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1.03 Kratki znanstveni članek

1.03 Short Scientific Article

DIGITAL COLLECTION OF BELGRADE CITIZENSHIP CARD REGISTER 1922-1954

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Abstract:

Historical Archives of Belgrade was founded in 1945 and today it represents a modern, efficient and user-friendly cultural institution, which is dedicated to the idea of applying high standards in protecting archival material. Since 2004, the Archives has been developing its own information system and parallel to developing and presenting informative aids in electronic form, analytically described and processed fonds are being digitized. In the period between 2015 and 2017, a very important project has been implemented with a support of Ministry of Culture and Information of the Republic of Serbia and Secretariat for Culture of the City of Belgrade - digitization of the card register of certificates of permanent residence of Belgrade citizens created between 1922 and 1954.

Key words:

Historical Archives of Belgrade, digitization, card register, citizens, residence certificate

Izvlaček:

Digitalizacija domovinske kartoteke za mesto Beograd

Zgodovinski arhiv Beograd je bil ustanovljen leta 1945 in danes predstavlja moderno, učinkovito in uporabnikom prijazno kulturno ustanovo, ki za zaščito arhivskega gradiva skrbi na najvišjem nivoju. Od leta 2004 arhiv razvija notranji informacijski sistem, iskalne pripomočke v digitalni obliki in digitalizacijo urejenih in popisanih fondov. V obdobju med letoma 2015 in 2017 se je s podporo Ministrstva za kulturo in informacije Republike Srbije in Sekretariata za kulturo mesta Beograd začel pomemben projekt – digitalizacija kartotečnega registra potrdil o stalnem prebivališču prebivalcev Beograda, ki je bil ustvarjen med letoma 1922 in 1954.

Ključne besede:

Zgodovinski arhiv Beograd, digitalizacija, kartotečni register, državljani, potrdilo o stalnem prebivališču

1. Introduction

Historical Archives of Belgrade (founded on September 26, 1945) is a modern, efficient and user-friendly cultural institution, dedicated to the idea of applying high standards in protection of archival material with a goal to emphasize its significance for the history of the City of Belgrade and the region. Archives' employees make every effort in their everyday professional activities to make archival material available for researchers and other users. Today the Archives preserves 2,737 fonds and collections, which accumulates to over 13 linear kilometers of archival material, which contains data exceptionally important for the history of Belgrade and Serbia for the period between the

18th and the late 20th century. At the same time, the Archives supervises records kept in registry offices in all 17 Belgrade municipalities.

The systematical process of introducing electronic record keeping and digitization, together with developing an internal computer network was initiated in 2003 when the Center for Information was established (today Department for Information Technologies). From 2004, the Archives created its own web oriented modular information system, called *Janus*, which is used in all important archival activities and contains all registers of archival material: from the accession register to the list of fonds and collections, processed archival material according to ISAD(g)¹ standard, records of researchers in the Reading Room and Registry Office, specific searchable databases, library registers and statistics on Archives' employees efficiency and their monthly reports. The web site² was created in 2007 and today it represents the starting point for our users.

Since archival documents have different formats – from card registers and technical documentation to cadastre projects, maps, birth and death registers, their paper quality is very different and since sorting and processing of archival material is a long-lasting and complicated process, digitization is being implemented systematically and mainly on fonds and on parts of fonds that have been completely processed and arranged, following the *Directives for Digitization of Cultural Heritage in the Republic of Serbia by the Ministry of Culture and Information*³, but also consulting international guidelines issued by IFLA and ICA,⁴ which provide instructions for each phase of the process based on positive experiences. In the last several years, the Government of the Republic of Serbia considers the process of digitization to be one of the most important national priorities. In August 2017, the Ministry of Culture and Information signed an agreement with Telekom Srbija and the Mathematical Institute of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts with a goal to digitize the entire cultural heritage and modern cultural tendencies in Serbia. With this strategy, cultural institutions now have the chance to apply for a grant on an open call concerning digitization. Complex process of digitization implies consulting all relevant factors and it is also important to understand users' needs; therefore, projects must be administrated methodically, from the project proposal, estimated expenses and realistic assessment of human and other resources.

2. Digitization of Belgrade citizenship cards registers

Administration of the City of Belgrade was founded in 1839 as the Administration of the Town of Belgrade. It was the administrative, police and for a while judiciary authority of the capital. The Administration was active, with an interruption during the First World War, until the liberation of Belgrade on October 20, 1944. Documents produced by this authority represent cultural assets of extraordinary value and are inevitable historical sources for all researches concerning Belgrade and its citizens.

