



HCCH

Connecter Protéger Coopérer Depuis 1893
Connecting Protecting Cooperating Since 1893
Conectando Protegiendo Cooperando Desde 1893



Annual Report 2024

Annual Report

2024

Secretary General's Message

As I sit in my office reflecting on the year 2024 for the HCCH, the first thing that comes to mind is the Spanish summer. This has nothing to do with the temperatures in The Hague. Rather, I am thinking of the HCCH's Spanish summer — when, on 1 July 2024, Spanish was introduced as the third official language of the Organisation.



At the close of the first day of the meeting of the *Special Commission (SC) on the Practical Operation of the 1965 Service, 1970 Evidence, and 1980 Access to Justice Conventions* — the first formal HCCH meeting conducted with Spanish as an official language — we celebrated this historic milestone. As I have noted on previous occasions, the introduction of Spanish effectively reflects the Organisation's evolving

Membership, particularly its growth in Latin America. It also represents a significant step forward in fostering universality and inclusiveness within the HCCH, reaffirming the role of multilingualism and multilateralism as fundamental pillars of our work, while enabling even greater engagement from Spanish-speaking Members. It has been a truly remarkable development.

Yet, the year 2024 was not only about the addition of a new official language. The HCCH continued to move forward with impressive momentum.

One State (Bahrain) applied for Membership, and we witnessed 19 new treaty actions in respect of HCCH instruments, further expanding the reach of our work.

Across the three divisions of the Permanent Bureau (PB), 2024 saw numerous significant developments — far too many to recount here, but I will highlight a few. In the area of International Family and Child Protection Law, two major international gatherings took place. In June, the HCCH co-hosted the first *Forum on Domestic Violence*

"[...] the introduction of Spanish [...] represents a significant step forward in fostering universality and inclusiveness within the HCCH [...]"

2024



and the Operation of Article 13(1)(b) of the 1980 Child Abduction Convention, in collaboration with the Government of South Africa and the University of Pretoria's Centre for Child Law — an initiative I was pleased to initiate. Then, in September, the HCCH and the Government of Malta co-hosted the *Fifth Conference on the HCCH Children's Conventions as Bridges between Civil / Common Law and Islamic Law (Malta V)*. Once again, both meetings exemplified the HCCH spirit of universality and inclusiveness, bringing together key actors for essential dialogue on matters of deep importance.

"One State (Bahrain) applied for Membership, and we witnessed 19 new treaty actions in respect of HCCH instruments, further expanding the reach of our work."

The work of the Transnational Litigation and Apostille Division was equally significant. In addition to the aforementioned SC meeting, the Division organised the *13th International Forum on the electronic Apostille Programme (e-APP)*, co-hosted with the Ministry of Justice of Kazakhstan and Maqsut Narikbayev University. The Forum provided once again a valuable platform to discuss key global developments in relation to the e-APP. Meanwhile, in the field of International Commercial, Digital, and Financial Law, 2024 saw the inaugural meetings of the Experts' Group (EG) on Central Bank Digital Currencies (CBDCs) and the launch of the Digital Tokens Project — just two examples of the many initiatives advancing in the rapidly evolving area of the digital economy.

I invite you to explore the details of these and other projects in this Annual Report, which I am particularly proud to present — in all three of the HCCH's official languages: English, French, and Spanish.

In closing, I wish to extend my heartfelt gratitude to all the delegates and experts involved in the work of the HCCH, as well as my colleagues at the PB. Looking back at the achievements of the past year, I am once again reminded that these successes are the result of collective efforts.

Thank you — Merci — Gracias.

Dr Christophe Bernasconi
Secretary General

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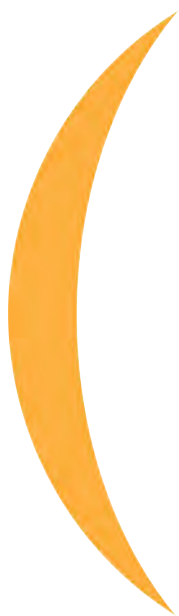
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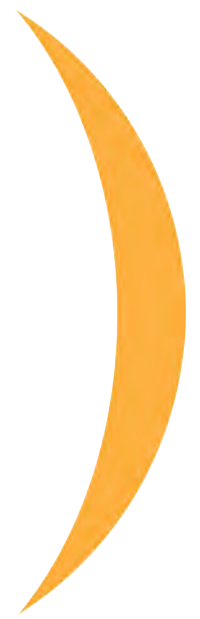


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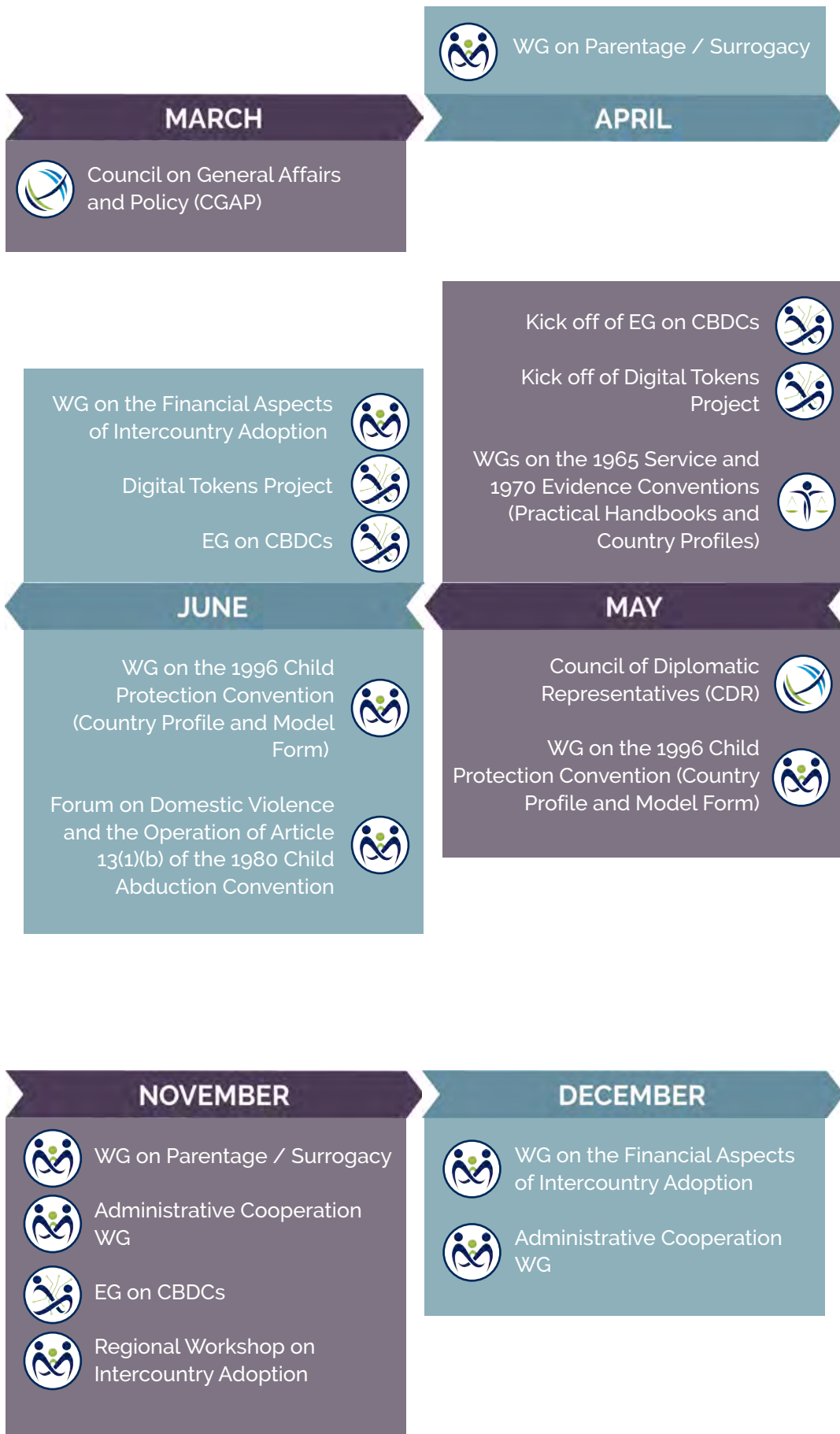
Milestones

YEAR
2024





**YEAR
2025**



Facts & Figures

28

Signatures, Accessions & Ratifications

9 New Signatures

(2000 Protection of Adults, 2005 Choice of Court, 2007 Child Support, and 2019 Judgments Conventions, and 2007 Maintenance Obligations Protocol)



10 New Accessions

(1961 Apostille, 1965 Service, 1993 Adoption, 1996 Child Protection, 2005 Choice of Court, and 2007 Child Support Conventions)

9 New Ratifications

(2000 Protection of Adults, 2005 Choice of Court, 2007 Child Support, and 2019 Judgments Conventions, and 2007 Maintenance Obligations Protocol)

35+

Meetings



7+

Public Events

- 2 Experts' Group
- 8 Working Groups
- 1 Special Commission
- 2 Governing Bodies
- 1 Network



32

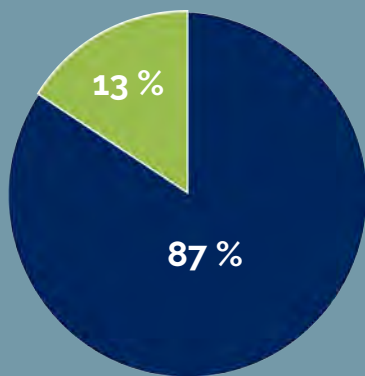
Staff members
from 21 States

6

Secondees
from 3 States

42

Interns
from 17 States



 Budget
 Voluntary
Contributions

€ 5,262,044

Budget for
Financial Year 2024-2025

€ 738,712

received in monetary voluntary
contributions in 2024



6

New publications

(per 31 December 2024)

New Treaty Actions

The HCCH has 91 Members (90 Member States and the European Union (EU)) representing all major regions across the globe.

