

### Sorainen Law Offices

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#### Sorainen Law Offices: first law firm in the Baltics awarded quality certificate

International certification agency Lloyd's Register Quality Assurance carried out an external audit at the Tallinn, Riga, and Vilnius offices of Sorainen Law Offices. As a result, our quality management system was declared in line with the requirements of ISO 9001:2000 and the respective certificate issued.

Sorainen Law Offices is the first law firm in the Baltics and one of only a few in the Nordic countries where a quality management system has been implemented and certified under ISO 9001 standards.

The decision to adopt the ISO 9001:2000 quality management system was made at the beginning of 2001. According to Toomas Prangli, the partner responsible for quality management, the system was required because of fast growth of the firm, the need to organize and unify internal procedures in the offices, and the firm intention to offer high quality integrated legal services in all three countries where the offices are located. "Compliance with ISO 9001:2000 requirements shows that we are on the right track, but the certificate itself has never been an aim in itself for us. Our priority is achieving client satisfaction through superb quality management", Prangli explains. "A quality management system is a suitable method for increasing efficiency and improving the standards of the law firm on a more general level", confirms Prangli.

"For clients this event primarily represents assurance that they have chosen a service provider who is constantly improving its services", adds Katri-Helen Agur, the firm's marketing manager. According to Lloyd's leading auditor Urve Poldoja, the management system of Sorainen Law Offices is characterized by a universally high level of legal services offices located in all three Baltic capitals, along with professionalism and innovativeness of all staff. According to Poldoja, as a result of long-term efforts the core and support processes in the firm have been taken to a level that provides both maximum client satisfaction and internal efficiency.



## EUROPEAN UNION

### EU NEWS

#### Eyes on Microsoft vs. European Commission case

The European Court of Justice ('ECJ') started court hearings in the case of Microsoft Corporation ('Microsoft') versus the European Commission ('the Commission') on 24 April 2006.

After a five-year investigation, the Commission fined Microsoft EUR 497 million in March 2004 for abusing its market power in the EU. This is the largest fine in EU history.

The Commission found that Microsoft had abused its market power by deliberately restricting interoperability between Windows PCs and non-Microsoft work group servers, and by tying its Windows Media Player, a product where it faced competition, with its Windows operating system. This alleged illegal conduct had enabled Microsoft to acquire a dominant position in the market for work group server operating systems, which are at the heart of corporate IT networks, and risked eliminating competition altogether in that market. In addition, in the Commission's opinion Microsoft's conduct had significantly weakened competition on the media player market.

The Commission had ordered Microsoft to disclose to competitors the interfaces required for their products to be able to 'talk' with the ubiquitous Windows Operating Systems. Microsoft was also required to offer a version of its Windows Operating Systems without Windows Media Player to PC manufacturers (or when selling directly to end users), as well as the version with it.

Microsoft appealed against this decision to the ECJ and asked for the decision to be suspended until the proceeding come to a final decision in possibly four years. The ECJ refused this request December last year.

In the Commission's view, Microsoft has not fulfilled its obligations correctly so far. The Commission has repeatedly demanded the software maker to comply with

## Estonia

**Obtaining residence permits becomes more difficult for non-EU residents**

## Latvia

**New regulations on rules of Value Added Tax application procedure**

## Lithuania

**Changes in dispute resolution procedure under Real Estate Tax Law**

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**Our offices in the Baltics awarded quality certificate**

**New administration manager Aivi Roasto joined Sorainen Law Offices**

protocol-sharing requirements. Daily fines have been also issued against Microsoft in the amount of EUR 2 million daily.

According to Microsoft, the network protocols it has been ordered to share are "valuable trade secrets" and its intellectual property, while its ability to innovate is also at stake.

The ECJ proceedings could last for several years and the outcome is unpredictable. This is without doubt a landmark case and will pave the way for future competition cases. In case the Commission's position prevails, the companies holding market power within the EU may be obliged to share their intellectual property. However, in case the position of the Commission is not supported by the ECJ, the Commission may lose a lot of its credibility in fulfilling its tasks. The outcome of the case will determine the framework for the future competition policy within the EU and shall also set guidelines to the amount of possible fines.

