



Institut suisse de droit comparé
Schweizerisches Institut für Rechtsvergleichung
Istituto svizzero di diritto comparato
Swiss Institute of Comparative Law

ANNUAL REPORT

2024



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A WORD FROM THE CHAIRMAN

The year 2024 will go down in the annals of the Swiss Institute of Comparative Law.

Firstly, because 2024 will have seen the arrival of most of the new members of the Institute's Council and the creation of an Academic Council to replace the one that the new law had rendered obsolete.

Secondly, because some of the strategic changes initiated in 2020 have borne fruit. The most important aspect is undoubtedly an increase in the number of research projects, accompanied by the launch of a SNSF project and an increase in the number of legal opinions for judicial authorities. In addition, major work within the library has been completed, including the rationalisation efforts begun earlier. On behalf of the Council, I would like to extend my warmest congratulations to the Institute's staff at all levels. Without their intense commitment, the work accomplished would not have had the same scope or the same impact.

Finally – and I'll remember this as the highlight of the year – 2024 saw the arrival of our new Director, Professor Nadjma Yassari. From day one, she has breathed new life into the Institute and identified original approaches for achieving the 2024-2027 strategic objectives. The Institute's Council is delighted with this renewal. It is convinced that, with Nadjma Yassari at the helm, the SICL will pursue its mission with distinction and excellence.

At the end of my term of office as Chairman, and after more than twenty years on the Institute's Council, I feel a sense of satisfaction, despite the difficulties that the Institute has encountered on more than one occasion. The year 2025 will undoubtedly bring further changes, notably with new restructuring and reorganisation measures. I am confident however, that it will mark a return to greater stability and pave the way for the development we all wish to see.

I wish my successor, Professor Michel Heinzmann, every success. I am sure that together with the Council and the new Director, he will be able to lay the foundations for the changes that still need to be put in place.

Franz Werro

Outgoing Chairman

A WORD FROM THE DIRECTOR

In August 2024, I had the great pleasure of taking up my new post as Director of the Swiss Institute of Comparative Law (SICL). This post, which had been vacant for some time, marked for me the start of an intensive period of immersion in the missions and strategy of this unique institute.

The structure and mission of the SICL set it apart, not only in Europe, but also internationally. Its mission of providing academic analysis and comparative law studies for the authorities remains of paramount importance, particularly in a world where cross-border legal issues are becoming ever more complex. The SICL is a reliable partner for the Swiss authorities, international institutions and the academic community. Through its analyses and studies of foreign legal systems, it makes a significant contribution to informed and rigorous legal decision-making. At the same time, we are constantly broadening our horizons through university partnerships, the organisation of international conferences and the nurturing of emerging talent.

However, this uniqueness is also accompanied by challenges: in a context of budgetary restrictions and institutional uncertainties, a clear direction and unwavering determination are essential to guarantee the stability and excellence of the SICL.

This year marks not only the start of my mandate, but also a phase of renewal and consolidation. We have had to fill vacant positions, strengthen internal structures and meet the high expectations of our academic and administrative partners. I have attached particular importance to dialogue with the staff and institutions involved, in order to build a shared vision of the future of the SICL.

The heart of the SICL is undeniably its library. With over 520,000 titles, it is one of the most prestigious comparative law collections in the world. But it is much more than just a collection of books: it is a lively forum for discussion and reflection, where researchers, practitioners and students come together to answer major legal questions. Our library also embodies the link that the SICL makes between research and practice – a connection that needs to be re-defined in a globalised world and in the age of emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence.

This Annual Report provides an overview of the work and challenges faced by the Institute this year. It is a testament to our efforts in developing the institute while underlining the importance of its contribution to legal scholarship and practice – now and in the future.

I would like to extend my warmest thanks to all our staff for their commitment during this key phase and I look forward to actively shaping the future of the SICL with them.

Nadjma Yassari

Director

2024 AT A GLANCE

Highlights of the year

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1 MAY

NEW DIRECTOR

New director Nadjma Yassari appointed to take up post on 1 August

17 JUNE, 18 SEPTEMBER AND 4 DECEMBER

EVENTS BASED ON THE ENCYCLOPAEDIA OF INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC LAW

Online conferences on international public economic law



Institut suisse de droit comparé
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Istituto svizzero di diritto comparato
Swiss Institute of Comparative Law

17 OCTOBER

DISCUSSIONS WITH THE POLITICAL AUTHORITIES

Official visit by Federal Councillor Beat Jans



18 AND 19 NOVEMBER

PROMOTING REFLECTION ON COMPARATIVE LAW IN OTHER REGIONS

Comparative law seminar in Bogotá,
Colombia



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26 NOVEMBER

EXPLORING NEW FORMATS FOR EXCHANGE AND DISCUSSION

In-house participative workshop (BarCamp)
during the Private International Law Day



MAIN DECISIONS OF THE INSTITUTE'S COUNCIL REGARDING THE LIBRARY

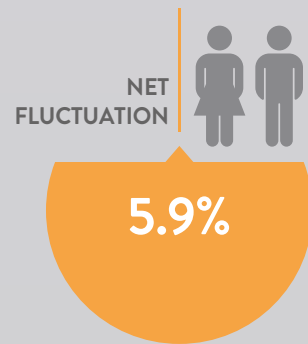
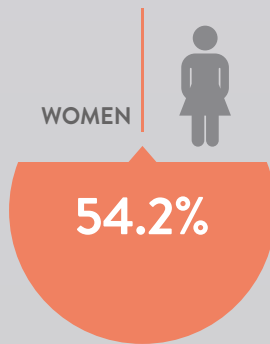
20 NOVEMBER

- Approval of the library's *paper-copy weeding* plan
- Approval of the principle of external storage of periodicals

2024 IN FACTS AND FIGURES

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RESEARCH

16 PUBLICATIONS
INCREASE OF 77%

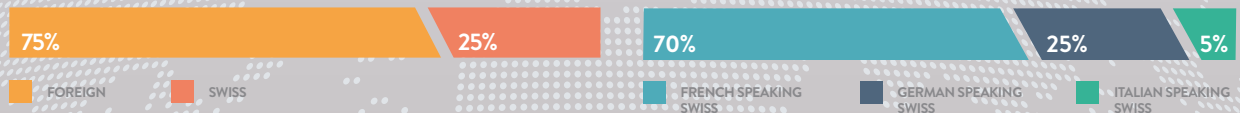
25th VOLUME
YEARBOOK OF PRIVATE
INTERNATIONAL LAW

THE LINKEDIN PAGE CONTINUES TO GROW

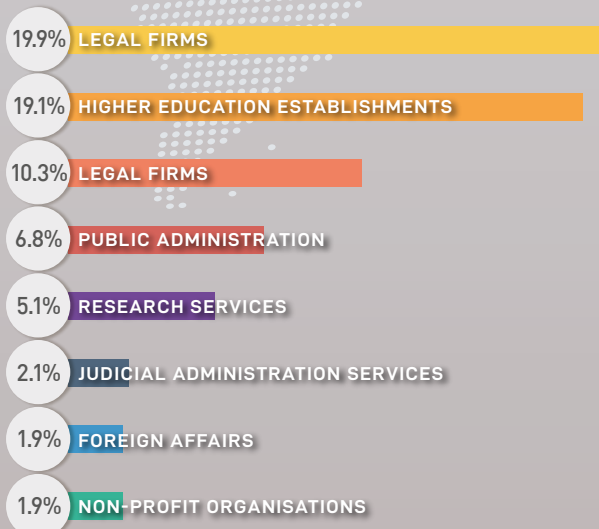
SICL institution page on 31 December 2024

5,281 followers (+29.7%)