¹ Available at: <https://www.ica.org/en/isadg-general-international-standard-archival-description-second-edition>.

² Available at: www.arhiv-beograda.org.

³ Available at: <http://www.kultura.gov.rs/docs/dokumenti/propisi-iz-oblasti-kulture/smernice-za-digitalizaciju-kulturnog-nasledja-u-republici-srbiji.pdf>.

⁴ Available at: <https://www.ifla.org/files/assets/preservation-and-conservation/publications/digitization-projects-guidelines-me..pdf>.

Within its valuable documentation, this fonds preserves cards produced by the Central Application Office of the Administration of the City of Belgrade. The material that covers the period from 1922 until 1954 is arranged in 851 boxes (each box contains 1,200 cards written on both sides). The card register is divided in two parts:

- Card Register of the Citizens of Belgrade (758 boxes)
- Card Register of the Citizens of Zemun (93 boxes)

Every card contains the following data for a person who lived permanently in Belgrade or visited Belgrade for a certain period of time:

- Residence (address)
- Last name (married and née, for married women or a widow - name of husband) and first name
- Profession
- Citizenship
- Day, month and year of birth
- Place of birth
- Marital status
- Religion
- Father and mother's name, and mother's maiden name
- Former residence
- Information on a wife and children under 18 years of age
- Personal description (stature, face, color of eyes)
- Previous addresses in Belgrade

Examples:

СОПСТВЕНИК КУЋЕ
SOPSTVENIK KUĆE
ХОТЕЛ
HOTEL

ЊЕГОВ СТАН
NJEGOV STAN

ПРИЈАВА — PRIJAVA
ПРИЈАВЉУЈЕ СЕ: — PRIJAVLJUJE SE:

Улица, број, седиште, стан, становање
200p 16. B.

Име породично и презиме, да удано или удано и ро-
ђено име жене и удано породично име
Име породично и презиме, да удано или удано и рођено
име мајке и породично презиме

Карађорђевић Александар
Корољ Југославије
Цетиње

Занимање — Занимање
Држављанство — Држављанство
Датум, месец и год. рођења — Дан, месец и год. рођења
4-VI-1888
Место рођења, према земљи — Место рођења, према земљи
Цетиње
Занимање оца, према земљи — Занимање оца, према земљи, менаџер
Братово име — Братово име
Петар
Вера — Вера
Зорка
Рођено име оца и мајке, и матично дејелачно сведочење
Рођено име оца и мајке, и матично дејелачно сведочење
Религија став у Библији: вера и број, или у неком другом
Католицизам, православље, ислам, итд. и у ком другом ме-
стима: католицизам, православље, ислам, итд.

ЖЕНА И ДЕЦА ИСПОД 18 ГОДИНА — ŽENA I DECA ISPOD 18 GODINA

Рођено име и презиме породично или матично Рођено име оца и мајке, и матично дејелачно сведочење	мушко шпице	женско депице	Датум, месец и година рођења	Место рођења Место рођења
Марија Карађорђевић	суп	Жена	9-VI-1899	Цетиње
Петар Карађорђевић	суп	у-	6-VI-1902	Београд
Косићević	у-	у-	6-VI-1908	у-
Лјилја	у-	у-	28-VI-1929	Београд

НАПОМЕНА:
NAPOMENA:
Станар — Stanar
Власник куће-управитељ-становодавац
Vlasnik kuće-upravitelj-stanodavac

29-V-932
200p 16. B.

Picture 1: Front page of the residence certificate of King Aleksandar Karadjordjević⁵

⁵ Aleksandar I Karadjordjević (Cetinje, December 17, 1888 – Marseille, October 9, 1934), son of King Petar Karadjordjević and Montenegrin Princess Zorka. After abdication of his older brother Djordje in 1909, he took over the position of a Crown Prince. He participated in the Balkan Wars as a commander of the I Army. Just before the outbreak of the First World War, he was proclaimed Prince Regent and after the war had started, he became supreme commander of Serbian Army, standing by it even in the most difficult times. After the liberation of the country, he became the King of a new state of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes. He was murdered on October 9, 1934 during his official visit to France.

