Marshall Islands: A Pacific island-country joins the HCCH Service Convention (updated)

On 31 July 2020, the Depositary (*i.e.* the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of the Netherlands) notified that the Marshall Islands acceded to the HCCH Service Convention. A six-month period for filing objections has been set to run from the date of the Depositary's notification until 31 January 2021. In the absence of any objection from an already ratifying State, the Convention will enter into force for the Marshall Islands on 1 February 2021.

So far the Marshall Islands has made no declarations under the treaty (think for example of Articles 8, 10, 15 and 16). Nor has it designated Central Authority. While this can be done at a later date, it is undoubtedly of great importance that the designation of Central Authority be made as soon as possible for the treaty to operate smoothly and avoid potential objections, even if this is only a theoretical possibility as the objection-mechanism has never been used in practice.*

In the Pacific region, there are a few other States already a party to the Service Convention, such as the Philippines (date of entry into force: 1 October 2020!), Japan and Australia.

The HCCH news item is available here.

* *On 4 August 2020, the Marshall Islands diligently informed the Depositary of its declarations under Articles 8, 10(a), 15 and 16 of the Service Convention. It also made a declaration concerning the language of the documents to be served under Article 5 of the Service Convention, and although this declaration is not contemplated explicitly in this treaty, it is a very common declaration to file. Importantly, it also designated the Republic of the Marshall Islands Attorney-General as the Central Authority. See here (notification of 7 August 2020).*