

Law Libraries in Finland

Arctic Centre, Information Service

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online catalogue “hilla.linneanet.fi/”

Focus

Environmental and minority law, other minority issues

History

The Northern Institute of Environmental and Minority Law (NIEM) is now part of the Arctic Centre. The former reference library of the institute is a special collection in the Arctic Centre Library.

The late director of NIEM, Dr. Frank Horn was an internationally recognized specialist in minority and environmental issues. He took part in projects around Europe and collected material on his journeys to his own library and the library of the institute. Dr. Frank Horn's personal library is also a special collection in the Arctic Centre Library.

Collections

The legal collections in the Arctic Centre Library are small (about 25 shelf meters) but there is some rare material in them. Interlibrary loans are often requested to other Finnish universities or research institutes.

The Arctic Centre Library has large electronic collections in common with the Library of the University of Lapland.

Users

The main user group of the library are researchers and students in the Arctic Centre and in the University of Lapland as a whole. Other main user group of the library are international students, especially in the Arctic Studies Program of the University of Lapland and Circumpolar Studies Program of the University of the Arctic.

Profile

The collections focus on circumpolar Arctic topics in minority and environmental law.

Future

The library will continue developing the collections according to the needs of the researchers in the Arctic Centre.

Library of Parliament: Parliament of Finland

FI-00102 Eduskunta
Helsinki, Finland
Telephone: 358-9-4321
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E-mail: library@parliament.fi
“www.eduskunta.fi/kirjasto/Welcome-eng.html”

Focus

Library of the Finnish Parliament is a public library specialising in jurisprudence and political science and information on parliament itself.

History

Library was founded in 1872 by the Four Estates as an archive and library. When the unicameral parliament convened in 1907, the library and archive were named the Library of the Finnish Parliament. Since 1913, the services of the Library of Parliament have been available to all.

Collections

The library has extensive collection of material on jurisprudence: Finnish and foreign Statutes since 16th century, parliamentary records, law books, collections of court cases and legal literature. Library is the official Depository for the publications, among others, European Union, OECD, the WTO and the UN. The library collections are total about 550 000 volumes.

The Archives of Parliament, working in conjunction with the library, contain a number of original documents from the sessions of the estates, dating back to the parliamentary assembly of 1863 and all the documents of the unicameral parliament since its inception.

Users

Library serves, besides Members of Parliament and parliamentary officials, all citizens: students, journalists, researchers and entrepreneurs, as well as various associations and organizations within the State administration.

University of Helsinki: Faculty of Law Library

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The Faculty of Law Library of the University of Helsinki dates back to the year 1910, to be precise October 19th, 1910, some seven years before Finland became an independent state. It was at first called the Legal Seminar Library and the founding document was signed by the Chancellor of the university. During the first twenty years of its existence the library collection remained very small indeed, it was only a collection of text books relating to the courses taught in the faculty. Later it has grown into a substantial research library with some 60 000 books and 400 serial publication subscriptions. The first fulltime librarian was appointed in 1960 and today the library staff has grown to 11 most of which have a library degree of some sort, are library professionals.

The Law Library is a research library open to anybody looking for legal information, legal literature, books and journals, as well as official documents and publications. Primarily it serves the teaching staff, researchers and students of the faculty. The library is situated on the two upper floors of the in 2004 renovated building in Fabianinkatu 24 right in the very centre of Helsinki, surrounded by the main administrative buildings of the University. It is easy to reach which the great number of daily visitors shows. The opening hours are eleven hours a day, five days a week. (The library is closed on weekends).

Background information

In order to understand the complexity of the context in which the law library is situated, some facts about the University and the Faculty of Law will follow.

The University has the widest range of disciplines in Finland. It was established in Turku in 1640, but was transferred to Helsinki in 1828. The number of faculties today is eleven. There are 38,000 degree students and 7,500 staff. The number of degrees taken each year is 4,200, of which 400 are doctorates. The faculty of law is one of the oldest faculties of the University of Helsinki. The law students amount to some 2 500 and the teaching and administrative staff of the faculty to about 100.

The University of Helsinki is a member of the League of European Research Universities (LERU) which was founded in 2002 as an association of twelve research-intensive universities sharing the values of high-quality teaching within an environment of internationally competitive research.

The University has strong international connections. It has some 80 co-operation agreements with universities on different continents. The University researchers are in great demand as experts in international scientific communities, meetings and publications. There are proportionally more foreign students studying at the faculty of law than in any other faculty of the university.

