

A PRACTICAL GUIDE TO INTERNATIONAL AND FOREIGN LEGISLATION

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This guide provides some guidance on how to access foreign legislation and international treaties. In contrast with the '*practical guide to global jurisprudence*', this guide does not focus on the outcome of the judicial process, but on the outcome of the national legislative process and international law making. It provides a short description of – and links to – foreign and international law resources on the Internet.

I. FOREIGN LAW METAPAGES

This section lists the most comprehensive foreign law metapages. Metapages provide a range of legal information ordered by country. They might also allow for a cross-country search around a specific topic. Moreover, they often contain international documents.

Worldlii provides case law and a range of legislation for many countries of the world. It allows for searches by country or by region. It also has rather extensive coverage of international documents and case law. The database is self-explanatory and well organized and is probably the best starting point for researching foreign legislation.
<http://www.worldlii.org/catalog/215.html>

Global legal information network (library of US Congress) provides one of the most extensive and comprehensive general database on foreign law and judicial decisions. It allows searches of laws, judicial decisions, legislative records or legal literature per country or for multiple countries at once. It also contains international documents.
<http://www.glin.gov/search.action>

Guide to law online (library of congress) provides an overview of online legal materials for most countries. It orders information per country and often provides links to the country-entry in subject specific databases (see below). It is a good starting point if one is interested in a particular country (rather than in a particular subject area).

Internet Legal Resource Group provides selected legal materials for most countries of the world along a broad range of subject areas.
http://www.ilrg.com/nation_ref.html

Institute for Social Sciences provides a rather extensive overview of electronic legal resources. It provides links to country-specific databases for each country. It also provides an overview of the available resources by subject area- both for international and national laws. It basically is a more extensive version of this document.
<http://www.intute.ac.uk/socialsciences/law/>

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Practical Guide to foreign and international legislation

The Swiss Institute for Comparative Law provides an overview of links to legal materials for each countries. It generally provides links, information and documents in their original language

<http://www.isdc.ch/en/droit-ligne.asp/4-0-10730-5-4-1/5-0-1960-21-4-2/>

The World Law Guide provides full texts of legislation on a range of subject areas for most countries

<http://www.lexadin.nl/wlg/legis/nofr/legis.htm>

II. FOREIGN LAW BY SUBJECT AREA

This section will lists the most comprehensive subject-specific databases. Please note that these databases do often not only provide the laws of different countries on the specific subject areas, but generally also contain international treaties and other international legal documents on the topic.

Arbitration laws

Kluwer Arbitration provides the best source on arbitration. It provides national documents such as national legislation on arbitration, national case law and national organizations. It also provides the text of international conventions and an overview of multi-lateral organizations. Moreover, it provides access to the most important commentaries in the field of arbitration.

<http://www.kluwarbitration.com/arbitration/arb/default.asp>

Banking laws

Center for the Study of Central Banks provides and overview of legislation and constitutional provisions in every country with respect to the central bank and national banks.

<http://www.law.nyu.edu/centralbankscenter/texts/order.html>

Bar Associations from Around the World

The Chan Robles Virtual Law Library provides links to the websites of most bar associations around the world.

<http://www.chanrobles.com/virtualbarasso.htm>

Citizenship laws of the World

US Office of Personnel Management provides a summary of the citizenship law of most countries in the world. It documents for each country how citizenship can be obtained, how it can be lost, if dual citizenship is recognized etc.

<http://www.opm.gov/extra/investigate/IS-01.pdf>

Civil Procedure

New York University Law Library provides a guide to civil procedure laws and cases for a large number of countries in the world. It provides references to the primary sources of civil procedure in these countries.

http://www.law.nyu.edu/library/foreign_intl/civilproc.html

International Property Laws

The World Intellectual Property Organization provides a rather extensive overview of the international property laws in each country. It provides the texts of copy rights laws,

regulations of marks, trade names, industrial designs and much more. It also provides the text of regional and multilateral treaties.

http://www.wipo.int/clea/en/clea_tree1.jsp

UNESCO Collection of National Copy rights law provides the texts of the copy right laws of most countries around the world.

