

BUREAUX INTERNATIONAUX  
RÉUNIS POUR LA PROTECTION  
DE LA PROPRIÉTÉ INTELLECTUELLE  
GENÈVE, SUISSE

# BIRPI

UNITED INTERNATIONAL  
BUREAUX FOR THE PROTECTION  
OF INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY  
GENEVA, SWITZERLAND

## COMITÉ DE COORDINATION INTERUNIONS, SEPTIÈME SESSION INTERUNION COORDINATION COMMITTEE, SEVENTH SESSION

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(Geneva, September 22 to 26, 1969)

BIRPI HEADQUARTERS BUILDING

### Report by the Director of BIRPI

1. In conformity with the program for 1969, approved by the Interunion Coordination Committee in its September 1968 session (see documents CCIU/VI/6, paragraph 39, and CCIU/VI/17, paragraph 27), BIRPI has continued the studies and negotiations concerning the extension of its headquarters building.

### THE PRESENT BUILDING

2. The present building has a surface of 4,400 square meters, distributed over six levels: one basement, one ground floor, and four floors above the ground floor. It contains a conference room for approximately 70 delegates, offices for approximately 100 employees, and a garage for two cars. It contains no premises specially designed for the reproduction and mailing services. Neither does it contain a cafeteria or a restaurant.

3. The construction of the present building was completed in 1960. One of the floors was rented to another international organization until 1967, and part only of the same floor until April 1, 1969. Since that date, the whole building has been occupied by BIRPI. However, it is not large enough to satisfy BIRPI's present needs, with the result that premises have had to be rented in another building, at a distance of approximately 1 kilometer. The Publications Section and the Industrial Designs Section are located in those premises outside the BIRPI building.

4. The present building was erected on a lot of some 4,500 square meters which belongs to the State of Geneva. The latter has rented the ground to BIRPI. The contract, unless extended, expires in 2018. The building itself is the property of BIRPI. Its construction cost some 2,600,000 Swiss francs. Its present value is at least 4,000,000 Swiss francs. (These figures do not include furniture and equipment.) All the construction costs have been paid, but in part with money borrowed from the Pension Fund of the Staff of BIRPI. At the present time, some 500,000 Swiss francs are still outstanding on this loan, secured by mortgage.

#### FUTURE NEEDS

5. The present building has thus become too small within a period of less than ten years. When its construction was decided, in 1957, BIRPI had 32 employees. The number of employees was 50 in 1960 and it will be 106 in 1970.

6. It is rather difficult to estimate the future needs. Barring unforeseen circumstances, they will doubtless increase. But by how much and at what pace? And what needs should the future building be able to satisfy: those that will exist in 1975, 1980, 1985, or some other (and, if so, what) date?

7. It would obviously be prudent to construct in anticipation of the needs that will exist at a rather distant date. Such a course, however, would increase the cost.

8. Consequently, it would seem to be preferable to take account only of those needs which will exist in the relatively near future. The considerations set forth below take as a basis the needs which are likely to exist between 1975 and 1980. The proposed construction will probably not be completed before 1973 to 1975.

9. In making the estimates of future needs, the following main elements were taken into account:

- (a) the number of employees,
- (b) the number and the size of conferences and meetings,
- (c) the volume of documents to be reproduced and mailed,
- (d) the difficulties of circulation and parking of vehicles, difficulties which will necessitate the creation of a cafeteria (and/or restaurant) and of underground parking facilities.

10. The Number of Employees.- If one takes as a basis the fact that the number of employees has doubled in the last ten years and that in 1970 it will be 106, the number of employees in 1980 will be some 210. But such an increase in the past has resulted only from the increase in BIRPI's ordinary program and ordinary administrative tasks. For the period 1975-1980, one must also take into consideration some entirely new administrative tasks that BIRPI will probably have to assume, such as the tasks concerning the Patent Cooperation Treaty, the World Patent Index, and the International Patent Classification. Furthermore, one will have to take into account the possibility that the international registration of trademarks may suddenly and considerably increase and that ICIREPAT may expand. Then again, BIRPI will have to furnish office space to the International Union for the Protection of Plant Varieties. It is not possible to foresee, today, whether all these plans will become a reality and how many employees each of them will require. The number, nevertheless, is estimated to be 180. This figure, together with the 210 employees referred to above, would mean 390 employees in 1980. If, between now and the commencement of the construction, some of these plans fall through or show considerable delays, the extension of the building will have to be more modest. If, on the other hand, all the plans materialize, the estimates would probably prove to be insufficient--since the needs in staff have been calculated rather conservatively--and the capacity of the building would reach its point of saturation before 1980.

