



British Institute of
International and
Comparative Law

Paul Barnett - Adviser on Treaty Practice and Procedures

As [Head of Treaty Section at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office](#) for eight years (2002-2010), Paul was responsible for the practice and procedural aspects of all international agreements involving the United Kingdom including treaty signings, ratifications and accessions, treaty publications, laying of treaties before Parliament, registration at the United Nations, Depositary functions, the organisation of treaty records and public information including the launch of [UK Treaties Online](#) earlier this year.

Paul advised FCO legal advisers, officials and others across Whitehall, and in other governments, on UK treaty practice and procedures including briefing the Foreign Secretary and other Ministers. He attended and officiated at all treaty signing ceremonies in the UK, and advised on those overseas involving the UK. He ensured the Government maintained its constitutional obligations to Parliament in respect of UK treaties by managing the publication and laying of treaties as Command Papers, together with accompanying Explanatory Memoranda.

He has extensive experience of working with foreign diplomats based in London embassies, and regularly hosted visits and provided training or briefing for officials from other countries' Ministries of Foreign Affairs, especially those from new states setting up treaty offices for the first time. He initiated the establishment of an international forum for treaty professionals from a range of Governments, to exchange experiences and views on contemporary issues in treaty practice.

Paul has given numerous presentations and talks on UK treaty practice including an annual talk to post-graduate students at Queen Mary College London, presentations to legal advisers at other UK Government departments and the Institute's conference [Celebrating 40 Years of the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties](#).

Prior to joining the FCO, Paul worked at the Department of Health in a number of roles relating to the administration of legal procedures, including Clerk to the Mental Health Review Tribunal and Deputy Clerk to the Medical Practices Committee. His civil service career began in 1979 with the Crown Agents for Overseas Governments and Administrations, London.

Contact: TreatyProcedures@biicl.org