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Item No. 11 on the agenda: Library and research activities

(prepared by the Secretariat)

<i>Summary</i>	<i>The document illustrates developments at the Library and its activities in 2015, perspectives for 2016 as well as proposals for the coming years</i>
<i>Action to be taken</i>	<i>The Governing Council is invited to take note of the progress made and to consider additional measures</i>
<i>Mandate</i>	<i>Work Programme 2014 - 2016</i>
<i>Priority level</i>	<i>High</i>
<i>Related documents</i>	<i>Annual Report 2015 (C.D. (95) 2); UNIDROIT 2016 – Study Scholarships: Impl. 27) LXV /</i>

I. LIBRARY COOPERATION AND NETWORKING

1. The UNIDROIT Library continued in 2015 the cooperation strategy with other Roman and foreign libraries. In 2015, a very fruitful collaboration programme was established with the Library of the Università degli Studi di Napoli, Federico II.

II. CATALOGUING AND SOFTWARE UPGRADING OF THE LIBRARY MANAGEMENT SOFTWARE

A. Library management software upgrading

2. The Library's software management system Aleph500 was upgraded to the latest version Aleph 21.2.2 without any interruption of services for the Institute's scientific staff or the researchers in the Library.

B. Cataloguing

3. With regard to cataloguing, work continued with regard to the development of a so called "Legal thesaurus", which allows an even more precise search result in all languages. The project is very innovative, just a few libraries in the world do have a legal thesaurus in various languages.

III. DIGITISATION

4. At its 94th session (Rome, May 2015), the Governing Council requested clarification as to whether it was possible to digitise Library materials so as to offer the Library readers an even broader range of research material. It was agreed to proceed with an official request to become a partner library in the Google library project as an attractive opportunity to make the collection of a large library, such as the UNIDROIT Library, accessible in digital form.

5. Therefore, in 2015 the library examined the possibility to join the Google library project. Furthermore, in detail alternative ways of the digitisation of materials, and the possibilities and costs of an independent solution for the UNIDROIT Library for the realisation of such a very challenging project were examined.

A. Google library project

6. Unfortunately, our official request to be included as a partner of Google in the Google Library Project was not successful, because Google is currently unavailable to accept new partners due to many other large library projects.

B. In-house-Digitisation

7. In 2015 the UNIDROIT Library examined, therefore, the key issues involved in the conceptualisation, planning and implementation of a in-house digitisation project as an alternative solution. For the realisation of such a project, UNIDROIT started to examine the practical and financial possibilities, and consulted experts in the field of digitisation of books regarding the various technical ways for digitisation of materials in-house.

8. For digitisation, the key factors influencing costs are: the nature of the original item to be digitised, the digitisation process and mechanisms possible and the information, content and delivery objectives to be achieved. There are costs involved regarding the startup of creating digital content, for establishing access and for managing and maintaining digital resources into the future. There are also costs involved with regard to the selection of the materials, the preparation of documents, metadata creation, benchmarking, text conversion, quality control and post-processing of digital files. Apart from costs related to staff, advanced technical equipment is necessary for the digitisation project. There are innovative book scanners on the market. The firm ALPACA S.r.l, Rome, offers, for example, the book scanner Zeutschel Scanner Planetario Zeta Comfort for about € 12.000,00. Furthermore, the digitisation process requires a large range of various software solutions for indexing and for creating metadata.

9. The experts in the field of digitisation of library materials, the company SIAI (Servizi Integrali alle Imprese, Roma) were invited to examine the situation and to make a costs estimate. SIAI has carried out an inspection in the library and submitted a bid for the digitisation of about 25.000 paper volumes, based on an average of 700 pages each. Using this estimation, it was possible to make a price proposal for each page to be scanned. The costs of one page to be scanned are € 0,0668 + IVA. The costs for the digitisation of about 25.000 volumes would therefore be roughly € 17.500,00. In general, the more pages that are to be scanned, the cheaper

it is. The price includes costs for adapting the metadata, quality control, storage and backup of digital copies. Each volume will be associated with the data required for its research so that it can be extrapolated directly from the OPAC (Online Public Access Catalogue (so-called indexing)).