Members determine the Work Programme of the Organisation and play an active role in its legislative, post-Convention and governance work.

Albania

2005 Choice of Court Convention (S+R)
2007 Maintenance Obligations Protocol (S+R)
2019 Judgments Convention (S)

Ireland

2000 Protection of Adults Convention (R)

Kosovo

2005 Choice of Court Convention (S)
2019 Judgments Convention (S)

Moldova

2005 Choice of Court Convention (A)

14

9

2

Belize

1996 Child Protection Convention (A)

Dominican Republic

1965 Service Convention (A)
2007 Child Support Convention (A)

El Salvador

1965 Service Convention (A)
1996 Child Protection Convention (A)

Paraguay

2007 Child Support Convention (S+R)
2007 Maintenance Obligations Protocol (S+R)

Angola

1993 Adoption Convention (A)

Cabo Verde

2007 Child Support Convention (A)

Contracting Parties to the HCCH Conventions benefit from an extensive legal cooperation network and uniform international standards. The Conventions are open to Members of the Organisation, but also to non-Members, of which many have either signed or become Contracting Parties to one or more HCCH Conventions. As a result, there are a total of over 150 States connected to the work of the Organisation worldwide.

North Macedonia

2005 Choice of Court Convention (R)

Romania

2000 Protection of Adults Convention (S)

Switzerland

2005 Choice of Court Convention (A)

United Kingdom

2019 Judgments Convention (S+R)



Bangladesh

1961 Apostille Convention (A)

Georgia

2007 Child Support Convention (R)

2007 Maintenance Obligations Protocol (R)

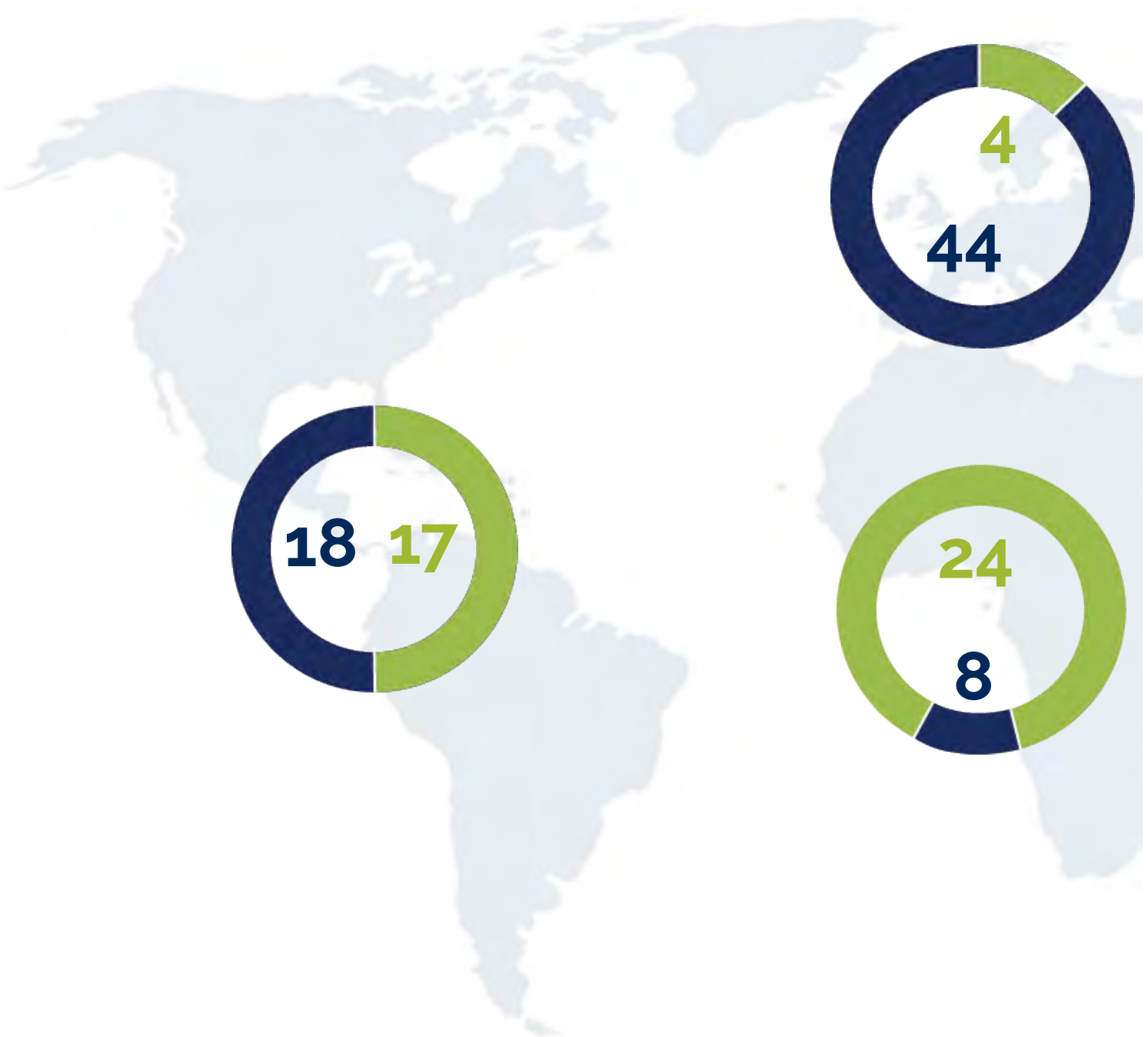
Keys:

Signature (S)

Accession (A)

Ratification (R)

Members & Other Connected States or Parties



Members of the HCCH (91): 90 States, plus the European Union

Admitted States: **Bahrain**, **Colombia**, **Lebanon**, and **Rwanda** have been admitted by affirmative vote and are invited to deposit their acceptance of the Statute to become Members.



 Other Connected States or Parties (67):

Non-Members that are a Contracting Party (or signatory) to at least one HCCH Convention or in the process of becoming a Member.

International Family & Child Protection Law

1980 Child Abduction and 1996 Child Protection Conventions

New Contracting Parties

El Salvador and Belize acceded to the 1996 Child Protection Convention in September and December 2024, respectively. With these accessions, the Convention now has 56 Contracting Parties. As for the 1980 Child Abduction Convention, it currently has 103 Contracting Parties.

The 1980 Child Abduction Convention seeks to protect children from the harmful effects of wrongful removal and retention across international boundaries, by providing a procedure to bring about their prompt return and ensuring the protection of rights of access.



Belize accedes to 1996 Child Protection Convention

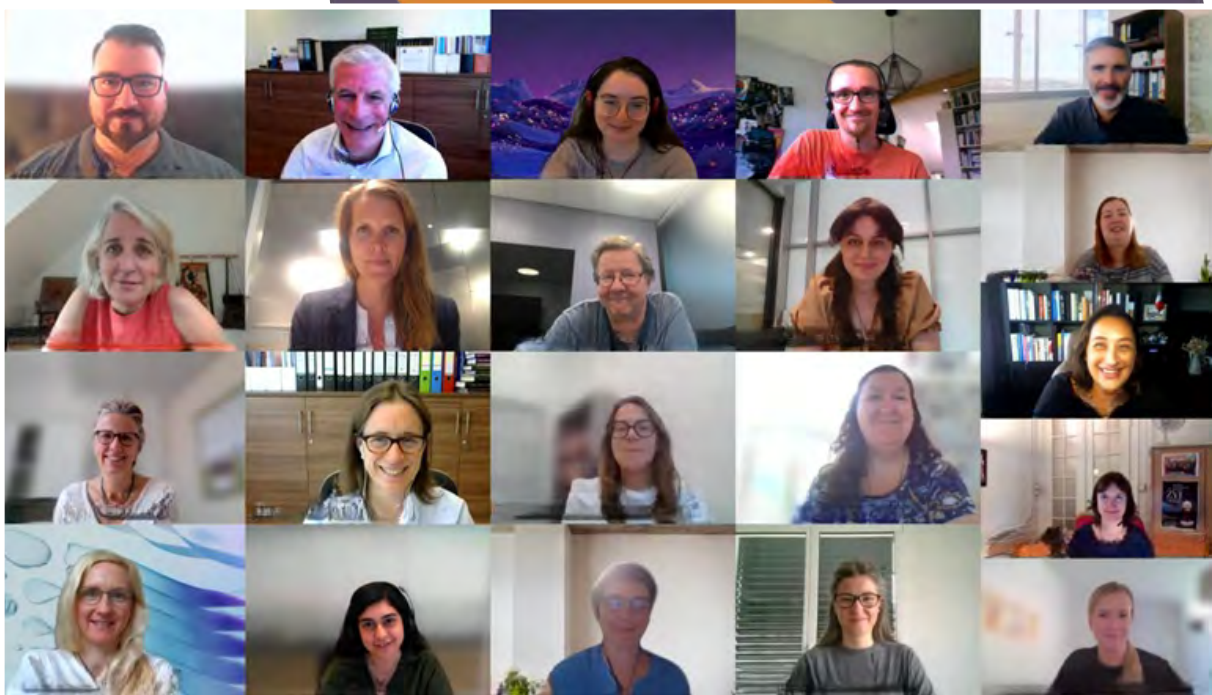


El Salvador accedes to 1996 Child Protection Convention

New Working Groups (WGs) and Tools to Assist with the Implementation and Operation of the 1996 Child Protection Convention

