

The New Talent Demands More

Space, the law's new frontier

Driving company success

Driving innovation and sustainability: Abreu's way

Inês Sequeira Mendes explains how the Portuguese law firm, a pioneer in the use of AI, has incorporated knowledge and technology to forge a path of expansion

Editorial

Ilaria Iaquinta



The lifts

In the United States, it is often said that law firms are fragile because “their assets take the lift down every night”. This powerful, symbolic phrase highlights that the real value of a law firm does not lie in its premises or the prestige of its name, but in the people who work there – or as we like to call them today, the talent. When partners start to leave, it triggers a domino effect, much like a bank run, which can lead to a firm’s collapse. The true strength of a firm lies in the relationships and internal cohesion among its professionals.

This sentiment is the perfect way to introduce this editorial, which opens the issue you are about to read. No matter how much a firm might rely on its brand, it is always the people who make the difference. People who forge relationships, create solutions, imagine the future, and bring it to life. In the following pages, alongside stories of individuals who, each in their own way, make a difference in the legal services sector every day, we also talk about young talent. With insights from our research team, we present the top lawyers under 40: a generation of professionals who, with their vision and determination, are redefining the boundaries of the legal profession.

Among the youngest leader **Juango Ospina**, managing partner of the firm Ospina Abogados. Ospina, who represents the Arrieta family, has provided us with updates on the latest developments in the **Daniel Sancho** case, which has garnered significant media attention in Spain and Colombia. This high-profile, complex case has led to Sancho receiving a life sentence for the murder of Colombian surgeon **Edwin Arrieta**.

We also turn our attention to the youngest in the profession, exploring how law firms in Spain and Portugal are organising themselves to attract and retain young professionals starting out in their careers. These are individuals in whom law firms are investing, because the future of legal practices lies with them: they will be the ones making the decisions that shape the law firms they are growing into.

On the Portuguese cover of this issue, you can find an exclusive interview with the managing partner of Abreu Advogados. We discuss the law firm's success, strategies for attracting talent (yes, again), and the challenges posed by increasing international competition, as well as innovative areas like digital transformation and ESG.

Beyond talent, law firms are continuing to push forward with growth and the development of their structures. It is impossible to ignore the increasing interconnection between the legal markets of Spain and Mexico. Firms like Garrigues and Pérez-Llorca are strengthening their presence in Mexico, contributing to the creation of a truly transnational legal market in Latin America. This model of legal integration could inspire future collaborations across the region, combining local expertise with an international network.

Additionally, this issue includes an article on the challenges faced by foreign companies in Spain, focusing on tax, bureaucracy, energy costs, and regulation, based on the "2023 Business Climate Barometer in Spain". There is also a piece exploring the prospects for European companies investing in the United States. We delve into the challenges and opportunities they encounter when crossing the Atlantic, offering a comparative view of both landscapes.

The growing emphasis on personal identity protection and expansion has led us to reflect, alongside legal experts, on the increasing trend of footballers registering trademarks. This trend is exemplified by **Kylian Mbappé**, who has surpassed both **Lionel Messi** and **Cristiano Ronaldo** in the number of registered trademarks. This highlights the rising importance of safeguarding one's name and image in the world of sport, as well as the legal matters that come with it.

This issue also covers the recent launch of the first free Spanish-language legal artificial intelligence model, developed by Little John. This innovative platform opens up new opportunities for legal consultancy, but also raises significant ethical, legal, and economic questions. To explore these aspects in depth, we interviewed the development team, discussing both the benefits and the potential challenges of AI use in the legal sector.

We have also spoken to legal experts about recent advancements in space law in Portugal, which is positioning itself as a leader in the sector through investments and forward-thinking policies.

Finally, there is an article on the arrival of CLOC Spain, a milestone that marks a turning point in the Spanish legal sector. The association brings with it a revolution in legal operations management, with a strong focus on efficiency and technological innovation. Now is the time for firms and legal departments to embrace this change, break down barriers, and prepare for a more dynamic and competitive future.

As always, you will find interviews with leaders in legal departments from Spain and Portugal, and a window into the financial world. 

2024

EVENTS CALENDAR

OCTOBER

- Legalcommunity Real Estate Awards Milan, 10/10/2024
- Inhousecommunity Awards Italia Milan, 17/10/2024
- Legalcommunity Marketing Awards Milan, 21/10/2024
- Inhousecommunity Days Switzerland Zurich, 24-25/10/2024
- Legalcommunity Litigation Awards Milano, 29/10/2024

NOVEMBER

- Iberian Lawyer Inhousecommunity Day Madrid, 05/11/2024
- Iberian Lawyer Gold Awards Madrid, 05/11/2024
- Financecommunity Week Milan, 11-15/11/2024
- Financecommunity Awards Milan, 14/11/2024
- LegalcommunityMENA Awards Riyadh, 21/11/2024

DECEMBER

- The LatAm Energy & Infrastructure Awards São Paulo, 11/12/2024

2025

EVENTS CALENDAR

JANUARY

- Legalcommunity Energy Awards Milan, 30/01/2025

FEBRUARY

- Private Capital Talks and Drinks Madrid, 06/02/2025
- Legalcommunity Finance Awards Milan, 13/02/2025
- Iberian Lawyer Sustainability Summit - Spain Madrid, 20/02/2025
- Iberian Lawyer Labour Awards Madrid, 20/02/2025

MARCH

- Iberian Lawyer Inspiralaw Madrid, 06/03/2025
- Financecommunity Fintech Awards Milan, 13/03/2025
- Legalcommunity IP&TMT Awards Milan, 20/03/2025
- LC Sustainability Summit Milan, 25/03/2025
- LC Sustainability Awards Milan, 25/03/2025

APRIL

- LC Inspiralaw Italia Milan, 01/04/2025
- Legalcommunity Tax Awards Milan, 03/04/2025

MAY

- LegalcommunityCH Awards Zurich, 08/05/2025
- Legalcommunity Forty under 40 Awards Milan, 22/05/2025
- Iberian Lawyer Legaltech Day Madrid, 29/05/2025
- Iberian Lawyer IP&TMT Awards Madrid, 29/05/2025

JUNE

- Legalcommunity Week Milan, 09-13/06/2025
- Legalcommunity Corporate Awards Milan, 11/06/2025
- Rock the Law Milan, 12/06/2025
- Iberian Lawyer Energy Day Madrid, 19/06/2025
- Iberian Lawyer Energy Awards Madrid, 19/06/2025

JULY

- Italian Awards Rome, 03/07/2025

SEPTEMBER

- LC Energy Day Milan, 11/09/2025
- The Latin American Lawyer Women Awards São Paulo, 11/09/2025
- Legalcommunity Labour Awards Milan, 18/09/2025

SEPTEMBER

- Iberian Lawyer Forty Under 40 Awards Madrid, 25/09/2025

OCTOBER

- Inhousecommunity Days Milan, 1-3/10/2025

LEGEND

- Legalcommunity / LegalcommunityCH
- LegalcommunityMENA
- LegalcommunityWEEK
- Financecommunity
- FinancecommunityES
- FinancecommunityWEEK
- Iberian Lawyer
- The Latin American Lawyer
- Inhousecommunity
- Foodcommunity
- LC

ITALY

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ENERGY & INFRASTRUCTURE		
Research Period from	01/11/23	DOWNLOAD SUBMISSION ↓
Research Period to	31/10/24	
Deadline Submission	27/09/2024*	
Report Publication	Feb-25	

*It will be possible to integrate with subsequent deals within Friday 22 November 2024

FINANCE		
Research Period from	01/12/23	DOWNLOAD SUBMISSION ↓
Research Period to	30/11/24	
Deadline Submission	11/10/2024*	
Report Publication	Feb-25	

*It will be possible to integrate with subsequent deals within Friday 13 December 2024

IP&TMT		
Research Period from	01/01/24	DOWNLOAD SUBMISSION ↓
Research Period to	31/12/24	
Deadline Submission	08/11/2024*	
Report Publication	Apr-25	

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TAX		
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Research Period to	31/01/25	
Deadline Submission	06/12/2024*	
Report Publication	Apr-25	

*It will be possible to integrate with subsequent deals within Friday 14 March 2025

CORPORATE		
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Research Period to	31/03/25	
Deadline Submission	17/01/2025*	
Report Publication	Jul-25	

*It will be possible to integrate with subsequent deals within Friday 18 April 2025

LABOUR		
Research Period from	01/04/24	DOWNLOAD SUBMISSION ↓
Research Period to	31/03/25	
Deadline Submission	18/04/2025	
Report Publication	Oct-25	

REAL ESTATE		
Research Period from	01/07/24	
Research Period to	30/04/25	
Deadline Submission	16/05/2025	
Report Publication	Nov-25	

INHOUSECOMMUNITY		
Research Period from	01/07/24	
Research Period to	30/06/25	
Deadline Submission	23/05/2025	
Report Publication	Nov-25	

LITIGATION		
Research Period from	01/04/24	
Research Period to	31/03/25	
Deadline Submission	30/05/2025	
Report Publication	Nov-25	

FINANCECOMMUNITY		
Research Period from	24/08/24	
Research Period to	31/08/25	
Deadline Submission	27/06/2025	
Report Publication	Dec-25	

*It will be possible to integrate with subsequent deals within Friday 29 August 2025

SPAIN AND PORTUGAL

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LABOUR		
Research Period from	01/12/23	DOWNLOAD SUBMISSION ↓
Research Period to	30/11/24	
Deadline Submission	20/09/2024*	
Report Publication	Apr-25	

*It will be possible to integrate with subsequent deals within Friday 13 December 2024

IP&TMT		
Research Period from	01/03/24	DOWNLOAD SUBMISSION ↓
Research Period to	28/02/25	
Deadline Submission	15/11/2024*	
Report Publication	Jun-25	

*It will be possible to integrate with subsequent deals within Friday 14 March 2025

ENERGY & INFRASTRUCTURE		
Research Period from	01/04/24	DOWNLOAD SUBMISSION ↓
Research Period to	31/03/25	
Deadline Submission	17/01/2025*	
Report Publication	Jul-25	

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SWITZERLAND

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SWITZERLAND		
Research Period from	01/01/24	DOWNLOAD SUBMISSION ↓
Research Period to	31/12/24	
Deadline Submission	15/11/2024	
Report Publication	Jun-25	

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MENA

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MENA		
Research Period from	01/05/24	
Research Period to	30/04/24	
Deadline Submission	27/06/2025	
Report Publication	Jan-26	

LATAM

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ENERGY & INFRASTRUCTURE		
Research Period from	01/05/24	
Research Period to	30/04/25	
Deadline Submission	30/05/2025	
Report Publication	Jan-26	

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THE COACH APPROACH

Your soft skills are your superpower!

On the move



NEW HEADS OF DEPARTMENT IN PORTUGAL

Francisco Mendes da Silva new Tax co-head at Morais Leitão

Morais Leitão has announced the appointment of **Francisco Mendes da Silva**, partner at the firm since 2021, as new co-head of the Tax Department, joining **Bruno Santiago**.



Fernando Lança Martins in charge of Tax Litigation at PwC Portugal

PwC Portugal's law firm has brought on lawyer **Fernando Lança Martins**, who will be in charge of the Tax Litigation area. He joins from Cuatrecasas Portugal, where he spent 17 years and reached the position of senior associate.



TERESA PALA SCHWALBACH, PEDRO FERNÁNDEZ SÁNCHEZ Y FRANCISCA MENDES DA COSTA (TODOS EN LA FOTO DE IZQUIERDA A DERECHA).

EQUITY PARTNERS

Sérvulo has appointed three new equity partners

Francisca Mendes da Costa, **Pedro Fernández Sánchez**, and **Teresa Pala Schwalbach** are the new equity partners at Sérvulo & Associados. With these latest appointments, Sérvulo now has a team of 17 equity partners, within a total of over 120 lawyers.



ANDERSEN CONTINUES TO GROW IN IBERIA

Andersen has incorporated three new partners in its Lisbon office

Andersen Iberia incorporates three new partners in Lisbon: **Pedro Drago**, who joins the Public and Regulatory Law department; **Filipa Barata**, to the Litigation and Arbitration department, and **Gonçalo Rodhes**, to the Real Estate department. In Lisbon, Andersen Iberia now has more than 50 professionals.



Javier Toribio new partner of the Public and Regulatory Law practice at Andersen Andalusia

Andersen has hired **Javier Toribio**, former counsel at Garrigues, as a new partner in the Seville office to head the firm's Public and Regulatory Law department in Andalusia. With these new hires, the firm now has a total of nine partners and is approaching 50 professionals in the Andalusian capital. The firm has also reached 40 professionals in the city of Malaga, four of whom are partners. Among the latest incorporations, the integration of the boutique specialized in economic criminal law Apalategui Abogados; the incorporation of Rafael Perea and Jorge de Gorría as partners, respectively, of the Commercial and Real Estate departments, and that of José Cortés as counsel of the Commercial department, stand out. In addition, the tax boutique Affasa has joined the firm and Alfonso Casado has been appointed as a partner in the Tax department.

NEW MANAGING PARTNER

Fernando Navarro, new managing partner of White & Case

Change of management at White & Case Spain. **Fernando Navarro** becomes as of October 1st the new managing partner of the Madrid office, replacing **Juan Manuel de Remedios**, who will continue as partner and head of the M&A/Corporate Group in Spain.



NEW GENERAL MANAGERS

Salomón Monzón, new general manager at BK ETL GLOBAL

ETL GLOBAL has strengthened its team with the appointment of **Salomón Monzón Durán** as General Manager of Despachos BK ETL GLOBAL in Álava, marking a key step in its growth and expansion.



Sonia de Zunzunegui new general manager at Eversheds Sutherland

Eversheds Sutherland has appointed **Sonia de Zunzunegui**, until now managing director of Squire Patton Boggs, as the new managing director of its Spanish office. She specialises in growth strategies and business model optimisation, knowledge and team management, and implementation of communication and marketing strategies.

Verónica Ollé, new general manager for Public Justice Service

The Spanish government has appointed **Verónica Ollé Sesé** as the new Director General for the Public Justice Service following the approval by the latest Council of Ministers. Ollé, a lawyer and judge with a distinguished 30-year career in both the public and private sectors.



NEW HEADS OF DEPARTMENT IN SPAIN

Juan Pablo Regojo new head of risk & compliance at A&O Shearman

A&O Shearman has hired **Juan Pablo Regojo**, from the RB Iberia restaurant group, as the new head of Risk and Compliance for its Spanish office.



Diego García Diego, new director of Sports & Entertainment area at Ontier

Ontier has appointed **Diego García Diego**, until now head of the legal department of RC Deportivo de la Coruña, as head of the Sports and Entertainment area with the aim of providing comprehensive advice and strategic consulting to sports clubs, federations, athletes, sports retail companies and companies in the audiovisual sector both nationally and internationally.

Daniel Vázquez to lead the Public, Regulatory and Environmental Law practice at Simmons & Simmons

Simmons & Simmons has added **Daniel Vázquez** to its Madrid office. After six years as a partner at Dentons Spain, Vázquez joins Simmons & Simmons to lead the Public, Regulatory and Environmental Law practice.



NEW PARTNERS

Íñigo Berricano new Capital Markets partner at Hogan Lovells Madrid

With the addition of **Íñigo Berricano**, who until now was a partner at Linklaters, the firm – which celebrates its 20th anniversary in Spain this year – will now have 22 partners and more than 100 lawyers. Berricano will work closely with the Corporate and Banking practices, which have, respectively, specialists in the financial sector.



Yoko Takagi new Corporate and M&A partner at DLA Piper

DLA Piper has hired **Yoko Takagi**, until now a partner at White & Case, as a new Corporate and M&A partner in the Madrid office, who will focus mainly on Capital Markets and Private Equity..



Ramón Ruiz de la Torre new Auren's partner

Auren, a global provider of professional services in auditing, legal advisory, consulting, and corporate services, has announced the appointment of **Ramón Ruiz de la Torre** as the new partner of Auren Legal. He will head the firm's banking and capital markets law practice. Prior to this he worked at Martínez-Echevarría, where he led the financial law and capital markets practice.

Xavier Aixelà, from KPMG, new tax partner at Fieldfisher

Fieldfisher has strengthened its tax practice with the addition of **Xavier Aixelà**, from KPMG, as a new tax partner based in the Barcelona office. He will team up with Juan Osuna, tax partner based in the Madrid office.



Mariana Robles new partner at Crowe Legal and Tax

Crowe Legal and Tax, led by Jordi Bech, continues to expand its Madrid office by welcoming **Mariana Robles**, from Rödl & Partner, as a new partner. Robles joins the firm as a partner in the Transfer Pricing department, reinforcing Crowe's commitment to its Madrid operations.



JESÚS RUBÍ



MARGARITA SOTO MOJA

ECIJA

New partners at ECIJA's Privacy and Data Protection área and arbitration

ECIJA has signed **Jesús Rubí**, from the Spanish Data Protection Agency (AEPD) as partner of the Privacy and Data Protection area. This is the third signing so far this month and adds 20 partners and 120 professionals in technology, privacy and data protection in Spain and 200 professionals globally. The firm has also incorporated **Margarita Soto Moja**, ex Garrigues, as a new partner in the Madrid office, who will join the firm's litigation and arbitration team, which already has 12 partners and 45 professionals in Spain.



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On the web



M&A dynamism returns: energy, real estate and technology set the pace

The return from summer has brought renewed dynamism to the mergers and acquisitions (M&A) market in Spain and Portugal, with significant deals in the energy, real estate and technology sectors. Among the notable deals was Masdar's €1.2 billion acquisition of Saeta Yield, marking one of the largest renewable energy investments in the region. This transaction was advised by KPMG Abogados, Linklaters and Uría Menéndez.

The real estate sector also played a major role. The sale of two logistics parks by Delin Property to EQT Exeter, valued at 100 million euros and advised by CMS; and the acquisition by InmoCaixa of an office building in Barcelona for 50 million euros, advised by RocaJunyent, stand out as key transactions.

In the technology area, the acquisition of Qualitas Funds by P10 for US\$63 million and the purchase of Smarttech-industria, a subsidiary of Ayesa, by GTO Partners and Katesia. They reflect the strong interest in the Iberian technology market.

In Portugal, the real estate sector remained strong. Of particular note were the transactions by Lighthouse Properties, which acquired the Alegro Montijo shopping center for 177.8 million euros, and the purchase by Castellana Properties of three shopping centers for 176.5 million euros, both advised by PLMJ. These transactions underscore the attractiveness of the Iberian market for international investors.

Masdar acquires Saeta Yield from Brookfield for €1.2 billion: Advisors



RICARDO LÓPEZ



FERNANDO GÓMEZ GALICIA



ESTEBAN ARZA



MANUEL ECHENIQUE

UAE renewable energy company Masdar has reached an agreement to buy Spanish green energy company Saeta Yield from Canada's Brookfield's in a deal that values the company at €1.2 billion.

KPMG Abogados has provided tax advice to Masdar, with a team led by **Ricardo López** -Tax Director of KPMG Abogados- and in which **Carlos Carrera**, **Concha Navarro** and **Nuria Rosello** have also participated. The team has provided advice on tax due diligence, structuring and tax advice in the review of the formal documentation of the transaction. Additionally, and from the seller's point of view, KPMG Abogados has advised Brookfield on tax matters, with a team led by **Fernando Gómez Galicia** (Partner), with the participation of **Álvaro Hernández** (Senior Manager) and **Nikolay Iliev** (Senior Manager).

Linklaters has advised Masdar (Abu Dhabi Future Energy Company) on its new investment in Spain. The legal team has been formed by the Corporate department: **Esteban Arza** (Partner), **Jaime Peláez Arosa** (Managing Associate) and **Olivia Martínez Ribó** (Junior Associate). In addition, from the Public Law department: **Jorge Toral** (lawyer), **Sergio García Rigal** (lawyer) and **Alejandra Arribas** (lawyer).

Uría Menéndez has successfully advised Brookfield on the sale of Saeta Yield to Masdar, the UAE-based clean energy power plant. The legal team, led by partner **Manuel Echenique** (M&A-Private Equity, Madrid), included experts from multiple jurisdictions and practice areas, reflecting the international scope of the transaction. The team also included **Alex Bircham** (International Partner, M&A-Private Equity, Madrid), **Miguel Stokes** (Partner, Corporate, Lisbon), **David López Pombo** (Partner, Tax, Madrid), **Eduardo Bayona** (Managing Associate, M&A-Private Equity, Madrid), **Gonçalo Andrade e Sousa** (Managing Associate, Public Law, Lisbon), **Casilda Campuzano** (Senior Associate, M&A-Private Equity, Madrid) as well as **Paula Lissorgues** (Associate, M&A-Private Equity, Madrid).

PRACTICE AREA

Corporate

DEAL

Masdar acquires Saeta Yield from Brookfield for €1.2 billion

FIRMS

KPMG Abogados, Linklaters and Uría Menéndez

ADVISING PARTNERS

Ricardo López and Fernando Gómez Galicia (KPMG Abogados); Esteban Arza (Linklaters); and Manuel Echenique, Alex Bircham, Miguel Stokes and David López Pombo (Uría Menéndez).

VALUE

1.2b EUR

CMS advises on the €100m sale of two logistics parks to EQT Exeter



JAVIER COLINO

CMS Albiñana & Suárez de Lezo has advised Delin Property, a leading pan-European real estate fund, on the sale of two complexes in Illescas and Alcalá de Henares to EQT Exeter for €100 million.

With 110,000 square meters of fully leased space and strategic locations in the center of Spain, this transaction is one of the most important of the year in the logistics sector.

