

Matrimonial and Family Arrangement between Mainland and Hong Kong comes into operation

The Mainland Judgments in Matrimonial and Family Cases (Reciprocal Recognition and Enforcement) Ordinance (Cap. 639) (Ordinance) and the "Arrangement on Reciprocal Recognition and Enforcement of Civil Judgments in Matrimonial and Family Cases by the Courts of the Mainland and of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR)" (Matrimonial and Family Arrangement) came into operation today (February 15).

Under the new mechanism of the Matrimonial and Family Arrangement, the courts of the two places may recognise and enforce reciprocally effective civil judgments in matrimonial and family cases that are made by the courts of the other place and are covered by the Matrimonial and Family Arrangement. This reduces the need for parties to re-litigate the same dispute in the Mainland and Hong Kong courts respectively, thereby saving their time and costs, as well as relieving their emotional distress. It also allows parties convenient and timely access to effective judicial relief, with their rights better protected. The Ordinance was enacted for the purpose of implementing the Matrimonial and Family Arrangement in the HKSAR through local legislation. The new mechanism applies to judgments given by Hong Kong or Mainland courts from today onwards in cases covered by the Matrimonial and Family Arrangement and also to divorce certificates issued from today onwards by a civil affairs department in the Mainland.

The Secretary for Justice, Ms Teresa Cheng, SC, remarked, "Under the principle of 'one country, two systems', Hong Kong and the Mainland have established an effective system for mutual legal assistance in civil and commercial matters. Today, we witness together the coming into operation of the Matrimonial and Family Arrangement. The Matrimonial and Family Arrangement signifies a new milestone in mutual legal assistance in civil and commercial matters between the two places. It also represents another innovative initiative that adheres to the upholding of the principle of 'one country' while leveraging the advantages of 'two systems'."

The Supreme People's Court and the Department of Justice (DoJ) co-organised a webinar on "New Mechanism for Reciprocal Recognition and Enforcement in Matrimonial and Family Cases between the Courts of Mainland and the HKSAR" today to explain the Matrimonial and Family Arrangement as well as the Ordinance, including the applicable rules, specific procedures, etc. Members of the public may also read the promotional [leaflet](#) on the Ordinance for more details. The DoJ will host another seminar on cross-boundary family mediation tomorrow (February 16). Please visit the relevant [website](#) for registration.