FOLLOWERS



PRINCIPAL SECTORS OF ACTIVITY



INSTITUTE EVENTS

PUBLIC EVENTS



CONFERENCES



RESEARCH SEMINARS

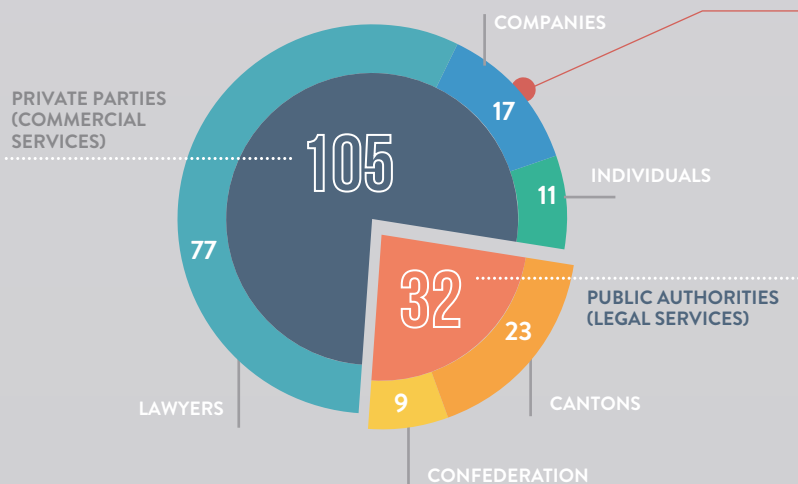


AT THE INSTITUTE OFF SITE ONLINE

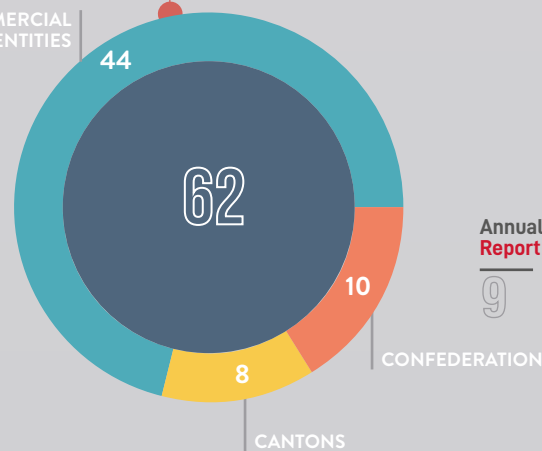
LEGAL OPINIONS

137 OPINION REQUESTS
of which 51 validated
by 31 December 2024

62 OPINIONS
established



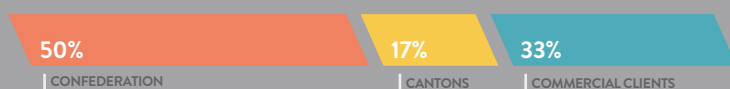
COMMERCIAL ENTITIES



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TOTAL TIME SPENT PREPARING LEGAL OPINIONS



CROSS-BORDER RESTRUCTURING

65 REQUESTS
(53 lawyers, 12 companies)
of which 31 validated

LIBRARY STATISTICS

9,089
VISITORS
welcomed

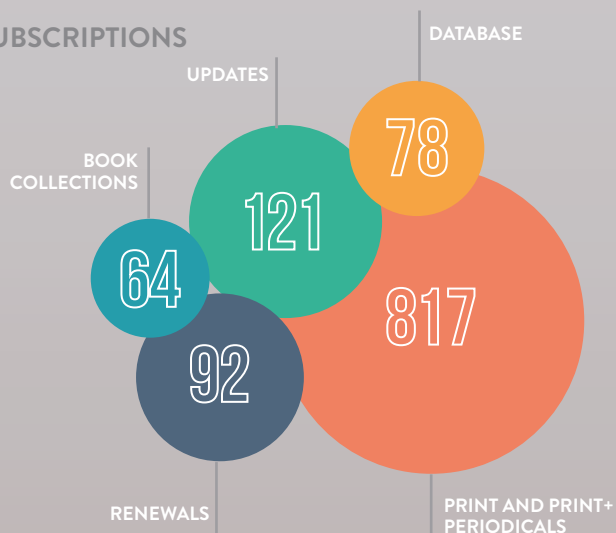
312 digitisations
REQUESTS
COMPLETED

139 WORKSPACES
available for
reservation

18,817 LOANS MADE
13,271 loan
extensions

2,558 INFORMATION
REQUESTS
PROCESSED
(960 of which on library
services)

SUBSCRIPTIONS



CONSERVATION PREVENTION AND REPAIRS

548 COMPLETE REBINDINGS

8 SINGLE HOT-GLUED BINDINGS

84 REPAIRS

86 BONDED JACKETS

THE INSTITUTE'S LEADERSHIP AND MISSIONS

The Swiss Institute of Comparative Law is a documentation and research centre for comparative law, foreign law and international law. Its tasks and its organisation are governed by the Federal Act on the Swiss Institute of Comparative Law (SICLA). As part of the Institute's remit and with due regard for its academic independence, the Federal Council sets strategic objectives every four years.

To carry out its tasks, the Institute is endowed with two organs:

- the Council, composed of a maximum of nine members, appointed by the Federal Council for a maximum of four years, twice renewable;
- the Directorate, consisting of a director and up to two vice-directors, which is the executive body of the Institute.

The Institute's Missions

The Institute's main mission is to provide independent, high-quality access to foreign, international and comparative law, with priority given to the public administration and the academic world. This mission involves, on the one hand, active investment in academic legal research and on the other, the management of a specialised library open to the public with more than half a million documents and electronic resources concerning the legal systems of the world.

Art. 3 of SICLA defines the tasks of the Institute, namely:

- to prepare, for Swiss federal authorities, such documents and studies as are required for the drafting of legislation and the conclusion of international agreements;
- to participate in international efforts to harmonise or unify the law;
- to provide information and legal opinions to Swiss courts and cantonal authorities;
- to conduct its own academic research, support and coordinate research projects at Swiss universities and to provide researchers in Switzerland with an appropriate research centre.

It also states that the Institute is to maintain a specialised library and documentation of foreign and international law.

The Swiss Institute of Comparative Law remains independent in its academic activities and receives no instructions from the Federal Council or the relevant government department in that respect (Art. 5 of SICLA).

Strategic Objectives 2024-2027

In accordance with Art. 20 of SICLA, the Federal Council sets the Institute's strategic objectives for each four- year period, within the framework of the tasks defined by Art. 3 of SICLA and while preserving the Institute's academic independence (Art. 5 of SICLA).

For the period 2024-2027, the Federal Council expects the Institute to:

- follow, as far as possible, a business strategy based on sustainability and ethical principles;
- be recognised, in Switzerland and abroad, for its academic excellence as a centre of research and documentation in the fields of comparative law, international law and foreign law documentation in the fields of comparative law, international law and foreign law;
- offer Swiss and foreign researchers an attractive environment;
- strive to achieve a high level of customer satisfaction and employee loyalty;
- maintain an excellent public reputation.

In the Institute's specific field of activity, the Federal Council expects the SICL to pay particular attention to:

ensuring the high quality and visibility of its services;

carrying out academic research that is recognised by authoritative publications and events in academic discourse, both in Switzerland and abroad;

focusing its services on the needs of its customers, while respecting its academic independence;

employing the quality and diversity (particularly geographical diversity) of institutions as the main criteria for establishing links with universities and research institutes, as well as their libraries and other partners in Switzerland and abroad;

digitalise its processes and services where this can be expected to increase efficiency and/or facilitate access to its services.

The Institute's Council

The Institute's Council is the highest decision-making organ of the SICL. In close cooperation with the Directorate, it orients the Institute and ensures that the strategic objectives assigned to it by the Federal Council are implemented.

The Institute's Council is made up of a maximum of nine members, representing education and research, judicial authorities and the federal administration. One member represents the canton of Vaud, where the Institute has its headquarters. In November 2023, the Federal Council appointed the members of the Institute's Council for the following term of office (2024-2027).



THE INSTITUTE COUNCIL MEMBERS ON 31 DECEMBER 2024

Daniel Alder, Doctor of Laws, practising attorney, Zurich

Elena Balzardi, Deputy-Director of the Swiss National Library

Prof. Eva Maria Belser, University of Fribourg

Eric Cottier, law graduate

Prof. Cordula Lötscher, University of Basel and attorney

Prof. emeritus Pascal Mahon, University of Neuchâtel

Natascia Nussberger, MLaw, Attorney, Head of FOPER's Legal Department (vice-chair)

Prof. Franz Werro, University of Fribourg (Chair until 31 March 2025)



Daniel Alder,
Doctor of Laws,
Practising Attorney,
Zurich



Elena Balzardi,
Deputy-Director of
the Swiss National
Library



Eva Maria Belser,
Professor of
Constitutional and
Administrative Law at
University of Fribourg



Eric Cottier,
Bachelor of Laws



Cordula Lötscher,
Attorney, Professor
of Private Law,
University of Basel



Pascal Mahon,
Professor emeritus of
Public Law, University
of Neuchâtel



Natascia Nussberger,
MLaw, Attorney, Head of
FOPER's Legal Department,
Vice-Chair



Franz Werro,
Professor of Law at University
of Fribourg and Georgetown
University Law Center,
Washington, DC, Chair

CHANGES

On 1 May 2024, Jean-Christophe Kübler, the FDJP's representative on the Council, resigned from his post. On 20 December 2024, the Federal Council appointed Michel Heinzmann, Professor at the University of Fribourg, to succeed Franz Werro as Chairperson of the Institute's Council. Michel Heinzmann will take office on 1 April 2025. The Federal Council has extended Franz Werro's term of office until 31 March 2025.

Konrad Sahlfeld was elected to succeed Jean-Christophe Kübler. Konrad Sahlfeld will hold this position until the end of the 2024-2027 term.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

At its meeting on 20 November 2024, the Council discussed the management of potential conflicts of interest. In particular, it instructed the Vice-Chair, Natascia Nussberger, to monitor conflicts of interest among the members of the Institute's Council and to raise awareness of this issue on a regular basis.

Declarations of interest are published on the Confederation's website (www.admin.ch/ch/f/cf/ko/Gremien_interessenbindung_10768.html). No member of the Council reported any change of potential conflicts of interest in 2024.

