

FROM THE COURTROOM TO THE CLASSROOM

Given the pace of change in Central and Eastern Europe, it is not surprising to learn that the legal system is having a hard time keeping up. Law has always been a complex field but, in the midst of daily economic and democratic reforms that are fundamentally reshaping societies, the challenge is unparalleled.

For the past three years, the Canadian Bar Association (CBA), in co-operation with the Task Force on Central and Eastern Europe, has been at the forefront of legal reform in the region, assisting Central and East European lawyers meet the changing demands of their profession as their countries make the transition to independent legal systems.

Legal Eagles in Training

The centrepiece of the CBA's efforts is a three-month academic training and legal internship program in Canada. Launched as a pilot project in Hungary in 1990, the program has grown each year and this fall will accept 24 of the best lawyers from Poland, the C.S.F.R., Ukraine and Hungary. Under the program, the interns receive an intensive academic introduction to various areas of law, including constitutional, corporate and commercial law, before undertaking working internships with law firms and legal organizations across the country.

Following specially tailored programs similar to those of articling students, the interns gain first-hand experience in research, court work and client relations. The work load is demanding but the interns often receive special assistance from a designated "mentor" within the organization fluent in their mother tongue, a reflection of Canada's multicultural makeup and a unique strength of the CBA program.

Canadian sponsors are quick to stress that their involvement in the program is a "two-way street," with the long-term benefits of establishing linkages with leading law firms in Central and Eastern Europe and of expanding their opportunities and client base in the region.

Competition for positions in the increasingly well known program is tough, and support from Canadian legal organizations is growing. Although participating firms must contribute \$10 000 to sponsor an intern, interest in initial CBA plans to include Ukrainian participants in the 1992 fall

program was so high that a special Ukrainian internship project was launched in the spring. Canadian sponsors are quick to stress that their involvement in the program is a "two-way street," with the long-term benefits of establishing linkages with leading law firms in Central and Eastern Europe and of expanding their opportunities and client base in the region.

On Both Sides of the Bench

This year the Canadian Bar Association will also become involved in training those who sit behind the bench when it launches a pilot project for 15 judges from the C.S.F.R. and Hungary. The participants will first complete a basic training program for new Canadian judges at the country's National Judicial Institute and will then spend two weeks in a Canadian courtroom under the guidance of a specially assigned Canadian mentor judge. The aim is to assist in the emergence of an independent and efficient judiciary in Hungary and the C.S.F.R.

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