REHABILITATION OF THE ARCHIVE SERVICE
IN BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA

(In association with the International Council on Archives and the Public Record Office)

In May 1999 our third seminar, Rehabilitation of the Archive Service in Bosnia-Herzegovina was hosted by the Public Record Office (the national archives of the United Kingdom), and held in association with the International Council on Archives. This brought together officially for the first time since the beginning of the war senior archivists from both entities, led by the head of the State Archives of Bosnia-Herzegovina. Representatives from UNESCO, the Open Society Archives, the Packard Humanities Institute, directors and senior staff from European national archives also attended, working with the Bosnian delegation to formulate an action plan for rehabilitation of the service (in particular, to strengthen the position of the Archive of Bosnia-Herzegovina), with the object of seeking funding and support from a range of regional and international sources.

Background
Participants
Programme
Press Release
Unesco WebWorld News 07/05/1999 “Rehabilitating archives in Bosnia-Herzegovina”
[www.unesco.org/webworld/highlights/bosnia_070599.html]
Unesco WebWorld 18/05/1999 “Bosnia-Herzegovina archives meeting”
[www.unesco.org/webworld/highlights/bih_180599.html]
Background
The Archive of Bosnia-Herzegovina (Arhiv Bosne i Hercegovine) was established in Sarajevo in 1947 by the government of the People's Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina as an independent institution of the Presidency; soon after a network of regional archives was set up throughout Bosnia-Herzegovina. The archive service in the post-World War II Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRJ) was at first regulated together with activities concerning the cultural heritage; however, as the federal authorities realized the importance of the service in the administration of the state, legislation regarding archives came to be passed separately. Archive legislation later fell under the authority of the constituent republics of the SFRJ, of which Bosnia-Herzegovina was one; the last legislation relating to archives was passed in 1987 and is still in force. Following the recognition of Bosnia-Herzegovina as an independent state by the United Nations, the Archive of Bosnia-Herzegovina became a Category A member (for national archives administrations) of the International Council on Archives in 1994, participating in its international conferences in Thessaloniki (1994) and Edinburgh (1997), and of CIBAL (International Information Centre on the Sources of Balkan and Mediterranean History) and other international archive organizations. The Archive of Bosnia-Herzegovina is responsible to the Council of Ministers, and is a part of the administrative system of the common central state institutions of Bosnia-Herzegovina. This has left it in an uncertain position operationally, legislatively and with regard to funding.

Archives after the war
The signing of the Dayton Accords, which ended the war in Bosnia in November 1995, saw the creation of two entities within Bosnia-Herzegovina (the Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina and Republika Srpska) and the formation of new cantonal structures within each entity. Archives for the newly created entities were established (Arhiv Federacije BiH, Arhiv Republike Srpske), whose remits cut across the boundaries of the old regional archives. To complicate matters further, the new cantons were required to take on responsibility for archives.

The physical destruction of archival material held in archives due to war actions was relatively limited, with a few major exceptions, such as the total destruction of the Oriental Institute in Sarajevo. The far greater threats to the survival and functioning of the archive service were less direct: boundary changes which severed links with record-creating agencies; the loss of staff, damaged and inadequate buildings, leading to damage to stored archive material; the destruction of equipment and facilities; the lack of preservation materials; professional isolation.

Now, three and a half years after the end of the conflict, the majority of these problems remain - for example, there are still no microfilming or conservation laboratories in any of Bosnia-Herzegovina's archives, which lack even basic office equipment. The continuing scarcity of qualified staff has been compounded by the difficulty of attracting new staff, particularly young people, into what is perceived as a low-paid profession with no prospects for advancement. There are currently no professional training courses for archivists taught at any level in Bosnia-Herzegovina.
The rehabilitation of archives in Bosnia-Herzegovina into a modern, effectively-functioning service, an essential element in the administration of any state, and particularly for one which has recently experienced a devastating war and is still going through major constitutional and economic transitions, will require significant international support.

**Post-war projects**

In 1995 and 1996, George MacKenzie, Deputy Secretary General of the International Council on Archives assessed the situation of archives in Bosnia-Herzegovina at the request of UNESCO. He first visited archives in Sarajevo and Mostar and later in Tuzla, Banja Luka, Travnik, Bihac, Doboj and Foca.

