

Top lawyers started from scratch, broke new ground following Soviet collapse

BY OLGA GNATIV

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The Ukrainian legal market is in its infancy compared with Western Europe and the United States, which boast centuries- and decades-old legal traditions.

The country's leading lawyers, therefore, are not only those who have worked on huge projects with big clients. They are the ground-

breakers who established and developed their practices from scratch after the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991 saw Ukraine shift toward a market economy.

The Kyiv Post asked 20 of the leading Ukrainian law firms to pick out who they consider to be the top lawyer in 10 fields. The following law firms presented their responses: DLA Piper, Pavlenko&Poberezhnyuk Law Group, CMS Cameron McKenna,

Integrites, Asters, Avellum Partners, Astapov Lawyers, Salans, Magisters, Konnov&Sozanovsky, Vasyl Kisil & Partners, SayenkoKharenko, Lavrynovych&Partners, Beiten Burkhardt and Arzinger.

Most of the top lawyers were pioneers in obtaining additional education abroad in the mid-1990s, before returning to Ukraine, often to work for locally founded companies or to set up their own firms.

Antimonopoly Law **Ihor Svechkar,** *partner at Asters*

Age: 31

Years in field: Eight

Education: Master's at the Institute of International Relations of National University Taras Shevchenko in Kyiv; master's in international law at Utrecht University, the Netherlands.

Experience: Represented Schering-

Plough and Merck in obtaining clearance for their \$4.1 billion merger. Advised Telenor in VimpelCom-Kyivstar merger and antitrust proceedings into alleged abuse of dominance and concerted practices initiated by Farimex.

Top clients: GlaxoSmithKline, Coca-Cola, Nissan, Philip Morris, Walt Disney, Biersdorf, Heel, Telenor and Ansell.

Quote: "First of all, the key to success is to be attentive to details. Second is to take enjoyment from what you do and not treat work as a routine. It gives room for development."

"I like this field because it is very pleasant to work with one of the most European and modern state authorities in Ukraine - the Antimonopoly Committee. I also have the opportunity to communicate with other lawyers in this field from other countries, so I can compare where we are and predict where we will be in several years."



Foreign Trade **Tetyana Slipachuk,** *partner at Vasil Kisil & Partners*

Age: 42

Years in field: 15

Education: Master's in law at National University Taras Shevchenko in Kyiv;

Ph.D. in Business Law and Arbitration at National University Taras Shevchenko in Kyiv.

Experience: Advised a Korean automobile manufacturer on terminating a distribution agreement with a Ukrainian distributor; counseled a leading Austrian infrastructure group in waste management; consulted on the Ukrainian legislation stipulating provisions against corruption.

Top clients: Would not disclose.

Quote: "There are two parts to success. First, professionalism. I work on myself a lot and I'm constantly learning new things. Second, there are certain life values that I keep in my work, such as ethics and honesty in problem-solving and decision-making in deals."