The team leading the transaction was formed by real estate partner **Javier Colino** and associates **Rodrigo García-Escorial de León**, **Marián Moya Torres** and **Sebastián Bruzzzone Martínez**. Also participating in the transaction were associates **Marta Burgos Murillo**, from the tax area, and **Jose Luis Rodríguez Ontiveros** from corporate / M&A.

PRACTICE AREA

Real Estate

DEAL

CMS advises on the €100m sale of two logistics parks to EQT Exeter

FIRMS

CMS Albiñana & Suárez de Lezo

ADVISING PARTNERS

Javier Colino

VALUE

100m EUR

P10 acquires Qualitas Funds for \$63m: Advisors



FRANCISCO ISO



FRANCISCO J. MARTÍNEZ

P10, a leading provider of private markets solutions, today announced that it has signed a definitive agreement to acquire Qualitas Equity Funds (“Qualitas Funds”) for an initial purchase price of \$63 million, with the possibility of additional earn-outs.

The initial consideration of \$63 million consists of \$42.25 million in cash and \$20.75 million in P10 shares. The share consideration is subject to a three-year lock-up period. In addition, up to \$35 million in earn-out consideration may be paid based on the proceeds associated with the new funds Qualitas Funds raises post-closing through December 31, 2027. Compensation will consist of a combination of cash and P10 shares, at the election of the seller, with a maximum of 65% in cash.

Pérez-Llorca Abogados is acting as legal advisor to P10. Cuatrecasas, Gonçalves Pereira is acting as legal advisor to Qualitas Funds.

The Pérez-Llorca team was formed by **Francisco Iso**, partner in the Corporate practice; **Ana Ibarra**, lawyer in the Corporate practice; **Javier Ihatsu**, lawyer in the Corporate practice; **Juan Sánchez**, lawyer in the Corporate practice; **Josefina García Pedroviejo**, partner in the Financial Services practice; **Pablo Figueroa**, partner in the Competition practice; **Norma Peña**, partner in the Tax practice; **Isabel Moya**, partner in the Labor practice; **Alejandro Fluja**, lawyer in the Competition practice; and **Eva Láuzara**, lawyer in the Labor practice.

The Cuatrecasas team was led by **Francisco J. Martínez**, with the participation of **Jorge Canta**, **Paz Irazusta** and **Pedro López-Dóriga**.

PRACTICE AREA

Corporate

DEAL

P10 acquires Qualitas Funds for \$63 million: Advisors

FIRMS

Pérez-Llorca and Cuatrecasas

ADVISING PARTNERS

Francisco Iso (Pérez-Llorca) and Francisco J. Martínez (Cuatrecasas)

VALUE

63m USD

RocaJunyent advises InmoCaixa on its acquisition in Barcelona



ESTHER BOIX SALLÓ

RocaJunyent has advised InmoCaixa, CriteriaCaixa's real estate subsidiary, on the recent acquisition of an office building in Barcelona. The property, previously owned by Tristan Capital Partners, has a surface area of 13,280 square meters and is located at number 38 Berlin Street, one of the most important business areas of the city.

The transaction has been carried out by RocaJunyent's Real Estate team, led by partner **Esther Boix Salló** and senior associate **Carlos Fernández Hernando**. Their participation in the acquisition underlines the firm's solid experience in the real estate sector, helping InmoCaixa to expand its portfolio in one of the most dynamic real estate markets in Spain.

PRACTICE AREA

Real Estate

DEAL

RocaJunyent advises InmoCaixa on its acquisition in Barcelona

FIRMS

RocaJunyent

ADVISING PARTNERS

Esther Boix Salló

VALUE

50m EUR

GTO acquires with Kartesia a subsidiary of Ayesa: Asesores



ÁLVARO MATEO



JULIO LUJAMBIO

GTO Partners, a British private equity firm, has acquired Smarttech, a subsidiary of Ayesa specializing in software solutions, together with Kartesia, demonstrating GTO and Kartesia's strong interest in the Spanish technology market.

Smarttech-industria is a leading provider of software solutions covering product design, manufacturing execution and back-office management for mid-market industrial companies in the Iberian Peninsula, supporting their transition to Industry 4.0.

The GA_P team has advised Kartesia and GTO Partners and has been formed by **Álvaro Mateo**, **Andrés Castro** and **Marta del Toro** from Corporate; **Luis Cuesta** and **Aitor Soloeta** from Tax; **Isabel Bandín** and **Isabela Crespo** from IP; **Vanessa Fernández-Lledó** from Criminal and Compliance and **Diego Rizo** from Labor.

The Pérez-Llorca team has advised Ayesa and has been composed of **Julio Lujambio**, partner of Commercial; **José Luis Romeu**, partner of Commercial; **Beatriz Sánchez**, lawyer of Commercial; **Cristina Aguilar**, lawyer of Commercial; **Ana Cremades**, partner of Public and Regulation; **Andy Ramos**, partner of Intellectual Property, Industrial and Technology; and **Norma Peña**, partner of Tax.

PRACTICE AREA

Corporate

DEAL

GTO acquires a subsidiary of Ayesa with Kartesia

FIRMS

Gómez Acebo and Pombo y Pérez-Llorca

ADVISING PARTNERS

Álvaro Mateo (GA_P) and Julio Lujambio (Pérez-Llorca)

VALUE

not disclosed

PLMJ advises Lighthouse Properties on the acquisition of 177.8 million euros



RICARDO REIGADA PEREIRA

PLMJ's real estate team has advised South African company Lighthouse Properties on the acquisition of the Alegro Montijo shopping center for €177.8 million. The deal had been announced in July and the contract has been signed this Wednesday, representing a significant growth in Lighthouse Properties' portfolio of assets in the Iberian Peninsula.

The advisory team provided support throughout the transaction, from negotiation to tax structuring, with the leadership of partner and co-coordinator **Ricardo Reigada Pereira** on both the real estate and tax aspects. The team also included **Tamara Martins da Fonseca**, **Marta Van Zeller** and **Pedro Marques da Costa** (Real Estate), as well as **Leonardo Scolari** (Tax).

PRACTICE AREA

Real Estate

DEAL

PLMJ advises Lighthouse Properties on the acquisition of 177.8 million euros.

FIRMS

PLMJ

ADVISING PARTNERS

Ricardo Reigada Pereira

VALUE

177.8m EUR

PLMJ advises Castellana Properties' entry into Portugal



Castellana Properties, a real estate investment trust (Socimi) of the South African fund Vukile Properties, has made its first acquisition in Portugal with the purchase of three shopping centers from Harbert European Real Estate. PLMJ has advised Castellana Properties throughout the negotiation and tax structuring process of the transaction, which will be completed in October. The binding purchase agreement between the two parties was signed last week.

The transaction is valued at €176.5 million and includes the acquisition of Loures Shopping, Rio Sul Shopping and the 8th Avenue shopping center. Castellana Properties adds close to 75,000 m² to its portfolio, marking its first investment in Portugal and a significant step in its expansion in the Iberian Peninsula.

On PLMJ's side, the team was led by **Ricardo Reigada Pereira** for the Real Estate and Tax structuring components, with the participation of **Hélder Santos Correia** and **Rita Neves Machado** (Real Estate) and **Leonardo Scolari** (Tax).

PRACTICE AREA

Real Estate

DEAL

PLMJ advises Castellana Properties on its entry into Portugal

FIRMS

PLMJ

ADVISING PARTNERS

Ricardo Reigada Pereira

VALUE

176,5m EUR

A portrait of Inês Sequeira Mendes, a woman with dark, wavy hair, wearing a dark purple cardigan over a matching top and a colorful necklace. She is holding a tablet and looking towards the camera with a slight smile. The background is a blurred green foliage.

Driving innovation and sustainability: Abreu's way

Inês Sequeira Mendes explains how the Portuguese law firm, a pioneer in the use of AI, has incorporated knowledge and technology to forge a path of expansion

by glória paiva

Sustainability, technology, training, and resilience. These are the pillars that underpin the success of Abreu Advogados according to its managing partner, **Inês Sequeira Mendes**. Leading the firm for the past three years, Sequeira Mendes has guided Abreu to remarkable growth, with a 19% increase in revenue in 2023, reaching €49.7 million. This milestone coincided with the firm's 30th anniversary, showing that, during the past three decades, the organization has managed to balance tradition and innovation in an increasingly volatile context.

The second woman to lead Abreu after **Carmo Sousa Machado** (2004-2007), Sequeira Mendes brings a bold and strategic vision, anchored in the conviction that innovation is not just an advantage but a necessity. Abreu's "Knowledge Institute" (Instituto de Conhecimento) exemplifies this vision, acting as a learning and adaptation laboratory for new trends and challenges. One of the latest examples of this quest for innovation is the partnership with Microsoft to adopt the new Copilot for Microsoft 365, a tool that promises to transform how the legal profession interacts with technology. In an exclusive interview with Iberian Lawyer, Inês Sequeira Mendes reveals the secrets behind Abreu's strategy.

«When we think about innovation, we are talking about finding innovative solutions and having collaborative processes»



INÊS SEQUEIRA MENDES - HEAD OF THE LABOR DEPARTMENT - 4C S.A.

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**lawyers make up
the Abreu team**

Abreu grew by 19% in 2023 and achieved record revenue. How do you evaluate this result? Was it expected?

It was an excellent year, with results that exceeded our expectations. This growth was a birthday gift for the firm, which celebrated 30 years in 2023, and it demonstrates that, over the years of management, we have followed a sustainable path. The focus has been on continuous growth while empowering our team, creating internal and collaborative mechanisms that enable the development of individual talents. All of this is combined with innovation and the adoption of new technologies, which make our internal processes more efficient. The success is the result of the combination of these factors, with a very clear focus on maintaining solid and

sustainable growth.

What is the importance of innovation for Abreu?

When we think of innovation, we are talking about finding innovative solutions and having collaborative processes. Our Knowledge Institute has been fundamental in this journey, focusing on new areas of law that are not yet regulated and empowering the team. It is a think tank of people who think about issues such as market evolution, technological innovations, the energy transition, the complexity of regulation, and how to help companies better adapt to new rules. We have conducted many training sessions and collaborations in this field, in a joint effort between lawyers, companies, and academia. It is important to empower companies and professionals, providing them with tools, not necessarily technological, but knowledge-based,

«We set the goal of having 40% of women in management positions by 2030, and we have already surpassed it»



ABREU ADVOGADOS IN LISBON

that allow them to respond to new challenges.

How?

There are two aspects: technological tools and knowledge creation. Regarding the tools, we are developing some, with "legal tech" being among the most relevant. We were also pioneers in establishing a partnership with Microsoft for the development of Copilot with the use of artificial intelligence (AI) in the office. We saw Microsoft as an ideal partner, mainly because it guarantees the confidentiality of all processes, one of our biggest concerns given our profession. We are sure that AI will be the way of the future, and it already is, in areas we can't even imagine.

How do you see the private law market in Portugal, with the entry of new international operators in recent years?

The Portuguese legal market is highly competitive and still has growth potential, which is positive, as competition pushes us to offer more client-focused services and to be at the forefront. We have in Portugal great national and international firms, which shows that the country is an attractive destination for foreign investors. For years, we have had major Spanish and UK operators working here. I believe the Portuguese market is aligned with the main European markets, with a constant pursuit of innovation and closeness to clients.

What were the main hires in terms of collaborators in the last year?

In September, we welcomed 27 new trainees who joined our team. We also recently announced the

40%
of Abreu's revenue comes
from international clients

promotion of 14 new associates after completing their traineeship process. In the past year, we strengthened the private equity area with the arrival of Rita Albuquerque and integrated a team led by Ana Rodrigues de Almeida, specializing in urban planning and territorial planning. We also strengthened the energy sector. Last year, Paulo de Sá e Cunha, a specialist in Criminal Law, Sanctions, and Compliance, joined Abreu Advogados. In the area of Projects and Structured Finance, Rui Ferreira de Almeida returned with all his knowledge in this field.

What are Abreu's policies for attracting and retaining talent?

Attracting and retaining talent is a priority for us. We have several initiatives, from the moment of attraction, with partnerships with universities, internships, and legal laboratories for students, to the development of internal policies to ensure that this is a place where people feel good about working and where there is room for growth.

How do you evaluate Abreu's current organic profile in terms of the average age of partners?

The average age in our firm is relatively low, below 40 years. One of our major commitments is diversity, which also includes age diversity, always leveraging the experience of the older generation with the energy and ideas of the younger one. We have a mandatory retirement policy at the age of 65, after which partners become consultants, and we hope they continue to collaborate with Abreu

«From the beginning, one of the areas we invested in the most was sustainability, a value that has always been part of our DNA»

and join our Advisory Board. This policy was well thought out from the beginning by Miguel Teixeira de Abreu (chairman of the Advisory Board and founding partner, ed.) to ensure that we always have this comprehensive view of the profession and life.

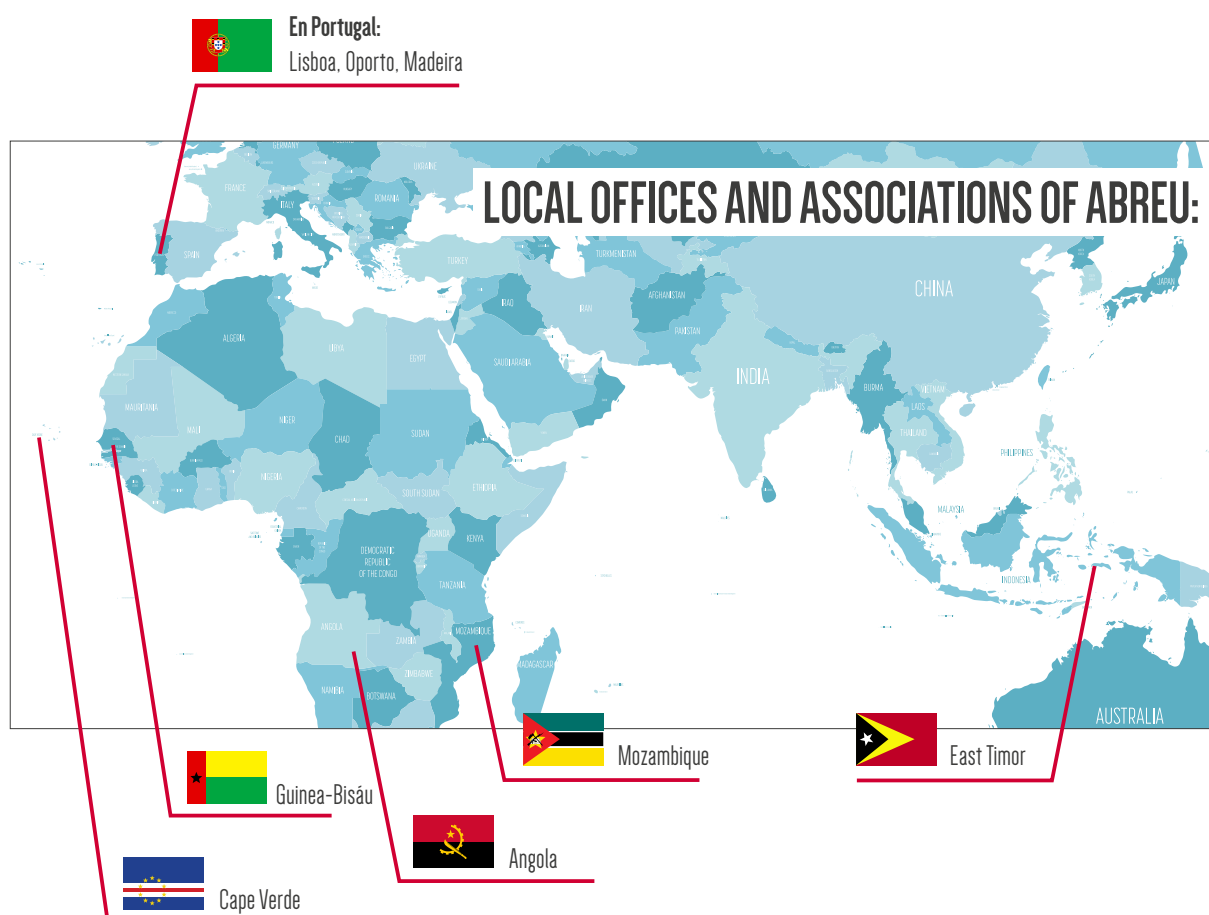
And what about gender diversity? Is there still a way to go when it comes to women in leadership positions in private law?

In Portugal, the number of men and women in leadership positions is still not equal, but we have seen progress. My wish is for this to no longer be an issue. There are still more men in leadership positions due to generational factors, but we are now starting to see younger women entering these roles as well. At Abreu, we joined the Global Compact's target gender equality initiative and set a goal of having 40% of women in management

positions by 2030, a goal we have already achieved. We also participate in initiatives focused on female entrepreneurship and gender equality in companies. Additionally, we have maternity, flexibility, and other policies to ensure we can have increasingly diverse profiles, including gender diversity.

The international market accounts for 40% of Abreu's revenue. What is the importance of internationalization in the firm's strategy?

Internationalization is fundamental for Abreu. These 40% mainly refer to international clients, especially from Spain, the USA, and the UK. Moreover, our strategy is to continue focusing on Portuguese-speaking countries, with offices and local partnerships in Angola, Mozambique, Timor-Leste, Guinea-Bissau, and Cape Verde. These partnerships have been crucial for our





ABREU ADVOGADOS IN LISBON


international expansion.

The past year marked the consolidation of new projects in ESG (Environmental, Social, Governance) areas. What are Abreu's initiatives in this sector?

From the beginning, 31 years ago, one of the areas we invested in the most was sustainability, a value that has always been part of our DNA as a firm. We deeply believe that our duty is to contribute our part to a sustainable future for the society in which we operate. We have a strategy highly focused on innovation, technology, and sustainability. We were the first law firm in Portugal to produce a sustainability report, and we have joined the B Corp certification, which requires high standards. We also created a specific hub for sustainability in our Knowledge Institute.

In partnership with AICEP, we promote training for small and medium-sized enterprises, helping them adapt to new ESG requirements.

What are Abreu's goals for the coming years?

We want to continue growing sustainably, with a focus on double-digit growth, but always adapted to the market conditions. We are attentive to changes, both nationally and internationally, and ready to adjust our practice areas as necessary. What concerns us is ensuring that we always have the capacity to provide quick responses to our clients' challenges. These foundations, along with our resilience and ability to adapt quickly, are what drive us forward and lead to our success. Internationalization is another important focus, reinforcing partnerships with international and local firms. 



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The appointment where the most important law professionals will discuss the latest legal trends, tips and tools in the Iberian context

**YOUR SPACE,
YOUR VOICE.**

under



Focus on the under 40

A new wave of leadership is emerging in the Iberian legal market, driven by a young generation of lawyers. Many of them are already partners, some even heading entire departments

by vincenzo rozzo

A snapshot from Lc Publishing's research highlights a "colony" of under 40 lawyers thriving across various practices. In a survey of 63 law firms, comprising 4,316 legal professionals (partners, associates, counsel, and trainees), 2,606 of them - more than half - are under 40.

Based on data gathered by the research team, KPMG Abogados leads the Iberian market in terms of young professionals, boasting 720 lawyers under the age of 40 out of a total of 950 - approximately 75%. Gómez-Acebo & Pombo follows in second place with 191 lawyers under 40 from a total of 333, representing 57%. Rounding out the top five, KPMG and GA_P are joined by Abreu Advogados, which has 178 young professionals out of 310 (57%); Broseta with 165 out of 244 (67%); and Ambar Partners, with 124 out of 355 (35%).

Among practice areas, the corporate M&A department has the highest concentration of young lawyers, with 296 out of 523 practitioners in total. Ambar Partners leads in terms of total professionals in this field, with a focus team of 99 lawyers, of whom 32 (32%) are under 40. Broseta ranks second, with an impressive 71% of its M&A team under 40 - 30 out of 42. The top five is rounded out by KPMG, where 24 out of 31 lawyers (77%) are under 40, Osborne Clarke with 19 out of 26 (73%), and Abreu Advogados, where 15 of the 54 professionals (27%) are young lawyers.

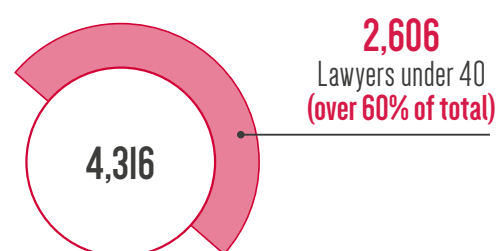
GENDER EQUALITY

Out of 2,606 professionals under 40, 1,473 are women, slightly more than half.

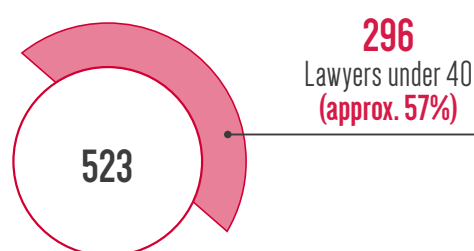
KPMG stands out with an impressive 500 women under the age of 40, accounting for a majority of the firm's 720 young professionals. This makes the firm a leader in promoting gender diversity within its ranks, with women making up nearly 70% of its young workforce. Gap holds the second position with 122 women under 40 out of a total of 191, which translates to about 64% female representation in its younger demographic. Similarly, Abreu shows a strong proportion of female lawyers, with 112 women out of 178 total young professionals, amounting to approximately 63%. Broseta follows with

98 women out of 165 young professionals, and RocaJunyent also has a notable 53 women under 40 out of 113, maintaining a gender ratio of almost 47%. Overall, the data reflects a positive trend in the legal industry toward gender equality, particularly in younger age groups.

