

FORUM ON TRANSNATIONAL PRACTICE FOR THE LEGAL PROFESSION

JOINT CLOSING COMMUNIQUE

On the invitation of the American Bar Association, the Council of the Bars and Law Societies of the European Community and the Japan Federation of Bar Associations, the bar leaders of Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Japan, The Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, United Kingdom and United States as well as representatives of the Inter-American Bar Association, International Bar Association and Union Internationale des Avocats, met on November 9th and 10th at the "Maison du Barreau" in Paris for a "**Forum on Transnational Practice for the Legal Profession**".

The Forum considered common interests and concerns of lawyers from these countries and the changes in the structure of the legal profession that have occurred as a result of the globalisation of business and the increased access to information worldwide.

The Presidents of each organisation - Philip S. Anderson of the ABA, Michel Gout of the CCBE, and Shigeru Kobori of the JFBA – called attention to the basic principles of the profession recognised in the entire world: a profession well educated and competent, a profession which exercises its expertise independently, a profession governed by ethical principles and a profession which recognises its responsibility towards the clients and the Public interest.

The bar leaders considered ways to facilitate the ability of lawyers to practice in foreign jurisdictions, an issue that will be on the agenda of the World Trade Organisation's Working Party on Professional Services in coming years and they decided to co-ordinate their efforts in order to answer in a concerted way. The Forum discussion also focused on the effects of multidisciplinary practice on the legal profession. Also on the Forum agenda were ethical issues presented by transnational practice, social responsibility and independence of the legal profession and forms of licensure of foreign lawyers.

Representatives of the three organising associations as well as other participants affirmed that the legal profession performs a unique and valuable service in each of their societies. They affirmed as well that, despite their undoubted differences as to some issues, lawyers from all over the world share common values to a remarkable extent. The ABA, the CCBE and the JFBA accordingly resolved to explore additional fora and procedures by which their joint interests - and, more important, the interests of the communities they serve - can be advanced.