

THREAT OF COLLECTIVE DISMISSALS DECLINING IN PORTUGAL - AAMM

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Fewer workers in Portugal are facing the threat of collective dismissal, though employers are still taking steps to restructure and organise their businesses, according to Filipe Azoia, founding partner at AAMM.

"Companies turned to collective dismissals in unprecedented numbers during the period of the troika in Portugal but fewer of them are now using this mechanism," he says. According to Azoia, the result has been that fewer workers are now affected by collective dismissal procedures – however he adds that employers are still having to restructure their businesses and are using agreements that allow for an employee's professional category to be downgraded, for example.

In practical terms, this may mean that employees see a reduction in their pay, as well as a temporary or permanent change in their place of work. Azoia says: "It would therefore be wrong to conclude that the improvements seen in the Portuguese economy have necessarily led to lower demand from clients in the area of employment law."

Azoia says the biggest employment-related challenges clients face include "staying ahead of the

game". He continues: "This involves anticipating risks and presenting innovative and immediately effective solutions."

Clients should show greater initiative when considering employment-related issues, Azoia adds.

"Clients should use employment lawyers in a more proactive way instead of doing so when disputes arise," says Azoia. "A lawyer's involvement is essential when taking management decisions regarding reductions in costs."

Azoia says employment lawyers are in demand due to clients' involvement in mergers, acquisitions, outsourcing and subcontracting. Clients frequently require advice on layoffs, flexible working hours, collective dismissals, standardisation of working conditions and redundancies.