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## CIS - staying independent, going international

Posted 30/06/2008 by Richard Lloyd

Today's first panel discussion of the CIS Local Counsel Forum featured a Who's Who of the independent Russian legal market, which now includes 16,500 firms and more than 1,000 law schools. ALRUD senior partner Vassily Rudomino highlighted the progress of the local firms that, up until a decade ago, were little known in the international legal community. But he stressed that work still needed to be done.

"We need to increase our profile, be integrated with the international community, and develop overseas relationships either through a 'best friends' network or more formal associations," Rudomino said.

The presentation and the Q&A that followed focused in part on how CIS firms could copy the success of leading overseas independents like Slaughter and May and Germany's Hengeler Mueller. In the battle to recruit the best staff, moderator Dimitry Afanasiev of Egorov Puginsky advised that Russian firms emphasise to potential recruits that they can offer job security, a platform for young lawyers to share profits, and the opportunity to be part of a rapidly developing business.

Although Andrey Goltsblat, managing partner of Pepeliaev Goltsblat, joked about merging his firm with Linklaters to form Goltsblat & Linklaters, the prevailing sense was that these Russian firms would resist any overtures from international firms and remain independent.

*This blog also appears on the website of [The American Lawyer](#), Legal Week's US sister title.*

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