



Γενικά Αρχεία του Κράτους

Υπουργείο Παιδείας, Δια Βίου Μάθησης και Θρησκευμάτων

GSA Greece : a centre of national heritage

Central Service
and
Regional Services



January 2011

General State Archives of Greece - Planning,
Coordination and Studies Department

General overview:

A little about us...



The General State Archives (GSA) of Greece is an **independent public service** that reports to the Ministry of Education, Lifelong Learning and Religious Affairs. GSA constitutes of the Central Service based in Athens and of 64 Regional Services around Greece. Provincial Archives are regional administrative authorities operating under the Central Service of GSA.

Mission statement 1/2

The General State Archives in Greece, a center of national heritage whose main goal is to:

- a. protect,
- b. preserve and
- c. disseminate the Greek cultural / historical memory.

The GSA is a central repository providing access to public and private archives, documents and manuscripts collected throughout modern history (from the 13th century until today).

Mission statement 2/2

The main objectives of the agency can be summarized as follows:

- Selection, appraisal, disposal, permanent preservation, conservation, classification and indexing of national archival material that includes records of the government as well as private archives.
- Collaboration with church institutions and holders of private records for the rescue of archival material.
- Issuance of publications (periodical and non periodical) as well as research tools (indexes, catalogues, inventories and other information material)
- Collaboration with other scientific institutions in Greece and abroad.
- Enrichment of the archival material through purchase or donation from private holders and / or organizations in Greece and abroad.

Brief History

Some important dates for the agency:

- **1914:** “The Establishment of the Greek State Archiving Service” according to the Law 380/1914 under the governance of Eleftherios Venizelos, thanks to the efforts of Professor Spyridon Lambrou and the historian-researcher Yiannis Vlachogiannis with the purpose of “collecting and monitoring documents included in all public archives dating 50 years back”. The first Director of the General State Archives was Yiannis Vlachogiannis who donated his valuable collection to the General State Archives and the first Chairman of the Advisory Council was Nikolaos G. Politis.
- **1939:** Law 2027/1939 is passed regarding the “Reorganization of the General State Archives”.
- **1991:** Law 1946/1991 determines a new legislative frame which regulates the operation of the General State Archives to this day. The Central Service is structured into departments and Archives are established in prefectures which did not exist till then.
- **2005:** The Public Special Service of Greek Government’s Prime Minister, Ministers and General Secretary Archives (founded by the Law 2846/2000) was incorporated into the Central Service of the General State Archives of Greece.

[Legal framework governing the access to archives]

- The access to archives and records is governed by the disposals of a number of legal texts.
- In Greece, the right to access to information is first and foremost declared in Article 5a (1) of the Constitution of Greece, as it has been amended in 2008.
- “Everyone has the right to information as specified by law. Restrictions on this right may be imposed by law only if is absolutely necessary and justified for reasons of national security, combat crime or of protecting the rights and interests of third persons”.

[Legal framework governing the access to archives]

- N. 1946/1991 (General State Archives law)
- N. 1599/1986 (State –citizen relations)
- N. 2690/1999 (Ratification of Code of Administrative Procedure)
- N. 2472/1997 (Protection of individuals from personal data processing) and
- N.2846/2000 (Prime Minister, Deputy Ministers, and General Secretariats' of the Ministerial Council Archives)

Legal framework governing the access to archives

- The disposals concern the right of access to archives after their transfer to the services of the General State Archives.
- Some disposals of the law 2690 of 1999 concern the access to records held by in the services where they have been created.
- More precisely, the article 42 from the law 1946 of 1991, which refers to the study of archival documents kept in the General State Archives, prescribes a period of 30 years before archives can be released to the public. This period is however limited in cases where national interests or the protection of the private life of third persons are threatened.
- Access to archives or collections of documents acquired by donation is subjected to the conditions defined by the donor and, in some cases, to general or special disposals foreseen by the above-mentioned article 42.
- The law 2846 of 2000, concerning the "Archives of Prime Minister, Ministers, deputy ministers, and of the secretariat of the government" defines on the other hand, special periods after the expiration of which records are considered free of access.

Legal framework governing the access to archives

- There are some restrictive disposals on access to documents defined by the law 2472 of 1997, which concern the privacy and the protection of personal data. A balance between three rights constitutionally protected is looked for by this law : the right of the freedom for researching, of the right of access to information to as well as the right of privacy. From these disposals can be drawn a practice allowing the releasing of records containing personal data (for example the documents of the courts and the notarial documents) to those people concerned who can justify a legal right, and the scientific research in these archives, with the condition that the results do not reveal these data.
- Besides the General State Archives, a number of legal and moral entities which keep archives, such as political parties, political personalities, banks, collectors of literary documents. These archives can be inspected by the general State Archives.