Remark: Since the exact number of the cards was not determined earlier, and counting of the cards would take too long, it was estimated that approximately 850 cards were in every box. Unfortunately, this estimation turned out to be quite incorrect since the amount of cards was 30 per cent higher.

- Phase 2 – Public procurement and selection of the most favorable and competent tenderer
- Phase 3 – Scanning and production of a database adjusted for importing the annotations

One of the basic demands of digitization is to ensure supporting annotations, metadata necessary for search of such extensive content. Even though all data from the cards are significant for a user, available funds allowed us to import only minimal metadata: first name, last name and father's name. It was decided that multi tiff format 300 dpi satisfies all quality criteria.

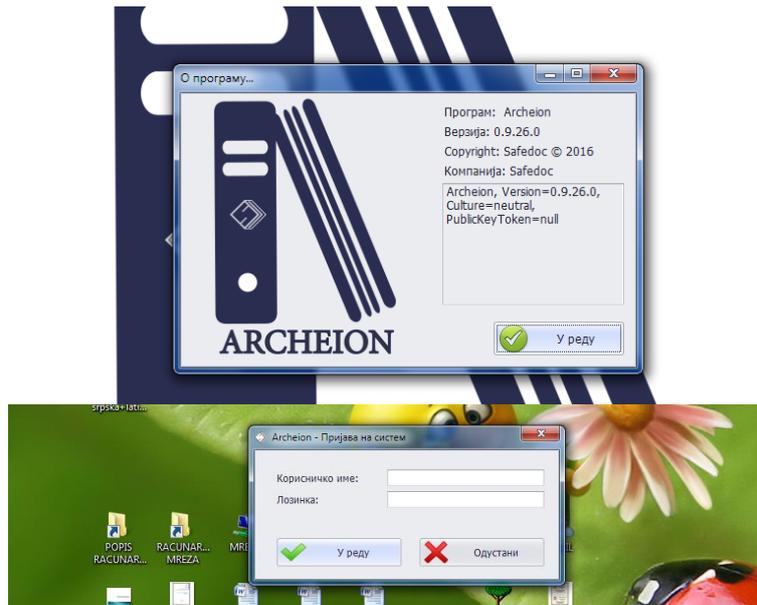
The result of the third phase of the project were 1,026,088 scans in multi tiff format stored on local storage. The card register was now physically protected.

Remark: After realizing that the number of cards was wrong and that the deadline for scanning was miscalculated, another problem occurred. The quality of the cards varied and scanners were being filled with paper dust, therefore they had to be maintained often and some of the cards had to be scanned on feed scanner while the others had to be scanned on the flat scanner. All this caused the project activities to pass all the deadlines. Still, with the effort of all participants in the project and with the support of the Secretariat for Culture and later Minister of Culture, Vladan Vukosavljević, the scanning of the cards was finalized, but the work on annotations was not over yet. Handwritings on the cards presented an additional problem for the operators who had never had opportunity to work with this kind of material.

