

## UNITED WE STAND



I am delighted to present the 2024 edition of the *Law in Transition* journal. This journal showcases the work of the EBRD's Legal Transition Programme, which seeks to improve the legal framework

for investment in the economies where the Bank operates. This year, the various articles highlight the “partnership” element of our work, since each of the EBRD's success stories is a real team effort, involving other international organisations, donors, national authorities, NGOs and/or private-sector actors.

Each article demonstrates that a particular partnership has been instrumental in delivering outcomes and impact on the ground. The overarching lesson is that we need to establish strong relationships with key stakeholders in order to achieve the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals. “United we stand, divided we fall,” as the saying goes.

In the first story, Pavle Djuric, Duncan Kernohan and Jelena Cirkovic explore the links between investment in Western Balkans railways and institutional and governance reforms in that sector. This story is an excellent illustration of the role that partnerships play in our work, showing how national and international development organisations are working with political entities at regional and national level to improve the railway sector in the Western Balkans.

The second article, by Eliza Niewiadomska and Michael Strauss, looks at how the EBRD and the World Trade Organization are working to promote open markets for public procurement in economies where the Bank operates – a win-win scenario that primarily benefits small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in those areas.

The next story, by Anar Aliyev, Nikolay Angelov and Marcel Schlobach, showcases an EBRD programme that is helping SMEs to make improvements in the area of ESG in partnership with the Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs and a number of banks in Central Asia and the Caucasus.

In the fourth article, Gian Piero Cigna explores the role of governance – the “G” in ESG. He argues that establishing appropriate governance is essential in order to realise ESG ambitions and prevent greenwashing, providing plenty of examples from recent practice.

The fifth story, by Veronica Bradautanu, Yulia Shapovalova and Patricia Zghibarta (with contributions from Lizaveta Trakhalina), looks at the EBRD's efforts to improve law enforcement in Moldova, which have involved promoting mediation as an alternative dispute resolution mechanism and enhancing the practices of enforcement officers. The key partners in this project have been Moldovan authorities, the International Development Law Organization, relevant private-sector actors and donor countries (namely, Luxembourg, the United Kingdom and the United States of America).



In the next article, Catherine Bridge Zoller takes stock of two decades of cooperation between the EBRD and Serbia's Bankruptcy Supervision Agency (BSA) – a partnership that has, in recent years, also involved the provision of advice on the BSA's digital tools. That piece also contains an interview with Dragisa Petrovic, Director of the BSA.

Next, Paul Moffatt and Julia Anderson take us to Azerbaijan for a story showing how the country is using the internet to shape its future. The Bank has been working with the Azerbaijani authorities on an ambitious digitalisation programme encompassing both investment and technical cooperation.

The eighth article, by Vesselina Haralampieva and Divya Chawla (with additional input from Khalid Hamza and Solomiia Petryna), looks at the contribution that company boards and independent directors can make to the green transition process in the EBRD regions. It showcases the Bank's collaboration with the Climate Governance Initiative and contains input from that organisation as well.

The last piece, by Milot Ahma and Liubov Skoryk (with contributions from Markus Renfert, Serhiy Savchuk and Neal Harm), highlights the EBRD's efforts to promote factoring as an alternative source of finance for SMEs. It also reflects on the partnerships that the Bank has forged with professional associations promoting factoring, as well as the EBRD's recent collaboration with Ukrainian authorities aimed at modernising the legal framework for factoring in that country.

We hope that, by sharing the EBRD's experiences in this area, these stories will encourage policymakers, donors and other stakeholders working on legal reforms to come together and pool their efforts in pursuit of the Sustainable Development Goals.

As usual, all feedback on the journal is welcome.

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