

National Coordination of the Preservation of the Originals of the Written Cultural Heritage in Archives and Libraries – Background, Findings, Perspectives

How is the preservation of the written cultural heritage in Germany anchored politically?

Culture, science and education are organised federally in Germany. The Länder (States) are responsible for these. Due to arrangements, the federal government and the Länder can work together in cases of national importance such as research, education and teaching.

- Kultusministerkonferenz, Empfehlungen 1993/1995 (**Conference of Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs, Recommendations 1993/1995**): Cultural-political impetus against paper deterioration by the KMK-Empfehlungen für Bibliotheken (1993) und Archive (1995) (KMK Recommendations for Libraries (1993) and Archives (1995))
- Empfehlungen der Enquete-Kommission „Kultur in Deutschland“ des Bundestags, 2007 (**Recommendations of the Committee of Enquiry “Culture in Germany” of the German Parliament, 2007**): Development of a national conservation concept for endangered written cultural heritage by the Federation and the States, setting up a funding programme by the German Government to physically save cultural heritage
- Allianz Schriftliches Kulturgut Erhalten, 2009 (**Alliance for the Preservation of the Written Cultural Heritage, 2009**): Memorandum „Zukunft bewahren“ (Preserving the Future) as a specialist interpretation of the Enquiry’s recommendations
- **Coalition Contract at Federal Level, 2009**: National conservation concept and the establishment of a coordination office
- Beauftragter der Bundesregierung für Kultur und Medien (BKM), Kulturstiftung der Länder (KSL) und Kultusministerkonferenz (KMK), 2011 (**The German Government’s Representative for Culture and Media (BKM), Cultural Foundation of the States (KSL) and the Conference of Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs (KMK), 2011**): The foundation of the Koordinierungsstelle für die Erhaltung des schriftlichen Kulturguts (KEK), attached to the Berlin State Library – Prussian Cultural Heritage Foundation
- **Coalition contract at Federal Level, 2013**: The preservation of originals is registered as a collective national task
- **6th Cultural-Political Summit Talk, October 2016**: “It is commonly understood that the written records in archives and libraries, in addition to digitisation, remain an essential integral part of the national identity. Therefore we are to work together to ensure their preservation.”
- **The German Government’s Representative for Culture and Media, November 2016**: “Next year, we can support the preservation of the originals of the written cultural heritage for the first time with a budget of 1 million euros.”

How was the KEK able to structure conservation through national coordination?

- Funding of a total of **188 model projects** in the pilot phase (2010–2015), investment of 2.4 million euros in infrastructural measures, conservation measures to save objects and public relations
- Strengthening of **exchange among memory institutions (archives and libraries) and disciplines**
 - Designation of national networks of experts by the ministries
 - Initiation of closed-door meetings of the national committees for conservation
- Publication of the **„Bundesweite Handlungsempfehlungen“ (National Recommendations for Action)** on the basis of a national inventory (2015)

Central statements:

- Deployment of 63.2 million euros to save at least 1 per cent of the endangered or damaged written cultural heritage per year
- Increase in staffing levels to carry out the continuous task of conservation

- Establishment of a corresponding Federal-State funding programme

What are the specific tasks and aims up to 2020?

- The continuation of the KEK is ensured by the political authorities up to 2020. The **development of an overall strategy** for the national coordination of the preservation of the originals of the written cultural heritage focuses on three levels:
- **Infrastructural measures:**
 - Improvement of the data situation (inclusion of non-public actors, transparency of stored provenances, documentation of conservation measures)
 - Further development and standardisation of technical processes, in particular mass deacidification
 - Examination of the efficiency of the development of infrastructures
 - Strengthening of networks (education and training etc.)
- **Object-related measures:**
 - Investment in preventive measures
 - Mass deacidification
 - Conservation
 - Accompanying research
- **Cultural-political measures:**
 - Raising public awareness for the preservation of the written cultural heritage, for example with a stronger online presence
 - Mediation between those responsible in politics and professional circles



28th April 2009
Allianz Schriftliches Kulturgut Erhalten
hands over the memorandum „Zukunft
bewahren“ to the Federal President Horst Köhler

Advisory Board of the KEK:

Dr. Michael Hollmann, President of the German Federal Archives, Chairman of the Advisory Board
 Prof. Dr. Thomas Bürger, General Director of the Saxon State and University Library Dresden, Deputy Chairman of the Advisory Board
 Dr. Ernst Otto Bräunche, Director of the City Archiv of Karlsruhe
 Prof. Dr. Mario Glauert, Deputy Head of the Brandenburg State Archives
 Dr. Alessandra Sorbello Staub, Head of the Library of the Fulda Faculty of Theology

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