



INFORMATION SOURCES in

law

SECOND EDITION

Guides to Information Sources

Edited by
Jules Winterton and
Elizabeth M. Moys

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Law

Second Edition

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Introduction

This is a practical book for practical people, both for those in the commercial world and for other researchers. We also hope it will assist those developing services and collections relating to the law of European countries, wherever they are based. We have tried to ensure that there is never a dead end and always a further source of information whether printed, electronic or direct to an organization.

When first asked to compile this volume, we had to decide what limits should be set to its jurisdictional coverage. Clearly world coverage would be impossible within the time and space limits set by the Series Editors. On the other hand, restriction to the legal systems of the United Kingdom would have been too narrow, ignoring the steadily increasing influence of European legal systems on each other and the expansion of the European market. We decided that the most useful arrangement would be to include as many individual countries as possible in the geographical area of Europe, regardless of any regional groupings to which they might or might not belong, since sources in many of those countries were insufficiently documented in English. We had hoped to indicate the coverage of this book in the title by calling it 'Information sources in law in Europe' but this did not prove possible because of the requirements of the series to which it belongs.

We are very grateful to the authors from so many countries who have contributed chapters on their own and other national legal systems, helping to fill a serious gap in the literature in English. We should have liked to include chapters on several other European countries and in particular we expected a chapter on Hungary but, at a late stage, illness prevented the chapter being delivered.

We have included the European Union itself because its law becomes part of the law of its member states in a much more immediate way than is the case with other sources of law outside the jurisdictions themselves.

Otherwise we have not attempted to document sources of public international law such as international organizations based in Europe, except basic treaty sources, because this would require and deserve another volume.

The previous edition of this work was devoted almost entirely to English-speaking jurisdictions, including some in other continents. Since that book was written, further guides to legal research in those countries have appeared, so that it seemed to us that it would be invidious to attempt to improve on their excellent reference publications.

This volume covers selected sources of information for law both in the original language and in other languages, mainly in English. Of necessity sources specific to particular branches of law are not covered, although the most important codes, treatises and leading journals in the main areas of law are mentioned in many of the chapters; the book concentrates on general sources and the research tools which will provide further specialist sources if required.

This book differs considerably from some other volumes in the series because of the nature of law and legal information. First, law is usually tied to territory and is therefore highly jurisdictional, unlike some other subjects which are not likely to vary in their basics from country to country. Each legal jurisdiction has its own legal system and, although some systems may bear a family resemblance, each one is different in detail.

Second, the laws applying in any jurisdiction are in a continual state of flux. New legislation is constantly being produced, some existing laws are revoked and, at least in common law jurisdictions, decisions in the superior courts from day to day make varying degrees of change to the application of law. Therefore, a considerable proportion of legal information must be sought in serial publications: legislation, law reports, government gazettes, etc.

The text is up to date generally to December 1996 with some amendments at the proof stage in early 1997. In our attempt to make this volume of direct use, we have included information which can be more subject to change than bibliographic references, in particular telephone and fax numbers and notoriously Internet addresses. For any changes which affect you, we apologise, and we should be glad to receive new or corrected information (Elizabeth Moys was responsible for the European Union, Ireland, Malta and United Kingdom chapters and the index, Jules Winterton for the remaining chapters).

We should like to thank all the authors for their care and dedication and their colleagues who participated in whatever way in gathering the information. We should also like to thank our own friends and colleagues for their support and encouragement and tolerance, particularly the staff of the Institute of Advanced Legal Studies Library and Bowker-Saur.

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