One of the major operational problems identified during Mr MacKenzie’s visits was the lack of knowledge among archive staff of the situation and extent of destruction and damage to archival material held at record-creating agencies. In 1997, with the active involvement of Mr MacKenzie, a census was carried out by staff of the Archive of Bosnia-Herzegovina, helped by a local co-ordinator. A total of 80 record creating agencies in the Sarajevo area holding over 15,000 linear metres of records were surveyed. Agencies visited included state administration, health and research institutions, courts, religious communities and other institutions. The census was extremely valuable in identifying needs and priorities for future activities. Organizational assistance and funding for the project came from the Open Society Archives, Budapest, the International Council on Archives, UNESCO and the Council of Europe. This project should ideally be extended across Bosnia-Herzegovina – in the remainder of the Federation, and in Republika Srpska.

Parallel with the census, five 2 day training sessions for staff at the record-creating agencies who worked with archival material were held at locations across the Federation. Due to the wartime turnover of staff, many had no experience of records work. The sessions were organized and carried out by staff of the Archive of Bosnia-Herzegovina, who had identified the problem while carrying out their census of record-creating agencies. The training sessions were highly successful and should be repeated in those areas of the Federation that did not participate in the original sessions, and in Republika Srpska. Funding for the project came from the Council of Europe and UNESCO.
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PARTICIPANTS

1. Professor Matko Kovacevic, Director, Archive of Bosnia & Herzegovina, Sarajevo
2. Ms Samija Saric, Director, Archive of the Federation of Bosnia & Herzegovina, Sarajevo
3. Mr Dusan Vrzina, Director, Archive of Republika Srpska, Banja Luka
4. Dr Azem Kozar, Director, Regional Archives Tuzla (President, Bosnia-Herzegovina Society of Archivists), Tuzla
5. Mr Slobodan Kristic, Deputy Director, Archive of the Federation of Bosnia & Herzegovina, Sarajevo
6. Mr Vjenceslav Miljic, Archival consultant, Banja Luka
7. Fra Marko Orsolic, IMIC, Sarajevo
8. Mr George MacKenzie, Deputy Secretary General, International Council on Archives
9. Mr Axel Plathe, UNESCO, Information and Informatics Division, Paris
11. Mr Erik Norberg, Director-General, Riksarkivet, Stockholm
12. Dr Christian Sapper, Director, Finanz-und-Hofkammerarchivs, Vienna
13. Dr Kai von Jena, Head of International Relations, Bundesarchiv, Koblenz
14. Mr Patrick Cadell, Keeper of the Records of Scotland, National Archives of Scotland, Edinburgh
15. Dr Josip Kolanovic, Director, Hrvatski Drzavni Arhiv, Zagreb
16. Dr Helen Forde, Head of Preservation Services, Public Record Office, London
17. Mr Robert Child, Head of Conservation, National Museums and Galleries of Wales
18. Mr Michael Roper, London (former Keeper of Public Records, Public Record Office)
19. Professor Istvan Rev, Director, Open Society Archives, Budapest
20. Mr Wilkins Poe, Packard Humanities Institute, California
21. Dr Andras Riedlmayer, Harvard University, Cambridge, USA
22. Dr Marian Wenzel, Director, Bosnia-Herzegovina Heritage Rescue, London
23. Mr Asim Djonlic, Director Sarajevo Office, Bosnia-Herzegovina Heritage Rescue
24. Mr Quintin Hoare, Director, Bosnian Institute
25. Ms Helen Walasek, Bosnian Institute
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PROGRAMME

Day One

Friday, 7 May 1999

09.30 – 09.40

1. Welcome: Quintin Hoare, Director, The Bosnian Institute

2. Introduction: Sarah Tyacke, Keeper of the Public Records, Public Record Office

Chair: Helen Forde, Head of Preservation Services, Public Record Office

9.40 - 11.30

3. Summary of the state of the archive service in Bosnia-Herzegovina
   Facilitator: George MacKenzie, ICA

The delegates for Bosnia-Herzegovina will be invited to give their assessments of the state of the service, based on their own direct experiences. These should be relatively brief and factual, and particularly deal with elements such as:

- Physical condition of the fonds
- State of buildings
- Staff numbers and qualifications
- Technical services
  - microfilming, conservation
- Links with record-creating agencies
- Other archives

Other participants with experience in Bosnia will be invited to comment.

George MacKenzie will summarize the results of the session.

11.30 – 12.00

Break
12.00 – 13.00

4. Legal framework
Facilitator: Michael Roper, former Keeper of the Public Records

The delegates from Bosnia-Herzegovina will introduce the subject, based on their respective experiences, and deal with the questions:

- What is the legal framework under which the archives service operates in BiH
- What are the advantages and disadvantages of the current situation
- What changes or improvements are necessary
- How can these be achieved

Representatives from other European archives present (Austria, Croatia, Sweden, United Kingdom) will be invited to comment. The representative of the Council of Europe will also be invited to comment, and to identify areas where the work of the Council could be helpful.

