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RECORDS MANAGEMENT AT THE CREATORS OF ARCHIVAL MATERIALS IN KOSOVO

Abstract:

At the beginning, in the introductory part, the author presents the importance of the official management system within the institutions. Further on he provides a brief history of official management systems in Kosovo after the war of 1998-99, next, he continues with a description of official management systems in public institutions, public-private and private institutions in Kosovo, engagement of the Kosovo State Archives' Agency on the development of the official management, difficulties and engagements to overtake them, problems and their solutions, training staff for the management of documents etc. Finally, the author stresses that the regulated system of the official management must be in function of carrying out duties in a regular manner, timely, efficiently and with responsibility, with efficient leadership, administrating documents, protection of public interest, employee rights, and the rights of the parties and other interested entities, determining the responsibility to carry out duties and actions, protection and free access to documentation etc.

Key words:

official management, archives, archival material, institution, staff training

Izvleček:

Upravljanje z dokumenti pri ustvarjalcih arhivskega gradiva na Kosovu

V uvodnem delu prispevka avtor predstavi pomembnost uradnega sistema za upravljanje z dokumenti pri ustvarjalcih. Predstavi tudi zgodovino takšnih sistemov na Kosovu po vojni 1998/99 ter nadaljuje z opisom uradnega sistema za upravljanje z dokumenti, ki se uporablja v javnih ustanovah, javno-zasebnih in zasebnih ustanovah na Kosovu, predstavi sodelovanje Kosovske državne arhivske agencije pri razvoju sistema, težave in poskuse njihovega reševanja, usposabljanje za uporabo sistema itd. Na koncu avtor poudari, da je mora uraden sistem za upravljanje z dokumenti omogočati izvajanje nalog in dolžnosti pravočasno, učinkovito in odgovorno.

Ključne besede:

sistem za upravljanje z dokumenti, arhivi, arhivsko gradivo, ustanove, usposabljanje osebja

INTRODUCTION

Official management is an auxiliary activity contributing to and helping all bodies and organisations on accomplishment of their key official duties in a fair and efficient manner. This management studies the system of a leadership style in regard to tasks of administration and operating with documents since their compilation to the stage of archiving, including different phases from going through different offices

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of different bodies and organisations. This enables a classification of disordered materials in the manner and system of their compilation.

Official management - is one of the information subsystems, where the documents are classified and recorded in such a way that they are easy to be found when they are needed. It is made of several administrative-technical mutually linked procedures in a body or organisation.

Official management should follow up and meet the requirements set forth by the contemporary management (automation almost in all fields of life), and at the same time containing the qualities of accuracy, simplicity, rationality, efficiency. But unfortunately our practice does not follow contemporary development steps in this aspect.

OFFICIAL MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS IN KOSOVO AFTER THE WAR

Following the end of the war in Kosovo in 1998-1999, Kosovo was set under administration of the United Nations, respectively UNMIK. In the state bodies, but also in the municipal bodies, administrators from different countries were appointed. Almost each administrator applied a system of official management depending on what country he/she came from. Thus, diversity in styles of official management systems appeared in Kosovo. In some institutions where influence of administrators was low or there was no international administrator at all, the old type of Yugoslavian official management system continued to be applied. The large protocol system continued its application, with plans of archival signs, a short protocol system (where there were less than 3000 numbers a year) and decimal system of classification in the model of files.

After conclusion of the mandate of foreign administrators in Kosovo, an official management system of the big protocol started to be implemented. Each institution was leading the official management in accordance with own needs. Some of them did not even have a classification plan, some had compiled it partially, including signs only for internal organisational units, without dismounting it further within units according to services and type of archival case. This later on made it difficult to find documentation. The worse difficulty would appear when that documentation came in the archives.

