



“With a robust legal system and infrastructure, Hong Kong is an ideal neutral venue for international arbitration services to support both international and Mainland China businesses.”

**Nicolas Wiegand, Managing Partner
CMS**

European Law Firm Expands in Asia via Hong Kong

CMS leverages Hong Kong's status as a leading international arbitration hub to support global clients

Operating 71 offices worldwide in 40 countries, Frankfurt-based law firm CMS offers comprehensive legal services, such as corporate law and dispute resolution in Europe, Asia and Latin America.

To facilitate the expansion plan in Mainland China and Asia, CMS opened its office in Hong Kong in September 2016, the third branch in Asia after Beijing and Shanghai. Its fourth branch, Singapore, was recently added to the Asia network in 2017.

The Hong Kong office has two primary areas of focus: International Arbitration and Finance. The international arbitration team led by Nicolas Wiegand, Managing Partner, advises on arbitration disputes in both commercial and investment arbitration, with a specific focus on M&A, infrastructure and Intellectual Property or Information Technology related matters and, through a specialised team, on treaty arbitration. The finance team led by Tim Elliot, Partner, focuses on asset finance with a strength across multiple asset classes including shipping, aviation, energy and infrastructure.

Wiegand revealed that the Hong Kong office is the anchor point for European companies with business interest in Mainland China and the Asia Pacific region and vice versa. With a robust legal system, Hong Kong is an ideal neutral venue for international arbitration services to support both international and Mainland businesses. “Hong Kong is one of the most important arbitration hubs in the world, it is essential for CMS to have a presence here,” he said.

Thanks to positive trade relations between Mainland and Europe, CMS aims to further expand their footprint. “China is one of the most important trading partners for Germany. The enormous amount of trade and investment between the two countries leads to increasing demand for legal advice.” He said, “This, together with the Belt and Road Initiative that rolls out major infrastructure projects along the route, will provide

us the opportunity to create more business in Mainland China through Hong Kong.”

According to Wiegand, what sets CMS apart from other large law firms in the region is their Continental European root which combines Civil Law with common law experience. “We have many civil lawyers in our team who share the same legal understanding with companies in Mainland China as well as other Asian civil law countries. We have a much better understanding on clients’ expectation, and how they approach disputes,” he said.

The CMS Hong Kong office has a growing team, which Wiegand expects will continue to expand. “Our plan is to establish a long term presence in the region, and employ more local and international staff,” he added.

Before CMS set its foot in Hong Kong, Wiegand was already in contact with InvestHK Berlin office and was referred to the Hong Kong team which has provided various services to help its development in the city. “We wouldn’t be here today without InvestHK. We got the right advice and everything is smooth and easy,” he concluded.

CMS

- Founded in Europe, CMS is a leading law firm with 71 offices worldwide
- Offers a full range of legal services such as corporate law, dispute resolution, banking and finance and employment law

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