

Foreign Ministry archives services of the European Union MEMBER STATES

ITALY

1. Full title of Foreign Ministry and of archives service

Ministero degli Affari esteri
Servizio Storico Archivi e Documentazione
Ufficio II - Archivio Storico Diplomatico

2. Contact details

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www.esteri.it – Documentazione - Servizio Storico Archivi e Documentazione

www.esteri.it – Documentazione - Commissione per la Pubblicazione dei Documenti Diplomatici Italiani

3. Summary of historical background of the archives service

In the Kingdom of Sardinia, the practice of regularly transferring documents from the Foreign Ministry to the State archives had gradually fallen into disuse by the time of Italian unification. Subsequently, successive ministers - notably Visconti Venosta - advocated keeping foreign policy documents in the Ministry.

In 1881 Minister Mancini issued a Decree setting up separate Ministerial archives, subdivided into ‘modern archives’ (containing records since 1861) and ‘old archives’ (earlier records). From 1884, the Ministry’s budget began to include sums earmarked for the operation of the archives service.

In 1886, Giacomo Gorrini was appointed director of the Ministry Archives and in the same year the archives of the missions of Sardinia and other States prior to unification were transferred to the Ministry.

The historical archives were officially established in 1902 and regulated in 1908. The ‘general holding archives’ came into being in 1924, where all current documents from the various departments were held for 10 years before transfer to the historical archives and sorting.

During the Second World War and immediately afterwards, the Ministerial archives suffered considerable damage and were widely dispersed. Nevertheless, from 1945, a group of archivists led by Ruggero Moscati devoted themselves to conserving and reorganizing the various series contained in the historical archives. One of the most notable provisions issued since then was the departmental regulation of 8 August 1953, signed by Under-Secretary Zoppi, on the reorganization of departmental archives for the period 1945-50.

As Office II, the Diplomatic Historical Archives are part of the Historical Service, Archives and Records which was established in its current form on January 1, 2000 (Presidential Decree 267 of 11.5.99). It includes the former functions of the office of the “archive committee” which now has an advisory role in establishing the general criteria to be followed by Office II (Diplomatic Historical Archives). It gives its advice on the general criteria for handling the archival material in the central offices of the Ministry, on transferring archival material from offices abroad to the Diplomatic Historical Archives, and on the selection and destruction of documents. However, the Diplomatic Historical Archives retains the task of collecting, preserving and sorting the records received from the central offices and from abroad, from the archival records of the Ministry and the original copies of international agreements as well as being open to the public consultation.

The Historical Service also includes Office I (Office for Studies) which is responsible for the volumes of the annual series “Texts and Documents on Italian Foreign Policy” and Office III (Library - Periodical Room) that handles its substantial book collection and the international subscriptions to 178 periodicals, many difficult to find, and is open to the public for consultation.

The “Committee for sorting and publishing Italian diplomatic documents” is composed of historians and experts appointed by Degree of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It constitutes a special section of the Secretary General of the Ministry (Coordinating Unit), under which it operates, and is responsible for the preparation and distribution of the volumes of the Italian Diplomatic Documents.

4. Physical access

Italian and foreign researchers may consult the Diplomatic Historical Archives (in the case of foreigners, provided reciprocal facilities are granted and on recommendation from their diplomatic representation). Researchers are asked to present a letter of recommendation from the university or institution to which they belong.

Opening hours: Monday to Friday 9.00 to 14.00

Closed: Saturdays, Sundays and public holidays. The archives are closed for about a month in summer and for few days at Christmas and Easter.

5. Practical facilities

- Consultation Room
- Two microfilms readers for public use.

Researchers can use a Consultation Room inside the historical archives building. They can also make use of the services of the Ministry library.

6. Reproduction of documents

The photocopying service is run by an outside company. The machines operate with magnetic cards. The current charge is € 0,10. In principle, photocopies may be made of any material that can be consulted. However, damaged, restored, bound or valuable documents may be excluded. In some cases, researchers may be given permission to copy documents using their own means of photo reproduction provided that a copy of the resulting microfilm is supplied to the archives.

7. Access regulations

Documents which are more than 50 years old can be consulted after authorization given by the director. In very exceptional cases, the Ministry may reduce the time-limit to 30 years. Documents relating to the private life of individuals may only be consulted after 70 years. The relevant rules were laid down in the Ministerial Decree 3880bis of June 24, 1972, Law 675 of December 31, 1996 and Decree 281 of July 30, 1999. Obviously, archives that have not yet been filed or which do not yet have adequate means of identification cannot be consulted. The same applies to very valuable documents which present conservation problems.

