

The International Association of Law Libraries (IALL): law libraries in an era of globalisation

Jules Winterton, President of IALL

Introduction

The International Association of Law Libraries (IALL) is a universal and multinational non-profit organisation created to further co-operation among law librarians, law libraries and others concerned with legal information across borders and continents, and to encourage and promote their interests world-wide. Founded in 1959, the IALL now has over 700 members in more than 50 countries on five continents. The members represent all types of legal collections ranging from academic law libraries of all sizes to corporate libraries, and from national and parliamentary libraries to administrative agency and court libraries.

It is my hope that colleagues and fellow professionals in Russia will find the work of the Association both interesting and useful for your professional activities, and that you will become a member. I also hope that you will have an opportunity to attend our annual courses in international law librarianship, which take place in different parts of the world in the autumn of each year. At these meetings participants learn and develop professionally but also meet colleagues and make friends, enjoying and enlarging a most important global professional network. I look forward to meeting you in person at such an occasion.

You may want to bookmark our homepage <http://www.iall.org>, where you will find all kinds of news relating to our Association and its activities. There are pages about the forthcoming conference in Istanbul in October 2009 and a re-design of the site has recently been completed.

The Mission of the IALL

As a worldwide, cooperative non-profit organization, IALL:

- promotes the work of individuals, libraries, and other organizations concerned with the dissemination of legal information;
- advances the education of law librarians and other legal information professionals by providing substantive educational programs on foreign and international legal systems in venues all around the world;
- supports educational and professional opportunities for newer legal information professionals, especially those from developing nations, by providing financial support in the form of bursaries and scholarships for annual course attendance and internships;
- shares legal knowledge and scholarship and increases access to legal information on a worldwide basis through the International Journal of Legal Information and other publications, its listserv and its website;
- fosters networking and mentoring among legal information professionals on a worldwide basis by creating and maintaining ongoing relationships between IALL and other international, national and regional law library and legal information organizations, by supporting the creation and development of such organisations and by sponsoring organisations and events;

- supports and encourages the development of national and international legal information policies and promotes free access to legal information on a worldwide basis through policy statements and scholarship, its Website Award, and its adoption of open access strategies for its publications.

Governance

The Board of the Association is elected for three years and the latest Board took office at the end of the Annual General Meeting on 3 December 2007 in Mumbai. It is presently constituted as follows, President: Jules Winterton of the Institute of Advanced Legal Studies, England; Secretary: Jennefer Aston of the Bar Council of Ireland; Treasurer: Ann Morrison of Dalhousie Law School, Canada; First Vice President: Dick Danner of Duke Law School, USA. Board members: Ruth Bird of the Bodleian Law Library, England; Barbara Garavaglia of the University of Michigan Law School, USA; Ligita Gjortlere of Riga Graduate School of Law, Latvia; Petal Kinder of the High Court of Australia; Xinh Luu of the University of Virginia Law School, USA; Uma Narayan of the Bombay High Court, Mumbai, India; Pedro Padillia-Rosa, University of Puerto Rico; Anita Soboleva of JURIX (Jurists for Constitutional Rights and Freedoms), Russia; Jeroen Vervliet, Peace Palace Library, Netherlands.

IALL Annual Conferences

The annual course in international law librarianship is the Association's main meeting and educational event of the year. It takes place in a different city around the world each year and reflects the local legal environment and culture as well as addressing international issues of importance to all legal information experts. The annual conference is also a catalyst for change and improvement in the recognition of the role of law librarians and of legal information itself. It regularly attracts delegates from over 25 countries. Over the last few years it has taken place at the University of Cape Town, in Mumbai, and of course in Russia.

The Association's Annual Course on International Law Librarianship on 'The New Russia: Law and Legal Information' was held at the Faculty of Law of St Petersburg State University in 2006 and an optional additional programme took place in Moscow including particularly at the M I Rudomino All-Russia State Library for Foreign Literature. The conference was organised in collaboration with the Russian Association of Law Libraries. The quality of the programme for our course was outstanding in both its educational and social aspects and gave us access to unique expertise and to outstanding examples of Russia's cultural heritage. The Association received very complimentary comments from many delegates about the programme, the locations, and the superb organisation. For many it was their first visit to Russia and they felt they had learned a great deal and made good friends with their Russian counterparts. Russia and its legal system do not seem so distant or so unknown thanks to these colleagues and the wonderful conference which they organised for us. The meeting of the International Association of Law Libraries in Russia proved both an enjoyable and important experience. Several of the papers given at the conference are contained in the 'conference issue' of the *International Journal of Legal Information*, volume 35, no.2, Summer 2007.

The 27th Annual Course on International Law Librarianship, 'Puerto Rico and the Caribbean: Legal Information in Multiple Legal Systems' in San Juan, Puerto Rico has recently taken place in December 2008. The conference benefited from a large group of local law librarians as organisers and was a great success, drawing on expertise across the Caribbean, educating us in the complexities and diversity of legal systems and cultures and providing us with an experience of the warmth and vivacity of Puerto Rico.