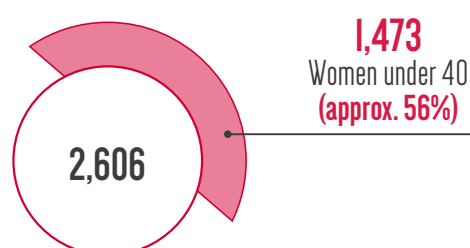
A GROWING COLONY OF LAWYERS UNDER 40



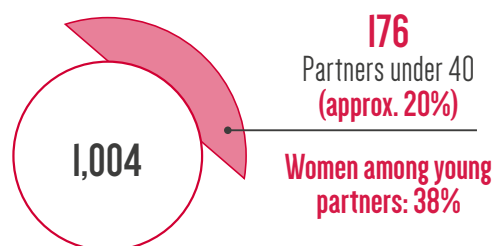
M&A DEPARTMENTS LEADING THE CHARGE



GENDER BALANCE AMONG LAWYERS UNDER 40



YOUTH IN LEADERSHIP



FOCUS PARTNER

Of the 1,004 total partners, 176 are under the age of 40, making up nearly 20% of the partnership. Among these younger partners, 68 are women, representing approximately 38% of the group.

Ambar Partners leads the charge, with 124 young partners among its 355 total lawyers. However, it's to clarify that in this firm, all lawyers are partners, which contributes to the high numbers. Cases & Lacambra also stands out with 7 partners under 40 among its 19 total partners, indicating that more than a third of its leadership team is comprised of younger professionals. PRA – Raposo, Sá Miranda & Associados follows with 5 partners under 40, out of a total of 26, demonstrating a similar focus on youth in leadership positions. The boutique Ayuela Jiménez, with 7 partners in total, has a notable 5 partners under 40.

Let's meet now some of them.

Antonio Bañón - Squire Patton Boggs

The energy department is headed by Bañón, one of the firm's most prominent lawyers, who is increasingly recognised within the sector. Since his arrival, he has managed to attract top tier clients in the renewable energy sector and consolidating existing clients, enhancing the advice provided to them with regulatory legal services. He has been able to position the energy practice internationally within the firm, leading and coordinating cross-border projects with teams in the US and the UK.

Eduardo Buitrón - Eversheds Sutherland

As legal director in the litigation and life sciences department at Eversheds Sutherland's Madrid office, he brings extensive expertise in pre-litigation strategies and dispute resolution, with a strong focus on pharmaceutical, health, and IP law. Recent highlights of his work include representing a global pharmaceutical giant in patent infringement litigation; providing legal counsel and courtroom defense for a leading international transport and logistics firm.

TOP 20 FIRMS		
FIRM'S NAME	UNDER40	TOTAL LAWYERS
KPMG Abogados	720	950
Gómez-Acebo & Pombo	191	333
Abreu Advogados	178	310
BROSETA	165	244
Ambar Partners	124	355
PRA – Raposo, Sá Miranda & Associados	119	168
RocaJunyent	113	189
Antas da Cunha Ecija & Associados	72	115
Eversheds Sutherland	64	98
Osborne Clarke	63	98
Servulo & Associados	63	114
CMS Portugal	63	106
SRS Legal	57	120
Lener	54	152
Cerejeira Namora, Marinho Falcão	51	80
Cases & Lacambra	43	66
Squire Patton Boggs	42	64
Deloitte Legal	38	58
ELZABURU	36	70
Augusta Abogados	34	57

PARTNER UNDER40		
FIRM'S NAME	PARTNER UNDER40	TOTAL PARTNER
Ambar Partners	124	355
Cases & Lacambra	7	19
PRA – Raposo, Sá Miranda & Associados	5	26
Ayuela Jiménez	5	7
KPMG Abogados	4	56
RocaJunyent	3	42
Bufete Casadeley, S.L.	3	5
Osborne Clarke	2	19
Servulo & Associados	2	32
CMS Portugal	2	28
Dower	2	3
CCSL Advogados	2	6
SPS Advogados	2	15
BMFS Porto Law	2	2
Abreu Advogados	1	46
BROSETA	1	38
Antas da Cunha Ecija & Associados	1	18
Cerejeira Namora, Marinho Falcão	1	6
Squire Patton Boggs	1	14
FILS	1	6

Guillermo Crespo - EY Abogados

Over the last year, Crespo has continued to demonstrate his expertise in complex finance structures, particularly in the implementation and financing of R&D projects and film industry productions. Additionally, he has been at the forefront of financing a significant number of renewable energy projects and has adeptly managed over 10 shipping finance transactions, with a combined value exceeding €250 million.

Rosa Espín - Ambar Partners

Espín is the co-CEO and co-founder of Ambar Partners, spearheading one of the most innovative ventures in the legal sector across Spain and Continental Europe. Her leadership and impactful achievements have earned her recognition as one of the 50 most inspiring women in the legal industry, a testament to her management skills and vision.

Rodrigo Falcão Nogueira - Pérez-Llorca

He recently joined Pérez-Llorca as a partner to contribute to the firm's international expansion strategy. Previously, he worked for renowned law firms where he was a founding member and head of the corporate/M&A practice area. He has a track record of advising multinationals, private equity houses, and institutional investors in sectors including energy, industrial, healthcare, financial, and insurance.

Ricardo García-Borregón - Ashurst

He has broad experience in tax planning, advising national and international clients in all aspects of Spanish taxation. In particular, he is specialised in advising in connection to the tax aspects of M&A and restructuring transactions, both concerning direct and indirect taxation, being specially involved in real estate investments, acquisitions of NPLs portfolios and debt refinancing deals.

Alba M. López - Elzaburu

She specializes in providing expert counsel and contract management in the areas of trademarks, patents, unfair competition, software, copyright, image rights, and corporate reputation.

MGA PRACTICE - TOP 20 FIRMS		
FIRM'S NAME	UNDER40	TOTAL MGA LAWYERS
Ambar Partners	32	99
BROSETA	30	42
KPMG Abogados	24	31
Osborne Clarke	19	26
Abreu Advogados	15	54
Squire Patton Boggs	14	19
Lener	14	26
Cases & Lacambra	12	15
SRS Legal	11	22
CMS Portugal	11	15
Eversheds Sutherland	10	16
Deloitte Legal	10	15
PRA - Raposo, Sá Miranda & Associados	9	15
Dower	9	9
Dentons	8	14
Antas da Cunha Ecija & Associados	8	15
SPS Advogados	6	14
Servulo & Associados	5	7
J+Legal	4	8
mavens	4	7

WOMEN			
FIRM'S NAME	WOMEN UNDER40	OF WHICH PARTNER	TOTAL UNDER40
KPMG Abogados	500	1	720
Gómez-Acebo & Pombo	122	0	191
Abreu Advogados	112	1	178
BROSETA	98	0	165
RocaJunyent	53	2	113
Ambar Partners	49	49	124
Antas da Cunha Ecija & Associados	47	0	72
Eversheds Sutherland	43	0	64
Servulo & Associados	41	0	63
Cerejeira Namora, Marinho Falcão	34	0	51
Cases & Lacambra	33	5	43
Osborne Clarke	33	0	63
Lener	33	0	54
SRS Legal	32	0	57
Squire Patton Boggs	26	1	42
Deloitte Legal	26	0	38
ELZABURU	25	1	36
Toda & Nel-lo	19	0	31
Dower	17	0	31
Simmons & Simmons	14	0	30

Luis López Alonso - Gómez-Acebo & Pombo

Luis López, previously a senior associate in the litigation and arbitration department, was promoted to partner in January 2024, becoming the youngest partner in the litigation and arbitration department in the firm's history. In the past few months, he has advised clients in civil and commercial litigation related to infrastructure and construction, energy, corporate disputes, agency and distribution agreements, among others.

Sara Soares - Abreu Advogados

She is a key member of the tax disputes team which registers an above average success rate including in high-profile tax disputes. She has extensive experience in dealing with tax litigation cases of significant economic value on VAT, CIT and social security matters, to which she has been greatly contributing with innovative and disruptive approaches while assisting relevant national and international companies.

Tiago Valente de Oliveira - CMS Portugal

Nominated partner in January 2023, he is specialised in corporate law, mergers and acquisitions, commercial law, capital markets and banking and finance both for domestic and international clients. He also participates in different processes of acquisition and sale of companies, national and cross-border corporate restructuring, structuring of international partnerships and standing legal assistance mainly regarding corporate law. 





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The new talent demands more

**From hybrid work to mentoring programs:
strategies making a difference according to HR heads at top
Spanish law firms**

by mercedes galán

Attracting and retaining young talent has become a key focus to maintain competitiveness in the legal sector. *Iberian Lawyer* spoke with HR leaders from major firms to understand how they are tackling this challenge. In a market where tech skills and disruptive thinking are essential, engaging new generations is crucial. The key factors? Social media presence, mentoring programs, continuous training, and flexible work policies. Experts share how they are adjusting strategies to win over future lawyers and keep them engaged in an increasingly dynamic and demanding environment.

SOCIAL MEDIA PRESENCE

Social media plays a critical role in attracting young talent who seek information, references, and opportunities online, says **Laura Elorza**, HR manager at Garrigues. Years ago, aspiring lawyers submitted paper résumés at university job fairs or via email, but now, as Elorza notes, "Through social media, we can effectively and transparently communicate our employer value proposition and build trust and engagement with potential candidates."

Nerea de Antonio, HR director at Freshfields, adds that LinkedIn is the most relevant platform for attracting and connecting with talent; however, Instagram is the channel we communicate with when targeting younger talent: "With strict data protection laws and the digitalization of HR, we have adopted global digital tools, and LinkedIn plays a key role in optimizing our selection process and firm's projection." **Íciar Rodríguez Inciarte**, secretary general at Uría Menéndez, agrees, noting that LinkedIn is essential for announcing hiring processes and important events while projecting the firm's image. Meanwhile, **Eva Delgado**, HR director at Pérez-Llorca, emphasizes the importance of maintaining active connections with universities and business schools to attract talent directly.

DEVELOPING MENTORING PROGRAMS

Mentoring is universally acknowledged as a powerful tool. De Antonio explains that every new lawyer is paired with an experienced tutor to guide their early steps, making integration easier and boosting long-term retention. "Participants



LAURA ELORZA

choose their preferred mentors and topics, and are assigned based on their goals and skills. The firm has also launched a reverse mentoring program, where young talent mentors senior executives, promoting visibility and networking for those from underprivileged backgrounds."

Uría Menéndez follows a similar approach, assigning a mentor to each new lawyer, based on their specialty and preferences. Rodríguez notes that small team structures foster close relationships and detailed follow-ups, helping retain talent. Elorza adds that assigning mentors ensures ongoing growth, with continuous training and regular performance evaluations to guarantee



NEREA DE ANTONIO

development

TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

Continuous learning is key to keeping young talent engaged. “We offer junior lawyers comprehensive legal and multidisciplinary training through our PLL Academy from their first year,” explains Delgado. Their internal training program ‘TESEO’ provides solid training in all areas of business law, including legal English, accounting, finance, and litigation skills, while involving them in complex and relevant cases from the start.

Elorza emphasizes that investment in training helps both growth and loyalty. Garrigues offers programs tailored to each professional level, international development opportunities, and training in legal tech and new technologies. Uría Menéndez also has specific mentoring programs for senior and principal associates, focused on professional and personal development.

IMPLEMENTING HYBRID WORK POLICIES

“Since the pandemic, remote work has naturally become part of our daily routine,” says Rodríguez. Offering hybrid work options that meet legal requirements allows firms to balance the benefits of office work with the flexibility of remote work. However, Rodríguez points out, “It’s still important for younger staff to participate in daily activities in-person to ensure smooth knowledge transfer and learning.”



ICÍAR RODRÍGUEZ INCIARTE



EVA DELGADO

At Garrigues, the Home Office Plan allows professionals to voluntarily combine in-office and remote work on set days, helping manage time and balance work and personal life.

"This flexibility lets us enjoy the benefits of remote work while preserving the advantages of face-to-face learning and synergy in the office" Elorza adds.

BALANCE AND NEW TECHNOLOGIES

"Young professionals value flexibility that allows them to balance their personal and professional lives," says de Antonio. Professional excellence requires dedication, but law firms increasingly recognize the importance of balancing career and personal goals for sustainable success.

Delgado adds that "new technologies and a supportive culture help lawyers maintain this balance".

Rodríguez agrees, noting that the introduction of new technologies, like AI, has brought change: "This enables our lawyers to focus on more value-added and enriching tasks."

CULTURE AND VALUES

"Young lawyers increasingly value a good corporate culture where they can reach their full potential in a positive, respectful, and diverse environment," de Antonio explains.

Fostering equality, diversity, and inclusion is critical. As de Antonio points out, each firm's culture is what sets them apart. "The only way young talent can understand the difference between firms is through internships," she says.

Recognition is also key to integrating and motivating young professionals, helping strengthen their sense of belonging. De Antonio adds, "We regularly gather feedback from young lawyers to understand their motivations." Delgado highlights the importance of feedback as well: "We conduct follow-up meetings with new employees at one, three, and six months after joining, gathering valuable information on their first impressions. Additionally, we conduct a workplace climate survey every two years to assess organizational atmosphere." ■



The race for young legal talent

HR specialists from Portugal's law firms share strategies for selecting and retaining top talent, as well as integrating junior and senior lawyers

by glória paiva

The days of offering a minimally paid internship with the chance to make photocopies to learn a profession are long gone. People management practices have evolved, and today, attracting and retaining young talent is a priority for law firms seeking innovation and competitiveness. *Iberian Lawyer* contacted a sample of the main law firms in Portugal and found that, regardless of size—whether boutique firms or large-scale practices—this issue is a consolidated reality and directly related to corporate strategy and the future.

Data collected shows that lawyers under 30 now account for up to 55% of teams in some cases, with the percentage rising further when including those under 40. One firm reported that 64 of its 116 professionals are under 30. The high concentration of young lawyers can have positive impacts on a firm's culture, fostering a dynamic and innovative environment, according to interviewees. Additionally, the presence of younger lawyers can ease the implementation of new technologies and practices to meet client needs. In *Iberian Lawyer's* sample, all firms consulted said they offer programs for young talent, ranging from short-term internships to more structured programs with real prospects for hiring.

ATTRACTION STRATEGIES

The range of policies to attract young talent



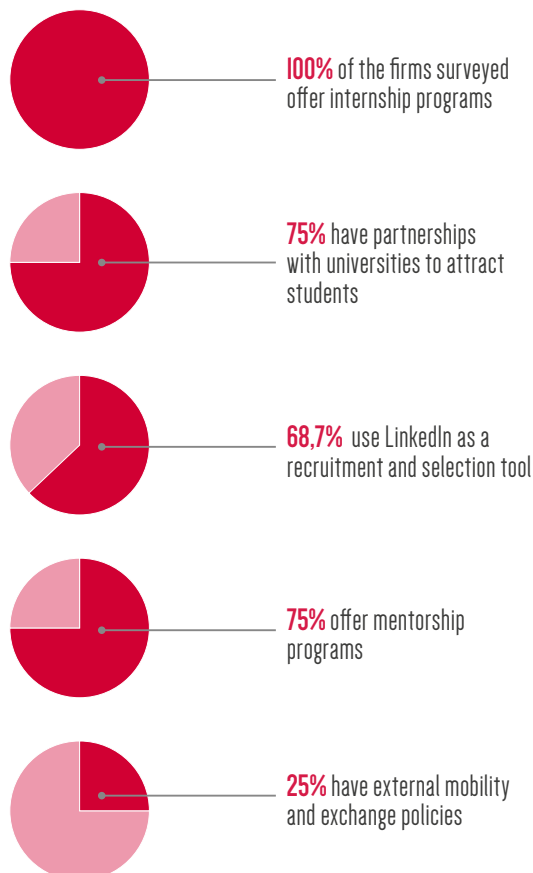
INÊS ZENHA

«Fast, transparent recruitment processes that offer interesting projects are essential to attract good candidates»

Inês Zenha

head of human resources at
Cuatrecasas Portugal

ATTRACTING AND RETAINING YOUNG TALENT: THE NUMBERS*



*According to a sample conducted by Iberian Lawyer with 16 law firms in Portugal

has grown significantly. A common practice is participation in job fairs and partnerships with universities, mentioned by 12 of the 16 firms. According to **Inês Zenha**, HR director at PLMJ, quick, transparent selection processes that offer interesting projects are essential to attract top candidates. So, what attracts this talent? “Clear expectations, retention policies, and a rich experience with exposure to various areas of law and an inclusive culture”, explains Zenha. At PLMJ, 90% of interns are hired permanently.

LinkedIn has also become a consolidated recruitment tool, mentioned by 11 of the 16 firms. At Cuatrecasas, the platform has become essential for attracting applications, explains **Leonor Vila Luz**, HR manager for the firm in Portugal. “Recruitment has shifted to this platform, where candidates actively seek opportunities more than on firm websites”, she states. Social media is also used to communicate organizational culture by building an attractive image. **Andreia Pereira de Oliveira**, talent and training manager at DCM | Little, highlights the importance of “employer branding”. “How do we compete with larger firms for talented professionals? By investing in a strong employer image”, she summarizes. “On social media, we try to convey who we are, what we do, and what we envision for the future,” she reports.

«International mobility programs allow lawyers to deepen their knowledge in their areas of expertise»

Leonor Vila Luz

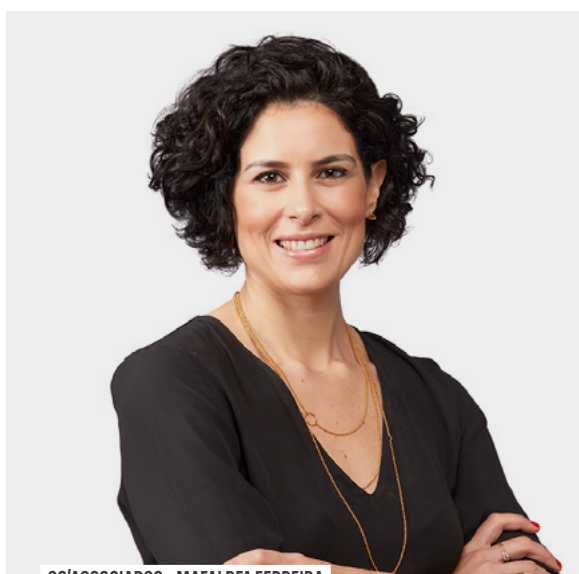
head of human resources at
Cuatrecasas Portugal

TALENT RETENTION

After selection, retention becomes an ongoing challenge. The integration and collaboration between generations have proven to be enriching tactics. Mentorship programs, mentioned by 12 firms, allow for the exchange of ideas and professional development. At CS' Associados, newcomers have direct contact with partners and clients and are immediately integrated into teams with responsibilities. This environment promotes rapid growth and engagement of interns. “The effect is highly motivating, due to quick responsibility and the external visibility



LEONOR VILA LUZ



CS'ASSOCIADOS - MAFALDA FERREIRA

our trainee lawyers achieve early on,” explains the **professional organization committee** at CS’ Associados.

Proximity to senior professionals and encouragement of new ideas also generate motivation. At PLMJ, lawyers are involved in innovation projects for tools and solutions to be implemented in the future. “When it comes to developing and adopting new technologies, lawyers are the first users”, states Inês Zenha. In this intergenerational exchange, continuous feedback practices are considered fundamental for promoting a learning and growth environment.

Continuous training is another priority: 11 of the 16 firms interviewed by Iberian Lawyer offer both technical and soft skills training. At Cuatrecasas Portugal, training for younger professionals tends to focus on various areas of law. As their careers progress, the focus shifts to leadership skills and other qualifications. “We also offer language courses and technical training, like software usage”, says Leonor Vila Luz. Many firms (12 of 16) also emphasize clear and structured career plans as important aspects for maintaining commitment.

BALANCE AND FLEXIBILITY

Work-life balance is increasingly relevant



ANDREIA PEREIRA DE OLIVEIRA

«It is necessary to invest in employer branding, creating a strong image of the firm as an employer»

Andreia Pereira de Oliveira
talent and training manager
at DCM | Little

for younger generations: nine of the 16 firms consulted offer flexible work routines as a retention strategy. At DCM Littler, employees can take up to five months of leave for personal matters, in addition to having remote work options. At CS’ Associados, lawyers can work from home without prior approval, and teams meet weekly to ensure that workloads are efficiently distributed. Wellness and socialization initiatives are also promoted, such as out-of-office team-building activities, for example, at PLMJ.

International experiences are also becoming a key differentiator. About a quarter of the firms consulted offer mobility programs, especially those with an international presence. “Mobility programs allow lawyers to deepen their knowledge in their areas of expertise. These are highly valued experiences,” says Vila Luz from Cuatrecasas Portugal. At DCM | Littler, new lawyers can be seconded to other offices worldwide to “work with foreign clients and experience diverse legal realities”, explains Oliveira.

The quest for age balance within teams and aligning with the expectations of lawyers is a constant challenge. Firms that can adapt to these demands will be better positioned to attract and retain top talent, contributing to a more dynamic, inclusive, and innovative legal environment. 

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Space, the law's new frontier

How the expansion of space activities in Portugal is redefining the role of lawyers and legislators in a rapidly evolving sector

by glória paiva

“Not only are we in the universe, the universe is in us.” The reflection of American astrophysicist **Neil deGrasse Tyson** has never been more relevant than at this moment in human history. From mobility infrastructure, telecommunications, weather forecasting, defense, and natural resource management to the dream of expanding humanity's reach, the universe has never felt so close to Earth and our daily lives. A multitude of human activities already depends on space-based solutions, and technological advances, the entry of private companies, and international cooperation are contributing to the development of the sector. In this context, “space law” is emerging as an essential field, which still needs to evolve to address the regulatory and ethical challenges of this new frontier.

“The growth of what is called New Space—a private sector aiming to democratize access to space and reduce the cost of related activities—is also contributing to the universalization of these activities, even in countries without launch centers, like Portugal”, explains **Magda Cocco**, partner and head of the information, communication and technology practice, the digital frontiers practice and head of the aerospace sector at Vieira de Almeida (VdA). The Atlantic nation has been adopting a series of unprecedented measures to encourage the



«Portugal is positioning itself as a development hub, with the potential to lead initiatives in telecommunications and space exploration»

João Leitão Figueiredo

Key areas of demand and potential growth in Space Law:

- Regulation of commercial space activities
- Ownership and exploitation of space resources
- Environmental management and sustainability
- Security and defense in space
- Civil liability and insurance for damages and risks
- Privacy and protection of personal and sensitive data
- International contracts
- Communications regulation and compliance
- New space propulsion technologies
- Intellectual property and patents



«Innovation and the disruptive potential of technology give rise to all kinds of legal challenges, forcing the law to evolve»

Magda Cocco

sector's development, such as establishing the Portuguese Space Agency and investing in space infrastructure, like the Spaceport in the Azores. Portugal is collaborating with international partners and projects like Copernicus, NASA, MIT, and the European Space Agency, and has engineering schools with programs specifically designed for the space sector. This year, On September 26 and 28, the first test launches of rockets were carried out from the spaceport in the Azores, on the island of Santa Maria,..., with the autonomous region aiming to become "an Atlantic hub for space."

Portugal's trajectory could enable its inclusion in an exclusive club of nations with strategically

and economically significant space programs. "The creation of a launch base in the Azores will undoubtedly place the country in a prominent position. Involvement in international projects positions Portugal as a development hub with great potential to lead initiatives in telecommunications and space exploration", says **João Leitão Figueiredo**, partner in the technology, media & communications, intellectual property, and life sciences & healthcare practices at CMS Portugal.

NEW LEGAL CHALLENGES

In a scenario marked by the lowering of launch costs and the commercial exploitation of space resources and related activities, new demands are arising related to legislation, regulation, and licensing. In February, Portugal took an important step forward by adopting Decree-

84

companies in Portugal are already involved in space activities

€ 140

million was invested in the sector in Portugal in 2023

€ 2.5

billion is the total investment Portugal aims to attract for the sector by 2030*

€ 20

million will be invested in the Iberian Space Partnership, a satellite network to monitor forests and coasts in Portugal and Spain

Source: Agência Espacial Portuguesa

*Goal established in 2019 as part of the preparation for the European Space Agency's Space19+ Ministerial Council

Law 20/2024, which updates the so-called Space Law of 2019. The new decree established rules for licensing and sustainability, facilitating the establishment of launch centers by private companies and simplifying administrative procedures. According to **Ana Rita Paínho**, partner in the life sciences, intellectual property, and TMT departments at Sérvulo & Associados, the new legislation “aims to stimulate opportunities and flexibility in the establishment of launch centers, a positive approach that must now be tested.” Changes in international legislation, however, may impact the practice of Space Law locally. According to Magda Cocco, “the most substantial impact is expected to come with the future European space law, which will bring strict requirements and new opportunities

for the sector.”

In such a rapidly changing environment, some of the major law firms are already preparing to meet growing demand. With offices in 48 jurisdictions, CMS, for example, already has experience with various realities in this area. “We have advised companies and organizations on launch contracts, partnerships with governments, regulation of commercial space operations, and data protection. We have also been involved in matters related to civil liability and technological innovation in the sector”, says Leitão Figueiredo. A recent example involves a low-earth orbit satellite constellation project, where the firm provided legal and regulatory advice. According to the lawyer, new startups, tech companies, and satellite operators increasingly require assistance in such matters.



«In a sector marked by rapid technological evolution, we always have to ‘deal’ with things that weren’t foreseen»

Ana Rita Paínho

Sérvulo & Associados, meanwhile, already had a set of clients interested in the field, served by its technology, media, and telecommunications practices, but the firm decided to create a space law department in March. “We noticed a growing market interest in satellite communications constellations, as well as in adjacent areas of manufacturing components for space launches. The sector’s growth and demand for innovative solutions in software, components, and production have a direct impact on intellectual property and TMT”, explains partner Ana Rita Paínho.

Active in the space sector since 2010, Vieira de Almeida supports market players, public entities and projects with international organizations on various issues such as space cybersecurity or blockchain in satellite communications. VdA is also part of New Space Portugal, a consortium of 39 entities, aimed at developing and launching Earth Observation satellites. In partnership with GEOSAT, Nova SBE, and CoLAB +Atlantic, the firm is conducting a study that will help identify opportunities, gaps, and challenges for Portugal in this market. Earth Observation generates essential data for analysing scenarios in various areas of human activity, from climate change and epidemic mapping to urban planning and civil protection.

A RAPIDLY TRANSFORMING SCENARIO

The expansion of space activities brings new legal challenges—some anticipated, others yet to come. In the context of technologies such as satellite constellations and advanced telecommunications systems, there is already significant demand for services related to patent, trademark, and copyright protection concerning software, hardware, and algorithms. “Protecting innovations is a central issue, given the sector's competitiveness. Data protection and the management of trade secrets have also become increasingly important”, Leitão Figueiredo notes.

According to Ana Rita Paínho, another important issue is space debris. “It is necessary to establish regulations on the shared use of outer space, the launching of objects into space, their removal, and return”, she ponders. Also, it is important to consider what is yet unknown. “In a sector marked by rapid technological evolution,

we always have to ‘deal’ with things that weren’t foreseen”, states Paínho.

Soon, emerging topics such as space mining and in-orbit services will require further legal knowledge. “Space activities – says Magda Cocco – do not escape the big questions of our time”. Important issues, according to the VdA's partner, will soon include the sustainability and the ownership of potential space resources, as well as the need to establish security requirements for using these resources on Earth, considering risks such as contamination.

As humanity explore new frontiers in space, Space Law will play an increasingly crucial role in ensuring legal compliance and rights protection in a rapidly evolving landscape. “For those who provide legal support to tech-based sectors, the disruptive potential of technology give rise to all kinds of legal challenges, forcing the law to evolve”, points out Cocco. ¹⁰⁷



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SÓNIA VALADAS

Driving company success

Sónia Valadas, the new legal head of Novartis Portugal, reflects on the critical role of legal teams in shaping corporate strategy and the importance of multidisciplinary in this area

by glória paiva

To be a competent in-house lawyer, it is not enough to understand the law. It is necessary to have management skills, understand the market in which you operate, and possess communication skills, as well as having a deep knowledge of the company's products and services. This multidisciplinaryity is part of the daily life of the new country legal head of Novartis Portugal, Sónia Valadas. With 15 years of experience at the pharmaceutical giant and two years at Sandoz, Valadas took over the legal department at Novartis in June of this year, also becoming a member of the Board of Directors ([here the news](#)). Her career reinforces, as she herself says, the importance of the legal sector in the strategic and decision-making areas of the organization. She spoke with Iberian Lawyer about her career, challenges, and prospects for the legal department at Novartis Portugal.

What has changed in the legal department of the company during your 15 years at Novartis?

Novartis has changed a lot over these 15 years. Initially, it was a group with very diverse business units. Today we are a company 100% focused on innovation in the areas of cardiovascular, neurosciences, immunology, and oncology. The legal department naturally follows this evolution.

How does the legal department at Novartis operate internally today?

We work in a very integrated way with other headquarters, with multidisciplinary,

international teams in synergy. We have teams dedicated to specific matters outside of Portugal, and we benefit from their support. In Portugal, there are no other lawyers besides me, but there are colleagues abroad who work and focus on issues related to Portugal and the areas that interest us.

What are the first changes and projects you wish to introduce as legal head?

I am in a transition phase, listening to the needs of the company. I am consulting with my stakeholders to understand their needs as well. The legal department has a very important role, not only in legal advice but also as a strategic partner of the company as a whole. We cannot look to the future without looking to the legal dimension; we must consider the products, the market, and also the current and future legislative challenges, which can have a positive or negative impact on the company.

What is the role of the legal department in the company's global strategy?

To answer this question, I'll give you an example: imagine that we are preparing the market launch of a new medicine. It is very important to understand the context of that launch, to ensure the medicine reaches the patients quickly. It is impossible to do this without understanding the legal environment we are in. We may have a great strategy, but if we don't consider the potential challenges, such as legal barriers to market access, that strategy won't work.

ABOUT NOVARTIS

- Established in 1996 through the merger of Ciba-Geigy and Sandoz
- Operating in 130 countries
- 78,000 employees globally
- 220 employees in Portugal
- 600 in-house lawyers, 62% of whom are women, with 52% holding leadership positions

«We cannot look to the future without considering the legal dimension. We are a strategic partner of the company»

Does Novartis usually rely on external lawyers? For what types of needs?

Yes, typically for situations where we need to deepen our internal expertise. Sometimes we need more time or specific knowledge, for example in the area of patents, which is so specialized and involves knowledge from different fields. Topics like these make us seek local law firms when needed. In Portugal, we currently rely on the support of Vieira de Almeida.

How do you view diversity, particularly the presence of women in leadership positions in the legal market?

I believe the most important thing is how we promote the integration of this diversity. And I'm not just referring to gender, but also to different ways of thinking, age groups, and other aspects. All of this is diversity, and it should be valued. Today, there are more women than men graduating with law degrees, but what we still don't see is women occupying top positions. This is something we must continue to work on. At Novartis Portugal, more than 60% of leadership positions are held by women. I live in a privileged environment, but I know that unfortunately, this is not a reality across all sectors, companies, and law firms in Portugal.

What are the main challenges for your department currently?

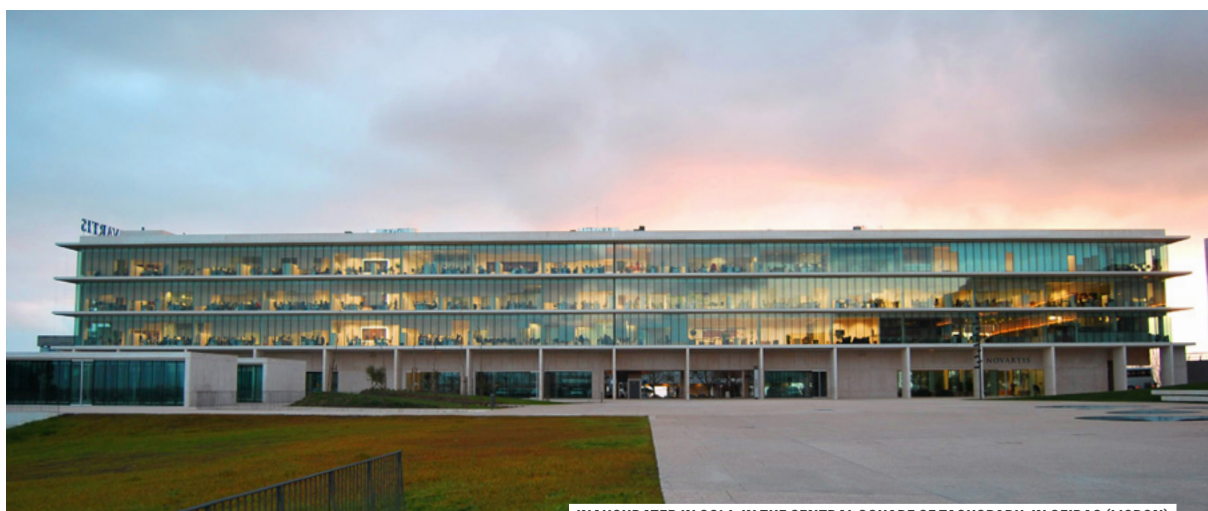
One of the big challenges for all companies in

«An in-house lawyer must have a deep understanding of the organization and be able to translate legal jargon into business language»

this sector is the reform of pharmaceutical legislation in the European Union. It is difficult to keep up with everything being produced at the legislative level in a constantly changing environment, both in the health sector in Portugal and globally. And it's not just about the legislation itself but also the organization of the healthcare system, the funding of new medicines, clinical research... All these changes represent a challenge, but also opportunities, which we cannot ignore.

You are also a member of the board of directors. What is the role of a legal director in a strategic position like this?

A local management team has the responsibility to implement the company's global strategy locally. Each board member is not only responsible for their functional area, but also



INAUGURATED IN 2014, IN THE CENTRAL SQUARE OF TAGUSPARK, IN OIRAS (LISBON)

has an additional responsibility as a company's leader. I am responsible for the company, the business, and the people in Portugal. Beyond legal knowledge, I have to ensure that the company operates well, is successful, that people are satisfied, and that we achieve our goals.

What should the profile of an in-house lawyer be, beyond technical knowledge?

If I had to sum it up, I would say there are two characteristics that define the profile of an in-house lawyer. He or she must know the business and the company very well. I may be an excellent lawyer, but if I don't know the medicines we have on the market, the ones we are developing, our stakeholders, and the context, I could as well produce brilliant legal opinions, but they would be completely misaligned with the company's needs. Another essential characteristic is communication skills. An in-house lawyer, when analyzing a new legal framework, must do so in light of the company's reality and know how to communicate it. The general manager and colleagues want to know the impact of that new legislation on our business. It's up to us to break down the legal jargon and translate it into business terms. We are in a company, not a court, and we must adapt.

SÓNIA VALADAS




«There are more women than men with law degrees, but we still don't see women occupying top positions»

Is there any specific project underway or new development on the horizon?

We have several ideas for the department, but any of them must be aligned with Novartis' business strategy. In the spirit of bringing the legal department closer to other business areas, I would like to launch a project that works like a "legal academy," where the legal department could provide training on topics of interest to other areas, such as patents, personal data protection, or the digital sector from a legal perspective. The idea is to create greater proximity between the legal sector and other business areas, equipping them with more skills. This is a personal project I would like to implement.

What message would you like to leave for young lawyers?

When I started working as a lawyer, there was a myth that good lawyers went to law firms, and others, who weren't as good, went to companies. I don't know if that concept still exists. But to young lawyers, I would say that there are more options than the ones that seem obvious, and these options can be just as good, if not more interesting, than others. We can be excellent lawyers in a company, develop skills that go beyond the strictly legal, and be very happy doing so. I wish someone had told me that in the beginning of my career. 



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09:40 Keynote Speech
09:50 **ROUNDTABLE I**
"TO INTERNALISE OR TO OUTSOURCE? THE CORE PRACTICES OF LEGAL AFFAIRS DEPARTMENTS"
11:00 Coffee Break
11:30 **ROUNDTABLE II**
"LEGAL DEPARTMENT BUDGET:
HOW TO CONVINCE THE MANAGEMENT TO GIVE YOU MONEY"
12:45 **ROUNDTABLE III**
"TECHNOLOGY FOR CONFLICT RESOLUTION: IMPROVING TIMELINE AND EFFICIENCY"
14:00 Light Lunch

SPEAKERS*

Ruth Breitenfeld, Trading Legal Director, *Cepsa*

Inês Costa Moura, Head of Legal, *Mercan Properties*

Guillermo de Torre, Legal Director, Corporate Legal & M&A, *Sonova Group*

Isabel Fernandes, General Legal Counsel, *Grupo Visabeira*

Mercedes Galán, Journalist, *Iberian Lawyer*

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¡Viva México!

Garrigues and Pérez-Llorca lead expansion in Mexico with key integrations strengthening their position in Latin America and creating a transnational collaboration model in the legal sector. Iberian Lawyer discusses this with Javier Ybáñez and Iván Delgado

by *ilaria iaquinta*

Mexico whets the appetite of Spanish law firms. In recent months, two of the most prominent firms, Garrigues and Pérez-Llorca, have made strategic strides in their expansion within Mexico.

Garrigues has announced its integration with Sánchez Devanny, which is expected to be finalised in the fourth quarter of 2024, once the confirmatory due diligence process is completed and the final terms of the agreement are settled ([here the news](#)), while Pérez-Llorca has finalised its merger with González Calvillo, following its announcement in spring ([here the news](#)). These mergers not only bolster the presence of both firms in Latin America but also represent a significant step towards creating a more cohesive and interconnected transnational legal market.

Iberian Lawyer interviewed the international executive partners of both Spanish firms to analyse the implications of these integrations and their expectations for the future.

PÉREZ-LLORCA AND GONZÁLEZ CALVILLO

In July, Pérez-Llorca completed its integration with González Calvillo, another renowned legal firm in Mexico, thereby consolidating its presence in one of Latin America's most dynamic markets. This operation, announced in April, significantly expands Pérez-Llorca's service offerings and opens new business opportunities in the region.



IVÁN DELGADO

Pérez-Llorca views Mexico as a natural market for expansion. "Mexico is not only the most populous Spanish-speaking country with a GDP of \$2 trillion, but it is also a thriving and developed economy, larger than the combined totals of Spain and Portugal where Pérez-Llorca was already operating", states **Iván Delgado**, international executive partner. He further emphasises that Mexico's strategic location, along with cultural and economic ties to Spain, and the interconnectedness between the business communities of both countries, makes it fertile ground for the firm's growth. "We are confident that the strong and sophisticated Mexican legal industry will continue to develop, grow, and consolidate in the coming years, and



with the integration of the elite firm González Calvillo, we are positioned and equipped to contribute positively and significantly to that process of institutionalisation”.

The merger is a full integration, meaning that both teams and strategic objectives are unified, a factor that distinguishes Pérez-Llorca from other international firms operating in the country. “We do not conceive of this union as an alliance but as an integration in the strictest sense of the word, and we believe this is something that sets us apart from other firms”, explains Delgado. “Pérez-Llorca enters Mexico through the integration of an elite firm with nearly 40 years of experience in the country, boasting extensive regional and global connections due to its renowned transactional work. This gives us profound knowledge of the Mexican business landscape, its specificities, and present and future needs”, he notes. Moreover, this integration is based on a relationship of over two decades between both firms, which has facilitated the establishment of shared culture and standards, easing the consolidation of this union.

The new entity will comprise a team of 100 lawyers and around 160 professionals across its offices in Mexico City and Monterrey. The goal is clear: to position themselves as leaders in the Mexican legal sphere, with a particular emphasis on high-stakes transactions, financing, transnational litigation, and regulatory matters. To achieve this, the firm has devised an ambitious investment strategy that will strengthen local teams and support their expansion in the country. Although specific details have yet to be revealed, Delgado hints that “we anticipate the incorporation of new partners and lawyers into our project”, aiming to “establish ourselves as the largest legal practice in the Mexican market, advising Mexican, Iberian, multinational clients, and international law firms on their most complex operations, as well as in litigation, regulatory challenges, and opportunities”.

Regarding the key sectors in which Pérez-Llorca plans to focus its efforts, Delgado highlights

«Mexico is not only the most populous Spanish-speaking country with a GDP of \$2 trillion, but it is also a thriving and developed economy, larger than the combined totals of Spain and Portugal where Pérez-Llorca was already operating»

Iván Delgado (Pérez-Llorca)

several. “In 2024, we have witnessed changes arising from the Mexican economic environment due to the federal elections and developments stemming from various reform projects, including judicial reform. In a consolidated economy like Mexico, which has been capitalising on the nearshoring phenomenon in recent years, it will be interesting for us to complement the advice of our colleagues in Mexico with a global platform in key sectors of this economy, such as automotive, aerospace, and energy”. Furthermore, the firm believes that the mining, transport and logistics, and tourism sectors will also play a significant role in expanding their services in the country.

GARRIGUES AND SÁNCHEZ DEVANNY

At the end of July, Garrigues announced its ongoing integration with the Mexican firm Sánchez Devanny, which is expected to complete in the fourth quarter of 2024. Once the integration is finalised, Garrigues will hold 100% ownership of the new entity, which will be named Garrigues Mexico. **Javier Ybáñez**, partner in charge of coordinating Garrigues' practice in Latin America, explains to Iberian Lawyer: “The integration, expected to become effective in the fourth quarter of this year once the confirmatory



JAVIER YBÁÑEZ

«The integration will enable us to combine Sánchez Devanny's deep knowledge of the Mexican market with Garrigues's international strength and our one-stop-shop model»

Javier Ybáñez (Garrigues)

due diligence process is completed, will enable us to combine Sánchez Devanny's deep knowledge and experience with local and international clients in the Mexican market with Garrigues's international strength and our one-stop-shop model, allowing us to provide local, regional, and international advice through regional teams by service lines and coordinate cross-border projects and operations”.

