

**REPUBLIC OF TURKEY
PRIME MINISTRY
GENERAL DIRECTORATE OF STATE ARCHIVES**

Publication No: 15

GUIDE ON THE GENERAL DIRECTORATE OF STATE ARCHIVES



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ANKARA-2001

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PREFACE

Democracy and transparency for the access to knowledge are in the foreground all over the world. Societies and individuals desire transparency for the access to private registers as well as to public registers. In the knowledge and information age dominated by such an understanding, archives have very significant duties and responsibilities.

For this reason, “transparency”, which is the main principle of modern archival studies, is also a basic principle which applies to Turkish archives. In the Turkish archives classified documents are immediately available to researchers without any restriction. As a matter of fact, from the beginning of 1900 up to the present, thousands of researchers from more than 80 countries including the U.S.A., England, France, Canada, Israel, Hungary, the Netherlands, Japan, Spain, Italy, Russia, Bulgaria, Albania, Algeria, Kuwait, Egypt, Syria, Saudi Arabia, Greece, Iran and Romania have carried out and are still carrying out research on the Ottoman Archives of the Prime Ministry.

The great leader and founder of the Republic of Turkey, Atatürk said, “To write history is as important as to create it. If the writers are not faithful to the creators of history, the invariable truth can mislead the humanity.”

Guided by this principle, the Turks want the writers of history to be faithful to the creators of history, because

scientific works based upon archives will remove the subjective political approaches emanating from the prejudice and misinformation. The archives are authentic documents which reflect reality in the most objective way among other historical sources. We urge that the judgements on historical subjects put forward are based upon authentic sources of history, which are archives.

With the aim of submitting documents in our archives to the scientific world in the best and quickest way, we have accelerated the activities concerning microfilming archival material kept in the Ottoman Archives and transferring catalogues and information pertaining to records and register groups with their images into computers.

It must be particularly emphasized that the Turkish archives which own a cultural and historical heritage of 700 years include 150 millions of documents pertaining to the Ottoman period. Consequently, a region's or the world's history which will be written without making researches in the Turkish archives will be certainly deficient and incomplete.

Dr. Yusuf SARINAY
General Director

CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
PREFACE	III
I- ESTABLISHMENT AND FUNCTIONS OF THE GENERAL DIRECTORATE OF STATE ARCHIVES	1
A- Historical Background	5
B- Legal Regulation	7
C- Functions of the General Directorate of State Archives	7
II- ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE OF THE GENERAL DIRECTORATE OF STATE ARCHIVES	10
A- Directorate of Ottoman Archives	10
B- Directorate of Republican Archives	13
C- Directorate of Documentation	17
III- GUIDING INFORMATION FOR RESEARCHERS	20
A- Working Hours	20
B- Applications for Research	20
C- Using Archives	20
D- Photocopy Requests	21
E- Rules to be Followed by Researchers	21
APPLICATION FORM TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT THE GENERAL DIRECTORATE OF STATE ARCHIVES	24
CONTRACT	25

I-ESTABLISHMENT AND FUNCTIONS OF THE GENERAL DIRECTORATE OF STATE ARCHIVES

Documents in national archives illustrate the rights of states and nations and also the relations between nations. They are, in effect, the title deeds of a nation and constitute the most important element binding their past, present, and future together. Archives are the major sources of history and culture. It is thanks to archives that we are able to achieve a better understanding of the past, the present and the future.



Ottoman Ferman

The Turkish Nation possesses a long-established history and a very rich culture and also possesses the archives of these two elements. The Republic of Turkey has inherited rich archival materials from the Ottoman Empire which ruled on three continents during

more than 600 years and thus shared its history with many nations. This collection is an important source, not only for Turkey, but for the identification of national and common history of many nations which established independent states of their own.



