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***Archives and Society***

*Dr. Marietta Minotos*

*Director General*

*of the General State Archives of Greece*

**Α. The role of archives in their dimension**

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**Introduction**

First of all I would like to thank the organizers warmly for their invitation to participate to the EBNA meeting organized in Cyprus. I am very very glad also to be here in Cyprus. Special thanks I owe to my colleague and friend Ms. Parparinou the Director of the Cyprus State Archives and her colleagues for the welcome, the hospitality they offered us and the high level organization of the event. I am also grateful to the Government of Cyprus for the important presentation and welcoming. Also I am very happy to be in the same panel with Mr. Farrugia of the National Archives of Malta.

In my presentation I will begin with a short introduction in which I will stress some permanent characteristics of the archives in their dimension in order to show the continuity of the stable bond between them and the society that exists from the beginning of the creation of archives in the ancient past until today. Then I will make a reference to today circumstances that exist and mainly at the technological level that influence very much the management of archives and of course the daily duties of archivists. After these first remarks I will focus on the case of the GSA and specifically after a reference on mission, structure and legislation I will present to you in extent the **“extroversion”** policy of GSA with whose scientific, cultural and educational activities offer high level services to the scientific public and to the society as a whole.

#### Α. The role of archives in their dimension: *Knowing the past, serving and controlling the present and building a safe future*

#### “*Archives are the society’s memory and as such they belong to everyone*.” \*

I have chosen this phrase to begin with my presentation because I believe that it reflects the great dynamic that archives possess, their power that is preserved through the centuries regardless of the space and time and of the format.

#### From the ancient past until today the archives have been strongly related to the safeguarding of memory and the power of the value of proof.

#### The archives are produced mainly for administrative reasons and after this they obtain their historical dimension.

They have some basic and permanent functions such as to ensure rights, to participate in administration, to provide historical sources and to disseminate culture.

In general, the basic mission of the archives is to safeguard and preserve the public and private ‘tekmiria”( using a greek word), items, ensuring that people can discover, use, and learn from this documentary heritage.

Through the centuries the main sense of archiving – all the activities from creation and management to the use of documents and archives – remains the same: transmitting authentic evidence of human activity and experience through time.

Nowadays, archives continue to constitute a vital part of the cultural heritage of every country and the foundation for decision making in the Public Sector as well as the safeguarding of the citizens’ rights. They play a significant role in the field of historical research, cultural action, administrative information and the citizen’s service. These functions connect them directly with the society but also with political institutions since these functions are affected by the political and legislative framework of each country and reflect the quality of democracy at every level. They are directly connected with the policies applied for access to them and transparency. A definitive factor to the operation of archives is the development on the technological field. The archives have always been ever-changing but the changes have accelerated in the last decades during which the archives worldwide have undergone tremendous changes.

This technological revolution of recent years has brought electronic systems, networks and digitization to the forefront. These developments have served as a catalyst in many sectors of the professional and personal lives as a whole. We have all become fully aware that the general public has easier access to information.Archivists, par excellence the representatives of the scientific field whose primary aim is to classify, describe, manage, preserve, store and disseminate information, are confronted on a daily basis with these challenges and are called upon to meet them.

The decisive factor in the transition from the traditional manner of managing archival material to the new age of electronic archives, digital copies and in general, the dissemination ofinformation, is the policy of the country where the archival material is located and by extension, the policy of the organization that possesses it. There are, of course, the General Guidelines adopted by the International Bodies and served as prototype or as rules. The International Council on Archives plays the fundamental role in this field.

The contents of these archival functions had also changed dramatically by the end of the century. Changes are determined by society. Nowadays the archives have different requirements, way of thinking and values, they act and react differently as 30 years ago, i.e. they have a different philosophy.

The new philosophy can be described in a few words: globalisation, popularisation, transparency, respect of human rights, openness, market approach, media culture, information-centricity, IT revolution.

This has as a result all of the above that during the recent years an expansion of the target groups of archives is being observed at an international level as well as their general openness to the society.

In the contemporary information society, archives update their services making use of the new technologies with the aim of improving their communication with the people and their extroversion towards society. They digitize their valuable collections and display on the worldwide web their unique and extremely rare documents while at the same time they develop and offer services to people via internet.

All these changes are reflected on the policy of the ICA. Specifically, the recent Declaration in Oslo underlined the importance of the extroversion of archives and the offering of services to society.

