

ANA BUITRAGO, A FRONTLINE PLAYER

Posted on 01/12/2022



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by **ilaria iaquinta**

A frontline player. This is how **Ana Buitrago**, in-house counsel with more than 30 years of experience and head of Amazon's legal services and associate general counsel for Southern Europe, Germany and the UK until recently, describes herself. "I am very committed. When I am in a team, in a league, I play on the frontline. I have a great curiosity and desire to learn and to improve", says to *Iberian Lawyer* the lawyer who has a long and intense professional career, first in law firms and later in companies.

With a degree in business law from ICADE and LL.M *magna cum laudem*, her professional life can be divided into two main phases.

A first phase, spanning eight years, as a private lawyer at the law firm Uría Menéndez, with an 18-month break to study for an LL.M. in New York at Fordham University School of Law with a scholarship from Fundación La Caixa and also to work in the London and New York offices of Sidley & Austin.

"During this first phase, I gained and strengthened the skills and abilities that have accompanied me throughout my career. I would highlight rigour, work discipline, international experience and a vocation for client service", explains Buitrago.

The second phase, lasting twenty-two years, in the corporate field as head of legal departments,

which began in 2000 when she joined Terra Networks. "The company had gone public a few months earlier, it already had a very strong presence in Spain and Latin America, and was looking to strengthen its presence in the United States. It was a great jump for me professionally, because I got a taste of what it was like to be close to the business, to be part of the decisions and to face their consequences. Furthermore, I was joining what was then a pioneering sector, such as the Internet, which was evolving at high speed and where there was a lot of legal uncertainty", adds the lawyer.

This change also coincided with her wedding in April 2000. "I joined Terra after my two-week honeymoon," Buitrago recalls with a smile.

Two years later, she was approached by Iberdrola to set up from scratch the legal team of the newly created renewable energy subsidiary. So, in 2002 she joined the company. "Iberdrola Renovables grew very rapidly, expanded internationally, especially in Europe and Latin America. It doubled in size with the merger with Scottish Power in 2007 and then launched an IPO valued at \$23 billion. At that time I had the honour and luck to be appointed secretary general and secretary of the board of directors of the company, which meant that I had to set up the board secretariat, to form the committees, to organise the training of directors, the first general meeting, etc.", says Buitrago.

In the meantime, in these very busy years, her first daughter was born.

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