

MEMORY OF THE WORLD REGISTER

NOMINATION FORM

PART A – ESSENTIAL INFORMATION

1. SUMMARY

It is proposed that the original handwritten version of the 1789 Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen be included in the Memory of the World register. This text, which formed the basis of the United Nations Declaration of 1948, has a universal value extending beyond cultural, religious, political, ethnic, economic and social differences, and it thereby establishes the inalienable rights and duties of every human being.

2.1 DETAILS OF THE NOMINATOR

2.1 Name (person or organization)

Centre historique des Archives nationales (National Historical Archives Centre)

2.2 Relationship to the documentary heritage nominated

Owner

2.3.1 Contact person(s)

2.4 Contact details (address, phone, fax, email)

Ms Marie-Paule Arnauld, General Curator of the Heritage, Director of the *Centre historique des Archives nationales*, 60 rue des Francs-Bourgeois, 75003 Paris.

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2.1.1 IDENTITY AND DESCRIPTION OF THE DOCUMENTARY HERITAGE

3.1 Name and identification details of the items being nominated

Title

Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen (1789-1791)

Country

France

Name of organization

Centre historique des Archives nationales

Address

60 rue des Francs-Bourgeois

75003 Paris

3.2 Description

The generic title “Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen” covers a whole collection of documents connected to the proclamation and entry into force of the text. These documents become meaningful only in their relation to one another. The symbolic and political importance of the Declaration and the historical context in which it was drafted can be fully appreciated only if these documents are considered together. It is therefore vital that they be included in the Register as a complete set.

A comparison of all the existing versions of the Declaration shows that there are six different versions, dating from the beginning of the discussion stage to the promulgation of the Constitution in 1791 and not, as historians and folk memory still seem to suggest, just one single text.

However, only two versions meet the criteria for legal validity: the one which corresponds to documents **(a) to (d)** and the one labelled as document **(e)**. Both versions were adopted by the National Assembly, received royal approval, were promulgated by letters patent or law and, finally, were officially published.

Either of these two versions may therefore be referred to when talking about the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen. However, only the first version, comprising documents **(a) to (d)**, corresponds to the 1789 Declaration; the second is the 1791 Declaration.

- (a) *Handwritten text of the Declaration of the Rights of Man, taken from the minutes of the National Assembly, checked against the original on 30 September 1789 by the serving President, Mr Mounier, and the six secretaries, and tabled for a vote by the National Assembly on 2 October 1789.*

Paris, *Centre historique des Archives nationales, Musée de l'histoire de France*, Museum serial no. AE II 2982, original serial no. BB³⁴ I¹, n° 8, paper, volume bound with a blue silk ribbon, brown ink, h: 32 cm, w: 20.5 cm.

- (b) *Signed note by Louis XVI approving the aforementioned text: “I hereby fully accept the articles of the Constitution and Declaration of the Rights of Man presented to me by the National Assembly. 5 October 1789. Louis”.*

Paris, *Centre historique des Archives nationales, Musée de l'histoire de France*, Museum serial no. AE II 2983, original serial No. C 31, pl. 263, paper, folded double page, pinhole in the centre, below the text, h: 18 cm, w: 11 cm.

- (c) *Handwritten copy of the text of the Declaration of the Rights of Man, taken from the minutes of the National Assembly, checked against the original on 30 September 1789, bearing the signatures of the President and the six secretaries, followed by the words "Accepté pour être exécuté" (approved for implementation) and the signature of the King, "Louis", May 1790.*

Paris, *Centre historique des Archives nationales, Musée de l'histoire de France*, Museum serial no. AE II 1129, original serial No. A 70, n° 209 bis 2, paper, booklet bound with a blue silk ribbon, brown ink, h: 31 cm, w: 20 cm.

- (d) *Letters patent of Louis XVI approving various decrees adopted by the National Assembly between August and November 1789, including the Declaration of the Rights of Man, 3 November 1789.*

Paris, *Centre historique des Archives nationales, Musée de l'histoire de France*, Museum serial no. AE II 1629, original serial no. A 1, n° 9, printed in a booklet of 16-leaf parchment, signed by the King, yellow wax seal hanging on a double parchment strip, h: 33 cm, w: 25 cm, seal diameter: 12 cm.

- (e) *Original draft of the 1791 Constitution, preceded by the text of the Declaration on the Rights of Man, signed first by the President and secretaries of the National Assembly on 3 September 1791, and then by the King on 14 September 1791.*

Paris, *Centre historique des Archives nationales, Musée de l'histoire de France*, Museum serial no. AE I 10, n° 1 or AE II 1239, original serial no. A 98, p. 4605, vellum booklet, handwritten text, printed titles, beautifully leather-bound, red wax seal of the National Assembly.