Treaty of Istanbul signed by the Ottoman Empire, England, Prussia, Austria-Hungary, Spain, France, the Netherlands, Italy and Russia on October 29, 1888 concerning the free-passage through the Suez Canal

Ottoman Archives have exceptional value for the revealance of the cultures, economy and political history first and foremost of Turkey and other Middle and Near East, Balkan, Mediterranean, North African and Arab countries which formed nation states.

The Republic of Turkey, with the rich historical heritage that it was bequeathed by the Ottoman Empire, is one of the countries with

the wealthiest national archives, in terms of quantity as well as quality.



**Telegraph treaty signed between the Ottoman Empire and Austria on
January 21, 1857 in Istanbul**

It is impossible to write the individual histories of the more than 40 different countries that emerged out of the structure of the Ottoman Empire or shared their history with it, and the world history of that period, without making researches at the Ottoman Archives of the General Directorate. Therefore, all the local and foreign researchers feel the need to examine the Ottoman Archives in order to study,

identify and evaluate the documents related with the subjects of their study.



A Scene from the Research Room at the Ottoman Archives

In order to provide for the practical use by the world scholars, the documents which have been classified from nearly 150 million archival documents of the Ottoman period are open to all the researchers without distinction between Turkish and foreign scholars.

General Directorate of State Archives is a member of the International Council on Archives (ICA) and as such has signed co-operation protocols with more than 25 other countries. The General Directorate has also been exchanging information with these countries as well as carrying out bilateral exchanges of documents aimed at enhancing professional know-how and skills.

A) Historical Background

In the first half of the nineteenth century Ottoman archival documents were kept in different districts and as a result there were difficulties in carrying out official transactions. So the construction of a modern archives building was begun following an İrade (Command) of Sultan Abdülmecid of 19th Zilkade (November) 1846 (1262 according to the Islamic era) and the modern “Hazine-i Evrak” (Treasury of Documents) building was completed in 1849 (1265).

This building was completed under the supervision of the Italian architect Fosatti and a special commission was established under the name of “Meclis-i Muvakkat” (Temporary Assembly) to deposit the documents in it and to ascertain the way the documents would be kept in the main depots.

This arrangement continued until 1923 when “Hazine-i Evrak” (Treasury of Documents) was reorganized under the name “Archives Office” (Mahzen-i Evrak Mümeyyizliği) within the Directorate of the Private Secretariat of the Prime Ministry (Başvekalet Kalem-i Mahsus Müdüriyeti) in the period immediately after the end of the Ottoman Empire and before the proclamation of the Republic. To ensure that annulled documents and objects belonging to the Office of the Grand Vizier were preserved, Mahmud Nedim, the last chief clerk of the Treasury of Documents of the Ottoman Empire, was appointed as the Chief Clerk. The archives of the disbanded Council of State were also placed under the administration of this department.

The archives organization thus established under the name of “Mahzen-i Evrak Mümeyyizliği” within the “Başvekalet Kalem-i Mahsus Müdüriyeti” (Directorate of the Private Secretariat of the Prime Ministry) in 1923, was later attached to the Undersecretariat of

the Prime Ministry (Başvekalet Müsteşarlığı) with the name of “Hazine-i Evrak Müdür Muavinliği” (Deputy Directorate of Treasury of Documents) in 1927 and to some extent became an independent department. In 1929, although it was attached to the Başvekalet Muamelat Müdürlüğü (Directorate of Transactions of the Prime Ministry) it retained its links with the Undersecretariat Office of the Prime Ministry.