10. Although unfortunately a joint project with Google is not possible at present, it is nevertheless proposed to continue to pursue the possibility of digitisation of parts of the Library collection.

11. Digitised materials could enhance the Library's collection significantly. The offer submitted by the firm SIAI, Rome, is not only very cost effective but it also offers the advantage that the number of scanned books could be flexible, and could be adapted at any time to the existing financial resources of the annual budget of the Library. No long-term financial commitments must be taken.

12. Moreover, it would be possible to hire interns or students on the basis of volunteer work at the Institute, who could, for example, assist with scanning 1 or 2 hours a day, and then otherwise conduct research in the Library. In this way, of course, more pages could be scanned without further costs, and could then be handed over to the company SIAI for further processing.

13. It is therefore proposed to proceed with the UNIDROIT Library's digitisation project on the basis of a formal agreement with the firm SIAI, which could be funded either from the Library's budget (up to a very limited extend!), subject to available resources, or from external contributions that could be solicited. It is planned to introduce different levels of access to the digital resources. Users who contribute to the UNIDROIT Library by donations, could be granted privileged user rights, as for example the full access to the digital collection. Ensuring such privileged rights could also be a good way to encourage donations in the future.

IV. ACQUISITIONS, DONATIONS, EXCHANGES

14. In 2015, the Library's holdings increased by 1256 titles, of which 684 were purchased outright, 160 were obtained on an exchange basis, while 412 further titles were received as gift. The expansion of the Library's holdings has been hampered by steady increases in the price of publications and a chronic lack of resources.

15. In 2015, as in previous years, the Library received donations in kind from the Max-Planck-Institute of Foreign Private and Private International Law in Hamburg, and from the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG).

V. RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

16. The UNIDROIT Library has become more than just a study centre for those who take part in UNIDROIT's legislative activities and for visiting researchers. It is also a meeting place for people of different legal cultures who are inspired by UNIDROIT's work. The Library continued to attract researchers and readers from all over the world and, among the 1177 visitors in 2015, 39 foreign guests came from 28 different countries. 2015 was a particular busy and fruitful year for scientific legal interchange in the UNIDROIT Library.

17. Government officials, academics, private practitioners, and law students are welcome to access the UNIDROIT Library as ***independent visiting researchers***.

18. Each year, UNIDROIT also welcomes a limited number of interns – some through institutional cooperation programmes with UNIDROIT – to participate in the Secretariat’s work, such as projects arising from the current Work Programme, other UNIDROIT instruments, and non-legislative activities (e.g. development of the UNILEX database). In 2015, 28 researchers were welcomed as interns. Interns are generally expected to conduct research on specific aspects of the selected subject and prepare concept notes. Mr Teemu Viinikainen (Finland) Master of Laws, University of Turku and Mr Ercole De Vito (Italy) Master of Laws, L.U.I.S.S. Guido Carli University in Rome, were welcomed as Research Assistants in the UNIDROIT Secretariat.

19. UNIDROIT also welcomes public officials and lawyers from UNIDROIT member States to join its staff temporarily on **secondments**.

20. In line with UNIDROIT’s legal co-operation activities, a **Research Scholarships Programme** has been established for top-level lawyers, with special attention given to applicants from developing countries or countries in economic transition. This Programme has grown, in its 21 years in existence, into an important tool for promoting UNIDROIT’s work and related research in the field of international and comparative law. The Programme hosted 17 scholars from 14 different countries and, accordingly, continues to play a key role in disseminating and promoting UNIDROIT’s work. For a presentation of the Programme and its beneficiaries in 2015, see the UNIDROIT Research Scholarship Programme Implementation Report for 2015 (UNIDROIT 2016 – Study LXV/Scholarships: Impl. 26).

21. Voluntary contributions to finance scholarships were received from the UNIDROIT Foundation for International Uniform Law, members of the Governing Council on a personal basis, the President of UNIDROIT and the Transnational Law & Business University (TLBU). The Secretariat expresses its gratitude to all donors in 2015 and hopes that they will wish to renew their financial commitment, and that new donors may join them, so the Programme’s financial viability can be maintained and a satisfactory number of scholars selected.

VI. ACTION TO BE TAKEN

22. *The Governing Council is invited to take note of the progress made and to consider the additional measures proposed by the Secretariat.*