Foreword

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A true game changer. This is how the Secretary General of the Hague Conference on Private International Law, Dr. Christophe Bernasconi, described the 2019 Hague Convention on the Recognition and Enforcement of Foreign Judgments in Civil or Commercial Matters on 2 July 2019. Since then, the 2019 Judgments Convention has also been labeled a significant milestone as well as an apex stone in international commercial litigation. All these labels indicate one thing: the substantial importance of the 2019 Judgments Convention.

The instrument fills an important gap in the global landscape of private international law. It provides a set of commonly accepted rules and mechanisms that govern the recognition and enforcement of foreign judgments and civil and commercial matters among those States that become a party to it. With that, it promotes and enhances legal certainty and predictability in trade, commerce and investment; it allows to manage better the risks associated with cross-border dealings; and the free circulation of judgments across borders should promote global access to justice for the benefit of both companies and individuals alike.

The development and adoption of the 2019 Judgments Convention has taken some time. The first steps were taken in 2011, and from 2012 onwards, five working group meetings and four meetings of a Special Commission progressed the project to the point where a draft convention could be considered by a Diplomatic Session with a view to the instrument's finalization and adoption. This 22nd Diplomatic Session was held in The Hague from 18 June to 2 July 2019 and on its last day, the delegates adopted the 2019 Judgments Convention, the 40th normative instrument of the HCCH.

This Special Issue of the *Netherlands International Law Review (NILR)* serves a number of purposes. It celebrates this outstanding achievement of the HCCH, the preeminent global organisation for the unification of private international law and the development of legal cooperative regimes, with the hard work finally having paid off. It should chronicle the instrument's history, give an insight into this development, and set out and explain the many aspects it features. And perhaps most

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importantly, in the true spirit of the *NILR*, this Special issue should provide a collection of articles that are authoritative scholarly reflections on the 2019 Judgments Convention that will become important sources for the implementation, application and interpretation of the instrument. The articles were written by leading judges, academics and practitioners who were all closely involved in the development and adoption of the Convention.

I am confident that this Special Issue will advance the broad uptake of the Convention in the coming years as I am confident that it will assist greatly potential future users of the rules and mechanisms of the 2019 Judgments Convention. The Board of Editors of the *NILR* is very grateful to all authors for their contributions to this Special Issue.

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