

## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **CONFERENCE OF THE EUROPEAN COMPANY LAWYERS ASSOCIATION (ECLA) HELD IN ZAGREB**

European Company Lawyers Association (ECLA - [www.ecla.org](http://www.ecla.org)) is the roof organisation of European corporate lawyers comprising 23 European national professional legal organisations and over 29000 lawyers today. The main function of national organisations is the protection of the professional status of corporate layers and care of their life-long education.

The Croatian Association of Corporate Lawyers met the conditions for being a member of the European Family (ECLA) in November, 2007 and actually became a member during the Conference held in Dublin.

ECLA Conferences are organised twice a year and this time the Association of Corporate Lawyers was the host of the Conference held in Zagreb from 17<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> October, 2008. 26 participants from various countries (England, Ireland, Germany, France, Switzerland, Italy, Spain, etc.) took part in the Conference.

The main topic of Zagreb Conference was the extension of ECLA to other European countries. The first to become a member is the Russian Association whose representative gave a presentation of operation of her national organisation at the Conference. When reporting on the Plan of Activities of each individual organisation, the political turnaround in France made a special impression to the present. President Sarkozy had announced establishment of a common professional organisation of all the lawyers within which French corporative lawyers would achieve their long wished professional status, i.e. membership in the common Bar Association. One of the most interesting presentations was the presentation of Italian colleague who talked about activities of the Italian Association and their experiences bound to cooperation of the Association with head hunters. The Association provided for conditions for a high quality operation of ECLA Conference in Zagreb, participated in its activities and presented the Association itself and the Republic of Croatia as well organising casual associating of participants during their stay in Zagreb and in Croatia. Reception on the Faculty of Law in Zagreb, Zagreb site seeing, a gala-dinner in Croatian Journalist Club «Novinarski Dom» on 17<sup>th</sup> October and a trip to the town of Opatija on 18<sup>th</sup> October were only parts of those informal associating that contributed to the formal part of the conference in such a way that all the participants estimated the Conference as an extremely well organised event.

We would also like to use the opportunity to remind the public once again on the Association of Corporate Lawyers that began its activities as early as in 2005 with the Initiative for Establishment of the Croatian Corporate Lawyers Bar Association. Realising that a soon establishment of the Corporate Lawyers Bar Association is hardly expectable in near future, and with the aim of protection of interests not only of the profession itself, but also of trading companies they are employed in, Corporate Lawyers established the Association that was officially registered on 1<sup>st</sup> June, 2007. The Association adopted all the targets of the Initiative for Establishment of the Corporate Lawyers Bar Association.

The Initiative for establishment of the Corporate Lawyers Bar Association together with the Croatian Chamber of Commerce, Croatian Chamber of Entrepreneurs and the Federation of the Association of Corporate Lawyers was the initiator and the signatory of the Statement of the Status of Corporate Lawyers (Opatija, 2005) definitely stating that lawyers employed by trading companies had no determined professional status unlike other categories of lawyers (judges, public notaries, state attorneys) who were organised in professional associations (Bar Association, Chamber of Public Notaries) or their status were determined by the Law.

Corporate lawyers and their employers have been pointing out the necessity of defining the professional status of corporate lawyers and equalization of rights of trading companies to exercise right to compensation of costs and in case when an employer is represented by a corporate lawyer as well, and not only in case when it is represented by an attorney-at-law as it is now.

At the same time there is a need for novelty in the Civil Procedure Act, Criminal Procedure Act, Law on Trainees in the Judicial Bodies and the Bar Examination, etc.

The Association has today **200 members** from the whole Croatia and during the previous time period it has coordinated education organised as lectures, round tables and similar having the lectures not only from the own membership, but also from the line of respected colleagues from all the segments of the legal profession.

On the basis of the Cooperation Agreement with the Faculty of Law of Zagreb, students perform their practical part of education in economy as well.

More information could be found at [www.udruga-korporativnih-pravnika.hr](http://www.udruga-korporativnih-pravnika.hr).

With kindest regards,

President of the Association of Corporate Lawyers:  
(Josipa Jurinić)