OFFICIAL MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS IN PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS, PUBLIC-PRIVATE AND PRIVATE INSTITUTIONS IN KOSOVO

No legal provision for the management of archival documents was compiled in Kosovo until 2012. There was a Law for archival materials and archives. Administrative Instruction on receipt-delivery of archival material and the Administrative Instruction for selection of the archival material and disposal of invalid registered material.

After the declaration of Kosovo Republic as independent country, and omission of independence surveillance by United Nations, there occurred the need to compile new provisions for many activities, meaning also the Law for archives.

Upon the approval of the new Law on state archives (Law no. 04/L-088, 15 February 2012), according to this Law, the Kosovo State Archives' Agency has been obliged to draft a Regulation for official management in the state public institutions

of Kosovo. The draft of the Regulation is compiled and shall be sent to the Kosovo Government for approval. In this Regulation management procedures with archival documents in the stage of their creation in institutions are prescribed. Included are also procedures of reception, opening, control, evidence, distribution of documents, respectively the accepted mails, afterwards technical-administration proceeding of documents, sending of documents, archiving, evaluation, maintenance and their use.

A special importance in this regulation has been given to the plan for classification of documents. The classification scheme prescribes the decimal classification system. State activities are classified in 10 major groups, from 0-9. Major groups have been dismantled in groups, whereas groups in subgroups.

This Regulation of official management will be implemented also by public-private institutions in Kosovo. Whereas, for private institutions no Administrative Instruction, Regulation has been compiled yet, nor was a law for official management approved. Such institutions mainly apply the official management system of the big protocol (with 9 columns) and a plan of classification signs compiled on the basis of their specifications, respectively the organisational scheme of the organisation.

ARRANGEMENT OF THE AGENCY IN INCREASING THE LEVEL OF OFFICIAL MANAGEMENT

Today, it is increasingly evident that it is not sufficient to supervise an archival document in its creation. Archives should get engaged in different forms in the overall life cycle of documents, meaning to follow them from their creation up to their use. This implies the constructive role of archivists in the compilation of legal provisions and professional standards for archival material maintenance.

In the Kosovo State Archives' Agency the control and inspection service is in function. Previously this service was called external service and then the inspection service. The competencies of this service are extended in the whole territory of Kosovo. Within this service depending on the number of employees, there are also inspectors of regional level. In those regional archives where the number of employees is under 6 officials, the duties of inspection are conducted by the director of the archive.

This service, as an organisational unit within the archive, is a special form of cooperation of the archive with the creator of the archival material. It may be called also as connecting bridge between the two entities.

Basic duties of the control and inspection service are: control, evidence, evaluation, permission for disposal and reception of archival case. It serves to the archiving policy of the archives and without this service the permanent storage of archival material is impossible, as a part of cultural treasure of a nation.

The status of this service has recently undergone certain changes, which firstly have to do with its role towards the creators of the archival material, respectively in the function that it appears. Today this service plays its role in the activity of storage and protection of the treasure written in its territory. However, in the future, with the development of technology, social changes, progress in all the fields of life, change of the archive in society, all these will somehow effect in certain changes, and with this also in the profile of education and the way of work of the archival employees, especially those dealing with this service.

In future, the work of creators in regulating the archival material shall be a guide also to the further work of regulating and proceeding of archival material. The material received in the archive in irregular condition, slows down further work in regulating and proceeding of archival material in the archive. Archival employees are obliged to conduct work operations in the archive in regulating the archival material, which used to be the duty of the creator.

DIFFICULTIES AND ENDEAVOURS TO OVERCOME THEM

It should be emphasised that from the proper lead of the official management of the creator of the documentation depends a lot the further work in the organisation/institution regarding the finding, use, storage, valorisation etc. of the archival material. It is important especially the work of state archive activities. Non-proper official management reflects in the work of archives, such as classification, archiving, selection up to submission.