11. Conferences and Other Meetings.- The experience of recent years has amply demonstrated that the only existing conference room is inadequate. Meetings have to be held frequently outside the BIRPI building, either because the existing conference room is too small or because it is being used for other meetings.

12. At the same time, account must be taken of the fact that the State of Geneva is in the process of constructing, a few hundred meters from the BIRPI building, a Conference Center whose conference rooms could be rented by BIRPI. That solution--rental of conference rooms--has one advantage and several drawbacks. The advantage is that it renders unnecessary the investment of the considerable amount of money that is required by any construction. The drawbacks are that the conference rooms of the Center will not always be available to BIRPI since they will be rented also to other organizations, that BIRPI will have no say in fixing the rental fees, and that having the discussions in one place and the reproduction of the documents and all other secretariat services in another place always slows down a meeting, and such slowing down results in loss of time for the delegations and loss of money for the member States.

13. The problem is to find a compromise between the two extreme solutions: to construct no conference rooms at all (that is, to rely for all needs on the Conference Center) or to construct enough conference rooms to satisfy all the needs of BIRPI. It is proposed to try to satisfy in the new construction only the most common needs of BIRPI--and to estimate even those needs with moderation--and, consequently, to construct only four conference rooms, each of them relatively small: one for 200 delegates, one for 100, one for 50, and one for 20. It is to be noted that no really big conference room is envisaged at all. It will therefore be necessary to rent conference rooms in the Center whenever there are meetings with a large number of delegates (assemblies, diplomatic conferences, the periodical conferences of WIPO, etc.), or whenever all the meeting rooms of BIRPI are occupied.

14. Documents.-- Experience in recent years has shown that not only does the number of meetings increase rapidly and constantly but the same holds for the volume of documents. This, by the way, is a natural phenomenon, since the documents of BIRPI are, for the most part, prepared for ("preparatory documents"), during ("working documents" or "conference documents"), or after (reports, summary minutes, etc.) meetings.

15. Any increase in the number of documents results of course not only in an increase in the typing and translation work, but also in the work of reproduction (mostly by photographic and offset processes) and distribution (sending, by mail, to the member States and frequently also to the individual participants).

16. Receiving the documents rapidly is in the obvious interest of the member States: it is possible for the delegations to prepare adequately for the meetings only if they receive the preparatory documents some time before the opening of the meeting; the duration of the meeting increases if the conference documents do not issue promptly; the delegations are unable to make final reports to their governments without the minutes and reports, which should therefore be communicated to them shortly after the closing of the meeting.

17. For all these reasons, it is proposed to construct all the premises necessary to satisfy the considerable increase in the needs of the reproduction and mailing services. A surface of 2,000 square meters will be necessary for these two services.

18. Restaurant and Parking Facilities.- The reason for which the need for a restaurant and the need for parking facilities are treated together is that the principal cause of both needs resides in the same fact, namely, the difficulties of travelling back and forth.

19. It is becoming increasingly difficult to find apartments at distances which still make it practical for employees to go home for lunch since traffic, before and after the lunch hour, is particularly heavy and slow in Geneva. It is therefore inevitable that an increase must be counted on in the number of employees who will not be able to go home for lunch. For such persons, one must provide for the possibility of eating rapidly and at a reasonable price at noon. This is why it is proposed that a cafeteria be constructed for 100 persons and a restaurant for 50 persons. These two, together with the kitchens, the storing and other related facilities, will occupy a surface of some 1,000 square meters.

20. As far as parking is concerned, it must be noted that, in view of the increase in traffic, it is probable that the Geneva Authorities will soon prohibit parking in all streets around the Place des Nations, that is, also in the neighborhood of the BIRPI building. At the same time, the said Authorities intend to construct an underground car park, probably somewhere between the buildings of BIRPI and the International Telecommunication Union. They insist that BIRPI rent parking places in the proposed underground park.

21. It is proposed to satisfy the wishes of the Geneva Authorities to a very considerable extent and, when the time comes, to rent places in the underground park covering the greater part of the foreseeable needs. At the same time, it is proposed to construct an underground park for some 130 cars under what will be the extension of the present BIRPI building. Thus, places will be available closer to BIRPI for at least part of the cars of employees, delegates and visitors.

