

---

# Historical Archives of the European Parliament

---

Annual Report for 2017

---

EPRS | European Parliamentary Research Service

**Historical Archives Unit**

December 2018



## Table of Contents

<b>Summary .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Part I - <u>Objectives and progress in 2017</u> .....</b>	<b>6</b>
1) Background .....	6
2) Objectives.....	6
3) Progress in 2017.....	8
Acquisition of new material .....	8
Long-term preservation and processing of the archives .....	9
Transfers to the Historical Archives of the EU .....	9
Historical Library .....	10
Services to researchers and other users.....	10
Research, publications and outreach.....	10
EP Historical Archives in numbers .....	11
<b>Part II - <u>Detailed account of the services offered by the Historical Archives in 2017</u> .....</b>	<b>12</b>
1) Historical Archives.....	12
a) Acquisitions, storage and transfers.....	12
b) Processing of the Historical Archives.....	13
2) Historical Library .....	15
3) Services to researchers and other users.....	16
Electronic database.....	16
Intranet pages.....	16
Internet pages .....	17

Reading room.....	17
Historical research .....	17
4) Publications and outreach .....	17
Publications.....	18
EP History project (First series of studies - 1979-1989).....	18
Events and exhibitions .....	18
Oral history project .....	18
5) Relations with other EU institutions and international bodies .....	18
<b>Part III - <u>Administration of the Historical Archives</u>.....</b>	<b>20</b>
1) Budget .....	20
Contribution to the annual budget of Historical Archives of the EU (HAEU) .....	20
Investment in electronic archives: Efforts for long-term preservation and accessibility.....	20
Processing of the archives.....	20
2) Staff .....	21
Establishment plan.....	21
3) Cooperation within the EP administration .....	21
4) Premises.....	22
5) Computerisation .....	23

## Summary

Each European Union institution, including the European Parliament, is obliged in law to maintain an archive of its official documents. The Historical Archives of the European Parliament have existed since the launch of the ECSC in 1952 and their holdings now number more than five million items.

The detailed work in this field is undertaken by the Historical Archives Unit of the Parliament's administration, which manages and preserves the Parliament's official documents and other archival material, including the papers of individual Members who choose to submit them. It also operates the Library reading room in Luxembourg, in the form of the EP Historical Library, and it seeks to maintain the historical 'memory' of the Parliament as an institution, by making the archives publicly accessible, by assisting academic researchers in retrieving them for use, and by publishing historical studies of the Parliament based on the archives and other sources.

The work of the Historical Archives Unit is set out in this report of its activities for the year 2017. A quick overview of the Unit's work, described in much greater detail in the pages which follow, is captured in the figures below:

### Historical Archives:

- Submissions of administrative and legislative archives:	288 linear metres (2,877 containers)
- Submissions of digital files:	57.23 GB
- Items from the Official Mail archives:	42,884
- Transfers to the Historical Archives of the EU (paper documents have reached thirty years):	168 linear metres (7,164 files)
- Archives processed (paper):	293 linear metres

### Historical Library:

- Opening days:	242
- Hotline and other enquiries treated:	2,319
- Numbers of requests for documents:	603, with 4,668 documents provided
- Number of study visitors (researchers) received:	32
- Training sessions:	22

### Outreach:

Studies (History of the EP):	3
Briefings:	1
Events and exhibitions:	6
Websites maintained:	3 (76 posts)

## **Part I - Objectives and progress in 2017**

### **1) Background**

This is the fourteenth Annual Report of the Historical Archives of the European Parliament. It complies with Council Regulation (EEC, Euratom) No 354/1983 of 1 February 1983 - amended by Council Regulation (EU) No 2015/496 of 17 March 2015 - on the opening to the public of the historical archives of the European Economic Community and the European Atomic Energy Community.

This EU Archives Regulation sets a legal obligation on EU institutions to maintain archives and, after a period of time, to deposit those already 'opened to the public' in the common Historical Archives of the European Union (HAEU), which are located at the European University Institute (EUI) in Florence. Article 9(2) of the Regulation stipulates that 'each institution shall publish information annually on its historical archiving activities'. The Annual Report on the Historical Archives of the European Parliament is submitted to fulfil this obligation.

The Historical Archives Unit within the European Parliament's administration manages and preserves the Parliament's official documents and other archival material, including the deposited papers of individual Members, dating back to 1952. Formally, in accordance with the decision of the Bureau of the Parliament of 2 July 2012 on document management, the unit is responsible for the acquisition, storage, processing, and accessibility of the official documents of the institution. It provides these documents, both internally and to outside citizens, notably researchers and historians, through 'tools that facilitate online access to information'. It assists researchers on the history of the Parliament and of European integration more generally, and publishes historical studies based on the archives, using 'any means of documentary or academic dissemination or publishing'. It works closely with the EU Historical Archives in promoting use of the archives and study of the history of the Parliament.

Located in Luxembourg, the Historical Archives Unit forms part of Directorate for the Library (Directorate B) within the European Parliamentary Research Service (DG EPRS). In order to provide a better service to researchers, the Historical Library of the European Parliament (equally located in Luxembourg) is also part of the Historical Archives Unit. This means that internal and external users can find the Parliament's archival and historical library collections together in one place, supported by the expertise of staff who can help them to locate and contextualise the materials they need. The unit also undertakes research, dissemination and communication activities aimed at promoting knowledge of the history of the European Parliament as an institution.

### **2) Objectives**

The objectives of the Historical Archives Unit are related to:

- i) ensuring the acquisition of materials of historical value of the European Parliament, their orderly organisation for future access, and their preservation; and
- ii) ensuring the access to these materials and their use for the promotion of the understanding of the history of the Parliament and of European integration more widely.