SECRETARIAT

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ACADEMIC ADVISORY COUNCIL

In accordance with Art. 10 of SICLA, the Institute's Council set up an Academic Advisory Council in 2024 to support the management in academic matters. It is made up of the following members:

- Prof. Dr Mira Burri, University of Lucerne, Switzerland, Law Faculty
- Prof. Dr Michelle Cottier, University of Geneva, Switzerland, Law Faculty
- Prof. Dr Raphaela Cueni, University of Saint-Gallen, Switzerland, Law Faculty
- Prof. Dr Julia Eckert, University of Bern, Switzerland, Social Anthropology Institute
- Prof. Dr Florian Eichel, University of Bern, Switzerland, Institute of International Private Law and Civil Procedure
- Prof. Dr Mark Goodale, University of Lausanne, Switzerland, Institute of Social Sciences
- Prof. Dr Andreas Heinemann, University of Zurich, Switzerland, Law Faculty
- Prof. Dr Ramon Olivier Mabillard, LL.M., University of Fribourg, Switzerland, Law Faculty
- Prof. Dr Makane Moïse Mbengue, University of Geneva, Switzerland, Law Faculty
- Prof. Dr Daniel Möckli, University of Zurich, Switzerland, Law Faculty
- Prof. Dr Andreas Müller, University of Basel, Switzerland, Law Faculty
- Prof. Dr Andreas R. Ziegler, University of Lausanne, Switzerland, Law Faculty
- Prof. Dr Nesa Zimmermann, Neuchâtel University, Switzerland, Law Faculty
- Prof. Gary Bell, National University of Singapore, Singapore
- Prof. Dr Fabienne Jault-Seseke, University of Paris-Saclay, France
- Prof. Dr Marie-Claire Foblets, Max Planck Institute for Ethnological Research, Halle (Saale), Germany
- Prof. Dr Yuko Nishitani, Kyoto University, Japan
- Prof. Dr Dr.h.c. Anne Peters, LL.M., Max Planck Institute for Foreign Public Law and Public International Law, Heidelberg, Germany
- Prof. Dr Anselmo Reyes, Hong Kong University, Hong Kong
- Prof. Dr Gregory Shaffer, Georgetown University Law Center, United States of America
- Prof. Dr Anne van Aaken, Hamburg University, Law Faculty, Germany

The Institute's management and team

The Directorate is responsible for the operational management of the Institute. It manages business, represents the Institute externally and prepares the foundations for decisions of the Institute's Council.

In the spring of 2024, Nadjma Yassari was appointed Director of the SICL. She took up her post on 1 August 2024, relieving Lukas Heckendorn Urscheler of the interim directorship that he had held since the retirement of the previous director, Christina Schmid.

NADJMA YASSARI

Nadjma Yassari was born on 6 March 1971 in Tehran. After moving to Vienna with her family in 1976, she obtained her baccalaureate from the Lycée Français in 1989. She went on to study law in Vienna, Paris and Innsbruck from 1989 to 1995, before obtaining a Master of Laws from the University of London in 1997 and a Doctorate in Law from the University of Innsbruck in 1999.

After studying Arabic in Damascus in 2000-2001, she moved to Hamburg, where she became Head of Islamic Countries' Law at the Max Planck Institute for Foreign and Private International Law in Hamburg. From 2009 to 2024, she headed a research group on family and succession law in Islamic countries. In 2016, she obtained her habilitation in Hamburg and was appointed Professor of Private International Law, Comparative Law and Islamic Law in 2021.

Nadjma Yassari took over as Director of the Swiss Institute of Comparative Law on 1 August 2024.

LUKAS HECKENDORN URSCHELER

Lukas Heckendorn Urscheler, born in Bangkok on 31 December 1973, is a Swiss lawyer with an international background. After graduating in Latin and Greek in Liestal in 1993, he went on to study law at the University of Fribourg and Paris II, graduating with a bilingual degree.

His career began in the Federal Tax Administration, followed by varied experiences as a trainee lawyer in Madrid and later at various locations in Switzerland, as an assistant at the University of Fribourg and as a UN observer in Ethiopia and Eritrea. A Doctor of Law since 2006, he has enriched his expertise through research visits to Sweden, Germany and Nepal, where he also held a teaching engagement.

Since 2009, he has held senior positions at the Swiss Institute of Comparative Law, becoming its deputy director in 2010. A lecturer in European and comparative family law since 2018, he undertook a research visit to Senegal in 2019-2020, demonstrating his ongoing commitment to international legal research.

KRISTA NADAKAVUKAREN SCHEFER

Krista Nadakavukaren Schefer, born on 2 July 1968 in Illinois, USA, is a lawyer specialising in international and economic law. She obtained a double bachelor's degree in political science and public policy studies from the University of Chicago in 1990 before continuing her legal studies at Georgetown University Law Center, where she obtained her Juris Doctor in 1994. In 1998, she completed her doctorate in law at the University of Bern, focusing on trade in financial services in NAFTA. Her academic career was further enriched in 2008 with a habilitation at the University of Bern, focusing on economic sanctions in international economic law.

After holding various research posts, notably on trade and human rights, she was appointed SNSF Research Professor at the University of Basel from 2009 to 2016, where she studied the positive duties of states. Since 2016, she has held the position of adjunct Professor at the University of Basel. In April 2017, she was appointed Vice-Director and co-Head of the Legal Division at the Swiss Institute of Comparative Law.

The Institute's staff is an international team of lawyers and librarians, supported by specialists in the fields of finance, human resources, public relations and visitor reception. This team works on a daily basis to ensure the smooth running of the SICL.

The head of the library is responsible for managing the library, which is open to the public and contains a collection of more than half a million documents and electronic resources in dozens of languages concerning more than 260 legal orders.

NATHALIE MATTHEY

Nathalie Matthey, born in Switzerland on 25 April 1975, is Head of the Library at the Swiss Institute of Comparative Law. She began her career in the library sector after obtaining her diploma as a BBS librarian-documentalist-archivist in 1999.

She has gained wide-ranging experience working in a number of institutions, including Pro Senectute Suisse in Zurich and the cantonal libraries of Fribourg, Thurgau and Vaud in Fribourg, Frauenfeld and Lausanne respectively.

In 2018, Nathalie Matthey joined the SICL as the Head of Acquisitions and Continuing Resources, before being appointed Head of the Library in 2021.

In addition to her main duties, she has also been involved in training, in particular as the head of apprenticeships in the Canton of Vaud's Cultural Affairs Department and by taking on teaching mandates for the I+D Training Delegation in Bern. Her commitment to professional development in the library sector is reflected in her ongoing training, which includes obtaining the Swiss Federal Diploma in Group Leadership in 2019.



Nadjma Yassari
Director



Lukas Heckendorn
Urscheler
Co-Head of the Legal
Division



Krista Nadakavukaren
Schefer
Co-Head of the Legal
Division



Nathalie Matthey
Head of the Library

THE INSTITUTE'S ACTIVITIES

Art. 3 of SICLA attributes two main tasks to the Institute: providing access to foreign law and conducting, supporting and coordinating research projects in international and comparative law.

In application of the law, the Institute draws up studies and provides information to public bodies: federal and cantonal administrative services, federal and cantonal courts and criminal prosecution authorities. Within the limits set by law, it also provides commercial services to private entities: law firms, notaries' offices and private enterprises.

The information provided relates to foreign legal systems and/or international law. The SICL does not issue opinions on Swiss substantive law. Services provided to the public sector are classified as legal services and invoiced in accordance with the Regulations Governing the Fees of the Swiss Institute of Comparative Law. Services provided to the private sector are deemed to be "commercial services" and are invoiced in accordance with Art. 22 of SICLA.

Legal opinions, expert reports and studies

In drafting its legal opinions, expert reports and studies, the SICL adheres to the principles of efficiency, quality, accuracy and neutrality. Some of its work is also subject to a duty of confidentiality, which means that not all of it can be mentioned in this report. In its studies, the SICL does not express opinions or give advice.

FIGURES

The Institute issued 62 opinions in 2024, a relatively stable figure compared with 2023 (60 opinions). According to the Institute's current strategy which aims to guarantee quality as well as legal tasks, the Institute is to focus on its legal missions, in particular the processing of requests from public authorities. There was a slight increase in the number of requests from cantonal authorities (23 in 2024, compared with 20 in 2023 and 17 in 2022). The number from the Swiss Confederation varied in accordance with policy needs (9 in 2024, compared with 17 in 2023 and 16 in 2022). The number of applications from the private sector has also fallen (105 in 2024, compared with 140 in 2023 and 136 in 2022). The decrease in the total number of requests received – always volatile – reflects the Institute's strategic goals (137 applications in 2024, compared with 177 in 2023 and 170 in 2022).

When the SICL is unable to respond favourably to a request, it systematically provides either preliminary information (which is often sufficient) or a reference to another institution that can respond to the request.

Although requests from private parties account for the majority in numerical terms, the hours devoted to them represent only 35% of the time worked by employees (excluding research and other public services), compared with 65% to statutory services. Due to the drop in requests from the Confederation, the proportion of hours dedicated to legal services fell by more than 10% compared with previous years. However, this reduction in hours has made it possible to increase academic output, in line with our strategic objectives.

LEGAL SERVICES FOR ADMINISTRATIVE AND OTHER PUBLIC AUTHORITIES

Number of countries represented in legal services requests: 36

The Confederation

Assignments for the Swiss Confederation consist of comparative studies which enable federal administrative offices to benefit from the experience of other countries when preparing new or revised legislative texts and of expert reports on the application of foreign law which are made available to the courts or prosecution authorities of the Confederation.

In 2024, the SICL devoted 1,438 hours, or almost 50% of its time spent on opinions (i.e. excluding research and other public services), to drawing up opinions and studies for the Confederation.

The Federal administration's requests primarily concerned the legal systems of Western, Central and Eastern Europe, as these are the subject of particular attention when legislation is in preparation.

A few examples

The Institute's work for the Swiss Confederation included a number of multi-jurisdictional reports and reports on international legal rules. One multi-jurisdictional report looked at how different jurisdictions in Western Europe and the United States regulate the registration of reinsurance agents. While registration requirements are designed to protect consumers of reinsurance services, the obligation to register represents an additional cost for these agents and thus a potential commercial disadvantage if competitors are not subject to the same requirements.

Another report looked at the European Union's regulation of batteries and waste batteries, including from electric vehicles. The Institute studied the rules governing the cross-border movement of used and waste batteries, as well as the regulations governing their labelling and use. The report then analysed how international trade rules designed to prevent trade restrictions (both bilateral and multilateral) view these or similar frameworks when used outside the EU.