http://portal.unesco.org/culture/en/ev.php-URL_ID=14076&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html

Competition Laws

The International Bar Association Global Competition Forum provides a brief history of competition regulation in each country, the texts of the laws currently in force in that country and the regulations of the national competition authority

<http://www.globalcompetitionforum.org/#%27>

Constitutional Law

The Richmond Constitution Finder provides the constitutional texts of most countries of the world. It often provides the texts in multiple languages and also provides the texts of constitutional amendments and earlier versions of the constitutions

<http://confinder.richmond.edu/>

International Constitutional Law project provides the constitutional texts of most countries of the world. It also rather extensively documents the various constitutional amendments, although generally does not provide the full text of those

<http://www.servat.unibe.ch/law/icl/index.html>

Criminal Law

Buffalo Criminal Law Center provides an overview of the criminal codes of many countries of the world

<http://wings.buffalo.edu/law/bclc/resource.htm>

Corpus Jures provides the text of the criminal codes and related codes of the EU candidate countries.

http://www.era.int/domains/corpus-juris/public/texts/legal_text.htm

Mc Connel International Cybercrimes provides an overview of countries that have laws that allow for the prosecution of cyber crimes.

<http://www.mcconnellinternational.com/services/Updatedlaws.htm>

UNODC legal crime library provides an overview of regulations of drug control, international criminal cooperation and criminal laws for most of the countries of the world.

http://www.unodc.org/enl/browse_countries.jsp

The Crime of Genocide in Domestic Laws and Penal Codes provides an overview of the status of the crime of genocide in domestic law for most countries of the world.

<http://preventgenocide.org/law/domestic/>

E-commerce Law Resources

Baker and McKenzie Global E-commerce Law provides an overview of the e-commerce laws of many countries of the world and includes e-transactions law (including e-signatures), privacy and data protection and information security law.

<http://www.bakernet.com/ecommerce/>

Election Laws and democracy

Project on Political Transformation provides the texts of the election laws of Eastern European and CIS countries.

http://www2.essex.ac.uk/elect/legi_index.htm

OSCE legislation online provides legal information per country on topics related to democracy and human rights. It provides terrorism laws, gender law, migration laws, election laws etc for the OSCE countries.

<http://www.legislationline.org/?topic=0&subtopic=0&subsubtopic=0&intst=0&eu=0&country=0>

Georgetown University Political Database of the Americas provides information on the regulation of democracy, political parties, elections, local governance for Latin American countries.

<http://pdba.georgetown.edu/> (also in French)

Environmental Law

Ecolex provides a database of national environmental laws, judicial decisions on environmental law, international environmental treaties and environmental law literature. The search engines allow for the ordering of the laws of a particular country along a range of environmental law subjects.

<http://www.ecolex.org/index.php> (also in French)

Equal Employment Law

The ILO Legal Framework for Equal Employment Opportunities provides for each country the relevant international instruments, the texts of national equal employment legislation, constitutional provisions and case law. It moreover provides a rich source of background information in the field of equal employment law.

<http://www.ilo.org/public/english/employment/gems/eo/law/main.htm>

Food, agriculture and renewable resources regulations

Faolex database by the Food and Agricultural Organization provides the food, agriculture and renewable resource regulation for every country in the world.

<http://faolex.fao.org/faolex/>

Labor and Social Security Laws

The ILO NATLEX database provides abstracts of national labor, social security and related human rights legislation for most countries in the world.

http://www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/natlex_browse.home

The ILO Occupational Health and Safety Information Centre provides national Occupational Health and Safety Laws for most countries in the world.

<http://www.ilo.org/public/english/protection/safework/cis/legosh/>

Tobacco laws

The WHO National Tobacco Information Online System provides tobacco regulation for every country.

http://apps.nccd.cdc.gov/nations/nations/Country_Specific_indicators.asp

III. AFRICAN RESOURCES

Francophone Africa: general

Droit Francophone provides jurisprudence, legislation and a range of other legal materials for francophone countries. Database is provided in French

<http://portail.droit.francophonie.org/df-web/>

Africa: human rights

Minnesota human rights library provides links to Africa's most important human rights documents

<http://www1.umn.edu/humanrts/links/africalinks.html>

South Africa: general

The Southern African Legal Information Institute publishes case law, legislation and other legal materials from Southern African countries.