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## ESTONIA

### FINANCIAL AND SECURITIES LAW

#### New rules for Venture Capital and Real Estate Funds

The act amending the Investment Funds Act (*investeerimisfondide seadus*) and related acts will soon be introduced to the proceedings of the Estonian Parliament.

One of the main aims of the act is to create a legal environment enabling establishment of venture capital funds (including venture capital funds based on private initiative and private capital) considering the peculiarities arising from the nature of venture capital funds. This has hitherto been unregulated in Estonia. In order to promote the establishment of venture capital funds, certain requirements on management companies have been relieved, ensuring that their administrative burden is lower.

Another important change introduced by the act is the establishment of different regulation for real estate funds and, in particular, their management companies. For example, compared to other funds, real estate funds no longer need to have a depositary. The aim of these amendments is to facilitate the establishment of real estate funds and make the foundation of risk capital funds and real estate funds more attractive.

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### IMMIGRATION LAW

#### Obtaining residence permits becomes more difficult for non-EU citizens

Amendments adopted to the Aliens Act (*välismaalaste seadus*) and other related acts introduce a new concept of a long-term resident and make the conditions for getting a residence permit stricter. The amendments to the act enter into force on 1 June 2006 and do not apply to EU citizens.

According to the amended act, two types of residence permit will be available in Estonia: temporary residence permits, and residence permits for long-term residents. According to the act, permanent residence permits will no longer be issued and all aliens holding a permanent residence permit will automatically become long-term residents - they need only replace the document proving their residence permit. Aliens holding a long-term residence permit in Estonia will need no work permit for employment or engaging in business in Estonia. For the purposes of the act, the term "alien" includes both citizens of third (i.e., non-EU) countries and stateless people.

An alien who applies for a long-term residence permit must have lived in Estonia on the basis of a residence permit continually for at least five years before applying for a long-term residence permit; the person must have a valid temporary residence permit, permanent legal income, health insurance, and at least a basic level of language proficiency in Estonian.

Taking the basic level language exam is not required of residents under the age of 15 and over the age of 65; people who have acquired basic, secondary, or higher education in Estonian, adults with restricted active legal capacity, and people who for health reasons are permanently unable to take the language exam.

We advise all others to apply for long-term residence permit before 1 June 2007, because this avoids the need to take the basic level Estonian exam.

The language proficiency requirement for issuing permanent residence permit is already effective in Latvia. Similar amendments to the aliens act are currently under way in the Lithuanian parliament.

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### INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY AND IT LAW

#### End to abuse of trademarks in website addresses and business names

Attorneys Triin Toomemets and Carri Ginter successfully represented Gulf International Lubricants Ltd. before the Supreme Court

in a claim against an unofficial reseller of "Gulf" goods in Estonia.

In a landmark judgment of 30 March 2006 the Supreme Court ruled that the lower courts should have interpreted Estonian law in harmony with European legislation. According to correct interpretation of Estonian law it is illegal to use another's trademark in a manner that creates false impression of a special connection between a reseller and the trademark proprietor.

The court also stated that unauthorized use of a trademark in another person's business name can infringe the rights of the trademark proprietor. If the business name is misleading, then it is possible to prohibit its use regardless of the areas of activity of the respondent undertaking. The court can thus prohibit use of the business name and impose penalties on a respondent violating the prohibition.

For the first time in local legal practice, the court recognized that a trademark proprietor is entitled to prohibit the use of its trademark in a domain name of a third person. The court pointed out that mere registration of the domain name provides sufficient grounds for turning to the court because of the trademark owner's inability to use the same website address.

In conclusion, the case stands as a landmark as it demonstrates that, on top of resolving a number of unclear legal issues, the shortcomings of domestic law and practice can be overcome by using principles set forth in relevant EU legal acts and recognized by the ECJ.

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### TRADE, DISTRIBUTION AND TRANSPORT

#### Consumer games are not lotteries

The Supreme Court of Estonia made an important decision on consumer games in April this year. The Estonian Ministry of Finance initiated a misdemeanor procedure against a local newspaper that organized a consumer game for its clients, with prizes drawn including a car. The Ministry of Finance argued that this was a lottery so that the newspaper should have applied for relevant lottery license to carry out the campaign.