The more specific objectives of the Historical Archives in 2017 (and currently) have been:

1. To pursue a long-term strategy for the historical archives and library to address the challenges posed by the digital revolution, so as to become a centre of excellence and reference for historical research on European integration and the European Parliament;
2. To continue to contribute to the definition and implementation of the Parliament's document management policy and rules governing the transfer of archival and library material for permanent preservation, from Directorates General and services, in particular;
3. To streamline the acquisition of the institutional archives:
  - a) to diversify the variety of services guiding the transfer to the archives of documents and publications in order to meet and satisfy the specific needs from services;
  - b) to continue to streamline the processes of electronic transfer of data into the Unit's collections and databases;
  - c) to contribute to the definition of administrative procedures for the transfer of library material to the Historical Library; and
  - d) to contribute to broadening the sources of European Parliament history, specifically by providing an integrated access to the media library material and expanding oral archives with testimonials from former Members;
4. To plan and implement a strategy for long-term preservation of the archives and library material:
  - a) to develop a policy for long-term preservation of analog historical library material, in particular as regards preventive conservation and restoration;
  - b) to implement the necessary measures to ensure reliable digital preservation and to guarantee integrity and legibility over time, namely by preparing for long-term preservation of digital contents in collaboration with other institutions and the Historical Archives of the EU and by developing and integrating tools for processing digitally born documents and data; and
  - c) to revise the Historical Archives' metadata policy, in order to create, expose and connect information on archives collections, in particular, to ensure efficient transfer from business applications to the historical archives database;
5. To ensure internal and external accessibility of the historical library collections and archives:
  - a) to further strengthen a client-oriented historical research service by ensuring a timely and adequate response to historical requests from Members and EP staff through the Members' Hotline and by email;
  - b) to prepare online archives, specifically by creating webpages for historical information about former delegates and Members and making available the historical archives database on internet;
  - c) to optimise accessibility of the historical library collections with cataloguing and indexing,

6. To contribute meaningfully to the promotion of understanding of the history of EU integration and of the European Parliament:
- a) to design and follow an overall communication strategy, in cooperation with the services responsible, to promote the historical archives and library, and to ensure a strong online presence;
  - b) to guide and implement the research and publication of studies on the history of the European Parliament;
  - c) to participate in the management of the 'My House of European History' website;
  - d) to foster inter-institutional and professional cooperation, in particular in the framework of the Inter-institutional Archives Group (IIAG) and by participating in expert groups and professional organisations so as to develop projects of common interest (digitisation, unification of metadata and controlled authorities); and
  - e) to continue to complete the oral history testimonies with former Presidents, Secretaries-General, and Members of the institution.

### **3) Progress in 2017**

As its core mission, the Historical Archives Unit manages and preserves the European Parliament's official public documents and other archival material dating back to 1952 and running to over five million items. In 2017, the Unit processed 57.23 GB of electronic files, received both as systematic collections (for example, plenary documents) and as large sets (hard drives or shared drives). (The latter currently requires greater work, but the new records management policies which the Unit is helping to develop, will change the acquisition process for the latter to a mainly automated system, similarly to the one for systematic collections).

Some 168 linear metres (or 7,164 paper files) were organised and transferred to the Historical Archives of the European Union in Florence. (The logistics of this process involves a risk if archival materials are handled by external transporters, whilst transport organised internally with the Parliament's own services reduces that risk). The entire transfer, including logistics, is managed by the Unit, with the aim of maximising the quality and safety of the process.

The Unit answered more than 600 individual requests for historic documents and other information, supplying over 4,600 documents. Such requests come mainly from the Parliament's offices and services (cabinets, plenary, committees, Legal Service, Transparency Unit, etc.), and to a lesser extent from external sources (mainly academics and researchers).

#### **Acquisition of new material**

In 2017, the Historical Archives Unit developed a pro-active approach to acquiring European Parliament archives, by accompanying administrative units in their archiving activities and conducting a retrospective analysis of the 'fonds' processed, in order to identify any gaps or weaknesses and thus better define priorities. This approach, matched by a more and more rigorous application of the archiving rules defined in the administration's retention schedules, generated a significant collection (the largest in terms of volume outside an electoral year). This included the first of several transfers - from services that have never previously sent their documents to the



Historical Archives, notably the Classified Information Unit, Legal Service, and European Parliament Mediator for Children who have been victims of cross-border parental abduction - as well as papers from the office of President Martin Schulz and the archives of former Secretary General Harald Rømer. The archives of parliamentary committees have been requested according to a systematic plan, in order to provide a full view of the legislative process.

The Historical Archives welcome and invite the submission of the archives of individual Members and former Members of the European Parliament. Since the creation of EPRS there has been a much more active effort to secure such papers as an important component of the history of the institution. In 2017, the Unit was contacted with a view to receiving the papers of two former Members (Bill Newton Dunn and Jean-Antoine Giansilly). An increased pro-active effort will be undertaken in order to receive such materials, potentially of great historical value, in the period May to July 2018.

An oral history campaign to collect testimonies from former Members began in November 2017 and will continue in coming years, with the aim of collecting a meaningful number of personal accounts, which will complement former Members' private archives received and kept in accordance with the Bureau Decision of 25 March 2014.

### **Long-term preservation and processing of the archives**

The processing of archival material consists in the organisation of documents (or files), attribution of systematic descriptions (metadata) and indexation, and the preparation of material for digitisation and long-term preservation. (The European Parliament maintains a full digital copy of all its archives, including the documents submitted in paper form to the EU Historical Archives in Florence).

