



section for archives of parliaments and political parties
international council on archives

section des archives des parlements et partis politiques
conseil international des archives

Resolution

The Section of Archives and Archivists of Parliaments and Political Parties in the International Council on Archives (SPP/ICA) ,

on the ground of the proceedings and results of the conference on the subject of “Archives and Democracies in Transition” held on October 6th and 7th, 2011 in Vilnius (Lithuania),

taking into particular account the experiences of parliamentary and political party archives in political systems having successfully performed the transition to democracy, as presented to the conference, and

in alignment with the policies of ICA to provide the archivists’ professional community with a reference framework of best practices and standards in the field of archives and records management,

recommends

1. to regularly evaluate and adapt archival legislation to the experiences made and requirements recognized, in particular to ensure statutory accessibility of archival holdings;
2. to acknowledge the function of parliamentary archives as the keepers of the memory of the core role of parliaments in democracy engineering, as well as in continuously incarnating democratic values, by guaranteeing their independence from other bodies, which, as far as the archives of executive bodies are concerned, would also be a manifestation of the constitutional principle of the separation of powers;
3. to provide for the documents of all parliamentary structures being transferred to the parliamentary archives on a regular basis, normally at the end of each parliamentary term;
4. to oblige and enable parliamentary archives to make available their holdings to the public in digitized form, as well;
5. to develop parliamentary archives into research centers or central hubs for research on parliamentarism in particular and democracy in general, thus enlarging and promoting the analytical knowledge of democratic structures and processes, and enabling multipliers, be it MPs or experts in political education, to address their target groups in civil society with information based on empirical research;

6. to pay attention to the records of parliamentary groups and ensure them being stored either in the responsible parliamentary archives or in the archives of the respective political party on the ground of a regular procedure, normally at the end of a political term;
7. to have issued legislation to support political parties in establishing archives to keep their respective records, ideally by entitling them to public funding for that sake, and encourage them to provide the public with access to these holdings, which in practice may be done by obliging them to apply access regulations not more restrictive than those of general archival legislation, in case they were receiving public funding;
8. to ensure the preservation of political party archives even in case of the respective political party no longer being in existence, by having them transferred, e.g., to public archives, which may be done on a contractual or a statutory basis;
9. to be aware of the specific character of the archival records of former single parties, due to them combining governmental or pseudo-governmental functions with the functions of a political party organization, which is to suggest public archives to be made responsible for their preservation and for making them accessible to the public;
10. to take into account the justified demands of the victims of non-democratic regimes to get immediate access, without any delay that would be imposed by the general rules of archival legislation, to the archival records documenting acts of repression they were subdued to;
11. To enable parliamentary, political party, and politicians' archives to acquire other relevant documentation than parliamentary business, e. g. the personal papers of Mp's, which would require the necessary budget, personnel, and facility resources to be available;
12. to assist civil society movements and NGOs, in particular in case of them having been active in a pre-transitional or transitional political situation, like dissident or human rights organizations, in establishing and keeping archives, which, due to the specific nature of opposition to a repressive system, would often require to actively collect documents, including oral history records.

Vilnius, October 7th 2011