

Legal links

Sharing the rule of English Common Law

Strong and lasting ties between the respective legal professions are enhancing professional standards as well as the rule of law

Legal co-operation has long been an important aspect of Kazakh-British cooperation, a relationship formalised in late 2014 by the visit of Lord Faulks, UK Minister for Civil Justice and Legal Policy to Kazakhstan, and a reciprocal visit by Kazakhstan's Prosecutor General, Ashkat Daulbayev to London. The result was an MoU to establish a Joint Consultative Committee, and in 2015 a Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty was signed.

In May of that year, the Bar Council led a four-day mission to Kazakhstan, with a group of UK barristers arriving in the capital, Astana on the morning of the re-election of H.E. President Nursultan Nazarbayev. Comprising specialists in the fields of International Arbitration, Corporate Governance, Mediation and International Bribery and Corruption, the aim of the visiting British lawyers was to create strong and lasting ties between the Kazakh legal profession and the Bar of England and Wales, developing professional standards as well as the rule of law. And early in 2016, Baroness Scotland, the UK's former Attorney General and currently Secretary-General of the Commonwealth of Nations, visited Kazakhstan to discuss Kazakhstan's co-operation with the UK in matters of law.

The recently established Astana International Financial Centre (AIFC) is to operate under the principles of English law. In June 2017 the UK Law Society, in partnership with the AIFC and the Supreme Court of Kazakhstan, ran a judicial training programme aimed at providing Kazakh judges with an overview of the English common law system together with an insight into the legal profession in England and Wales.

H.E. Erlan Idrissov, Kazakhstan's Ambassador to the UK, noted that the hope was that the expertise gained by Kazakh judges through the programme would ensure the effectiveness of the AIFC Court and encourage fair settlement in investment disputes as well as attract further foreign investment.

Meanwhile the UK government has recently funded a US\$100,000 project to train prison officers to international standards, led by the NGO Penal Reform International (PRI), in partnership with the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Kazakh Government's Anti-Corruption Agency. PRI is working to develop accountability and good governance in the law enforcement system, in line with H.E. President Nursultan Nazarbayev's ambitious reform programme in Kazakhstan's judicial and rule of law sectors. **F**



Astana EXPO: part of this building is to be used for the International Financial Centre