After a year of transition in 2016, dedicated to the quality control of archival descriptive data (metadata) in the context of the migration of the electronic archive to the new archive management system (CLAVIS) and the revision of the processing methodology, the processing of archives in 2017 started to be undertaken in accordance with this new methodology, underpinned by a new inter-institutional framework contract signed in May.

The work of harmonisation and enrichment of the information on 'controlled authorities'<sup>1</sup> carried out on the occasion of the migration to CLAVIS continued, particularly concerning information on former delegates and Members.

In order to provide better access to the Historical Archives, the Unit has compiled a methodical inventory of the archives of the offices (cabinets) of the Presidents of the European Parliamentary Assemblies before 1979.

In terms of preservation of the electronic archives, a stock-taking exercise, started in 2016, was extended to the files resulting from digitisation operations, and a study was launched for the definition of the long-term preservation strategy of the digital archives.

### **Transfers to the Historical Archives of the EU**

---

<sup>1</sup> *Authority control* is a term used in cataloguing, meaning the use of a single authorised heading for all records having the same authority; for example, authors of documents (e.g. MEPs) are *authorities*: authority control ensures the name is always written the same way, there are no spelling mistakes, there is consistent use of the middle name or initial, there is disambiguation when several authors with the same name, etc.

Transfers to the Historical Archives of the EU (HAEU) in Florence continued in 2017, in accordance with the legal obligations of the Institution and with the procedure successfully tested in previous years, involving the submission of the files of parliamentary reports from the 4th legislature.

### **Historical Library**

The primary mission of the Historical Library, based in Luxembourg, is to help preserve the European Parliament's historical and cultural heritage and ensure its availability for future generations. During 2017, the Historical Library developed a Rare and Special Book Collection (RSBC) and initiated the restoration of books in its collection of '100 Books on Europe to Remember'. The Library also started preparing for the removal of its collections to the new Konrad Adenauer (KAD) Building, as well as for the transfer of library data to the new library system, ALMA.

### **Services to researchers and other users**

The Historical Archives Unit continued to provide access to the Parliament's historical documents and publications for researchers wishing to explore the history of the institution and of European integration more widely. The Unit has been pro-active in developing relations with universities and continued to host trainees and visitors undertaking research on relevant topics.

### **Research, publications and outreach**

Since 2014, the Historical Archives have also organised their publications into two series - the European Parliament History Series and the European Union History Series - with greater emphasis on issues of political interest. In the four years 2014-17, the Unit published seven studies - including two volumes on the history of the budgetary powers of the Parliament, a study on the history of the common electoral system and the 1976 European Elections Act, and a briefing on the impact of the ECSC Common Assembly on the politics, negotiation and content of the Rome Treaties.

In order to comply with the objective of ensuring accessibility of EP documents for academic dissemination or publishing, the Unit launched in 2017 a new publication project on the History of the EP. This project involves researching and publishing material on the history of the Parliament as a political institution since the first direct elections in June 1979. A first set of three studies on the EP during its first two elected parliamentary terms (1979-1989) has already been launched, tracing and analysing (i) the character, composition and culture of the directly-elected Parliament; (ii) the Parliament's role in the institutional and constitutional development of the then EC; and (iii) its role in the completion of the European single market. These studies are being published in 2018 and 2019.

The Unit drafted blog posts and organised events and exhibitions. A new website for the Historical Archives came online in March 2015, and a new intranet site with useful information and practical advice for Members and staff became operational in September 2015, and both have been actively maintained by the Unit throughout 2017. The Unit also provided historical articles and blogs to other online platforms managed by EPRS, and took part in the management and maintenance of the 'My House of European History' website.

The Historical Archives Unit organised six exhibitions and events in 2017. As example, in October and November 2017, it set up a travelling exhibition on 'Ever Closer Union: The Legacy of the Rome Treaties', which was on display in Luxembourg, Strasbourg and Brussels. This initiative took place in

the framework of 2017 being the 60th anniversary of the signing of the Treaties. Staff of the Unit also participated in several workshops and conferences dealing with the history of European integration.

In parallel, the Unit organised round-table discussions involving authors and historical experts. The Unit organised an EP History Roundtable which looked at the character and culture of the first two directly-elected European Parliaments (1979-1989) and the role they played in the institutional development of the Communities and the completion of the European single market. It also continued to foster inter-institutional and professional cooperation, in particular, in the framework of the Inter-institutional Archives Group (IIAG) and European Diplomatic Archives Group (EUDIA), and by participating in expert groups and professional organisations, so as to develop projects of common interest (inter alia digitisation, harmonisation of metadata and controlled authorities).

### EP Historical Archives in numbers

<b><u>Archival work</u></b>	
Transfers received (submissions of archives)	71
Storage containers/linear meters of transfers	2,877 containers / 287.8 m
CDs / Electronic files received	148 / 57.23 GB
Items from the Official mail archived	42,884
Transfers to the HAEU Florence: Transfers / Files / linear metres	1 / 7,164 / 168 m
Archives processed: files processed in linear meters :	293.2*
Inventory of paper posters	1,067
Digitization of audio files : lots /cassettes	4 / 28 000
<b><u>Library and research</u></b>	
Reading Room opening days	242
Hotline and other enquiries treated (number of requests)	2,319 (around ten enquiries per working day)
Number of requests for documents	603 (an average of 2.4 requests per working day)
Number of documents sent as answers to requests/enquiries	4,668
Number of study visitors/visitors in groups	32/75 (in 4 groups)
Training sessions/number of participants	22/81
<b><u>Outreach</u></b>	
Studies: History of the EP	3
Briefings	1
Events and exhibitions	6
Posts: web	13
Posts: intranet	6
Posts: My House of European History website	57

\*Processing completed in 2018

## **Part II - Detailed account of the services offered by the Historical Archives in 2017**

This section sets out in greater detail some of the qualitative advances made in the services provided by the Historical Archives Unit in 2017.

