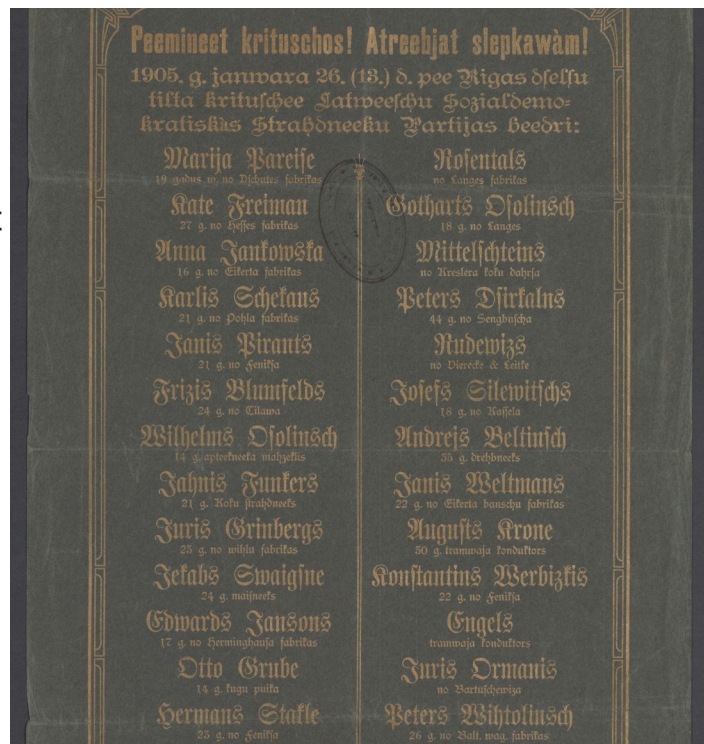


National Archives of Latvia getting closer to APE users

As the custodian of the country's historical heritage, the National Archives of Latvia (NAL) preserves and makes accessible a wide range of records that collectively form the complex tapestry of Latvia's past. The centuries-old archives of Latvia are home to priceless documents, manuscripts, and artifacts that provide a wealth of information on the social, political, and cultural development of this Baltic country and range from modern records to charters from the Middle Ages. The archives contain sizable collection of medieval manuscripts, charters, and other records that provide insight into Latvia's medieval past, among which the medieval Livonian Chronicle is the crown jewel.

Another important source of knowledge on the history of the Baltic area and also the city of Riga is the collection of Riga City Council Minutes that has been part of the UNESCO's Memory of the World Program's Latvian National Register since 2022. It serves as a tribute to the record-keeping customs and contemporary writing culture that emerged in Europe at the end of the 16th century.

The joint documentary heritage of Latvia, Germany, Belgium, Denmark, Estonia, and Poland, known as the "Hansa History Documents", has also been included in the UNESCO's Memory of the World programme in 2023 and comprises 21 documents. The collection of papers from Latvia also contains materials from other archives and libraries that represent the Hanseatic League's geographical expanse and variety of written testimony.



Internationaal Instituut voor Sociale Geschiedenis (Netherlands), Latvian group of the RS-DRP, 1900-1914, available in APE.

In its daily work, NAL uses a centralized information system Unified State Archives Information System (USAIS). The system is

an essential element for the development and sustainability of the sector. It will also ensure the long-term preservation and availability of electronic-generated documents in the future.