<http://www.saflii.org/>

East Africa: general

Law Africa provides rather extensive coverage of laws and judicial decisions from Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania as well as some coverage of legal materials from other East African countries. Yet, this database can only be accessed by subscription

<https://www.lawafrica.com/index.asp>

IV. INTERNATIONAL LAW

In many cases, the subject-specific databases and the foreign law metapages listed in the previous sections also contain international documents. In addition to those, the ASIL guide provides a good starting point for researching international law specifically. In addition, the OHCHR website provides a comprehensive overview of human rights treaties, their status of ratification and the decisions and comments of the different treaty committees.

ASIL Guide to Electronic Resources for International Law. This guide by the American Society for International Law provides an excellent starting point for international law research. It covers the United Nations, International Commercial Arbitration, International Criminal Law, International Economic Law, International Environmental Law, International Intellectual Property Law, International Organizations and Private International Law. It provides links to websites that contain the texts of international treaties and decisions from international courts and tribunals.

<http://www.asil.org/resource/ergintr1.htm>

Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights. This website provides the text of the most important UN Human Rights Treaties, the status of ratification and reservations as well as links to their respective commissions.

<http://www.ohchr.org/english/law/index.htm>

V. COUNTRY SPECIFIC RESOURCES

In addition to the legal materials in the foreign law metapages or the subject-specific databases, individual countries may have rather extensive country-specific databases. In the following section, these databases are briefly described. Note however that if a country is not listed in this section, this does not mean that no legal information is available for this country. In fact, many of the databases- or metapages- described above may provide information on this country. Non-listing in this section merely implies that no separate country specific database is available. In general, the metapages are probably the best starting point for foreign law research- particularly Droit Francophone for West Africa and Worldlii for the rest of the world.

Algeria

Lex Algeria provides the texts of the most important Algerian codes such as the civil code, the penal code, the family code, the civil procedure code, the penal procedure code, the insurance code and more. Lex Algeria is provided in French.

<http://www.lexalgeria.net>

Andorra

Representacio de S.E. Coprincep Frances provides civil, administrative and immigration codes and the constitution in French.

<http://www.coprince-fr.ad/frances/textes.htm>

Argentina

Info leg database by the Ministry of Economic Affairs includes constitution, laws, codes and other legal information in searchable database for Argentina in Spanish. Can be searched by number of legislation (norma) and official bulletin number.

<http://infoleg.mecon.gov.ar/>

National Law database provides the texts of a broad range of legal documents and allows for advanced searches. In spanish.

http://www1.hcdn.gov.ar/folio-cgi-bin/om_isapi.dll?clientID=1066969165&infobase=leyes.nfo&softpage=doc_frame_pg42

Australia

Austlii database provides a rather extensive overview of legislation and case law in Australia, both at the state and at the federal level.

<http://www.austlii.edu.au/>

Austria

Rechtsinformationssystem des Bundes is a German language site providing links to federal, state and municipal laws and draft bills; Federal Law and State Law Gazettes; and full-text case law from the: Constitutional Court (1980-), Administrative Court (1990-), Supreme Court, Independent Administrative Tribunals (1991-), Independent

Federal Asylum Board (1998-), Environmental Senate, Federal Public Procurement Review Authority, Data Protection Commission.

<http://www.ris.bka.gv.at/>

Bahamas

Lex Bahamas provides a comprehensive listing of legislation from the Bahamas, including some full-text.

<http://www.lexbahamas.com/>

Belarus

National Centre of Legal Information provides Legal Acts of the Republic of Belarus in English and in Russian. The Russian version of this database contains a complete set of acts. This site also includes the National Register of Legal Acts, an index of laws by date.