### **1) Historical Archives**

#### **a) Acquisitions, storage and transfers**

In order to carry out acquisitions, storage, and transfer, the Historical Archives Unit:

- collects and registers the Parliament's official archives (both legislative and administrative);
- receives, organises, and manages the private archives of Members;
- receives, organises, and manages the archives of the Parliament's Official Mail;
- ensures the restoration and preventive conservation of archived materials;
- prepares and manages transfers to the Historical Archives of the European Union (HAEU);
- manages relevant stocks and storage spaces.

The Historical Archives Unit currently store in its compactuses some 2,500 linear metres of material and comprise both legislative and administrative collections, some of which are still being processed. In 2017, the Unit reorganised the storage management and archive acquisition processes, and focused on actively seeking and processing of the documents from parliamentary committees and delegations. It continued the systematic yearly large-scale transfer of documents to the Historical Archives of the European Union (HAEU) of archived paper documents that have reached 30 years of age.

The main advances in 2017 in relation to the acquisition part of archiving have been:

- to diversify the variety of services guiding the transfer of documents and publications in order to meet and satisfy the particular needs from offices and administrative services;
- to continue to streamline the processes of electronic transfer of data into the Unit's collections and databases;
- to contribute to broadening the sources of EP history, specifically by providing an integrated access to the media library material and expanding oral archives with testimonials from former Members.

In addition to reorganising its storage space, so as to afford optimised workflows and a more economic use of space, the Unit continued the efforts to optimise the acquisition and storage of electronic archives. In 2017, the Unit was a member of, and actively participated in the work of, the GIDOC Secretariat, the administrative group in charge with the reorganisation of records management. In this context, the Unit ensured the drafting of future rules for records management to afford automatic archiving - for example, the introduction within the records management process of the flagging of records to be later archived. In parallel, it continued the task of modernising the database holding the electronic archives.

The entire acquisition procedure was reviewed and redesigned in a process which started in 2016. The preliminary analysis conducted for the automation of the transfer of digital archives and their metadata from the business applications to the archive management system has been continued

and will be extended to each application, in order to define and implement the appropriate transfer protocol and define the necessary tools. This effort will ensure an automated process of acquisition of electronic archives, resulting in savings on the processing part.

A simplified transfer form is now used in the acquisition of archives. The introduction of the new form in July 2016 was accompanied in 2017 by proactive work to apply the decision of the Secretary General of 23 October 2013 implementing the Bureau Decision on document management, including the need of visa from the 'Responsible for the Administration of Documents' (RAD) of the DG in charge. This work was further strengthened in 2017 by ensuring direct support to various administrative services and offices to help them submit their archives.

In parallel, starting in 2017, the acquisitions register created in 2015 now encompasses all transfers, regardless of their status (transfers from the EP or other European institutions or deposits of archives of former MEPs) or their form (not only paper documents, but also digital archives, audiocassettes, gifts, posters, etc.). All archives collected are registered, checked and packed with a unique identifier, to ensure traceability during their management by the Historical Archives.

Since 2017, official e-mails from the European Parliament, registered by the Official Mail Unit, are no longer printed for archiving purposes. This measure complements a similar decision taken in 2015 jointly by the Official Mail Unit and the Historical Archives Unit concerning incoming emails. In addition to contributing to a reduction of the volume of archived paper mail, these measures have a significant positive impact on the environment.

## **b) Processing of the Historical Archives**

In relation to the processing of the Parliament's archives, the Historical Archives Unit:

- defines the policy, strategy and practical modalities of archival treatment;
- plans and manages archival processing and digitisation projects;
- manages the outsourced processing of archives and digitisation;
- coordinates internal and external archival processing projects;
- carries out the quality control of processing and of metadata (descriptive data).

After being received, the content of files submitted is identified and organised according to their source, so as to protect their original context. This is important in order to ensure later ease of identification of any document sought in the archives. A hierarchical description (hierarchical layers of metadata) is then undertaken, in accordance with the ISAD(G) archiving standard (series and files) and in compliance with a wide range of criteria, and is entered directly into the database. Each document, whether 'paper-born' or 'digitally-born', will have a similar description and exist electronically in the archival database.

The processing methodology was updated in 2016, comprising the revision of the methods of processing and description, the enhancement of controlled authorities and thesaurus, the quality control of descriptive data, and the control of the rules concerning access to public archives. The tender for processing based on this new methodology resulted in the signing in 2017 of a new contract for processing of the archives.

The new methodology for the processing of archives was set in place and assessed in 2017. It focuses on the production environment of the documents and on the better indexing of files. It involves a return to the principle of *respect des fonds*, notably, respect for the creator of the records and a

limit to the documentary approach to archives. It ensures the application of rules for archival description according to international archival standards.

This new methodology and quality control were systematically implemented in all archival processing projects in 2017: petitions from 1989 to 1997 and the written questions for the sixth parliamentary term were therefore treated on the basis of the new procedure. The description standards for designs, photographs, bookplates, etc. were revised to best fit the particularities of these documents. These principles were also applied for the analysis of the archives of current or former Members, leading to a more individualised approach to the processing proposals made to the evaluation committee, depending on the interest of the records and the typology of the documents.