Historical background

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|-------------------|---|
| 9 July 1789 | Mounier, deputy for the Dauphiné, proposes that the Constitution be preceded by a declaration of the rights of man. |
| 4 August 1789 | Mounier's proposal is approved by the National Assembly. |
| 12 August 1789 | A committee of five elected representatives is set up to examine the various draft declarations of the rights of man and combine them in a single text. |
| 17 August 1789 | The committee submits a 19-article draft. |
| 19 August 1789 | The National Assembly examines all the drafts article by article. A single, 17-article version is adopted. |
| 20-26 August 1789 | The adopted version is examined, article by article. |
| 27 August 1789 | Drafting of the Constitution begins. The Declaration of the Rights of Man is decreed. |
| 2 October 1789 | The committee submits the Declaration with its articles in their final order. The text is approved as it stands by the Assembly. It is decided that the Assembly President shall submit the articles of the Declaration and Constitution to the King. |
| 4 October 1789 | The King asks for his observations to be submitted to the National Assembly. |

- 5 October 1789 The King’s response is read to the National Assembly. The deputies are unhappy. A new delegation is sent to the King who, finally, accepts the articles of the Declaration and Constitution without amendment.
- 3 November 1789 Letters patent issued by the King, promulgating certain National Assembly decrees, including the Declaration of the Rights of Man.
- 17 November 1789 Letters patent registered with the Parliament and *Chambre des comptes* (Audit Chamber).
- August 1791 The National Assembly resumes discussion of the Declaration of the Rights of Man, which is to form the preamble to the Constitution.
- 8 August 1791 Debate. The whole Declaration of the Rights of Man is finally approved and the text appears in the National Assembly minutes.
- 3 September 1791 The Declaration on the Rights of Man and the Constitution are read to the National Assembly. They are approved and it is decided that they should be printed. A delegation is appointed to take the text, complete with the Assembly seal and the signatures of the President and secretaries, to the King.
- 13 September 1791 The King issues a message approving the text.
- 14 September 1791 The King swears in the Constitution. At the end of the ceremony, he signs his name in the margin of the first page of the original copy of the Constitution.
- 15 September 1791 The signed original is deposited in the national archives.

Visual documentation

See Annex.

Bibliography

There are numerous related works, including:

- A. Aulard and B. Mirkine Guetzevitch. *Les déclarations des droits de l’homme*, Paris, 1929.
- A. Bayet. *Histoire de la déclaration des droits de l’homme*, Paris, 1939.
- G. Del Vecchio. *La déclaration des droits de l’homme et du citoyen dans la Révolution française*, Rome and Paris, 1968.
- F. Furet and M. Ozouf. *Dictionnaire critique de la Révolution française*, article “Droits de l’homme”, Paris, 1988.
- J. Godechot. *La pensée révolutionnaire. 1780-1799*, Paris, 1964.
- L. Jaume. *Les déclarations des droits de l’homme*, Paris, 1989.
- G. Putfin. “La déclaration des droits de l’homme et du citoyen. Recensement et variantes des textes (août 1789-septembre 1791)”, in *Annales historiques de la Révolution française*, 1978, pp. 180-199.
- La Révolution française à travers les archives. Des Etats généraux au 18 Brumaire*, Paris, 1988.
- S. Rials. *La déclaration des droits de l’homme et du citoyen*, Paris, 1988.
- A. Soboul. *Dictionnaire historique de la Révolution*, Paris, 1989.

Names and contact details of experts or organizations

Mr Maurice Agulhon, Honorary Professor at the *Collège de France*, 11 place Marcellin-Berthelot, 75231 Paris Cedex 05.

Mr Michel Vovelle, Professor Emeritus at the University of Paris I, Panthéon-Sorbonne, 12 place du Panthéon, 75231 Paris Cedex 05

Mr Pierre-Dominique Cheynet, Head Curator of Nineteenth Century Heritage, *Centre historique des Archives nationales*, 60 rue des Francs-Bourgeois, 75003 Paris

2.2 JUSTIFICATION FOR INCLUSION/ASSESSMENT AGAINST CRITERIA

4.1 Is authenticity established?

The documents' authenticity is fully established and complete.

4.2 Is world significance, uniqueness and irreplaceability established?

The documents are unique and irreplaceable. They have had a major influence on the history of humankind. The Declaration on the Rights of Man and the Citizen is one of the foundations of international law.

4.3 Is one or more of the criteria of (a) time, (b) place, (c) people, (d) subject and theme, (e) form and style satisfied?

1st criterion – time: The Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen represents, on its own, the legacy of the French Revolution and sums up its principles and ideals.

2nd criterion – place: The Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen was originally a French text, but from the time of its promulgation it was aimed at all humanity, irrespective of cultural, religious, political and other differences.

