



EN

GOVERNING COUNCIL
99th session (B)
Rome, 23-25 September 2020

UNIDROIT 2020
C.D. (99) B.17
Original: English
August 2020

Item No. 13 (b) 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 2019, perspectives for 2020 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 2020 - 2022</i>
<i>Priority level</i>	<i>High</i>
<i>Related document</i>	<i>Annual Report 2019 (C.D. (99) B.2); UNIDROIT 2019 – Study LXV/Scholarships: Impl. 30</i>

I. LIBRARY COOPERATION AND NETWORKING

1. The UNIDROIT Library continued in 2019 the cooperation strategy with other Roman and foreign libraries. In particular, first steps have been taken to create a future collaboration between the UNIDROIT Library and the “*Biblioteca juridica*” of the Bank of Italy.

II. CATALOGUING AND SOFTWARE UPGRADING OF THE LIBRARY MANAGEMENT SOFTWARE

2. The Library’s software management system Aleph500 was upgraded to the latest version Aleph 23.2.3 without any interruption of services for the Institute’s scientific staff or the researchers in the Library.

III. DIGITISATION

3. At its 96th session (Rome, May 2017), the Governing Council agreed to proceed with the in-house digitisation of Library materials so as to offer the Library readers an even broader range of research material. The project was considered an attractive opportunity to make the collection of a large library, such as the UNIDROIT Library, accessible in digital form.

4. In 2019, work has progressed on the digitisation project of library materials. In 2019, 664 monographs (389 titles of the Gorla collection, 275 titles regarding, in particular, the 'Chiomenti collection' and various other titles regarding comparative law and unification of laws), were digitally prepared and added to the Library's electronic collection. Special attention was paid to the digitisation of the 'Gorla collection' in order to enhance and preserve one of the Library's rarest and most valuable historical collections, from the 17th to the early part of the 19th Century.

5. The UNIDROIT Library also continues to follow the strategy of "scan on demand", as agreed on the occasion of the UNIDROIT Governing Council's 97th session in 2018. The digitisation of less sought-after materials can be avoided and the best possible use can be made of the financial resources available for the project.

IV. PRESERVATION OF THE GORLA COLLECTION

6. One of the Library's future projects with high priority is the preservation of the ancient part of the generally most valuable Gorla collection. Rare books can be damaged by several factors, including moisture, heat, excessive sunlight and general mishandling. Appropriate storage materials should be provided for fragile materials.

7. In order to adequately store and protect the valuable collection for the future, in particular to assure adequate protection against the negative effects of light and dust, new suitable shelves have been purchased from a specialised firm for library storage systems, 'Promal'. The shelves have been received and installed, and the Collection relocated on this new, more appropriate setting. These shelves ensure the proper ventilation of the rare books and the protection against the damaging factors mentioned above.

8. In addition, the room in which the Gorla Collection is kept is to be equipped with a humidifier to prevent the destruction of valuable books due to dryness. Furthermore, new shades have been installed to ensure only the adequate amount of light enters the room.

V. UPDATE OF LAW REVIEWS LIST

9. The list of law reviews to which the Library is subscribed has been completely revised. Links of those publications which are also available online have been included in the relevant bibliographic data sheet in the online catalogue, and can now be easily consulted by readers.

VI. ACQUISITIONS, DONATIONS, EXCHANGES

10. In 2019, the Library's holdings increased by 865 titles, of which 512 were purchased outright, 112 were obtained on an exchange basis, while 241 further titles were received as gifts. The expansion of the Library's holdings has been hampered by steady increases in the price of publications and a chronic lack of resources.

11. In 2019, as in previous years, the Library received donations in kind from the Max-Planck-Institute of Foreign Private and Private International Law in Hamburg.