At the request of the Federal Office of Justice (FOJ), the SICL is currently preparing a comparative study of prohibitions on girls wearing headscarves at school, as part of the implementation of postulate 22.4559 Binder-Keller. To this end, the SICL is updating information already provided in 2018 in response to a previous request and analysing new laws, court decisions and sociological studies on this subject in ten European countries.

The Federal Office of the Land Registry and Real Estate Law (FOLR) has commissioned the SICL to carry out a comparative study of remote authentication and of certification of real estate transactions. The SICL is analysing the legal situation in four of Switzerland's neighbouring countries.

Cantons and cantonal courts

Processing requests from cantonal authorities and courts took 506 hours, more than double the previous year's figure. This means that processing requests from cantonal authorities accounted for some 17% of the time devoted by the SICL to public and private requests for advice.

In terms of subject matter, the vast majority of expert opinions produced in 2024 for cantonal courts dealt with issues of family and inheritance law as well as foreign criminal law. For example, in the context of an inheritance procedure underway in Switzerland, the SICL issued an opinion on the choice of law applicable to the inheritance, taking into account various changes of domicile and transitional provisions of Swiss law.

The Institute also deals with issues of dual criminality, enabling the Swiss authorities to prosecute conduct (partially) committed abroad under current legislation. For example, the Institute has issued opinions on offences under French drug trafficking law and on Turkish criminal law relating to domestic violence.

COMMERCIAL SERVICES: COMPANIES, LAW FIRMS, NOTARY OFFICES, INDIVIDUALS

As mentioned above, the SICL provides commercial services to private clients, namely enterprises, associations, foundations, law firms, notaries and private individuals. These services fall into two categories:

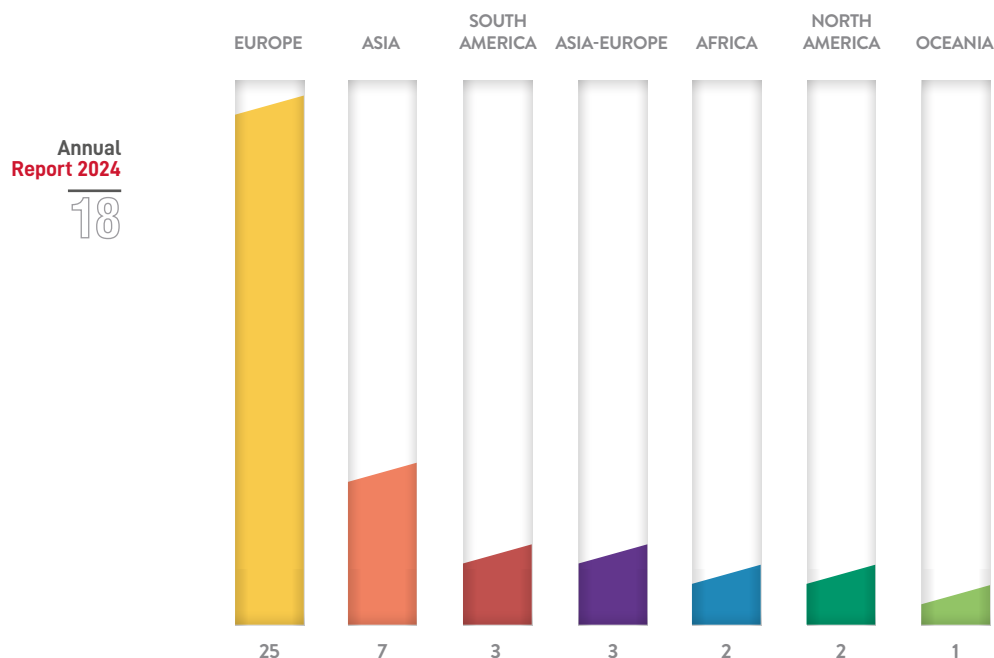
commercial opinions, i.e. legal opinions on specific legal issues, normally drawn up in the context of litigation with international elements;

opinions and certificates drawn up in the context of cross-border corporate restructuring.

In 2024, the SICL received 105 requests from the private sector. Of these commercial requests, 65 concerned cross-border corporate restructuring. This figure is lower than in previous years (2023: 82 restructuring projects, 58 opinions; 2022: 75 restructuring projects, 61 opinions), which is in line with the Institute's Council's strategy to give priority to legal services for public authorities. The Institute issued 32 opinions (including six commercial opinions and 26 attestations, see explanations below). The rate of acceptance of requests is therefore around 35%. The SICL only deals with requests that fall within its scope. In other cases, it provides customers with alternative sources of information.

Commercial opinions

Requests for commercial opinions concerned 31 different legal orders. These were primarily the legal systems of Western, Central and Eastern Europe (25 requests), including one request concerning the Holy See (Vatican City). Other regions are also concerned, notably Asia (seven requests) and America (five requests).



A few examples

The SICL provided six commercial opinions relating to inheritance law, family law and private international law.

Specifically, it issued an opinion on the law applicable to matrimonial property regimes under the private international law of the United Arab Emirates and on the fate of the deceased's debts and obligations under Saudi inheritance law. In another case, the aim was to explain the mechanisms of English and Indian inheritance law. In all three cases, the opinions involved explanations to Swiss clients about legal institutions that are fundamentally different from those existing under Swiss law.

Cross-border corporate restructuring: provision of “proof”

In 2024, the SICL issued certificates in 38 cases out of the 44 opinions issued in favour of private clients. This task required 671 hours of work. This represents a decrease of approximately 250 hours (933 hours in 2023) compared with the previous year.

Swiss private international law provides for various types of cross-border restructuring of companies (or associations or foundations). The most common type is that of the “cross-border relocation of registered office”, i.e. where a company set up in country A wishes to move its registered office to country B.

To become legally effective, a cross-border restructuring requires its effects to be recorded in the public registers of the two countries concerned. In Switzerland, the Commercial Register Ordinance (CRO) requires certain “proof” to be submitted to the cantonal registry office, including proof that the restructuring operation planned by the company in question will be permitted under the law of the other country. The cantonal offices normally accept the evidence SICL provides in the form of opinions on foreign law or certificates of adaptability.

In this respect, the SICL plays a fundamental role in controlling the legality of cross-border restructuring projects insofar as it refuses to issue “proof” with respect to projects deemed inadmissible under the legal systems of the foreign countries concerned and describes the preconditions for admissibility prescribed by the foreign legal systems.

A few examples

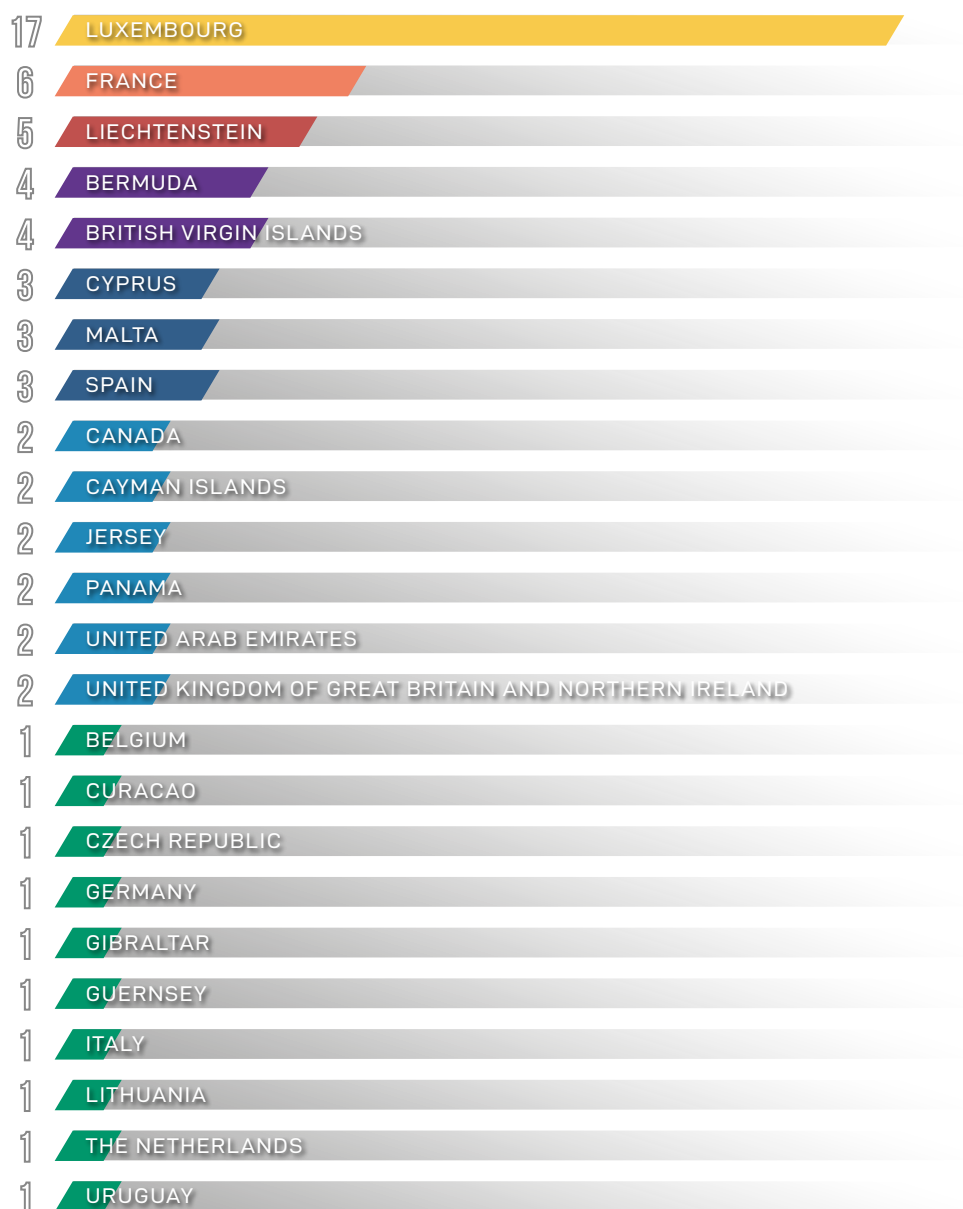
In 2024, the SICL had to deal with a cross-border restructuring involving the United Arab Emirates for the first time. In that case the registered office of a company listed in the Dubai Multi-Commodities Centre of the Emirate of Dubai was transferred to Switzerland.