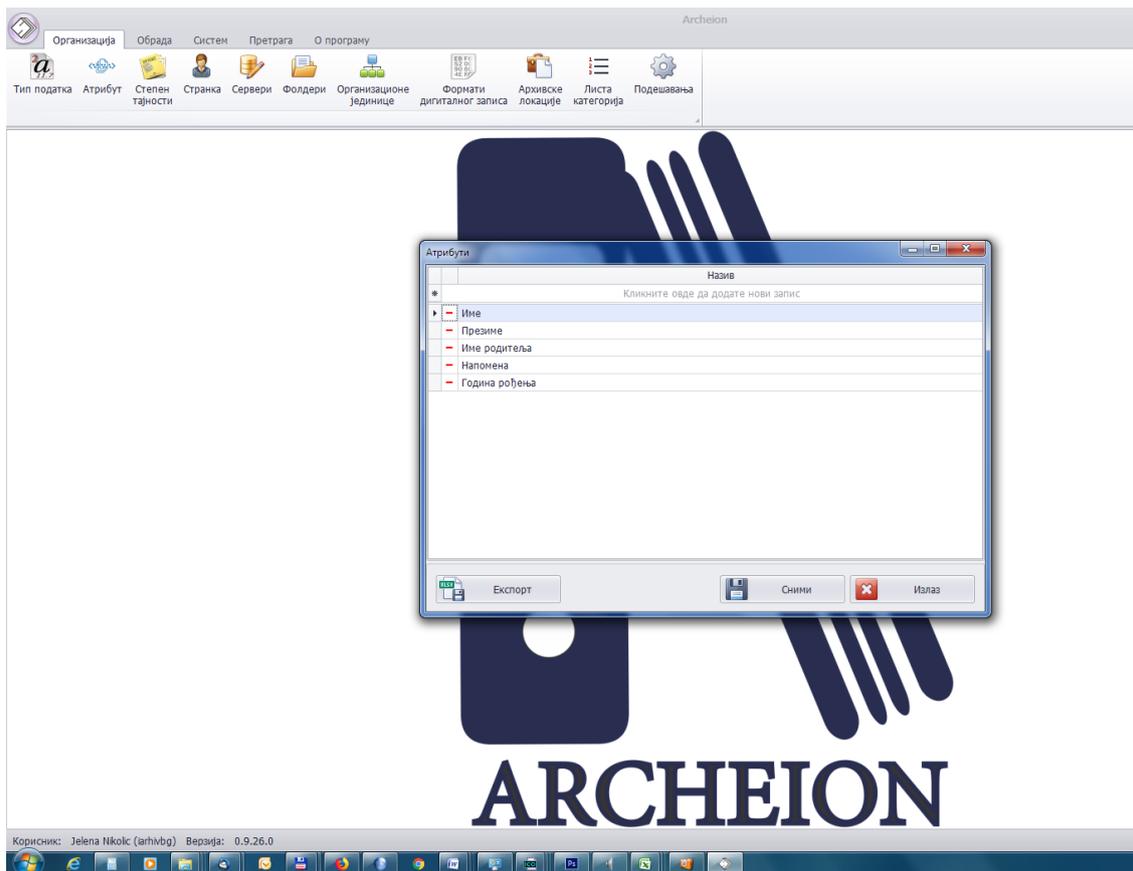
- Phase 4 – Annotations of the cards – residence certificates, supported by the Ministry of Culture and Information within the Open call for financing the projects in the field of digitization of the cultural heritage in the Republic of Serbia in 2017

Even though in previous phases cards were scanned and protected, it was still difficult to find a specific name since they were not always arranged in the correct order. The fourth phase of the project, in 2017, included the creation of a multiuser application called *Archeion* for importing data. Metadata were connected to the scans on the screen and imported data was corrected. After that, the program *Archeion* was integrated into the Archives' information system and finally the searchable database was a reality. It was also possible to print or save the results of the search.

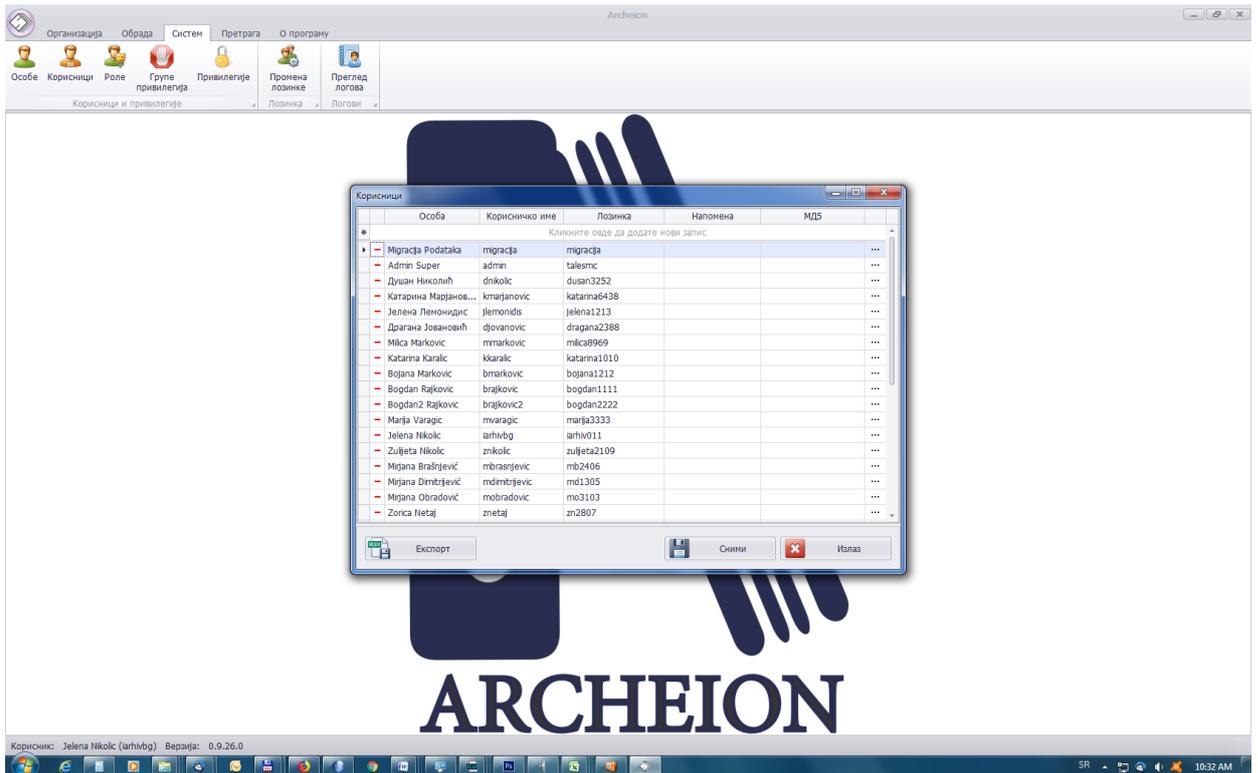
The work on this project represents a precious experience that will greatly facilitate the organization and implementation of future similar projects. It will also enable us to eliminate all factors that may slow down or put the digitization processes at risk. Working with archival material is a significant experience for the tenderer - contractor as well, since it gives a new perspective when it comes to setting the deadline.