In the official management system in Kosovo there appear some difficulties which are reflected in protection, classification, storage etc. of the archival material in public, private-public and private institutions. Among most emphasised difficulties are:

- The so far deficiency in the legislation for official management with documents. The compiled Regulation has to do only with public institutions. There should be drafted also Regulations, and even laws for official management of documents created by private institutions, for electronic documents, including also the electronic stamp and signature. In the work plan of the Agency for 2013 these legal provisions are foreseen to be compiled also.
- The lack of staff trained for official management, since the present staff is in majority young, they do not have sufficient experience and knowledge. In Kosovo there is no school or faculty which trains staff for official management. Within the Faculty of Philosophy, in the branch of history the subject on archivistics is taught, whereas, in the other levels of studies - the masters, there are also archivistics and information systems and digital archives. Now the Faculty of Philosophy, the branch of history, in cooperation with Kosovo State Archives' Agency, has prepared a subject curriculum for opening an archivistics group, besides the branch of history in the Faculty of Philosophy.
- The most important problem of the creator of the archival material is the lack of premises to place and store the archive material. In the buildings where the institutions function there are no special storages to place and maintain the archival materials. They have turned or improvised a work office, corridor, alcove or basement into a storage, without the minimal conditions for optimal storage of the archival documentation or rather said, in the majority of institutions in Kosovo the archival case is usually protected in the work offices. During the visit in the institutions, the inspection and control service of the Agency warns them for the lack of a premises, for the poor state of archival documentation and measures that should be taken, especially in obtaining an adequate premise to place the archival documentation.
- The unregulated, loose, unregistered, unselected documentation is put in a place, which after a time is full. All this comes as a result of non-proper lead of the official management, respectively of the evaluation of documents,

assigning the deadlines of storage and occasional selection of documents of permanent historic, scientific and legal value, and disposal of insignificant material, the storage deadline of which has expired. Upon the conclusion of these work operations of official management, this issue would be attenuated and it would become easier to store only the documentation of permanent value, which would be found easily to be used. Unfortunately, this cannot be achieved as a result of the absence of a unique system of official management, professional staff, but also the interest of the persons in charge of the organisation/institution. The storages of the organisations but also the work offices in the last ten years have become overloaded. The body/organisation does not possess a strategy for this.

- Almost 13 years passed that the archival documentation has been created in Kosovo institutions. There are lots of materials the storage deadline of which has expired. The majority of institutions have not selected the archival materials and disposal of registry insignificant material and have not sent the List of archive documentation categories with storage deadlines. The state Agency has facilitated three years ago with publishing a book of orientation lists of archival documentation categories with storage deadlines. These orientation lists have been prepared for almost all the activities in Kosovo. In this year we have compiled general orientation lists of archival documentation of the creator. These lists have been prepared and based in the General Registry of the material with deadlines of Croatian Archival Council, Zagreb 2010 and the model of classification plan to classify the documents of the companies and institutions with storage deadlines, compiled by the Slovenian State Archive, prepared by Dr. Vladimir Zhumer, on 15.03.2011. These lists have been modified, completed and adopted to Kosovo institutions. Orientation lists will facilitate the institutions which compile their own Lists for storage deadlines of documentation which they have created and continue to create.

MANAGEMENT OF ELECTRONIC DOCUMENTS

According to the archival terminology, the electronic documents are in general data made of letters, symbols, numbers, graphical records and video records included in the deliveries, in written, decision or any other type of document produced by the legal and natural persons or by any state body in order to use them for legal circulation or in the legal or court or other procedure before the state bodies or if documents are compiled in electronic form, digitalised, sent, received, stored or archived in electronic, magnetic, optic or other media. Regardless the form of registration and circulation, the electronic document has administrative and legal value only if that is drafted and stored in compliance with required standards. Electronic documents are valuable as archival property if they are registered in an unchanged manner since the act of their compilation. On the other hand, digitalisation is transferring the archival material from other formats into electronic format in order to facilitate its finding, use and publication.