The University is bilingual, but in addition to Finnish and Swedish teaching is also provided in English. Partly due to the growing importance of the international aspects of law, the number of postgraduate students has been increasing rapidly and presently exceeds 400. The faculty is also hosting an ever growing number of international students, mainly owing to the ERASMUS exchange programmes and the popularity of the international LL.M. Diploma programme. Since the establishment of the programme in 1992, over 180 students from all over the world have obtained the LL.M. Diploma.

The particularly Scandinavian characteristics of Finnish law have traditionally been stimulated by Nordic co-operation in the fields of legislation and research. At least in some branches of law, one may almost speak of an “internal Nordic market of law”.

The European integration process and membership in the European Union have brought new aspects to legal research and teaching at the law faculties in Finland. International co-operation and research on international legal developments have become essential in many fields traditionally considered “national”, owing to the implementation of European Community Law.

Finnish law has traditionally been strongly influenced by German law. There are still strong links to German research. In many fields of law there is also a growing exchange with other legal spheres, including the Anglo-American and French ones. Because of Finland's special geopolitical position, there is a tradition of co-operation with some of the states of the former Soviet Union, especially Estonia, as well as with some Eastern European countries.

Collections

The collections of the Law Library comprise approximately 60 000 domestic and foreign monographs and over 400 periodicals covering various areas of law. Domestic legislation material and reports of legal cases are available since the 1860's. The library acquires most of the law literature published in Finland and in the other Nordic countries. In addition, the library aims to acquire a representative selection of publications from other countries.

Official publications form a very important part of the library collections. Finnish parliamentary documents can be found from the 1870's onwards and Statutes of Finland since the 1860's. Statutes of Sweden are available since 1856. The library also has the most important domestic legal case collections and approximately 30 foreign legal case collections as well as publications relating to law-drafting.

The collections are catalogued into the joint catalogue of all the libraries of the University of Helsinki, the HELKA database: “helka.linneanet.fi/webvoye.htm”. It is freely accessible on the internet. The Law Library code is Ho and location of the books on the shelves and call numbers are easily checked in the database. The books are arranged on the shelves according to their subject contents. The classification system is the outcome of a joint project between library and teaching staff.

European Documentation Centre

A special collection within the Law Library is the European Documentation Centre (EDC) of the University of Helsinki. The collection of the EDC focuses

on EU legislation, the work of the institutions, and on the case law of the Court of Justice of the European Communities. Included in the collection are also publications published by the European Union. The documents and publications are mostly in English. The EDC provides advice on EU information sources and the reference librarian responsible for the collection assists the library users with information searches in matters relating to the European Union based on the collection, EU databases and other information sources.

Electronic resources

The Law Library has access to a wide variety of electronic resources. The collection of e-journals in law holds more than 250 full text journals. In addition to these titles there are thousands of titles in the *WestLaw International* and *HeinOnline* resources subscribed to by the library and accessible to library users within the university network. Other important electronic resources are the reference database *Index to Foreign Legal Periodicals*, and the special collection of the *United Nations Treaty Collection Online*, the *WorldTradeLaw.net Dispute Settlement Commentary (DSC)* collection, the *KluwerArbitration Online* resource as well as the freely available *Directory of Open Access Journals, DOAJ*.

These electronic resources are of special interest to foreign student. In addition to the international resources the law Library reader has access to many full text resources of Finnish legal documents: *Suomen laki – Finlands lag Online* and *Edilex* (licensed resources) and freely available resources such as *Finlex*. The legislative information in *Finlex* is organized in six databases. The database of translations of Finnish acts and decrees contains translations of Finnish Acts of Parliament (mostly in English) is of special interest to foreign students.

All the online services are accessible from outside the university premises provided the reader has access to the university network. Outside library users may access the services in the library.

Services

The Law Library offers its readers a hundred studying places, some of which equipped with computers and twelve research places with computers to students working with their thesis and post-graduate students. There are three photocopying machines on the premises and one fast printer connected to the network.

The Law Library is a “teaching library”, that is, library staff offers instruction on how to use the library and on how to search the databases to students at different level of their studies beginning from first year undergraduates to post-gradual level. These instructions are very popular both among students as well as their teacher and the demand is steadily growing. Instructions are also given to foreign students in English. In addition to formal instructions to specific groups of student, library staff is prepared to give personal reference guidance whenever needed.

