

The Preservation of Electronic Records: Decision Acts Signed by the Department Heads

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In the last few years, the Province of Forlì-Cesena has started a records digitization process aimed at producing digital records to be preserved permanently in trusted digital repositories. The main objectives of the study are the following: to test ways and methods for record creation; check the record links to the Protocol Register and the quality of the electronic recordkeeping system; and assess the record authenticity and reliability for long-term preservation. The case analyzes the digitization process for a special type of record called “decision acts.” These records are signed by the Department Heads and prepared using the ERMS software that manages every step of the workflow, including the integration with other systems and software. The project provides for the use of digital signature and open formats for records creation and subsequent preservation in trusted digital repositories.

ORGANIZATION BACKGROUND

The Italian administrative division is based on three levels: Regions, Provinces, and Municipalities. Regions are the first-level administrative sub-division of the State, whereas Provinces are the administrative sub-division between Regions and Municipalities. Provinces include several administrative sub-divisions called mu-

nicipalities. Each Province is headed by a President assisted by a legislative body, the Provincial Council, and an executive body, the Provincial Executive Committee. The President and the members of the Council are elected at the same time by resident citizens. The Executive Committee is chaired by the President who appoints its members, called Deputies.

Provinces carry out administrative functions within their territories, in collaboration with Regions and Municipalities. Provinces' administrative functions are primarily regulated by the Constitution of the Italian Republic. The Constitution gives Provinces financial independence in terms of revenue and expenses, granting them independent financial resources; other functions are transposed by national or regional laws. National laws grant powers in terms of soil conservation, environmental management, water and energy resources, cultural heritage, traffic and transport, flora and fauna, hunting and fishing, waste disposal control, water control, health services, education, and technical and administrative assistance to local municipalities. Other functions may be delegated by the Region of reference. The Region of reference for the Province of Forlì-Cesena is the Emilia-Romagna Region, which has entrusted the Provinces of its territory with a number of functions in many fields: agriculture, environment, culture, vocational training, tourism, territorial administration, and European funds management. The activities carried out by the Provinces are intended to meet the needs of different groups of people, industries, schools, private companies, etc. within the provincial territory. The mission is to provide better services to the citizens living in the Province. Provinces are responsible for the construction and maintenance of high schools and streets; they allocate funds to Municipalities and civil society (companies, associations, citizens, NGOs) for agriculture, culture, education and training, health services, and tourism. They are also responsible for granting the following authorizations: internal waters, energy resources and waste disposal, public and private transport, truffle hunting, and tourism activities. Provinces help Municipalities fulfil their administrative functions.

The origin of the Province of Forlì-Cesena dates back to July 5, 1831 when Provinces were considered as belonging to the Papal States. The first Provincial Council met in Forlì on October 10, 1832 (State Archives of Forlì, 1832-1835). In 1992, the Province of Forlì was divided into two separate areas and the new Province of Rimini was created, while the remaining area was renamed Forlì-Cesena to highlight the two most important cities in the territory.

Nowadays, the Province of Forlì-Cesena has a matrix model organization with line units dedicated to external recipients (citizens, private companies, schools, etc.) and staff offices that support the line functions to pursue the goals of the Administration. The organization chart is structured with every office having an officer responsible for coordinating the human resources and activities. Offices are

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