<http://ncpi.gov.by/eng/legal/list.htm>

Belgium

Ministry of Justice Legislation Coordonee allows searching for full-text of codified laws by date, number and keyword.(in French)

http://www.cass.be/cgi_loi/legislation.pl

Belize

Laws of Belize Revised Edition 2000. This is a searchable database with an efficient search engine. The search results are full-text pdf versions of the statutes contained in the most recent revision for Belize. (In English)

<http://www.belize-law.org/lawadmin/index2.html>

Benin

Textes Juridiques - Bénin. This website provides a list of laws arranged by subject matter. The site provides citations to the law including the law or ordinance number. An email address is provided where pdf versions can be obtained on request. Costs are not clear from the site. (in french)

<http://www.afrikinfo.com/lois/>

Bermuda

Bermuda Laws Online. This is a database of full-text Bermuda laws in English on a variety of subjects.

<http://www.fortknox.bm/NXT/gateway.dll?f=templates&fn=default.htm>

Bolivia

National Congress (from the NC) includes recent legislation, important laws by subject area, and a database of abstracts for laws from 1979 to 2005, as well as information about the congressional system.

<http://www.congreso.gov.bo/indice.asp>

Unidad de Modernización Judicial de la Comisión Andina de Juristas contains various laws and codes full-text in Spanish.

<http://www.cajpe.org.pe/rij/bases/legisla/bolivia/legibopr.htm>

Brazil

Senate Federal Legislation database searchable by type or number. (in Portuguese)

<http://www.senado.gov.br/legbras/>

Office of the president provides laws, including Leis Ordinarias organized by date, Leis Complementares, Leis Delegadas, and legislation by subject. Also includes list of ministries and their authorization. (in Portuguese)

http://www.planalto.gov.br/CCIVIL/Leis/principal_ano.htm

Bulgaria

Online Bulgarian Legislation (from the Bulgarian Institute for Legal Development): legislation in the vernacular searchable by section number and full-text.

<http://www.bild.net/temida/index.html>

Cambodia

iFrance database provides the full text of laws and regulations of Cambodia in English and French arranged chronologically and by subject.

<http://cambodialaw.ifrance.com/>

Council of Jurist Laws and Regulations of Cambodia contains legal documents in English and/or French. There is also a chronological index.

http://www.bigpond.com.kh/Council_of_Jurists/somg.htm

Cameroon

Government Portal provides numerous legislative rules and regulations for Cameroon in French. Also provides a search engine. Coverage goes back to 1981 but is not comprehensive.

<http://www.spm.gov.cm/showtexte.php?lang=fr&nbrte=nbrte>

Canada

The Canlii database provides extensive coverage of Canadian legislation and case law in both French and English

<http://www.canlii.org/>

Chile

Library of Congress Legal Database provides a searchable database of laws with access by number or free-text. Also provides links to constitution, codes and other legal information.

<http://websolon.congreso.cl/basicdocs/consulta2.html>

Colombia

Novedades Legislativas (Ministry of Justice Library): Includes recent laws full-text organized by subject. There is also a database with bibliographic information about older legislation.

<http://www.minjusticia.gov.co/biblioteca/nl59re.htm>

Juriscol (Banco de la Republica): Includes the Constitution, laws on constitutional reform, laws and decrees from 1990 and resolutions of the "Junta Directiva del Banco" and "Junta Monetaria."

<http://juriscol.banrep.gov.co:8080/>

Costa Rica

Gaceta (National Press) provides laws (leyes) and decrees (decretos) for each day. There does not appear to be an archive although issues from December 1996 to July 1998 are available at another website.

<http://imprenal.go.cr/>

Ecuador

Unidad de Modernización Judicial de la Comisión Andina de Juristas includes the full-text of various laws and codes in Spanish.

<http://www.cajpe.org.pe/rij/bases/legisla/ecuador/legiecpr.htm>

El Salvador

Las Leyes de la Republica (Asamblea Legislativa): provides selected laws from 1962 through 1998 in Spanish

<http://www.asamblea.gob.sv/leyes/index1.htm>

Estonia

Estonian Legal Translation Center this state agency provides translations of Estonian legislation into English for selected laws

<http://www.legaltext.ee/indexen.htm>

France

Lexis Nexis JurisClasseur extensive coverage of French codes and judicial decisions in French. Requires a subscription.