A lottery defines as a game where;

- participation enables the chance to win money or other assets;
- the prize of a person who has acquired the right to participate depends on figures, symbols or a picture;
- the outcome is determined by a draw or another activity entirely based on randomness;

- participants risk losing their contribution in return for the right to participate.

In the given case the Supreme Court took the position that the first characteristic of a lottery, i.e. randomness, is present in consumer games. The court also found that the second essential characteristic of a lottery, i.e. the contribution, is not present in consumer games. The Court reasoned that contribution is considered to mean only such financial outlay which, if made, involves the risk that the assets of the contributor decrease as a consequence of the activity based on randomness used to determine the prize. In a situation where a person pays a certain amount of money with the aim of acquiring certain goods or services as well as the right to participate in a draw of a material value (prize), such payment can be considered to be a contribution only if the amount of money paid exceeds the market value of the goods or services acquired in addition to the right to participate in the draw. In the case of consumer games, where no additional money is payable for participation, no risk arises that the assets of the participant would diminish in consequence of the draw compared to the situation before acquiring the right to participate. If no contribution is required for participation in the campaign, then the lottery does not require any operating permit.

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## LATVIA

### COMPANY LAW

#### Changes to Commercial Law concerning appointment of auditor and approval of sample signatures

The Parliament adopted amendments to the Commercial Law. The amendments to the Commercial Law are in force since 10 April 2006:

- The rules regarding mandatory appointment of an auditor for all companies are withdrawn.
- An auditor no longer need be registered with the Commercial Register.
- Appointment of a sworn auditor is necessary if two of the three following criteria can be applied:
  - the sum of the balance sheet exceeds LVL 100 000 (ca. 143 000 euros);
  - annual turnover exceeds LVL 200 000 (ca. 286 000 euros);
  - the average number of employees within the financial year exceeds 25.

Of course, a company may appoint an auditor even these legal criteria are not reached.

We suggest that companies resolving that an auditor is not necessary should ensure withdrawal of the clause in the articles of association on the need for an auditor.

In addition, the amendments provide that the Companies Register of Latvia may approve sample signatures (i.e., signatures of an individual trader and founder on applying for registration) if an individual trader or a company with sole founder is being established, as well as signatures of management board members, liquidators and procurists. Therefore, in these cases it will not be necessary to visit a notary. In particular cases, data already kept on file at the Companies Register need not be submitted - for example, approved individual sample signatures. Further, a management board member who signs an application for registration as a management board member need not submit specific consent, or specific notice on legal address. These amendments to the Commercial Law will enter into force on 1 July 2006.

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### PROPERTY AND CONSTRUCTION LAW

#### Constitutional court revokes rent ceiling

On 8 March 2006 the constitutional court decided to suspend the amendments to the law on Residential Tenancy passed by the *Saeima* on 20 December 2004, extending the validity of the rent ceiling in relation to houses de-nationalized or returned to their lawful owner until 2008.

The constitutional court decided that the right to own property contains the right to benefit from it, whereas fixing a rent ceiling restricts an individual's right to own property. Although the right to own property may be subject to restrictions in order to protect the interests of low-income tenants, the rent ceiling, which applies not only to low-income tenants, is not a proportional measure for attaining this objective. The constitutional court declared that the amendments to the law extending the initially determined deadline for application of the rent ceiling violated the principle of legal certainty.

The constitutional court decided that by 1 January 2006 the *Saeima* should choose more proportional measures to protect low-income tenants.

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### TAXATION LAW

#### New regulations on rules for Value Added Tax application procedure

The Cabinet of Ministers adopted regulations interpreting the procedure for applying the rules of the Law on Value Added Tax (VAT). The largest part of the new regulations includes the same provisions as the previous government regulations with the same name (of 19 July 2005) and explain the new provisions of the Law on VAT introduced as of 1 January 2006, or have only "technical" improvements. Although the new regulations have been published on 8 May 2006 they provide for a retroactive application - as of 2 April 2006.