[Legal framework]

The duties of the General State Archives (GSA) are regulated by the Law 1946/91. Restrictions posed by Personal Data Protection Authority are also kept.

2005: The Public Special Service of Greek Government's Prime Minister, Ministers and General Secretary Archives (founded by the Law 2846/2000) was incorporated into the Central Service of the General State Archives of Greece.

[What's more]

- Nowadays that free access to information constitutes a fundamental right, GSA does not just store and preserve documents but also manages information issued in different types of material. The GSA ensures the usability of its records by making them available in the Reading Room area. By participating in digitization projects it also manages to make the records available to the public via the Internet. It also serves the administration and the public.

[Reading room regulations]

- Access to the archives and collections kept at the General State Archives is free, according to the terms and limitations mentioned in Law 1946/1991.
Study of the archives may take place in the Reading Room of the General State Archives.
- At the Reading Room of the General State Archives, researchers will be provided with an Application form – Statement that they are required to complete by hand.
- Researchers' applications are required to be clear and to mention the specific material they wish to study. The application is subject to the approval of the Supervisor of the Reading Room or is referred to the Director for approval.
- Finding aids, such as catalogues and indexes of the archives kept at General State Archive, will be available to enable researchers locate the material they wish to study.

Remote access to archives

- General State Archives of Greece, both Central Service and Provincial Services, have been engaged in several digitization projects in order to provide remote access to their holdings.
- These projects, were funded by the EC, and resulted in more than 7.000.000 digital documents.
- Access to these digital collections is facilitated by archival portals both at national and European level.
- @ρχειομνήμων, is a new archival document management system, which serves as a centralized database where all the archives disposed to both the Central Agency and the Provincial Archives will be stored and made accessible to the public.

[APENET (Archives Portal of Europe on the Internet)]

APENET (Archives Portal of Europe on the Internet)

- Within the scope of the five priority actions determined by the European Council, the European Archivists Group (EAG) decided to proceed with the cooperation of the EContentPlus program, whose main goal is to make the digital content in Europe accessible and exploitable.
The implementation of the APENET (Archives Portal of Europe on the Internet) project is scheduled as part of the EContentPlus program and it aims to create a network between the European Archives. This network, through an internet portal and being technically and organically compatible and searchable through the European Digital Library, will be able to provide online access to:
 - a) search engines that cover millions of digitized documents
 - b) access to the actual digitized documents that are documented by the above mentioned search engines
 - e) information services for archive sources, archives, archive organizations or institutions of cultural nature or other that have archive collections available

[Physical access]

- Two accessible workstations equipped with assistive technologies for people with visual impairments and motor disabilities.

Society of Greek Archivists

www.eae.org.gr/

- The Society of Greek Archivists has long been concerned with the issues of access to archives and records, therefore participated in international meetings of the International Council on Archives, organized seminars or workshops and informed the Greek community through archival publications.

[What's more]

Nowadays that free access to information constitutes a fundamental right, GSA does not just store and preserve documents but also manages information issued in different types of material. The GSA ensures the usability of its records by making them available in the Reading Room area. By participating in digitization projects it also manages to make the records available to the public via the Internet. It also serves the administration and the public.

Digitisation 1/3

Operational Program IS 'Information Society' - Invitation Nr. 65

“Developing and Distributing Integrated Digital Collections of Cultural Information in the General State Archives (Central Service)”

- Project's Budget: 650,000 Euros
The project is 80% financed by the European Fund of Regional Development (EFRD) and 20% by national resources.

Implementation Period: July 2004 - September 2008

Object

Digitalization, documentation and promotion of three digital collections of the General State Archive Central Services:

- **The archives of the Greek Revolution** (1834-1865), applications and honorary awards to soldiers of the 1821 Revolution (takes: 35,367 pages, documentation: 23,095 XML files)
- **The archives of the Greek communities of Asia Minor** (1682-1928): codices, firmans, beratia, patriarchal letters (takes: 65,000 pages, documentation: 654 XML files)
- **Engravings – Maps** (17th-20th centuries): 475 documents (takes: 680, documentation: 658 XML files)

[Digitisation 2/3]

Invitation Nr. 152

- This project involved the development of an archives management system (@ρχειομνήμων) and the implementation in the GSA. The new system will serve as a centralized database where all the archives disposed to both the Central Agency and the Provincial Archives will be stored and made accessible to the public.
- It also involved the digitization of archives from all the Services of GSA (Central Service and Provincial Services) **7 million documents in total.**

