Inspired by Archives

Press release

14 to 19 March 2016

A week of events for expressing your opinion if you care for the fate of the Italian archives

Without the archives we lose our collective history. No more opportunities to learn from our past, to understand our present and make effective plans for our future. Our rights as citizens are threatened in our everyday life, in our relations with public administration, banks, physicians, goods and services providers, employers...

Archives are the common heritage of all: they document current activities, protect rights, pass on memory.

Archives are everywhere in all public and private contexts: administrative offices, hospitals, schools, military institutions, courts, businesses, families...

The work of archivists, as community members, is to ensure that this wealth is not lost.

Without court records, we could neither properly report on trials nor reopen the proceedings after the discovery of new elements.

Without scientific archives, research could not make progress. Without health records, we could not evaluate our clinical history as well as the care we need. Physicians could neither study the long-term evolution of epidemics, nor find and test new treatments.

Without records on weather conditions created throughout centuries, we could not study the climate changes. Without historical maps and sources on changing landscapes, we could not study earthquake risk assessment, sediments, avalanches, landslides when we wish to build a proper management of our territory.

Without archives, it would be impossible to study good and bad policies implemented throughout history, and we could not investigate facts on mafia or terrorism.

The Italian National Archival Association (ANAI) this week launches initiatives to ensure that all citizens are aware of a rich heritage in danger and that the authorities are aware of the need for adequate resources for preserving, managing and making accessible the Italian archives, including digitized archives.
It is essential and urgent to put in place the means to:

• Save thousands of kilometers of archives throughout the national territory.
• Select records to preserve or destroy, according to approved standards, and realize potential savings.
• Employ professionals to make a rational transition from paper to digital archives.

The choices we make about our archives will show the extent of the values in the society we want to build.

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