

# HERBERT SMITH FREEHILLS LAWYER APPOINTED TO TOP MIDDLE EAST ARBITRATION CENTRE

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News

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The Dubai International Financial Centre Arbitration Institute (DAI) has appointed Herbert Smith Freehills senior associate Robert Stephen as the new Registrar of the DIFC-LCIA Arbitration Centre (DIFC-LCIA).

Robert, an arbitration specialist, who has been with Herbert Smith Freehills for more than 10 years, will join the DIFC-LCIA on 1 May 2017 and replace the current Director and Registrar of the DIFC-LCIA, Mohamed ElGhatit, who has held the post since February 2016.

From its base in the Dubai International Financial Centre, the DIFC-LCIA provides alternative dispute resolution services for those doing business in and with the Gulf and Arab states and for those looking for an arbitration and mediation centre with world class capabilities, situated in a neutral and highly connected jurisdiction.

During his time at Herbert Smith Freehills, Robert has advised and represented clients on international disputes across a wide range of industry sectors, including the oil and gas, energy and natural resources, construction, real estate, and finance and banking sectors.

He has advised and represented clients in international arbitrations under the DIAC, DIFC-LCIA, ICC, LCIA, and SIAC Rules as well as in ad-hoc proceedings and DIFC and English Commercial Court litigation.

Prior to moving to the firm's office in Dubai in January 2011, Robert had also worked out of Herbert Smith Freehills' offices in London, Moscow and Paris.

Chair of the UAE Branch of the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators Young Member's Group Committee and member of the Global Chartered Institute of Arbitrators Young Member's Group Committee, Robert is also a member of the ICC Young Arbitrators' Forum, and the LCIA Young International Arbitration Group.

Commenting on his appointment, Paula Hodges QC, Head of Herbert Smith Freehills' Global Arbitration Practice and Vice President of the LCIA Court, said:

*"This is a significant appointment for Robert and we are extremely proud that a member of our very talented arbitration team in the Middle East has been chosen as the new Registrar of the DIFC-LCIA. We wish Robert every success in his new role."*

Craig Shepherd, Head of Middle East Disputes and Global Co-Head of Contentious Construction, said:

*"Robert has been an important member of our team in the Middle East for many years, and I am sure he will help to drive the DIFC-LCIA forward as a unique and exciting institution serving a broad range of businesses in one of the most dynamic regions in the World."*

Trustee of DAI and Director General of the LCIA, Jacomijn van Haersolte-van Hof, added:

*"I am delighted that Robert will be joining the DIFC-LCIA and the LCIA "family". His extensive experience in private practice including in the region makes him very qualified for the role and we look forward to working with him."*

Audley Sheppard QC, Trustee of DAI and Chairman of the LCIA Board, said:

*"I am very pleased that someone of Robert's experience and skills is becoming Registrar to continue the very good work that the DIFC-LCIA is doing in assisting parties to resolve their disputes."*

Alec Emmerson, Trustee and Chief Executive of the DAI said:

*"With his extensive international and regional dispute resolution experience, the trustees and I are confident that Robert will be a great asset to the continued development of arbitrations and mediation under DIFC-LCIA Rules. We thank Mohamed for his work over the last 13 months and wish him well on his return to private practice."*

## **About Herbert Smith Freehills**

Operating from over 26 offices across Asia Pacific, EMEA and North America, Herbert Smith Freehills is at the heart of the new global business landscape providing premium quality, full-service legal advice. We provide many of the world's most important organisations with access to market-leading dispute resolution, projects and transactional legal advice, combined with expertise in a number of global industry sectors, including energy, natural resources, infrastructure, technology and financial services. [www.herbertsmithfreehills.com](http://www.herbertsmithfreehills.com)

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