Digitisation 3/3 (@ρχειομνήμων)

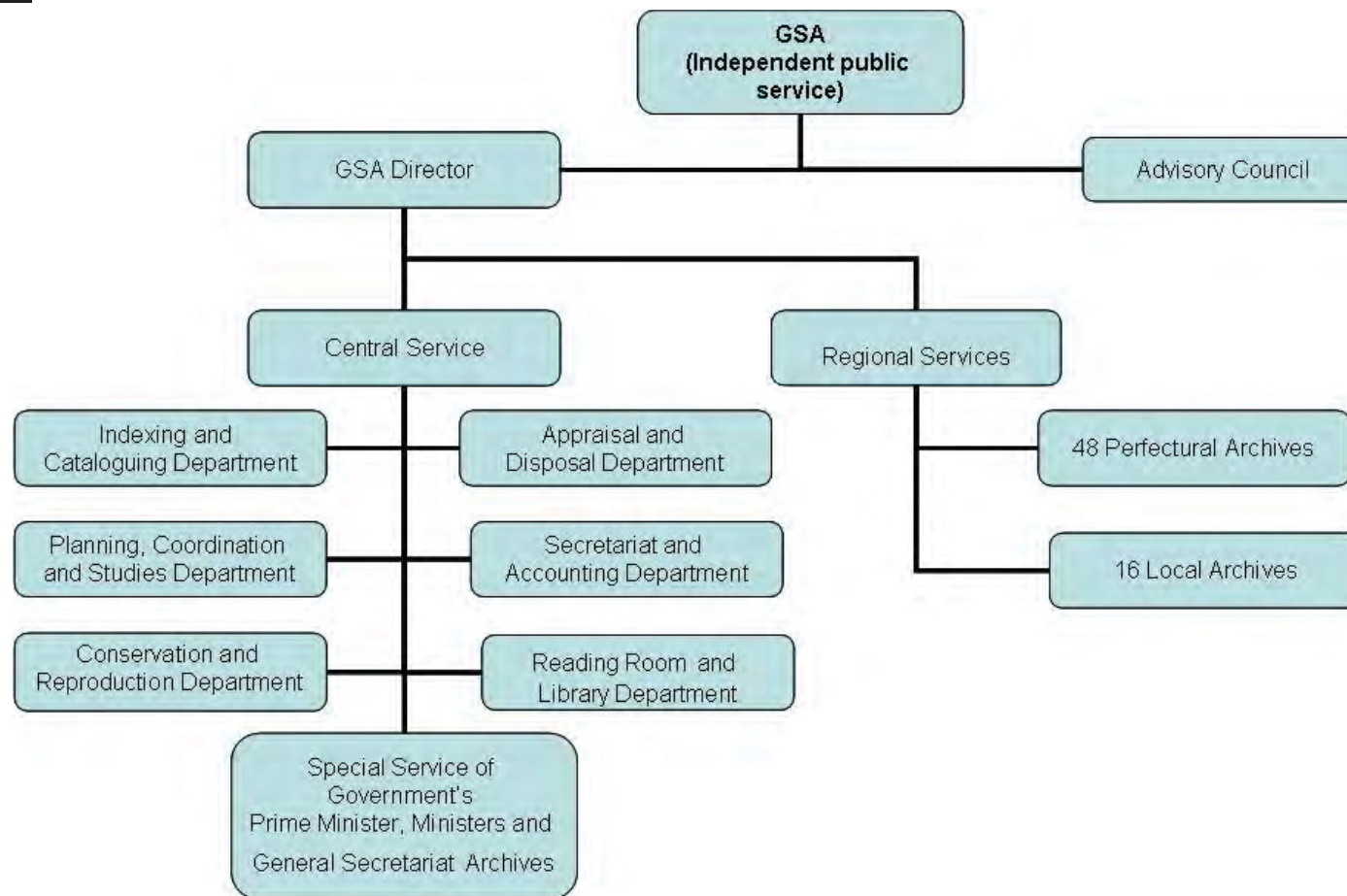


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Organisational chart

(Central Service, Athens)



[General State Archives]

(Central Service, Athens)

The building that houses the GSA was delivered to the Central Service in 2003. The construction, 6.500 m² in total is structured in 6 split levels (A-F, beginning from the lowest): the main entrance was placed on level D together with the reception area and the customer service area, the conference room and some of the offices. Level E, which is in the form of an entresol of open balconies overlooking level D, houses the rest of the offices and the canteen. Level F houses the Reading Room and the Library, as well as the Directorate's offices.