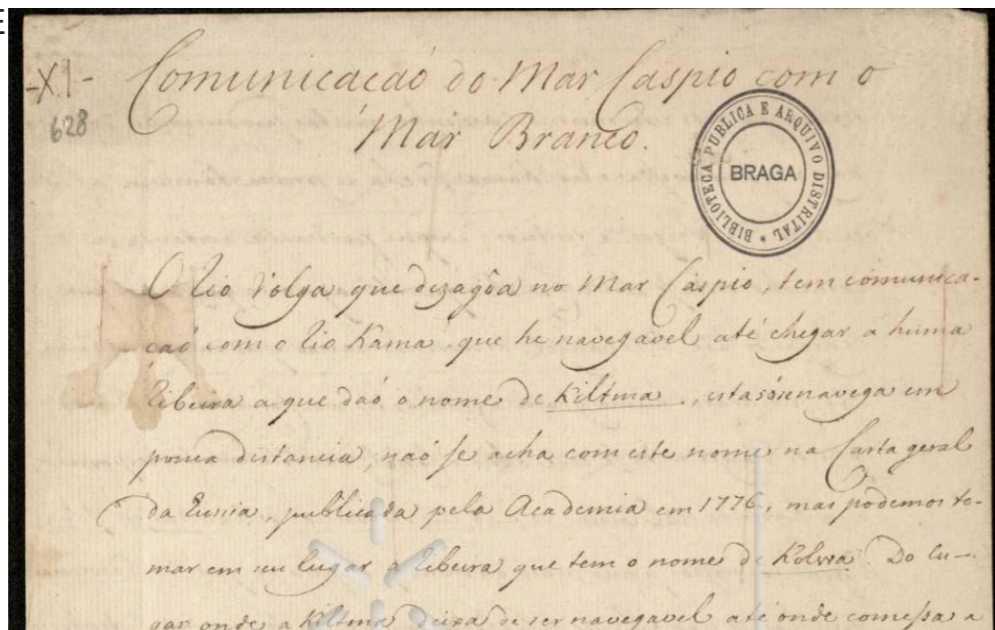
Until 2022, NAL had only 349,062 descriptive units available on the Archives Portal Europe (APE) portal, of which the majority was NAL Cesis Zonal State Archives collection “Dvēseļu revīzija”. However, at the end of 2023, NAL system holds around 1,670,000 publicly available description unit records at the search engine Latvijas Nacionālais Arhīvs (resources: arhivi.gov.lv). As a result of two grants – Digitise & Upload Grant and Metadata Ingestion Grant – NAL made available all publicly available descriptions unit records to APE and also improved the existing collections that were already in APE.

Work undertaken

To harvest data for APE, NAL and RIX Technologies worked together on data exploration and modifying the EAD schema produced by the NAL system for the portal. Initially, within the workflow, some XMLs were loaded one by one while fixing some problems with



Krigsarkivet (Sweden), *The Baltic Sea Provinces. Riga, 1646*, available in APE



Arquivo Distrital de Braga (Portugal), *Notes on communication between the Caspian Sea and the White Sea and on hydraulic works in Riga, 1787 ca.*, available in APE

the new EAD format and generating additional EAD files for public funds in USAIS. Different types of harvesting processes were researched, for example – OmekaS service, however, the results were not what had been expected. There were no modules for some versions and some versions did not work entirely. Consequently, it was determined to develop a different strategy even after reviewing the OAI rules (<http://www.openarchives.org/OAI/openarchivesprotocol.html>).

To avoid any issues, RIX tested an offline harvester emulation application before initiating the harvesting procedure. The harvesting process took longer than anticipated;