8. Concise description of the principal record groups and collections

The Diplomatic Historical Archives currently hold 15 linear kilometres of records. These are basically classified by origin, which is the system most groups have retained or reverted to. Some political series have been rearranged in alphabetical geographical order.

Some of the main groups are listed below.

Archives predating unification

- Secretariat of State, later Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Sardinia (1814-61), 30 linear metres.

- Sardinian legations: Vienna (1707-1859), 13 linear metres; London (1730-1860) 11 linear metres; St. Petersburg (1783-1861), 6 linear metres; Paris (1814-1861), 11 linear metres; Madrid (1814-1861), 6 linear metres; The Hague (1815-1861), 1 linear metre; Berne (1815-1861), 5 linear metres; Lisbon (1842-1861), 1 linear metre; Lima (19th century), 3 linear metres; Rio de Janeiro (19th century), 3 linear metres; Napoli (1844-1860); Washington (1848-1860); Rome (19th century), 5 linear metres.
- Diplomatic mission in Alexandria (Egypt) (1825-1861): 5 linear metres.
- Sardinian consulates (19th century): 57 linear metres.
- Tuscan diplomatic missions and consulates (1737- 1859): 66 linear metres.

Central Administration Archives of the Ministry

- Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Italy (1861- 1888), 132 linear metres.
- Treaties (1861 onwards): 40 linear metres.
- Telegrams series (1861 onwards): 428 linear metres.
- Published diplomatic documents (1861 onwards): 33 linear metres.
- "D" Series - Historical Archives Directorate (1861-1953): 12 linear metres.
- "Z" Series - Legal Department (Servizio del Contenzioso) (1861-1939) : 37 linear metres.
- Education archives (1861-1943): 500 linear metres.
- Secret Cabinet archives (1869-1914): 4 linear metres.
- Crispi Cabinet (1888-1891): 2 linear metres.
- Political Series "A" (1888-1891): 25 linear metres.
- Political Series "P" (1891-1916): 117 linear metres.
- Commissariat-General for Emigration (1901-1928): 20 linear metres.
- Tittoni - Pompili Cabinet (1904-1909): 1 linear metre.
- Reserved Cabinet archives (1910-1922): 16 linear metres.
- Sonnino Cabinet documents (1914-1919): 2 linear metres.
- Ordinary and Cabinet series (1915-1918): 66 linear metres.
- Central Arbitration Commission for Emigration (1915-1929): 20 linear metres.
- Peace conference archives (1919-1921): 66 linear metres.
- Conference archives (1916-1934): 60 linear metres.

- Political Affairs Series (1919-1930): 161 linear metres.
- Commercial Series (1919-1950): approximately 330 linear metres.
- Cabinet and Secretariat-General Archives (1923- 1943) : approximately 225 linear metres.
- Political Affairs Series (1931-1945): 350 linear metres.
- Reserved Secretariat-General Archives (1943-1947): 2 linear metres.
- Archives of the Foreign Ministry of Italian Social Republic (1943-1945): 40 linear metres.
- Political Affairs Series (1946-1950): 192 linear metres.
- Directorate-General for Political Affairs (1951-1957): 175 linear metres.

Diplomatic missions and consular archives

- Diplomatic missions: Berlin (1867-1943), 30 linear metres; London (1861-1950), 212 linear metres; Paris (1861-1950), 72 linear metres; St. Petersburg - Moscow (1861-1950), 57 linear metres; Vienna (1862-1938), 64 linear metres; Washington (1861-1941), 110 linear metres.
- Consular missions in the United States (1848-1960) 250 linear metres.

The diplomatic historical archives also keep:

- various records from the former Ministry of Italian Africa, covering the years 1859-1959 and totalling some 700 linear metres, they include: the historical archives of the Ministry of Italian Africa (ASMAI) (1857-1945); the historical archives of the Ministry of Italian Africa - Miscellany (named 'Africa 3') (1879-1955); the Cabinet, ordinary and secret archives (1925-1956); the archives relating to the Laws and Decrees Service, later the Legislative office (1926-1943); the archives relating to the Superior Colonial Council (1923-1939); the archives relating to the Directorate-General for Political Affairs (1906-48); the archives of the Directorate-General for Economic and Financial Affairs (1923-1943); the archives relating to Eritrea (1880-1945);
- the archives of the Italian Trust Administration in Somalia (AFIS) (1950-1960) totalling some 100 linear metres;
- the archives of prominent personalities - Aldrovandi Marescotti, Artom, Avarna, Barilari, Benigni, Bettini, Blanc, Borsarelli, Brin, Cagiati, Calice, Cantalupi, Caroselli, Contarini, Corni, Crispi, Cusani Confalonieri, D'Arco, De Goyzueta, De Renzis, Di Fausto, Di Robilant, Di Rudinì, Di San Giuliano, Ducci, Fabiani, Felsani, Ferraris, Folchi, Gorrini, Grandi, Guariglia, Imperiali, Iannelli, Levi, Manfredi, Manfredini, Mariotti, Masi, Negrelli, Nigra, Nogara, Oldoini, Ortona, Pansa, Pepoli, Salata, Sanchioni, Santangelo, Serra, Sforza, Susinno, Suvich, Taliani, Tommasini, Venturelli, Visconti Venosta - totalling some 150 linear metres;

- a group of records from the former Ministry of Popular Culture relating to the Fascist period, totalling around 102 linear metres;
- microfilm archives, comprising some 2600 reels.

9. Finding aids and computerisation

There are analytical or summary inventories, transfer slips or other means of identification for most of the records listed above. There are also finding aids for other record groups not mentioned. There are computer aids for consulting the records relating to European Community, bibliographic records and microfilms (currently for internal use).

a) Unpublished inventories include: political Series 'A', political Series 'P', the ordinary and Cabinet Series (1904-1922), the political Series (1919-1930), the peace conference archives and the archives of the Directorate - General for Political Affairs (1951-56).

b) Inventories published by the Foreign Ministry

Le scritture della segreteria di Stato degli Affari esteri del regno di Sardegna, edited by R. Moscati, Rome, 1947; *La legazione sarda in Vienna (1707-1859)*, edited by E. Piscitelli, Rome, 1950; *Le legazioni sarde a Parigi, Berna, L'Aja, Lisbona e Madrid*, edited by F. Bacino, Rome, 1951; *La legazione sarda in Londra (1730-1860)*, edited by M. Pastore, Rome, 1952; *La legazione e i consolati del regno di Sardegna in Russia (1783-1861)*, edited by F. Bacino, Rome, 1952; *Le scritture del Ministero degli affari esteri del Regno d'Italia dal 1861 al 1887*, edited by R. Moscati, Rome, 1953; *Le scritture del "Gabinetto Crispi" e le carte "Sonnino"*, edited by F. Bacino, Rome, 1955; *Le scritture della legazione e del consolato di Toscana in Roma dal 1737 al 1859*, edited by R. Mori, Rome, 1959; *Inventario della "Series D" (Direzione dell'Archivio storico)*, edited by S. Ruggeri, Rome, 1988; *Inventario dell'Archivio del Consolato del Granducato di Toscana in Roma (1817-1853)*, edited by C. Lisi, Rome, 1996; *Le carte del Gabinetto del Ministro e della Segreteria generale dal 1923 al 1943*, edited by P. Pastorelli, Rome, 1999; *Inventario della Series "Affari politici" 1931-1945*, Rome, 1976; *Inventario delle rappresentanze diplomatiche: Londra 1861-1950*, Rome, 1976; *Inventario della Series "Affari politici" 1946-1950*, Rome, 1977; *Inventario delle rappresentanze diplomatiche: Francia e Russia (URSS)*, Rome, 1979; *Inventario delle rappresentanze diplomatiche: Berlino 1867-1943, Vienna 1862-1938*, Rome, 1981; *Inventario dell'archivio riservato della segreteria generale 1943-1947*, Rome, 1985; *Inventario del fondo "Commissione centrale arbitrale per l'emigrazione" (1915-1929)*, edited by P. Santoni, Rome, 1986; *Il fondo archivistico "Series Z - Contenzioso"*, edited by L. Pilotti, Rome, 1987; *I fondi archivistici della legazione sarda e delle rappresentanze diplomatiche italiane negli U.S.A. (1848-1901)*, edited by C. M. Aicardi and A. Cavaterra, Rome, 1988; *I fondi archivistici dei consolati di Chicago, Cleveland, Denver, New Orleans e S. Francisco conservati presso l'Archivio storico diplomatico*, edited by P. Catani and R. Zuccolini, Rome, 1990; *Il fondo archivistico Commissariato generale dell'emigrazione (1901-1927)*, edited by P. Santoni, Rome, 1998.

- Seven volumes of inventories for the archives of the former Ministry of Italian Africa have also been published in photocopied form.