As part of the preparation of records before their migration into the new archival management system (CLAVIS) that was launched early 2018, several revision and/or quality control projects were carried out in 2016 and in 2017. These included: (i) systematic and comprehensive revision of the classification scheme for the Parliament's archives; (ii) formal quality control of all descriptions (several million records) and associated digitised files; (iii) review of authorities<sup>1</sup> and controlled vocabularies<sup>2</sup>: alignment of the thesaurus with the latest version of EUROVOC and transition to multilingualism, recovery of non-controlled vocabularies<sup>3</sup> and alignment with EUROVOC where possible; and (iv) summary of the existing indications for accessibility to public archives to facilitate a revision of the associated rules.

Substantial progress has been made in the processing of various EP archives. Priority was given in 2017, in addition to the processing of archives submitted by former or current Members in accordance with the recommendations of the evaluation committee foreseen by the Bureau Decision of 25 March 2014, to archives which have been submitted late and covering fully or partly a period prior to the 30-year delay for opening the archives set by the Regulation 354/83 on the opening to the public of the archives of European institutions. Five such processing projects were launched in 2017, with a volume of 293.2 linear metres of paper archives, and they have all been completed, in accordance with this plan, in 2018.

The processed archives have been:

- several private archives of former or current MEPs :

- Doris PACK
- Graham WATSON
- Dagmar ROTH-BEHRENDT
- Alexander ALVARO
- Joan COLOM I NAVAL
- Sharon BOWLES
- Pervenche BERES

---

<sup>1</sup> *Authority control* is a term used in cataloguing, meaning the use of a single authorised heading for all records having the same authority; for example, authors of documents (e.g. MEPs) are *authorities*: authority control ensures the name is always written the same way, there are no spelling mistakes, there is consistent use of the middle name or initial, there is disambiguation when several authors with the same name, etc.

<sup>2</sup> In library, archival and information science *controlled vocabulary* is a carefully selected list of words and phrases, which are used to tag units of information (or records) so that they may be more easily retrieved by a search.

<sup>3</sup> *Non-controlled vocabularies* represent free text metadata used in cataloguing to identify information.

- archives of the Legal Service (1957 – 1986);
- archives concerning the drafting and update of Staff Regulations (1951 – 2001);
- archives of the administration of Members (1953 – 2014);
- archives of the Parliament offices (Bureau, Quaestors) (1977 – 2012).

In addition, 1,067 paper posters acquired from the Ushers Unit have been inventoried, described, and prepared for long-term preservation.

The migration of the electronic archives to CLAVIS offered the opportunity to reorganise, optimise, harmonise and align them in accordance with international archiving standards. This effort has been continued in 2017 with the information of authorities, particularly with the enrichment of the information on former Members notably the drafting of a biography, adding a list of committees and delegations to which the Member belonged, and checking existing data. The European Parliament actively took part in a joint effort led by the Commission to harmonise the formats of metadata and align them with the Historical Archives of the European Union (HAEU), in order to create the basis of publication of archival material as metadata.

Systematic quality control was undertaken for the transfer of archives to the HAEU, in accordance with the transfer procedure foreseen in 2014. All the files transferred were checked so that their description in the Historical Archives' database and the paper files match exactly. The error-rate recorded during the reception checks carried out by the HAEU was 0.01%. The inventories corresponding to XML-EAD format were sent to the HAEU in 2017.

The introduction of the new electronic system for the archives led to an assessment of the quality of digitisation and to a temporary interruption of the digitisation work usually carried out after each processing project for paper documents. As example, paper documents have been digitised "classically" with a simple scan: advanced digitisation affords the creation of a complex digital version of the document, including index file and OCR file, affording more complex search efforts. This is useful for increasing possibilities for historical research based on data-mining, such as identifying all the plenary debates on a given topic. Due to the 100% digitisation of all documents, including the 6th legislature, and nearly-complete digitisation of the 7th legislature, matched with the much faster speed of digitisation as compared to all other archival phases, an interruption of digitisation was possible without posing risks to the archives, in order to allow for an assessment and tender to improve the quality of that digitisation process. Requirements for an inter-institutional tender on digitisation have been defined and communicated to the Office of Publications.

However, the digitisation of files involving vulnerable media continued, with the digitisation of audio-cassettes, where four lots were digitised, encompassing a total of 28,000 audio tapes.

## **2) Historical Library**

Forming part of the Historical Archives Unit, the Historical Library seeks to preserve the institution's historical and cultural heritage and make it available to the public. With its unique collection of historical publications, it offers Members of the European Parliament, the parliamentary community, researchers and the general public an insight into the history of the Parliament and its place in the wider European integration process.

The Historical Library's main tasks are:

- to manage the Parliament's Library Reading Room in Luxembourg;
- to manage a physical collection of books and a growing number of e-books and e-journals;
- to set up and manage Rare and Special Book Collection (RSBC) of books about the European Parliament and European integration;
- to manage the '100 Books on Europe to Remember' project and webpages;
- to manage a number of external databases;
- to provide access to certain newspapers and journals;
- to organise training sessions in the use of certain databases and other information sources;
- to organise events in and visits to the Historical Library.

The Historical Library works closely with the On-site and Online Library Unit of EPRS, using the same electronic platform, copyright services, and type of service to internal users. In 2017, joint teams finalised the new collection management policy.

