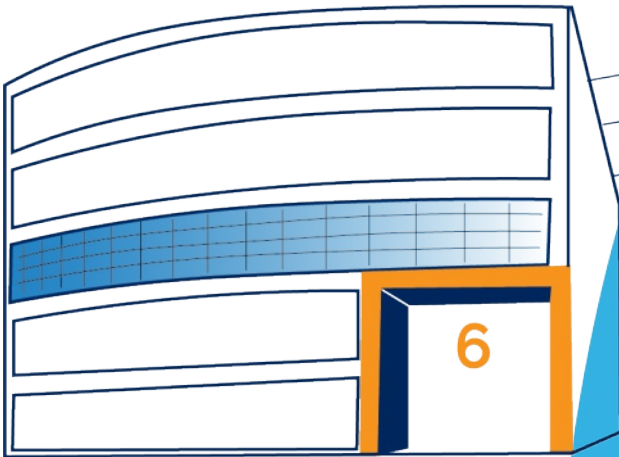


# STRATEGIC PLAN

**2023 – 2028**







I am proud and pleased to introduce the HCCH Strategic Plan 2023-2028. Its development process provided a timely opportunity to assess the achievements of the HCCH. The HCCH is now in its 130<sup>th</sup> year as the pre-eminent international organisation developing global private international law solutions, which has just recently surpassed 1,000 treaty actions across its Conventions and Protocols.

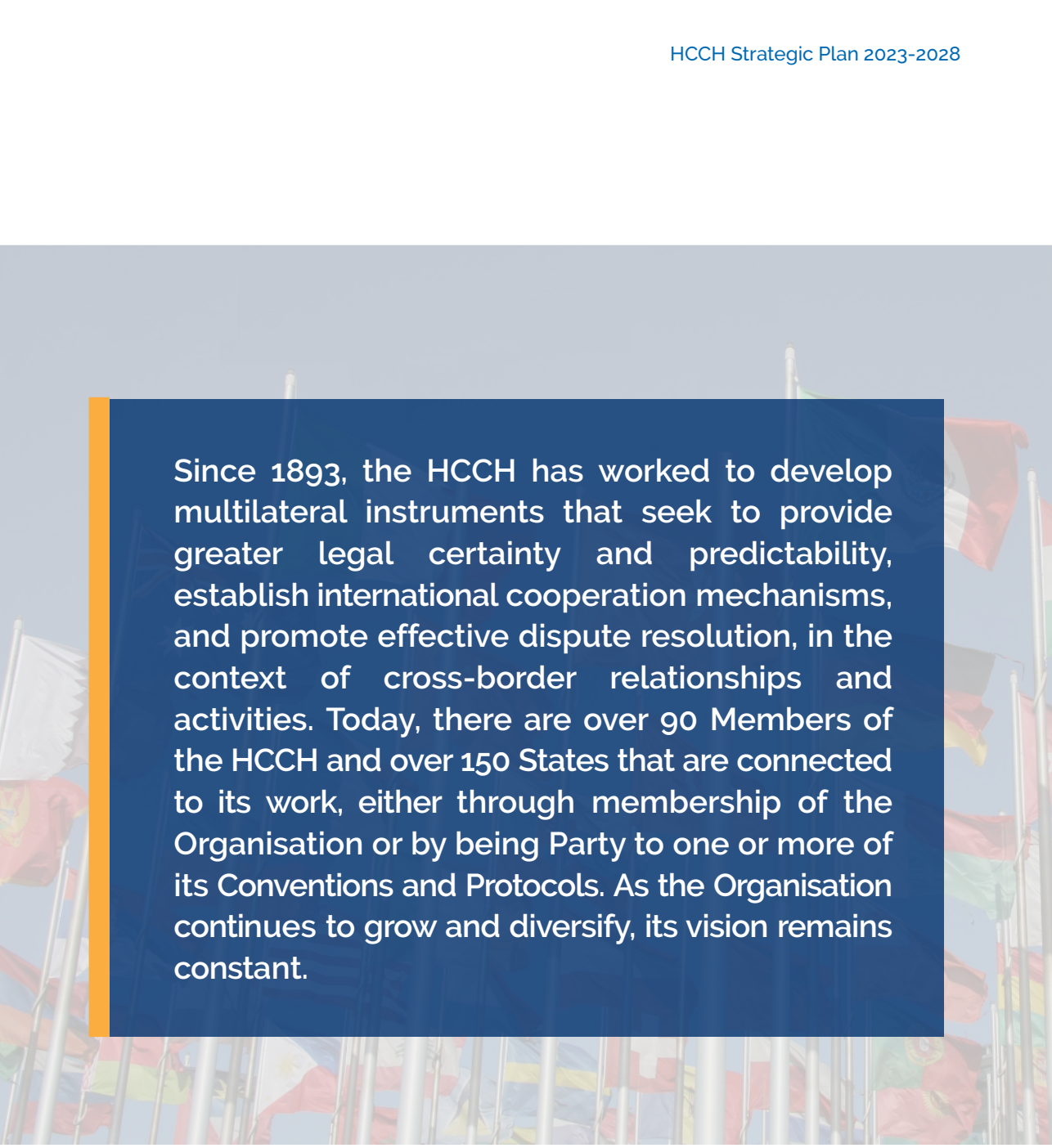
This Strategic Plan acknowledges the increasingly complex and diverse world in which we live, and the accompanying challenges that the HCCH will be pivotal in addressing, as cross-border interactions and transactions become the norm.