In March 2024, CGAP mandated the establishment of a WG to complete the 1996 Child Protection Convention's Country Profile and, subsequently, progress work on the draft Cooperation Request Recommended Model Form. The WG held five meetings in 2024, during which it finalised the draft Country Profile taking into account comments provided by HCCH Members and Contracting Parties. The draft Country Profile was circulated to HCCH Members for approval via written procedure and, in the absence of any objections, was approved in November 2024. A second WG, also established in 2024, will focus on the operation of Article 33 of the 1996 Child Protection Convention by, first, developing a Model Form and, subsequently, developing a Guide on the application of Article 33.

In October 2024, the PB announced the publication of the document *The Application of the 1996 Child Protection Convention to Unaccompanied and Separated Children – Update 2024*. The updates to the document, which had originally been published in 2022, were discussed and finalised in 2024 through the organisation of informal meetings with relevant experts, as mandated by CGAP at its 2024 meeting.



Third meeting of the WG established to complete the Country Profile for the 1996 Child Protection Convention

The 1996 Child Protection Convention provides a comprehensive framework to protect children in cross-border situations, with uniform private international law (PIL) rules that prevent conflicting decisions regarding civil measures of protection for children and their property.

International Child Abduction Database (INCADAT)

The PB continues to support the operation of INCADAT, the only global, free legal database on international child abduction law. Available in English, French, and Spanish, INCADAT is a comprehensive tool that facilitates the research of cases by providing case summaries and legal analyses within the scope of application of the 1980 Child Abduction Convention. Some of the decisions are provided in their original language, reflecting the wide reach of the database which currently covers over 55 jurisdictions. In 2024, INCADAT continued to grow both in terms of users and content, supported by the ongoing cooperation of the PB with INCADAT correspondents, universities, and Central Authorities across the world, which assist with the addition of new content and the translation of existing content.



Forum on Domestic Violence and the Operation of Article 13(1)(b) of the 1980 Child Abduction Convention

Forum on Domestic Violence and the Operation of Article 13(1)(b) of the 1980 Child Abduction Convention

From 18 to 21 June 2024, the first Forum on Domestic Violence and the Operation of Article 13(1)(b) of the 1980 Child Abduction Convention was held in Sandton, South Africa, co-hosted by the HCCH, the Government of South Africa, and the University of Pretoria's Centre for Child Law. For the first time, the HCCH convened participants from various backgrounds and disciplines to share their perspectives and engage in an open, informal dialogue on the operation of the 1980 Child Abduction Convention within the context of domestic violence. The Forum brought together, in person and online, over 440 participants representing advocates for victims of domestic violence and left-behind parents, judges, Central Authority personnel, legal practitioners, psychological experts, academic researchers, and representatives from non-governmental organisations from around the world.

Special Commission (SC) meeting on the 1980 Child Abduction and 1996 Child Protection Conventions

In March 2024, CGAP endorsed the Conclusions & Recommendations (C&R) of the Eighth Meeting of the SC on the 1980 Child Abduction and 1996 Child Protection Conventions, held in 2023, and invited the PB to host an informal brainstorming session to discuss possible means by which the PB could be assisted with the organisation of its next meeting. The brainstorming session, the result of which will be discussed at CGAP 2025, was held from 18 to 21 November 2024.

International Hague Network of Judges (IHNJ)

The First Regional Meeting of Judges of the IHNJ from Latin America and the Caribbean took place in May 2024 in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Established in 1998, the IHNJ facilitates international cooperation and communication between judges on the cross-border protection of children. Its scope encompasses the 1980 Child Abduction, 1996 Child Protection, and 2000 Protection of Adults Conventions. At the time of writing, the IHNJ comprised 152 judges from 88 States across all regions of the world.



First Regional Meeting of Judges of the IHNJ from Latin America and the Caribbean

1993 Adoption Convention

WG on the Financial Aspects of Intercountry Adoption

The WG on the Financial Aspects of Intercountry Adoption met three times in 2024. Pursuant to its mandate, the WG continued to take stock of current practices, identify possible coordinated, targeted, practical approaches, and to prioritise them with the understanding that the objective would be to raise standards using the HCCH Guides to Good Practice and the Note on the Financial Aspects of Intercountry Adoption as the starting point.

The 1993 Adoption Convention provides safeguards to ensure that intercountry adoptions take place in the best interests of the child and with respect for their fundamental rights.



Ms Irene Fagayan (Philippines),
co-Chair of the WG on the Financial
Aspects of Intercountry Adoption



Mr Antonio Ferrandis Torres (Spain),
co-Chair of the WG on the Financial
Aspects of Intercountry Adoption



Fourth meeting of the WG on the Financial Aspects of Intercountry Adoption

Publication of the *Recommended Model Forms for use under the 1993 Adoption Convention*

In February 2024, the PB announced the publication of the *Recommended Model Forms for use under the 1993 Adoption Convention*. The Model Forms are intended to simplify and facilitate compliance with the 1993 Adoption Convention by assisting Contracting Parties in the collection of relevant information.



Recommended Model Forms for use under the 1993 Adoption Convention



Intercountry Adoption Technical Assistance Programme (ICATAP)

As in previous years, the PB continued to provide post-Convention assistance on the implementation and operation of the 1993 Adoption Convention to Contracting Parties, funded through the generous support of the Governments of France, the Netherlands, and Norway. Notably, the PB organised a Regional Workshop on Intercountry Adoption: Sharing Experiences on the Effective Implementation of the 1993 Adoption Convention in Africa, held in Togo, and, with the assistance of consultants, provided further technical assistance to Paraguay, resulting in the development of guidance materials and the training of Central Authority staff members.



Technical assistance to Paraguay



Regional Workshop on 1993 Adoption Convention

2000 Protection of Adults Convention

New Contracting Party

In May 2024, Ireland ratified the 2000 Protection of Adults Convention, which then entered into force for Ireland in September 2024. With this ratification, the Convention now has 16 Contracting Parties. In August 2024, Romania signed the Protection of Adults Convention.

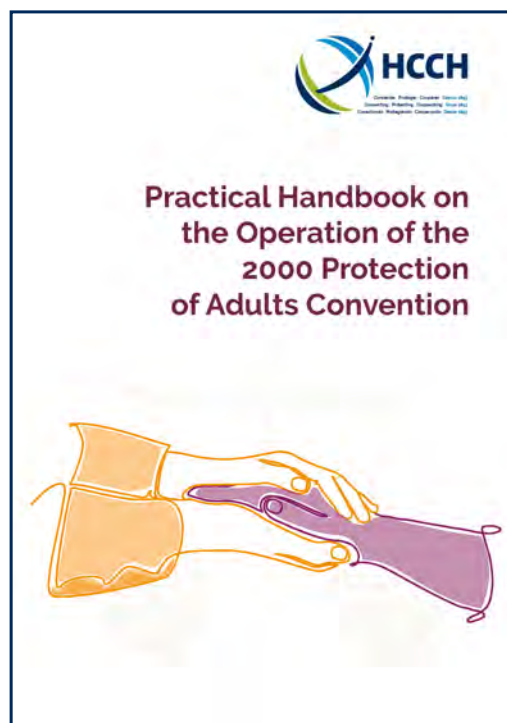
The 2000 Protection of Adults Convention applies to the protection of adults in international situations who, by reason of an impairment or insufficiency of their personal faculties, are not in a position to protect their interests.

New Publication and Tools to Assist with the Implementation of the Convention

The *Practical Handbook on the Operation of the 2000 Protection of Adults Convention* was published in December 2024. This publication is intended to assist current and prospective Contracting Parties to the 2000 Protection of Adults Convention by providing practical guidance on its implementation and operation, drawing from experience of experts from both Contracting Parties and States which are considering becoming Contracting Parties. The *Implementation Checklist under the 2000 Protection of Adults Convention*, a tool highlighting implementation issues which may need to be considered by current and prospective Contracting Parties, as well as the *Country Profile under the 2000 Protection of Adults Convention*, a tool for Contracting Parties to provide information regarding their domestic laws in the area and their implementation of the Convention, were also approved and published in 2024.