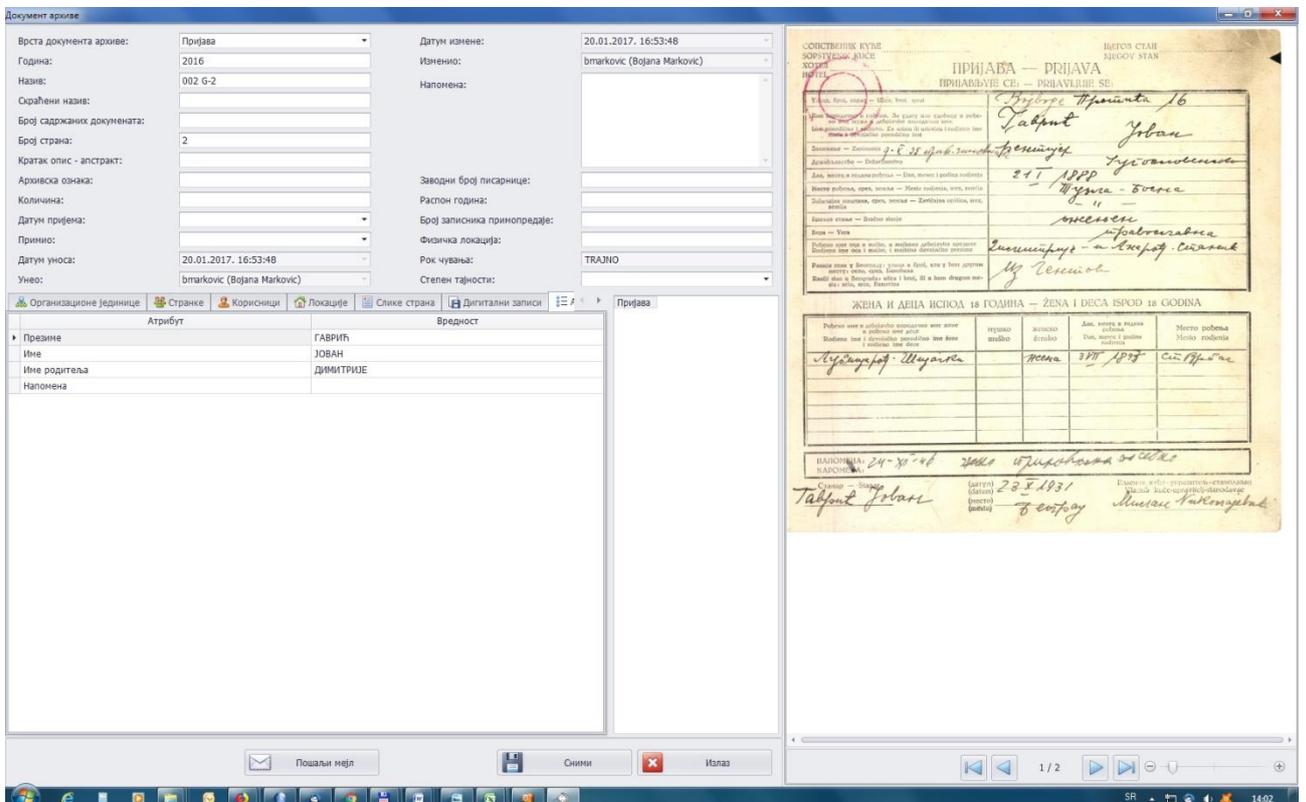
Picture 3: Application Archeion and logging in the system