A further change came at the 10th anniversary of the Turkish Republic. The Directorate of Documents (Evrak Müdürlüğü) in Ankara and the Deputy Directorate of Treasury of Documents (Hazine-i Evrak Müdür Muavinliği) in İstanbul were combined under the joint name of the Directorate of Prime Ministry Documents and Treasury of Documents (Başvekalet Evrak ve Hazine-i Evrak Müdürlüğü) by Law 2187, of 20 May 1933. According to the same Law, the Deputy Director was located in İstanbul heading Treasury Documents Department. It later became an independent archive department under the Under-secretary of the Prime Ministry by Law 3154 of 19 April 1937. It was given the status of General Directorate of the Prime Ministry Archives (Başvekalet Arşiv Umum Müdürlüğü) by Law 4443, added 29 June 1943, and later included in the Law 6330 regarding the Organization of Prime Ministry of 9 March 1954. It was renamed Department of Ottoman Archives under Prime Ministry Organization by the Decision 8/4334, of 27 February 1982 entitled “Decision of the Council of Ministers Concerning the Reorganization of Ministries and Application of Their Working Regulations” (Bakanlıkların Yeniden Düzenlenmesi ve Çalışma Esaslarının Yürürlüğe Konulması Hakkındaki Bakanlar Kurulu Kararı).

On 19 October 1984 a further Law 3056 was issued for the Reorganization of Prime Ministry. All responsibility for the protection and the use of Turkey’s national archives was transferred to Prime

Ministry. At this point the General Directorate of State Archives was established to carry out this mission and the Directorate of Ottoman Archives was then attached to the General Directorate.

B) Legal Regulation

All aspects of the work of protecting and utilising Turkey's national archives were assigned to Prime Ministry by subsection (g) of the Article 2 of the Prime Ministry Organization Law and Article 11 specifically entrusts this task to the General Directorate of State Archives, which is one of the main service units.

Subsection (g) of the Article 2 of the Law identifies the principal duties of state archive services within the Prime Ministry as:

“Collecting, evaluating and organising historical, judicial, executive, economic, scholarly documents and official papers belonging to the Turkish State and nation, by using advanced techniques of filming and microfilming rescuing archival material which exists only in a sole copy; establishing an archives laboratory to prevent the deterioration of documents; keeping abreast of new developments in international archive techniques; presenting important archival material to the scholarly community in Turkey and rest of the world.”

C) Functions of the General Directorate of State Archives

These are listed in Article 11 of the Prime Ministry Organization Law 3056 as:

a) To ascertain the fundamental principles of Turkey's national archival policy and proceeding with the implementation and supervision of them,

b) To collect, evaluate, and store information and documents of every kind about state and national life,

c) To find and collect, and if necessary also to buy archival material from the hands of various public agencies and organizations and private persons; to repair and to restore these; to classify and to translate them, and to publish them where appropriate,

d) To follow new developments in national and international archival techniques and related areas of scholarship and to translate and publish news of the work in this field, to present the important and valuable archival material to the Turkish and international scholarly community,

e) To form collections from the archival material possessing appropriate historical, cultural and aesthetic value, and if necessary to establish an archives museum and organize exhibitions,

f) To take measures to prevent the destruction of archival material and to establish an archives laboratory,



Ottoman Ferman

g) To make copies of archival materials in order to provide continuity, and to reduce these copies to small volumes by utilising filming, microfilming, photocopying or other developed techniques, if necessary,

h) To determine the principles for using state archives, to assess and to issue permissions if necessary for requests to do research in the archives,

i) To arrange, sort out, and classify every kind of information and archival material and to keep them by filing so as to be ready for use at any time,



Restoration Section of the Ottoman Archives

j) To oversee the tasks of sorting out, storing, and destroying record material in public bodies and organizations.

II-ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE OF THE GENERAL DIRECTORATE OF STATE ARCHIVES

General Directorate of State Archives is one of the main service units of the Prime Ministry and is based in Ankara.

The service units of the General Directorate, the Directorates of Republican Archives and Documentation are based in Ankara, while the Directorate of Ottoman Archives is based in İstanbul.

A) Directorate of Ottoman Archives

The most rich and valuable archival material inherited from the Ottoman Empire is contained in the Directorate of Ottoman Archives of the Prime Ministry General Directorate of State Archives. The Imperial Chancery of State (Divan-ı Hümayun), the Ministry of Finance (Bab-ı Defteri) and the Palace of the Grand Vizier (Bab-ı Asafi or Bab-ı Ali) were the central institutional bodies of the Ottoman Empire and Directorate of Ottoman Archives of the Prime Ministry contains the records, registers and documents of their various offices and desks. Thanks to the exceptional nature of the archival material that they contain, they are regarded as the state archives of this period.

