

Publication of Latvian diplomatic documents

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I would like to express my gratitude to the organizers of the conference for the opportunity to participate in the conference. Latvia is represented in this conference for the first time.

There are three periods that can be marked in the history of the edition of Latvian diplomatic documents.

The first period is from the declaration of the independence of the Republic of Latvia on 18 November 1918 till the Latvia's occupation by the USSR in 1940. Several remarkable volumes of publications were issued during this period, e.g., *Recueil des principaux traités conclus par la Lettonie avec les pays étrangers Volume 1, 1918-1930, Rīga, 1930; Volume 2, 1930-1938, Rīga, 1938. Publié par le Ministère des Affaires Etrangères sous la direction de G. Albat, Ministre Plénipotentiaire, Secrétaire Général au Ministère des Affaires Etrangères* and several irregular publications of diplomatic documents, among these – congratulations of the leaders of the world states to the President of Latvia, publications in the encyclopedic editions, etc.

The second period is from the Latvia's occupation by the USSR in 1940 till the regaining of independence in 1991, when publishing of the diplomatic documents was possible only in exile. During this period a very significant work was carried out by the Latvian legation in the United States of America under the leadership of the envoy in Washington Alfrēds Bīlmanis. Regular publications of the informative bulletins contained also editions of diplomatic documents. There were publications of document collections on Latvian - Russian relations explaining from the view of international law the existence *de iure* of the state in the actual situation of occupation. This work of the legation was a notable contribution to the maintenance of the continuity of the state and was helpful during the process of the regaining of Latvia's independence that was accomplished in 1991.

The third period began after the regaining of independence. In the beginning of nineties there were several document collections published. Among these documents a considerable part were diplomatic documents. The first book of the Ministry of Foreign

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Affairs, the State Historical Archives and the Society of Latvian Archivists in the series “*Latvia and International Relations*” – *A Document Collection on the International Recognition of Latvia, Renewed Independence, and Diplomatic Relations. 1918 –1998* was published in 1999. The second book in this series – a biographical dictionary *The Latvian Foreign Office. 1918-1991* was published in 2003.

Along with books exhibitions can be considered document publications, too. As the interest of the society in the issues of diplomacy and state history is increasing, the Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has prepared several exhibitions. The last exhibition was devoted to the Latvian foreign office work in exile during the occupation years, to diplomats who were keeping alive the idea of the existence of the state. At the present moment the work on the digital version of this exhibition is going to be completed; digital exhibition will be available on CD and by the end of November 2005 it will be presented in the web pages of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Latvia.