3rd criterion – people: The Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen is the fruit of the efforts of all the deputies of the National Assembly who laid the foundations of modern France.

4th criterion – subject and theme: The Declaration on the Rights of Man and the Citizen establishes respect for the human person as an inviolable and fundamental principle.

5th criterion – form and style: Thanks to their incantatory, standard-setting and inspired style, some articles of the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen have become slogans or watchwords.

4.4 Are there issues of rarity, integrity, threat and management that relate to this nomination?

The Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen is a document of undeniable rarity, bearing in mind its content and era, and its integrity is total.

5. LEGAL INFORMATION

5.1 Owner of the documentary heritage (name and contact details)

State: French Republic

Ministry of Culture and Communication

Direction des Archives de France

Centre historique des Archives nationales

60 rue des Francs-Bourgeois

75003 Paris

5.2 Custodian of the documentary heritage (name and contact details, if different to owner)

Ministry of Culture and Communication

Direction des Archives de France

Centre historique des Archives nationales

Musée de l'histoire de France

60 rue des Francs-Bourgeois

75003 Paris

5.3 Legal status:

(a) **Category of ownership:** public/legal entity

(b) **Accessibility:** free

(c) **Copyright status:** none

(d) **Responsible administration:**

Centre historique des Archives nationales: this national centre, which is answerable to the *Direction des Archives de France* of the Ministry of Culture and Communication, was set up to preserve, communicate and promote the French national archives dating from between the seventh century AD and the establishment of the Fifth Republic in 1958.

(e) **Other factors:**

Legal provisions: Archives Act n° 79-18 of 3 January 1979

6. MANAGEMENT PLAN

6.1 Is there a management plan in existence for this documentary heritage?

The *Centre historique des Archives nationales* has a general preservation plan for all its collections, which include all the documents relating to the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen. It has a preservation department, which deals with all issues concerning document preservation and operates a fixed policy in this area, with its own budget and resources (restoration workshop).

7. CONSULTATION

7.1 Provide details of consultation about this nomination with (a) the owner of the heritage; (b) the custodian; (c) your national or regional *Memory of the World* committee:

The owner and custodian are, in this case, the nominators.

The French *Memory of the World* committee was consulted at its meeting of 4 October 2002 and warmly welcomed the nomination, which was unanimously supported by its members.

PART B – SUBSIDIARY INFORMATION

8. ASSESSMENT OF RISK

8.1 Detail the nature and scope of threats to this documentary heritage.

There are no risks. The *Centre historique des Archives nationales* has its own preservation department, restoration workshop and photographic laboratory. Security on the premises is provided 24 hours a day and the burglar and fire alarms are in compliance with regulations.

9.1 Detail the preservation context of the documentary heritage.

Physical state: very good

Preservation history: as soon as they entered into force, the documents were deposited in the National Archives, set up under the French Revolution to preserve the archives of the assemblies and governments of the time.

Current preservation policy: all the nominated documents have been photographed, microfilmed and digitized. Researchers generally have access only to these reproductions. The *Centre historique des Archives nationales* only allows the originals to be viewed under exceptional circumstances (see below). Furthermore, during the nineteenth century, all of these documents were removed from their original series so they could be stored separately in the reserve of the *Centre historique des Archives nationales*, i.e. in the *Musée de l'histoire de France*.

Person responsible for preservation : Ms Ariane James-Sarazin, Curator of the Heritage, manager of the *Musée de l'histoire de France*

Means of access to the document:

Public access to the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen can be arranged as follows:

reproductions: microfilm available to researchers in the reading room of the CARAN (National Archives reception and research centre), 11 rue des Quatre-Fils Aymon, 75003 Paris (in 2003: salle Labrouste, 58, rue de Richelieu, 75002 Paris). However, researchers must first obtain a National Archives library card or pass, on presentation of proof of identity. All consultations are recorded on computer (Caran system).

originals: having submitted a request explaining the purpose of the consultation and arranged an appointment by telephone, fax or email, researchers may view the original documents at the documentation centre of the *Musée de l'histoire de France*, 60 rue des Francs-Bourgeois, 75003 Paris. However, researchers must first obtain a National Archives library card or pass, on presentation of proof of identity. All consultations are recorded on computer (Caran system).

remote consultation, via the ARCHIM database (which documents the French Revolution), accessible from the Internet site of the *Centre historique des Archives nationales* (www.archivesnationales.culture.gouv.fr). The photographic department of the *Centre*

historique des Archives nationales also possesses ektachromes and digitized images of the Declaration.

PART C – LODGEMENT

This nomination is lodged by:

(Please print name)..... *Centre historique des Archives nationales*

(Signature)..... (Date).....23 December 2002