



YOUR FULL NAME:

Graham Conlon

YOUR JOB TITLE:

Managing Partner

YOUR COMPANY:

CMS Cameron McKenna Nabarro Olswang (Ukraine)

YOUR BRIEF BIOGRAPHY (250-300 words):

I originally came to Kyiv in 2011 on secondment from our London office. I instantly fell-in love with the country, and its potential, and Ukraine has been a very important part of my life ever since. I became managing partner a few years ago, and whilst other law firms left the market, we have done the opposite – investing more into our real-estate, IT, infrastructure and people, convinced that it's just a matter of time before the country really takes off. I am an M&A lawyer at heart, but with my managerial hat on my task is to ensure that we as an office are able to provide investors with the full range of necessary support that they may need when investing in the country.

In my career to-date I have lived and worked in several countries (UK, Romania, Kazakhstan, Poland) and I have advised foreign investors on transactions in 40 countries around the world.

I am 40 years old - young-enough to commit to what I do with full energy, passion and enthusiasm, yet also experienced enough to understand the practicalities as to how the world works.

I am married (to a Ukrainian of course!) with two young children. Hobbies of mine include music (I played piano professionally when I was younger), travelling and keeping fit.

ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

Why do you think membership in the American Chamber of Commerce is important for business operating in Ukraine?

The American Chamber of Commerce plays a critical role in representing businesses, providing a voice on behalf of the investor community and ensuring that that voice is heard loud and clear by government and policy-makers. The chamber helps to shape, promote and implement reforms, and working sub-groups and committees help to ensure that issues are analyzed at the micro-level, all with a view to improving the way of doing business in Ukraine.

What motivates you to be a Chamber Board Member?

Ukraine is one of the largest untapped economies in the whole of Europe, having received just a fraction of the FDI that its neighbors have received since the fall of communism. With the government targeting GDP growth of 40% over the next 5 years, raising \$50 billion in the process, and implementing reforms at an extremely fast pace, the potential upside for foreign investors and the country as a whole is enormous. The Government will no-doubt make mistakes along the way, but as long as the overall intent is genuine, then investors will follow. I hope to be able to use the benefit of my experience gained in other countries around – and based on many years of seeing what works or does not work for our clients – to help do my small bit to ensure that the country gets to the next level as quickly and as efficiently as possible.

Why do you feel you are qualified to serve on the Chamber Board? What skills would you bring to the Board?

Having acted for foreign investors in 40 different countries around the world – including in nearly every single former country in Central and Eastern Europe and the Former Soviet Union – I have first-hand experience as to what works well (and what doesn't) from an overall policy/legislation/FDI perspective. Investor-friendly legislation is obviously important in that respect. But equally (if not more) important is the rule of law. Even with imperfect legislation, investors will come (and stay) as long as they know that the courts can be relied upon to give effect to a fair and common-sense conclusion.

Similarly, non-retrospectivity of laws, and the upholding of investor and property rights, are also critical principles to ensure that Ukraine holds the necessary positive image in the eyes of foreign investors.

If the country has good legislation in place on top of this, then I am confident that the gates will open and investors will start pouring in at an even faster rate than they have until now.

Working for the 5th largest law firm in the world, I have the ability to pick-up the phone at any time and ask my colleagues in other jurisdictions as to how their respective countries transitioned through harder times to the shining success-stories that some countries now are. I have personally witnessed some of these transitions myself – having lived and worked on the ground in Romania, Kazakhstan and Poland.

I have served as a director of other organizations in the past – including on the board of a not-for-profit/charitable school, and for a different chamber of commerce in a different country.

Through all of this, I therefore have a career-built intuition as to what the country needs to do to get to the next level, and I have prior experience of serving at director level which I believe will help. I will happily share this experience with the Chamber, and will carry out my duties to the Chamber to the best of my abilities.

How have you been active in the Chamber over the course of the last two years?

Yes.

What activity or Committee would you participate in and be responsible for?

I am flexible, and ultimately would be happy to participate wherever the Chamber believes my experience is most needed, whether that be on the legal committee, the infrastructure committee, the health-care committee, the retail & e-commerce committee or otherwise.