VII. COOPERATION WITH ACADEMIC INSTITUTIONS

12. In line with its policy over the previous years, and with the intention to further develop it in the future, the Secretariat has promoted cooperation with academic institutions in relation to the Institute's activities. In 2019/2020, new Memoranda of Understanding have been signed with the International Institute for Air and Space Law at Leiden University (the Netherlands), the University of Nottingham School of Law (United Kingdom), Shanghai University of Political Science and Law (SHUPL) (P.R. China), *Université Clermont Auvergne* (France), the International Training Centre of the International Labour Organization (Italy), the International Bar Association (IBA), and the *Comité Americano De Derecho Agrario* (Costa Rica). These agreements contemplate collaboration in research projects for the promotion of UNIDROIT's purposes and achievements, and participation in the UNIDROIT research scholarship and internship programme. Additionally, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between UNIDROIT and the Ministry of Commerce of the People's Republic of China (MOFCOM) relating to the sponsoring of China-funded Junior Professional Officers (JPOs) at the UNIDROIT Secretariat. Under this agreement, a JPO will be sponsored by MOFCOM to work as a Legal Officer at the UNIDROIT Secretariat for a period of 2 years. The Secretariat continues to enhance the number of agreements with research centres and universities.

VIII. RESEARCH ACTIVITIES AND INTERNSHIPS

13. UNIDROIT's *Research Programme* and *Internship Programmes* are important tools for promoting UNIDROIT's work and related research in the field of international and comparative law.¹

14. Initially designed as a simple tool in support of the Institute's scientific and legislative activities, over the years the UNIDROIT Library has grown into one of the foremost legal documentation centres in Europe and beyond. It provides an ideal setting to carry out research in areas of international private law, commercial law and uniform law. In 2019, the Library received a total of 1145 visits, and hosted 68 scholars and researchers from 32 different countries.

15. While most of scholars and researchers were hosted on an independent basis, often funded by their university, or under cooperation schemes with academic institutions, in 2019 ten scholars were awarded a grant under the *Scholarship Programme* thanks to contributions from the Ministry of Commerce of the People's Republic of China (MOFCOM), the UNIDROIT Foundation, as well as from members of the UNIDROIT Governing Council. For a full presentation of the Scholarship Programme and its beneficiaries in 2019, see the Annual Report 2019 (C.D. (99) B.2), and the UNIDROIT SCHOLARSHIP AND INTERNSHIP PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION REPORT FOR 2019 (UNIDROIT 2019 – STUDY LXV/Scholarships: Impl. 30). The Secretariat expresses its gratitude to all donors in 2019 and hopes that they will wish to renew their financial commitment, and that new donors may join them.

16. Taking advantage of the presence of distinguished scholars at UNIDROIT, starting in January 2019, the Secretariat has organised a series of lectures and presentations on topics related to the scholars' areas of research, attended by members of UNIDROIT Secretariat and current guests in the library as well as interested outside experts expressly invited to participate. To this end, UNIDROIT has partnered up with institutions such as the Bank of Italy or Roma Tre University. Relevant examples of the said presentations were, amongst other, the following:

- On Tuesday 29 January 2019, Professor Guo Yu (Law School, Beijing University (PRC)), delivered a lecture entitled "The electronic delivery in international trade: the recently adopted UNCITRAL Model Law on Electronic Transferable Record (MLETR)". Professor Guo Yu was a former representative of the Chinese delegation to the UNCITRAL Working Group that drafted the Model Law on Electronic Transferable Records. The lecture was followed by a Q&A session, and, building on the presentation, an exchange ensued on the different methodological approach to the

¹ For a full presentation of the Research Programme and the Internship Programme, including a list of current and former guests see: <https://unidroit.org/research-and-internships>

drafting of international instruments between UNCITRAL and UNIDROIT. Professor Guo Yu and Secretary General Prof. Ignacio Tirado acted as main discussants.

- On 22 February 2019, Professor Lionel D. Smith, Faculty of Law, McGill University, Montreal, Canada, delivered a guest lecture entitled "Acting for Others in Law". The lecture was followed by a Q&A session, moderated by Secretary-General Professor Ignacio Tirado.

17. UNIDROIT's internship programme hosts a select number of interns each year to participate in the work of the Secretariat. Interns are generally expected to conduct research on specific aspects of the selected subject and assist members of staff. In 2019, 25 researchers were welcomed as interns (See Annual Report 2019, C.D. (99) B.2)).

VI. ACTION TO BE TAKEN

18. *The Governing Council is invited to take note of the progress made.*