In another case, an “Anstalt” under Liechtenstein law (a legal form unknown under Swiss law) wished to transfer its registered office to Switzerland. It was transformed into an “Aktiengesellschaft” under Liechtenstein law. It was only after this transformation that the SICL was able to certify its ability to adapt to the Swiss legal provisions governing limited companies.

More generally, it was necessary to analyse the way in which Directive (EU) 2019/2121, amending Directive (EU) 2017/1132 as regards cross-border transformations, mergers and divisions, has been transposed into national law by certain Member States of the European Union. SICL looked in particular at Belgium, Malta and the Netherlands in order to identify the effect of these transpositions on cross-border transformations in relation to Switzerland.

CROSS-BORDER CORPORATE RESTRUCTURING

Number of requests by country



Publications and research

In 2024, the SICL staff wrote and published academic articles in the Institute's fields of research: private international law, international economic law and comparative law methods. These publications contribute to the development and dissemination of knowledge in these areas, while strengthening the Institute's position as a key player on the international stage.

Several publication projects are currently underway in the Institute's research and advisory areas, in particular on comparative law methods, comparative family law, private international law and international economic law. The following explanations are limited to books published in 2024.

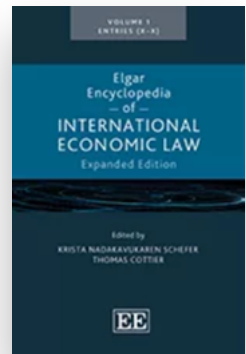
RESEARCH WORK

Contributions to encyclopaedias, legal journals and reference works

In 2024, the SICL staff published around ten articles in the Elgar Encyclopaedia of International Economic Law (see box below).

The articles explored international economic law's institutional, social and environmental dimensions. They combine theoretical and practical analyses, with a particular focus on the interactions between trade, investment, international law and national frameworks.

The Elgar Encyclopaedia of International Economic Law is a collection on international economic law that covers a wide range of subjects such as international trade, investment and finance in a clear and understandable style. Grouping entries by subject rather than alphabetically, the encyclopaedia is a reference for researchers, practitioners and students. Part of the edition has been available online since this year, and new entries continue to appear. A printed version will be produced once the online version has been completed. In 2024, the SICL specifically supported the work of the second part of the encyclopaedia, which looks at how national legal systems contribute to and implement international economic law. Two members of the Institute led the work on this section: Krista Nadakavukaren Schefer, as editor, and Rodrigo Polanco Lazo, as associate editor for the national reports.



Collective publications

Lawyers at the Swiss Institute of Comparative Law (SICL) are renowned for their contributions to large-scale collective works covering a variety of legal themes, from humanitarian law to international arbitration, economic law and family law. Each contribution highlights a perspective on contemporary issues and proposes both analyses of and solutions to the problems encountered by practitioners and decision-makers.

Among the collective works to which SICL lawyers have contributed, five particularly stand out.

The book entitled “De platformeconomie: Een praktische kijk op het juridische kader rond online tussenpersonen”, co-authored by Mathias Wouters, Friso Bostoen and Bram Devolder, explores the legal frameworks governing online platforms in the context of the digital economy. Drawing on the law of the Benelux countries, it analyses the responsibilities of platforms and their implications for users and regulators.

In his contribution “Recepción del derecho económico internacional en los sistemas jurídicos nacionales: un análisis comparado”, published in the Estudios de Derecho Comparado edited by María Paz Gatica, Arantxa Gutiérrez, María Jesús Ithurria et al, Rodrigo Polanco Lazo examines how different countries adopt international economic law in their legal systems. The comparison highlights the nuances between monistic and dualist legal traditions.

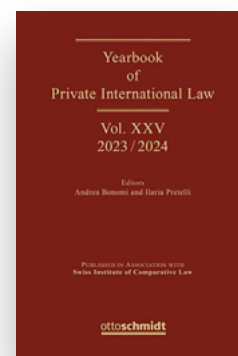
Written by Nadjma Yassari, the article “Beyond Kafāla: How Parentless Children Are Placed in New Homes in Muslim Jurisdictions”, appeared in the book *Children in Migration and International Family Law* edited by Stephan Arnold and Bettina Heiderhoff. It analyses the alternatives to Kafāla, an adoption system specific to Muslim jurisdictions, and explains how unaccompanied or orphaned children can be placed in new homes while respecting local legal traditions. This study is of particular importance in the context of international migration.

A collective work on international private law in East Asia (China, South Korea, Hong Kong, Japan and Taiwan), edited by Olivier Gaillard and Krista Nadakavukaren Schefer, was published in 2024. This book shows how the region's legal systems have gone from imitating Western legal systems to innovating by creating legal mechanisms or institutions better suited to their regional needs and then becoming exporters of these legal concepts themselves.

The Yearbook of Private International Law is a lighthouse publication covering recent developments in private international law. The 25th volume of this periodical, launched in 1999, is currently in preparation. It has established itself by the sheer force of the ideas that have been expressed over the years. Its success owes much to the hundreds of authors who have enriched the debate on current issues in comparative private international law through their exceptional contributions.

Volume 2023-2024 contains a reflection on the need to qualify the original doctrinal opposition between private international law and substantive law, by recognising the fundamental rights dimension that infuses its norms. Faced with the tragic resurgence of wars and conflicts around the world, the academic community is focusing on the real challenges of global governance.

Divided into several sections, 35 articles deal with classic issues such as the marriage of minors and inheritance and new ones, including family status in the age of marriage for all and the third gender, the legal nature of profiles and the ownership of property that exists only on digital platforms. The launch of this new edition is scheduled for early 2025.



In addition to the work mentioned above, our collaborators have contributed to collective works on a wide variety of subjects. Some of these works were carried out during the Institute's working hours. A list of publications can be found on the Institute's website.

NEWSLETTERS

The IDSC's Letter

An issue of the IDSC's Letter was published at the beginning of 2024. It presents the activities of the legal and academic team, as well as a report on participation in the IALL 2023 conference. It also announces the arrival of six new scholarship holders and sets out the Institute's new strategic objectives for 2024. Finally, it details planned conferences, recent publications and highlights events organised by partners of the SICL.

This newsletter is available free of charge on the [SICL](#) website.

EU News Click & Read

Henrik Westermarck is responsible for editing this monthly newsletter, which contains a selection of official European Union documents. It is aimed in particular at universities, federal and cantonal administrative offices, legal practitioners and the business community. In 2024, ten issues were published.

This newsletter is available free of charge on the [SICL](#) website.

TEACHING

In 2024, SICL lawyers taught at the Swiss universities of Basel, Bern, Fribourg, Lausanne and Lucerne, as well as abroad at institutions such as the University of Savoie Mont Blanc (Annecy, France), the University of Hamburg (Germany), the American University (Washington D.C., USA), and the University of Lisbon (Portugal). They have also contributed to training courses at the ILO's International Training Centre (Turin, Italy) and the Institut Catholique de Paris (France).

The courses covered private international law (filialion, matrimonial property regimes, inheritance), economic and commercial law (international investment law, non-competition clauses, digital platforms, WTO law), Muslim law, comparative family law and humanitarian law, at levels ranging from bachelor to postgraduate.



EVENTS

In 2024, the SICL organised several academic events on its premises, online and at partner universities.

Its staff also took part in many events. The topics discussed at the various events fall within its three main areas of research: international economic law, international private law and comparative law methods.

International economic law

In terms of international economic law, 2024 was marked by:

a seminar on the economics and law of space commerce, on 17 and 18 January at the World Trade Institute in Bern;

a webinar on legislation relating to the outsourcing of digital work, on 5 March;

a series of webinars providing an overview of the role of the different branches of government in the development and application of the rules of international economic law, on 17 June, 18 September and 4 December;

three roundtables on assessing the risks and challenges of the next 25 years in terms of stability and changes in international investment law, on 23 October, 30 October and 6 November.

Annual
Report 2024

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Private international law

On 26 November, the Institute organised its annual PIL Day in the form of an in-house session combining expert presentations with, for the first time, a participative workshop (BarCamp). The theme of the day was expertise on foreign law for the courts. In the morning, the speakers shared their experiences of providing information on foreign law to the courts. These contributions served as a basis for the afternoon session. It took the form of a workshop in which participants proposed and shaped the topics for discussion. Moderated by Nadjma Yassari, two themes were addressed: the relationship between the judge and the expert, and the relationship between language and law.

Comparative law methodology

On 18 and 19 November, the SICL and the Faculty of Law of the University of Los Andes (Bogotá, Colombia) organised a seminar on the challenges of comparative law in Latin America, entitled “Los desafíos del derecho comparado en Latinoamérica: metodologías e interdisciplinariedad”. The event was a follow-up to the symposium entitled “The limits of economic regulation in Latin America”, organised by the Faculty of Law of the University of Chile and the Swiss Institute of Comparative Law on 6 and 7 September 2023. Academics and researchers from Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, El Salvador, Spain, Italy, Peru and Switzerland took part in the conference.