In specific, the ICA delegates decided unanimously at their Annual General Meeting in Oslo, on 17 September 2010, to approve the text of the Universal Declaration on Archives. Developed by ICA/SPA ([Section of Professional Associations](http://new.ica.org/730/about-section-of-professional-associations-spa/about-spa.html)) on the model of the "[Déclaration québécoise des Archives](http://www.archivistes.qc.ca/declaration/index.html" \t "_blank)", the Universal declaration on Archives (UDA) sets out concisely the unique characteristics of archives and the management requirements to provide ongoing access for as long as the records are needed. It has been conceived as a basis for advocacy and promotion to support archives and the profession, and addresses a wide public.

The Declaration and UNESCO’s adoption of it is important because it gives world-wide recognition to the roles of archives and archivists in society:

as memory keepers, as instruments of transparency and accountability, for retaining corporate knowledge, and for informing future decision making.

The Declaration covers the many roles archives play in businesses, organizations, governments, and society in general. It also outlines how trained archivists support these roles.

[Good archives don’t just happen (the old adage junk in/junk out comes to mind); the Declaration shows the importance of having the right policies and laws, compliance, funding, and accessibility in order to fully support archives. The better the archives the better they are able to fulfil the important roles outlined in the Declaration.

I should point out that this Declaration mostly applies to an archives’ role with regards to records management. Not many people associate archives with records management, we are better known for our historical role. However, archives and records management are part of the same process, each equally important in ensuring the right information is available to the right people, at the right time.]

In each country the archival institutions and especially the National Archives hold the main role to collect the archives and to manage them in a way that they will promote their dynamic mentioned before. In specific they serve an important legal function in society. Archival institutions are generally legally constituted entities responsible for identifying, managing, and preserving the integrity of an institution's official records of long-term value. These activities prove the actions of the institution and provide essential protection for the institution's legal rights and those of its constituents or the general citizenry. Archival institutions enable legally constituted access to records, access that must also constantly address a range of legal concerns that become more pressing in the digital environment. These concerns include intellectual property, the privacy of individuals mentioned in materials, the conditions under which certain types of materials can be accessed and made available, and the protection of the integrity of digital materials from accidental or deliberate tampering. Concern for retaining the evidential value of records has placed the archival community at the vanguard of research and development in digital preservation and authentication. Archives are not merely the repositories of record in literal sense but they reflect the system of administrations and society in its totality.

The archivists play a significant role because they are the key persons between the archives and the society. They have an awareness of the societal, institutional, and individual construction of memory and an understanding of the implications of how that memory is represented and transmitted over time. This awareness becomes increasingly important as more of the world's collections are reformatted and represented online. It is also important for retaining evidence in time and over time, especially through digital preservation processes.

Β. GSA: SERVING THE SOCIETY

{I will pass very quickly in order to save some time}

Next in my presentation I will make a short reference to the general structure of GSA and a brief reference to their legislative framework so that you could follow more easily the analysis of the activities offered by GSA regarding the scientific community, the public and government administration and the society.

**Short Presentation**

The General State Archives (GSA) of Greece is an **independent public service** that reports to the Ministry of Education, Religious Affairs, Culture and Sports. GSA consists 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.

GSA preserve:

* Public archives (archives by public administration)
* Private archives (persons, families)
* Notarial archives
* Educational archives
* Ecclesiastical archives

**Mission**

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

1. protect,
2. preserve and
3. 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).

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.

**Structure**

According to the law 1946/91 archival services are established in all the capitals of the prefectures. At the present the Central Service, 48 archival services at the capital of the **prefectures** and 16 local archives all over Greece. The responsibilities of the regional services are relevant to those of the Central Service. The Director of the GSA Central Service coordinates the activities of the Central and Regional Services with the purpose to design and plan activities that aim to cover the needs of the country’s archiving system and improvement of its functionality and performance. The Director also represents the international field of the General State Archives for national governmental archiving issues

There is a commission titled [Advisory Council](http://www.gak.gr/frontoffice/portal.asp?cpage=resource&cresrc=25&cnode=17&clang=1) (article 35). The Commission consists of nine members, of which eight members have certified experience in archiving issues and have published archiving researches and studies of the Medieval and Modern Greek history, while the ninth member is the Supervisor of the authorised department of the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs responsible for the General State Archives. The Director of the General State Archives also participates in the Advisory Council’s conferences as an originator, without a voting right. The term is a period of three years.

**Legislation**

* 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 Law2846/2000) was incorporated into the Central Service of the General State Archives of Greece.

**Serving the Society**

**Scientific aims**

One of the main purposes of G.S.A. is to collect public and private archives, to classify them and to produce finding aids with an ultimate goal their opening to research according to the valid legislative framework (1946/1991).

