

---

## THE DOCUMENTATION OF COMMUNIST SECURITY AUTHORITIES

Warsaw, 4 - 5 October 2012

---

**Announcement**  
**of the 12th International Conference from the series *Colloquia Jerzy Skowronek dedicata***  
**organised in Warsaw on 4-5 October 2012**  
**concerning**  
***Documentation of Communist Security Authorities***

The academic conferences of the state archives of Central and Eastern Europe were initiated in 1995 by the chief directors of the State Archives of Poland and Russia, Professors Jerzy Skowronek and Vladimir Petrovich Kozlov. The scope of recent political transformations has forced the archives of this region to face many challenges, and rising to confront them was to be made easier by entering into cooperation and by exchanging information about the experiences of the archivists. The problems raised by the previous eleven conferences, organised from 1995 to 2005, included issues of the role of archives facing legal and political transformations following the fall of the communist system in Central and Eastern Europe; the problems facing archives and archival records of the Party, private sector archives and those of international organisations; the common archival heritage of the states and nations of Central and Eastern Europe; the place of archives in an information society and the challenges faced in light of the introduction of new information technologies into archival practice.

The subject of this year's conference, which was prepared by the Head Office of the State Archives in cooperation with the Institute of National Remembrance, were the problems connected to the collection, analysis and granting of access to documentation created by security forces, the main security authorities in countries with authoritarian and totalitarian regimes. This is a phenomenon of a worldwide scope, which has been experienced by countries lying on some of the continents. The significance of this documentation for the process of the democratisation of many societies and the need for compensation of the wrongs committed by repressive regimes results in the necessity of astute research into the legal regulations and the organisation of the functioning of institutes responsible for such documentation. Such problems were for the first time addressed in reference to representatives of different types of such repressive regimes. The situations in Spain and Portugal were also subjects of deliberation, alongside similar issues encountered by countries of the former Eastern Bloc.

Over 70 people participated in the conference, which on the first day took place in the Head Office of the State Archives, and on the second – in the Institute of National Remembrance. The participants were from the following countries: the Czech Republic, Estonia, Spain, Lithuania, Latvia, Germany, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia and the Ukraine.

The conclusions reached during the conference may be summarised as follows:

- the records of the security authorities of former repressive regimes are important testimony to the history of states and nations subjected to the power of authoritarian regimes,
- the knowledge on these records develops better understanding of the nature of these regimes and contributes to the strengthening of democratic attitudes of authorities and society,
- such records constitutes an integral part of national archival holdings,
- such records should be treated analogically to all other records which are classified as being archival material,
- the collection and analysis of records should be conducted in accordance with archival principles,
- legal regulations determining the basis and scope of access to such documentation should be improved in such a way that they ensure the widest possible access, especially in the case of academic research, and guarantee the respecting of the rights to privacy to victims of authoritarian regimes.

Acknowledging the value of creating a wider platform for establishing contacts and cooperation, the participants recognised the purposefulness of organizing further conferences in the “Colloquia Jerzy Skowronek dedicata” series. It was proposed that the meeting in 2013 be dedicated to the activities of archives in connection with electronic records and granting access to archival material over the Internet.