

1-1-2006

President's Report

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The *International Journal of Legal Information* is produced by The International Association of Law Libraries.

Recommended Citation

Winterton, Jules (2006) "President's Report," *International Journal of Legal Information*: Vol. 34: Iss. 2, Article 4.
Available at: <http://scholarship.law.cornell.edu/ijli/vol34/iss2/4>

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PRESIDENT'S REPORT

This is my second report to the membership as President of the International Association of Law Libraries, covering the period September 2005 to August 2006.

It is an ambition of the Association to foster national and regional law library associations and assist in their formation as part of the general aim of supporting law librarians. Back in 1968 the proposal, which led the following year to the foundation of the British and Irish Association of Law Librarians, was originally expressed in terms of a British section of the IALL. Much more recently, the Russian Association of Law Libraries was formed by a committed group who had attended several IALL conferences. During the past year there have been preliminary discussions regarding the possibilities of forming a law library group in Malaysia, an association of law libraries in India, and a regional association of law libraries for the former Yugoslavia. IALL has been associated with all of these initiatives and former IALL scholarship holders have played leading roles. We wish them all the very best of good fortune in their endeavours and will provide as much support as possible.

Turning to IALL activities, the Board of Directors met on 3rd September 2005 before the annual conference and again on 9th September 2005 immediately after the conference. Individual members of the Board met on a number of occasions during the year and kept in contact throughout the year to discuss issues concerning the Association.

The Association's 24th Annual Course on International Law Librarianship on "The European Union in the 21st Century: New Challenges in Law and Legal Information" was held at the European University Institute close to the village of San Domenico di Fiesole near Florence in September 2005. The attractions of an outstanding academic programme and the delightful surroundings of Tuscany made this one of our most popular and successful events, attracting almost 150 people from more than 25 countries. Once again it was a very special occasion, giving us access to unique scholarly expertise and providing an opportunity for us to renew our contacts and meet new colleagues from law libraries across the world.

Among the participants at the 24th Annual Course, we were glad to welcome the recipients of Association Scholarships. Following the decision to increase the budget for scholarships, for the first time there were three

recipients: Harvinder Kaur of the University of Malaya Law Library in Kuala Lumpur, Maria Otero-de Leon of the University of Puerto Rico Law Library, and Hudson Liyai of the University of Nairobi Law Library in Kenya.

The venue of the European University Institute (EUI) was particularly appropriate for the Association's Annual Course. It provided the Association with a setting combining exceptional academic expertise and international scholarly endeavour, and it offered a superb physical space for the Course. The EUI was founded in 1972 by the European Community Member States to provide advanced academic training to PhD students and to promote research at the highest level. It carries out research from a European perspective in history, law, economics, and political and social science. We are most grateful to its President, Professor Yves Mény, for his kind permission for the Course to be held at the European University Institute and for EUI staff to participate as speakers and local organisers.

I should like to repeat our thanks to the local organising committee, Veerle Deckmyn, Tommaso Giordano, and Machteld Nijsten, and the Board Liaison Officer, Jarka Looks, for their successful work. It takes considerable skill, determination and imagination to run a complex and lengthy conference so smoothly and to the satisfaction of so many different people. Our colleague and fellow IALL member, Machteld Nijsten, should be singled out as she bore the primary responsibility and deserves particular praise for the way she conducted the planning and running of the conference. I should also like to thank Guido Badalamenti, Director of University of Siena Libraries and Michele Casalini of Casalini Libri for their hospitality.

The Annual General Meeting of the Association was held on Monday 5 September 2005 and included reports on the work of the Association, its Officers and Committees. As part of the increasing transparency of the Association, the Board, with the membership's approval, appointed an independent auditor and the audited accounts for 2004 were approved. The AGM is also the venue for the presentation of the annual IALL Website Award; the 2005 Award was presented to Jeroen Vervliet, Director of the Peace Palace Library in The Hague, for his library's excellent website, to be found at <http://www.ppl.nl/>.

IALL members have increasingly important roles in an increasingly global legal environment and we need to ensure that our Association is serving the profession in the most effective ways. The Board had initiated a strategic review in 2004-05 to define the Association's priorities for development. A discussion document on strategic priorities for the

Association created earlier in 2005 was discussed extensively at the Annual General Meeting. The document was amended with reference to the comments made at that meeting and made available on IALL's website during late 2005 and the first part of 2006 for further comment by members unable to attend the AGM. It is scheduled to be formally adopted by the Board in September 2006.

I attended various events during the year representing the Association including the annual meeting of the American Association of Law Libraries in July 2006 where I spoke at the business meeting and hosted a reception, kindly sponsored by Thomson Legal and Regulatory, on behalf of the Association. I also attended the conference of the Nordic Law Librarians' Group in June 2006 and gave a paper on internationalisation and law libraries.

I am glad to record that IFLA, at the proposal of IALL and the American Association of Law Libraries, approved in December 2005 the formation of an IFLA Section for Law Libraries chaired by our Immediate Past President, Holger Knudsen. We can contribute a great deal to the law library community and to the library community in general by engaging in advocacy on policy issues that concern us all and we can best do that in collaboration with others. IALL has been a member of the International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA) for many years and has participated in IFLA congresses by organising short sessions for those who include legal materials among their responsibilities but cannot attend IALL conferences. IALL looks forward to continuing to support IFLA and expanding the representation of law librarians at an international level in policy decisions which affect our professional lives. Holger Knudsen is chairing the meeting of the Section on Law Libraries in at the IFLA congress in Seoul, South Korea in August 2006 where a programme will be presented in collaboration with AALL on the governance and management of law library and other specialist library associations with Susan Fox, Executive Director of AALL, as a speaker.

For the first time the Association website made available reports on the work of the Association, its Officers and Committees in advance of the Annual general Meeting. The documents remain available in a newly created archive section of the website together with a copy of the audited accounts of the Association. A survey on the appearance and content of the Association website has been conducted during the year. Based on the findings of the survey, a new design for the site will be developed and ways to increase its substantive content will be sought.

The archives of the Association were recently deposited at the Institute of Advanced Legal Studies, University of London and detailed listings have now been drawn up. If the listings and various policies on access are approved by the Board, these listings will be available on the Association website after the conference. Although the archives of the Association are now safely in an institutional home, there are many gaps in the papers. I would urge anyone with records of the Association, even such things as programmes from the early conferences, to contact me with a view to depositing them so that we can build a full record of the Association's history.

As I write, our 25th Annual Course on International Law Librarianship at the Law Faculty of the St. Petersburg State University in Russia from 10th to 14th September 2006 and the additional programme in Moscow are imminent. Board Liaison, Halvor Kongshavn and I visited the venue in early March 2006 and I am confident this will prove to be another memorable event and provide a valuable educational experience for all participants. The Course will also fulfil our mission in another way by supporting and encouraging the new Russian Association of Law Libraries. I look forward to meeting many of you again at our 25th Annual Course. I have no doubt it will be a highlight of the next report.

I finish this report by looking even further forward. I am delighted to announce that, following a visit by the President in December 2005, the venue for the 2007 conference has now been finalized. Uma Narayan, Librarian of the High Court in Mumbai and former IALL scholarship holder, will be the Local Organiser for the IALL's 26th Annual Course in International Law Librarianship, "Global Challenges & the Indian Legal System," in Mumbai, India from 1st to 5th December 2007.

Jules Winterton