

## THE UNIDROIT LIBRARY

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### DESCRIPTION

The UNIDROIT Library serves as research tool for use by the officials of UNIDROIT, visiting researchers/interns and also professors and students of law. The holdings of the UNIDROIT Library consist of more than 240,000 volumes and about 450 current periodicals/serials. The publications collected deal mainly with private law and, in particular, commercial law. The Library's collection also comprises a wide selection of material on international private law, international trade law, comparative private law, private international law and, especially as concerns periodicals, international public law. Moreover there are special sections on Roman and canon law.



*The building that houses the UNIDROIT Library - especially constructed for it in 1929 - 1930*

The UNIDROIT Library maintains extensive collections of the documentation of international organisations such as the League of Nations, the United Nations, the International Labour Organization, the International Maritime Organization, the Council of Europe, the Organization of American States, the Nordic Council, and the Hague Conference on Private International Law. The UNIDROIT Library is further a depository library for United Nations official records and sales publications.

*The Gorla Collection:* In 1987 Professor Gino Gorla, formerly Professor of Comparative Law at the University of Rome "La Sapienza", donated to the UNIDROIT Library his collection of antique books. This collection of over 550 titles comprising about 900 volumes is composed of treatises, commentaries, collections of *decisiones, resolutiones, consilia, responsa, allegationes and controversiae forenses*.

The Library is funded out of the UNIDROIT general budget. The financial resources are supplemented by donations from individuals and public research institutions, such as the *Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft*, the *Max-Planck Institut für ausländisches und internationales Privatrecht* (Hamburg), and the Italian Ministry of Culture.

The library staff is currently working on an electronic catalogue of the holdings of the library. The current library software, was introduced in 1997 and no longer meets the growing needs for information-system security. To permit a more effective protection of the existing data, the current software should be replaced by a new EDV-system, which guarantees a high level of security. The software identified as

the most suitable is an integrated library system used by a vast number of libraries throughout the world.

The system allows the direct import and export of data records from external databases. The copying of data is a major advantage compared to the work-intensive manual insertion currently carried out, which is also susceptible to mistakes and requires time-consuming corrections. Furthermore, it offers high flexibility for the management of the data, modern user masks for cataloguing purposes, and integrated norm data connections.

## **OPINION**

“My two month stay at UNIDROIT had a significant impact on the development of my research on transnational litigation and comparative procedure. Although I was very familiar with the ALI Rules of Transnational Procedure, my time at UNIDROIT allowed me to have more exposure to the European view of the harmonization project and UNIDROIT’s significant role in developing overarching Principles. [...]

The fine UNIDROIT library and open stacks made it possible for me to find many sources of which I was not even aware. The extensive periodical collection was especially helpful. I also enjoyed exposure to varying legal traditions and ideas through exchanges with the members of the Secretariat and with the visiting interns”.

(Louise Ellen Teitz, Law Professor at Roger Williams University School of Law, Bristol, Rhode Island (visiting scholar 2000)).

## **FUNDS NEEDED**

€250,000 for installation of air conditioning and security systems

€300,000 for acquisitions to enhance library holdings

€170,000, spread over four to five years for conversion from paper-based to electronic catalogue

€10,000 for photocopying and office equipment

€150,000 per annum for subscriptions, licences and maintenance of library holdings