



EN

GOVERNING COUNCIL
93rd session
Rome, 7 - 10 May 2014

UNIDROIT 2014
C.D. (93) 10
Original: English/French
April 2014

Item No. 11 on the agenda: Library and Research Activities

(prepared by the Secretariat)

<i>Summary</i>	<i>Library activities and research opportunities in 2013-2014</i>
<i>Action to be taken</i>	<i>The Governing Council is invited to take note of the activities undertaken</i>
<i>Priority level</i>	<i>High</i>
<i>Related document</i>	<i>Annual Report 2013 (C.D.(93) 2)</i>

A. The UNIDROIT Library

1. From its foundation, UNIDROIT set as one of its priorities the creation of an international legal documentation centre to assist it in the research and studies it was about to undertake. Initially designed as a simple tool in support of the Institute's scientific and legislative activities, over the years the Library has grown into one of the foremost legal documentation centres in Europe and beyond.

2. The UNIDROIT Library is an activity mandated by the Statute (Article 9) and must be maintained and expanded through an acquisitions and information management policy that preserves its unique profile and prevents it from becoming "just another" legal library available for researchers in or passing by Rome. In particular, the Governing Council indicated in the past that investment in the Library should prioritise measures aimed at:

(a) supporting the research activities needed to carry out the Organisation's Work Programme;

(b) enhancing the attractiveness of the Library for researchers from around the world, in particular from developing countries, taking into account the expectations of researchers in today's world; and

(c) intensifying exchanges with other libraries, including libraries in Rome and libraries maintained by other intergovernmental Organisations, such as the Hague Conference and UNCITRAL.

3. The UNIDROIT Library continued in 2013 the cooperation and networking strategy with other Roman and non-Roman libraries through specific collaboration programmes aimed at the sharing of bibliographic resources and at ensuring access and consultation of printed and electronic resources. It also completed work related to cataloguing and software upgrading of its management software. Thanks to recent extra budgetary funding a wide range of essential monographs could be acquired for the Library's collection and permitted the shift in resources toward the strategic acquisition of materials directly related to topics on the Work Programme of the Institute. For more information concerning the on-going activities of the Library, see the Annual Report 2013 (UNIDROIT 2014 – C.D.(93) 2, pp. 25-26).

4. The Library continues to attract readers from all over the world. Among the 1225 visitors in 2013, the 59 foreign guests came from 23 different countries.

B. Research activities

5. The UNIDROIT Library is more than just a study centre for those who take part in the legislative activities of the Organisation and for visiting researchers; it is also a meeting-place for people of different legal cultures where the legislative work being carried out by UNIDROIT for more than three quarters of a century constitutes a stimulus for research.

6. Government officials and members of the legal profession, not only academics and practitioners but also law students from all over the world, are welcome to use the UNIDROIT Library as **independent visiting researchers**.

7. Each year, UNIDROIT welcomes a limited number of **interns** – some under an institutional cooperation with UNIDROIT – to participate in the work of the Secretariat on one of the subjects (including non-legislative activities, in particular the data base UNILEX) on the Institute's current Work Programme, or on work associated with other UNIDROIT instruments. Interns are generally expected to conduct research on specific aspects of the subject chosen/assigned and/or to prepare concept notes.

8. UNIDROIT also welcomes public officials and lawyers from UNIDROIT member States to join its staff temporarily on **Secondment**: judges, public administration officials and professionals from public organisations and private institutions are invited to participate in the work of the Secretariat of UNIDROIT.

9. In line with UNIDROIT's legal co-operation activities, a **Research Scholarships Programme** has been set up for top-level lawyers, with special attention given to applicants from developing countries or countries in economic transition. The Research Scholarships Programme has, in the more than twenty years of its existence, grown into an important tool for promoting research in the field of international and comparative law. It is primarily aimed at citizens from developing countries or countries in economic transition, and has proved its mettle in particular in publicising the Institute's work.

10. Since 1993, when the Programme was first launched, it has hosted roughly 200 researchers from some 60 countries. Between 12 and 15 scholarships are awarded each year for an average research period of two months. The Programme has long been funded partly from the general budget of UNIDROIT and by donors and the candidates were chosen under an audit of a Scholarships Sub-committee of the Governing Council.

11. At its 92nd session (2012), the Governing Council reaffirmed the important impact the Programme has on developing and promoting the work of the Institute and welcomed the Secretariat's proposal to make the efforts to fund this Programme entirely from outside sources beginning in 2014. It therefore decided to abolish the Chapter 11 budget line for the Legal Co-operation Programme, with a view to funding the scholarships entirely from voluntary contributions, while at the same time expanding the Programme's capacity where possible. To this end, scholarships and opportunities for research or secondment are now shown as a general item in the draft Work Programme for 2014-2016 under the heading "Non-legislative Activities" under the umbrella of the Library and the Scholarships Sub-committee accordingly serves no further purpose.

12. In 2014, the UNIDROIT Foundation has agreed to provide financial support for three selected scholars; other financial sources for the scholarship programme are *Transnational Law & Business University (TLBU)* (six scholarships) and the Government of the Netherlands (one scholarship). Additional financial support for the Programme is being sought by the Secretariat among potential voluntary donors.

13. The list of the persons welcomed at UNIDROIT in 2013, as independent visiting researchers, interns, on secondment and under the Research Scholarship Programme is to be found in the Annual Report 2013 (UNIDROIT 2014 – C.D.(93) 2, pp. 25-26).

ACTION TO BE TAKEN

14. *The Governing Council is invited to take note of the activities undertaken by the Library, the research opportunities offered by UNIDROIT, and to assist the Secretariat in its efforts to secure additional funding for the Research Scholarship Programme.*