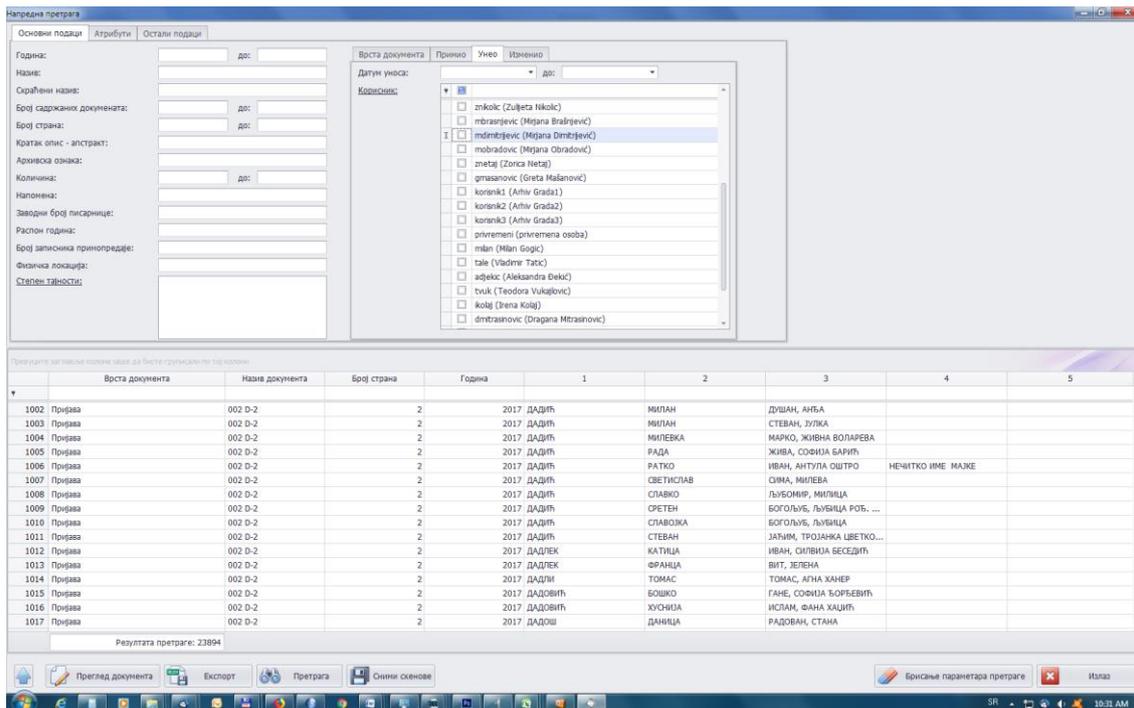
Picture 4: Determining annotation fields



Picture 5: User administration



Picture 6: Screen for importing metadata from a digital copy



Picture 7: The search module screen

This project of digitization is an example of successful cooperation between the Archives and the tenderer-contractor SafeDoc, a company that implements projects of digitization, archives management, administration of advanced archival systems and it develops the program *Archeion* adapted for approaching digital contents.

Database is available to the employees within the Archives' intranet system, in the reading Room and in the Registry Office and also to archivists who need this database in everyday work. By the month of May, supervision and control of the data will be completed and then the database will be available to all users in the Archives. In the next phase, after the web interface is upgraded, the citizens' residence certificate cards database will be available to everyone on the Archives' Web site.

The most valuable outcome of this project – digitization of the Belgrade citizenship card register is the fact that now the residence certificates are fully protected. They are precious both to those who are looking for their ancestors and to the experts involved in scientific research. The card register contains residence certificates for all Belgrade citizens, besides ordinary citizens there are ministers, writers, politicians and many others who left some trace in the history.

