

**PRESS RELEASE****PERMANENT COURT OF ARBITRATION ENTERS INTO HOST COUNTRY AGREEMENT WITH IRELAND**

THE HAGUE, 8 MARCH 2019

On Tuesday, 5 March 2019, at the Dublin Dispute Resolution Centre (“DDRC”), the Attorney General of the Republic of Ireland, Mr. Seamus Woulfe SC, and the Secretary-General of the Permanent Court of Arbitration (“PCA”), Mr. Hugo Siblesz, signed a Host Country Agreement that will facilitate the conduct of PCA proceedings within the country. At the same occasion, a Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of Ireland and the DDRC was signed by Mr. James Kingston, Legal Adviser of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, and Mr. Colm Ó hOisín SC, board member of the DDRC. The DDRC is a privately owned entity and a venture of the Bar Council that facilitates arbitration and other forms of alternative dispute resolution. The DDRC will be the primary facility made available to the PCA.

The Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, Simon Coveney T.D., has welcomed the signing of the Host Country Agreement, in the following terms:

“Ireland has a huge amount to offer as a venue for international arbitration. Our legal system is highly respected internationally. Post-Brexit we will be the only fully common law, English speaking country in the EU. We also benefit from a geographic location and transport links that make Ireland very accessible from Europe, North America and further afield.”

“The Government is delighted to be partnering with the Dublin Dispute Resolution Centre on this initiative. The DDRC offers top class dispute resolution facilities and will provide an ideal venue for PCA arbitrations.”

The signature of the Agreement and Memorandum of Understanding was followed by a seminar at the DDRC, co-organized by the PCA, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Ireland, the DDRC, and the Irish arbitration association, Arbitration Ireland, on “Opportunities for Ireland to increase its role in international dispute settlement”. At the seminar, Secretary-General Siblesz gave an address reflecting on “The PCA at 120: *Expectations, Ideals, Reform and Evolution*”. Attorney-General Woulfe spoke on “Ireland as a venue for dispute resolution post-Brexit”. The seminar also included a dialogue between Mr. Ó hOisín and PCA Senior Legal Counsel and Representative in Singapore, Fedelma C. Smith, on the advantages of Ireland as a seat of arbitration, the impact of Brexit, and lessons for Ireland from the Singapore experience.

Since the 1990s, the PCA has adopted a policy of concluding Host Country Agreements with its Contracting Parties with the goal of making its dispute resolution services more widely accessible throughout the world, not just at its headquarters at the Peace Palace in The Hague. Through such agreements, the host country and the PCA establish a legal framework within which PCA-administered proceedings (including arbitration, conciliation, mediation, and fact-finding commissions of inquiry) can be conducted in the territory of the host country on an ad hoc basis under conditions similar to those guaranteed by the PCA’s Headquarters Agreement with the Kingdom of the Netherlands. Other countries with which the PCA has concluded Host Country Agreements include Argentina, Chile, China (in respect of Hong Kong SAR), Costa Rica, Djibouti, India, Malaysia, Mauritius, Portugal, Singapore, South Africa, and Viet Nam.

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Photographs of the Signing of the Host Country Agreement between the Permanent Court of Arbitration and Ireland and Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of Ireland and the Dublin Dispute Resolution Centre





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Background on the Permanent Court of Arbitration

The Permanent Court of Arbitration is an intergovernmental organization established by the 1899 Hague Convention on the Pacific Settlement of International Disputes. The PCA has 121 Contracting Parties. Headquartered at the Peace Palace in The Hague, the Netherlands, the PCA facilitates arbitration, conciliation, fact-finding, and other dispute resolution proceedings among various combinations of States, State entities, intergovernmental organizations, and private parties. The PCA's International Bureau is currently administering 3 interstate disputes, 102 investor-State arbitrations, and 49 cases arising under contracts involving a State or other public entity. More information about the PCA can be found at www.pca-cpa.org.

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