One material novelty provides that according to case law of the ECJ a disposal of all or part of a business (a transfer of a business as a going concern under the Commercial Law) is a transaction which is not subject to (outside the scope of) VAT, previously being taxable. This provision is extremely important for most of purchases of a business (as opposed to share transactions), because it would at least improve a cash-flow (on VAT amount) situation of such transactions. This provision to a great extent is a result of a thorough work by Sorainen tax lawyers representing interests of several of its clients by indicating to the authorities on the incompatibility of the Latvian law with the EU VAT Sixth directive. However, this necessitates amending the Law on VAT from the point of view of the legal technique, because this provision is in contradiction with the Law on VAT.

The other novelties of the regulations inter alia provide for other issues which were not covered by the law previously, e.g.

- regarding an immovable property:
  - determination of the taxable value of transactions with "unused immovable property";
  - regarding the immovable property there is also a new statement made that investment into a share capital of an "unused immovable property" is VAT-exempt, although it's first sale being subject to 18% VAT, which leaves some room for VAT planning;
  - it is very important to note for real estate businesses that now if a purchase price of the taxable ("unused") and exempt property has not been separated then all the purchase price will become subject to 18% VAT;
  - the procedure for paying tax and for issuing of invoices in cases involving termination of hire purchase (leasing) agreements on "used immovable property" has been set;
  - the regulations explain the deduction of input VAT procedure for goods acquired or services received - before the person has been registered in the VAT payer register, which is a new concept introduced by the Law on VAT as of 1

January 2006 implementing the corresponding ECJ case law;

- the provisions on determining the market price (transfer pricing) of a transaction as well as on application of discounts and bonuses, etc. have been made more exact;
- for importers and exporters (also expedition companies, etc) it should be important that there is a list of documents made that can qualify as supporting for goods in export, import or transit.

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**Selection of relevant acts and amendments adopted 01.03.2006-30.04.2006:**

- Cabinet Regulation No 201 on "Order of Covering Administration Fees and Administration Expenses in the Insolvency Process" (in force as of 24 March 2006);
- Public Procurement Law (in force as of 1 April 2006);
- Amendments to the Law on Taxes and Duties (in force as of 3 May 2006).

## LITHUANIA

### EMPLOYMENT LAW

**New minimal wage established**

The Government adopted a Resolution Regarding Increase of Minimal Wage (*Dėl minimaliojo darbo užmokesčio didinimo*). The Resolution entered into force on 31 March 2006 (with exceptions).

The Resolution establishes that from 1 July 2006 a minimal hourly pay of 3.65 litas (ca. 1.05 euros) and a minimal monthly wage of 600 litas (ca. 174 euros) will be applied to employees working in undertakings, institutions, and organizations, irrespective of the form of ownership, and to other persons. The minimal hourly pay and the minimal monthly wage of state politicians, judges, state officials, soldiers and state office employees will respectively be 2.62 litas (ca. 0.76 euros) and 430 litas (ca. 124.54 euros).

From 1 April 2006 till 1 July 2006 the minimal hourly pay of state politicians, judges, state officials, soldiers and state office employees is 2.62 litas (ca. 0.76 euros) and the minimal hourly pay of all other workers is 3.35 litas (ca. 0.97 euros).

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### PROPERTY AND CONSTRUCTION LAW

**Circle of persons that can prepare planning documents has been expanded**

The Parliament adopted a Law Amending Article 41 of the Law on Land (*Žemės įstatymo 41 straipsnio pakeitimo įstatymas*). The Law entered into force on 15 April 2006.

Prior to the amendment, only legal entities were entitled to prepare planning documents. This regulation was inconsistent with EU legislation. The amended Law establishes that planning documents may be prepared by natural persons or legal entities. Furthermore, branches of companies of EU member states and other countries forming part of the European Economic Area ('EEA countries'), established in Lithuania, are also entitled to prepare planning documents.

Note that to qualify for preparation of planning documents, license is required. Licenses are granted to natural persons, who have obtained a specific higher educational degree and satisfy the qualification requirements established by the Government. To obtain a license, legal entities and branches of companies of EU member states and other EEA countries should have specialists that satisfy the requirements set for natural persons.

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### TAXATION LAW

**Changes in dispute resolution procedure under Real Estate Tax Law**

The Parliament adopted a Law Amending Articles 10 and 12 of the Real Estate Tax Law (*Nekilnojamojo turto mokesčio įstatymo 10 ir 12 straipsnių pakeitimo įstatymas*). The Law entered into force on 8 April 2006.

