

RESOURCES OF THE SEJM ARCHIVES AND THEIR AVAILABILITY

The resources of the Sejm Archives, which constitute a department of the Sejm Library, comprise archive materials and non-archive documentation, generated and collected as a result of activities of the Sejm and its bodies, and of the Chancellery of the Sejm. The Archives also collect documentation generated as a result of activities of deputies' offices. The resources comprise primarily files (i.e. paper documents) in the form of minutes from the sittings of the Sejm, the Presidium of the Sejm, the National Assembly and the Sejm committees, records of arrangements made by the Council of Seniors, documentation of legal acts and resolutions of the Sejm, interpellations and questions of deputies, as well as the Sejm papers, stenographic reports from the sittings of the Sejm, etc. The Archives also have audio-video recordings of the sittings of the Sejm and audio recordings of the sittings of the Sejm committees and subcommittees.

The issues related to provision of archive materials in Poland are regulated by the *Act of 14 July 1983 on National Archive Resources* (consolidated text, Dz.U. [Journal of Laws] 2016 item 1506). Pursuant to its Article 16a, everyone shall have access to archive materials and the materials shall be made available either as originals or as copies. The Act limits the access to documents for users only if the documents contain statutorily protected information, including classified information, in order to protect personal interests or personal data, and also if the documents are in poor technical condition and must be protected against damage or destruction (Article 16b). In principle, there are no time constraints when providing the resources, but there is a group of archive materials the access to which is possible only after the expiry of a specific time defined in the Act.

It should be emphasized that archive materials are made available free-of-charge, unless additional costs related to their preparation are incurred, such as the costs of making photocopies, scans or copying the recorded documents. Detailed issues related to making available the collected archive materials are laid down in the *Ordinance of the Council of Ministers of 22 June 2011 on making available the archive materials in separate archives* (Dz.U. 2011 No 196 item 1161) and *Order No 7 of the Chief of the Chancellery of the Sejm of 18 February 2016 introducing the instruction on management of documentation at the Sejm Archives*.

Archive materials in the Sejm Archive are made available at a written request of the applicant with the consent of the Director of the Sejm Library, and if the materials include classified information – with the consent of the Chief of the Chancellery of the Sejm. Apart from contact details, the applicant should also define the type of documentation that he/she is interested in (e.g. minutes of the meetings of the Sejm committees, legal opinions, etc.) or define the subject and thematic scope of search, as well as the suggested method of documentation provision.

The documents can be made available directly on site, i.e. in the reading room of the Archives. The user can then directly look through documents. The user may also request for a copy or only for information included in the documentation. In special cases, with the consent of the Director of the Sejm Library, documentation may be taken out of the premises of the archives. The materials that cannot be taken out of the premises include the materials which the organisational unit providing the documentation defined as classified in this regard, materials including confidential information protected by the law, as well as damaged files, audio and audio-video recordings.

The requests of deputies and persons acting on their behalf are served first.

When performing search queries the users may also use the Sejm online databases (biblioteka.sejm.gov.pl up to 1991 and sejm.gov.pl since 1991) which provide information about the legislative procedure of submitted draft acts, information about deputies and some documents in the form of pdf files, generated during the work of the Sejm.

The work is also pending on creating the “Sejm Archives” database at biblioteka.sejm.gov.pl with detailed information about the resources of the Archives.