<http://www.lexisnexis.com/fr/droit/home/home.do?rand=0.47948903221484074>

Georgia

Institutional Reform and the Informal Sector database provides a wide range of codes and laws in English and Georgian.

<http://www.iris.ge/en/resources.html>

Germany

The Ius Comp website provides a range of German statutes and laws in English.

<http://www.iuscomp.org/gla/statutes/statutes.htm>

Bundesgesetzblatt BGBl (Makrolog): Provides the most comprehensive overview of German law from 1949 to present in German. Allows for searches
<http://bgbl.makrolog.de/>

Guatemala

Ministry of Finance provides a limited collection of laws from different subject areas. (in Spanish)
<http://www.minfin.gob.gt/swf/leyes/>

Hungary

Lexis Nexis provides an overview of selected Hungarian laws in force in English. Requires a subscription.
www.lexisnexis.com

Iceland

Ministry of Justice selected legislation in English.
<http://brunnur.stjr.is/interpro/dkm/dkm.nsf/pages/english>

India

Ministry of Law and Justice India code database Allows for searching by Short Title/Act Year /Act No./Full Text and includes a Chronological table for Status of an Act. It also contains section on Parliamentary Bills and Legislative Bills.
<http://indiacode.nic.in/>

Indonesia

Badan Koordinasi Penanaman Modal contains selected laws, regulations and decrees in a variety of areas in English.
http://www.bkpm.go.id/en/law.php?mode=baca&catinfo_id=1

Ireland

Lexis Nexis provide comprehensive coverage of the laws from Ireland in English. Requires a subscription.
www.lexisnexis.com

Israel

Minister of Foreign Affairs website contains selected laws in English
<http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/Government/Law/Selected%20legislation/Selected%20Laws%20of%20the%20State%20of%20Israel>

Jamaica

The Supreme Court website provides selected laws in English
<http://www.sc.gov.jm/LOJ/index.htm>

Japan

English Translations of Japanese Law provides a compilation of links to online sources of Japanese law in English

<http://homepage2.nifty.com/paper/lawcollection.htm>

Korea, Democratic Republic (North)

NovexCN.com provides laws of North Korea in english. Includes: Arbitration Law, Commercial Joint Venture Law, Constitutional Law, Customs Law, Economic Plans, Fisheries Law, Foreign Enterprises Law, Foreign Investment Law, Free Trade Ports/Economic Trade Zones, Immigration/Emigration Law, Labour Law, Tax Law.

http://www.novexcn.com/north_korea_contents_main.html

Korea, Republic of (South)

Comprehensive Legal Information Service System from the Ministry of Legislation provides an on-line database of legislative information and court cases. Contains a variety of Acts, regulations, court cases, and books on jurisprudence. Information is searchable by word/phrase, subject term, amendment number, title, case number and more. (in Korean and English)

<http://www.moleg.go.kr/>

Kuwait

Council of Ministers provides selected legislation in English

<http://www.fatwa.gov.kw/>

Latvia

Translation and Terminology Centre provide selected laws in English

http://www.ttc.lv/new/Lv/EN_tulkojumi.htm

Lithuania

INFOLEX databases provide extensive coverage of laws across different subject areas. Some of the laws are available in English.

<http://www.litlex.lt/scripts/sarasas2.dll?Pirmas=1>

Malaysia

Parliament of Malaysia provides the full text of selected bills and acts enacted from 1990-2001

<http://www.parlimen.gov.my/eng-acts.php>

<http://www.parlimen.gov.my/eng-bills.php>

Mexico

Legislación Federal Vigentee (Camera de Diputados) provides access in Spanish to Mexican legislation and constitution. Also provides full-text codes in HTML or PDF format.

