



The First CIS Local Counsel Forum

On June 29 & 30, 2006 the First CIS Local Counsel Forum was organized in Kiev (Ukraine). The mission of the forum was to bring together the CIS and international legal communities with the aim of creating joint business opportunities and long-term cooperation.

The Forum was the first ever wide-scale meeting of the international legal community with the Local Counsel law firms of the CIS economic region (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, Uzbekistan). From two to four Local Counsel from each CIS country was selected by the Organizational Committee to participate in the Forum. Distinguished individuals from the CIS legal, business and academic community, Ukrainian media and the Government, attended the Forum as speakers and guests at social events.

The Program/Agenda for the Forum was divided into two days, with the first day consisting of the CIS regional panels and International Law Firms panels including: Local Counsel from the Caucasus region; Local Counsel from Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, and Moldova; Local Counsel from Central Asia; Showcase of the Host Country: Ukraine; two International Law Firms panels and Presentation on the Proposed CIS Counsel Association. The second day consisted of substantive panels devoted to specific areas of law where the participants could discuss recent developments in a specific area of law in their particular jurisdiction: mergers & acquisitions; dispute resolution; intellectual property; and natural resources.

As a leading CIS law firm **GRATA Law Firm** was invited to participate in the Forum. **Mr. Zafar Malikov**, Partner, Director of GRATA branch office in Uzbekistan spoke at the event as a Central Asian panelist. From his speech the attendees of the Forum got acquainted with legal aspects of doing business in Uzbekistan, current problems and outlook this region had.

During the Forum Zafar Malikov met with the representatives of the leading law firms participating in the forum; partner firms and those interested in launching joint projects in the Central Asian region.

At the end of the Forum it was decided to work on creating the CIS Counsel Association. The 2nd Forum is likely to be held in Baku (Azerbaijan) in 2007.