During the Ottoman Empire the first place was Yedikule used as “mahzen” (cellar) to store the archives. Later the archives were moved to the Atmeydanı (Hippodrome) and then stored in the Topkapı Palace in the Hazine-i Amire (Exchequer) and Enderun-i Hümayun (The Sultan’s Private Apartments).

Hazine-i Evrak (Treasury of Documents) was the name of the office where the official records of the Empire were kept. It was the central and it was founded in 1846 to be the archive for Bab-ı Ali, the Office of the Grand Vizier.



A Scene from the Repositories of the Ottoman Archives

The functions of the Directorate of Ottoman Archives:

- a) To identify, collect, and supervise the archival materials of the Ottoman and pre-Ottoman periods,
- b) To protect these materials in accordance with the techniques of the archives, to classify and make copies of them in order to ensure continuity of knowledge,
- c) To make scientific and technical preparation required for the purpose of putting them at the disposal of the state, scholars, and individuals and institutions,



A Scene from the Repositories of the Ottoman Archives

d)To make various collections from the most invaluable and important archival materials in order to introduce them to the scholarly community in Turkey and the rest of the world and to establish archives museum, to organize exhibitions and make publicizing activities,

e)To keep abreast of scientific developments in world archival work and adopt necessary innovations and new technology and to translate and prepare relevant publications for printing,

f)To provide samples and catalogues of archival materials related to Turkish culture and history of the Ottoman and pre-Ottoman periods,

g)To introduce the computerization of the archive services and the use of mechanographical methods and techniques,

Date of establishment:

It was organized under the name of “Hazine-i Evrak” (Treasury of Documents) in 1846.

Address:

Başbakanlık

Devlet Arşivleri Genel Müdürlüğü

Osmanlı Arşivi Daire Başkanlığı

Ticarethane Sokak No:12

34410 Sultanahmet-İSTANBUL

Phone: (+90 212) 526 20 01 (direct line) (+90 212) 513 88 70-72
(switchboard 3 lines)

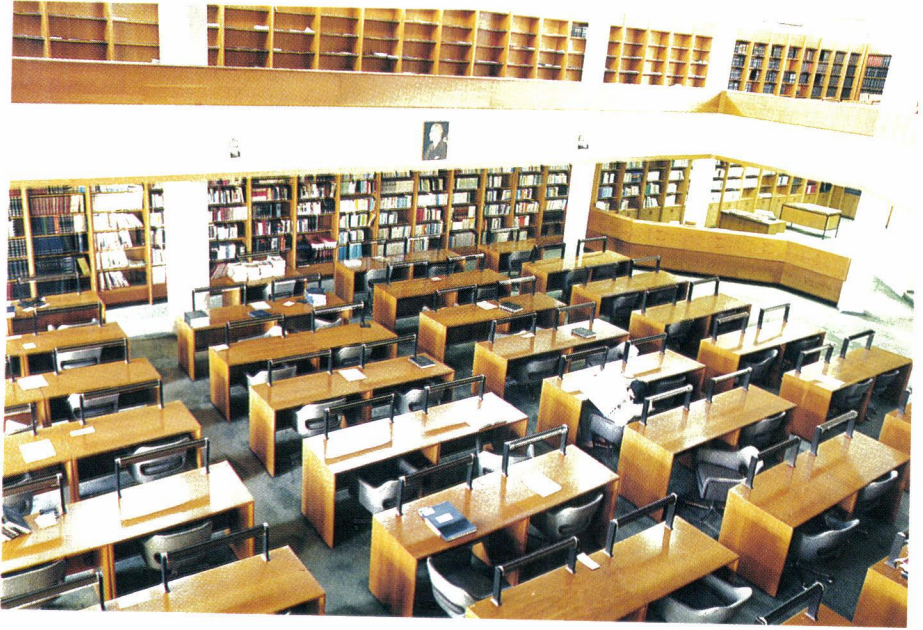
Fax: (+90 212) 511 75 86

e-mail: devletarsivleri.gov.tr

B) Directorate of Republican Archives

Law 3473 Concerning the Destruction of Redundant Documents and Materials states that the Directorate of Republican Archives has the duty of carrying out and supervising the necessary scientific and technical work of determining, protecting, arranging and evaluating archival materials in institutions and organizations dating from the