Mr Geraldo Rocha Ribeiro (Portugal),
Chair of the WG on the Practical
Handbook on the Operation of
the 2000 Protection of Adults Convention



2007 Child Support Convention and 2007 Maintenance Obligations Protocol

New Contracting Parties

In 2024, Cabo Verde, the Dominican Republic, Georgia, and Paraguay joined the 2007 Child Support Convention, and Albania, Georgia, and Paraguay joined the 2007 Maintenance Obligations Protocol. With these new treaty actions, the 2007 Child Support Convention now has 53 Contracting Parties, while the 2007 Maintenance Obligations Protocol has 35.



Paraguay ratifies the 2007
Convention and Protocol



Georgia ratifies the 2007 Convention and Protocol

The 2007 Child Support Convention and 2007 Maintenance Obligations Protocol seek to establish a modern, efficient, and accessible international system for the cross-border recovery of child support and other forms of family maintenance.



Mr Arnaldo José Alves Silveira (Brazil), co-Chair of the EG on the International Transfer of Maintenance Funds

Experts Group (EG) on the International Transfer of Maintenance Funds

The EG on the International Transfer of Maintenance Funds was established in 2019 in light of persisting challenges to the smooth cross-border transfer of child support payments, such as high transfer costs and other difficulties of an organisational nature. The EG held its fifth meeting in February 2024, continuing its work discussing good practices in relation to the cross-border transfer of maintenance payments, with a view to identifying solutions that are cost-effective, transparent, prompt, efficient, and accessible.



Dr Sarah Gerling-Stock (Germany), co-Chair of the EG on the International Transfer of Maintenance Funds (until 31 May 2024)



Fifth Meeting of the EG on the International Transfer of Maintenance Funds

Administrative Cooperation Working Group (ACWG)

The ACWG met online in November and December 2024 to discuss and finalise updates to the Country Profile on the 2007 Child Support Convention. The updated Country Profile was circulated to HCCH Members for approval via written procedure in December 2024 and, in the absence of any objections, was approved in January 2025.



Mr Philip Ashmore (USA),
co-Chair of the ACWG



Ms Floor de Jongh Bekkali (Norway),
co-Chair of the ACWG



ACWG meeting

iSupport

Throughout 2024, the PB continued to work on the maintenance and improvement of iSupport, the electronic case management and secure communication system for the cross-border recovery of maintenance obligations under the EU 2009 Maintenance Regulation and the 2007 Child Support Convention, as well as other international and bilateral instruments. The first official exchange of data using iSupport occurred on 9 January 2024, as several official messages under the EU 2009 Maintenance Regulation were exchanged between Germany and Sweden through e-CODEX, the secure electronic communication software used by iSupport.



Ms Karin Honorato dos Santos (Sweden),
Chair of the iSupport Governing Body

Technical Assistance

In September 2024, the PB provided technical assistance to Georgia on the implementation and operation of the 2007 Child Support Convention and its Protocol through the organisation of a training for Central Authority officials, enforcement officers, and judges.

Malta Process

In September 2024, the HCCH and the Government of Malta co-hosted the Fifth Conference on the HCCH Children's Conventions as Bridges between Civil / Common Law and Islamic Law. The conference was organised within the framework of the Malta Process, initiated by the HCCH in 2004 to facilitate dialogue and promote cooperation among States with civil, common, and Shari'a-based legal systems in complex cross-border family conflicts.



Malta V Conference

Technical Assistance on the 1980 Child Abduction, 1996 Child Protection, and 2007 Child Support Conventions

Since 2022, the PB has been cooperating with the Governments of Finland and Namibia with the aim of expanding the HCCH's impact in the African region. In 2024, in the context of this cooperation, representatives of the PB and the Government of Finland provided technical assistance to the Government of Namibia on the implementation of the 1980 Child Abduction, 1996 Child Protection, and 2007 Child Support Conventions, including the designation of Central Authorities.



Prof Michael Hellner (Sweden),
Chair of the WG on Parentage / Surrogacy

Parentage / Surrogacy Project

The WG on Parentage / Surrogacy continued its consideration of draft provisions for a new instrument on legal parentage generally, including legal parentage resulting from an international surrogacy agreement, by holding its second and third meetings in April and November 2024, respectively.



Second meeting of the WG on Parentage / Surrogacy

Transnational Litigation & Apostille

1961 Apostille Convention

New Contracting Parties

In 2024, Bangladesh acceded to the 1961 Apostille Convention, which currently has 127 Contracting Parties. The Convention entered into force for Canada in January 2024 and for Rwanda in June 2024. It will enter into force for Bangladesh in March 2025.

The 1961 Apostille Convention facilitates the use of public documents abroad, replacing the traditional legalisation process with the issuance of a single Apostille certificate.

Electronic Apostille Programme (e-APP)

The e-APP, which comprises two components: the issuance of electronic Apostilles (e-Apostilles) and the operation of electronic Registers (e-Registers) to verify both paper Apostilles and e-Apostilles, has continued to attract interest. In 2024, the PB was advised of seven Contracting Parties to the 1961 Apostille Convention which had implemented one or both components of the e-APP. Ecuador, Morocco, Panama, the Philippines, the Russian Federation, and three states of the United States of America (Kentucky, Minnesota, and Washington) have implemented both components. Uruguay has commenced issuing e-Apostilles, and Pakistan has implemented an e-Register. With these developments, 56 out of the 127 Contracting Parties to the Convention have now implemented one or both e-APP components.

The e-APP plays a crucial role in modernising and streamlining the process of obtaining Apostilles. In October 2024, the 13th International Forum on the e-APP provided a unique international platform for governments, organisations, and the private sector to

learn more about the benefits of the e-APP, to promote its effective implementation, and to discuss the latest developments in relation to the e-APP worldwide. The Forum was the first to be held in Central Asia and was jointly organised by the HCCH, the Ministry of Justice of Kazakhstan, and the Maqsut Narikbayev University. It was attended by over 300 participants, both in person and online, who highlighted the pressing need to incorporate technology into the operation of the 1961 Apostille Convention, as digital solutions not only improve the issuance and verification of Apostilles but also facilitate accessibility for users worldwide. Discussions demonstrated that by transitioning from traditional paper-based methods to electronic systems, the e-APP enhances efficiency, reduces costs, and minimises the risk of document fraud.



13th International Forum on the e-APP



13th International Forum on the e-APP

1965 Service, 1970 Evidence, and 1980 Access to Justice Conventions

New Contracting Parties

In 2024, the Dominican Republic and El Salvador acceded to the 1965 Service Convention, which currently has 84 Contracting Parties. Following these accessions, the Convention has entered into force in the relevant States. The 1970 Evidence Convention currently has 66 Contracting Parties, while the 1980 Access to Justice Convention has 28.



The 1965 Service Convention and the 1970 Evidence Convention establish effective cross-border cooperation mechanisms to facilitate and streamline, respectively, the service of documents and the taking of evidence abroad.

The Dominican Republic accedes to the 1965 Service Convention



The 1980 Access to Justice Convention ensures that nationals or habitual residents of a Contracting Party to the Convention have non-discriminatory access to justice within all other Contracting Parties.

El Salvador accedes to the 1965 Service Convention

SC on the 1965 Service, 1970 Evidence, and 1980 Access to Justice Conventions

The Meeting of the SC on the Practical Operation of the 1965 Service, 1970 Evidence, and 1980 Access to Justice Conventions was held from 2 to 5 July 2024 in The Hague. It was attended by 260 delegates and other experts, in person and online, representing HCCH Members, non-Member Contracting Parties, and Observers. The meeting provided an important and timely opportunity for participants to examine and review the practical operation of the Conventions, resulting in the adoption of 138 C&R. In relation to the 1965 Service Convention, participants discussed, among other topics, the use of information technology for the transmission and execution of requests for service, assistance in locating the addressee, time and delay in executing requests, and the operation of alternative channels of transmission. As for the 1970 Evidence Convention, participants discussed, among other topics, the transmission and execution of Letters of Request, the use of the recommended Model Form, the expeditious execution of requests, language and translation, types of evidence and their use, and the use of video-link for both Chapters I and II of the Convention. In relation to the 1980 Access to Justice Convention, participants discussed issues to be taken into account when the requested State examines applications for legal aid. The SC also highlighted the ongoing importance of all of these Conventions and recommended to States that are not currently Party to them to consider joining them.



Ms Maija Annika Leppä (Finland),
Chair of the SC Meeting



Meeting of the SC on the 1965 Service, 1970 Evidence, and 1980 Access to Justice Conventions



Meeting of the SC on the 1965 Service, 1970 Evidence, and 1980 Access to Justice Conventions

Fifth Editions of the Service and Evidence Handbooks

The HCCH is currently working on updates to the *Practical Handbook on the Operation of the Service Convention* and the *Practical Handbook on the Operation of the Evidence Convention*, with a view to publishing the fifth editions of these Practical Handbooks in 2025. Updates to the Practical Handbooks include important developments in case law, current practices of Contracting Parties, and C&R from the 2024 meeting of the SC. The updated *Practical Handbook on the Operation of the Evidence Convention* will also incorporate the *Guide to Good Practice on the Use of Video-Link*, in addition to further practical information on the use of information technology in the taking of evidence abroad.

