

## ARTICLE FOR THE EABH "BULLETIN" 1, 2001<sup>1</sup>

1. At the Bank of Italy current archives no longer needed for the ordinary working of the offices that produced them are transferred after five years to the semi-current archives, where they are kept until the time limit is reached for their disposal or permanent retention for historical purposes. Records selected for permanent retention are transferred to the historical archives after twenty-five years.

The Bank's semi-current and historical archives are two separate units and belong to two different Departments.

2. The semi-current archives are part of the General Secretariat, which, among other things is the Bank's record manager and responsible, in cooperation with the historical archives, for operating the record classification system and keeping the retention and disposal schedules. The current archives have been operated on the basis of an electronic registration and filing plan since 1989; previously paper-based filing plans were used.

The historical archives are part of the Historical Research Office. They are responsible for the conservation, arrangement and electronic cataloguing of Bank records of historical interest and for making them available to in-house and other researchers. The electronic cataloguing function is based on an information retrieval system. A common record management system is available, but only for records registered from 1989 onwards using the new electronic filing plan.

2a. The main advantage of the division of the Bank of Italy's archives into two is that the historical archives are an integral part of the unit that carries out historical research within the Bank. The relationship between internal researchers and the archivists who look after the wealth of historical records is direct and marked by a continuous exchange of experiences and analysis of needs, to the benefit of both sides.

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2b. The potential problems inherent in the separate management of the Bank's current and historical archives — primarily the difficulty for the historical archives of tracking the flow of records, following them from their creation and having advance knowledge of the quantity and quality of those that will enrich the stock — are overcome by means of close cooperation between the Historical Research Office and the General Secretariat and the adoption of clearly defined record-flow and disposal procedures.

At the Bank of Italy the disposal schedule is kept by the General Secretariat and amendments are agreed between this Department, which represents administrative needs and those related to the current management of the Bank's records, and the Historical Research Office, which takes account of records' historical value and has a good knowledge of researchers' needs.

Before the disposal of records and during the appraisal of those to be sent to the historical archives, the material is generally subjected to a control, carried out jointly by members of the staffs of the semi-current and historical archives, who prepare a list of the proposed disposals. The last step is the approval of the disposal lists by a committee made up of representatives of the two archives and other Bank Departments.

The branches of the Bank of Italy also have a disposal schedule that identifies the types of records to be kept for an unlimited period of time. As a precaution, prior to the disposal of records for which a retention period of thirty years is prescribed, they are examined by the General Secretariat and the historical archives to see if there are any records of historical interest.