periods of the Turkish War of Independence, Government for the Turkish Grand National Assembly and the Turkish Republic.



Research Room at the Republican Archives

Functions of the Directorate of Republican Archives:

- a) To identify the archival materials belonging to the National Struggle, TGNA Government and Republic periods which are generated from the institutions and organizations subject to the Law 3473,
- b) To take over the archival materials from the organizations and institutions in compliance with the existing procedures and merits determined by the Law,

c) To classify materials received,



A Scene from the Repositories of the Republican Archives.

d) To take necessary measures to protect the archival materials sent to the Directorate of Republican Archives against any kind of harmful effects; to restore defective archival materials as closely as possible to their original condition; to establish archival laboratories, and conservation and restoration workshops in which all these services may be undertaken,

e) To make the necessary scientific and technical preparations for the purpose of putting archival materials at the disposal of the state, scholars and scientists, and private and legal bodies,

f) To evaluate research demands and place archival material to the disposal of researchers,

- g) To monitor the reorganised archival materials,
- h) To inspect the selection, storage and destruction procedures at the archives of the public institutions and organizations,
- i) To follow and inspect the implications of the national archive policy principles set by the General Directorate,
- j) To follow new scientific developments in the field of archives, if necessary, to introduce them, and translate the publications on archives for printing,
- k) To prepare various collections among the most invaluable and important archival material and to establish archival museums; to organize exhibitions and make publications with the purpose of introducing archival materials to the scientific circles at home and abroad,
- l) To carry out works in order to obtain archive catalogues and copies of documents on Turkish history and culture on the War of Independence, Turkish Grand National Assembly and Republic period,
- m) To transfer archive services to a computer environment and use mechanographic methods and techniques in archive services,
- n) To ensure the preservation of archival materials by copying them and to use films, microfilms, photocopies and if necessary other advanced technologies in order to reduce their size,
- o) To establish working relationships with authorities and members of institutitons and organizations entrusted with state archive services.

Date of establishment:

The Directorate was established in October 1976; has been put under the jurisdiction of the General Directorate of State Archives by the Law 3056 of the Prime Ministry Organization Law.

Address:

Başbakanlık Devlet Arşivleri Genel Müdürlüğü
Cumhuriyet Arşivi Daire Başkanlığı
İvedik Caddesi No: 59
06170 Yenimahalle-ANKARA
Phone: (+90 312) 344 16 46 (direct line)
(+90 312) 344 59 09 (switchboard, 15 lines)
Fax: (+90 312) 315 10 00
e-mail:devletarsivleri.gov.tr

C) Directorate of Documentation

Directorate of Documentation is responsible of the following:

- cooperate with organizations in order to procure the information and documents needed by the administration for its services and activities,
- identify, collect and control in a centralized manner documents on administrative matters,
- classify and evaluate those documents in accordance with documentation methods and techniques,
- in addition to the administration, present those documents to the scientific community, and for the use by public and private entities.