In addition to the updated Practical Handbooks, the HCCH is developing Country Profiles for the 1965 Service and 1970 Evidence Conventions, which will replace the current Practical Information Charts for each Contracting Party. The HCCH may also develop new Model Forms for the taking of evidence under Chapter II of the 1970 Evidence Convention.

In March 2024, two WGs were established to review and refine updates to the Practical Handbooks and the Country Profiles. The WGs met six times, both prior to and following the meeting of the SC in July 2024.



Ms Aldana Rohr (Argentina),
Chair of the WG on the Evidence
Convention Handbook



Mr David Cook (United Kingdom),
Chair of the WG on the Service
Convention Handbook

2005 Choice of Court Convention

The 2005 Choice of Court Convention aims at ensuring the effectiveness of choice of court agreements, or "forum selection clauses", between parties to international commercial transactions.

New Contracting Parties

In 2024, Albania, North Macedonia, the Republic of Moldova, and Switzerland joined the 2005 Choice of Court Convention, which then entered into force for the Republic of Moldova in July 2024 and for Albania in October 2024. As a result, 36 States plus the EU are currently bound by the Convention. In 2024, Kosovo signed the Choice of Court Convention.



2019 Judgments Convention

New Contracting Party

In 2024, the United Kingdom signed and ratified the 2019 Judgments Convention. The Convention currently has effect between the EU, including its Member States (except Denmark), Ukraine, and Uruguay. It will enter into force for the United Kingdom in July 2025. In 2024, Albania and Kosovo signed the Convention, which now has eight signatories.

The 2019 Judgments Convention facilitates the effective global circulation of judgments in civil or commercial matters.



The United Kingdom ratifies the 2019 Judgments Convention

Jurisdiction Project

The Jurisdiction Project forms part of the original Judgments Project, which has been an important focus of the HCCH's normative work aimed at addressing two key aspects of PIL in transnational civil or commercial litigation: the international jurisdiction of courts and the recognition and enforcement of foreign judgments. Under the auspices of the Judgments Project, the HCCH successfully negotiated and concluded the 2005 Choice of Court Convention and the 2019 Judgments Convention. The HCCH now continues to explore matters related to the jurisdiction of courts in transnational civil or commercial litigation, including how harmonised rules in transnational litigation can reduce the risk of parallel litigation in multiple States.



Prof Keisuke Takeshita (Japan),
Chair of the WG on Jurisdiction

The WG on Matters Relating to Jurisdiction in Transnational Civil or Commercial Litigation (WG on Jurisdiction), established in 2021 and chaired by Professor Keisuke Takeshita (Japan), met twice in 2024. The second of these meetings was held in Tokyo through the generous support of the Government of Japan. Pursuant to its mandate, the WG has made further progress on the development of draft provisions on parallel proceedings and related actions, which may occur when separate proceedings are instituted before courts of different States. The WG will meet again in February 2025 and will report to CGAP at its March 2025 meeting.



Sixth meeting of the WG on Jurisdiction



Seventh meeting of the WG on Jurisdiction

Practical Guide to Access to Justice for International Tourists and Visitors



In July 2024, the PB published the 2024 Edition of the *Practical Guide to Access to Justice for International Tourists and Visitors*. Originally published in 2023, the Practical Guide is intended to assist international tourists and visitors to foreign countries seeking access to justice for disputes arising from their tourism experience by providing information on online dispute resolution (ODR) mechanisms that may be available and HCCH legal instruments that may be relevant in a given case. The 2024 Edition of the Practical Guide features changes made to reflect developments relating to the 2019 Judgments Convention, among which its entry into force on 1 September 2023, as well as a number of minor amendments and additions to its text.

International Commercial, Digital, & Financial Law

1985 Trusts Convention

In 2024, the PB continued its work, in partnership with relevant subject-matter experts, on the study of the interpretation of analogous institutions for the purpose of Article 2 of the 1985 Trusts Convention. This study focuses on clarifying potential divergences in interpretation between the English and French versions of the Article and exploring whether analogous institutions would include foundations and endowments, institutions and developments relating to the *waqf* in the Islamic legal tradition, and decentralised autonomous organisations and other similar structures.

The 1985 Trusts Convention specifies the law applicable to trusts and governs the recognition of trusts among Contracting Parties.

2006 Securities Convention and Digital Developments in Respect of Securities Markets

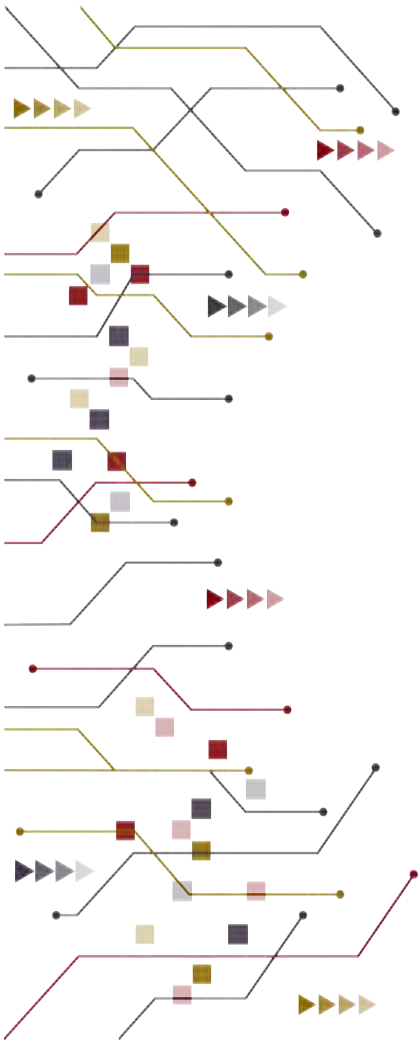
The PB has continued to work, in partnership with relevant subject-matter experts, on a secretariat study which aims to analyse the determination of jurisdiction and applicable law in the context of securities markets in light of developments in technology such as distributed ledger technology; to assess the ramifications of the growing attention that financial services and securities industries have accorded to developments in technology; and to identify opportunities, in the context of the digital economy, for the desirability and feasibility of future normative guidance concerning securities, in addition to the 2006 Securities Convention.

The 2006 Securities Convention determines the law applicable to the perfection, priority, and other effects of securities held with an intermediary.

2015 Choice of Law Principles

In partnership with relevant subject-matter experts, the PB has continued to study the feasibility, desirability, and necessity of developing guidance on applicable law in international contracts providing protection to weaker parties. The PB has also continued to monitor developments relating to the 2015 Choice of Law Principles in order to identify areas for review and future work, and to work towards further increasing the widespread awareness and use of the 2015 Choice of Law Principles.

The 2015 Principles, the first "soft-law" instrument of the HCCH, are designed to promote party autonomy in international commercial contracts.



EG on CBDCs

A number of central banks are currently piloting CBDCs in light of their potential to be a “new form of money” that promotes various benefits and policy goals including financial inclusion, reduced transaction costs, resilience of payments in emergency situations, and increased competition in the cross-border payments sector. At the same time, questions have arisen regarding the requisite legal frameworks of CBDCs and the potential challenges to the application of traditional PIL rules.

In March 2024, CGAP mandated the establishment of an EG to study the applicable law and jurisdiction issues raised by the cross-border use and transfers of CBDCs. Following an online kick-off meeting in May 2024, the EG held its first and second working meetings in June and November 2024, respectively. The EG agreed to bifurcate its work to first consider applicable law and jurisdiction issues relating to wholesale CBDCs (wCBDCs), and thereafter to move to the consideration of applicable law and jurisdiction issues relating to retail CBDCs (rCBDCs). During the meetings, participants discussed existing typologies of CBDCs, connecting factors in determining the applicable law and issues in relation to jurisdiction, various functions and actors (including intermediaries and third parties) that may participate

in wCBDC systems, and the relationships between parties in these systems. Participants also discussed overriding mandatory rules and relevant public policy considerations, among other matters.



Kick-off meeting of the EG on CBDCs



First working meeting of the EG on CBDs

Digital Tokens Project

In March 2024, CGAP mandated the commencement of the Digital Tokens Project. Under this project, the PB, in partnership with relevant subject-matter expert participants and Observers, is studying the PIL issues relating to digital tokens. Following an online kick-off meeting in May 2024, the first and second working meetings of the Digital Tokens Project were held in June and October 2024, respectively. During the meetings, participants discussed relevant international, regional, and national legal frameworks relevant to digital tokens; considered examples of digital tokens (and their potential use cases) that may be considered within the scope of the project; and assessed the role of party autonomy and connecting factors in determining the PIL issues relating to digital tokens (and their potential use cases).



Second working meeting of the Digital Tokens Project

Digital Economy Project



Global Digital Trade Expo 2024

Throughout 2024, the HCCH continued to monitor developments with respect to the digital economy, with a view to identifying PIL issues for potential future work. It also continued monitoring developments with respect to the PIL issues related to digital

platforms, artificial intelligence and automated contracting, immersive technologies, and decentralised autonomous organisations, in partnership with the Secretariat of the UN Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL), other relevant international organisations, and subject-matter experts. In the context of this work, in 2024 the PB participated as an observer in UNCITRAL's WG IV (Electronic Commerce), contributing to the PIL aspects of its work. The PB also participated in events including the Global Digital Trade Expo 2024 in Hangzhou, China, the ASEAN Senior Legal Officers' meeting, and various meetings and conferences organised by universities.

