

In rivers confluence - Life on Slovak-Austrian border

“The ETC project „Memory without borders“. A multiplier for cross border cooperation of Slovak and Austrian Archives”

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The history of Austria and the Slovak Republic has many common characters. Those common properties were concealed for a fairly long time, for example because of the so called “Iron curtain”. Since the Middle-European countries joined the European Union those barriers disappeared and new room for a fertile cultural exchange have been established. The goal of “Memory without borders” as part of the European Union’s cross border cooperation program “Creating the future” between the Slovak Republic and Austria, is to strengthen the collaboration between Slovak and Austrian archives as well as give individual people of both countries the opportunity to get easy online access to written historical documents with the help of technical resources like digitization and new media. The project will accomplish a platform on its website www.crossborderarchives.eu, which is free of charge and will guaranty boundless and unlimited availability to important cultural assets to the interested public. Therefore the project portal stands for cross border access to written sources of formerly closely connected historical regions as a virtual memory without borders.

Numerous important documents and written historical sources of the border region Austria and the Slovak Republic are kept in the national, regional and clerical archives of both countries. These mutual historical sources compose an essential part of European cultural beneficiaries. Not only are they important for people living in the border regions but also for the wide public in general. The values of the documents for cultural and touristic activities – for example marketing activities in castles, churches, monasteries or even towns and cities – have been hardly promoted nor actively utilized in the past. As its first goal „Memory without borders“ offers the possibility of free online access and the border- and timeless utilization of written historical documents to the interested public.

Over the past few years irresistible transformations of archives have taken place, leading them onto a path into the digital future. No longer are they just purely information service providers

for analog documents but instead have changed into providers of digital materials. For this reason the second goal of “Memory without borders” is to cross national borders between Austrian and Slovak archives. The accomplishing of close cooperation between the archives should assure a strengthening of international networks between both countries in the field of archival work. The European Regional Development Fond (ERDF) contributes 85% of the project costs, 15% of financial input comes from national co- financing or equity capital of the partners.

With the help of many accompanied cultural offers like workshops, courses or guided tours in Slovak and Austrian archives, written documents can be experienced in an active way. The historical past of both countries comes back to life and can be rediscovered by the interested public.