

## **AGREEMENTS REACHED AT THE LAST NATIONAL COUNCIL ON ARCHIVES AND RECORDS MANAGEMENT**

The National Council on Archives and Records Management of Catalonia finally took place on 12 December 2016. It met for the first time under the new name stipulated in Law 20/2015 amending Law 10/2001 on archives and records management and for the first time in the current legislature. We had been requesting since the beginning of the year an urgent meeting of the highest consultative body in the Catalan Archives System in order to address the delay in decision-making regarding archives. It was therefore absolutely necessary, but above all obligatory, given that the decree governing this body contemplates at least two meetings a year.

In the little over two hours it lasted, a number of issues were discussed, which we enumerate here. First of all, the current state of the Regional Archive Network was assessed, along with its rapid adaptation to the Transparency Act and to digital administration in order to provide services for Catalan local government. Another matter discussed were the two archives that are still to be built, one in L'Alta Ribagorça, the other in Les Garrigues, and the three-way issue of the archives in La Terra Alta, El Montsià and El Vallès Occidental that has yet to be resolved. Still on the table is the debate on the role of regional archives, understood as mere documentary heritage management centres and repositories or as centres for cooperation and regional promotion in records management, transparency and digital administration.

The meeting also included a review of action taken in regard to electronic document management at Catalan Government level with the implementation of the ARESTA project, the new appraisal tables approved by the CNAATD and the presentation of the document classification tables for Catalan local government. In this respect also on the table is the need for coordination meetings between the CNAATD, the GAIP and the APDCAT—in compliance with the Transparency Act—to be more frequent and effective to prevent confusion regarding access to information at Catalan Administration level. This trilateral has met on very few occasions since the Transparency Act was passed. This is wrong; procedures should be far more dynamic.

The basic lines of the Strategic Plan being drawn up by the National Archive and its new management for 2017 to 2020 were presented for the first time. It should be said that this is the first time in the last few Council meetings that the National Archive has addressed us all together regarding its aims and projects, which is to be welcomed. According to the presentation, the plan should be public knowledge within two months. This means we should know something more definite in February.

The meeting highlighted the commitment of the heads of the Catalan Archives System to the Transparent Governments Network and the National Agreement for a Digital Society. The AAC proposed joining the network at the June 2015 National Council, and this has finally happened. A plan is being drawn up in regard to records management for presentation at the network's plenary session. It

should be remembered that this network aims to comply fully with Catalan Transparency Act and includes the Ministry of Governance and Institutional Relations, the Catalan Open Government Consortium, the School of Public Administration of Catalonia, the provincial councils of Barcelona, Girona, Lleida and Tarragona and the municipalist associations (Catalan Association of Municipalities and the Federation of the Municipalities of Catalonia). In addition to defining common policy on transparency-oriented records management, we have always considered it strategic to participate actively. Just as it is strategic to participate in the National Agreement for a Digital Society. This second point was discussed at the National Council with the active participation of the director of the CAOC, the party responsible for the implementation of the National Agreement. The last editorial of last year discussed the National Agreement and its implications for Catalonia's digital transformation. During the National Council, the will of the Catalonia Ministry of Culture to take part in it was clearly expressed, as was the CAOC's undertaking not to sideline archives and records management.

Diagnosis was begun that will lead to the drawing up of a Strategic Plan for the Catalan Archives System in 2017. The AAC had also called for this plan on numerous occasions, with several denominations: shock plan, white paper and strategic plan. Finally, the way has opened up for the National Council standing committee to begin to outline the Catalan Archives System of the 21st century. Minister Santi Vila himself has openly expressed the need to review the System so that it exceeds the 2001 legal framework. Thus, the digital transformation comes also to the Catalan Archives System, and we hope that, effectively, with an open view, informing all actors, at the end of 2017 we will have a powerful, innovative roadmap that above all generates job opportunities and improves the lot of professionals. This decision leads to say right out that this National Council has been amongst the most important held to date. The fact that it was the National Council that proposed the drawing up of the strategic plan means it can go beyond electoral calendars so that work is done continually regardless of who is in power. According to what was said at the National Council, work meetings are set to begin this January. These meetings will be held under the auspices of the standing committee, which is henceforth to meet every two months instead of every three. It was also agreed that the National Council will be held every six months. So, we should be having another one in June with reports on how work is going on the drawing up of the strategic plan.

The AAC, naturally, will ensure that the plans set in motion in December enjoy the necessary continuity, ambition, analytical rigour and significance. The life cycle of the Catalan Archives System, designed under 20th-century paradigms, is at an end. It is time to design a new framework for the 21st century.