On Friday, Feb. 15, 2013, the Polish State Archives (PSA) and Jewish Records Indexing-Poland (JRI-Poland) entered into a new multi-year agreement that will expand access to Jewish records for thousands of family historians.

The agreement will enable JRI-Poland to rapidly expand its current online database of indices to five million records. With the support of researchers from the hundreds of towns with records in the JRI-Poland database, indices to more than one million additional records are expected to become available within a year.

The agreement reflects a resumption of cooperation between the PSA and JRI-Poland, whose landmark agreement from 1997-2006 resulted in the indexing of more than four million records whose listings are searchable in the JRI-Poland database.

JRI-Poland and the PSA will institute a new Order Processing System to vastly simplify the process of obtaining copies of archival records. JRI-Poland will have the administrative responsibility for processing orders for records from branches of the Polish State Archives. Researchers will be able to place orders by clicking on record index entries of interest in the JRI-Poland search results and paying by credit card via the JRI-Poland website.

In a statement reflecting the strong significance of these records and their importance to family historians around the world, the PSA announced that they are beginning a massive effort to digitize all vital records in their more than 30 Regional Archives. These will be available — free — on their National Digital Archives and Regional Archive websites.

JRI-Poland will serve the research community and PSA by linking its search results to the PSA's digital images of the Jewish records. As a result of the massive indexing undertaken by JRI-Poland since 1995, the indices to Jewish records will form the bulk of all digital image linking on the PSA website.

The Order Processing System will eventually be phased out as digitized records become available online.

PSA General Director, Professor Władysław Stepniak observed: "The signing of this agreement will open a new phase in the cooperation between JRI-Poland and State Archives in Poland. I am convinced that the results of our mutual efforts will be helpful for many people interested in centuries-old Polish-Jewish relations, shared history and family history research."

To reach this milestone took the combined and diligent efforts of the JRI-Poland executive committee, Judy Baston, Stanley Diamond, Mark Halpem and Michael Tobias, and former committee member Hadassah Lipsius, and the invaluable input of our board members. We also would like to thank those JRI-Poland Archive Coordinators and Town Leaders who continued to carry out their responsibilities and serve researchers around the world during the years leading up to this new agreement.

Additional information will be posted as we move forward.

Stanley Diamond, Executive Director
For the Board of Jewish Records Indexing - Poland

See the full text of the Jewish Records Indexing - Poland agreement News Release.

Read the announcement on the Polish State Archives website.