



press release

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CMS, the leading organisation of European law firms, has today 30 June 2008 announced its sponsorship of a programme in Civil Justice Systems at The Centre for Socio-Legal Studies at the University of Oxford, England. The programme will undertake groundbreaking research into the emerging development and consolidation of civil law systems across Europe.

“We are proud for CMS to be associated with such an important, timely topic and with such a prestigious academic institution,” explained CMS Executive Partner, Robert Derry-Evans. “Civil litigation is changing across Europe. Many of our clients and businesses generally could suffer if current trends result in a European-wide, US style approach to class action lawsuits. We believe it would be bad for business and bad for all parties involved.”

The programme will be led by former CMS Partner Dr Chris Hodges who has long been associated with issues related to fair access to civil justice across Europe. The sponsorship will fund his position as head of the team at Oxford, which will undertake research to inform the debate on European policy. Hodges has been at Oxford for five years and, jointly with Stanford University, has attracted a global reputation for work on class actions.

“Our work in this area is at a point where we need world-class, robust, objective research in order to shape the policy debate and ensure that we end up with the most fair, accessible and balanced civil justice systems across the whole of Europe,” said Hodges. “The CMS programme at Oxford will provide that research.”

The five-year sponsorship will include a number of research projects, roundtable discussions and topical publications. A book on an innovative approach towards collective redress is due out in

September followed by work on class actions globally, funding systems, court systems and ADR. The programme will also have access to the expertise of more than 2,200 lawyers working for CMS across 48 cities in Europe and beyond.

Hodges continued: “It’s an excellent match. We must have a good understanding of all existing civil justice systems, as well as regulatory and informal dispute resolution systems. All of these are changing in Europe. Several European states have reformed their court procedures. Third party funding of litigation is spreading quickly. Interest in mediation is rising. There is strong interest in collective redress in Brussels and across Europe. This is a very exciting time for looking at dispute resolution systems and evaluating the options. Some innovative thinking is needed.”

Robert Derry-Evans added: “Access to civil justice is equally important to every part of Europe as it is to the whole of Europe. That is the core idea of CMS as a leading European organisation: deep local understanding in each country where we operate, equally matched with strong cross border capabilities.”

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Notes to editors:

CMS is the organisation of European law and tax firms of choice for organisations based in, or looking to move into, Europe. CMS provides a deep local understanding of legal, tax and business issues and delivers client-focused services through a joint strategy executed locally across 26 jurisdictions with 57 offices in Western and Central Europe and beyond.

CMS is one of the top five legal services providers in Europe measured by fee income, number of offices, number of partners and total headcount.

CMS member firms are: CMS Adonnino Ascoli & Cavasola Scamoni (Italy); CMS Albiñana & Suárez de Lezo (Spain); CMS Bureau Francis Lefebvre (France); CMS Cameron McKenna LLP (UK); CMS DeBacker (Belgium); CMS Derks Star Busmann (Netherlands); CMS von Erlach Henrici (Switzerland); CMS Hasche Sigle (Germany); and CMS Reich-Rohrwig Hainz (Austria).

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