The Historical Library keeps historical collections of books and other materials, including a reference collection, a collection on 'Parliamentarism and Democracy', the '100 Books on Europe to Remember' collection, serials and an EU publications collection, as well as a Learning Resources Collection (LRC). In 2017, the new collection of Rare and Special Books has been launched by the Historical Library. The historical collections cover materials on the creation and development of the European Parliament and the political and institutional aspects of the European Union since the 1950s, including monographs and periodicals inherited from the Library of the Common Assembly and the Parliamentary Assembly. Among the rare books, it includes not only early publications on a united Europe, but also almost forgotten yet valuable publications issued by the predecessors of the European Parliament.

In total, the Historical Library's online catalogue now contains over 25,000 books located in Luxembourg. It also keeps a collection of more than 990 yearbooks and periodicals published from the 1950s to today and preserved for their historical value. It preserves printed and digitised material in the Historical Library and Historical Archives in accordance with the best international standards and will develop know-how and procedures for long-term preservation.

In 2017, the cataloguing or re-cataloguing of old holdings was launched, after a complete inventory of the contents of the Historical Library compactus in 2017.

### **3) Services to researchers and other users**

In order to make its documentary resources as accessible as possible, the Historical Archives Unit promotes its archival and historical library holdings in a number of ways:

#### **Electronic database**

The electronic archives (the database) contains more than five million documents. It is currently only available for EP staff and the public in the reading room of the Historical Library in Luxembourg and in the reading room of the Library in Brussels, but not outside the Historical Archives and Library, for technical reasons. By contrast, the new CLAVIS database will be accessible outside the Parliament as a result of various projects to promote online accessibility.

#### **Intranet pages**



The Historical Archives Unit's intranet pages are divided into several sections offering information on the Historical Archives and the Unit's objectives, and services provided to MEPs, assistants and EP staff, as well as publications, events and training. In addition, there are pages on the history of the EU, providing facts and figures and other material on EU history, grouped chronologically and thematically. The pages include a timeline of the history of the European Parliament, with historic images, multimedia footage, and historic documents.

The Historical Archives intranet pages can be accessed at the following address:

[http://www.eprs.sso.ep.parl.union.eu/eprs/auth/en/historical\\_archives.html](http://www.eprs.sso.ep.parl.union.eu/eprs/auth/en/historical_archives.html).

### **Internet pages**

The Historical Archives' Internet site gives the Historical Archives and Historical Library a possibility to better communicate and promote their holdings, services and publications to the outside world. The site consists of five sections (Home, Holdings, Multimedia Gallery, Publications, and About us).

The Historical Archives internet site can be accessed at the following address:

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/historicalarchives/en/home/home.html>.

### **Reading room**

The reading room in Luxembourg is available to in-house and external users. The Historical Library offers library services for EP staff in Luxembourg and welcomes members of the general public, in accordance with the rules on study visits (due to its location within an administrative building, this is not a walk-in library, needing an advanced request to secure access). In order to ensure transparency and to disseminate knowledge on EP activities among citizens, the Historical Library has opened a section to the public specifically set aside for historical research on the Parliament and European integration in general.

In 2017, the Historical Library in Luxembourg was open 242 days and received 107 researchers in study visits of various lengths (between hours and weeks): 32 individual researchers and 75 visitors in four organised groups. The Historical Library staff continued to provide training sessions on various library-related topics, with 22 sessions comprising 82 participants in 2017 (these are in addition to the visitors).

### **Historical research**

The Historical Archives Unit provides access to the Parliament's historical documents and publications for researchers working on the history of European integration. In 2017, 603 requests were received from internal and external clients, whether MEPs, EP offices and administrative units, other institutions, citizens (including via the Transparency Unit), researchers or historians, with 4,668 documents supplied. 59 % of the requests came from general public and 41 % from within the EP. The Historical Archives Unit continued in 2017 to develop relations with universities and to welcome trainees and visitors undertaking research on issues relating to the Parliament and the Union more widely.

## **4) Publications and outreach**

The main activities conducted by the Historical Archives Unit in the field of publications and outreach in 2017 were as follows:

## **Publications**

The Historical Archives Unit continued in 2017 to publish studies and briefings in the twin *European Parliament History Series* and the *European Union History Series*, writing and issuing a study entitled *Impact of the ECSC Common Assembly on the politics, negotiation and content of the Rome Treaties*.

### **EP History project (First series of studies - 1979-1989)**

A first set of studies on the EP during its first two elected parliamentary terms (1979-89) was commissioned at the end of 2016 and largely carried out in 2017, in order to trace and analyse: (i) the character, composition and culture of the directly-elected Parliament; (ii) the Parliament's role in the institutional and constitutional development of the then EEC; and (iii) its role in the completion of the European single market. The exercise is designed to draw on a wide variety of sources, including the Historical Archives, publicly available external material, and interviews with figures from the time, including former MEPs and officials. The first such study was published towards the end of 2018 and the other two will be published in spring 2019.

## **Events and exhibitions**

The Historical Archives Unit organised six events and exhibitions in 2017:

- an exhibition (in Brussels) entitled 'Sicily in Europe/Europe in Sicily' to commemorate the 1955 conference in Messina;
- a round-table on 'The political impact of the European Parliament in the 1980s: Writing EU history' (held in Brussels);
- a conference on 'Economic and Monetary Union: 25 years after Maastricht' (Brussels); and
- a travelling exhibition on 'Ever Closer Union: The legacy of the Rome Treaties' (displayed in Luxembourg, Strasbourg and Brussels).

Online, the unit provided a monthly article under the general rubric of "This month in history", and contributed 56 postings to the "My House of European history" website.

