

THE MIAMI CONNECTION - GARRIGUES

Posted on 31/08/2009



Category: [Uncategorized](#)



As well as offering an alternative route into the US Miami also connects to Latin America

Miami is a business location that offers opportunities for Spanish clients not only wishing to access the US, but which also enables them to connect with the whole of central and Latin America, says José María Alonso, comanaging partner of Garrigues, the first major Spanish law firm to open there.

"It is a location in which a lot of Spanish companies already have significant operations but it continues to attract more – it is a very comfortable place in which to do business as there is a very strong cultural connection, but significantly it also now stands as a key north-south investment conduit for the Americas."

Recent years have seen Banco Santander, BBVA, Caja Madrid and Banco Popular Español establish significant Florida operations, while the past month has seen Banco de Sabadell agree to acquire Miami-based Mellon United for around \$200m. In addition, Spanish infrastructure companies also now utilise Miami as a base from which to manage local and regional highway concessions.

José María Alonso "In Miami it is possible to operate totally in Spanish should you wish to.

It is a major gateway for US-based businesses to Central and Latin America but this also works the other way round, Latin businesses are very comfortable operating there too," says Xavier Ruiz, Garrigues' New York based partner who will oversee the three-lawyer office.

The focus of the local practice is in part intended to complement its New York office, says Alonso, and to focus on the immediate Spanish law needs of its existing clients locally – it will not offer local US capability. But the goal is to also utilise the office to help connect the US to the firm's Latin American Affinitas network.

"We are not seeking to compete directly with the local Florida firms but it is no secret that I think that we should build a strong Latin American platform. We have a small office with an emphasis on private client, tax issues and transactional management issues that can plug directly into our clients' needs across the region," says Alonso.