The certificates are now available also to citizens who are trying to achieve their legal rights and to researchers, scientists, chronologists and historians of this region.

3. Problems in the digitization projects in the archives in Serbia

Digitization in archives is a very complex process, especially considering the fact that archival material is very sensitive, often damaged, on large formats and sometimes inadequately arranged for scanning. Therefore, before starting digitization, archival material must be selected, arranged and adjusted to the scanning process. Newly formed databases are adjusted to terabits and this demands planning and implementation of a storage and management system. It is also very important to secure a sufficient network flow in order to successfully handle such large amounts of electronic content within the institution's information system, not to mention the need of contemporary users to have the content available on the Internet. All this requires new resources and new experiences. It is also important to mention that archives are obliged to comply with the Law on personal data and copyrights protection, so this issue must be resolved before digitization starts.

Even though complex and demanding, digitization is a crucial process that cannot be stopped and it is just a matter of time when the archives in Serbia will digitize preserved material, even though these institutions are still facing numerous problems like insufficient financial funds, the lack of educated personnel and technical equipment and the lack of employees, whose number has been reduced ever since the Government's restrictive Directive on Prohibition of Employment in Public Institutions was introduced (in power since 2008)⁷.

POVZETEK

DIGITALIZACIJA DOMOVINSKE KARTOTEKE ZA MESTO BEOGRAD

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Avtorica bo predstavila projekt digitalizacije domovinske kartoteke, kartotečnega registra mesta Beograd, ki ga hrani Zgodovinski arhiv Beograd. Projekt je bil izveden v sodelovanju z zunanjim izvajalcem, ki je bil izbran na javnem razpisu. Posebno pozornost bo avtorica namenila pripravi arhivskega gradiva na digitalizacijo, težavam, ki so se pojavile, in rešitvam le-teh.

Zgodovinski arhiv Beograd je bil ustanovljen leta 1945 in danes predstavlja moderno, učinkovito in uporabnikom prijazno kulturno ustanovo, ki za zaščito arhivskega gradiva skrbi na najvišjem nivoju. Od leta 2004 arhiv razvija notranji informacijski sistem, iskalne pripomočke v digitalni obliki in digitalizacijo urejenih in popisanih fondov. V obdobju med letoma 2015 in 2017 se je s podporo Ministrstva za kulturo in informacije Republike Srbije in Sekretariata za kulturo mesta Beograd začel pomemben projekt – digitalizacija kartotečnega registra potrdil o stalnem prebivališču prebivalcev Beograda, ki je bil ustvarjen med letoma 1922 in 1954. To gradivo predstavlja primarni zgodovinski vir in je kulturna dediščina posebnega pomena. Vsaka kartotečna kartica – potrdilo – vsebuje osebne podatke meščana, ki je imel stalno prebivališče v Beogradu ali je tam

⁷ Published in: Sl. glasnik RS, br. 113/2013, 21/2014, 66/2014, 118/2014, 22/2015 i 59/2015.

določen čas živel. Register je urejen po abecednem vrstnem redu, podatki so zapisani z roko, po njem se išče ročno. Postopek digitalizacije je, z nekaj uspešno rešenimi težavami, trajal od junija 2015 do konca leta 2017.

Podatkovna zbirka je dostopna preko intranetnega sistema v arhivu, vsak dan jo uporabljajo arhivisti in arhivska čitalnica. Do junija 2018 bo končan še proces preverjanja podatkov in potem bo zbirka dostopna vsem uporabnikom v arhivu. V naslednji fazi, ko bo končan spletni vmesnik, bo zbirka dostopna vsem uporabnikom tudi preko spletne strani arhiva.

Najpomembnejši rezultat projekta je dejstvo, da je register z njim popolnoma zaščiten. Register je dragocen tako za uporabnike, ki iščejo svoje prednike, kot raziskovalce, saj vsebuje podatke o vseh prebivalcih mesta, med njimi so tudi pomembni meščani, ministri, pisatelji, politiki itd.

V zadnjih nekaj letih je Vlada Republike Srbije digitalizacijo določila kot eno izmed prioritet. Tako se lahko kulturne ustanove prijavijo na razpise za projekte digitalizacije. Čeprav je digitalizacija arhivskega gradiva zapleten proces, še posebej zaradi občutljivega in pogosto poškodovanega papirja, pri katerem moramo proces prilagoditi, je le-ta nujna in se ji ne moremo izogniti.

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