## **Oral history project**

Work continued in 2017 on enhancing the archives of former Presidents and Secretaries-General of the Parliament, by adding video interviews. This project is undertaken in cooperation with DG Communication (Audiovisual Unit). As interviews are made in the mother tongue of the interviewee, subtitles in translation are now added to them.

## **5) Relations with other EU institutions and international bodies**

Cooperation with the Historical Archives of the European Union (HAEU), located at the European University Institute (EUI) in Florence, continued to be strengthened in 2017. The Historical Archives Unit is clarifying techniques for depositing and describing its archives, in order to harmonise the presentation of its holdings with that of the HAEU and to allow them to be presented in XML EAD (Encoded Archival Description) format on the Archives Portal Europe. All materials transferred to Florence by the Historical Archives of the European Parliament are fully organised and placed in boxes for preservation, accompanied by inventory, descriptions, and index. No further processing is

needed for the archives submitted by the European Parliament to the HAEU, apart from the unpacking and placing on compactus shelves.

The Historical Archives Unit also actively participated in the twice-yearly inter-institutional meeting of the Archival Group (IIAG) of the EU institutions. It also participated in the European Union Diplomatic Archives (EUDiA) annual meeting. In parallel, relations with other national and international archival services continued, on operational aspects and particularly in receiving visiting groups of archivists from national archives.

## Part III - Administration of the Historical Archives

### 1) Budget

In 2017, the Historical Archives Unit managed its appropriations under the following EP budget line:

Budget Line	2017 commitments
3210-07	1,737,921 EUR

### Contribution to the annual budget of Historical Archives of the EU (HAEU)

In 2017, the European Parliament contributed its quota of 379,872 EUR to the budget of the HAEU in Florence. It received the Annual Report of the HAEU and submitted comments on it, consistent with the recommendations contained in an audit exercise commissioned by the European Commission.

### Investment in electronic archives: Efforts for long-term preservation and accessibility

The implementation of the electronic archive has been fully managed and paid for by the Historical Archives Unit. The low cost of 52,565 EUR for the new electronic system resulted from a substantial in-house contribution by staff to the development of the system (adaptation of a commercial solution), including project management. Additional IT services were needed to prepare the database for migration involving 112,570 EUR for database programming.

An amount of 124,630 EUR was dedicated to investment in the future through a long-term preservation study, to help the Historical Archives Unit to develop such a strategy (in 2018) and to launch projects in 2019.

### Processing of the archives

The main item of expenditure in 2017 involved sorting, organising and processing (digitisation and indexing) of paper documents. This cost 924,205 EUR, with the largest amount dedicated to the processing of the archives of Presidents, Bureau and Quaestors (297,360 EUR). Another large amount was dedicated to the processing of equally large archives of the administrative documents of MEPs, covering 1952-2012 (185,000 EUR).

The amounts reflect the very substantial work of processing individual paper files, preparing for digitisation, adding indexing and meta-data, and uploading into the database. The earlier effort of inventory and preparation of batches for processing of the submitted archives is made by staff. The paper documents are expected to become less substantial, as electronic systems start replacing the traditional paper files. Importantly, archives submitted include archives dating back 1952.

The Historical Archives Unit relies on the provision of services through framework contracts with specialised companies for processing work. Tasks assigned to the external company are organised in projects, which are benchmarked and monitored. Each project concerns well-defined submissions, so that the indexing and assignment of metadata is similar across the project. All tasks

relating to the responsibility and management of each project are carried out by the EP staff within the unit. The choice of *intra-muros* processing is dictated by the unique and sometimes confidential nature of the archives to be treated.

The maximum number of external staff recorded in a year varies, depending on the number of projects launched and completed within that year. At the end of 2017, there were 13 external members of staff involved in the processing of archiving projects on the basis of framework contracts.

The transition towards digital archiving requires adapting the resources traditionally used for the processing of paper records in order to: (i) enhance and contextualise them (indexing, metadata, etc.), so as to optimise and improve their accessibility; and (ii) reinforce the implementation of the new archive system CLAVIS and to guarantee the acquisition and treatment of digital data, as well as the stability and maintenance of the system.

## **2) Staff**

### **Establishment plan**

On 31 December 2017, the establishment plan of the Historical Archives Unit stood at 20 officials, two temporary staff and one contract agent. Two staff retired, one was away on CCP (long-term leave) and two posts were abolished. Recruitment to the remaining vacant post was ongoing.

## **3) Cooperation within the EP administration**

The Historical Archives Unit cooperates closely both with other administrative units within DG EPRS and with other DGs and services within the Parliament's administration more widely. For example:

- *within DG EPRS*

The Historical Archives Unit in Luxembourg works closely with the On-site and Online Library Services Unit of in Brussels. They share a common Library Management System (LMS) and online catalogue, as well as a common budget for new acquisitions.

The Citizens' Enquiries Unit (AskEP) passes on to the Historical Archives Unit all information requests they receive for historical documents from members of the public. In 2017, the Historical Archives Unit collaborated with units of the Members' Research Service (research of documents, peer review and fact-checking of six publications), notably in the context of an on-going EPRS series of publications on the history of various European Parliament buildings.

The Historical Archives Unit also cooperates actively on a regular basis with other DGs and services:

- *with DG Presidency (PRES)*

The Historical Archives Unit organises and archives, in paper and digital forms (the latter searchable online), all the outgoing and incoming mail of the European Parliament (42,884 items in 2017), which is transferred on a regular basis from the Official Mail Unit.

The Historical Archives Unit cooperates with the Transparency Unit, in particular in cases of requests for access to documents under Regulation 1049/2001 involving more extensive searches with historical profiles 77 such extensive searches were carried out in 2017.