Once the integration is effective, Garrigues will become one of the largest law firms in Mexico, with a team of 160 professionals distributed across offices in Mexico City, Monterrey, and Querétaro. Ybáñez remarks: “Our model is to have our own offices in all countries where we operate to ensure the same quality of service to our clients throughout our network,” which

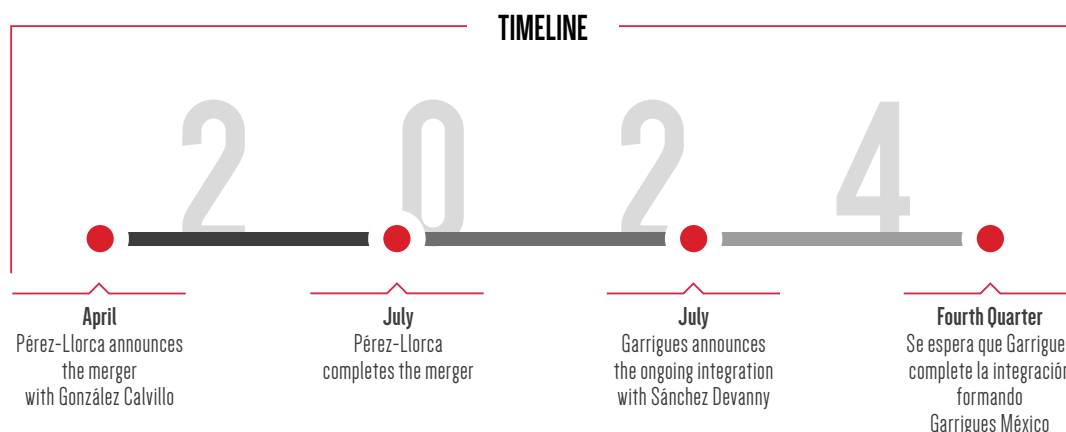
THE MEXICAN LEGAL MARKET

Mexico, with the second-largest economy in Latin America after Brazil and its strategic proximity to the United States, has established itself as one of the region's most attractive markets. In recent years, the demand for specialised legal services has grown considerably, particularly in sectors such as energy, technology, and manufacturing. The ratification of the Treaty between Mexico, the United States, and Canada (T-MEC) has strengthened trade relations and generated an increase in demand for advice on cross-border operations, especially in compliance, intellectual property, and international trade.

The growth of foreign investment, especially from the United States and Europe, has driven the need for legal services in key areas such as mergers and acquisitions, intellectual property, and corporate law. At the same time, the expansion of Mexican capital abroad has increased the demand for advice on international regulations, reinforcing the importance of having a local presence with global reach.

This landscape has captured the attention of numerous international law firms that view Mexico as a key platform for expanding their presence in Latin America. In addition to Garrigues and Pérez-Llorca, other Spanish firms such as Cuatrecasas and Ecija have also established a significant presence in Mexico. For example, Cuatrecasas integrated Rico Robles and Libenson (RRL) in January 2023, strengthening its team with lawyers of extensive experience in transactional and regulatory matters. Meanwhile, Ecija opened its office in Mexico City in January 2020 after integrating the multidisciplinary firm Chacón & Rodríguez.





explains the decision to pursue a full integration rather than a less formal collaboration. “In Latin America, having long ago dismissed the alliance model as unsuitable for us in the region, we have primarily opted for organic growth wherever possible and the integration of firms in markets where opportunities truly align with our strategy”, highlights Ybáñez. This is precisely the case with Sánchez Devanny, a firm that “complements Garrigues both in terms of practice areas and geographic presence,” he adds.

Moreover, once the integration is complete, Mexico will become Garrigues’s second most important market after Spain. “The Mexican legal market is the most significant Spanish-speaking

market in Latin America and has a privileged relationship with the United States, which presents an opportunity in itself”, states Ybáñez. “Having an even more significant presence there (Garrigues has operated in Mexico with its own office since 2014, ed.) is one of our objectives and will add value for our clients in the region thanks to Sánchez Devanny’s substantial local presence and market knowledge, whose clients will benefit from Garrigues’s international reach”. However, he admits that “integrating a firm is a challenge in itself, as is realising the opportunities identified on paper”.

Garrigues Mexico will closely coordinate with existing operations in Chile, Colombia, and



KEY SECTORS FOR LEGAL GROWTH IN MEXICO



Energy



Technology



Manufacturing



Automotive



Aerospace



Mining




Transport and Logistics



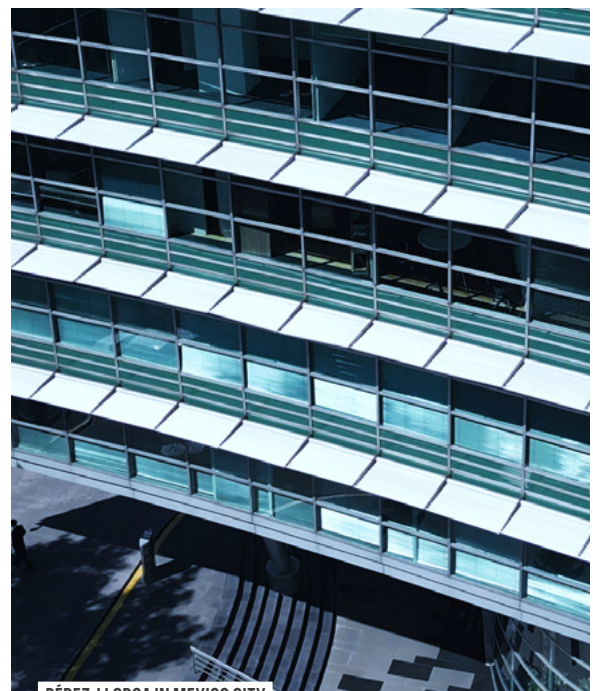
Tourism

Peru as part of the firm's regional strategy. Ybáñez explains, "Garrigues has long been committed to Latin America, aiming not only to be a benchmark in each of the markets where we operate but also to be the reference firm for clients seeking a single point of contact in the region". To provide a cross-cutting service backed by Garrigues's international network, "close coordination among offices and practice areas is crucial, combining our expertise in different markets, something we have successfully developed over many years".

Regarding the practice areas that will benefit the most from this integration, Ybáñez emphasises that "it is very important for us to be able to provide comprehensive services in business law across all or most areas in each of our offices. This is clearly a differentiating element for Garrigues and is our objective in Mexico". Garrigues is characterised as a "full-service firm, with a very direct and close relationship with clients", enabling them to "combine both transactional aspects and the day-to-day operations of our clients". 



GARRIGUES' ACTUAL HEADQUARTERS IN MEXICO CITY



PÉREZ-LLORCA IN MEXICO CITY

IVÁN DELGADO AND RODRIGO ROJAS DISCUSS THE MERGER WITH *THE LATIN AMERICAN LAWYER*

In an exclusive interview with *The Latin American Lawyer*, conducted by **Giselle Estrada**, the leaders behind the merger between Gonzalez Calvillo and Pérez-Llorca, **Iván Delgado** and **Rodrigo Rojas**, shared further details about the integration process and the strategy following the merger in Mexico. Below is an extract from the interview ([available here](#)):

How do the corporate cultures of both firms align, and what efforts are being made to unify the vision and values of the new entity?

Our consolidation processes began several months ago, and we have been working hard in collaboration with all departments and practice areas to establish concrete action plans, both internally and for clients, with the goal of sharing best practices and consolidating a single firm culture.

What role will each office play in this new structure, and how will responsibilities be distributed between the offices in Mexico and Spain?

A development committee has been established in Mexico, comprising partners from both Mexico and Spain, to finalise and steer this integration and determine the next steps.

How do you plan to integrate the teams and maintain motivation and talent retention during this transition?

All lawyers and support staff at González Calvillo will have career opportunities on the same terms as those available to the rest of the firm's offices, including the same chances for growth, development, and training that Pérez-Llorca's professionals currently enjoy. We intend to pursue a significant investment and growth strategy in Mexico, so we anticipate that new partners and lawyers will join our project in the future. However, it's still too early to provide specific details, which we'll do when the time comes.

What is your outlook on the legal market in Latin America and Europe, and how will this merger allow you to capitalise on opportunities in both regions?

This union strengthens us and makes us more competitive in facing the complex challenges of an increasingly internationalised legal market, where transactions and disputes transcend national borders. The collaboration we are undertaking marks a turning point for legal firms in Mexico and across Latin America. Our integration has resulted in a marked and sustained increase in interest from multinational companies looking to invest and operate in Mexico.

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we are
LAWESOME

Lawesome, a specialization that makes the difference

With a 2023 marked by its entry into the top 10 of the TTR Ranking, the law firm reinforces its presence in the market with new offices in Barcelona and Girona, and is committed to technological innovation and structural growth

por julia gil

In recent years, the firm Lawesome, founded by **Xabier Álvarez** and **Martín Eguia**, has experienced remarkable growth, consolidating its presence in the Spanish legal market. This progress reflects a clear and effective strategy, focused on the essential: “the deal, the business, the client”. With a team of 30 professionals distributed in four offices -Bilbao, San Sebastian, Girona and Barcelona-, Lawesome continues to consolidate its position in the Spanish legal market.

TOP 10 OF THE TTR SPAIN RANKING

The boutique of legal services for corporate transactions has been another year in the top 10 of the TTR Spain Ranking. Specifically, in 2023, the firm has achieved the number six position as the best firm by number of venture capital and M&A transactions, with 21 transactions advised. **Mikel Mendiola**, partner and manager of the M&A and venture capital area, is in fourth place among professionals by number of deals closed, 21. In turn, among the top 10 of the TTR Rising Stars Ranking by number of transactions are the firm's lawyers **Antonio Castro** (6th), **Ignacio Ortiz de Urbina** (7th) and **Sandra Albarrán** (9th).



MIKEL MENDIOLA

«The firm's growth is based on maintaining and increasing the number of clients in the technological field, but also on those clients from other sectors that are demanding our services»

GOALS

With such positive results in 2023, the firm is looking to maintain the same growth in 2024. Its objectives for the rest of the year are focused on continuing with structural growth, which includes the incorporation of new professionals in key areas such as business development, in addition to the incorporations already made during 2024 in the areas of financial management and human resources, according to Mendiola. In addition, the firm is committed to geographic growth in the market, accompanied by the development of other specialties that will add value to the firm. “We want to continue to maintain our boutique nature, but we believe that there are certain specialties that clients are demanding from us and that, in addition, we believe can enrich the current areas,” says the head of the M&A department.

In this regard, Mendiola highlights the areas of M&A and venture capital as those that have experienced the greatest growth and visibility. In venture capital, during the last few years, the firm has shown a significant evolution, going from advising mainly startup founders to currently collaborating with investment funds, technology centers and large companies in their innovation and expansion processes. This area of M&A and venture capital is especially attractive for young talent, who are not only recruited by the firm, but also show a marked interest in joining its team. In fact, the firm is one of the firms that receives the most applications for internships and new hires from students of the



XABIER ÁLVAREZ

Master's Degree in Access to the Legal Profession at the Vizcaya Bar Association.

Mendiola points out that this attraction for young talent is due, in part, to the specialization in corporate transactions, an area in which few Basque law firms have such a strong focus. "If we add that specialization in an environment where most firms are not, we obtain a differentiation that is one of the reasons that attracts young people," he stresses. On the other hand, the partner also attributes part of the firm's success to its ability to create a project that motivates and encourages senior lawyers, helping them in their professional development and generating opportunities for growth within the firm.

MARKET OPPORTUNITIES

Although, as a firm, one of its main initial challenges was to be able to generate an initial critical mass of clients, the firm has an extensive track record of advised transactions. The most recent was the sale of a majority stake in Hispavista from San Sebastian to a group of Basque investors led by Induhold Participaciones. However, the firm's growth is not limited to the technological field, as it has

«Our clients are already reactivating M&A and Venture Capital operations»

also diversified its activity towards sectors such as industry and retail. "The firm's growth is based on maintaining and increasing the number of clients in the technological field, but also on those clients from other sectors that are demanding our services", says the head of M&A.

NATIONAL EXPANSION PLAN

After the inauguration in February of its new offices in Catalonia, located in Barcelona and Girona, the firm's idea is to keep up the pace and gradually expand geographically. "There has to be a coexistence between the attraction for that territory and the integration of professionals who share the values of Lawesome and are willing to join the project," says Mendiola. The partner emphasizes that the new offices should not depend on the headquarters in Bilbao, encouraging the autonomy and independent growth of each office.

LAWESOME ATERRIZA EN CATALUÑA

Lawesome opens its office in Catalonia in February, with a team led by **Robert Burguell**. The firm marks an important step in its expansion by extending its reach in the region through new offices in Barcelona and Girona. The new managing partner for Catalonia, Burguell brings nearly fifteen years of experience in the corporate and commercial sector, having worked at renowned firms such as Marimón Abogados, BDO and Lexcrea. ([Link to the new](#))

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

In line with its commitment to innovation, Lawesome is also exploring the use of artificial intelligence to optimize its internal processes. According to Mendiola, the firm is not rushing to adopt this technology indiscriminately, but will

do so “progressively and seeing where we can truly use it.” The focus is on areas where AI can generate greater efficiency, “probably in those jobs that are more repetitive,” he says. Among them, he highlights due diligence work as a clear example of processes that “can speed us up and allow us to offer the same service at a lower cost to clients”.

For Mendiola, the implementation of these technologies is crucial to remain competitive: “If we don’t do it, we risk being left out of the market”. With its specialization in advising technological and innovative companies, it is imperative for the firm not to fall behind in these areas, which are precisely one of the strengths of its own clients.


M&A OUTLOOK

As for the outlook in the area of M&A and Venture Capital, Mendiola highlights a notable increase in transactions in 2024, a phenomenon that he defines as “an increase that we have suffered, in the good sense of the word”. Despite a slower last quarter of 2023, where deals were seen postponed, adjusted or even cancelled, the trend has changed. “We have seen many deals that seemed imminent get postponed or closed for less than expected amounts,” he comments. However, the outlook this year is more encouraging. “Our clients have

«Our objective is more to try to fulfill what our values say than a quantitative objective»

already reactivated M&A and Venture Capital transactions,” says Mendiola optimistically. This upturn is, in his opinion, a clear sign that the market is reactivating: “There is an excess of liquidity that has been held back for the last few years, and that capital will inevitably come to the market. Lawesome thus stands firm ahead of a 2024 that promises sustained growth in these key areas.

THE FUTURE

For Mendiola, Lawesome's future is not defined by numbers, but by the fulfillment of the values that guide the firm. “Our goal is more about trying to fulfill what our values say than a quantitative target,” he says, stressing that they are not pursuing numerical growth. Instead, the priority is to consolidate an internal culture where both the team and clients feel satisfied. “We prefer to consolidate values, that people are happy with their work in the office, with their balance, with their way of life,” he explains, adding that they seek to make clients feel supported with the service they receive and count on the solutions they need. In addition, Lawesome also aims to be a key element and contribute its grain of sand in the development of the entrepreneurial ecosystem. From this base, the future objective is clear: “Our objective is also, as far as possible, to try to grow geographically and in new specialties that add value to what we have been doing so far”, concludes Mendiola, with a view to an expansion that is consistent with the principles that have defined Lawesome's success so far. 

LAWESOME IN NUMBERS (2023)

PROFESSIONALS: 30

OFFICES:

Bilbao
Donostia/ San Sebastián
Barcelona
Girona

Turnover:

M&A and Venture Capital
operations in 2023: **21**

R&D&I projects financed in 2023

Financing raised: **16.5 million euros**

Number of projects advised: **>170**



Sancho case: a global legal challenge

Juan Gonzalo Ospina assumes the defense of the Arrieta family, dealing with legal challenges and intense media scrutiny in a trial with great international repercussions

At six o'clock in the morning on Thursday, August 29, 2024, the sentence became effective. **Daniel Sancho** is sentenced to life imprisonment for the murder of the Colombian **surgeon Edwin Arrieta** in Thailand. The court considers him guilty of the three crimes for which he has been charged: premeditated murder, dismemberment and concealment of the victim's body, and destruction of other people's documents, specifically the victim's passport. "It was the sentence we were looking for so that the crime would not go unpunished" assures **Juan Gonzalo Ospina**, founding partner of Ospina Abogados and lawyer representing the Arrieta family. On the other hand, also as part of the sentence, the defendant is sentenced to pay a compensation of 4 million bat, equivalent to about 107,000 euros, to the victim's family. Gonzalo Ospina's firm made an expert appraisal of the damage caused to Edwin Arrieta's family, which quantified the damage at 30 million bats (793,000 euros).

LEGAL CHALLENGES

One of the most shocking cases of recent times, both because of the media involvement and the high international complexity, which has resulted in a long judicial process that has not yet ended. Juango Ospina himself, as he is known by the Spanish legal sector, has confessed

«It was the sentence we were seeking so that the crime would not go unpunished»

that they had never handled a case with so much media expectation. The main challenge was to ensure that the story that the public opinion showed was not far from the facts, as Ospina explains: "Playing against a contaminated part of the public opinion has been complicated". But this has not been the only challenge faced by the Ospina Abogados team. Explaining to the Arrieta family the limits of the procedure was a delicate task, aggravated by language and cultural barriers that required an accurate translation of the documents. The team made several visits to Thailand to ensure that the judicial process was carried out correctly and in accordance with the law. One of the particularities of this case, in turn, is that it involved three different jurisdictions - Colombia, Spain and Thailand - and, therefore, three legal systems with disparate legal cultures. For this reason, Ospina



JUANGO OSPINA ADDRESSES THE MEDIA OUTSIDE THE KOH SAMUI COURT

emphasizes that this procedure marked a before and after in his career. With a solid background in international criminal law, he describes it as “the perfect groundwork for Edwin Arrieta's family to count on us to defend their interests”.

THAILAND REPRESENTATION STRATEGY

The Ospina Abogados team worked hard to maintain faithful representation of the Arrieta family, despite the language barriers, the time change and the cultural differences with Thailand. As the partner explains, when they received the Arrieta family at the firm in September, they did not consider the media background of the case, but rather, their first meeting with Darling Arrieta (Edwin Arrieta's sister and spokesperson for the family) “was about the legal strategy of the case and the structure of the case”. According to Ospina, “the greatest need and difficulty was to find the right law firm in Thailand”, since during the resolution of the case in the criminal court on the island of Samui, it was necessary to coordinate the defense with a Thai law firm. The head of communications, **Miguel Roderó**, contacted more than 50 local law firms until he found the right one. According to the lawyer, these firms “would not act pro bono and the fees they were asking for were very high”. After an “intense but

«Playing against a contaminated part of public opinion has been complicated»

quick” negotiation, not without difficulties, an agreement was reached with a firm in Bangkok, with **Mettapon Suwancarern**, as the legal representative in Bangkok of the victim's family. “The firm appeared in the proceedings, asked for a copy of the proceedings and explained what the framework of the entire criminal procedure would be,” explains Ospina. Subsequently, this advice was reinforced with the support of another firm on the island of Koh Samui, with **Nattha “Lak” Jongratwanin** as lawyer.

DEFENSE OF DANIEL SACHO

Daniel Sacho's defense, led by the Spanish **Marcos García-Montes**, also known as the “celebrity lawyer”, with the collaboration of **Carmen Balfagón**, the lawyer and criminologist of the law firm B&CH, always maintained optimism in the acquittal. Although the reading of the sentence showed that the Thai court never doubted the fact that Daniel Sacho had

JUAN GONZALO OSPINA - EXPERIENCE

Martínez-Echevarría



(Lawyer)

Independent



(Criminal Lawyer)


Ospina Abogados



(Managing Partner)

ended the life of Edwin Arrieta, something that the defendant acknowledged on several occasions, the defense argued that the crime was committed in self-defense without premeditation, following an alleged rape attempt by the Colombian surgeon. If the defendant had been sentenced for reckless homicide, his sentence would have ranged from six to eight years in prison. On the other hand, after the reading of the sentence, Daniel Sancho's defense announced its desire to exercise its right to appeal. "We have to wait to see if the sentence will be appealed by Daniel Sancho's defense and we will challenge it once the sentence is final," explains Juango.