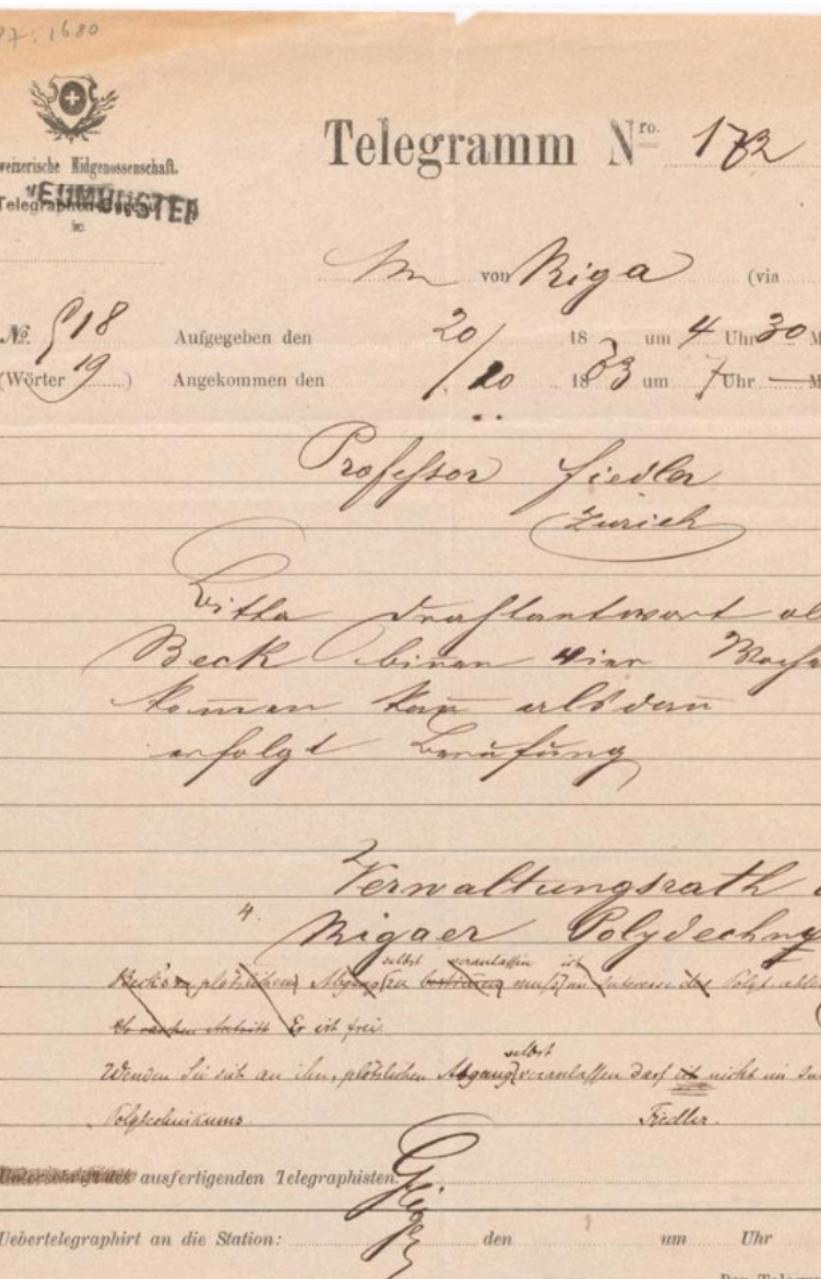
some errors occurred – sometimes process ended with files being stuck in a queue with no option to force the start of processing. The issues were fixed after close collaboration with APE IT personnel.

The material available

Upon completion of the project, the National Archives of Latvia has made over 1.6 million archival descriptions available to the public. Thanks to the successful completion of the project, it is now possible to utilize the established export service to update the existing content on APE, which enables to explore the National Archives of Latvia’s coverage on APE in its entirety. This is a significant improvement from its previous state of around 25%, which was incomplete and outdated. With these new resources, it is possible to dive deeper into Latvia’s fascinating history and gain a better understanding of its social, political, and cultural development over the centuries.

The Latvian National Archives preserves a diverse range of historical materials that offer insights into Latvia’s past. These holdings encompass various types of records,

including Administrative and Government Records; Official government documents, laws, and administrative records; Historical Manuscripts and Documents; Manuscripts, correspondence, diaries, and personal papers; Census data, population registers, and genealogical materials; Historical maps, land surveys, and architectural plans; Photographs, audio recordings, films, and other visual materials; Legal documents, court records, and notarial records; Church Records – Baptism, marriage, burial records, and ecclesiastical documents; Records related to political parties, social movements, and activism; Documents from periods of occupation and records of resistance movements; Literary manuscripts, artistic works, and cultural artifacts; School records, university archives, and educational materials. These materials collectively provide a comprehensive view of Latvia’s history, spanning from administrative and governmental affairs to cultural, social, and artistic aspects.



Riga — Schwarzhäupterhaus
Riga — Melngalvju nams

Landesarchiv Baden-Württemberg (Germany), Postcard, Schwarzhäupterhaus - House of the Blackheads, 1918 ca., available in APE