10. Reference works and articles

A bibliography on the administration of Foreign Affairs, edited by V. Pellegrini, appeared in, *La formazione della diplomazia nazionale (1861-1915): Indagine statistica*, Università degli Studi di Lecce, Dipartimento di scienze storiche e sociali Rome, 1986, pp. 115-126. Bibliographical reference may also be found in the recently published: *Materiali per una bibliografia dei funzionari del Ministero degli Affari esteri*, edited by V. Pellegrini, Rome, 1999.

General works include:

L. V. Ferraris, *L'amministrazione centrale del Ministero degli esteri italiano nel suo sviluppo storico, (1848-1954)*, Florence, 1955; R. Moscati, *Il Ministero degli affari esteri, 1861-1870*, Milan, 1961; E. Serra, *La diplomazia in Italia*, Milan, 1984, pp. 21-57; V. Pellegrini, *Amministrazione e ordinamento costituzionale: il Ministero degli affari esteri*, Istituto per la Scienza dell'Amministrazione Pubblica, *L'amministrazione nella storia moderna*, archivio n. 3, Milan, 1985, pp. 1851-1929; *La formazione della diplomazia nazionale (1861-1915)*, Repertorio bio-bibliografico dei funzionari del Ministero degli affari esteri, Università degli studi di Lecce, Dipartimento di scienze storiche e sociali, Rome, 1987; *La formazione della diplomazia italiana 1861-1915*, edited by L. Pilotti, introduction by F. Grassi, Milan, 1989; *L'amministrazione centrale dall'Unità alla Repubblica. Le strutture e i dirigenti*, edited by G. Melis, vol. I: *Il Ministero degli affari esteri*, edited by V. Pellegrini, Bologna, 1992; *Materiali per una bibliografia dei funzionari del Ministero degli Affari Esteri*, edited by V. Pellegrini, Rome, 1999

a) For bibliographic details relating to the archives, see below.

Besides the introductions to the inventories listed at 9 (b) the following are suggested in particular: *Le scritture della segreteria di Stato degli Affari esteri del Regno di Sardegna*, edited by R. Moscati, Rome, 1947, pp. 8-13; V. Pellegrini, *Le fonti per la storia del Mezzogiorno nell'Archivio storico diplomatico del Ministero degli Affari esteri*, in *Ricerca storica e occupazione giovanile. Le fonti archivistiche per la storia del Mezzogiorno nell'età moderna e contemporanea*, edited by C. Donno and V. Pellegrini, Lecce, 1983, pp. 169-193; *Inventario della "Series D" (Direzione dell'Archivio Storico)*, edited by S. Ruggeri, Rome, 1988, pp. 7-57; P. Pastorelli, *Le carte di Gabinetto del Ministero degli Affari esteri, 1923-1943*, in *Storia delle relazioni internazionali*, V (1989), pp. 313-348; V. Pellegrini and A. Bertinelli, *Per la storia dell'amministrazione coloniale italiana*, Milan, 1994.

b) Other publications from the diplomatic historical archives: *La struttura e il funzionamento degli organi preposti all'emigrazione (1901-1919)*, edited by F. Grispo, Rome, 1986; *Inventario della Series "emigrazione" del fondo "assistenza e previdenza" dell'archivio della Società umanitaria di Milano*, edited by M. Punzo, Rome 1987; *La rete consolare nel periodo crispino (1886-1891)*, edited by M. Cacioli, Rome, 1988; *Repertorio degli atti parlamentari relativi all'emigrazione (1902-1927)*, edited by M. L. Bozzi Colonna, Rome, 1990; *L'ufficio di informazioni e protezione dell'emigrazione italiana di Ellis Island*, edited by L. Pilotti, Rome 1993.

The Committee for sorting and publishing Italian diplomatic documents has undertaken the publication of the following volumes of the 'Documenti diplomatici italiani':

Series I (1861-1870), Vol. 13

Series II (1870-1896), Vol. 27

Series III (1896-1907), Vol. 1 to 7

Series IV (1908-1914) Vol. 12

Series V (1914-1918) Vol. 11

Series VI (1918-1922) Vol. 1 and 2

Series VII (1922-1935) Vol. 16

Series VIII (1935-1939) Vol. 1 to 9, 12 and 13

Series IX (1939-1943) Vol. 10

Series X (1943-1948) Vol. 7

Series XI (1948-1953) in preparation

A Foreign Ministry committee (now dissolved) for documentation on Italy's activities in Africa published 13 volumes of documents relating to Africa.