A SUCCESS STORY FOR OSPINA ABOGADOS

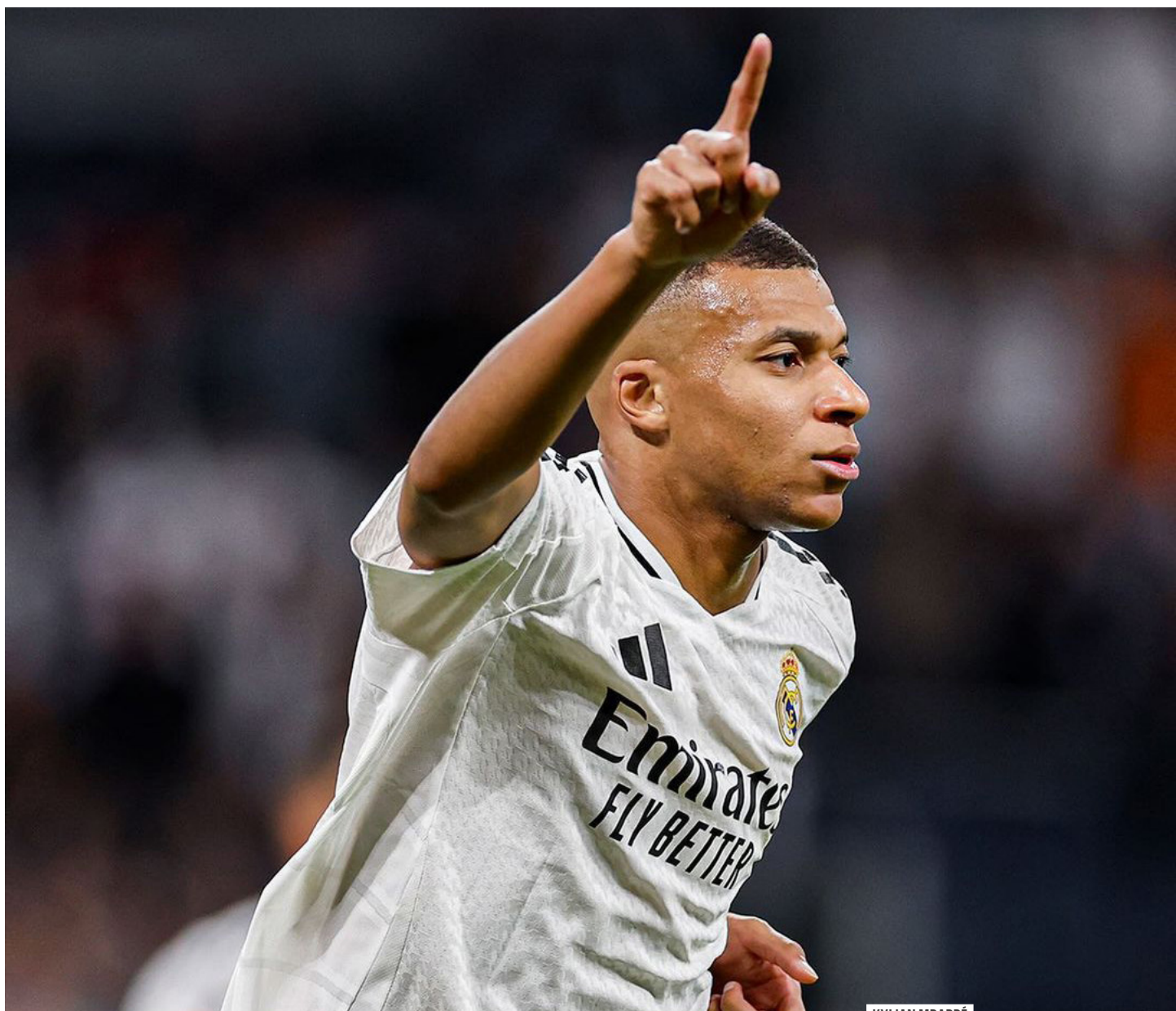
For the law firm founded by Juango Ospina, the case has been a success due to the choice of the local law firm and the improvement they felt not only in understanding the Thai culture, but also in being able to respect it. For Ospina, one of the most rewarding moments came with the life sentence. After months of work and facing several obstacles, the firm achieved what the Arrieta family was looking for: that the crime would not go unpunished. 

WHAT WE ARE TALKING ABOUT: DANIEL SANCHO CASE

In August 2023, Daniel Sancho (30 years old) is charged with the murder and dismemberment of Colombian surgeon Edwin Arrieta (44 years old) on the island of Koh Phangan in southern Thailand. The two were on the island spending a few days together. Sancho confesses to the crime shortly after Arrieta's disappearance, which leads to his arrest and subsequent imprisonment. Thai authorities find conclusive evidence, including parts of the victim's body, linking Sancho to the murder. After trial, he is sentenced to life imprisonment for premeditated murder. The case has generated great media impact due to the nature of the crime and the public profile of Sancho, who is the son of a famous Spanish actor.

«The greatest
need and difficulty
was to find
the right law firm
in Thailand»





KYLIAN MBAPPÉ

Gestures worth millions

Recording celebrations as brands is transforming sport. Players such as Mbappé and Vinicius Jr. are turning them into valuable commercial assets. At *Iberian Lawyer*, we analyse this with experts in industrial property

by mercedes galán

Football is no longer just a sporting spectacle; it has also become fertile ground for sophisticated commercial strategies. Athletes are taking their iconic celebrations beyond the field, turning them into strategic commercial assets. From **Kylian Mbappé** to **Michael Jordan**, protecting gestures and movements has become a new way to capitalize on sporting success. At *Iberian Lawyer*, we explore this phenomenon—where sports and industrial property intersect—alongside several experts in the field.

As **María Dolores Garayalde**, a partner in the intellectual property area of Baker McKenzie, explains, in the world of sports, particularly in football, goal celebrations have become a clear personal signature for many players. In recent years, as **Aída Tarí**, head of the Trademarks and Brand Intelligence department at PONS IP, notes, "sports stars such as David Beckham, Rafael Nadal, Pau Gasol, Tiger Woods, Michael Schumacher, Gareth Bale, or Cristiano Ronaldo have opted to protect their names, nicknames, slogans, and celebrations as trademarks in different jurisdictions."



MARÍA DOLORES GARAYALDE

LEGAL OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

"The main opportunity is to monetize these distinctive expressions, granting exclusive rights to exploit their use in the market, both directly and through licensing to third parties," says



LUIS BAZ

Garayalde. For a celebration to be registered, it must be graphically representable. "It can be a figurative mark (a static image), a movement mark (an animation), or even a multimedia mark (a combination of video and sound)," she explains. Tarí highlights that "the challenge for industrial property lawyers, as exemplified by the case of Mbappé, is to develop comprehensive strategies to protect intangible assets in a global and digitalized environment, as athletes now extend trademark registration beyond their name and signature, including celebrations and sound marks."

Some standout examples include the famous "jumping player" image of Michael Jordan, registered by Nike, or the animation of Cristiano Ronaldo running and jumping vertically with his arms outstretched while shouting "Siuuu," which could be registered as a multimedia mark, Garayalde points out. The celebration must also meet registration requirements such as distinctiveness and the absence of conflicts with prior rights. Athletes, agents, and clubs need to define a national and international protection strategy for these distinctive signs, Tarí explains. Although trademark law and image rights are separate legal regimes, they complement each other in the protection strategy for the athlete

or sports entity. However, when asked if a football celebration can meet the originality requirements to be protected by copyright under Intellectual Property Law, **Luis Baz**, head of the trademark area at Elzaburu, is clear: "According to the law, for a work to be protected, it must be expressed in any medium or tangible or intangible support. In other words, it is unlikely that the athlete's gesture, considered on its own, would meet this requirement."

But if the gesture were transferred into a drawing, who would be the author? According to Baz, "if it was not created by the athlete, I'm afraid that the athlete could only reserve the exploitation rights of the work, but the authorship and moral rights would belong to the actual creator." The law protects the expression of a work, not ideas, so if the drawing is not made by the athlete, it would be difficult for it to reflect their imprint, and they would not be considered the author. Consequently, "I don't think this is the best route to attempt to protect a football celebration," Baz concludes.

Regarding legal challenges, like the opportunities, as Garayalde points out, "they will depend on the specific project and brand." In many cases, the main challenges consist of carefully determining, for example, whether the player can request or exploit the trademark in light of prior contracts signed with their respective clubs or past sponsors, whether due to industrial property obligations or image rights exploitation.

PROTECTION AND DEFENSE OF THESE RIGHTS

As Garayalde notes, the strategy for registering a celebration mark will depend on the specific project and must consider several factors: compatibility with existing agreements on image rights and sponsorship, the structure for marketing the products or services that include the mark, and variations in international legal regimes. Additionally, it is essential to comply with legal obligations, such as continuous use of the mark to avoid cancellation, and to monitor for potential misuse to protect the registered mark. "Any mark not used for an uninterrupted

period of five years allows a third party to take action to request the cancellation of that mark," she emphasizes.

If the athlete has not registered their trademark, they can still claim for infringement of their image rights. As Baz points out, when it comes to claiming a violation of intellectual property or image rights, each case must be assessed individually. "A footballer could invoke the Organic Law on the Protection of Honor, Privacy, and Self-Image to claim a violation of their rights if their image is used without authorization for commercial purposes. This route would allow them to request the cessation of unauthorized use and also seek compensation for damages or illicitly obtained profits," he explains.

COMMERCIAL IMPACT

The growing trend of co-branding and the importance of endorsers in marketing drive the protection of such trademarks. "Brands leverage the image of sports stars to stand out in advertising campaigns and generate positive associations that resonate with consumers," explains Tari. Aware of the importance of their image, some athletes capitalize on their trademarks through sponsorship and merchandising agreements. As Garayalde points out, this approach is especially relevant given that some footballers generate more income from their image and commercial activities than



AÍDA TARI



VINICIUS JUNIOR

from their on-field performance.

Registered celebrations become part of the player's identity, strengthening their personal brand, enhancing emotional connections with fans, and increasing their appeal to sponsors, Garayalde highlights. These celebrations not only create an emotional bond with fans but also allow brands to develop more effective advertising campaigns and gain visibility.

SUCCESS STORIES

Kylian Mbappé, for example, has registered his famous celebration as a trademark in the EU, allowing him to control its commercial use in products, licenses, and other forms of exploitation. "This type of protection turns symbolic gestures into valuable assets that diversify athletes' revenue streams," Garayalde points out. Mbappé's trademark portfolio goes beyond the conventional, including not only his celebration pose but also iconic phrases like *"Le football il a changé"* and *"Moi tu m'parles pas d'âge,"* comments Tari. Vinicius Jr. has also registered his "BAILAVINIJR" brand and others, related to his popular celebratory dances, for commercial exploitation.

However, it is important to remember that the relationship between a player and their sponsors can limit the use of their registered personal brand due to exclusivity clauses or the need to obtain approval for certain commercial uses. Additionally, contracts with clubs often include clauses about image rights that allow the club to control how the player's trademarks are used, Garayalde concludes. ¹⁰



EXAMPLES OF REGISTRATIONS PROTECTING THE CELEBRATION OF ONE OF OUR SPORTING STARS

GRAPHICAL EXAMPLES OF BRANDS



Kylian Mbappé, with the European Union trade mark n. 018984423, registered in 2024



Kylian Mbappé, with the European Union trade mark No. 017157355 .Registered in 2019



Jude Bellingham, with the European Union trade mark n. 018725642, in 2024



Lionel Messi, already in 2015 obtained the registration of his own signature also before the EUIPO



just like Pau Gasol in 2003



Welshman Gareth Bale's celebration was recorded in the UK on 19 July 2013 by the same player

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09:00 - 13:00	Opening Conference "Finance and Geopolitics"	  	Four Seasons Hotel Milan Via Gesù 6/8, Milan	REGISTER
13:00	 Light Lunch			
14:00 - 16:00	Roundtable "Family Holdings and Italian Economy"	 d'Aniello & Associati STUDIO LEGALE TRIBUTARIO	Four Seasons Hotel Milan Via Gesù 6/8, Milan	REGISTER
16:00 - 18:00	Roundtable		Four Seasons Hotel Milan Via Gesù 6/8, Milan	REGISTER




TUESDAY 12 NOVEMBER

09:00 - 13:00	Conference "Safe assets, securitisation and Capital Market Union"		Four Seasons Hotel Milan Via Gesù 6/8, Milan	REGISTER
09:15 - 11:15	Roundtable "Leadership & Management"	 Morpurgo e Associati Studio Legale	Four Seasons Hotel Milan Via Gesù 6/8, Milan	REGISTER
11:15 - 13:00	Roundtable "M&A e Private Capital Outlook"	 	Four Seasons Hotel Milan Via Gesù 6/8, Milan	REGISTER
13:00	 Light Lunch			
14:00 - 16:00	Roundtable		Four Seasons Hotel Milan Via Gesù 6/8, Milan	REGISTER
16:00 - 18:00	Roundtable		Four Seasons Hotel Milan Via Gesù 6/8, Milan	REGISTER
From 18:30	Cocktail		ADVANT Nctm Via Agnello 12, Milan	FOR INFO

WEDNESDAY 13 NOVEMBER

09:30 - 13:00	Conference		Four Seasons Hotel Milan Via Gesù 6/8, Milan	REGISTER
11:00 - 13:00	Roundtable "Tax Reform/Cooperative Compliance"		Four Seasons Hotel Milan Via Gesù 6/8, Milan	REGISTER
13:00	 Light Lunch			
14:00 - 16:00	Roundtable "The revolution to come: digital wallets, payments and regulations ahead"		Four Seasons Hotel Milan Via Gesù 6/8, Milan	REGISTER
16:15 - 18:00	Roundtable "Restructuring"		Four Seasons Hotel Milan Via Gesù 6/8, Milan	REGISTER

THURSDAY 14 NOVEMBER

09:00 - 13:00	Conference: Private Equity		Four Seasons Hotel Milan Via Gesù 6/8, Milan	REGISTER
13:00	 Light Lunch			
19:15 - 23:00	Financecommunity Awards		Rubattino56 Via Raffaele Rubattino n.56 Milan	FOR INFO

OPENING CONFERENCE

FINANCE AND GEOPOLITICS

11.11.2024 - 09.00 - 13.00

LUNCH TO FOLLOW

FOUR SEASONS HOTEL

Via Gesù, 6/8 - Milan, Italy

PROGRAM*

- 8:45 Check-In and Welcome Coffee
- 9.15 Greetings
- 9:30 Welcome Speeches
- 10.00 Session I
- 11.00 Coffee Break
- 11.30 Session II
- 12:30 Keynote Speech
- 12.50 Closing Remarks
- 13.00 Light Lunch

SPEAKERS**Orlando Barucci**, Managing Partner, *Vitale & Co.***Michela Cannovale**, Journalist, *Inhousecommunity***Gregorio Consoli**, Managing Partner, *Chiomenti***Rob Cox**, Founder/CEO, *Frontwards Strategic Communications*, Senior Advisor, *UBS*,
Former global editor, *Reuters Breakingviews***Nicola Di Molfetta**, Editor-in-Chief, *Financecommunity***Livio Fenati**, Founder & Managing Partner, *Vesper Infrastructure Partners***Eleonora Fraschini**, Journalist, *Financecommunity***Federico Freni**, Undersecretary of State to the *Ministry of Economy and Finance***Patrizia Micucci**, Managing Director, *Neuberger Berman***Fabrizio Pagani**, Partner, *Vitale & Co.* | Professor, *SciencesPo Paris* | Former *G20 Sherpa* and *OECD Director***Corrado Passera**, Founder & CEO, *illimity***Aldo Scaringella**, CEO, *LC Publishing Group S.p.A.***REGISTER
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ROUNDTABLE

FAMILY HOLDINGS AND ITALIAN ECONOMY

11.11.2024 - 14.00 - 16.00**FOUR SEASONS HOTEL**

Via Gesù, 6/8 - Milan, Italy

SPEAKERS***Francesco Amyas d'Aniello**, leading partner, *d'Aniello & Associati***Massimiliano Cagliero**, Founder and CEO, *BANOR SIM***Stefano Trettel**, Tax Director, *Fininvest S.p.A.*, Advisory Board, *Assoholding*

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ROUNDTABLE

LEADERSHIP & MANAGEMENT

12.11.2024

09.15 - 11.15

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TAXES
REFORM

ROUNDTABLE
**TAX
REFORM/COOPERATIVE
COMPLIANCE**

13.11.2024**11.00 - 13.00****FOUR SEASONS HOTEL**

Via Gesù, 6/8

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ROUNDTABLE

THE REVOLUTION TO COME: DIGITAL WALLETS, PAYMENTS AND REGULATIONS AHEAD

13.11.2024**14.00 - 16.00****FOUR SEASONS HOTEL**

Via Gesù, 6/8

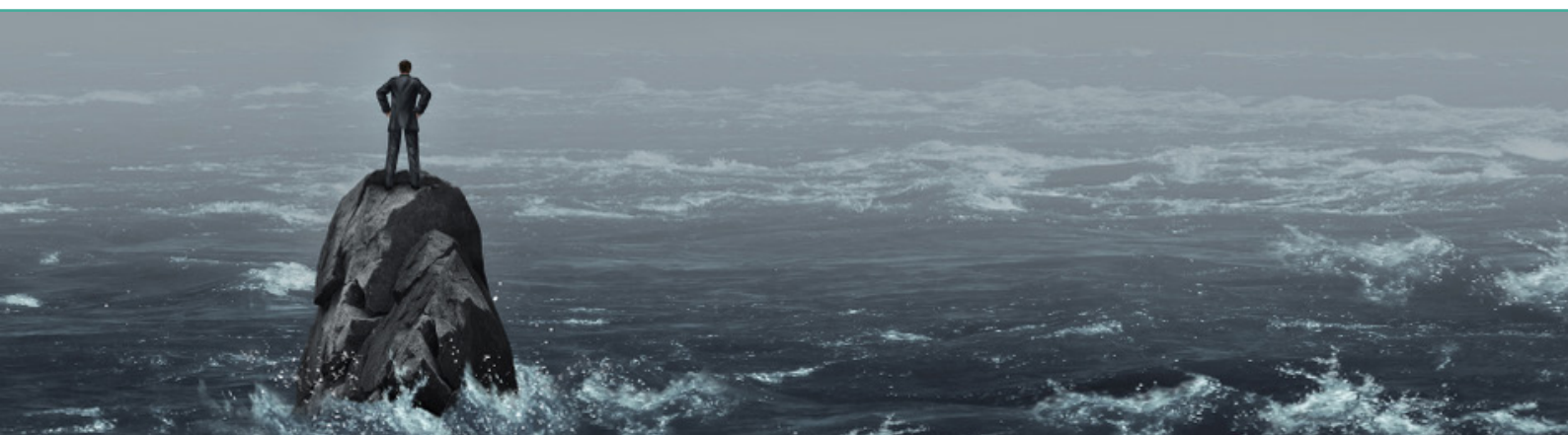
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ROUNDTABLE

RESTRUCTURING

13.11.2024

16.15 - 18.00

FOUR SEASONS HOTEL

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Legal AI made in Spain

A tool for lawyers that promises to optimise information analysis, but what challenges does it pose for the sector? We spoke to founders Daniel Vecino and Alex Dantart to find out more

by ilaria iaquinta

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is making rapid strides in the legal sector, fuelling an ongoing debate about its impact on legal professionals. Tools designed to process large volumes of information promise to boost efficiency in tasks that used to require hours of human effort. However, the emergence of these technologies raises questions about the role of technology in law and the risks associated with its adoption. Last September, legal tech firm Little John introduced a free Spanish-language AI tool for lawyers, aligning itself with industry giants like Harvey in creating legal tech solutions ([here the news](#)). One tool developed from this model is Justicio, designed to provide foundational legal answers to professionals in the field ([here the news](#)).

The concept behind this solution, explains **Daniel Vecino**, CEO and co-founder of Little John, responds to a critical need within the legal sector. Speaking to *Iberian Lawyer*, he notes: “If you ask any legal professional, they will tell you one of the biggest challenges is searching, selecting, and organising vast amounts of information. The real challenge is being able to create well-founded responses based on that data to support cases. The complexity does not lie solely in finding the information but in knowing how to interpret it correctly for the specific contexts each lawyer faces”. In the pre-digital era, lawyers relied on traditional legal databases or physical libraries. With digitalisation, however, the volume of available information has grown exponentially, creating a need for more sophisticated tools. “Today, we have technologies that, when properly combined, can help overcome this challenge”, Vecino adds, referring to how tech can optimise tasks that once required significant time and effort.

«The complexity does not lie solely in finding information but in knowing how to interpret it correctly»

Daniel Vecino



DANIEL VECINO

TECHNICAL AND LEGAL CHALLENGES

Despite technological advances, the development of AI-based legal tools presents numerous challenges. According to Vecino, “the technical and legal difficulties are deeply intertwined”, particularly in a highly regulated field like law. He highlights three key challenges in developing Justicio: “First, the tool had to be usable by professionals without requiring technical knowledge. Second, we wanted to avoid the ‘black box’ issue, meaning that the AI’s responses had to be transparent. Justicio offers clear, well-founded answers with specific references, allowing users to understand where the information



ALEX DANTART

comes from. Finally, we needed to eliminate so-called 'hallucinations' – incorrect or fabricated responses, a phenomenon some AIs experience when they generate data not based on real facts”.

One of the critical aspects of Justicio's development, explains **Alex Dantart**, CTO and co-founder of Little John, was training the AI model to work with accurate and relevant data. “We need two things: data accuracy and absolute reliability, because in law, any error can have serious consequences”. To achieve this, the team engaged in a data selection and processing phase, ensuring only pertinent information was included. “The first thing we had to do was select data, to decide what to include and what not. This process involved speaking with many lawyers to understand what information really matters in their day-to-day work”, Dantart elaborates.

They also had to label and classify each piece of information. “We had to tag all the words, knowing which were people, companies, dates, figures, laws, rulings... and classify them into specific categories, like regulations or royal decrees, so the system could interpret the legal context correctly”, he explains. Additionally, they had to manage cross-references between new and older laws, given that the legal framework is constantly updated. Another key aspect was avoiding excessive ‘noise’ in the data, which could lead the AI to provide confusing or irrelevant answers. “We realised that bigger is not always better with AIs; it is much more important for the data to be of high quality”, Dantart asserts. As a result, they opted to train their own model, specifically tailored for the Spanish legal sector, rather than using a generic one.

UPDATING AND ACCOUNTABILITY

One of the essential factors for the success of any AI tool in the legal field is its ability to stay updated. “Justicio has bots that check new laws every day, both from Europe and Spain's autonomous communities”, explains Dantart. These systems ensure that the AI keeps up with legislative changes and offers responses based on the most up-to-date regulations.

However, updating information is not just about adding new documents. Vecino clarifies: “Updating is not just about adding new documents; it is about linking them properly with previous ones and ensuring that the responses remain coherent and accurate. It is about setting up the necessary rules so the information is grounded in current legislation”.

«We need two things: data accuracy and absolute reliability, as any mistake in law can have serious consequences»

Alex Dantart



JUSTICIO



Regarding accountability, Vecino is clear that AI does not replace the lawyer: “Justicio is not a lawyer and does not aim to be. It is a tool to help legal professionals obtain well-founded answers, but the interpretation and use of that information must always be done by the professional”. Therefore, the ultimate responsibility lies with the lawyer using the AI-generated responses in their specific context.

