



Project

Cross Border E-archive

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NEWSLETTER

January – March ` 2013



Project steering group's chairman Armands Magone and vice-chairman Kirill Ladygin

Welcome to this year's first issue of the newsletter!

2013 started with active work on reviewing reports of the project "Cross Border E-archive" and, in spite of small challenges, further progress has been achieved concerning Project administration and coordination.

In February all Project partner organisations were audited, and this process revealed the general Project status up to date. Also, the first steering group meeting was organized in Riga (Latvia). Many internal meetings took place in Riga and Russia, as well as events were organised for researchers, archive experts and the general public.

During the steering group meeting, archive experts from Estonia, Latvia and Russia met in Riga and together with the Project's supervising body agreed on main topics that will be included in the e-archive. Furthermore, portal development has been advanced and is currently underway – visions and strategies are to be designed to help ensure that the goal of the Project is reached.

Looking back, we have worked hard in achieving the best possible Project outcome. The results up to date show we are on the right track and inspire us in continuing with even more passion and dedication. I wish everyone a joyful springtime and lots of energy to continue the good work in the next period!

Indra Auzane, Project manager



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THE PROJECT "CROSS-BORDER E-ARCHIVE" STEERING GROUP`S FIRST MEETING IN RIGA

On 14th March the first meeting of the steering group of the project "Cross-border E-archive" was held in the office of the Culture Information Systems Centre (CISC). The steering group in accordance with the draft by-law of the Project is the highest governing body that oversees implementation of the Project. In this first meeting the Board of Management and the draft by-law of the steering group was approved and the current status of the Project implementation presented and discussed as well as the future challenges were outlined.

CISC director Armands Magone was approved as the chairman of the steering group of the Project, while the head of Department on innovation and international projects of Saint-Petersburg Information and Analytical Centre Kirill Ladygin was approved as the vice-chairman. As the steering group members with voting rights were approved: the director of Estonian Historical Archives Indrek Kuuben, the deputy director of National Archives of Latvia Inguna Slaidina and the Board member of NGO Ideju Forums Edmunds Vanags.

Since the aim of the Project is to develop a publicly accessible online website (e-archive) in which

selected and digitalized archival documents from the archives of the three participating countries will be placed in until 2014, during the meeting of the steering group there were two main questions proposed for discussion and approval about the further activities of the Project – the best solution for the development of such digital site and the agreement on the quantitative results of the Project.

It was proposed to develop the digital platform as an interactive, user friendly portal with focus on regular users giving them the possibility to include descriptions themselves (add explanations to church book records etc.).

As the main topics of the archival materials that will be included in the portal there were approved the student and lecturer records, Lutheran church books and maps.

It was highlighted that "e-archive" is a pilot project and even after the end of Project implementation further funding can be allocated in order to advance the portal and make more documents available online from archives of Estonia, Latvia and Russia.

It was approved to hold the next meeting of the steering group in August 2013 in Tartu, Estonia.

Memorable moments from the steering group of the project "Cross Border E-archive":



INFORMATION DAY OF THE PROJECT

Within the framework of the project “Cross Border E-archive” on 30th January meeting with researchers, archive experts, users and media took place during the Information Day of the Project in the Latvian State Historical Archives. The aim of the Project is to preserve historical and cultural heritage of Estonia, Latvia and Russia cross border area archives and to provide access to the heritage for the citizens of the area. Until 2014 universally accessible online platform (e-archive) will be developed with unlimited access to the archival information. Cross Border E-archive will bring together lost connections between historical facts on larger level and family history on individual level.



Information Day was opened by the Deputy Director of the National Archives of Latvia Gatis Karlsons. Participants were introduced with the Project and its realization by Project manager Indra Auzane. Director of the Latvian State Historical Archives Nikolajs Rizovs presented to the audience variety of inquiries in Latvian archives on family history and links, which show the importance and public demand of the virtual archive. Archive expert from the National Archives of Latvia Valdis Stals introduced to the contents of the Latvian State Historical Archives collections and documents that can be shared with Project partners and included in the e-archive. After presentations many interesting archival materials were revealed to the audience and vibrant discussion took place on actual issues of the Project.



