

National Archives of the Netherlands
Ministry of Education, Culture and Science

THEFT IN ARCHIVES

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LIBER Collection
Security Conference

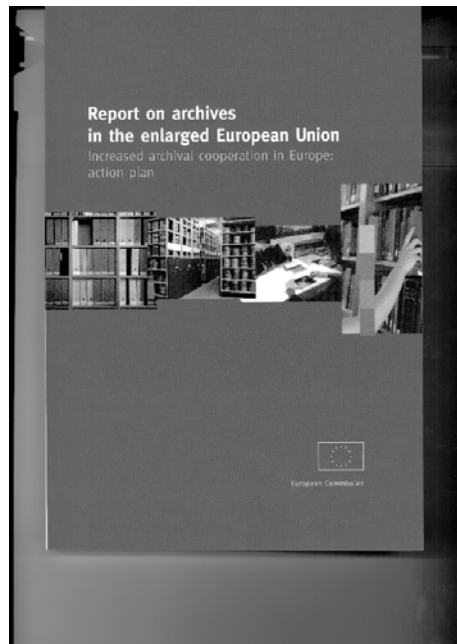
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THEFT IN ARCHIVES – A EUROPEAN PROJECT

**2004: SURVEY ARCHIVES DE FRANCE
EBNA-MEETING THE HAGUE**

2005:



REPORT ON ARCHIVES



EUROPEAN UNION

COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION OF 14-11-2005

ON PRIORITY ACTIONS TO INCREASE
COOPERATION IN THE FIELD OF ARCHIVES IN EUROPE

RECOMMENDATION 5:

ADOPTION OF MEASURES TO PREVENT THE THEFT OF ARCHIVAL DOCUMENTS

Development of an action plan and common guidelines by the National Archives: exchange of information and best practices to combat theft and facilitate recovery of stolen documents



EBNA/EAG WORKING GROUP

2005-2008

**SWEDEN (chair), ESTONIA, FRANCE,
THE NETHERLANDS, POLAND, SPAIN,
UNITED KINGDOM**



RESULTS

2007: Report Stealing from archives

2008: Principles and practical guidance

2008: Declaration on the prevention of theft in archives and fight against their illegal trade



1. REPORT

- TO WHICH EXTENT IS THEFT A PROBLEM TO ARCHIVAL INSTITUTIONS?
- WHAT IS THE NATURE OF THE PROBLEM?
- WHICH MEASURES HAVE BEEN TAKEN TO DEAL WITH IT?



- QUESTIONNAIRE

- TO NATIONAL ARCHIVES IN 25 COUNTRIES**
- FOR DISTRIBUTION TO NO MORE THAN 15 REPRESENTATIVE ARCHIVAL INSTITUTIONS**

REPLIES RECEIVED

- 190 IN ALL; 96 DETAILED REPLIES**



- REPORT: NUMBER OF THEFTS

THEFT PROBLEMS:

78 institutions(41%) of which 63 in the last 10 years

- CERTAIN THEFTS: 53 (28%) [90 c.]**
- SUSPECTED THEFTS: 33 (17%) [75 c.]**

But: 'impossible to say, figures are kept for missing material but there are other explanations for why it is missing'



- REPORT: WHAT GETS STOLEN

AUTOGRAPHS	(in 14 institutions)
PHILATELIC MATERIAL	(in 11 institutions)
MAPS	(in 10 institutions)
OWNERSHIP TITLES	(in 9 institutions)
GENEOLOGY	(in 3 institutions)
SEALS	(in 3 institutions)
SUNDRY	(in 33 institutions)



- REPORT: DISCOVERY

- WHEN?	Within a month:	19 (12%)
	Within a year:	41 (24%)
	After more than a year:	48 (29%)
	Not known:	37 (22%)
- HOW?	Thief caught redhanded:	8 (9%)
	Own staff / visitors:	47 (52%)
	In connection with sale:	16 (18%)
	External agent:	20 (22%)
	Returned voluntary	3 (6%)



- REPORT: RECOVERY

- **EXTENT?**

Returned:	36 (40%)
Partly returned:	14 (16%)
Not returned:	37 (41%)

- **HOW?**

Caught in the act:	5 (10%)
Institution staff:	15 (30%)
Police:	15 (30%)
At time of sale:	14 (28%)



- REPORT: THE THIEF

FULLY IDENTIFIED: 51 (57%)

26% robbed more than once in more than one institution

MOTIVES: money (80 out of 90 thefts)

- * sell on the open market

- * retain as investment

- * blackmail

status

political reasons

behavioural disorder



- REPORT: THE THEFT

Theft most commonly takes place:

- DURING DAYTIME

FROM ARCHIVAL INSTITUTIONS' READING ROOMS

OR

- BY STAFF WITH ACCESS TO ARCHIVAL STORAGE AREAS



- REPORT: SECURITY

MEASURES DIRECTED AT:

- THE PUBLIC All institutions
- STAFF 54%
 - * Limited access
 - * Ban on dealing in archival documents



2. PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICAL GUIDANCE

PRINCIPLES:

**RISK ASSESSMENT AND LOSS PREVENTION
AWARENESS**

PROTECTION AND SUPERVISION

**PROTECTION OF RECORDS BY SECURITY AND
READING ROOM STAFF**

PROTECTION THROUGH PHYSICAL SECURITY

PRACTICAL GUIDANCE

ON RULES AND PROCEDURES FOR READING ROOMS



3. DECLARATION

European symposium:

Roubaix 20-21 November 2008

**A DECLARATION ON THE PREVENTION OF
THEFT AND THE FIGHT AGAINST THEIR
ILLEGAL TRADE**

**was adopted by Heads of the National
Archives of 27 Member States**



3. DECLARATION: RECOMMENDS

- MEASURES TO IMPROVE SECURITY OF ARCHIVAL DOCUMENTS**
- MEASURES TO PROMOTE COOPERATION ON THE RESTITUTION OF STOLEN ARCHIVES**



MORE INFORMATION

On the European Union and archival policy:

http://ec.europa.eu/archival-policy/eur_arch_group/index_en.htm

On measures to prevent theft:

http://ec.europa.eu/archival-policy/eur_arch_group/prevent_en.htm

Here can found the texts (in PDF format) of

- **Report Theft in archives**
- **Principles and practical guidance**
- **Declaration on the prevention of theft in archives and fight against their illegal trade**