The constant policy of G.S.A. lies in the “**open archives”.** GSA, the Directorate and the Advisory Board in close collaboration with the Ministry of Education, Religious Affairs, Culture and Sports on a daily basis manage the matters of archives always according to the legal framework so that the quality of democracy and transparency are preserved. These decisions are applied with success by the high - level scientific personnel (equipped with theses on the field of archives’ sciences and history) manage the archival material with an ultimate goal to make access more and more easy. In parallel, on a daily basis, they elaborate the necessary finding aids which are available in the area of services and in many cases via internet.

In addition, information and the required documents, especially copies of court decisions, are very often provided to every citizen from the Juridical Archives.

The Central Service of the General State Archives of Greece has expanded and adapted its services in order to be equally accessible to people with disabilities (people with visual impairments and motor disabilities). More specifically, the Reading Room has been equipped with two accessible workstations for people with disabilities, including assistive technologies such as Braille display, Braille embosser, closed-circuit television, alternative keyboards and speech synthesis software. The webpage of the GSA allows the enlarging of its text size for facilitating users with visual impairments.

The public service “Archives of the Prime Minister, Ministers, Deputy Ministers and the Government’s General Secretariat” was incorporated as a “Special Service”

At this point I would like to stress that at GSA a special service operates since 2005 which according to the law collects material that regards the archives of the Prime Ministers. The public service “Archives of the Prime Minister, Ministers, Deputy Ministers and the Government’s General Secretariat” was incorporated as a “Special Service” in the *General State Archives* (National Archives of Greece) (Law 3391/2005). Besides the archive of the ex Prime –Minister Mr. K Simitis, during the recent years, the archives of the Prime Ministers Mr Georgios Papandreou, Mr. Pikramenos and Mr.Papademos have been deposited to our Service. I would also like to inform you that we are going to organize next year a very interesting conference and exhibition of archival material with the subject : Archives, Citizen and Politics.

**Digitization**

*Recently there have been completed great digititzation programmes at GSA and I will make a reference to them*

The archival collections kept in the State Archives are an integral part of our cultural heritage. The wealth of information included is impressive and encompasses every aspect of social, economic, scientific as well as every other activity of the nation.

Traditionally, access to that information – a legal right of every citizen – was possible only via the original copies, by visiting the location those copies are being kept. The use of original documents –occurring more often the greater their importance– and the inevitable damage caused, beyond normal aging of materials, poses another problem concerning their preservation.

This project reflects the coordinated effort of the Central and Local agencies of the General State Archives, within the framework of the co-funded actions of the Operational Program “Information Society” to provide access to digitized archival documents for the general public, making them available on the Internet, preserving the original documents.

Thirty seven State Archives participate in the project, offering original documents. Their dispersion throughout Greece is indicative of the variety and the chronological range covered by the archival documents.

A wealth of archival material was digitized that reaches 7,220,000 pages and dating from the 17th to the 20th century.

The necessary infrastructure for the creation of the widest possible network for access, presentation and use of digital copies, has been achieved by procuring and providing basic equipment for the recording as well as on-site and online access to the digitized material to all public archive departments throughout Greece.

The project is completed by an integrated software program for the management of archive data, specially designed to cover the variety of archival processes applied by the State Αchives throughout Greece. The immediate benefits are standardization and a more rapid digital processing of the archival material, resulting in faster availability of the archival information to the researchers using the archives, from a remote location, online/real-time, using the active websites infrastructure of the G.S.A.

To ensure international access to the digitized cultural content created within the framework of this project, a translation to the English language –and the language of the digitized original documents– is provided for the indexes and research tools for selected collections of archival documents, complying with the international archival standard ISAD(G).

All the aforementioned actions would not have the desired effect without publicizing, on a larger scale, the creation of digitized archival content by the General State Archives. The active promotion of this project, through events, information leaflets and the creation and distribution of multimedia products is the last but not least part of the general project.

The perspectives for continuing the creation and availability of digital content by the General State Archives are positive. The public Archives now have a powerful managerial tool for the digital material, educated manpower and the proper experience and infrastructure. Its meaningful participation in Information Society depends on the increase of contribution and participation on all levels.

**Website (www.gak.gr)**

A detailed website has been created for the Central Service and the Regional services in which the researcher/citizen has the possibility to get to know the history of the institution of GSA and all the activities at all levels. The website has information in the Greek and English languages and also a special section in which all the news are shown and the public of Greece and abroad can be informed. The most important thing, however, is the direct access to the archival material that has been digitized by the great digitization programmes. I have already referred briefly to the Digitization Programmes that were completed the previous years in GSA, in both the Central Service and the Regional services and contribute to the promotion of the valuable archival material and the direct contact and access of the public to the archives from a distance.