<http://www.cddhcu.gob.mx/leyinfo/>

Mongolia

Mongolia Law Library University of Indiana contains the most important Mongolian laws in English

<http://www.indiana.edu/~mongsoc/mong/lawlib.html>

New Zealand

The Knowledge Basket provides browseable full text selected acts in English
<http://www.knowledge-basket.co.nz/tkbgp/welcome.html>

Nicaragua

National Assembly Legislación Nicaraguense contains selected acts from 1969-1999 in spanish. Organized by type of legal instrument and by date.
<http://200.30.50.6/Normaweb.nsf/Normasenweb?Openview>

Nigeria

Laws of the Federation of Nigeria provides an overview of laws from 1990 to 2006 that are still in force. Some of these laws are provided full-text.
<http://www.nigeria-law.org/LFNMainPage.htm>

Pakistan

Pakistan Lawyer database contains numerous important laws in English (some full-text)
<http://www.pakistanlawyer.com/main.htm>

Panama

National Assembly Legislation contains approved legislation for the years 1999 to present in Spanish.
<http://www.asamblea.gob.pa/legispan/leyes/Leyes.htm>

Legalinfo-Panama.com provides assorted codes and laws in Spanish with some translations.
<http://www.legalinfo-panama.com/leyes.htm>

Peru

Unidad de Modernización Judicial de la Comisión Andina de Juristas provides various full-text laws and codes organized by subject in Spanish.
<http://www.cajpe.org.pe/rij/bases/legisla/peru/legiprpe.htm>

Philippines

House of Representatives webpage contains full texts of selected bills in English
<http://www.congress.gov.ph/download/billtext.php>

Portugal

The Documentation and Comparative Law Office provides selected legislation in English and French.
<http://www.gddc.pt/legislacao-lingua-estrangeira/english.html> (for english)
<http://www.gddc.pt/legislacao-lingua-estrangeira/francais.html> (for French)

Sierra Leone

The laws of Sierra Leone database provides extensive coverage of legislation, full-text, in English from 1926 to 2006 (including citations)

<http://www.sierra-leone.org/laws.html>

Singapore

Singapore Statutes Online provides a rather extensive range of full-text statutes in English.

<http://statutes.agc.gov.sg/>

South Africa

The Ministry of Justice Webpage contains bills, acts, notices, proclamations, regulations and other documents.

<http://www.doj.gov.za/legislation.html>

Spain

Boletín Oficial de Estado / Official Bulletin of the State provides laws and regulations. Available in full-text from 1995. (in Spanish)

<http://www.senado.es/legis7/actividad/index.html>

Switzerland

Federal Authority of the Swiss Confederation (Recueil systématique du droit fédéral / Systematische Sammlung des Bundesrechts / Raccolta sistematica del diritto federale / Systematic Collection of Federal Law) provides an inclusive database of Swiss federal law organized by subject, including the civil and criminal codes, available in French, German or Italian. Searchable.

<http://www.admin.ch/ch/f/rs/rs.html>

Trinidad and Tobago

Website of Parliament contains the full text of selected acts and pieces of legislation

<http://www.ttparliament.org/index2.htm>

United Kingdom

Lexis Nexis provides almost exhaustive coverage of UK legislation, case law and all sorts of legal documents. Requires a subscription.

www.lexisnexis.com

United States of America

Lexis Nexis provides almost exhaustive coverage of USA legislation, case law and all sorts of legal documents. Requires a subscription.

www.lexisnexis.com

Venezuela

Unidad de Modernización Judicial de la Comisión Andina de Juristas provides various full-text laws and codes organized by subject in Spanish.

<http://www.cajpe.org.pe/rij/bases/legisla/venezuel/legiprve.htm>

Vietnam

Maison du Droit contains a broad range of laws and codes in French. Well-organized site.

http://www.maisondudroit.org/tablematieres_fr.htm

Zimbabwe

Website of Parliament contains selected Bills and Acts

<http://www.parlzim.gov.zw/inside.aspx?mpgid=13>

Zambia

Institute of Human Rights, Intellectual Property and Development Trust provides selected laws of Zambia. Available full-text via pdf. (in English)

<http://www.hurid.org.zm/>