Future plans

In the future the importance of electronic resources as an information source will influence the activities of the Law Library even more than today. In order to satisfy the information needs of law students and researchers the library must regularly evaluate the use of the electronic resources it offers by making user enquiries; and, what is more important, to act on them.

Library and user interaction is one of the key issues in the future. Teaching: to teach the faculty staff and students to use databases and other electronic resources in an efficient way. Integration: to integrate the use of library resources into the curriculum as web courses. Interaction: to interact with the library user through the recently introduced NELLI portal (National EElectronic Library Interface) which is a national search portal for electronic and other resources. These are all issues to be initiated in the near future.

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Focus

University of Lapland Library - a learning centre on the Arctic Circle - is the information centre of the northernmost university in Finland. It is a scientific library open to everyone, with collections including materials for all the educational and research fields in the Faculties of Law, Art and Design, Business and Tourism, Education and Social Sciences. The University of Lapland Library consists of two library units, the Main Library and the Library of Arts and Design. As a European Documentation Centre, the Library includes the official publications of the European Union in its collection. The Library supports efficient study, teaching, and research by offering a range of services from lending course books to extensive training in information retrieval, and from rooms for group work to researcher rooms.

History

The University and the Library were founded in 1979 as The Faculty of Law, too. At the first stage the Library received considerable donations in the field of jurisprudence. They form the foundation for the older jurisprudential collections.

Collections

The University of Lapland Library acquires jurisprudential literature for the needs of the faculties. About 60 percent of the material is domestic. There are over 20 000 legal references in the library's database. Materials in the fields of

law and administrative science which are related to the northern areas are acquired as comprehensively as possible.

The needs of the special institutes of the Faculty of Law are taken into account in library's acquisitions. Separate institutes of the Faculty are:

- The Institute of Air and Space Law (IASL)
- The Institute of Legal Informatics
- The Institute of Commercial Law (ICLU)

Also an important area in the acquisitions is legal linguistics, both research and teaching.

Domestic jurisprudential periodicals and monographs are acquired very comprehensively. 90 foreign legal periodicals in paper form are subscribed. Information on the library collections is available in HILLA, the Web-based public access catalogue at "hilla.linneanet.fi".

During the last few years the number of publications in paper form has considerably decreased when the library has abolished the ordering of those which are available in electronic form. On offer are all kind of information sources for example electronic journals, reference databases, subject gateways.

The library's electronic resources including legal material are:

- ABI/Inform ProQuest
- EBSCO: Academic Search Elite
- EBSCO: Business Source Elite
- JSTOR
- Kluwer
- MCB: Emerald
- PCI Periodicals Contents Index
- Political Science Abstracts
- Westlaw International
- Cd-Lag (cd-rom in Swedish law)

Domestic electronic materials in use are

- Edilex
- Finlex
- Finnish Law Online

All the electronic materials can be searched and accessed via a Metalib portal, www.nelliportaali.fi, by the university community.

One of Finland's European Documentation Centres is located in the University of Lapland Library since 1995. The objective of the network of EDCs is to help universities and research institutions to promote and to develop the teaching and study concerning European integration, encourage them to participate in the discussion concerning European integration and to make the politics of the European Union familiar to all the citizens of Europe.

Users

The staff and students of the Faculty of Law are the main users of the jurisprudential collections. There are about 40 researchers and teachers and 900 students. In 2004 a higher academic degree was taken by 102 students and two researchers defended their doctoral thesis.

In the Faculty of Social Sciences there is a degree programme of Public Law Studies with two alternatives, the general public law and the medical law.

Other customers of the library are law firms, other companies, common citizens, libraries in the area and students from other educational institutions in the area.

Of Special Interest for Foreign Users

The University Library of Lapland has some special collections. The most remarkable is the collection of Ragnar Lassinantti. Mr. Lassinantti was a deceased county governor of Norrbotten in Sweden. The collection contains judicial and social literature from 1700's onwards dealing with the arctic region of the Nordic countries from many different aspects. It was invaluable for the new library that the donation included old Swedish law literature in extended series.

The library participates in indexing at national level. The library is responsible for indexing and recording of jurisprudential articles from domestic judicial journals into the national article database ARTO.

Future

The amount of electronic material will increase in the future. In the University of Lapland both regional impressiveness and international networking are increasing tendencies. These will be reflected in the collection policy of the library.