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GRATA International in Legal 500 EMEA 2018

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Legal 500 has recently released its annual legal rating of leading international law firms – Legal 500 EMEA 2018.

GRATA International secured its position in rankings across 8 countries – Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

In Kazakhstan, GRATA International has topped the rankings across 2 practices:

- ▶ Real estate and construction
- ▶ Tax and customs

For the second consecutive year GRATA International's Real Estate and Construction team, headed by **Yerzhan Yessimkhanov**, takes a leading position in Tier 1. The team was praised for its exclusive focus on real estate and construction issues, and was noted for its work handling infrastructure projects.

Tax and customs practice was featured in Kazakhstan's Legal 500 rankings for the first time and GRATA International's Tax and Customs department has topped the rating with Tier 1 position. The researchers have given a special attention, commenting on 'a wealth of experience and expertise in tax and customs law', combined with 'a practical approach' and 'strong team cooperation' within the practice. **Assel Illyasova**, head of tax and customs department, was identified as a leading individual within the practice across Kazakhstan.

GRATA International has continued the success with Tier 2 rankings across the following practices:

- ▶ Banking, finance and capital markets
- ▶ Dispute resolution
- ▶ Energy and natural resources
- ▶ IP and TMT

Banking and finance team, with its partners **Shaimerden Chikanayev** and **Marina Kahiani**, was described as 'excellent', 'responsive' and 'cost-effective' with strong capabilities in project finance and capital markets matters.

Legal 500 have recognised GRATA International's Dispute Resolution department's expertise in domestic litigation, as well as an increasing focus on international litigation and arbitration. Practice head - **Bakhyt Tukulov** was described as 'very energetic' and 'goal and client oriented'.

GRATA International's Natural Resources practice was assessed as 'very strong and effective'. **Almat Daumov**, head of the team, was noted for 'a strong tax, subsoil-use and litigation background', and **Maxim Burak**, leading firm's natural resources activities in Astana office, was praised for 'great experience in subsoil-use matters'.

The researchers have appraised GRATA International's IP and TMT team of for its 'creative approach' and expertise in trademark protection, licensing and franchising matters. Team head **Saule Akhmetova** focuses on contentious issues. Off counsel **Aizhan Mukhammad** and associate **Timur Berekmoinov** are qualified patent attorneys.

Corporate law practice was ranked in Tier 3. The team, headed by **Bolat Miyatov**, was recognised for its focus on M&A, corporate governance, antimonopoly and labour work.

In Azerbaijan, GRATA International was ranked among the leading firms in the country. Researchers have described as having 'an integrated one-stop-shop approach', 'always looks to stay informed of new trends, changes and client demands', and, according to one client, 'never compromises on quality no matter how tight the deadline'. Head of Baku office - **Ummi Jalilova** has 'a robust market reputation as a great legal adviser on mergers and acquisitions'.

In Kyrgyzstan, GRATA International joins the country's leading firms by taking Tier 2 position. Team of lawyers, based in Bishkek, was noted for banking and finance transactions, and its activities in mining and telecoms-related matters. Office head - **Kanat Seidaliev's** recent work includes acting for Huawei in a bankruptcy procedure against a Kyrgyz telecoms company and conducting a due diligence exercise for a Chinese gold mining company on three Kyrgyz companies that held licences for the exploration and development of gold deposits in the region. **Nurlan Kyshtobaev**, recognised as one of the leading individuals in the country, heads the banking and finance practice, with additional expertise in corporate and infrastructure-related matters. **Elvira Maratova**, one of the next generation lawyers, who has expertise in cross-border lending and procurement matters, recently advised Fresenius Medical Care on a PPP project involving the construction of medical centres which provide dialysis services.

In Uzbekistan, one of the most dynamic markets in Central Asia, GRATA International has joined country's leading law firms with position in Tier 2. The team in Tashkent, headed by **Bakhodir Jabborov**, was noted for its focus on natural resources, banking and finance, infrastructure and energy, FMCG, TMT, disputes and tax matters. Bakhodir has expertise in corporate and commercial transactions, advised Japan Oil, Gas and Metals National Corporation on a uranium deposits exploration project, and assisted General Electric with its EPC contract for its Tashkent power plant. **Nodir Yuldashev** is particularly active in the oil and gas, pharmaceutical and textile sectors. Project finance specialist **Atabek Sharipov** advised China Development Bank, as local counsel, on the secured financing of a local textile mill, and acted for Deutsche Asset Management's Global Social Finance Group on an unsecured credit facility to a local microfinance bank. **Irina Obukhova** is also a key figure, and has experience in civil and criminal proceedings.

GRATA International's Dushanbe team has secured its position among top law firms in Tajikistan, ranked in Tier 2. The team handles matters 'according to the highest international standards, using advanced practices', and is known for its expertise in the banking and finance sector. **Kamoliddin Mukhamedov**, who was recognised as one of the leading individuals in the country, has 'a high level of professionalism, produces high-quality work in a timely manner and meets all client requirements'. He and banking and finance practice head **Nurlan Kyshtobaev** assisted Coca-Cola Tajikistan with securing a loan of €44.7m. The firm also handles cross-border matters such as acting for China Development Bank during a sale and lease-back transaction and

advising Amdocs USA on labour issues.

Kordzakhia Jgenti GP, associate office of GRATA International in Georgia, secured its place among leading dispute resolution practices, taking Tier 3 position in the rankings.

Stepanov&Aksuk, associate office of GRATA International in Rostov-on-Don, was identified as having one of the leading transport practices in Russia. The researchers and peers noted the team for its expertise in maritime law, advising on contract-related issues, vessel registration and disputes involving crew members. Dispute resolution lawyer **Inna Makarova** heads the team.

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