*- with DGs Internal Policies (IPOL) and External Policies (EXPO)*

As in previous years, the Historical Archives Unit cooperated with DGs IPOL and EXPO in order to acquire the archives of the parliamentary committees, to add them to its existing holdings. A systematic transfer plan has been set up and followed, starting 2017, to ensure the comprehensive acquisition of all such materials for the archives.

*- with DG Communication (COMM)*

The Historical Archives Unit worked very closely in 2017 with the House of European History, the Events and Exhibitions Unit, and the EP Liaison Offices in the member states, both for acquisitions and the organisation of events and exhibitions.

The Historical Archives Unit and Library Directorate contributed to the Open Doors Days organised by DG COMM in Brussels, Luxembourg and Strasbourg.

*- with other DGs and services*

The Historical Archives Unit worked with various other DGs and services to explain and apply the retention schedules and worked, notably in the framework of GIDOC, to establish a filing plan and a common conservation list for the whole institution.

The unit also received a transfer of administrative documents from DG Finance (FINS) and DG Infrastructure and Logistics (INLO).

#### **4) Premises**

*- Stock-taking and preventive conservation*

The new archival approach and streamlining efforts also focused on archive preservation and store management. The general inventory of stores and archives conducted in 2016 was used in 2017 as a basis to reorganise the available space and to ensure adequate preservation conditions:

- identification and description of all storage spaces;
- assigning of location identifiers to each storage location;
- verification of the presence, or failing this, identification of each set of archives kept by the Historical Archives Unit (acquisitions, archives processed, digitisation lots, microfilms, posters, audio cassettes);
- quality control, or failing this, establishment of associated research instruments (transfer forms, digitisation forms);
- checking of the condition of the archives and their containers;
- rationalisation of the containers for better conservation and reconditioning, if necessary;
- classification of each file holding unit in association with a location in the storage areas.

This stock-taking operation made it possible to identify documents stored without an associated research instrument, sometimes for several years. By thus ensuring a better control of the material

kept by the Historical Archives, it made it possible to establish a more rational programming of processing and avoid the successive treatments of scattered parts of the same group of archives, thus ensuring a greater consistency and coherence of the descriptions.

#### - Microforms

A specific assessment of the condition of the microforms was carried out in 2016 in order to evaluate their exposure to 'vinegar syndrome'. The control confirmed a slight change in most of the oldest microfilms, based on acetate film. The prevention programme carried out in 2017 provided a controlled preservation environment (the air conditioning of the *microthèque* with a stable temperature and humidity maintained to stabilise the chemical process). A digitisation program for archives which exist only on microfilm is under active consideration, in order to ensure long-term preservation of their content.

#### - New Konrad Adenauer Building (KAD)

As requested by DG INLO, the Historical Archives Unit contributed in 2017 to the definition of the site plans for the Historical Archives and Historical Library in the new Konrad Adenauer Building (KAD), currently under construction in Luxembourg. The new facilities are designed around the concept of a research centre, and to afford optimal storage and technical workflows.

### **5) Computerisation**

#### - Upgrading from CLARA to CLAVIS database software

Since 2000, the Historical Archives Unit has been using an archive management software known as CLARA as its principal archival tool. This system is equally used for consulting purposes by the Bureau Secretariat, the Secretary-General's Office, the Transparency Unit and the EP Library in Brussels (the ARCDoc database). In 2014, a call for tender was launched to purchase a new, more up-to-date archival and document management software, known as CLAVIS, keeping all its existing functionalities whilst adding new ones, such as those related to multilingualism. In July 2015, a contract was signed with the winner of the relevant tendering process. In November 2015, the process of requirements analysis, application customisation and development started, and this work continued in 2016. In parallel, an analysis was carried out on the new system's interoperability with the Parliament's applications. In addition, the business workflow with the new application was documented and analysed.

A considerable challenge for the project was the cleaning up and the migration of the old database, with its existing descriptions, metadata and documents. This involved quality control and the review of around five million archival records before their migration to the new system. This challenge was handled by creating an intermediate database, which would easily allow the export and analysis of large sets of data, as well as guaranteeing a better quality of migrated data. This sub-project ran in parallel with the primary CLAVIS project and was completed in 2017.

#### - Intermediary archives

A decision of the Secretary-General in October 2008 marked the launch of a project to set up 'retention schedules', in order to establish uniform procedures for the retention of the current and intermediary archives held by the Parliament's directorates-general and services (period of retention, destruction or transfer of documents to the Historical Archives, and the extent to which

they can be communicated). Each DG was required to draw up such a schedule, in cooperation with the Historical Archives Unit.

A Bureau decision of 2 July 2012 (Article 6) stipulated that all retention schedules should be adopted by the end of January 2013. It established the inter-departmental group of document management officers (GIDOC) to ensure the implementation and to monitor the development of the document management system created pursuant to that decision and its implementing measures.

Work on the retention schedules, initiated and promoted by the Historical Archives Unit, and since 2012 by GIDOC and the Document Management Officers in each Directorate-General, has now started to bear fruit, as they are applied by the services.

In 2016, the elaboration of the retention schedule for the Office of the Deputy Secretary General was finalised and integrated in the DG Presidency (PRES) retention schedule following the reorganisation of administrative services. The retention schedule of the DG Personnel (PERS) was revised. Work on the revision of the retention schedules for DGs Internal Policies (IPOL) and External Policies (EXPO) was also carried out in 2017. The Historical Archives Unit contributed meaningfully to the drafting of all the issued documents within the GIDOC secretariat.