The Law was amended in favor of real estate taxpayers by extending terms for submitting certain complaints and requests. The term for considering complaints and requests was also extended, though this could not be considered as an improvement in taxpayers' situation.

The Law establishes that:

- real estate taxpayers' complaints regarding estimated tax value of real estate, and

- requests for application of the value assessed by way of individual valuation for tax calculation

should be submitted to the property valuer within three months from calculation of real estate tax value. The Law establishes an exception that during the fiscal year 2006 complaints and requests can be submitted to the property valuer within six months from calculation of real estate tax value. The property valuer must decide complaints and requests within two months of receiving them.

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**Encouragement for private legal entities to join specialist training**

The Parliament adopted a Law Amending Article 17 of the Law on Personal Income Tax (*Gyventojų pajamų mokesčio 17 straipsnio pakeitimo įstatymas*). The Law enters into force as of 1 October 2006.

The main goal of the amendments is to coordinate the training of students and pupils for business requirements, encourage private legal entities to participate in the process of specialist training, and facilitate material learning conditions.

The amended Law establishes that scholarships intended to cover the learning and living needs of students and pupils, which are paid under the trilateral agreements between the legal entity, the educational institution, and the student, are exempt from personal income tax. The exemption does not apply to students holding more than 10% of the shares of a legal entity granting the scholarship, employees of such legal entity, or their relatives. The exemption also does not apply if the paid scholarship relates to services provided to the legal entity by the scholarship recipient, and the annual amount of the scholarship exceeds 24 tax exempt minimums (one tax exempt minimum is 290 litas (ca. 84 euros)).

## We offer our readers Latvian Legal Update in French

The Legal Update published by Sorainen Law Offices is the only pan-Baltic update, since 1997 giving an insight into the latest changes in the legislation of the three Baltic countries. Currently we are offering the Legal Update in English, Latvian, Estonian, Lithuanian and Russian.

Because an increasing number of our clients is French-speaking, as well as in order to improve our services and to emphasize our individualized approach to differentiated needs of our clients, we intend to launch a pilot project: the Latvian Legal Update in French.

If you are interested in receiving the Latvian Legal Update in French please contact us via e-mail: [sorainen@sorainen.lv](mailto:sorainen@sorainen.lv) and confirm your wish to be updated on recent developments in Latvian legislation in French.

In addition, scholarships paid to students or pupils from the funds of Lithuanian or foreign non-profit organizations are exempt from personal income tax if the act of issuing scholarships is established in legal acts regulating the activities of those legal entities. For the exemption to apply, the scholarship recipient should not be a member or an employee of the legal entity issuing the scholarship, and the issuing should not be related to the scholarship recipient's services provided to that legal entity.

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**Selection of relevant acts and amendments adopted 01.03.2006-30.04.2006**

- Law Amending Article 11, Appendixes 3 and 4 of the Law on Tax for Environmental Pollution (will come into force on 1 January 2007);
- Law Supplementing Article 17 of the Law on Personal Income Tax (in force as of 29 April 2006);
- Law on Ratifying the Settlement between Lithuania and Bulgaria Regarding Encouragement and Protection of Investments (in force as of 25 April 2006);
- Law on Ratifying the Protocol to the 1979 Convention on Long-Range Transboundary Air Pollution on Reduction of Sulphur Emissions or their Transboundary Fluxes (in force as of 27 April 2006).

Contributed by Lea Liigus, Katri-Helen Agur, Estonia; Gita Rivdike, Latvia; Gytis Malinauskas, Lithuania. Edited by Toomas Prangli, Estonia.

## NEWS IN SORAINEN LAW OFFICES

### Recent deals

**Tallinn office contributes pro bono to creation of Haraka Home**

Haraka Home, a small village, is to be created in Maidla, Harju County for its future inhabitants - up to thirty disabled youths. Haraka Home will offer accommodation to disabled youths in this purpose-built village to meet their abilities and needs. Our Tallinn office contributed to the creation of Haraka village by establishing the Haraka Kodu Foundation free of charge. The case was handled by associate Kai Kaljaste. Haraka Home welcomes donations to its bank account in Hansabank, no. 221030431813, beneficiary Haraka Kodu.