The repositories are situated on levels A, B and C. Level A is in the basement and has a specially shielded area for the security of valuable documents, a large document storage area (745 m²) and the electrical-mechanical facilities.

General State Archives (Central Service, Athens)



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[Reading Room and Library]

(Central Service, Athens)

The reading room and library area (level F) are situated in privileged location in the building with a view overlooking the city of Athens.

The reading room has a capacity for 70 persons. 5 microfilm reader printer positions have been installed, as well as 10 positions equipped with computers that are linked to the General State Archive's network. All the study tables have outlets so that researchers may use their laptops. There is also a special map and design study table in the reading room.

[Approximately 8.000 titles]

Reading Room (Central Service, Athens)



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Library (Central Service, Athens)



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Library (Central Service, Athens)



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Repositories (Central Service, Athens)



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Repositories (Central Service, Athens)



Conference Room (Central Service, Athens)



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[Conservation Department]

(Central Service, Athens)

- The Conservation Department is responsible for the preservation of the collections of the GSA, through preventive and interventive conservation, aiming at safe study, storage or exhibition of the material. Studios are well equipped, including mass conservation treatment facilities (disinfestation chamber, leaf-casting machine, etc.).
- Conservation is based on minimal intervention, critical assessment and decisions, respecting the integrity and the values of every object. Lately, the Department has established scientific research projects dedicated to the systematic documentation of materials of special interest.

Conservation Department (Central Service, Athens)



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Conservation Department (Central Service, Athens)



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General State Archives in Cefalonia



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General State Archives of Greece - Planning,
Coordination and Studies Department

Repositories (Cefalonia)



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General State Archives in Corfu



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Reading Room (Corfu)



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General State Archives of Greece - Planning,
Coordination and Studies Department

Repositories (Corfu)



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General State Archives in Heraklion



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General State Archives of Greece - Planning,
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General State Archives in Larissa



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General State Archives of Greece - Planning,
Coordination and Studies Department

Repositories (Larissa)



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General State Archives in Volos



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General State Archives of Greece - Planning,
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Reading Room (Volos)



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General State Archives in Hydra



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GSA Main activities:

Publications

The GSA issue numerous types of publications intended for the public:

- guides
- inventories
- historical and archival studies
- albums

All of these publications aim at facilitating research in archives.

GSA Main activities:

International participation 1/2

- **International Council on Archives (ICA)**
<http://www.ica.org/>
- **European Board of National Archivists (EBNA)**
- **European Archives Group (EAG)**
- **DLM (Digital LifecycleManagement) FORUM**
http://ec.europa.eu/transparency/archival_policy/dlm_forum/index_en.htm
<http://dlmforum.typepad.com/>
- **European Legal Database – Euronomos**
- **APEnet – European Portal of Archives**

GSA Main activities:

International participation 2/2

APENET (Archives Portal of Europe on the Internet)

Within the scope of the five priority actions determined by the European Council, the European Archivists Group (EAG) decided to proceed with the cooperation of the EContentPlus program, whose main goal is to make the digital content in Europe accessible and exploitable.

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- a) search engines that cover millions of digitized documents
- b) access to the actual digitized documents that are documented by the above mentioned search engines
- e) information services for archive sources, archives, archive organizations or institutions of cultural nature or other that have archive collections available

GSA Main activities:

Educational Programs

The Central Service of the GSA frequently receives demands for educational visits. Groups of school or university students, in the context of historical or archival classes, visit the building in Psychiko, are shown to its areas and are informed about the operation of the archival Service. There is regular cooperation with the following institutions:

- Varvakeios School (Experimental High School - Upper High School)
- Athens Technological Educational Institution
- University of Athens
- Open University **Visits by School - University students**

GSA Main activities:

Students' training

The Central Service of the GSA has been cooperating since 2004 with various University Departments in the field of providing student training. The students are mainly employed in the Department of General Index and in the Department of Library - Reading Room for periods between fifteen days to six months, in accordance to the specifications of each institution. In addition, there have been several instances of students, coming mainly from Ionion University and Athens Technical Educational Institution, who have opted to prepare their dissertation or postgraduate thesis using the archives and the support of GAS personnel.

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Planning, Coordination and Studies Department

- Head of the Department: Dr. Vassiliki Psimouli

Conservation Department

Secretariat and Accounting Department

- Head of the Department: Anna Tanouli

Reading Room and Library Department

- Head of the Department: Amalia Pappa

Special Service of Government's Prime Minister, Ministers and General Secretariat Archives

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