

Petition for “L’Homme. Z.F.G.” and the “Sammlung Frauennachlässe”

To: University of Vienna and Bundesministerium für Wissenschaft und Forschung

From: Team of the research platform “Repositioning of Women’s and Gender History in an Altered European Context”, University of Vienna

The research platform “Repositioning of Women’s and Gender History in an Altered European Context” at the University of Vienna will soon come to a definitive end – and still the future of the two facilities that were financed from 2006 until 2011 within this context is uncertain: The “Collection of Women’s Personal Papers” and “L’Homme. European Journal of Feminist History” are in grave danger.

„L’Homme. European Journal of Feminist History” (*“L’Homme. Europäische Zeitschrift für Feministische Geschichtswissenschaft”*) and the “Collection of Women’s Personal Papers” (*Sammlung Frauennachlässe*) at the Department of History of the University of Vienna have been continually developed and expanded for more than 20 years with much enthusiasm and expertise, unpaid work and public money from the national and provincial governments as well as the university.

From 2006 until the end of 2011 both initiatives and two part-time staff scientists were financed by the University of Vienna via the research platform “Repositioning of Women’s and Gender History in an Altered European Context”. This financing has now expired, which endangers the long-term prospects of “L’Homme” and the “Collection of Women’s Personal Papers”.

Both facilities are closely connected with their founder and long-standing head, the doyenne of Austrian women’s and gender history, Edith Saurer, who died in April 2011. To secure what she stood for is a task for her companions and colleagues, who developed these institutions together with her.

“L’Homme” and the “Collection of Women’s Estates” are by no means of great significance merely for academic research and teaching in Vienna and Austria. Both institutions have also for a long time been part of broad international networks and can pride themselves on institutional cooperation throughout Europe and the United States. Today they are part of the widely recognised focus topics of research on Women’s and Gender History respectively ego-documents. They have often been awarded recognition and outstanding evaluations at the highest level.

Their glowing reputation, their great significance in academic research and teaching, the intensive usage of both institutions as an archival collection and as a possibility for publication, as well as the high level of international connections and cooperation can only be upheld if continuity is valued – continuity in financing and in supervision by a highly qualified, experienced documentarian familiar with the subject matter, and an extremely well-trained, professional and experienced editor. This is the more important in times when particular fissures characterise and endanger European academia, and a fast pace prevails even in the deployment of resources – whether of financial or personal nature.

With this appeal we would like to raise awareness of the currently very critical situation and stress the necessity of mobilising all possible means to ensure the future of both gender research activities in Vienna. With this signature we support the further financing and guaranteed existence of the “Collection of Women’s Personal Papers” and the editorship of “L’Homme” in their present form.