
Section 1: Before you start

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1.1. Comments on this edition

The publication of this specialized volume in the *Yearbook of International Organizations* series, included for the first time in 2001, is in response to the many enquiries the editors receive for statistical information on international organizational activity.

The volume is also a response to the needs of many for new ways of thinking about the complexity of international organization networks – and the networks of problems with which they deal, and the networks of strategies advocated in that process.

The editors, the Union of International Associations (UIA), are faced with a major challenge: how to enable people to obtain greater insight into complex networks of relationships amongst international organizations, world problems, strategies in response to them, human development and human values. The challenge is to compensate for the natural tendency to rely on focused information on urgent issues by enabling people to work with contextual information and configurations of related issues and responses to them.

Since the 1970s the UIA has been exploring the visualization of international organization relationships and the possibility of some form of *Atlas of International Relationships*. Investigation of the latter was supported for a time by the publisher of this Yearbook and by UNESCO in the early 1990s but has only become feasible with recent software and hardware developments.

The main features of this volume are:

Information from Volumes 1-6 of this Yearbook series: As from the 37th edition, all tables previously included as appendices in the other Volumes of this Yearbook now appear in this Volume 5. Volumes 1 to 4 include only tabular statistical summaries of the entries actually printed in those volumes.

Historical data and analyses: In addition to all the statistical tables formerly or currently included in Volumes 1 to 4, this volume contains extensive historical statistical summaries and presentations of statistical data, drawing on past editions of the Yearbook series.

Meetings of international organizations: This volume also includes statistical data from the international meetings database for meetings of international organizations as published in the *International Congress Calendar*.

The main innovations in this edition are:

More details in statistical tables: This edition contains more statistical tables than previous editions, and many of the tables are more detailed than similar tables in previous editions. At the same time, the number of graphs and charts (visualizations) has been reduced. This is in response to the many requests the editors have received over the years for more data and less interpretation.

Renumbered figures: Given the changes in the number and content of both the statistical tables and the accompanying visualizations, the figures in this edition are numbered sequentially and have no relation to the figure numbers in previous editions. An index to previous editions is included in 10.5. “Index to figure numbers in previous editions”.

Explanatory notes: In order to emphasize the importance of certain explanatory notes – in particular “Types of organization”, “Continuity”, and “Geographical names” – some texts included in the Appendices of previous editions have been moved to the front of this edition, namely to this Section 1. Users are advised to read these notes carefully before consulting the statistical tables.

For further explanatory information, see Section 10 “Explanatory Notes”, and in particular 10.1. “Methodological issues”