On 19 November, the SICL organised a conference entitled “Global Perspectives on Judging – AI and Other Challenges”. The aim was to discuss the impact of artificial intelligence (AI) on judicial systems through presentations by international experts. It was opened by Nadjma Yassari and Pascal Pichonnaz, President of the European Law Institute and Professor at the University of Fribourg, who introduced the issues involved in the changing role of the courts in a globalised and technological legal environment. Several international experts, as well as judges and magistrates from a variety of geographical backgrounds, explored how AI is influencing judicial systems in different countries. A central theme was the question of whether human decisions should be given priority, particularly in sensitive legal areas.



Conference “Global Perspectives on Judging – AI and Other Challenges”, organised by the SICL on 19 November 2024

Public events

On 23 March, the SICL library took part in BiblioWeekend for the second time. This is a national event organised by the Bibliosuisse association, aiming to open the doors of Switzerland’s libraries to the general public. For the occasion, the escape game created the previous year was revisited and adapted to this year’s theme: “À table! Zu Tisch! A tavola!” This fun, immersive activity gave participants the opportunity to discover how the library works, while exploring the diversity of its collections.

On 5 November, the SICL library welcomed participants in Discovery Week, an event dedicated to promoting careers in libraries, archives and documentation centres. Organised in several Lausanne institutions – including the city’s libraries, the cantonal archives and the Cantonal and University Library – this initiative aims to raise public awareness of the opportunities and realities in the field of information science. SICL’s participation reinforces its role as a training institution and encourages professional exchanges, as demonstrated by the integration of a new apprentice, recruited after an initial contact at a previous event.

An event for practitioners

On 26 September, the Institute organised an evening event in Geneva on the subject of marriage contracts, with the aim of showing practitioners the specific features of matrimonial contracts in different international legal systems. The aim was to make them aware of the risks and opportunities that matrimonial agreements can represent in an international context. Several members of the Institute’s staff shared their expertise, highlighting the particularities of their legal systems (Germany, Russia, Sweden, United Kingdom and the Arab countries) as well as questions of Swiss private international law. The presentations were followed by a contribution by a lawyer specialising in family law who described Swiss experiences in this area.

Events tailored to PhD students

In order to facilitate communication between researchers/scholars, in particular Swiss and foreign doctoral students, the SICL organised six “Informal Meetups”. During these exchanges, researchers were each given the opportunity to present their work in 20 minutes. Afterwards, participants were invited to ask questions.

Participation in conferences and seminars

In 2024, SICL staff took part in numerous symposia and conferences in Switzerland and abroad. These interventions covered a variety of legal fields.

Family law

In addition to the practitioners' event on 26 September 2024 on marriage contracts in Swiss private international law and comparative law, Ilaria Pretelli and Lukas Heckendorn Urscheler took part in a conference entitled "Union abroad: the need for certificates of capacity", held on 19 January 2024 at the Palazzo di Giudice in Rome.

International economic law and arbitration law

Rodrigo Polanco Lazo spoke at an event at ETH Zurich on "Who owns the moon" and at UNCITRAL on the financing of international arbitration by third parties. Mathias Wouters presented his thoughts on the implementation of labour standards in investment agreements as part of the International Society of Labour Law's World Labour Day in Rome.

For his part, Karim El Chazli examined the issue of the arbitrator's impartiality in the context of international arbitration during an online event organised by the University of Tunis on 9 March 2024.

Comparative law and methodology

Several colleagues shared their expertise on comparative law methodologies. Lukas Heckendorn Urscheler presented his work on comparative approaches at the conference of the European Association of Comparative Law in Paris on 20 June 2024 and at the Thematic Congress of the Academy of Comparative Law in Paris on 15 November 2024. Together with Rodrigo Polanco Lazo, he also took part in the aforementioned conference on the challenges of comparative law in Latin America, held in Bogotá on 18 November 2024.

Humanitarian law

Sean Stacy and Mathias Wouters took part in two conferences, one organised on 17 and 18 June 2024 in Oslo by the Norwegian Red Cross and the ICRC, and the other on 28 October 2024 in Geneva by the International Committee of the Red Cross, on the use of the medical emblems and symbols outside of the context of armed conflict. These presentations followed a legal opinion issued at the request of the FDFA.

Guest lecture

In order to increase exchanges with researchers who spend – or have spent – time at the Institute, the SICL invites external speakers to present their research. For example, on 16 July, a former fellow, Lucia Satragno, gave a lecture on the role of sovereign wealth funds (SWF) in global financial markets from a legal perspective. She analysed the evolution of governance arrangements of SWFs from a multi-level governance perspective. The aim of her paper was to examine how SWFs – as investment vehicles primarily focused on foreign investment – have taken on expanded roles and become domestic policy tools that their home countries can draw on to deal with crises. The presentation looked at the different regulatory approaches to sovereign wealth funds, with a special mention of the two Singapore funds (GIC Private Limited and Temasek Holdings).

THE LIBRARY

The mission of the Institute's library is to collect and provide documentation on foreign law, international law and comparative law. It works on a daily basis to update and develop its collections, as well as providing Swiss and foreign researchers and students with high-quality services.

Internally, the library is committed to training the next generation of staff. A new apprentice in documentary information (AID) arrived in August. She is involved in our day-to-day work and is learning more about the library team. Her apprenticeship will last three years. Her training will be supplemented by placements in other institutions, covering the fields of archiving and documentation.

In 2024, the library placed particular emphasis on an aspect that is essential to its smooth operation, namely in-house professional documentation. The procedures for user services were updated. Work is continuing on other aspects of the library's operations, in particular the development of the collections on China, Central and Eastern Europe, and Arab and Muslim Law.

Work on the collection development roadmap is continuing. The setting up of a Library Commission has been a key step. Its dynamism is crucial to the development of high-quality collections.

Lastly, 2024 saw us sort through a large number of donations, some of which were still outstanding, and to continue re-equipping and inventorying the collections. Donations that were not included in the SICL's collections were offered to partner libraries in Switzerland.

The collections

The Library Commission, which began work in January of 2024, is responsible for defining and adapting the collection development policy with a view to implementing the strategy defined by the Institute's Council. It is made up of a legal liaison officer, a legal expert and an academic librarian appointed by rotation, as well as the Head of the Library and her deputy. If necessary, it calls on other members of the Institute's staff to supplement the skills required to carry out projects. The Commission makes proposals that are then approved by the Directorate and, in the cases defined by the SICLA, by the Institute's Council.

The close collaboration between librarians and lawyers during this first year of activity has enabled us to obtain approval on the part of the Institute's Directorate and Council in respect of:

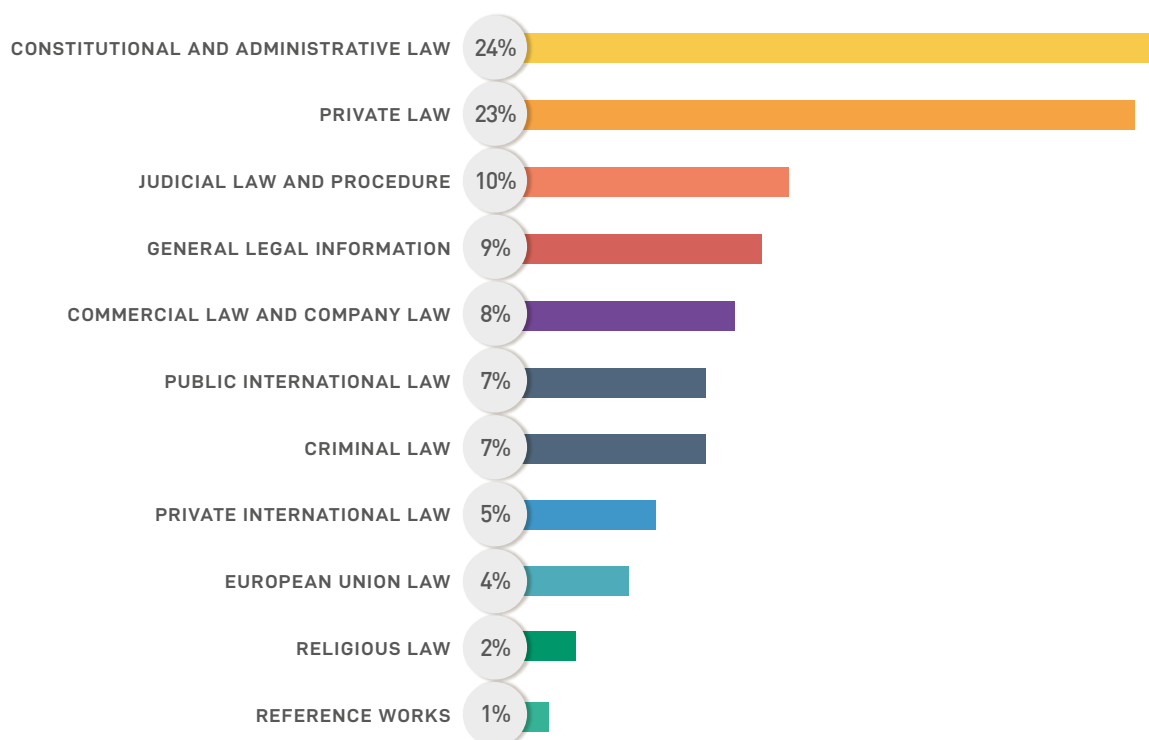
a general methodology for weeding;

an agreement in principle for the external deposit of periodical collections.

The members of the Library Commission have also begun drafting development policies for the German, Spanish, Danish, American and Polish law collections, in cooperation with the lawyers concerned. This work will continue in 2025.

Every year, the collections are enriched by various documents, thanks to subscriptions to ongoing resources (monographic collections, updates, periodicals and sequels) and the purchase of monographs. In 2024, 1,835 new monographs were added to the collections. This represents an average of 35 documents per week, all languages combined. More than a third of the acquisitions concerned private law (domestic, international, commercial).

NEW AQUISITIONS 2024



In 2024, the library also weeded its collections, starting with the Swiss law collection.

“Weeding” by relegation or scrapping, the general methodology of which has been validated by the Institute’s Council, is designed to meet three crucial needs:

- to showcase open-access collections, including new acquisitions;
- to guarantee the relevance of content;
- to manage space in the library so that monographs can be stored in the library, without having to store them externally, which would incur storage costs and delays in obtaining them.

The Swiss law collection was chosen to begin this process for several reasons. First, it does not form part of the core of the library’s holdings. Secondly, the library can rely on the Swiss library network to provide documents that are not in its holdings. Thirdly, the library does not have a patrimonial vocation or a specific mission in relation to the history of law.

The process will continue with other jurisdictions. For each collection, the selection criteria for weeding by relegation or scrapping are drawn up by the librarians in close collaboration with the relevant legal expert and validated first by the Library Commission and then by the Institute’s management.

The weeding process goes hand in hand with the development of the library’s network throughout the world (see “National and international cooperation of the library” report in the Academic cooperation section). This makes its collections better known, but also establishes partnerships with foreign and Swiss law libraries with a view to consolidating interlibrary loans.

Electronic collections are an inconspicuous but important part of the library’s collections. The market for electronic resources is very dynamic and the process of consolidation among suppliers is continuing. Based upon a detailed analysis of the SICL’s needs and given the reduction in the number of suppliers, the number of subscriptions has fallen significantly. However, the content of the databases is expanding, providing access to new documentary resources.

Legal classification in French-speaking Switzerland

The legal classification system in French-speaking Switzerland was created and developed by the SICL in collaboration with a working group of the libraries using the classification system. Its aim is to enable libraries to classify documents relating to all of the world's legal systems.

The activities of the working group had been suspended due to staff changes within the SICL library, the COVID epidemic and the relaunch of library activities following the containment measures. In 2024, the working group was reactivated and held two meetings to update the classification, which was last published in 2020. The group's work will continue in 2025. The participants were keen to breathe new life into this classification system, as it is used by almost all law libraries in French-speaking Switzerland, as well as some in German-speaking Switzerland.

User services

In 2024, library use rose by 34%. This increase is the result of stricter application of the rules for allocating workstations, in particular the requirement for users to be present at least once a week. These adjustments have been made with a view to maximising access to services and enabling as many people as possible to benefit from the library's collections and spaces.

The SICL library continues to attract researchers from all over the world, from regions as diverse as Japan, Australia, China, India, Congo, Venezuela and Iran. In all, researchers from more than 30 countries, including thirteen European countries, were welcomed in 2024. This international diversity testifies to the library's global reach and confirms that the impact of the COVID pandemic is now a thing of the past, marking a return to a global academic dynamic.

The Management of the FOJ's library

The Federal Office of Justice (FOJ) in Bern has its own library. The library is managed by the SICL based on an agreement. Its holdings belong to the FOJ. The head of the library is employed by the SICL.

In 2024, the working group tasked with assessing the role to be played by electronic resources in the library submitted its report to the Federal Office's management. The latter will have to decide on the scenario that best meets the professional needs of its staff.

The Head of the Library, together with the Delegate for Library Affairs, contributed to the FOJ 5.0 project, which encompasses the various aspects of organisational change, as well as the relocation of the Federal Office of Justice. They ensured that the needs of the library and its collection were covered in this project.

In December of 2024, the Management of the SICL terminated the agreement that has bound the two institutions since 2009. From 1 January 2027, the FOJ will once again be responsible for managing its own library.

SUPPORT FOR RESEARCH AND ACADEMIC COLLABORATION

According to its strategic objectives, the Institute should provide an attractive environment for researchers from Switzerland and abroad. To this end, the SICL provides a welcome and support service through its Welcome Center, maintains a network of alumni and friends of the Institute (AiSDC - The Association of Alumni & Friends of the Swiss Institute of Comparative Law) and awards study grants. Institutional academic cooperation is also inspired by this objective, while aiming to develop research and the quality of the Institute's services.

The Welcome Center

The Welcome Center helps foreign researchers organise their stays at the Institute. It manages the reservation of workspaces in the library and provides information to researchers according to their individual needs.

New arrivals receive information about the SICL and the university campus, as well as about the administrative aspects of their stay in Switzerland. The Welcome Center helps scholarship holders find accommodation for the duration of their stays and assists them with any questions they may have about their right to be in Switzerland.

In 2024, 48 researchers were welcomed by the Welcome Center.

Study grants

Every year, the SICL awards several scholarships to enable Swiss and foreign researchers to carry out academic work at the Institute in the field of comparative law, as well as foreign and international law.

Scholarships are awarded with preference to candidates who have never had the opportunity to undertake research outside their countries of origin or who are embarking on an academic career. Internationally, the grants are awarded primarily for research on certain topics dealt with at the Institute. At the Swiss level, support is given to research into comparative law and international law in general.

In 2024, six scholarship holders were welcomed:

Yann Conti, PhD student, University of Geneva, Switzerland,

"Access to Electronic Communications of Deceased Users A Comparative Perspective";

Maria Gabriela Mata Carnevali, PhD student, University of Palermo, Italy,

"Gender Power Relations in Family Law, Sudan and Somalia: A Comparative Approach Amidst Conflict";

Giacomo Furlanetto, PhD student, University of Insubria, Varese-Come, Italy,

"Legal transplants in the self-regulation of environmental claims in advertising: an interdisciplinary approach";

Apolline Schaal, PhD student, Sorbonne Graduate School of Law, University of Paris 1, France,

"Identity and international private law. A theoretical reflection on a dynamic of the present";

Dominik Dworniczak, doctoral researcher, European University Institute, Florence, Italy,

"Narrativising Case Law for Comparative Analysis: A Case for a New Approach in Contemporary Comparative Law";

Karla Borges Furlaneto, post-PhD student, University of São Paulo, Brazil,

"International Economic Law and the Global Value Chains".

The AiSDC

The Association of Alumni & Friends of the Swiss Institute of Comparative Law (AiSDC), which had 140 members on 31 December 2024, is managed by the Welcome Center. Its main objectives are to encourage young researchers to visit and stay at the Institute, to support projects that enhance the influence of the SICL, to organise academic or social events and/or to contribute to their organisation and funding.

To this end, the AiSDC co-organised, with the University of Pavia (Italy), an online conference on “CISG, Sustainability and Food Law”, held on 16 and 17 October.

In 2024, the Petar Sarcevic scholarship could not be paid out because the selected candidate was unable to travel to Switzerland. The scholarship will be offered to two candidates in 2025.

Academic cooperation

One of the SICL's strategic objectives for 2024-2027 is to establish and maintain collaborations with universities, research institutions and other partners of diverse geographical origins and backgrounds. The SICLA provides for the Institute to collaborate with the law faculties and legal departments of Swiss universities, as well as with other Swiss and foreign institutions, organisations and libraries.

As such, the Institute forged and cultivated links throughout 2024, notably by concluding cooperation agreements and co-organising events with partners, but also by welcoming foreign delegations and students from a variety of Swiss and foreign universities to introduce them to the Institute and its library, or even to organise presentations, comparative law exercises or support them in their research. Just over fifteen presentations were given in 2024, including for a mixed group from Galatasaray University (Turkey) and the University of Fribourg, the Law School at the University of Lausanne (BLaw) and students from Aix-en-Provence (France) taking part in a moot court competition.

EVENT ORGANISATION

On 30 October 2024, the SICL actively supported the organisation of a webinar on comparative and regional practices in child abduction, the result of cooperation with the Academy of Children's Rights (CRA) at the University of Geneva and the International Organisation for Migration (IOM). For the second year running, this webinar focused on the civil aspects of international child protection (ICPT). Due to the technical nature and complexity of some of the topics, the CRA team has decided to offer a series of free webinars on selected child protection topics, running from November 2024 through April 2025. In addition, the Institute supported a call for contributions to the collective work project titled “Refonder le droit du patrimoine culturel en Afrique Subsaharienne” and organised by the Ecole du Patrimoine Africain (EPA - Porto-Novo), in cooperation with the UNESCO Regional Office for West Africa.

CO-ORGANISATION OF ACADEMIC EVENTS

In 2024, the Institute co-organised events with the following universities, institutions and associations:

- American University, Washington College of Law, USA;
- University of Geneva, Switzerland;
- University of Fribourg, Switzerland;
- Los Andes University, Bogotá, Colombia;
- International Space Science Institute, Switzerland;
- World Trade Institute, Switzerland;
- University of Bern, Switzerland;
- Committee on Space Research (COSPAR), Paris, France;
- University College Dublin, Republic of Ireland.

RECEIVING DELEGATIONS FROM ABROAD

In September, the Institute welcomed a delegation from the Higher People's Court of Hebei province, China. The subject of the visit was the protection of minors. Presentations were made of the Institute and its library and discussions were held on the protection of minors in different jurisdictions.