The Plan's Guiding Principles and Strategic Goals are both an evolution and streamlining of the previous three-year plan. While reiterating commitments to the core ideals and objectives of the HCCH, the flexibility of this Strategic Plan, and its attention to matters such as diverse representation and inclusive participation, ensure that the HCCH is prepared for a promising future.

The development of this plan is the result of the dedication of the Strategic Plan Working Group, chaired by HE Adia Sakiqi, Ambassador of Albania to the Netherlands. I thank her and all the members of the Working Group for their deep reflections on the mission of the HCCH and their guidance in ensuring that the HCCH can effectively respond to the needs of the Membership in the years to come.

With my colleagues at the Permanent Bureau and the Regional Offices, and in cooperation with all Members and stakeholders, as Secretary General, I affirm my commitment to realising the goals set out in the HCCH Strategic Plan 2023-2028.

Dr. Christophe Bernasconi,  
Secretary General



Since 1893, the HCCH has worked to develop multilateral instruments that seek to provide greater legal certainty and predictability, establish international cooperation mechanisms, and promote effective dispute resolution, in the context of cross-border relationships and activities. Today, there are over 90 Members of the HCCH and over 150 States that are connected to its work, either through membership of the Organisation or by being Party to one or more of its Conventions and Protocols. As the Organisation continues to grow and diversify, its vision remains constant.

## Vision

The HCCH strives for a world in which unification of the rules of private international law enables individuals, families, and businesses to interact across different legal systems.

# Mandate & Mission

Article 1 of the HCCH Statute establishes the mandate of the Organisation, to work for “the progressive unification of the rules of private international law”. In pursuit of its vision and in fulfilment of this mandate, the mission of the HCCH is to develop effective multilateral normative frameworks (which, in the context of the HCCH, include conventions or other instruments) and to conduct non-normative work (which, in the context of the HCCH, includes reviewing and promoting the practical operation of existing HCCH Conventions and Instruments, and producing tools including guides, handbooks or other documentation).

In fulfilling its mission, the Organisation carries out a broad range of activities, which are best reflected by the different stages through which topics or projects progress at the HCCH. These activities are executed by the Membership of the Organisation, together with its secretariat, the Permanent Bureau. They include:

- following developments in relation to civil or commercial cross-border issues and identifying practical needs of Members which may benefit from multilateral normative solutions;
- critically assessing the desirability and feasibility of potential normative solutions, in response to the needs of the Members;
- where the assessment shows that normative solutions are desirable and feasible, proceeding to negotiate, draft, and adopt a normative instrument; or where normative solutions are not desirable and feasible, proceeding to develop a non-normative tool, where appropriate;
- promoting the new instrument or non-normative tool once it has been adopted;
- supporting and promoting the effective implementation and operation of the normative instrument or non-normative tool, in practice; and
- reviewing the practical operation of the normative instrument or non-normative tool, including its associated guidance materials, to ensure its continued efficiency and relevance.

For the HCCH's work to be truly effective at the global level, universality and inclusiveness are essential elements. They are critical in ensuring that the work of the Organisation reflects its international character and assists individuals, families, and businesses in cross-border relationships and activities.



## Guiding Principles

The following principles should continue to guide all aspects of the HCCH's operations. They are fundamental in implementing the Strategic Plan of the Organisation.

### 1. Cooperation and Consensus

Implementing the strategic goals of the Organisation, as set out further below, is a joint responsibility of the Members and the Permanent Bureau. In this regard, cooperation is to be encouraged, among Members and with the Permanent Bureau.

The Organisation should remain non-political and focused on its Work Programme. The activities of the Organisation should, where possible, respond to the needs of the Membership in its entirety.

Members should maintain their commitment to efficient, consensus-based decision-making and effective functioning of the Organisation. Members recognise that building consensus may involve solutions that balance different priorities of Members and regions. In the spirit of international cooperation, Members are encouraged to adopt a long-term perspective in considering the evolutionary nature of the Work Programme of the HCCH, including by prioritising projects when appropriate, to maximise the benefit of the work of the Organisation for the Membership in its entirety.

## 2. Transparency and Accountability

The HCCH remains strongly committed to the principles of good governance, including transparency and accountability, in all aspects of its operations.

Information should be made available and accessible in a timely manner, enabling the governing bodies of the HCCH to engage in open discussions and to make informed decisions about the Work Programme and related priorities of the Organisation, as well as their related budgetary implications.

To ensure financial accountability, the priorities established by the governing bodies should be realistic and the Organisation should seek to make the most efficient use of existing resources. This may require adjusting structures and processes, as well as considering non-normative tools such as guides and handbooks, and utilising external resources, such as drawing on the expertise of academic institutions and the private sector, where feasible and appropriate.

Existing governance frameworks should continue to be reviewed to ensure that they remain fit for purpose, with existing frameworks adjusted or new frameworks developed where necessary. This should be facilitated by an ongoing dialogue among the Members and with the Permanent Bureau.





## Strategic Goals

In fulfilling its mandate and mission, the HCCH pursues the following strategic goals:

### **1 To develop multilateral conventions and instruments that address global private international law needs.**

The HCCH should seek to establish uniform international legal standards of private international law through its normative work.

For Members and the Permanent Bureau, this includes:

- monitoring contemporary and emerging private international law topics and being proactive in submitting proposals for consideration in response to the needs of the Members;
- examining the practical needs of the Members, to assess the utility, desirability, and feasibility of a normative solution;
- taking into consideration the distinctive characteristics of different legal systems to facilitate the consensus-based development of solutions.

Where it is not feasible or desirable to address such needs through normative work, non-normative tools may be developed.

## 2 To ensure the continued effectiveness and relevance of HCCH Conventions and Instruments.

The HCCH should strive to ensure that HCCH Conventions and Instruments are widely adopted, effectively implemented, and continue to respond to the needs of the Members in the most effective way possible.

For Members and the Permanent Bureau, this includes:

- promoting the benefits of the core HCCH Conventions and Instruments through targeted outreach activities, where appropriate, in cooperation with relevant organisations and stakeholders;
- supporting the effective implementation and operation of HCCH Conventions and Instruments through publications, practical guidance, and the provision of other technical post-Convention services and assistance;
- facilitating the exchange of experience, best practices, and engagement between relevant authorities, such as during meetings of Special Commissions on the practical operation of HCCH Conventions and Instruments;
- encouraging the use of technology, where appropriate, to facilitate the secure and effective operation of HCCH Conventions and Instruments;
- following legislative, judicial, policy, and technological developments, and where possible, regularly collecting relevant data, to enable informed decision-making when reviewing the practical operation of HCCH Conventions and Instruments.



### **3 To facilitate diverse representation and inclusive participation, reflecting the global nature of the Organisation and its Membership.**

To give tangible effect to universality, the HCCH should continue to promote inclusiveness, in particular in Africa and other underrepresented regions, and encourage meaningful contributions from its Members, as well as from relevant actors involved in its work, at the domestic, regional, and international levels.

For Members and the Permanent Bureau, this includes:

- engaging regularly with National and Contact Organs, Central and Competent Authorities, diplomatic missions, advisory bodies, and other relevant actors to promote the work of the HCCH globally;
- engaging with and responding to regions and interested Members which may benefit from post-Convention services and assistance;
- drawing on the expertise and experience of the existing Regional Offices in increasing awareness of and accessibility to the benefits of the HCCH's work, and further developing regional contacts and initiatives;
- actively promoting geographic representation, in particular from underrepresented regions and Members, in the context of official positions, HCCH meetings, and the recruitment of Permanent Bureau staff;
- encouraging diversity, equity, and inclusion, as well as actively promoting representation across genders, in the context of official positions, HCCH meetings, and the recruitment of Permanent Bureau staff;
- implementing the adoption of Spanish, in addition to English and French, as another official language, without precluding the possibility of discussing the future adoption of additional languages, if necessary, with a view to facilitating the active engagement of all Members;
- strengthening cooperation with relevant external stakeholders, such as international organisations, non-governmental organisations, academic institutions, and the private sector, where feasible and appropriate, to advance the overall Work Programme and to support specific research or translation projects;
- utilising technological means to maximise, where feasible and appropriate, participation in meetings and outreach activities.



## Progress & Reporting

Progress made towards implementing the Strategic Plan will be monitored by the governing bodies of the Organisation and priorities determined accordingly.

The Permanent Bureau will report annually to the Council on General Affairs and Policy in relation to activities conducted in pursuance of the strategic goals of the Organisation. Members will be invited to complement the report from the Permanent Bureau with additional information in relation to activities undertaken in their respective States or regions.

The Council on General Affairs and Policy will, no later than its 2027 meeting, determine the process for reviewing the Strategic Plan.

## **Hague Conference on Private International Law - HCCH**

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