

The St Petersburg Initiative

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CENTER FOR BUSINESS ETHICS AND CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

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Our Mission

The Center's mission is to institutionalize ethical and transparent business operations in St. Petersburg, thereby providing a template which can be reproduced in other regions and business centers throughout the Russian Federation. We believe the private sector in Russia is in the best position to effect change around the issues of transparency and anti-corruption, as well as the rule of law and good governance.

History

In 1998, Sovereign Ventures, Inc.(SVI), with support from the Eurasia Foundation, led a group of Russian businesses to create the Declaration of Integrity in Business Conduct in St. Petersburg (Declaration). Under the Declaration, local companies pledge to refrain from bribery and implement corporate codes of ethics. This work was institutionalized in November 2000, when Sovereign Ventures, with the support from the Ethics Resource Center in Washington, D.C., created the Center for Business Ethics and Corporate Governance in St. Petersburg.

Services and Projects

The Center for Business Ethics and Corporate Governance provides the following services:

- Conducting seminars, workshops and trainings in the field of business ethics;
- Developing and disseminating toolkits that help the company management adopt their own Code of Conduct;
- Assistance in the development of code of conducts;
- Development of ethics training programs for employees;
- Conducting surveys and research on common business practices.

Additionally, the Center is currently working on the following specific projects:

“Island of Integrity” in Construction Sector of Saint Petersburg

Forming the Island of Integrity in a broad sense means forming a coalition of businesses that are committed to fair business practices and show leadership in this direction. The goal of the “Islands of Integrity” in construction sector projects is to bring together businesses, local administration and NGOs to create the conditions for open tenders in the construction industry and attract further investment to St. Petersburg. The project has been endorsed by the construction committee of the St. Petersburg government. Additionally, the project has led to creation of the Honest Constructors Business Club, which consists of the CEO's of the most reputable construction and investment companies. The initial stages of the project were supported by the Open Society Institute (Soros Foundation).

Code of Corporate Governance for the Russian Federation.

On April 30, 2001, the Russian Federal Commission for the Securities Market (the "FCSM") and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) selected a consortium of international experts to draft Code of Corporate Governance for the Russian Federation. The consortium, which was chosen on the basis of an international tender, includes Coudert Brothers, Moscow law firm YUST, Mikhail I. Braginsky, experts of the Institute of Law and Comparative Jurisprudence Sovereign Ventures, Inc., the Ethics Resource Center will provide recommendations regarding policies, rules and procedures to improve the corporate governance of Russian companies. Recommended provisions would address the rights of shareholders, the responsibilities of boards of directors and individual directors, the responsibilities of management, financial and disclosure obligations, dividend policies, and related matters. The Consortium envisions that the Code will be a detailed set of rules and guidelines, essentially providing a manual on good corporate practices

If you have any further questions, please feel free to contact Anna Ossipova by + 7 (812) 324-67-07, fax + 7 (812) 327-31-25 or email at annasvi@online.ru