**Acquisition of free Lithuanian newspaper "15 min"**

Vilnius office advised Schibsted Baltics AS, part of a leading media group in the Nordic region, whose activities comprise newspapers and publishing, TV and film production, film rights, TV channels, Internet and mobile services, in acquisition of the free Lithuanian newspaper "15 min". Our involvement included legal due diligence of the target company and drafting the transaction documents. The project was led by partner Renata Berzanskiene and senior associate Raminta Karlonaite.

**Investment in publisher of advertising and classified ads in Lithuania**

Vilnius office advised Northcliffe Media (Central Europe) Limited, part of Northcliffe Newspapers Group, in acquiring a stake in Noriu Group, one of the largest publishers of advertising and classified ads publications in Lithuania. Northcliffe Newspapers Group publishes more than 100 titles, amongst them 20 dailies and more than 50 weeklies, in the UK. The daily run of all titles together reaches 9 million. The project was led by partner Kestutis Adamonis, assisted by senior associate Raminta Karlonaite.

### The European Legal 500 recommends our offices

Quality of work by Sorainen Law offices has again been recognized by the 2006/2007 edition of The European Legal 500 Europe, Middle East & Africa, a guide reporting and analyzing the practices of thousands of commercial law firms in over 70

countries. All our offices are listed among the top law firms in all practice areas researched. Our offices are praised for "proactivity, flexibility and availability", "lawyers are swift, helpful and a pleasure to work with", "international focus and experience of the lawyers enabling the firm to provide the quality of service expected from big international firms". For further information please visit [www.legal500.com](http://www.legal500.com).

### Employees

Mrs. **Aivi Roasto**, former member of the management board of Nordea Bank Estonia, has joined Sorainen Law Offices as administration manager. She has extensive 25 years of experience in different businesses - in several software companies, in Ministry of Finance of Estonia and last 12 years in the leading financial services group in the Nordic and Baltic region. Aivi has graduated from Tallinn Technical University Information Technology Faculty and Faculty of Economics and Business Administration. She will be involved in the work of our management group and in charge of administration functionality of our Baltic offices, including IT, finance and personnel issues. Aivi is fluent in Estonian, English, Russian and Finnish.

Ms. **Olga Miskunec** has joined Vilnius office as a general assistant. Olga graduated from Vilnius Cooperation College, Faculty of Business Management. She is fluent in English, Russian, and Lithuanian.

### Seminars

**U.S. Business Investment and Trade Mission to the Baltic States**

On 23 May, Aku Sorainen will deliver a conference speech during the U.S. Business Investment and Trade Mission to the Baltic States to Explore Opportunities and Develop Contacts for Cooperation, which will take place in Riga at the Radisson SAS Daugava Hotel. For more detailed information on the event please check webpage: [www.usabalticinvestment.com](http://www.usabalticinvestment.com).

**The biggest Baltic Real Estate Investment Forum - this year in Riga, Latvia**

Sorainen Law Offices is supporting this year's biggest real estate event in the Baltics, which will take place in Riga, Latvia on 5-6 June and will be organized by the real estate company Ober-Haus. Partners Girts

Ruda and Kestutis Adamonis will deliver a presentation on "How to win or lose a deal in the booming Baltic real estate market. Some considerations from a lawyer's perspective". Managing partner Aku Sorainen will moderate a discussion panel on "Office development". For more detailed information, please check the webpage: [www.baltic-forum.com](http://www.baltic-forum.com).

#### **Presentations at seminars organized by Aripaev**

On 25 and 26 April senior associates Konstantin Kotivnenko and Carri Ginter delivered presentations on "Rights and obligations of debtors" and "Aspects and costs of debt collection" for Russian and Estonian audiences respectively at the seminar "What does an entrepreneur have to know about debt collection?" organized by *Aripaeva Seminarid*.

#### **Presentation at seminar organized by Tallinn Enterprise Board**

Associate Kai Kaljaste was one of the lecturers at Mentor Club event organized by Tallinn Enterprise Board which took place on 11 April. The topic of the lecture was "Successful negotiations".

#### **Presentations at seminar organized by the Union of Estonian Lawyers**

On 29 March senior associate Carri Ginter delivered a presentation on State liability - European court practice and its impact on national law at a seminar organized by the Union of Estonian Lawyers.