Functions of the Directorate of Documentation are as follows:

- a) To identify and gather general catalogues, bibliographies, list of publications, announcement bulletins, indexes, reviews of libraries, documentation/information centers and other data centers operating within institutions and organizations; identify and gather encyclopedias, dictionaries, and similar reference sources,
- b) To conduct research in manuals, legislations, almanacs, informational brochures, activity reports, development plans and programmes, statistical publications, research publications, reviews, bulletins and newspaper type professional documents published about the activities of institutions and organizations,
- c) To gather and assess unpublished but useful items for the services and activities of the administration and which might be needed by it. Those items will include specialized theses, research papers, annual activity and travel reports, studies, plan and programmes, statistics, project descriptions, legislations, circulars, papers/essays presented during learned congresses, symposiums, seminars and conferences; identify and gather from institutions and organizations declarations made by State dignitaries and high level Government officials, press conferences and briefings given by them, movies shot and pictures/slides taken during celebrations, official events attended by them,
- d) To work together with archives, libraries, documentation centers, data processing centers and similar research units of institutions and organizations, including those of the universities, in order to satisfy the requests and needs of the administration and researchers,

e) To establish the automated system of the Directorate, inquire about the possibilities of national and international co-operation to that effect, follow the technological developments,

f) To assess the information and documents gathered and identified within the automated system, present them to the administration and researchers in place or through an information network,

g) To conduct research in publications and prepare bibliographic materials about subjects needed by the administration.

Date of establishment:

Directorate of Documentation was established in September 1988.

Address:

Başbakanlık Devlet Arşivleri Genel Müdürlüğü
Dokümantasyon Daire Başkanlığı

İvedik Caddesi No: 59

06170 Yenimahalle-ANKARA

Phone: (+90 312) 315 10 32

Direct phone: (+90 312) 344 59 09

Fax: (+90 312) 315 10 00

e-mail: devletarsivleri.gov.tr

III- GUIDING INFORMATION FOR RESEARCHERS

A) Working Hours

For the Directorate of Republican Archives and the Directorate of Documentation based in Ankara: 09:00-18:00 (closed on Saturdays, Sundays and official holidays).

For the Directorate of Ottoman Archives based in İstanbul: 08:30-17:30 (closed on Saturdays, Sundays and official holidays).

B) Applications for Research

Local or foreign researchers who are in Turkey should apply in person or by mail. Researchers abroad can apply via the Turkish Embassies by filling in the form (Appendix 1) through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey.

Turkish State Archives replies to applications of researchers either local or foreign in one day, and in thirty days for applications coming from abroad (by means of embassies and consulates).

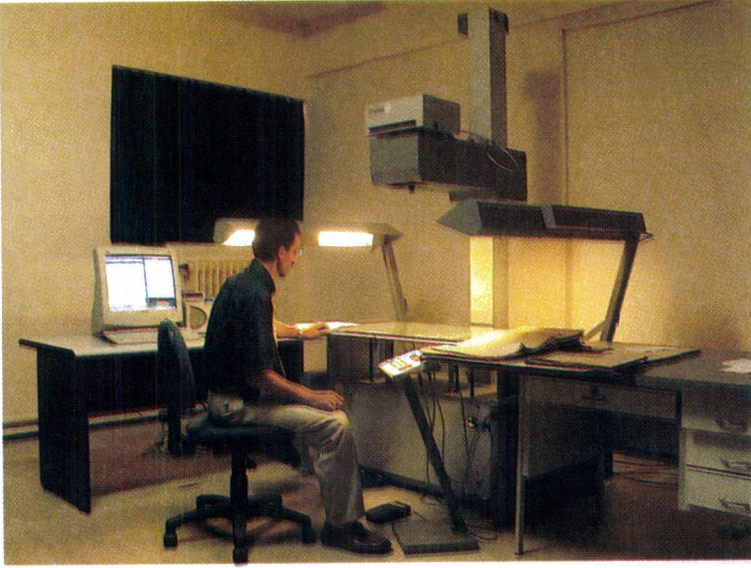
C) Using Archives

Rules and regulations for real and legal persons conducting research and studies and requesting copies of documents at the General Directorate of State Archives and other archives which are open to research are determined by the "Regulations for Real and Legal Persons Either Turkish or Foreign Intending to Conduct Research at the State Archives". According to these regulations, all researchers older than 18 years can make use of the classified archival fonds without any restriction.

