PERMANENT COURT OF ARBITRATION ENTERS INTO HOST COUNTRY AGREEMENT WITH THE REPUBLIC OF AUSTRIA

THE HAGUE, 22 DECEMBER 2022

On Thursday, 22 December 2022, the Secretary General for Foreign Affairs, Peter Launsky-Tieffenthal, and the Secretary-General of the Permanent Court of Arbitration (“PCA”), Marcin Czepelak, signed a Host Country Agreement in Vienna that will facilitate the conduct of PCA proceedings in the Republic of Austria and update the framework for the operation of the PCA’s Vienna Office.

The signing of the Host Country Agreement represents a significant milestone in the long-standing relationship between the PCA and the Republic of Austria. Under the terms of the Host Country Agreement, the Republic of Austria will provide facilities and services required for PCA-administered proceedings such as office and hearing space, which may be offered at no cost to the disputing parties. The Agreement also grants privileges and immunities to arbitrators and participants in PCA-administered cases, such as, under certain conditions, immunity from jurisdiction with respect to oral or written statements.

The signing of the agreement was followed by a reception hosted by the Secretary-General of the PCA, which was attended by PCA Members of the Court and prominent Austrian arbitration and international law practitioners, as well as representatives of Vienna International Arbitration Centre, the judiciary and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The signature was preceded by a meeting between the PCA and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in which the long-standing relationship between the PCA and the Republic of Austria and the significance of the recently opened PCA office in Vienna were emphasized.

Already on 1 April 2022, the PCA officially opened its office in Vienna. The Vienna Office is one of five PCA international offices worldwide and the first European office of the PCA outside of its headquarters in The Hague, the Netherlands. The Vienna Office enables the PCA to handle the growing number of PCA-administered proceedings in Europe, where demand for the organization of hearings has increased significantly throughout the region, thereby further enhancing the PCA’s flexibility and efficiency.

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 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, Brazil, Chile, China (in respect of Hong Kong SAR), Costa Rica, Djibouti, Ecuador, India, Ireland, Malaysia, Mauritius, Portugal, Singapore, South Africa, Uruguay, and Viet Nam.

* * *

**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 122 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.

More information about the PCA can be found at [www.pca-cpa.org](http://www.pca-cpa.org).

The Republic of Austria became a Contracting Party to the 1899 Convention for the Pacific Settlement of International Disputes on 12 November 1918. As a Contracting Party to the founding Convention of the PCA, Austria forms part of the PCA Administrative Council, and is represented on the PCA’s panel of independent arbitrators known as Members of the Court. These Members may be called upon to serve as arbitrators in PCA-administered disputes. Austria’s current Members of the Court are Prof. Dr. Gehard Hafner, Prof. MMag. Dr. August Reinisch, LL.M., Prof. Dr. DDr. h.c. Wolfgang Benedek and Prof. Dr. Ursula Kriebaum.

Contact: Permanent Court of Arbitration E-mail: [bureau@pca-cpa.org](mailto:bureau@pca-cpa.org).

* * *