

## **BRLA WELCOME NOTE AND DESCRIPTION OF THE ASSOCIATION**

*by*

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### Welcome note

The BRLA is delighted to support the CECJ's May 2018 programme for visiting Russian and Ukrainian lawyers. This is an excellent initiative that we are pleased to be able to contribute to. It complements perfectly our Association's objective of fostering close links between the legal professions of the United Kingdom and the Russian Federation, explained in more detail below. Our members are looking forward to meeting the delegation and sharing views on the many interesting recent legal developments in the England and Russia.

### Background to the BRLA

The BRLA was established in 1992 as the successor to the British-Soviet Law Association following the break-up of the Soviet Union.

Our first years coincided with profound changes in the Russian legal system. To reflect this our original remit involved assisting the development of the legal profession in Russia through mutual exchanges and training programmes, providing advice and assistance in connection with the administration of justice in the Russian Federation and the drafting of legislation and organising high level meetings and round table discussions on developing legal issues.

In the 1990's the BRLA organised a number of seminars in Russia funded by the British government involving leading judges, lawyers and academics from the UK and Russia on a range of subjects including: inward investment, judicial review and judicial training.

We also acted as hosts to delegations of Russian judges and lawyers visiting the UK.

Since then the work and aims of the Association have evolved to reflect the profound changes that have taken place in Russia over the course of the last 20 plus years - particularly the exponential growth of the Russian legal and commercial markets.

The BRLA's objectives now are: (i) to strengthen links between the legal professions in the UK and the Russian Federation; (ii) to provide a networking forum for lawyers, businessmen and anyone with an interest in developing Russo-British contacts and business.

The BRLA also acts as a point of contact and reference for anyone seeking the services of lawyers with experience of and expertise in the Russian market. In this we are assisted by the fact that our membership includes highly skilled experts in almost every area of law.

Our members include Russian advocates and lawyers, English solicitors and barristers, in-house counsel, accountants, bankers, corporate service providers and businessmen and women.

#### The BRLA's activities

The BRLA plays a leading role in the vibrant dialogue that exists between the legal professions in Russia and the UK. Much of this occurs through conferences and seminars and networking events that the Association organizes – either on its own or in partnership with other organisations. The focus of these events is English law issues in a Russian context, and vice-versa.

For example, we have organized seminars recently in Moscow, St Petersburg, Ekaterinburg, Ufa, Kazan and Krasnodar and, of course, London.

For the past few years the highlight of our annual programme has been English Law Week (in Moscow and St Petersburg) and Russian Law Week (in London) – each held on alternate years. These 'Law Weeks' (which the BRLA co-organises with the Law Society, the Bar Council of England & Wales, the RF Federal Chamber of Advocates and the Moscow and St Petersburg Chamber of Advocates) started in 2011 and are now an established fixture in the legal calendar. They provide a regular (and widely anticipated) opportunity for leading practitioners from Russia and the UK to share

with their counterparts information about the latest developments and trends in each country's legal practice and procedure.

In addition, since 2014 the Bar Council of England & Wales (supported by the BRLA) has organised study visits to England for groups of young Russian lawyers. The study visits involve 4-week placements with Barristers' Chambers, during which the young lawyers 'shadow' assigned barristers and learn more about the work of the English Bar and English litigation and arbitration.

These initiatives provide regular opportunities every year for Russian and UK lawyers to meet, share their knowledge and experience and develop strong professional relationships. They have helped to generate (and maintain) a fruitful dialogue between the legal professions of our two countries that has (we are pleased to say) withstood well-publicised geo-political challenges. Our current priority is to ensure that this remains the case.

Further information about the BRLA (including details of our recent events and how to join) can be found on our website: [thebrla.com](http://thebrla.com).

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12 April 2018