Documents which are requested before 10:00 a.m. by completing the appropriate "Document Request Forms" will be made available at 14:00 p.m. on the same day; while documents which are

requested in the afternoon till 16:00 will be made available at 09:00 a.m. (09:30 a.m. for the Republican Archives) the following day.

Also, after finishing the still continuing activities concerning microfilming and digitization of archive records and offering the catalogues in Internet, researchers will be able to make use of these facilities in a short time.



Microfilm and Digitization Unit

D) Photocopy Requests:

Photocopies or microfilms of archive documents can be obtained, at a charge, by completing the relevant request forms in the research rooms.

E) Rules to Be Followed by Researchers

1) On normal working days the research room and library will open at 09:00 a.m. and close at 17:00 in Ankara. In İstanbul, they open at 08:30 a.m. and close at 16:30. (Working hours conform to those of the Office of the Governor of İstanbul.)

2) Archival material which has not yet been classified and documents that are too brittle for study will not be available for research.

3) Documents undergoing restoration or being re-classified will not be made available even if they appear in the research catalogues.

4) Research and study of archival material other than printed material such as books and periodicals will in principle be conducted from photocopies or microfilms. The originals will be made available only for comparison purposes. If, however, it is not possible to obtain photocopies or microfilms, originals may be studied.

5) Researchers may study only those materials which relate to their research subject. They may not request material out of their research subject. They may not reserve the whole collection of archival material relating to their research subject.

6) Researchers should count documents for themselves when receiving and returning them. Researchers will be responsible for the loss of any material made available to them.

7) Document requests are handled in order of date and time of requests and the researcher will be informed about the date and time at which the requested documents will be provided.

8) Researchers should not request new documents before giving the previous ones. To request the documents related to the received ones, the same number of documents as is requested should be returned.

9) Researchers are forbidden to give the received archival material to another researcher, to copy and to photograph them.

10) Researchers should protect the archival material from any kind of destruction and falsification.

11) Researchers can not fold and wrinkle the documents, cannot change the order and the document cards, cannot write anything on the document and cannot put any mark or number. In case of any fault or confusion, researchers should not interfere themselves, but inform the staff in the research room.

12) During research and studies, only pencil and eraser can be used. However, portable typing machine and computer can be used at the places determined by the archive administration.

13) Researchers are forbidden to enter the research room with bag, camera, scanner, coat, etc. Researchers should lock their personal belongings in the cloak room.

14) It is forbidden to smoke cigarette and to drink anything in the research room.

15) Archival materials are strictly forbidden to be taken outside the research room.

16) Nobody can enter the research room except staff and researchers.

17) If researchers recess their research and studies for more than one week, they should return the documents they received.

18) Existing catalogues in the Republican Archives, belonging to the archival material of the Directorate of Ottoman Archives can only be used at the Directorate of Ottoman Archives in İstanbul.

APPENDIX 1

APPLICATION FORM TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT THE GENERAL DIRECTORATE OF STATE ARCHIVES OF THE PRIME MINISTRY OF THE REPUBLIC OF TURKEY

Name, Surname:

Nationality:

Occupation:

Education:

Permanent Address:

Residence in Turkey:

(for foreigners)

Identity Card Number:

Passport Number:

(for foreigners)

Affiliation with Any Scientific or Professional Institutions:

Subject and Period of the Research:

Date and Subject of the Previous Research at the Turkish
Archives:

I accept the correctness of the above information.

P.S.: Researchers should apply with two photos and photocopies
of their identity cards and passports (for foreigners).

Signature

Date:...../...../200

CONTRACT

I have carefully read the “Rules and Regulations to be Followed by Turkish or Foreign Real and Legal Entities Who Wish to Study in the Archives and Obtain Copies”.

I declare that I shall obey all rules and conform to the working principles of the institution and accept full responsibility in case of breach of these conditions.

Name, Surname:

Nationality:

Work Address:

Permanent Address:

Identity Card Number:

Passport Number:

Declaration Date:

Signature:

