

*Preface of the first edition of July 1997*

Since its foundation in 1992, the Section of archives and archivists of parliaments and political parties in the International Council on Archives (SPP/ICA) in several conferences has tried to strengthen the importance of the archives of parliaments and political parties in general awareness, in the respective organisations or institutions as well as in the interested public. The knowledge and the building up of record groups of parties, parliaments and their representatives should also be supported with the aim of reaching equal standards in qualified archives' methods.

In March 1993 in Rome and in November 1994 in Prague, the Section of archives and archivists of parliaments and political parties in the International Council on Archives dealt with parliaments, political parties and their archives. During its annual meeting in Budapest 1995, the Section directed its attention to the link between the political parties and parliaments, the parliamentary groups, which are often called "Political parties within the Parliament".<sup>1</sup>

This inventory on personal papers and deposits of members of the European Parliament in European archives is a preliminary result for the guidance of those who are dealing with the history of the European integration.

This overview is based on a survey of the Section of January 1997 to more than 40 non-state archives in the member states of the European Parliament. The state archives were initially excluded in this survey because they are generally responsible for the state records. Their financing also is certain while the financial status of those organisations and institutions which keep non-state current records as of political parties, parliamentary groups and their representatives

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<sup>1</sup> La memoria del Parlamento. Archivi storici parlamentari: teoria ed esperienze in Europa. Rom 1994. Das Gedächtnis der Parteien/The memory of the parties. Parteiarchive in Europa/Party archives in Europe. Hg.v. Günter Buchstab. Sankt Augustin 1996. "Parteien im Parlament"/"Parties in Parliament". Fraktionsakten in europäischen Partei- and Parlamentsarchiven/Records of parliamentary groups in European archives of parties and parliaments. Hg.v. Günter Buchstab. Sankt Augustin 1997.

could definitely be improved. One of the aims of the Section is to support these archives in their efforts and to initiate improvements to their financing.

The response to this survey was very varied; we were at least informed of the existence of 149 record groups. The situation in Germany appears very positive, where the appropriate archives of the political foundations deal professionally with the acquisition and the archival processing of documents of members of the European Parliament and of its parliamentary records (altogether 85 personal papers and deposits, 4 record groups with parliamentary documents). In Belgium and the United Kingdom central archives keeping party documents also work very effectively. Only few responses came from Italy, Denmark, Spain, the Netherlands, and no response came from France, Greece, Ireland, Luxembourg and Portugal. The archives in Austria, Finland and Sweden were not included in the survey because of their short membership in the European Union.

I would like to thank Dr. Reinhard Schreiner for the publication of this volume.

Sankt Augustin in July 1997

Dr. Günter Buchstab

(Chairman of the Section of archives and archivists of parliaments and political parties in the International Council on Archives, 1992-2000)