**Publications**

The Archive’s publications are valuable tools for educating the community about the archives, its holdings and services. They also can present and advertise the work of Archives and archivists to the wider public, and to those responsible for archives.

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.

At this point I would like to stress the very important work being done at the Regional Branches in the field of publications. Through these publications and utilizing the archival material the local history of each place is promoted and this is very important for the opening of the archives to the society.

You can find several examples on our website.

*Akropolis von Athen*

I mention one of the latest publications which consists of facsimile reproductions 21 unpublished texts that document the earliest (1834-1841) claim for the return of the Parthenon Sculptures.

**Educational Programs**

Schools’ Training

The General Index Department of the GSA Central Service (http://www.gak.gr ) at first and then the Organization and Studies Department in collaboration with the previous one as well as the Conservation and Reproduction Department are systematically occupied with issues of pupils’ and, especially, students’ training.

From 2004 (when the Service was transferred to the new building in Psychiko) up to day:

A. As far as Higher Education is concerned, 113 students have been trained in apprenticeship programmes for a period of time that ranges from fifteen days to six months on matters of preventive preservation and filing, as well as classification and indexing. During the apprenticeship, students are supervised on a regular basis and subsequently are evaluated by the Department personnel.

The collaborating institutions are:

* Ionion University (Corfu)
* Technological Educational Institution Of Athens- Department of Librarianship and
* Information Systems
* University of Athens
* University of Ioannina
* University of Thessaly
* Panteion University (Athens)

B. As far as Secondary Education is concerned, services of educational tour have been offered to hundreds of pupils in the archival Service. It is usually preceded by a short introductory speech and a video on the subject of the archival service. Pupils mainly come from schools of the region of Athens. Greater attendance of pupils occurs when periodic exhibitions of archival documents are organized in the Service and it is always realized on the initiative of teachers.

C. The related activities of GSA Central Service are systematically reflected on the Service website and in particular on the sections of Activities and Student’s Training (http://www.gak.gr/frontoffice/portal.asp?cpage=NODE&cnode=33&clang=1). There is going to be given particular emphasis on these sections in the context of the planned upgrading of the website (special visitors’ form) as well as the Newsletter that is in a planning stage.

D. Participation of the General State Archives of Greece to the project “Building an Expert Network for Promotion of Archives in Schools in Balkan Region States”

Departmental Archives OF Euboea: A Case Study

“Back to School! Educational projects of the GSA – departmental Archives of Euboea”

Of particular importance among the activities carried out by archival institutions are those relating to the use of archival material in the educational process. At the same time, this role also serves a series of goals intrinsic to the educational process itself. In order to learn to think in historical terms, students need to become familiar with the methods of history as a discipline. Using archival material is ideal for this purpose.

The educational programmes run by the General State Archives – Departmental Archives of Euboea have been developed within this overall general context. They are aimed at pupils and students from all levels of education and are adapted to both students’ ages and skills. They cover various subject areas, activities, workshops with relevant publications available. They are also accompanied by small-scale exhibitions of archival material -which frequently travel around-as well as multimedia, hypermedia and web applications which students themselves can use to create new content. Some applications are also available for other target groups.

Certain educational programmes are developed to order depending on the specific eeds of individual schools. The educational programmes run by the GSA of Euboea alson include seminars and workshops for teachers in primary and secondary education.

Hydra Museum Historical Archives (ΙΑΜΥ)

The educational program aims at students of all levels of education, and is entitled as "THE STREETS OF THE SEA" theme which is absolutely related to the island environment of our country and its long maritime history.

**Cultural Activities**

At this point I would like to mention that some months ago the Central Service realized a purpose that had had for many years to install one piece of art and specifically a sculpture at the outside area of the building which is very impressive and created by a famous Greek sculptor. With this action we want to establish a bridge “between” archives and the society and to use this piece of art as a reference, as a symbol of culture for our archives. This sculpture is “speaking” easier with the citizen and combines the archives with art under the umbrella of culture. This sculpture is combined in a great way with the modern building we have and represents the three circles of life of the archives (more details on [www.gak.gr](http://www.gak.gr)).

**"***When Archives and Art meet***"**

In particular, on Monday 11th of June 2012 the event organized by the General State Archives (G.S.A.), the G. Zongolopoulos Foundation and OKAPA of the Municipality of Filothei-Psychiko was held with great success on the occasion of the International Day of Archives and the installation of a sculpture created by George Zongolopoulos in the surrounding area of the main entrance of G.S.A. Central Service building.

