

LAW FIRMS PLAYING KEY ROLE IN CREATION OF NEW EMPLOYMENT FRAMEWORKS - ABBC

Posted on 26/01/2016



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Clients being advised by employment lawyers on strategic planning, as well as negotiations and disputes – meanwhile, cross-border instructions are on the increase

The current dynamics of the Portuguese market are giving law firms an opportunity to play a central role in the structuring and implementation of employment frameworks for clients, according to Benjamin Mendes, partner at head of the employment practice at ABBC in Lisbon.

He adds that the advice being provided by law firms covers the strategic planning level, as well as negotiations and disputes. Mendes says this gives lawyers the opportunity to provide the whole spectrum of advice including in relation to contracts, outsourcing, cost efficiencies and restructurings.

"Restructurings, although not increasing, are still a major source of employment work, as is contentious work arising from redundancies, for instance," explains Mendes. "We have also been very active reviewing and negotiating collective bargaining agreements on behalf of industry and sector associations in various fields of activity."

Instructions regarding cross-border issues are also on the increase, according to Mendes, who cites

the resurgent M&A market as the source of a "substantial volume of employment work, including due diligence, notifications and transfer of employees". He adds that law firms need to adapt to the evolving economy and believes that those that offer a wide range of employment-related services as well as seamless integration across practice specialties and areas will "not suffer from a substantial decrease in demand".

Mendes continues: "Litigation arising from collective dismissals has been increasing, namely because companies tend to pay legal minimum severances." He adds that cost efficiency work will continue, including "managing workforce supply and demand in a sustainable way", taking advantage of new technology – namely for the adoption of telework – and finding the balance between the legal protection of employees and organisations' collective interests.