As for electronic management of documents of the creator, archives must be deployed in the following processes: to encourage determination of policies, procedures, standards and acts which are meaningful in the sense of helping the creator to compile and store documents being authentic, credible and which are readable; they must be engaged in the whole document life cycle (to give meaning to creation and maintenance in order to be sure for their acceptance, storage and

permanent access to those documents which have already been given the archival value; they must manage documents' revision in order to get acquainted with the archival value; too articulate requests for storage and access in order to ensure use, access and understanding of documents in different time periods.

Electronic documents under official management are stored originally in the information mechanisms or in the media which enable permanent storage of electronic documents for an undetermined time period, and they constitute the electronic archive.

The electronic archive should assure: that the electronic document be saved in the same format in which it was compiled, sent, received or archived, which materially does not change the information, respectively the content of the document; b) that the electronic document is in its entire form all of the time of its storage and use by persons who have the right to access them; c) that the data be maintained for electronic signatures that were signed in electronic documents, as well as the data for verification of the signatures; d) that the electronic document is in that format and that through the aid of this technology and action the electronic signatures offer warranty for reliability and entirety during the time of their maintenance; e) that the origin, author, time, manner and form of each electronic document can be defined reliably since the time they have been received and archived for maintenance; f) that the electronic document is archived in the form and with the aid of that technology and actions which assure obviously that it cannot be changed or liquidated by unauthorised people; g) that the storage actions and the replacement of media for archiving the electronic documents, they do not violate the entirety of the electronic documents and do not harm them, and h) that the electronic document can be maintained safely and reliably within the time limits determined by law of other provisions that have determined the obligation of maintenance of the respective documents in written form.

No step has been undertaken in Kosovo related to official management of electronic documents. There aren't even legal provisions in place for protection, storage, recording, classification, evaluation etc. of electronic documents, and being far from electronic stamp and signature. Kosovo Government three years ago compiled a program for electronic documents management. But that program neither did include classification schemes nor time limits of archival document storage. Thus the abovementioned program was not successful and subsequently failed. Several ministries including the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Social Welfare drafted their own programs for official management, which showed to be successful at this very moment.

TRAINING

With the aim of increasing the awareness regarding the protection of archival material and to leading toward official management in Kosovo, training of archive staff is deemed necessary in different intervals in the registry-archives at the place of archival material creator. It is considered important also taking into account the contemporary technology development when speaking about creation of new documents, in particular the electronic ones, for the new archive staff, about new international standards on archival document management and other related matters.

ISO 15489-1 standard explains the need of organisation for application, respectively implementation of the training program for the whole personnel which creates documents or uses systems for document management. This part of ISO 15489 marks a number of requirements for training programs, for the personnel to be trained; for training of technical experts, for the training and evaluation methods and for reviewing the training programs. Training programs must ensure that functions and benefits related to document management are understood within the organisation. It must explain the policies and set up procedures and processes in the context in which the personnel shall be aware in regard to their importance and necessity. The training program shall be made more efficient if that is prepared as per needs of particular groups of personnel, in some cases even for individuals.

Taking this into account and based on local and international legal provisions, Kosovo State Archives' Agency every year organises seminars with officials and creators of archive material. In these seminars mainly are treated topics like official management from the stage of documents creation, recording, archiving, and evaluation to the stage of submitting to competent archive.

CONCLUSION

Regulated system of official management must be in function of carrying out duties regularly, timely, efficiently and with responsibility, efficient leadership, administration of documents, protection of public interest, rights of the officials, protecting the rights of the parties and other interested stakeholders, determining the responsibilities for carrying out the duties and activities, protection and free access to documentation etc. A successful official management in institutions is a key to a successful work of the archives. Kosovo archives are not experienced with compilation of instructions, regulations, law decrees for official management. Orientations regarding compilation of such acts are being taken from the experience of archive institutions from the Republic of Slovenia and Croatia. This way has been chosen taking into consideration the long time we spent together in one state union, and also taking into account that the archive systems of these two states are more advanced and are applying European standards.

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