The sculpture was exhibited in Zoumboulakis gallery in 1979 and at the entrance of the Athens Concert Hall during the retrospective exhibition dedicated to G. Zongolopoulos in November 2008 - January 2009. It is made of stainless steel and it consists of three circles with chords moving with the aid of water within the boundaries of the framework that sustains them.

An exhibition of architectural drawings and sculpture works of the artist, from the collections of the General State Archives and the G. Zongolopoulos Foundation accompanied by a projection of photographs of the sculptures by G. Zongolopoulos which have been placed in public areas and important buildings in Greece and abroad presented at the opening event of the sculpture installation.

During the event, speeches have been delivered by: Nikos Karapidakis - President of the Advisory Council of the General State Archives, Marietta Minotos - Director of the General State Archives, Nikos Theodoridis, President of the G. Zongolopoulos Foundation, Maro-Adami-Kardamitsi Professor Emeritus of the N.T.U.A., also in charge of the Modern Greek Architecture of the Benaki Museum and Thanassis Moutsopoulos - Art historian.

Hydra Museum Historical Archives

Hydra Museum Historical Archives (ΙΑΜΥ) are visited by many Greeks and foreigners on a daily basis. Visitors may admire 19th century paintings of considerable artistic value and many objects from the Hellenic War of Independence (1821) to which the island of Hydra played a major role, valuable documents such as letters by Ioannis Kapodistrias and other philellenists (Friends of the Greek People), various documents, traditional costumes of the time, navigation instruments, cannons, wood carved akrostolia (figureheads), lithographic impressions representing the Hellenic fleet in the 19th and 20th centuries and rich photographic material detailing the history of an island whose long maritime tradition and history are still attracting contemporary visitors.

The Historical Archives possess a wealth of material for historians and researchers.  As regards manuscript documents, the Archives hold 17.000 to which must be added 122, handwritten in their majority, codes and community records with details of the period from the mid-18th to the end of the 19th century

**Exhibitions**

Exhibitions for archives display and interpret archival material to inform or educate the visitor. Exhibitions provide a vehicle for archives to show off its collections and help fulfill the archives wider mission of encouraging public respect and appreciation for past achievements.

GSA most recent exhibition:

Hydra Museum-Historical Archives organise the photographical exhibition ***"Beyond White"*** by **Evgenia Koumandarou** (Duration: 8 September - 28 October 2012).

**International Participation**

GSA following its extrovert policy collaborates with international archival institutions and archival bodies having as an aim the promotion of the Greek cultural heritage and the creation of a network of communication and collaboration worldwide and an IT knowledge.

* International Council on Archives (ICA)   
  <http://www.ica.org/>
* European Board of National Archivists (ΕΒΝΑ)
* 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](http://www.gak.gr/frontoffice/_viewResource.asp?rid=57&cuser=&url=%2Ffrontoffice%2Fportal%2Easp%3Fcpage%3DRESOURCE%26cresrc%3D57%26cnode%3D28) – Euronomos
* APEnet – European Portal of Archives

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

* APEX - Archives Portal Europe – network of eXcellence

C. CONCLUSIONS

**To summarize, the Role of the Archival Services and I am specifically referring to the National Archives in a modern society is strongly related with the well functioning of Democracy** **through key functions**:

* They preserve the memory of society by constituting the sources of its individual and collective history
* They provide individuals and states with the evidence that enables them to justify their rights
* They enable citizens to exercise their right of access to official information and governments to account their actions
* They guarantee the well functioning of public and private, administrative and commercial organizations
* From opinion polls and other sources we know that members of the general public around the world value archives highly, associating archives with Memory and History.
* The public considers archives as part of the collective memory and as a source to learn about the past.

We as responsible keepers of archives owe to apply our purposes and to serve as a model in our country.

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### Internet Resources

* General State Archives, Greece <http://www.gak.gr>
* International Council on Archives <http://www,ica.org>
* EUAN, European Union Archive Network <http://www.euan.org/>

### DLM-Forum <http://europa.eu.int/historical_archives/dlm_forum/>

* «The Societal Role of Archives», URL: <http://www.clir.org/pubs/reports/pub89/role.html>
* «Recognition of the Importance of Archives in Society», URL: <http://www.transformingedmonton.ca/index.php/2011/12/13/recognition-of-the-importance-of-archives-in-society/>
* «Vision, Mission and Role of Archives in Society & Education», URL: <http://hp.gov.in/LAC/Archive/Vision,%20Mission%20and%20Role%20of%20Archives%20in%20Society%20and%20%20Education.aspx>
* «Report in the Society and Archives Survey», URL: <http://www.mybestdocs.com/barry-r-soc-arc-surv-report-030129toc.htm>