

Russian firm hires from Dechert

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Yuri Makhonin

Rybalkin Gortsunyan & Partners has hired an associate from Dechert as counsel in its Moscow office.

The Moscow-based firm, which is known as RGP, announced the hire of **Yuri Makhonin** on 21 October. RGP was opened last year by two former partners from Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld: disputes practitioner **Ilya Rybalkin** and corporate lawyer **Suren Gortsunyan**.

Rybalkin says the firm is “delighted to welcome Yuri as counsel,” praising his “business acumen and wealth of arbitration experience.”

Makhonin leaves Dechert after a decade as an associate in its Moscow office. Prior to that he had short spells at Noerr and Grant Thornton in Russia.

At Dechert, Makhonin says he represented Russian shareholders in several multibillion-dollar LCIA disputes and lawsuits in Cyprus relating to the construction of what is now the Four Seasons Hotel Moscow.

He defended a metallurgical plant in a US\$200 million SCC dispute with a Chinese contractor over the construction of a rolling mill in Russia; and acted for a Turkish construction company in a US\$100 million ICC dispute over the construction of a Moscow business centre.

He has also acted in various high-value disputes before the Russian courts.

Rybalkin told GAR last year that the decision to found RGP was made in response to US sanctions targeting Russian business owners and preventing US firms such as Akin Gump from representing them.

Five other international arbitration practitioners left Akin Gump with him for RGP, all joining as counsel.

Makhonin says RGP is the “fastest-growing litigation firm in Russia with unparalleled expertise in complex cross-border litigation matters. Its offering is first-rate and caters to the needs of businesses in today’s current challenging geopolitical circumstances.”

Dechert declined to comment on the move.

Dechert has hired two international arbitration partners this year, with public international law practitioner **Michelle Bradfield** joining in London and **Maria Sit** in Hong Kong.