THE IMPACT OF AI ON THE LEGAL SECTOR

The introduction of AI into the legal sector is met with both excitement and concern. While some see it as an opportunity to optimise processes and reduce time, others fear these technologies could threaten certain jobs, especially at the lower levels of the profession. Vecino addresses these concerns with a practical perspective: “The limit isn’t the technology. The real limit is in how it is used to enhance professionals’ capabilities. AI does not

«The concern for professionals is not artificial intelligence but the fact that fewer cases are reaching court, processes are dragging on, and legal costs are lower»


Daniel Vecino

«The limit is not the technology. It is in how it’s used to enhance professionals’ capabilities»

Daniel Vecino

replace the lawyer; it complements them, allowing them to focus on tasks that add real value”.

For Vecino, the real challenge for lawyers is not AI but adapting to changes within the judicial system. “Professionals’ concern is not artificial intelligence, but the fact that fewer cases are reaching court, processes are taking longer, and legal fees are lower. Law firms will need to be more efficient in their operations, and AI is a key tool to help them achieve that and boost their capabilities”, he notes.

As technology continues to advance, AI platforms may play a significant role in the evolution of the legal sector, not just in Spain but also in other countries. Vecino reveals that they are already working on bringing Justicio to other markets, particularly in Latin America and Europe, where there are regulatory similarities. “It is a long process because each country has its own legal framework, but we have collaborators helping us explore these markets”, he concludes. 



The barriers holding back foreign investment in Spain

Taxation, bureaucracy, and regulatory complexities are the main challenges for multinationals, according to the *Barómetro del Clima de Negocios en España 2023*. Iberian Lawyer discussed the issue with Cuatrecasas, Uría Menéndez, and Baker McKenzie

by ilaria iaquinta

Spain continues to be one of the top destinations for foreign direct investment, thanks to its infrastructure, market size, and human capital. This is according to the *Barómetro del Clima de Negocios en España 2023*, published in September by ICEX-Invest in Spain, alongside the Spanish Chamber of Commerce and the *Foro de Marcas Renombradas Españolas*. However, despite these strengths, the report highlights significant challenges: taxation, bureaucracy, the slow judicial system, and energy costs are major concerns for multinational companies already operating in, or considering entering, the country.



JOAN HORTALÀ



DAVID LÓPEZ VELÁZQUEZ

TAXATION: A HEAVY BURDEN FOR BUSINESSES

Multinationals consider Spain's tax burden to be high. More than 30% of foreign companies surveyed see it as a serious obstacle, with 50% saying it hampers investment, directly impacting profitability. The key concerns revolve around corporate tax, social security contributions, and VAT.

Joan Hortalà, a transfer pricing partner at Cuatrecasas, notes that although taxation across Europe is broadly similar due to EU and OECD initiatives, Spain's tax burden remains high but comparable to other European nations, including in tax audits. "The real challenge lies in practical application. Bureaucracy is extensive, complex, and slow, and the cooperation from the tax authorities is often lacking, especially in terms of speed. Multinational companies need quicker and more empathetic responses to their queries. Another significant challenge is the time it takes to resolve tax disputes, which can take years", he emphasises.

To mitigate the tax impact, Hortalà stresses the importance of "proper planning in advance, as once certain investments or decisions are made,



HEIDI LÓPEZ CASTRO

burden. “That said, some sectors — especially strategic ones affecting public order, security, or health — require additional permits. In these cases, it’s crucial to have specialised advisors who can guide businesses on the best way to operate in Spain — what legal structure is most appropriate, whether outsourcing certain tasks makes sense initially, the potential benefits of incentives, and the associated costs and timelines. Understanding the ‘playing field’ is essential to avoid surprises and plan activities effectively”, he adds. He also recommends having the right technology in place to streamline online procedures and reduce both time and costs.

Spain provides quality dispute resolution mechanisms, with a judicial system that ensures security and arbitration backed by the UNCITRAL Model Law, notes **Heidi López Castro**, a partner at Uría Menéndez. The country has strong national and international arbitration

it is difficult to adjust their tax implications. Spain’s tax system offers attractive advantages for certain activities, such as the Patent Box or the expat regime, but it’s vital to prepare the investment carefully and ensure supporting documentation is in place to avoid issues in practice. It’s also becoming increasingly common for taxpayers to take out tax insurance policies to minimise their exposure to identified risks”.

BUREAUCRACY AND THE JUDICIAL SYSTEM: A NEVER-ENDING MAZE

Bureaucracy is another major hurdle. Administrative processes are slow and costly, while lengthy commercial court cases add uncertainty. 33% of companies view bureaucracy as one of the biggest impediments to doing business in Spain.

“Although there is always room for improvement”, says **David López Velázquez**, counsel at Uría Menéndez, “Spain is neither hostile nor particularly complicated for foreign investment.” Recent reforms, such as the digitisation of notarial procedures, have simplified and reduced the bureaucratic



ANTONIO MORALES

courts, and its legal framework facilitates the swift enforcement of arbitral awards. “The main advantages of arbitration include the expertise of arbitrators in handling complex business disputes, the confidentiality of proceedings, the parties’ involvement in determining the process, and greater flexibility. Lastly, arbitral awards are final and binding, shortening the resolution process as there is no possibility of appeal or cassation”, she explains.

REGULATORY COMPLEXITIES

Spain’s regulatory environment is complex, particularly when operating across different autonomous regions. Regulations can vary significantly from one region to another, creating additional administrative costs and complicating daily operations. According to the *Barómetro*, 38% of companies view these differences as one of the main challenges.

Administrative complexity in Spain poses a challenge for foreign companies, as “a single investment project may be subject to regulations from up to three different levels of government (national, regional, and local)”, says **Antonio Morales**, head of the public law practice at Baker

McKenzie. This is particularly problematic in sectors where regulations vary by municipality and region, such as urban planning. For Morales, “bureaucratic burden and a fluctuating regulatory environment are among the biggest concerns for foreign investors. Therefore, it’s crucial that companies interested in investing in Spain seek specialised local advice from the outset to understand the complexities of the Spanish administrative system and take the right steps from the beginning. That said, despite the challenges, Spain remains a very attractive investment destination, partly due to the strong legal certainty our system provides”.

SUSTAINABILITY: A CHALLENGE FOR THE FUTURE

The *Barómetro* reveals that only 42% of foreign companies in Spain have a sustainability strategy, with a focus on gender equality and clean energy use. **Ester Navas**, compliance partner at Baker McKenzie, notes that European sustainability requirements are becoming more stringent, adding “complexity and regulatory fragmentation” that could pose a barrier to foreign investment. Within the EU, Spain is



ESTER NAVAS

ENERGY COSTS: THE GREAT THREAT TO COMPETITIVENESS


Energy prices in Spain have soared to alarming levels. According to the *Barómetro*, energy costs are identified as the country’s greatest competitive weakness, impacting 62% of surveyed foreign companies, particularly those in energy-intensive sectors such as manufacturing and heavy industry. The war in Ukraine has further aggravated the situation, leading to extreme price volatility. The report highlights that for 46% of companies, the rise in energy costs has had a significant negative impact on their operations in Spain, reducing their competitiveness compared to other European markets with lower or more stable costs. This situation adds further uncertainty, as many long-term energy contracts have lost their ability to cushion price shocks.

one of the stricter countries, “especially when it comes to reporting obligations”.

While some countries have limited these obligations to the types of companies mandated by EU legislators, Spain has extended them to more businesses. “In practice, it’s very difficult to explain to international groups with subsidiaries across Europe that their Spanish subsidiary—possibly with a smaller workforce and lower turnover than others—is required to report on sustainability when their other European subsidiaries are not. This increased rigidity around sustainability in Spain could

end up tipping the balance in favour of other countries that have chosen not to go beyond EU requirements, which are already demanding and complex”, she explains.

Despite these challenges, 88% of foreign companies plan to maintain or increase their investment in 2024.

Nevertheless, to secure Spain’s position as an attractive destination, it will be essential to simplify bureaucracy, adjust taxation, and enhance regulatory stability. 

88%

of foreign companies will maintain or increase their investment in Spain

30%

of companies see taxation as a serious obstacle

50%

state that the tax system hinders investment

33%

consider bureaucracy a major hurdle for operating in Spain

62%

cite energy costs as the biggest competitive weakness

46%

report that rising energy costs negatively affect their operations

38%

of companies see regulatory differences between autonomous regions as a key challenge

42%

of foreign companies in Spain have a sustainability strategy

Source: Barómetro del clima de negocios en España 2023



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PROGRAM

18.15 Check-in

18.30 Welcome Cocktail

19.15 Roundtable

*Bridging the Gap: Technology's Role in Enhancing
Collaboration Between In-House Counsel
and External Lawyers*

20.00 Awards Ceremony

21.00 Seated Dinner

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GIULIANO IANNACCONI, LUIGI PERIN

Investment in the U.S.: “business as usual”

After talking about the foreign investment in Spain, we shift our focus towards the U.S. market, a key destination for European companies, including those from Spain

by giuseppe salemme and ilaria iaquinta

With the U.S. presidential election fast approaching – November 5th, to be exact – the world's attention is fixed on what's happening in the United States. This time, voters will choose between former president **Donald Trump** and the current Vice President, **Kamala Harris**. While Europe has largely focused on U.S. foreign policy and geopolitics, the American economy is something that impacts us directly. The trade links between Spain and the U.S., in particular, have reached impressive figures, with a total exchange of \$19.7 billion, highlighting the importance of this relationship. Countries like Italy have capitalised on this potential: in 2023, Italian exports to the U.S. hit a record \$72.7 billion, positioning Italy as one of Washington's key European partners.

Although the upcoming presidential elections may cause uncertainty, experts are reassuring that there's no need for immediate concern. **Giuliano Iannaccone**, head of the international practice at Tarter Krinsky & Drogin in New York, and **Luigi Perin**, a tax expert at Funaro & Co., also based in New York, told MAG ([here's the original](#)

[article](#)) that the U.S. market continues to offer opportunities, even in the face of political shifts.

According to Iannaccone, who has spent 25 years advising Italian companies in industries such as fashion, food, and construction, "Political or economic crises that seem to threaten the U.S. market almost always create new opportunities in other sectors. Companies that are negatively affected at one point often bounce back and grow in the years that follow." Perin, for his part, emphasised that while elections stir anxiety, they are unlikely to drastically change the business landscape: "If Harris wins, there will be continuity with the Biden administration. If Trump wins, we might see changes in tariffs or incentives, but the interest in European, particularly Italian, products will remain strong."

In short, experts agree that once the electoral uncertainty subsides, the U.S. market will remain an attractive environment for European investment: business as usual. 🇺🇸



DONALD TRUMP



KAMALA HARRIS

FIVE THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT U.S. LAW AND TAXATION

TAXES VARY BY STATE

While the U.S. doesn't have a reputation for being a tax jungle, foreign companies need to pay close attention to the concept of "economic presence". This means that a European company could be required to file tax returns in a U.S. state without ever establishing a physical presence there. For instance, if a Spanish company exceeds \$100,000 in revenue in New Jersey, it must file a tax return there, even if no one has ever set foot in the state. As Perin notes, "It's like Italy in the 1400s, when you had to pay taxes every time you crossed a border".

LONG, DETAILED CONTRACTS

In Europe, short and to-the-point contracts are common, but in the U.S., the trend is the opposite: contracts tend to be long and detailed. "In the U.S., length is synonymous with clarity. If you don't regulate the contract in full detail, there's a risk a judge will do it for you," explains Iannaccone. This approach can surprise European businesses, used to more concise agreements, but it's essential for avoiding misunderstandings and litigation.

CORPORATE TRANSPARENCY ACT

Traditionally, setting up a company in the U.S. has been a quick and simple process, but with the new Corporate Transparency Act, businesses are now required to provide detailed information about their key shareholders and directors to the authorities. However, large companies with more than 20 employees, a physical presence in the U.S., and more than \$5 million in revenue may be exempt from this requirement. "In the past, you could establish a company in a matter of hours; today, it's more complicated due to the controls over shareholder data", Iannaccone points out.

ESG STRATEGY UNDER SCRUTINY

In some U.S. states, like Texas, investment decisions based on ethical, social, or environmental principles (ESG) are restricted. Conversely, in others, like California, directors are allowed to prioritise social or environmental goals in their business decisions. European companies must take these state-level differences into account when operating in the U.S., as approaches to ESG principles can vary significantly, impacting business strategy. Iannaccone notes that the "business judgement rule", which protects directors' decisions, can be applied differently depending on the state.

THE COST OF LITIGATION AND COMPLIANCE

Litigation in the U.S. is notoriously expensive, and the risk of lawsuits is particularly high in states like California, where regulations are so extensive that companies often struggle to comply with all of them. Iannaccone explains how lawsuits for unpaid overtime have surged, especially due to regulations that require businesses to prove the hours worked. Additionally, laws like Proposition 65 or the Americans with Disabilities Act have led to a rise in lawsuits, with law firms specialising in representing employees or consumers seeking damages for compliance issues.



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JOSE MARIA DE LA JARA EUGENIA NAVARRO, MARIA PEDROSA AND GABRIEL SILVA

Legal operations take off in Spain

CLOC launches its chapter in Spain, aiming to adapt the best international practices to the local context, fostering a more efficient and modern legal management. The vision of its leaders

by ilaria iaquinta

The revolution in legal operations has landed in Spain. In July 2024, the Spanish chapter of the Corporate Legal Operations Consortium (CLOC), the largest global community dedicated to legal operations, was officially launched, marking a significant milestone in the transformation of the country's legal sector. Led by top professionals such as **Eugenia Navarro** (partner at Lois and director of programmes at Esade), **Gabriel Silva** (legal manager at TravelPerk), **María Pedrosa** (head of legal tech & knowledge management at Repsol), and **José María de la Jara** (senior legal operations consultant at LOIS), this initiative heralds a new era of legal management, focused on efficiency, technology, and professionalism, promising to redefine work standards within Spanish law firms and legal departments.

CLOC Spain has a clear purpose: to create a community that addresses the specific challenges of the Spanish legal market by adapting the best international practices to local realities. Legal operations, which have already transformed the sector in the United States and the United Kingdom, are beginning to gain traction in Spain, although the level of adoption in the country is still developing. CLOC provides a collaborative space for professionals committed to modernising their legal departments and seeking greater efficiency.

WHAT ARE LEGAL OPERATIONS?

The definition of legal operations may initially seem ambiguous, as it encompasses multiple areas of work, from supplier management to the efficient delivery of legal services. As Navarro explains to *Iberian Lawyer*, “it is a set of processes and dynamics that enhance the efficiency of legal matters, both for the processes of an in-house department and for a law firm”. This concept extends far beyond simple task management; it involves a complete reconfiguration of how legal services are delivered, aimed at achieving technical and operational excellence.

Navarro also emphasises the importance of measurement in this new paradigm: “What cannot be measured cannot be improved”. This mindset is driving many law firms and legal departments to

adopt models like CLOC's, which identifies twelve key areas of focus to achieve greater efficiency. (see the dedicated box)

A SHIFT IN MINDSET

One of the most noticeable changes in legal departments is the growing demand for a more operational service. “They no longer want just technical excellence; they also want operational excellence”, comments Navarro, highlighting the shift in mindset within the legal sphere. Legal departments and firms are no longer solely focused on the technical quality of advice; they seek to optimise processes, leverage technology, and enhance resource management to maximise their value within organisations.

De la Jara uses a metaphor to illustrate this change: “Legal departments are on fire. They face an overwhelming workload, with tight deadlines and disorganised documents. Legal operations is the fire brigade that helps extinguish that blaze, providing a structured approach to prevent problems from recurring”. This shift has led many firms and legal departments to adopt more



«Legal departments are on fire. Legal operations is the fire brigade that helps extinguish that blaze»

José María de la Jara



LAUNCH PARTY FOR CLOC IN BARCELONA

advanced planning and organisation strategies, moving towards a more agile and adaptive business management model.



«What cannot be measured cannot be improved»

Eugenia Navarro

THE LEGAL OPERATIONS PROFESSIONAL

The profile of those managing legal operations has evolved. What was once considered an exclusive role for lawyers now requires a multidisciplinary approach. Silva articulates this clearly: “I do not think it necessarily has to be a position for a lawyer. Knowledge of the legal framework is advisable, but it must be a multidisciplinary role”. This profile demands skills in project management, technology, data analysis, and business acumen, alongside legal training.

For María Pedrosa, versatility is key: “If you are a lawyer and you work in operations, you need to have knowledge of business and management. And if you are not a lawyer, you must have an in-depth understanding of the legal sector”. This mixed approach reflects the changing nature of legal operations, requiring professionals capable of blending technical expertise with operational and managerial skills.

Moreover, training for these professionals is still in development. “At ESADE, we have started offering training courses in legal operations in

collaboration with MIT, but there is still much work to be done to consolidate this profession", explains Navarro.

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

One of the main challenges facing legal departments in Spain is resistance to change. Navarro notes: "Legal departments are made up of highly technical professionals and telling them they need to change their way of working, including the use of technology, is complicated". The introduction of technological tools, such as artificial intelligence, presents another challenge. For Pedrosa, AI poses a particular hurdle for lawyers, as "we work with language, and AI uses language models that can profoundly impact our profession".

Nevertheless, the potential of technology to transform the legal sector is undeniable. In Silva's words, "technology is not an end in itself, but these days it is impossible to manage a legal department without it". In fact, the automation of processes and the ability to manage large volumes



«Technology is not an end in itself, but these days it is impossible to manage a legal department without it»

Gabriel Silva

of data enable legal departments to enhance their efficiency and improve lawyers' quality of life, freeing them from repetitive tasks. De la Jara adds that it is essential to adjust budgets to this new technological reality to fully harness the potential of the available tools.

THE FUTURE

The future of legal operations appears promising. According to María Pedrosa, "growth in Spain should be exponential because companies are realising that they need people to manage the legal department beyond just legal advice". CLOC Spain positions itself as a key player in this process, aiming to create a community that shares experiences and fosters studies or use cases that reflect the realities of the sector. "Anything that helps us understand where we are is very important", emphasises Navarro.

Legal operations have arrived to stay in Spain, addressing a genuine need within companies. As legal departments adopt new technologies and more efficient ways of working, the role of legal operations professionals will become increasingly crucial. ■



«We work with language, and AI uses language models that can profoundly impact our profession»

María Pedrosa

THE CLOC I2 CORE COMPETENCIES REFERENCE MODEL

CLOC has identified 12 key competencies that every legal department should manage, with the aim of determining its level of maturity. These competencies not only serve to assess a department's growth but also to benchmark it against industry standards. Through this evaluation, legal operations can be classified into three stages: foundational, advanced, or mature, enabling continuous improvements to be made. The identified competencies are as follows:



Source: © 2018 Corporate Legal Operations Consortium, Inc.

COMPETENCY	DESCRIPTION
Financial management	Manage the departmental budget. Track accruals and forecasting. Work with Finance to identify spending trends, potential cost savings and efficiency opportunities
Vendor management	Create a vendor management program to insure quality outside counsel support at the right rates and under optimal fee arrangements. Hold regular business reviews. Negotiate fee agreements. Drive governance of billing guidelines
Cross-functional alignment	Create and drive relationships with other key company functions, such as HR, IT, Finance and Workplace Resources. Represent the Legal organization at CLOC
Technology & process support	Create a long-term technology roadmap including tools such as e-billing/matter management, contract management, content management, IP management, business process management, e-signature, board management, compliance management, legal hold, subsidiary management, etc
Service delivery & alternative support models	Drive departmental efficiency by leveraging the right resources for the right matters, including using managed services, LPOs, and other service providers and technology as appropriate
Organizational design, support & management	Deliver improved GC Staff and overall team performance by globalizing the team and creating a culture of growth, development, collaboration and accountability.
Communications	Work collaboratively across the legal ecosystem to create consistent global processes, from on boarding to complex project management support. Publish regular departmental communications, plan and execute all-hands
Data analytics	Collect and analyze relevant data from department tools and industry sources, define objectives to provide metrics and dashboards, that drive efficiencies and optimize spend, etc
Litigation support & IP management	Support e-discovery, legal hold, document review
Knowledge management	Enable efficiencies by creating seamless access to legal & department institutional knowledge through the organization and centralization of key templates, policies, processes, memos, and other learnings
Information governance & records management	Create a records management program including a record retention schedule, policies and processes. Support Intellectual Property Matters
Strategic planning	Create a long-term strategy, aligning yearly goals and corresponding metrics

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JOSÉ MARÍA BALBOA-TORIBIO

Adapt to the digital revolution

The key role of compliance and cybersecurity according to Inetum's general legal & compliance counsel (Iberia & Latam)

by mercedes galán

From the office to the heart of business strategy, this has been the transformation of the legal counsel in the technological era. In *Iberian Lawyer*, we spoke with **José María Balboa-Toribio**, general legal & compliance counsel (Iberia & Latam) at Inetum, about how the role of the legal advisor has shifted from reactive to leading risk management and strategic decision-making in tech companies.

Did you always have a clear vocation? What led you to transition to an in-house lawyer?

Not at all. I studied a dual degree in Law and Business Administration, aiming for broader options in my professional future, and during my studies, I saw myself more in strategic consulting. After an internship at Clifford Chance, I moved into the in-house world and was captivated. Having a 360-degree view of the company and being where things happen is what I enjoy most.

From your perspective, how has the role of legal counsel in tech companies changed in recent years?

It's clear that we have moved from a reactive role, responding to internal client needs regarding contracts and litigation, to being part of the senior management of companies, advising strategically and proactively on relevant issues such as new regulations or multidimensional compliance. Now we lead risk management and are a key player in the protection and sustainable profitable growth of our company.

