not only digitization of archival heritage and their presentation to the public on internet, but development international standards that facilitate interoperability and collaboration between European countries and realization international projects in the field of archival information technologies. Despite of all obstacles we can declare to make effort that State Archives in Slovakia will be able

to actively participate in contemporary projects which main purpose of is providing access to the experience, European integration, civil society building, regional cooperation and unification of international standards in archival field.

POVZETEK

IMPLEMENTACIJA MEDNARODNIH PROJEKTOV V SLOVAŠKEM DRŽAVNEM ARHIVU

Sodelovanje Slovaškega narodnega arhiva v različnih mednarodnih ali nacionalnih projektih je odvisno od mnogih dejavnikov. Glavni dejavnik, ki ima negativen vpliv na sodelovanje v projektih, je pravna odvisnost državnega arhiva. Ne glede na to pa nekateri državni arhivi sodelujejo v projektih, katerih cilj je ne samo digitalizacija kulturne dediščine in njena predstavitev javnosti na spletu, ampak tudi razvijanje mednarodnih standardov, ki olajšujejo sodelovanje med evropskimi državami in realizacijo mednarodnih projektov na področju arhivskih informacijskih tehnologij. Ne glede na vse ovire pa se slovaški arhivi trudijo sodelovati v sodobnih projektih.