Voluntary Carbon Markets Project

The HCCH continues to monitor developments with respect to the PIL aspects of voluntary carbon markets, in partnership with relevant subject-matter experts, as well as cooperating and coordinating with the Secretariats of UNCITRAL, the International Institute for the Unification of Private Law (UNIDROIT), the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and other relevant international organisations on their projects in relation to voluntary carbon credits.

Other Monitoring Work

The HCCH continues to monitor developments on the intersection of intellectual property and PIL, including through cooperation with the International Bureau of the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), and with respect to the PIL aspects of restructuring and insolvency, including issues relating to the treatment of digital transactions and digital assets in insolvency and restructuring proceedings.

Governance & Cooperation

As an intergovernmental organisation, good governance is essential to the operation of the HCCH. Its unique global mandate also requires international cooperation with the public, private, and non-profit sectors, as well as ongoing dialogue with the general public.

Council on General Affairs and Policy (CGAP)

CGAP met from 5 to 8 March 2024 to review progress and set the Work Programme for the year ahead. Chaired by Dr Marcelo De Nardi (Brazil), the meeting had over 420 participants, representing the Members of the Organisation, as well as Observer States, intergovernmental organisations, and international non-governmental organisations.

As in previous years, CGAP reviewed ongoing legislative and post-Convention work, providing guidance and direction as outlined in the preceding sections. Highlights included the endorsement of the C&R of the 2023 meeting of the SC on the practical operation of the 1980 Child Abduction and 1996 Child Protection Conventions, as well as the mandate of further normative work in relation to jurisdiction in transnational civil or commercial litigation, parentage / surrogacy, CBDCs (through the establishment of an EG), digital tokens, the digital economy, and voluntary carbon markets.

CGAP also mandated the establishment of two WGs in relation to the 1996 Child Protection Convention (the first tasked with completing the 1996 Convention Country Profile and progressing work on the draft Cooperation Request Recommended Model Form, and the second tasked with reviewing the operation of Art. 33 of the Convention) as well as of two WGs to review and refine updates to the Practical Handbooks and Country Profiles relevant to the 1965 Service and 1970 Evidence Conventions, respectively. CGAP welcomed progress in the implementation of the e-Country Profiles project, which will result in the development or modernisation of online Country Profiles for the 1965 Service, 1970 Evidence, 1980 Child Abduction, 1993 Adoption, 1996 Child Protection, 2000 Protection of Adults, and 2007 Child Support Conventions by September 2025. Finally, CGAP mandated the PB to continue to study digital developments in respect of securities markets; the interpretation of analogous institutions for the purpose of Article 2 of the 1985 Trusts Convention; and the feasibility, desirability, and necessity of developing guidance on applicable law in international contracts providing protection to weaker parties.



Dr Marcelo De Nardi (Brazil),
Chair of CGAP



Ms Yael Weiner (Israel),
Vice-Chair of CGAP

In terms of governance matters, CGAP noted the PB's plans regarding the implementation of Spanish as an additional official language and discussed the format of future HCCH meetings.



2024 CGAP meeting

Council of Diplomatic Representatives (CDR)



Mr Paul van den Ijssel (the Netherlands),
Chair of CDR

The annual meeting of CDR, the Organisation's primary financial and budgetary authority, was held in May 2024, chaired by Mr Paul van den Ijssel (the Netherlands).

Highlights of the meeting included the approval of the HCCH's budget for Financial Year 2024-2025, at a total of € 5,262,044, and the authorisation of the signature of a new 10-year rental agreement for the current premises of the PB's headquarters in The Hague.



Ms Marisar Ivy Cabatangan (Philippines),
Chair of the Standing Committee
of CDR



Ms Paulina Dudzik (Poland),
Vice-Chair of the Standing Committee
of CDR

Outreach & Institutional Cooperation

Cooperation with **multiple governments and other stakeholders** to promote awareness of the relevance of the work of the HCCH and the practical benefits of its Conventions in all parts of the world, including through regional outreach activities in Francophone Africa. This includes a project undertaken by three States to promote the HCCH's work, encourage membership, and attract more countries to join its Conventions, contributing to universality and broader global reach.



Cooperation with the **EU** on iSupport, on the development or modernisation of e-Country Profiles for several HCCH Conventions, as well as on the translation of key HCCH publications into EU languages.

Long-term cooperation with **UNIDROIT** and **UNCITRAL**, sister organisations of the HCCH, on a wide range of cross-cutting issues.



Cooperation with **WIPO** on the intersection between PIL and intellectual property law.

Cooperation with the **Asian-African Legal Consultative Organization (AALCO)**, including in the organisation of high-level meetings, events, and trainings for government officials.



Cooperation with the **Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)**, including through participation in the ASEAN Senior Law Officials Meeting.

Cooperation with the **African Union (AU)** through high-level meetings to discuss future activities in support of increasing the visibility of the HCCH across Africa.



Cooperation with the **Asociación Internacional de Juristas de Derecho de Familia (AIJUDEFA)**, including through the organisation of presentations at the 2024 AIJUDEFA Annual Meeting and the 2024 AIJUDEFA Seminar.

Cooperation with the **International Development Law Organization (IDLO)**, in the organisation of the seminar "HCCH-IDLO Dialogue on Accelerating Justice Delivery through Digitalisation of Public Services".



Cooperation with the **Asian Academy of International Law (AAIL)**, including participation in training programmes for government officials and legal practitioners.



Participation in the **Just Peace Month** organised by the Municipality of The Hague and the Hague Humanity Hub.

Cooperation with the **Center for International Legal Cooperation (CILC)**'s Balkan Enforcement Strengthening Project through the organisation of the workshop "Recognition of Non-EU Judgments in the EU Member States".



Cooperation with the **Organisation internationale de la Francophonie (OIF)** towards strengthening the use of the French language at the HCCH.



Cooperation with the **Asociación Americana de Derecho Internacional Privado (ASADIP)**, including through conduct of a joint survey on digital tokens and participation in ASADIP's Annual Conference and Meeting of International Forums on Private International Law.

Cooperation with the **Organization of American States (OAS)**, in particular its International Law Department, the Inter-American Juridical Committee, and the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights.



Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation

Cooperation with the **Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC)**, including through participation in various APEC meetings and workshops on online dispute resolution.

Cooperation with the **United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF)** on family law and child protection matters falling within the scope of the HCCH Children's Conventions and the Surrogacy Project.



Cooperation with the **UNFCCC secretariat** on the PIL aspects of voluntary carbon markets.

Work of the Regional Offices

As an intergovernmental organisation of universal nature, the HCCH seeks to include all regions of the world in its normative and non-normative work. The Regional Offices — the Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (ROAP) and the Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean (ROLAC) — have proven essential in this regard, strengthening dialogue within their respective regions and providing post-Convention services tailored to regional needs.

ROAP

In 2024, ROAP supported the continued engagement of States from the region through various activities. These included the organisation of two prominent regional webinars, which attracted a wide audience of experts and students from the region: the webinar "HCCH 2005 Choice of Court Convention: Fostering Access to Justice for Cross-Border Commerce in the Asia Pacific Region", which brought together experts from China, Indonesia, and Singapore to analyse the implementation and operation of the Convention in their respective States, and the "2024 Webinar on the HCCH 1980 Child Abduction Convention in Asia and the Pacific", which provided a platform for representatives of Central Authorities and other experts from Australia, Japan, the Philippines, the Republic of Korea, Singapore, and the United States of America to share good practices in the implementation and operation of the Convention. ROAP also contributed to the preparations for the meeting of the SC on the Practical Operation of the 1965 Service, 1970 Evidence, and 1980 Access to Justice Conventions, encouraging and facilitating the participation of States from the region.