Looking forward to the next two conferences, I am delighted to announce that arrangements are progressing for the Association's 28th Annual Course in International Law Librarianship will take place at the Bilgi University in Istanbul from 11th to 15th October 2009 under the title 'Turkey in a Global Context: Law and Legal Information. The conference is under the care of Sami Cukadar, a former IALL scholarship holder, and Kerem Kahvecioglu from Istanbul Bilgi University. Looking even further forward I am pleased to announce that the 2010 conference will take place at the home of international law, the Peace Palace in The Hague, home to the International Court of Justice, in the wonderful modern new extension housing the library and an auditorium, and other facilities.

Scholarships and Internships

Each year the Association awards three professional development bursaries to provide assistance for law librarians to attend the IALL conference, comprising a complimentary registration to the conference and up to US\$1,500 in financial assistance, and a free year's membership of the Association. Last year the bursaries were awarded to the National Librarian of Haiti, a law librarian from Washington DC, and a law librarian from Istanbul.

The Association has established a new scholarship in addition to the three professional development bursaries which assist law librarians to attend the Annual Course. The new grant provides financial assistance of up to US\$3,000 each year for a law librarian to undertake an internship or placement or extended visit to a law library outside their own country. In 2008 Ms Le Thi Hanh, librarian at the Hanoi Law University Library, Vietnam, became the first to be awarded the IALL internship grant and she will be hosted by the Cornell University law Library. She tells us: "I am applying for an internship in the technical services department of the Cornell Law library in order to observe and learn the challenges and principles of the classification of legal materials using the Library of Congress system. Our Library in Hanoi plans to proceed with a major change in its classification scheme; we will migrate from a Vietnamese classification system to the Library of Congress system. This significant change is fully supported by the Swedish project 'Strengthening Legal Education in Vietnam' with whom our Library has closely worked in the past few years."

Publications

The *International Journal of Legal Information*, the official publication of the International Association of Law Libraries, is issued three times a year: Spring, Summer and Winter. It seeks to advance the exchange of legal information throughout the world. Under the direction of its international editorial board and advisors, the *IJLI* serves the global community of law librarians, legal scholars, and practitioners through the publication of original articles, conference papers, bibliographies, book reviews, documents concerning law and law-related information.

The Association has negotiated a contract with Ashgate Publishing for the publication of an 'IALL Handbook of International Legal Information Management' to be compiled over the next two years and edited by officers of the Association. This will be a substantial volume and will provide law librarians around the world with a comprehensive and authoritative state-of-the-art review of the current issues in legal information management with a global perspective. The published volume will be available at a discount to members of the Association. Other publications of the Association and articles about it can be found listed at <http://iall.org/about-articles.html>.

Collaboration and Cooperation

It is part of the role of the Association to collaborate with national and regional law

library associations and, where possible, to assist in the formation of new associations. The new Section of Law Libraries of the International Federation of Library Associations which was formed following representations by IALL and the American Association of Law Libraries. The Chair of the Section is IALLs' former President, Holger Knudsen. The Association continues to offer support to the new Section as it contributes to the programmes within the World Congress and contributes to the policy-making and lobbying activities of IFLA on behalf of associations such as our own.

One of the watchwords of modern librarianship is collaboration. We know we need each other. So many initiatives and collaborative projects rely on coordination of efforts and these ultimately rely on contacts, on contact between a relatively few people and on meetings between individuals, increasingly on an international basis. The role of the IALL in facilitating international networking is extremely important.

Globalisation

One of the interests and challenges of law librarianship has always been that each country has a different legal system and a different system of legal publications, indeed each country may well have multiple jurisdictions. The legal systems may belong to larger families of legal systems, they may have influenced each other, but they still remain an expression of the culture and identity of a jurisdiction. This has always been the case and globalization has not reduced the complexity but on the contrary has increased the demand for access to legal information from these jurisdictions.

As law librarians, we increasingly need to be aware of foreign and international legal systems, understand the sources of law, and have recourse to expertise beyond our local resources. International contacts not only broaden our horizons and make us aware of other legal systems and responsive to enquiries about them, contacts also give us back-up for materials, language and expertise. Many of us are thankful for our international contacts at the end of a phone or an email.

Law librarians will meet many opportunities and challenges in the coming years but they will be well placed to share their expertise as globalisation in all its manifestations and the growing interpenetration of legal systems requires all of us to broaden our knowledge and our network of contacts. There is an increasing need for law librarians to gain experience in working with foreign legal information sources and to develop personal and professional relationships with law librarians around the world. There are opportunities to learn but also to contribute your own expertise because there will be many law librarians wanting to learn from you.

International Networking and IALL

International networking can start at home and, of course, networking can be virtual. You can participate through lists and discussion groups, membership of national and international associations, reading their publications, and building up contacts by email. However, there's a whole wide world out there waiting to meet you. So start thinking about a trip to meet your international colleagues. The IALL website includes an international calendar of events but IALL itself, its scholarships and Internships, and particularly its conferences are the best opportunities for international networking. IALL looks forward to more members from Russia becoming involved in our work and enjoying our association.

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