

## Malaysia and Korea pledge to open their legal markets

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The Malaysian and South Korean governments have told the UK that they want to open up their legal markets to international law firms.

Currently, foreign firms are not allowed to open offices in Malaysia or Korea, but following visits from David Lammy MP, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of the Department of Constitutional Affairs, this could change.

Lammy, whose visits will be followed up in December by Law Society president Peter Williamson, said: "We've had positive responses from Korea and Malaysia. They're keen to welcome foreign involvement in the liberalisation of their legal professions. Korea said it was keen to be the hub of any new developments, and Malaysia said the same thing."

Although Lammy is optimistic, the Malaysian government made a similar announcement in 1999 and then turned down several applications from foreign firms in 2001, following heavy lobbying from the Malaysian Bar Council.

Malaysian firms are currently able to form associations with foreign firms, and although the Korean market remains completely closed, the country has been discussing liberalisation of the legal market since 2001.

The countries are unsure what form liberalisation will take.

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