

..... is the study of differences and similarities between different jurisdictions, including civil-law systems, common-law systems and religious (or theological)

Comparative law has become of increasing practical importance for two reasons. First, the globalisation of world trade means that commercial lawyers are often required to work with colleagues and clients from unfamiliar jurisdictions. The second reason is the increasing (or unification) of laws between previously separate jurisdictions, as with the European Union and the Union of South American Nations.

Comparative law is closely related to private international law and the harmonisation of law. Private international law concerns the applicability of laws in situations involving other jurisdictions. Harmonisation of law developed out of a need to simplify these rules, both at a national level (e.g. the US Uniform Commercial Code) and between sovereign states (e.g. EU law).

Another key aspect of comparative law is the idea of uniform law. There are two main sources of international: The Hague Conference on Private International Law (HCC) and the International Institute of the Unification of Private law (UNIDROIT). The Hague Conference, a global intergovernmental organization with over 60 member states, is the leading organization in the area of private international law. An increasing number of non-member states are also becoming parties to the Hague conventions. The statutory mission of HCC is to work for the progressive unification of private international law in a wide range of areas, from commercial law to international civil procedure and from child protection to matters of marriage and personal status. This involves finding internationally agreed approaches to issues such as jurisdiction of the courts, applicable law and the recognition and UNIDROIT also has about 60 member states harmonising and co-ordinating private, especially commercial, international law. Its most notable convention is the Uniform law on the International Sale of Goods, 1964.