TEACHING SUPPORT OF COMPARATIVE LAW

Cooperation with Swiss and foreign universities often takes the form of hosting groups of students. For example, the Institute organised practical case-solving exercises, taking into account the legislative provisions applicable in different jurisdictions. These exercises included presentations of the Institute and its library. They were led by legal staff and librarians for groups from the University of Neuchâtel and the University of Fribourg.

In addition, several presentations of the Institute and its library were organised over the course of the year for various groups from the University of Lausanne.

The Institute hosted two seminars organised by the Chair of German Law at the University of Lausanne, the Jean Monnet Chair and the Europa-Institute;

on 22 and 23 January, a seminar on the external economic relations of Germany and the European Union under the banner of open strategic autonomy ("Die Aussenwirtschaftsbeziehungen Deutschlands und der Europäischen Union im Zeichen offener strategischer Autonomie"):

on 9 and 10 December, a seminar on current issues in European and international business law in the field of raw materials and sports law ("Aktuelle Herausforderungen des Europäischen und Internationalen Wirtschaftsrechts im Bereich des Rohstoff- und Sportrechts").

Lastly, as in the previous year, the SICL provided support on several occasions to groups of students in their preparations for moot court competitions (for teams from the University of Lausanne and the University of Aix-Marseille, France). Once again, this year, it hosted a workshop on international sports law, organised by the University of Aix-Marseille.

THE LIBRARY'S NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

In addition to its day-to-day tasks, the library is seeking to develop its networks around the world in order to publicise its collections and forge partnerships with foreign and Swiss law libraries.

In 2024, this commitment took the form of participation in various conferences and events organised by libraries:

Association of Swiss Law Libraries;

Bibliosuisse;

International Association of Law Libraries;

Association of German-Speaking Libraries DACHS;

SLSP Symposium;

Renouvaud Annual General Meeting.

In addition, a member of the SICL's library team sits on the Bibliosuisse legal committee.

AN OPENNESS TO MULTIDISCIPLINARITY

Located at the heart of the University of Lausanne campus, the SICL is ideally placed to host a variety of events in its conference rooms. In 2024, the Institute hosted:

on 7 and 8 March, the Management Committee of the Legislative Council of the Canton of Vaud;

from 1 to 3rd July, the 9 World Congress for French Linguistics;

on 30 October, the 6 edition of the AI Governance Forum, on regulation, harmonisation of standards and best practice for the use of artificial intelligence;

On 29 and 30 November, the meeting of the International and Interdisciplinary Research Group (Comparing European Language Literatures (CLE)) of the University of Lausanne.

Throughout the year, the SICL also welcomed several students who came to defend their law theses.

FINANCE AND RISK MANAGEMENT

The SICL is a public-law institution of the Swiss Confederation, with legal personality but without its own accounts (art. 1, para. 1, SICLA). The Federal Parliament therefore decides the Institute's budget. The SICL is part of the decentralised federal administration (art. 7a, para. 1, let. c, GA00). It is therefore subject to the provisions of the Federal Budget Act (FBA) and the Federal Finance Ordinance (FBO), as well as the directives and instructions of the Federal Finance Administration (FFA) relating to the Confederation's budgetary and accounting management. Exceptions are governed by specific laws or ordinances (e.g. exclusion from the scope of the Ordinance on the Organisation of Public Procurement in the Federal Administration OPPO).

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Operating expenses

Operating expenses totalled CHF 7,464,068 in 2024. Almost 67% of these were personnel costs. Approximately CHF 1,230,000 was spent on library acquisitions and subscriptions. In addition, there was expenditure on day-to-day operations, such as information technology and logistics. The meetings organised by the SICL (colloquia, seminars) are primarily intended for an audience of lawyers. The co-organising institutions often contribute to their funding.

Finally, the drafting of legal opinions subject to a fee sometimes requires the integration of specialist knowledge from third parties, in particular to cover certain legal orders outside the staff's geographical areas of expertise. This results in consultancy costs.

Expenses:

7,464,068 CHF, of which

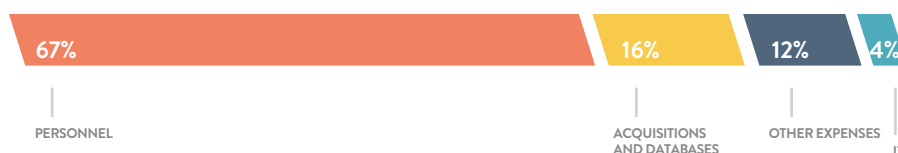
4,982,382 CHF Personnel

1,230,000 CHF Acquisitions and databases for the library

325,336 CHF IT

926,350 CHF Other expenses

PERCENTAGES DO NOT ADD UP TO 100% DUE TO ROUNDING.



Revenue

In accordance with SICLA and the Regulations Governing the SICL's Fees and Charges, operating revenue is separated into commercial revenue (CHF 257,132), revenue subject to fees (CHF 63,409) and other revenue. Art. 22 of SICLA requires that revenue from commercial services cover the costs of delivering those services (including salary costs, use of infrastructure, etc.). Cross-financing is not permitted.

In accordance with the strategic decisions of the Institute's Council, commercial services – the main source of the Institute's income – are only subsidiary. In 2024, this resulted in a drop in revenue from commercial services of CHF 81,197, or 24%. On the other hand, income from services provided to the cantonal authorities increased by 20%.

Revenue:**325,259 CHF, of which**

257,132 CHF commercial opinions

63,400 CHF public authority opinions

4,718 CHF other revenue

PERCENTAGES DO NOT ADD UP TO 100% DUE TO ROUNDING



Reports on the Accounts of the Swiss Confederation and on the budget with integrated planning of the tasks of the public administration and their financing can be found through the following links:

www.efv.admin.ch/efv/en/home/finanzberichterstattung/finanzberichte/staatsrechnung.html (Tome 2A)

www.efv.admin.ch/efv/fr/home/finanzberichterstattung/finanzberichte/budget.html (Tome 2A)

Risk management and the internal control system

Pursuant to Art. 39 of FBA, the SICL is required to manage risks and implement an internal control system (ICS). In this respect, it is required to comply with the normal reporting procedures of the federal administration and with the directives of the Federal Council.

The identification, analysis, assessment, control and monitoring of risks follow uniform rules, which are defined in a binding manner in the FFA's directives on the management of risks faced by the Confederation. A dedicated software application is used for risk management and risk reporting.

The SICL has already taken numerous measures to guarantee IT security and data protection and to maintain and improve the quality of its services. The Institute has also taken steps to prevent personal injury and material damage. For example, in terms of building safety, vertical evacuation routes have been signposted and brought up to standard. The emergency lighting in the horizontal evacuation routes on level 3 was renewed. During the year, a safety engineer commissioned by FOPER carried out a risk analysis in the book-binding workshop; the resulting recommendations have since been implemented.

The Internal Control System (ICS) ensures the quality management of business processes that have a financial impact. Consequently, it encompasses at least all levels of financial data processing in administrative units (including any upstream systems and interfaces).

ANNEXE

Table of Abbreviations

ABJS	Association of Swiss Law Libraries
AID	Documentary Information Apprentice
AIFBD	International Association of French-speaking Librarians and Documentalists
AiSDC	Association of Alumni & Friends of the Swiss Institute of Comparative Law
BBS	Bachelor in Business Studies
CDCEI	Centre of Comparative, European and International Law, University of Lausanne
COSPAR	Committee on Space Research
CRA	Children's Rights Academy
CRO	Commercial Register Ordinance of 17 October 2007; SR 221.411
CUPL	China University of Political Science and Law
CUSO	University Conference of Western Switzerland
FBA	Federal Act of 7 October 2005 on the Federal Financial Budget; SR 611.0
FBO	Financial Budget Ordinance of 5 April 2006; SR 611.01
FDFA	Federal Department of Foreign Affairs
FDJP	Federal Department of Justice and Police
FEDRO	Federal Roads Office
FFA	Federal Finance Administration
FOBL	Federal Office of Buildings and Logistics
FOJ	Federal Office of Justice
FOLR	Federal Office of the Land Registry and Real Estate Law
FOPER	Federal Office of Personnel
FPA	Federal Act of 24 March 2000 on the Personnel of the Swiss Confederation; SR 172.220.1
FPersO	Federal Ordinance of 3 July 2001 on the Personnel of the Swiss Confederation; SR 172.220.111.3
FTA	Federal Tax Administration
GA00	Ordinance of 25 November 1998 on the Organisation of the Government and the Federal Administration (Government and Administration Organisation Ordinance, SR 172.010.1)
GFeeO	General Fees Ordinance of 8 September 2004; SR 172.041.1
IALL	International Association of Law Libraries
ICPT	International Child Protection

ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
ICS	Internal Control System
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IOM	International Organisation for Migration
OPPO	Ordinance of 1 May 2024 on the Organisation of Federal Public Procurement; SR 172.056.15
PIL	Private International Law
SECO	State Secretariat for Economic Affairs
SICLA	Federal Act of 28 September 2018 on the Swiss Institute of Comparative Law; SR 425.1
SLSP	Swiss Library Service Platform
SNSF	Swiss National Science Foundation
SWF	Sovereign Wealth Funds
UNCITRAL	United Nations Commission on International Trade Law
UNIL	University of Lausanne
UniNE	University of Neuchâtel
UNISEP	Security Service of the University of Lausanne
UNOG	United Nations Office at Geneva
WTO	World Trade Organisation



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Schweizerisches Institut für Rechtsvergleichung
Istituto svizzero di diritto comparato
Swiss Institute of Comparative Law

The annual reports of the Swiss Institute of Comparative Law are available on its website: www.isdc.ch.

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