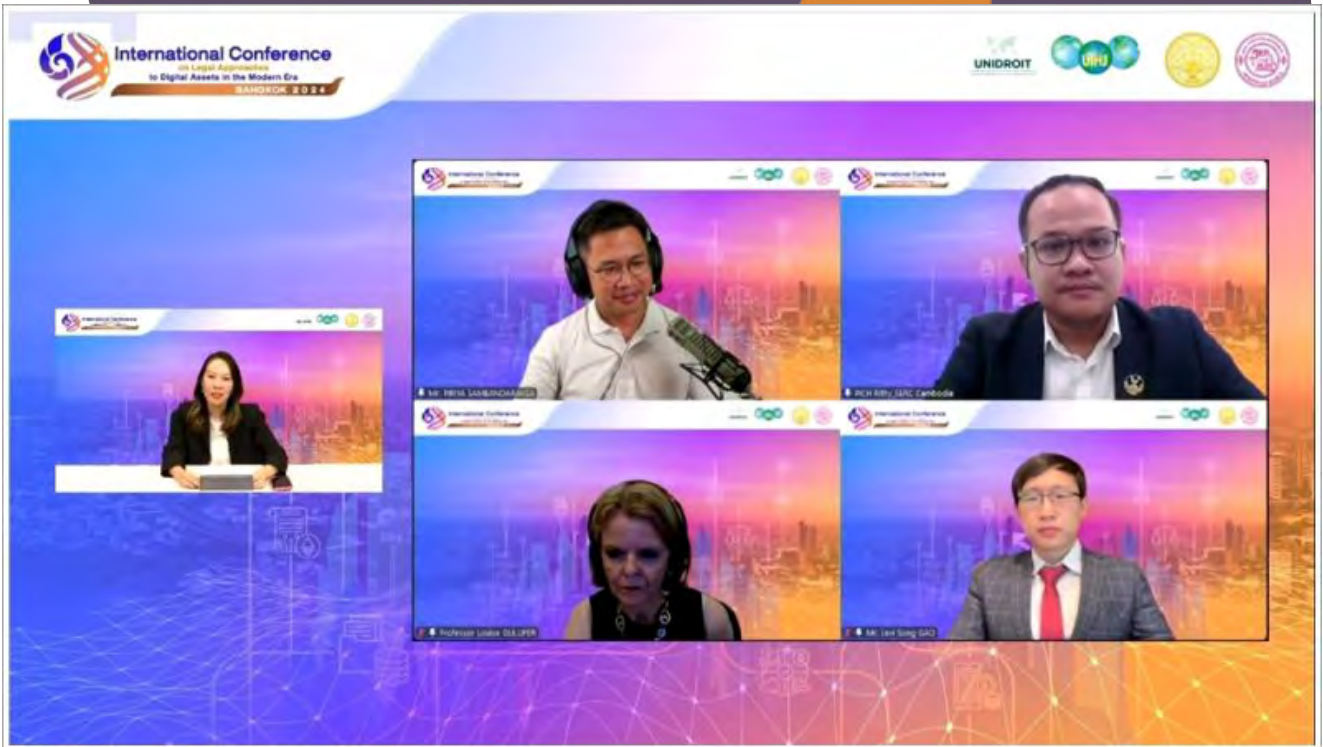
Prof Yun Zhao, ROAP Representative, Mr Junbo Song, ROAP Legal Officer and Ms Shelby Chan, ROAP Office Manager

ROAP also participated in a number of meetings and conferences throughout the year, with the aim of raising awareness of the work of the HCCH and of strengthening the Organisation's network of partners among governments and other key stakeholders in the region. These included, for example, the Annual Academic Conference of the China Society for Private International Law, the Annual Session of AALCO, and Hong Kong Legal Week 2024, as well as conferences and workshops organised by the APEC, AAIL, the China Maritime Arbitration Commission, and the Ministry of Justice of Thailand. ROAP also organised meetings with the Beijing Arbitration Commission, the Hong Kong Judicial Institute, and the International Organization for Mediation Preparatory Office, among others.

As part of its ongoing engagement with students and academics, ROAP organised seminars and workshops at East China University of Political Science and Law, Hangzhou Normal University, Jinan University, Ocean University of China, Ramkhamhaeng University, Shanghai University of Political Science and Law, Sichuan University, Universitas Padjadjaran, University of Macau, Wuhan University, and Xiamen University. It also organised internships for students from the China University of Political Science and Law, the Chinese University of Hong Kong, Doshisha University, Kyushu University, and Shanghai University of Political Science and Law.



Asia-Pacific International Private Law Summit



International Conference on Legal Approaches to Digital Assets in the Modern Era



Meeting with the Ministry of Justice of Korea

ROLAC

Throughout 2024, ROLAC provided assistance to Central Authorities and other government representatives from States across Latin America and the Caribbean in the adoption, implementation, and operation of HCCH Conventions and instruments. ROLAC also organised and participated in various meetings, seminars, and academic events. Among other activities, its staff members held meetings with over 20 Central Authorities and hosted a two-day study visit for the National Organ of Costa Rica; organised several trainings on the 1980 Child Abduction Convention and the 1996 Child Protection Convention; contributed as speakers to the annual meetings of ASADIP, AIJUDEFA, and the Mexican Academy of Private International and Comparative Law (AMEDIP); worked on the development of a judicial training on transnational access to justice to be offered across 15 jurisdictions through the Network of Judicial Schools of the Central American and Caribbean Judicial Council; and supported the work of the IHNJ, including the organisation of the First Regional Meeting of Judges of the IHNJ from Latin America and the Caribbean.

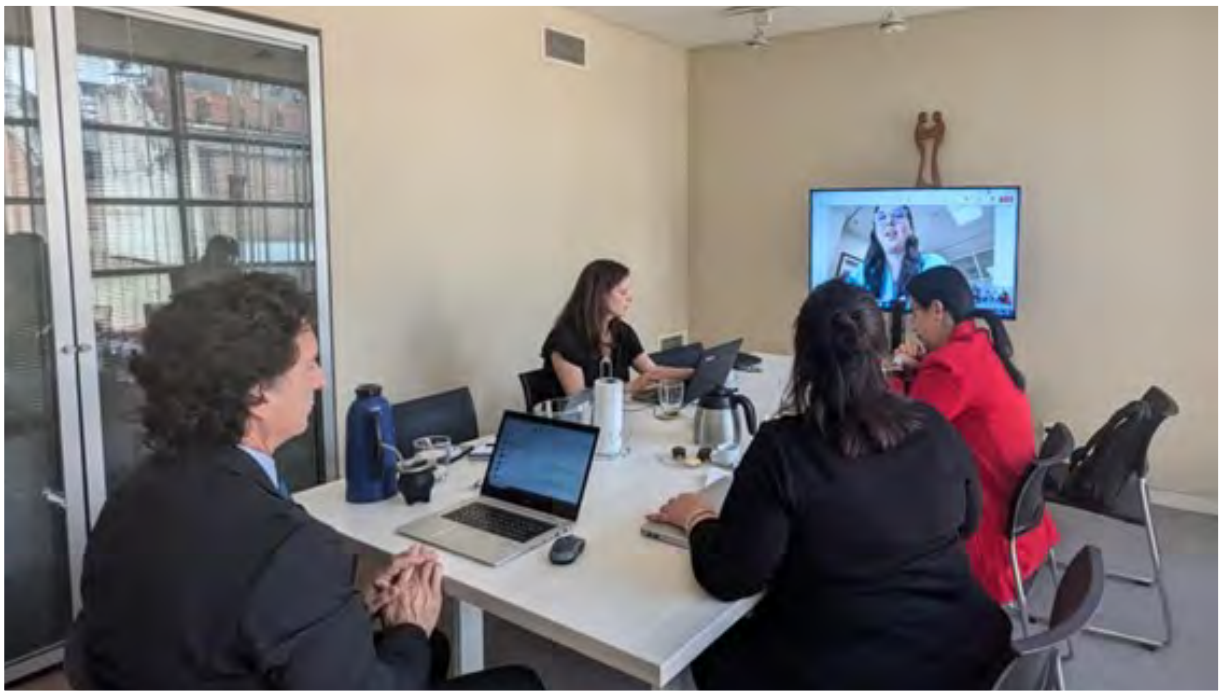
Working closely with the HCCH's Transnational Litigation and Apostille Division, ROLAC contributed to the preparatory work for the meeting of the SC on the Practical Operation of the 1965 Service, 1970 Evidence, and 1980 Access to Justice Conventions and for the 13th International Forum on the e-APP, encouraging and facilitating the participation of States from Latin America and the Caribbean.

ROLAC continued to play an active role in the process of implementation of Spanish as an additional official language, ramping up its long-standing efforts to support the translation into Spanish of key publications and documents produced by the HCCH. It also continued to support the expansion of INCADAT's Spanish language content through its collaboration with a team of PIL professors, young lawyers, and law students coordinated by Professor Nieve Rubaja (University of Buenos Aires).¹



Mr Ignacio Goicoechea, ROLAC Representative,
and Ms Florencia Castro, ROLAC Legal and Office
Coordinator

¹ The team includes Prof Nieve Rubaja, Prof Emilia Gortari Wirz, Sofia Aldana Ansalone, Catalina Comte, Brian Dmitruk, Valentina Romina Esperanza, Julieta Perroud, Martina Traveso, and Daniela Agustina Vuchich.