Michael Roper will summarize the results of this session.

13.00 – 14.00
Lunch

14.00 – 15.30

5. Training needs
Facilitator: George MacKenzie

The delegates from Bosnia-Herzegovina will identify their requirements for training of their present and future staff. The representatives of the Council of Europe and of UNESCO will be invited to comment on what they have done in the past.

15.30 – 16.00
Break

16.00 – 17.15

6. Group Discussions
Three smaller groups will be formed, each jointly led by a representative from Bosnia-Herzegovina and a facilitator, to examine the needs of the Bosnia-Herzegovina archive service in greater detail as a basis for tomorrow’s discussions. The topics proposed are:

1. Physical preservation and technical services (facilitator: Helen Forde)
2. Legal and administrative: legal framework, links with record creating bodies (facilitator: Michael Roper)
3. Training and professional development (facilitator: George MacKenzie)
7. **Report back and Summary**

Each group will be asked to make a 5 minute report back and the chair will provide a brief summary of the day’s proceedings.

**Day Two**

**Saturday 8 May**

**Chair:** Helen Forde, Head of Preservation Services, Public Record Office

**09.30 – 11.00**

1. **Identifying partners and donors**
   
   Facilitator: Patrick Cadell, National Archives of Scotland
   
   - International organizations (*UNESCO, Council of Europe, Open Society Archives, ICA*)
   - National archives and associations (Austria, Germany, Sweden, United Kingdom)
   - Government aid agencies (above nations, others)
   - Other bodies (eg private foundations)

   The representatives of the different organizations will be asked to comment, covering:
   
   - What projects has your organization or government carried out in the past in Bosnia-Herzegovina?
   - What projects do you have planned in Bosnia-Herzegovina?
   - Based on discussions at this seminar, what possibilities do you see for your organization or government to undertake future actions to assist in the rehabilitation of the archive services in Bosnia-Herzegovina?

**11.00 – 11.30**

Break

**11.30 – 13.00**

2. **Priority setting and action plan**
   
   Facilitator: Patrick Cadell, National Archives of Scotland

   6.1 Establishment of list of priority tasks to rehabilitate the archive service of Bosnia-Herzegovina

   6.2 Action by: The Bosnian Institute
   The International Council on Archives
   UNESCO
   The Council of Europe
   The national archives of neighbouring states
   Other potential donors

   6.3 Future steps
PRESS RELEASE:

BOSNIAN ARCHIVISTS MEET IN LONDON

Senior archivists from Bosnia-Herzegovina, headed by the director of the Archive of Bosnia-Herzegovina, and coming from both its two entities, the Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina and Republika Srpska, met together officially for the first time in London last week at a seminar organized by the Bosnian Institute, with the participation of the International Council on Archives.

Working together with representatives from a range of international and non-governmental organizations and major European archives, they agreed on a common programme and priority action plan for rebuilding the archive service across Bosnia-Herzegovina, which was severely damaged and disrupted during the recent war and has been left in limbo since the establishment of new administrative units following the Dayton Peace Accords.

Three broad areas for future co-operative action were identified: the need to modernise and harmonise the legal framework for the archive service across the country, and in particular to strengthen the position of the Archive of Bosnia-Herzegovina; work to protect the physical condition of archives; and training for staff of both archives and record-creating organizations.

Archives and records are crucial to good governance and essential for ensuring accountability and transparency. Bosnia-Herzegovina, after experiencing a devastating war, is still undergoing major constitutional and economic transitions. The rehabilitation of the archive service in Bosnia-Herzegovina into a modern, effective element of public administration will be a key factor in establishing its ability to function fully as a democratic state.

The seminar was hosted by the Public Record Office, and received financial support from the British Council Sarajevo. Representatives of UNESCO, the International Council on Archives, the Open Society Archive (Budapest), the Packard Humanities Institute (California) the International Multireligious and Intercultural Centre (Sarajevo), Bosnia-Herzegovina Heritage Rescue (London), and the Bosnian Manuscript Ingathering Project (USA) attended, along with senior archivists from Austria, Croatia, Germany, Sweden and the United Kingdom. The seminar was part of the International Seminar Programme of the Bosnian Institute, a London-based non-governmental organization.