LOCAL ACTIVITIES OF THE PROJECT

❖ IN ESTONIA

On 18th January Project manager of National Archives of Estonia (NAE) Kadri Tooming and external expert, professor, Aadu Must met with the Project manager of National Archives of Latvia (NAL) Valdis Stals to discuss users' interests, possible selection of materials and digitization. Outcome of the discussion was better understanding of each other standpoints and ideas for e-archive.

On 8th February a meeting of steering group of NAE was held. Project manager provided an overview of the activities in progress and steering group approved the content of the contribution to the second report. Also starting the digitization and metadata analysis, further activities in general and budget change needs were discussed.

The main activity during these months was research with the view of point out most relevant and interesting archival collections for the planned e-archive. Researcher, Project manager and Project manager's assistant worked with literature, finding aids and materials and composed lists of materials. In the second half of the February the lists of NAE's offerings and wishes were presented to the partners.

NAE started digitizing in order to ensure amounts promised in application. As materials were not agreed between partners yet, NAE started digitizing maps as they are interesting and understandable materials also for unskilled users and therefore will certainly be in the portal.

In addition to digitization specialist Project team of NAE was complemented with the metadata operator who will analyze archival descriptions used so far in NAE and in different previous projects.



LOCAL ACTIVITIES OF THE PROJECT

❖ IN RUSSIA

On 27th February a meeting with Marina Mishenkova (Deputy Chairman of Archival Committee). Participants: Marina Mishenkova, Marina Belozerova and Kirill Ladygin. Aim is to discuss current issues on the project “Cross Border E-archive”.

Meeting with Svetlana Shtukova (Chairman of Archival Committee). Participants: Svetlana Shtukova, Marina Mishenkova, Irina Garkusha, Kirill Ladygin and Marina Belozerova. Aim is to confirm and coordinate the Project team to the steering group’s meeting in Riga and to define the data to be placed in e-archive portal.

There were prepared and sent two official letters to Chairman of Archival Committee Svetkana Shtukova.

On 19th March a workshop in Scientific and Technical Information Centre "Progress on the e-Archive: Information and computer archival technologies", where Marina Belozerova has presented on the following topics – "The formation of e-archival collections and funds: current approaches of model structure development. Resources remotely. State Information System "State Archives of St. Petersburg": experience of development and implementation. Information systems for different purposes and functions: electronic archive of regulatory, financial and accounting, organizational and administrative, personnel, documentation, electronic archive of contracts, electronic library, electronic catalogue, electronic filing, etc. Maintaining centralized and distributed archive multidivisional company”.

Round Table: an exchange of views, where the presentation about the Project was demonstrated.

❖ IN LATVIA

In February, according to the decisions of Protocol of October 2012, complexes of documents of the Latvian National Archives – church books, census, maps, and major public figures, were selected.

In February-March the summary was prepared about all Project partners submitted research results and proposals about selection of documents and was presented to the steering group for further evaluation.

On 14th March, during the meeting with Estonian and Russian Project partners further actions for research study were defined–the files of university students of 19th century (which unites us all).

On 15th March, in the State Historical Archives during the meeting with Russian partners further plan about placing of documents of the Historical City Archives of St. Petersburg was discussed; the partners were introduced to the RPI inventories and student personal files, evaluating of those digitising feasibility.



On 12th March in a meeting in Culture Information Systems Centre the possible ways of e-archive development were discussed. One is more focused on a simple user with no background knowledge of archival materials, when the portal is simple and easy to use, with intuitively built features, richly illustrated with examples. Another way – the portal should be deployed as a catalogue with extensive search functions that will be helpful for those who know what to look for and how to look.

There were discussed both possible e-archive platforms scenarios "poles" with Russian and Estonian partners. Considering the content of the collection which is more focused on information about specific individuals a possibility was discussed that the development of the portal could be where users can obtain information in narrative form and search for themselves. The potential user roles as pupil, student, teacher, researcher, scientist, archives specialist were discussed, and it was decided to develop these role scenarios to gain a comprehensive idea of the required functionality of the platform.