Meeting with National Organs of Costa Rica and Mexico



Mission to the Bahamas



Mission to the Dominican Republic

The Staff

Ms Maryze BERKHOUT
Head of Finance / Senior Human Resources Officer

Dr Christophe BERNASCONI
Secretary General

Ms Sandrine BRARD
Administrative Assistant

Ms Florencia CASTRO
Legal and Office Coordinator (ROLAC)

Ms Shelby CHAN
Office Manager (ROAP)

Mr Harry CHENG
Legal Officer

Ms Marie-Charlotte DARBAS
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Ms Lydie DE LOOF
Senior Reviser (FR) / Publications Officer

Ms Melissa FORD
Secretary

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Deputy Secretary General

Mr Ignacio GOICOECHEA
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Ms Anna KOELEWIJN
Head of Administration

Mr Philippe LORTIE
First Secretary

Mr Thomas MACHUELLE
Legal Translator / Reviser (FR)

Ms Laura MARTÍNEZ-MORA
First Secretary

Ms Laura MOLENAAR
Administrative Officer

Ms Alix NG
Office Manager (ROAP - until October 2024)

Ms Capucine PAGE
Legal Officer

Ms Sophie PINEAU
Personal Assistant to the Secretary General

Ms Mathilde PRÉNAS
Senior Administrative Assistant

Ms Raquel SALINAS PEIXOTO
Legal Officer

Ms Viviana STROEHER
Finance / Human Resources Assistant (Maternity Cover)

Ms Sabrina STUCKEN
Administrative Assistant

Ms Giulia VALENTINI
Project / Communications Assistant

Ms Ana ZANETTIN
Legal Translator / Reviser (ES)

Dr Ning ZHAO
Principal Legal Officer

Prof Yun ZHAO
Representative (ROAP)

[Consultants / Contractors to the HCCH](#)

Consultants / Contractors supporting Normative and Post-Convention Work

Ms Eda AGUILAR SAMANAMUD
ICATAP

Ms Christina BAGLIETTO
ICATAP

Ms Nolwandle MLALAZI
*Work in the International Commercial, Digital, and
Financial Law Division*

Ms Sayeh MOHAMMADI
Support for the Malta V Conference

Ms Hilary NEVILLE
*Work in the International Commercial, Digital, and
Financial Law Division*

Ms Loren OVENS
*Support for the Forum on Domestic Violence and the
Operation of Article 13(1)(b) of the 1980 Child Abduction
Convention*

Ms Eliana SANTOS
ICATAP Coordinator

Consultants / Contractors supporting Governance and Operations

Ms Madelief ALSERDA
Library Assistant

Ms Helene GUERIN
Publications

Mr Willem-Paul HERBER
Accountant

Secondments to the PB

Ms Melinda CHIANG
*Barrister, seconded to the PB (The Hague) from 18LC
(from December 2024 to June 2025)*

Mr Minho DO
*Judge, seconded to the PB (The Hague) from the Supreme
Court of the Republic of Korea (from August 2024 until
August 2025)*

Mr Song (Levi) GAO
*Lawyer, seconded to the PB (ROAP) from the Ministry of
Foreign Affairs of China (until October 2024)*

Ms Myriam de HEMPTINNE
*Judge, seconded to the PB (The Hague) from the Ministry
of Justice of Belgium*

Ms Jungah LEE
*Judge, seconded to the PB (The Hague) from the
Supreme Court of the Republic of Korea (from August
2023 until August 2024)*

Mr Junbo SONG
*Attorney, seconded to the PB (ROAP) from the Ministry of
Foreign Affairs of China (from October 2024)*

Ms Diana WAN
*Seconded to the PB (The Hague) from the
Department of Justice of the Government of the Hong
Kong SAR (China) (from November 2023 until November
2024)*

iSupport

Mr Jean-Marc PELLET
iSupport Coordinator



Interns

In 2024, the PB had the pleasure of welcoming 42 interns from over 17 different States at its headquarters in The Hague, at its Regional Offices, or online.

Head Office The Hague, the Netherlands

Ms Ashlyn CHEONG (Singapore)
Mr Jasmin ETHIER (Canada)
Ms Zarifeh GHASEMI (Iran)
Ms Berta GONZÁLEZ RENALES (Spain)
Ms Ella HETFIELD (USA)
Ms Miku ISHII (Japan)
Ms Yukiho KASHIMOTO (Japan)
Ms Georgia LEE (Australia)
Mr Paul LEE (China)
Ms Melanie MAIER (Germany)

Ms Sayeh MOHAMMADI (Iran)
Ms Melina OTIFEH (UK)
Ms Loren OVENS (Australia)
Mr Camilo SALDÍAS ROBLES (Chile)
Mr Shaksham SHAHI (Nepal)
Ms Lucilla TORNAGHI (Italy)
Mr Jianfa WANG (China)
Ms Connie WONG (China)

ROAP Hong Kong SAR, China

Ms CAO Yang (China)
Ms CHENG Kelly (China)
Ms GAO Hengna (China)
Mr HAN Du (China)
Ms ISHIHARA Mika (Japan)
Ms KWON Yuhyun (Republic of Korea)
Ms TEOH Stella Anne Ming Hui (Malaysia)

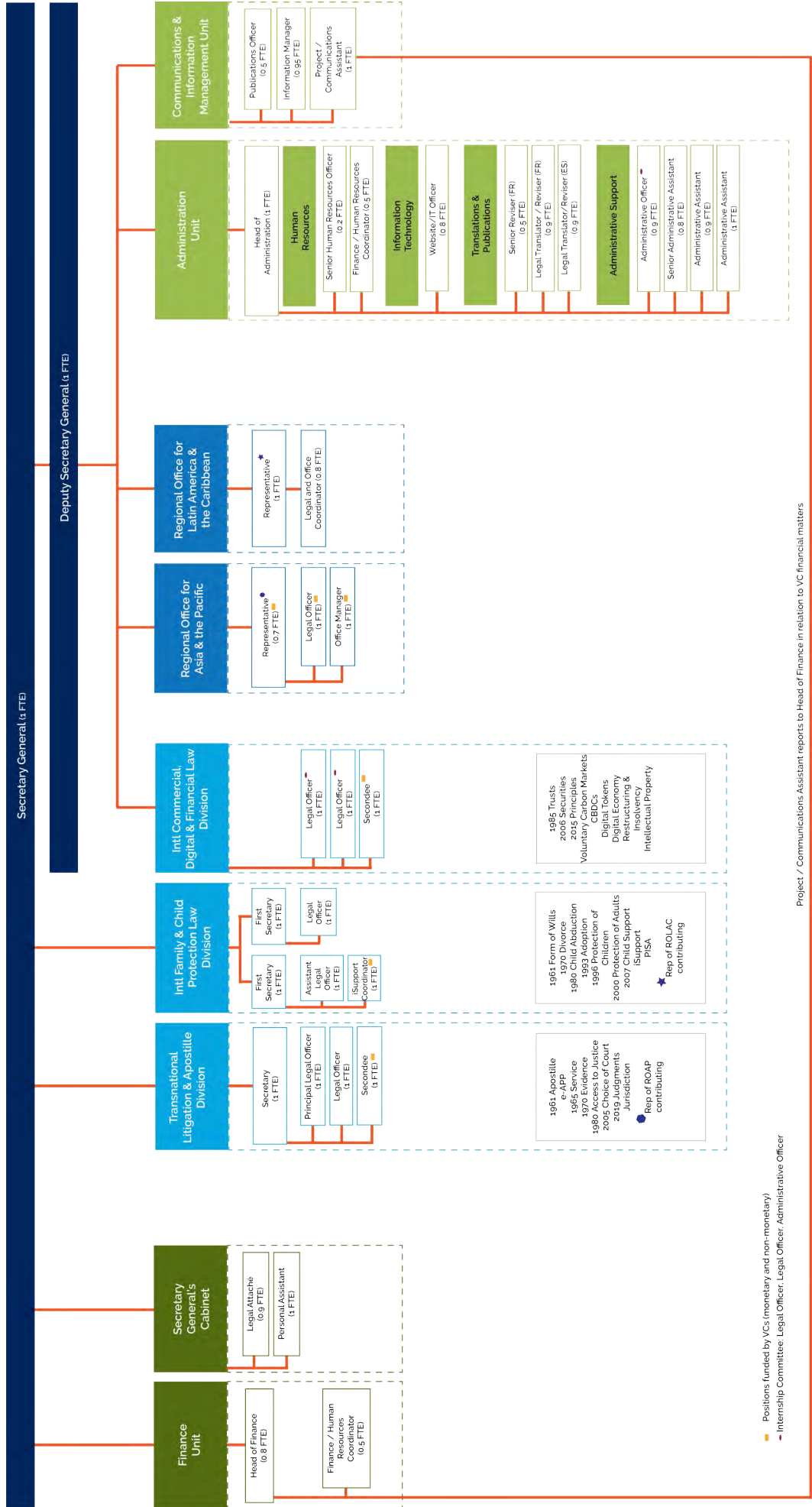
Ms WORAMUKSIK Vasinee (Thailand)
Ms YIN Jianing (China)
Ms ZHANG Xinyue (China)
Mr ZHAO Zhixin (China)

ROLAC Buenos Aires, Argentina

Ms Lara BOREAN (Argentina)
Ms Paula Jimena BORTNIK (Argentina)
Ms Valentina Lucila CALELLO (Argentina)
Ms Ailén CASTRO (Argentina)
Ms María Victoria COLOMBO RODRÍGUEZ (Argentina)
Ms Cloe ESCARANDANI LEVY (Argentina)
Ms Lucila GARCIA MONTI (Argentina)

Ms Sofia Aylin MATILLA AQUINO (Argentina)
Ms Morena Maku PRACANICO (Argentina)
Ms Mariel PRADO (Argentina)
Ms Carola SALVIA (Argentina)
Ms Abril Lia SHIN (Argentina)
Ms Martina TRAVESO (Argentina)

Organisational Chart



■ Positions funded by VCs (monetary and non-monetary)
 ■ Internship Committee, Legal Officer, Administrative Officer

Project / Communications Assistant reports to Head of Finance in relation to VC financial matters

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Hague Conference on Private International Law
Conférence de La Haye de droit internationa privé
Conferencia de La Haye de Derecho Internacional Privado