22. Since the needs for parking space, for 390 employees and for delegates and visitors, are estimated to be at least 440 places, all that BIRPI proposes to provide for in its own car park is about one-third of the contemplated needs.

23. A park for 130 cars will occupy a surface of some 4,000 square meters.

24. Total Needs.- On the basis of the needs referred to in the preceding paragraphs and other elements of lesser importance, the total surface of the building to be added to the present building will be approximately 19,000 square meters.

#### THE PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION

25. According to the architects BIRPI has consulted, it is not possible, for technical reasons, to build additional floors on top of the four floors of the existing building. According to the same architects it would therefore be necessary to construct an additional building, which could be either an extension of the present building or a separate building constructed near the existing building and connected to it by covered corridors.

26. Negotiations with the Geneva Authorities, which have lasted now for more than a year, indicate that the said Authorities are ready to rent the "Horngacher" plot to BIRPI. This plot is delimited by the plot on which the existing BIRPI building stands, the chemin des Colombettes, the avenue Giuseppe Motta, and the route de Ferney.

27. At the time of writing the present report, the negotiations have not yet been concluded but a decision on the principle itself is expected during the month of September 1969. If the decision is reached before the opening, on September 22, 1969, of the session of the Interunion Coordination Committee, it will be the subject of a supplementary report.

28. If the decision is favorable and if agreement can be reached on the amount of the rental fee and other details, BIRPI intends to invite three or four architects to submit plans for the "program," that is, plans for the satisfaction of the needs, of which a detailed description already exists.

29. The choice among the plans will be made by BIRPI with the help of architects specially designated for the purpose after consultations with the Federal Authorities of Switzerland and the Cantonal Authorities of Geneva.

30. The major part or all of the money required for the construction will be borrowed from the Fondation des Immeubles pour les Organisations internationales (Foundation for Buildings of International Organizations; FIPOI), subject to conditions which would be similar to those agreed upon between FIPOI, on the one hand, and the United Nations, the

International Labour Organisation, and other intergovernmental organizations located in Geneva, on the other hand. These conditions might be the following: amortization spread over a period of as much as 40 years, commencing upon the completion of the construction; 3% (or, possibly, 3½%) yearly interest on the capital not yet repaid.

31. FIPOI is a Swiss foundation created by the Swiss Confederation and the Republic and Canton of Geneva for the purpose of assisting international organizations in constructing buildings. The Board of Directors of the Foundation is composed exclusively of representatives of the Federal and Cantonal Governments.

#### EFFECT ON THE BUDGET OF BIRPI

32. The preparatory work cost 5,400 Swiss francs in 1968. For 1969, an amount of 30,000 Swiss francs is budgeted for, and the draft budget for 1970 contains a similar amount, i.e., 30,000 Swiss francs. The cost of the architects' plans, however, may exceed the amount budgeted for in 1970, and it is proposed to cover expenses by drawing, for the first time, on the FIPOI loan, provided such loan becomes available before the end of 1970.

33. It will not be possible to estimate, at least with any precision, the cost of the construction until after the architects' detailed plans have become available. On the basis of present, rough estimates, the cost will be in the neighborhood of 20,000,000 Swiss francs.

34. As far as provision for reimbursing any loan contracted for by BIRPI for the purposes of constructing and equipping the additional building is concerned, it is proposed that the Unions which will use the existing or future buildings should pay an annual amount. The amount that each Union will have to pay each year would depend on the amount to be reimbursed in capital plus interest and on the size of the surface used by that Union in either building. For example, in a year in which the amount to be reimbursed is 1,000,000 Swiss francs and the surface occupied by the services of the Berne Union is 10% of the total surface, the Berne Union would have to pay 100,000 Swiss francs.

35. How much will have to be paid each year on the loan? If it is taken, as an example, that the loan will be 20,000,000 Swiss francs and that the conditions (3%, 40 years) will be those indicated above, the payment in the first year

(i.e., around 1975) will be 1,100,000 Swiss francs. It will diminish by 15,000 Swiss francs each year and in the last year (2015) will be 515,000 Swiss francs.

36. More precise information and estimates will be submitted to the member States prior to the administrative meetings in 1970. The Director of BIRPI invites the attention of the Interunion Coordination Committee to the possibility of setting up a "Construction Financing Subcommittee," whose task would be to prepare detailed proposals on the repayment of any loan contracted for in view of the construction.

37. The Interunion Coordination Committee is invited to express its views on the contents of the present report and to set up, if it so desires, a "Construction Financing Subcommittee" as referred to in the preceding paragraph.

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