

GARRIGUES, VDA AND URÍA AMONG EUROPE'S MOST INNOVATIVE LAW FIRMS

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Leading Spanish and Portuguese firms recognised for their innovative approach to client service, dispute resolution, corporate strategy and social responsibility

Garrigues, Vieira de Almeida (VdA) and Uría Menéndez are among the most innovative law firms in Europe, according to a new report.

Research by the UK's Financial Times– which listed the 50 most innovative firms – ranked Garrigues as the sixth most innovative firm in Europe (and first in continental Europe), while VdA was in 20th position and Uría Menéndez was placed 21st.

The ranking was based on law firms' approach to innovation in a range of areas including: corporate strategy; international strategy; client service; dispute resolution; finance; corporate and commercial; social responsibility; and diversity.

The report said that Garrigues was one of the most forward thinking firms in the area of client service

and highlighted its collaboration with Telefónica to develop and implement a “corporate policy and information technology tool to apply tax exemptions for internationally mobile employees”. Garrigues was also commended for its approach to dispute resolution, specifically its defence of YouTube against copyright claims made by Telecinco. The firm was also rated “standout” in the areas of finance and social responsibility as well as being commended for corporate and commercial.

VdA was praised in the report, “FT Innovative Lawyers 2014”, for its corporate strategy, in particular its design and implementation of a fast-track career programme based on an appraisal process that identifies “A players” and “B players”. Meanwhile, VdA also received plaudits for its client service. The report said the firm’s “holistic, multidisciplinary approach” to legal services allowed the development of electronic and mobile payment services in Portugal. VdA was also commended for “value resourcing”.

Uría Menéndez was commended in the areas of dispute resolution, corporate and commercial and social responsibility.

Other Spanish and Portuguese firms to appear in the top 50 included: Gómez-Acebo & Pombo (ranked 28th); Morais Leitão, Galvão Teles, Soares da Silva & Associados (35th); Pérez-Llorca (40th); PLMJ (41st); and Cuatrecasas Gonçalves Pereira (49th).

Allen & Overy was placed first in the FT Law 50, ahead of Linklaters (2nd) and Baker & McKenzie (3rd).

The report also listed ten individuals in its Legal Innovator of the Year section, among them was Susana Almeida Lopes, corporate services director at VdA, who conducted a research project examining talent engagement and management in law firms, which involved collecting data from 800 participants. Meanwhile, Gómez-Acebo & Pombo managing partner Manuel Martín was also listed. He was praised for reinvigorating the firm’s governance through a consensual “one-partner, one-vote approach to big decisions”.

A special achievement award was given to Rosemary Martin, group general counsel at Vodafone. The report said Martin had “redefined the role of legal teams” by making them more integral to the growth of their companies through their involvement in driving economic growth.

Vodafone group general counsel Rosemary Martin is a member of the judging panel for the Iberian Lawyer Gold Awards – Spain (Premios Oro), which recognises the excellence of legal teams and compliance officers.

For more details, including the full list of judging panel members, visit www.iberianlawyer.com/index.php/premios-oro