#### **Presentation for Austrian trade mission**

On 26 March partner Kestutis Adamonis participated in an Austrian business mission in Vilnius, where he delivered a presentation on "Performing delivery contracts in the Baltics".

#### **Public lecture at Tartu University Oigustituut**

On 23 March senior associate Carri Ginter together with Katrin Jaakson from Estonian Bank delivered a public lecture on "Introduction of Euro in Estonia". The lecture was organized by Tartu University's Oigustituut.

#### **Presentation at seminars on "Arbitration and its use for business"**

Partner Renata Berzanskiene together with the Chairman and General Secretary of the Vilnius Court of Commercial arbitration participated in seminars on "Arbitration and its use for business" held on 15 March in Siauliai and Panevezys. During the seminars Renata introduced a presentation on "Arbitration clause in agreements. Practical advices for dispute resolution".

#### **Participation in Baltic Chapter meeting**

On 10-12 March partner Renata Berzanskiene participated in the Baltic Chapter meeting, held in Riga, where she acted as arbiter in pre-Moot for teams participating in the Vis Moot in Vienna.

#### **Presentation in Latvian Business Week**

Partner Pekka Puolakka gave a presentation on "Commercial Law changes and main problems in doing business in Latvia" at a seminar that took place on 9 March during Latvian Business Week in Estonia, organized by the Estonian Trade Council.

## Articles

Selection of articles written in March-April 2006:

*Baltic Times* column TALKING TAX:

- Luc Nijs: New treaty exposed to retroactive effect.
- Luc Nijs: Latvia opts in for lateral tax system.

Tax Business:

- Interview with Konstantin Kotivnenko: Euro sceptics

IRIS (Legal Observations of the European Audiovisual Observatory):

- Ieva Berzina: Draft act on political advertising in electronic media

International Comparative Legal Guide to International Arbitration 2006:

- Agris Repss: Report on Arbitration in Latvia 2006

Magazine of British Chamber of Commerce in Lithuania:

- Sergejs Trofimovs: .EU domain - a new tool in promoting businesses' European identity

*Aripaev*:

- Interview with Karin Madisson: Bankruptcy Trustees Operating without Legally Required Insurance

*Eesti Paevaleht*

- Viljar Kahari: Bailiffs' fee increased more than ten times since the beginning of this year
- Triin Toomemets: Marital property contract to provide more certainty to cohabitation

*Dienas Bizness*:

- Girts Ruda and Agris Repss: How to buy legal services
- Janis Taukacs: Buying ready-made private limited liability companies is not recommended
- Janis Taukacs: Agreements are forced

- Anete Rubene: Case Law: Cases on Collection of Insurance Benefits

*Verslo Zinios*, special annex *Verslo Klase*:

- Interview with Kestutis Adamonis and Renata Berzanskiene: Only recommendation is better than ranking

*Verslo Zinios*:

- Marius Urbelis: Producers' and importers' obligations and responsibilities
- Liudas Ramanauskas: Public procurement: the dispute will proceed for less than 60 days

Articles by lawyers from Sorainen Law Offices are available on our website [www.sorainen.com](http://www.sorainen.com).

## Other news

#### **Sponsoring international scientific conference**

Vilnius office is sponsoring the international scientific conference "Labor and Social Security Law in the XXI Century – Challenges and Prospects", organized by Vilnius University Law Faculty and the Lithuanian Society for Labor Law and Social Security on 11-13 May 2006.

#### **Support to Vilnius University team**

Vilnius office supported Vilnius University team's participation in the 2006 Telders International Law Moot Court Competition, held on 27-29 April 2006 in the Hague.

#### **Business breakfast for members of C.A.F.E. and SCCE**

Tallinn office hosted members of the French-Estonian Business Club C.A.F.E. and the Swedish Chamber of Commerce in Estonia on 20 April. During the event senior associates Risto Agur and Konstantin Kotivnenko delivered presentations on cross-border mergers and relocation of companies and tax laws affecting non-residents living in Estonia respectively.

#### **New member of the board of Estonian Young Bar Association**

On 7 April Karin Madisson, partner at Tallinn office, was elected as a member of the board of the Estonian Young Bar Association.