How does the legal department collaborate with other areas, such as IT or HR, to ensure comprehensive compliance for the company?

We are a company with agile processes and clear communication between areas, such as



JOSÉ MARÍA BALBOA-TORIBIO

finance and marketing. For each project, we form multidisciplinary teams with well-defined governance and action plans.

What role does your department play in strategic decision-making processes?

After a profound transformation of the legal area, encompassing capabilities, processes, and technology, we are involved in the company's strategic decisions. Senior management includes legal advice from the beginning of any initiative to be part of the team making the corresponding decision. Proof of this is that we are part of the management committee alongside areas that have traditionally occupied a role in such committees, such as finance and HR.

How do you adapt to address emerging trends in the industry, such as sustainability?

In our organization, we adapt to emerging trends through a proactive and strategic approach. First, we constantly analyze the regulatory environment and market needs, trying to anticipate the changes these trends impose. In terms of sustainability, we integrate ESG criteria into our operations and contracts to comply with current regulations and create long-term value for clients and society, aiming to be a B2B2S (business to business to society) company.

And regarding digital transformation or cybersecurity?

Many areas are involved that help us adopt advanced technologies to improve transparency and streamline compliance processes. We implement AI solutions and data analysis to optimize decision-making and manage risk more efficiently. Cybersecurity is a critical priority, especially in an IT services company. To address it, we have developed robust security policies and work closely with our IT and security teams to ensure the highest standards of data protection and information security are applied.

You are a technology company and have recently developed your own AI platform. What technological tools does your team use to improve efficiency in legal management and regulatory compliance?

«We have transitioned from a reactive role to being a key player in the protection and sustainable profitable growth of the company»

We have developed our own platform, and all employees can access an internal certification program called: "Do you speak GenAI?" It combines lectures, podcasts, e-learning, and quizzes in quick and simple modules to help employees assimilate and understand generative AI tools. We have formed an international working group of lawyers to test real cases in legal advice and compliance, achieving satisfactory results in contract review and risk analysis. Additionally, the use of Microsoft Copilot has been very helpful in our daily tasks.

How does Inetum manage compliance in markets with very different regulatory frameworks, such as those in Europe and Latin America?

To ensure compliance with regulations in LATAM, we have local legal teams that understand both the regulatory framework and the cultural practices of each country, ensuring solid legal advice tailored to the commercial and cultural realities of each geography. This local presence guarantees that our advice is not only legally sound but also culturally and commercially appropriate.

And how do you do that?

We adapt our compliance guidelines to local realities through the presence of Compliance Officers in each geography, ensuring advice aligns with the operational needs of each country. We also work closely with external advisors and local experts when necessary, to ensure our understanding of regulatory changes and cultural factors is always up-to-date and comprehensive. By integrating these strategies, we ensure that our legal advice complies with regulations and adapts to the cultural and business context of each jurisdiction in LATAM.

What legal or regulatory trends do you think will have the greatest impact on the technology sector in the coming years?

In the coming years, the technology sector will face significant regulations in key areas such as artificial intelligence, where transparency and ethics in its use will be sought; data protection, with stricter regulations as big data and IoT grow; and cybersecurity, requiring companies to strengthen their systems in light of increasing cyberattacks. Additionally, regulations on sustainability and the management of digital platforms will also play a key role, promoting energy efficiency and controlling online content.


What kind of compliance and business ethics culture is fostered at Inetum, and how is it ensured that it permeates throughout the organization?

At Inetum, we promote a culture of compliance and ethics based on responsibility and transparency, focusing on making regulatory

«Cybersecurity is a critical priority, and we work closely with our IT and security teams to ensure the highest standards of data protection and information security»

compliance a collective commitment rather than just an obligation. This is achieved through leadership, clear policies, continuous training, protected reporting channels, and constant monitoring. We aim to create an ethical organization that respects local and international regulations, operating sustainably and with integrity in all markets where we are present.

With your extensive experience, what advice would you give to new generations of lawyers?

My main advice is to stay curious, adaptable, and open-minded to the constant evolution of the profession. Law is no longer a static discipline; it is deeply influenced by digital transformation, regulatory changes, and social expectations. Therefore, it is crucial to develop a comprehensive approach that encompasses not only the technical knowledge of the law but also skills such as negotiation, a solid understanding of business, and a proactive attitude towards change. 

KEY REGULATORY TRENDS FOR THE TECHNOLOGY SECTOR

- Regulation of artificial intelligence (AI): Transparency, ethics, and responsibility in the use of AI.
- Data protection and privacy: Stricter regulations with the growth of big data and IoT.
- Cybersecurity and digital resilience: Reinforcement of security in light of increasing cyberattacks.
- Sustainability and green technology: Regulations promoting energy efficiency and electronic waste management.
- Regulation of digital platforms: Control of online content and promotion of competition in digital markets.

Artificial Justice: would you accept to be judged by an ia?

A movie for those who want to explore the uncertainties of the future ahead


by julia gil

On Saturday, September 28, at the initiative of the law firm Ceca Magán Abogados, several journalists attended the screening of the movie *Artificial Justice*, the new bet of Spanish cinema in the political thriller genre. I left the cinema with many questions in mind, and I am sure I was not the only one. For those who hate spoilers (like me), relax: this article is made for you.

Directed by **Simon Casal**, *Artificial Justice* is set in a near future that, although fictional, seems increasingly plausible. The plot places us at a critical moment for the Spanish judicial system, where human judges could be replaced by artificial intelligence, designed to offer a faster, fairer and more efficient trial. But the question that floats throughout the film is: are we ready for a software to determine our legal fate?

Verónica Echegui shines as **Carmen Costa**, an examining magistrate assigned by the government to evaluate the feasibility of this revolutionary judicial system. While the AI promises to eliminate human biases and errors, the film soon shows that the issue goes far beyond efficiency and opens a profound reflection on ethics, responsibility and the power we are willing to cede to machines.

Artificial Justice is not just another thriller. Although the plot takes us through the dark corridors of power and moral dilemmas, it also touches on contemporary issues such as the invasion of technology in everyday life and, more specifically, in key sectors such as the judiciary. What happens when artificial intelligence makes decisions that could define the course of our lives? How do we handle the margins of error or even the lack of humanity in these processes?

In short, it is a movie that invites the viewer to reflect on the growing role of artificial intelligence in our societies; while making us wonder to what extent we are willing to give up human intervention in such crucial aspects as justice. 



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JOSÉ ZUDAIRE

SpainCap: private equity prepares for a promising 2024

José Zudaire, managing director at SpainCap, analyzes the private equity landscape in the context of an initial slowdown, but with expectations of recovery in the second half of the year

by julia gil

With positivism and optimism. Despite a somewhat slow start in 2024, marked by a 35% drop in investment compared to the previous year, the outlook for the second half of the year is very positive. According to **José Zudaire**, CEO of SpainCap, better economic conditions and a pipeline of pending large deals augur a significant reactivation of the sector. In addition, new fundraising has shown outstanding growth, with an increase of 36% compared to 2023. This liquidity boost, coupled with the sustained interest of international funds that contributed more than 56% of investment during the first half of the year, positions Spain as an attractive destination for private equity.

In its recent report, SpainCap reported total investment of €6,709 million in 844 deals in 2023. How do you assess the situation in 2024 - positively or negatively?

Despite a start of 2024 marked by a slight slowdown, with a 35% drop in investment compared to 2023, a significant reactivation is expected in the second half of the year, driven by better economic conditions and large pending deals. New fundraising has been outstanding, with a 36% increase over the previous year, recording the best first half of the year in history. This positive trend reflects the support of public programs such as Fond-ICO Global and Next Tech.

2024 seems to be regaining some level of investment activity. From your perspective, what market signals are driving this recovery and how do you expect it to play out in the last quarter of the year?

This second half of the year will see the materialization of several large transactions yet to close. This indicates that investment activity is picking up pace and that megadeals are returning. In addition, there is an increase in available liquidity (dry powder) and the continued interest of international funds in our country, which accounted for 56% of investment in the first half of the year. All this, encouraged by the drop in interest rates, which will contribute to reactivate activity.

«New fundraising has been outstanding, with a 36% increase over the previous year, recording the best first half of the year in history»

Where has SpainCap seen the highest number of investments?

In the last year, the sectors that received the most investment in the first half of the year were key sectors related to new technologies, healthcare, energy/natural resources and industrial products and services.

The study also highlights that international funds have maintained a key role, registering record figures in investment in Spanish companies. What makes Spain an attractive destination for foreign funds and where does foreign investment in Spain come from?

There is no doubt that Spain is becoming a pole of attraction for private equity investment by international funds, thanks to the supply of good projects that are diverse in size, stage and activity. As a reflection of this interest, new international fund managers continue to

SPAINCAP IN FIGURES

- Managers:
170
- Consulting partners :
103
- Investment partners :
24

«New international fund managers continue to arrive in the Spanish market, which until now had not carried out any operations»



JOSÉ ZUDAIRE

arrive on the Spanish market that had not yet done any transactions (44 fund managers in 2023). Thanks to the intense activity of these funds, the private equity sector continues to grow in size and maturity and, consequently, the Spanish business fabric. Most are pan-European and international funds. The presence of international fund managers in recent years has included the financing of numerous projects of very diverse types, both in mature and early-stage companies.

What are SpainCap's forecasts for private equity in 2025, and do you think we could see a consolidation of certain sectors or new emerging investment niches in the coming years?

The forecasts for 2025 are positive and optimistic. Regarding sectors, our industry is characterized by being multi-sectorial, investing in all types of companies and sectors, although there are some that stand out over others depending on the size of the operation. Even so, everything related to new technologies and their applications to different fields is a sector that has been consolidating for some time, as well as those related to Health/Healthcare. 



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- *Carlos García Ciriza - presidente de ASEAFI*

PANEL I. Tras la "meseta" llega el descenso. ¿Demasiado tarde o demasiado intenso?

- *David Cano Martínez - Afi Inversiones Globales SGIIC*

MESA REDONDA I. Tras las bajadas de tipos, ¿dónde están las oportunidades?

- **Modera:** *Vicente Varó- Finect*
- **Participan:** *Fernando Fernández-Bravo Sauco, Invesco; Ana Rosa Castro Aguilar, Nordea AM y Borja González Rueda, M&G Investments*

PANEL II. La importancia de la flexibilidad en un escenario de bajada de tipos.

- *Joaquín Martín Garre - Edmond de Rothschild*

PANEL III. El dilema de la duración: La importancia de la gestión activa en renta fija.

- *Luis Merino González - Santalucía AM*

PANEL IV. Alto Rendimiento, Alta Resistencia

- *Pilar Vila - Schroders*

MESA REDONDA II. ¿No estaremos descontando demasiadas bajadas de tipos y muy rápidas?

- **Modera:** *Carlos Farrás - DPM Finanzas EAF*
- **Participan:** *Gregorio Oyaga Durán, Welcome AM y Félix López Esteban, ATL Capital*

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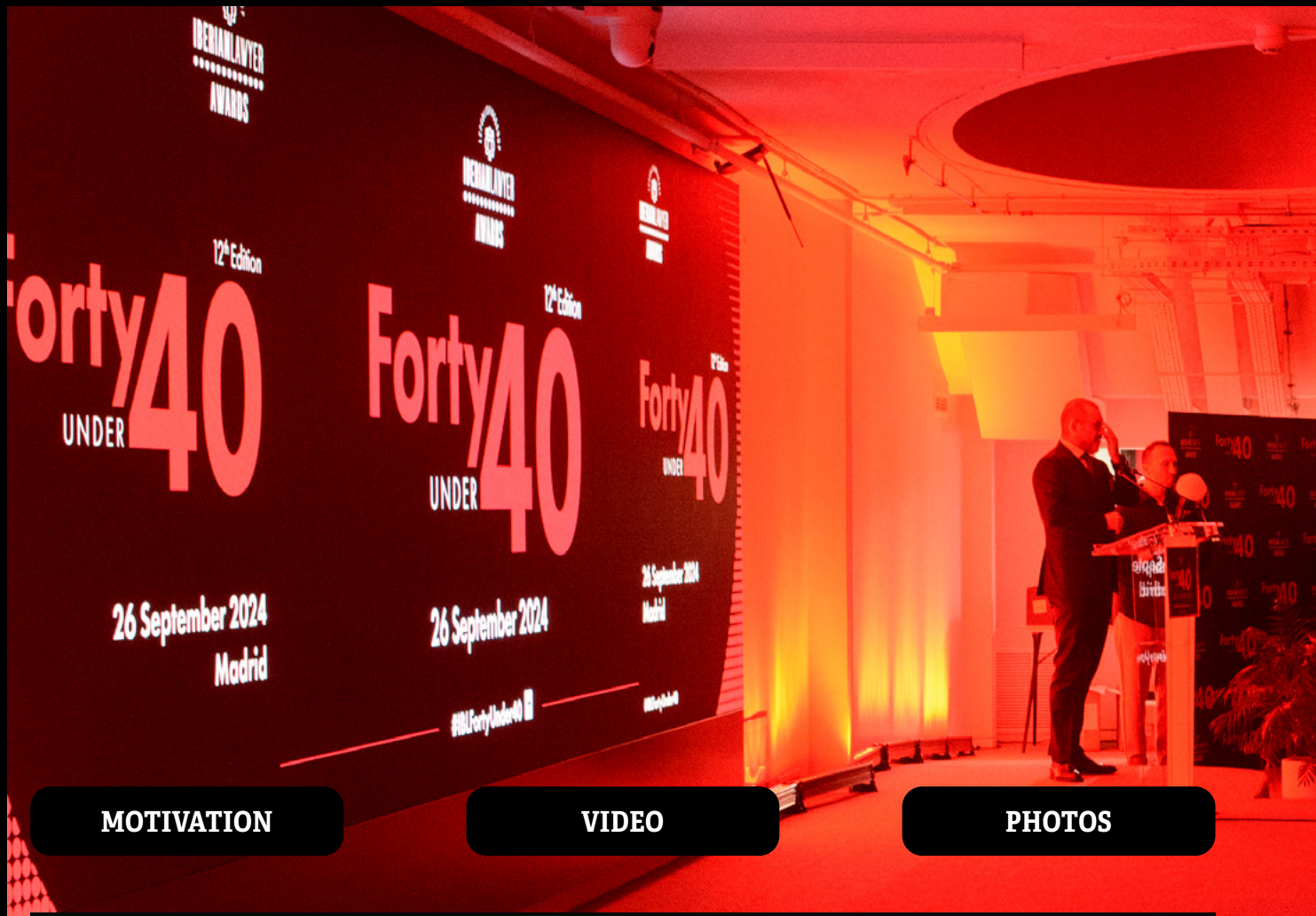
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The winners of the Iberian Lawyer 2024 Forty under 40 Awards were announced at the ceremony gala held on Thursday 26th of October at the Espacio KOI in Madrid.

The ceremony gathered numerous representatives of prestigious law firms and company's in-house departments of Spain and Portugal to recognize the most promising young lawyers and teams in the Iberian market. The awards were an opportunity to celebrate the achievements of the top lawyers and teams under 40 years, who will lead the legal profession in the future and deserve to be recognized for their hard work and dedication in their respective practices.



Categoría	Ganadores
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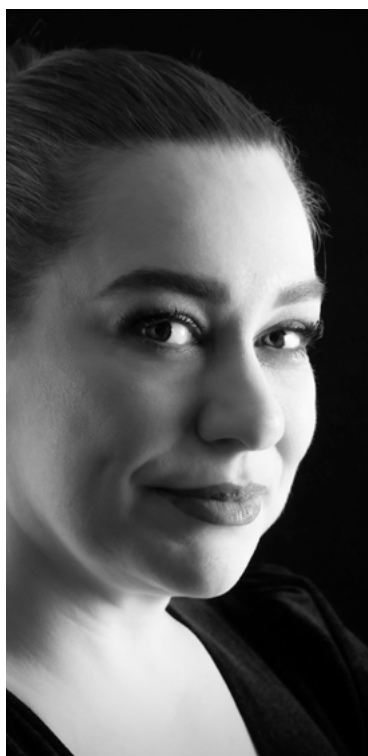
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World Compliance Association

Diary of a compliance officer

by ingrid matos*



Letter to a diary.

Dear diary, today is a new day, hopefully it's a typical day, if I can decide that my days are the same. I was thinking that next year a decade of reform of the Penal Code of 2015 will be completed. I remember this March when the legal responsibility of companies with many more doubts than hope was implemented. Few people take importance for granted. Our lawyers celebrate it, even without giving us an account of what was sold for a while.

Lately I have been reflecting on the last decade. How many corporate lawyers

have we been "promoted" to compliance officers without bonuses, selling this as a rise without understanding why? I remember the day I was assigned and left. I was a mix of uncertainty about myself, and it was good not to change my law firm to something new. I had not studied Compliance at the university. Would you be giving up on being a lawyer and finding yourself in a professional limbo? But how do I reject the offer?

Of course, we knew about growing ethical problems in the world, especially after the globalization of the '80s, which highlighted both the good and the bad of a multicultural

world and exposed questionable practices of large companies.

But looking back, how did I decide that taking on this role would open so many horizons, both in the corporate world and in our own interior?

When I explained to my family and friends that I was a "compliance officer," they asked me if I wasn't a lawyer, what was on that list, and they were confused with the word "compliance." I stopped calling, thinking I was wasting my career. Who, in your sane judgment, would you like to be the ethics police and combat corruption today?

The truth is that we didn't have, at least, the slightest idea of what to do from there, from point zero, from base camp. I went out in search of filling my knowledge backpack by searching for literature and courses, but... there was nothing often, no more friends around me could help. But I was there, after more than 15 years of career, I started again from scratch, a path that had never been planned for me.

Looking back over the years now I see an infinity of courses, books, literature, study cases and ideas... how everything has changed. Before we had a virgin path to explore, now the path is empty, but there is a long path to explore, because corruption is much more diverse, the borders often do not exist for criminals and even though we have a team more prepared to follow the journey of climbing

this mountain, after a decade, how much have we evolved now?

Being a compliance officer does not have to be a solitary adventure; each person in their corner, with their challenges, their stories and using their best skills to (re) teach them that being ethical is a possible option, despite the fact that ethics must be in each person, as an integral part of human naturalness or the reason Rousseau said when he said "People in their natural state are fundamentally good. But this natural innocence, however, is corrupted by the evils of society."

Well, I believe that as professionals we have crossed the Khumbu Glacier (Everest) in this first phase, full of challenges and obstacles.

A decade later, on the ground we fought against corruption as our main objective; We also talk about data protection, climate change, human rights and new forms of fraud and corruption, cybernetics. Is this a sign that, finally, our profession is being truly valued? Platón's phrase is clear: "Poverty does not come because of the diminution of wealth, but because of the multiplication of desires". That is to say, the more I want society to be, the more corrupt it will be?

The desires of the current society are many, they have their collateral effects (is the deterioration of democracy and development?).

But... Is reputation still an important value for people and companies? Does our function work? Will we truly be vectors of change in integrity or solely as a preventive doctor in a pandemic environment? "Our most deep-rooted, most indubitable convictions are the most suspicious. They constitute our limit, our confines, our prison (José Ortega and Gasset) Finally, I consider that José Ortega and Gasset's reflection was correct and can be applied perfectly to our current reality. Being a Compliance Officer requires a high degree of impartiality and mental openness, being able to listen and understand others, and even listen where there is no noise.

Therefore, I resume my daily work and leave here my concerns and thoughts, which I do not dare to share (or should. I have a lot of work; we continue to watch Troy.

Homero Gasset.

**chief compliance officer en QGMI*

Women in a Legal World

Going to work or flirting on Tinder: innovation or violation of rights?

by paula gonzález gonzález*



The introduction of the so-called "Tinder Leave" by the Thai company WhiteLine Group, as an innovative method for talent attraction, has sparked debate about the appropriateness of such a policy in the workplace. This leave would allow employees to use

working hours for personal dates, as announced on the company's website.

According to the available information, this leave allows employees to schedule dates during working hours, although it is unclear whether this includes using work time for dating-related activities or if it only refers to attending these dates outside of work hours. Additionally, the company offers employees a six-month premium subscription to the dating platform, which raises questions about the limits of this measure.

Since 2021, there has been a growing demand for talent, particularly in Europe, the Americas, and Asia, where companies seek to

attract workers from the millennial and Generation Z demographics. These generations value aspects such as personal satisfaction, continuous learning, work-life balance, flexible schedules, a salary that reflects professional development, and a positive work environment. However, introducing free time during working hours for personal matters, such as dating, seems far removed from the real expectations of workers and the strategic priorities of companies. For a company to be considered competitive, it should prioritize key aspects such as employees' mental health, professional growth, and talent recognition through financial compensation or promotions,

rather than offering benefits that do not align with current labor market demands.

From a legal standpoint, companies are required to comply with applicable labor regulations, including collective bargaining agreements, the Workers' Statute, and other complementary laws. If the company's collective agreement does not include specific compensation packages or additional benefits, the company is not obliged to offer them. Nevertheless, companies may voluntarily choose to implement improvements, as long as they do not harm employees, provided these measures comply with the legal framework.

As stated by the company, the "Tinder Leave" will be treated as paid leave, similar to vacation days or personal leave days. However, this raises several questions. In the case of vacation or personal leave days, the employee is only required to inform the employer of the number of days they wish to take without needing to justify the reason, whether it be a trip abroad or a stay at home. Similarly, personal leave days are typically linked to absences that do not require a formal justification, as their purpose is to allow employees to take time off without providing specific details. In contrast, paid leave regulated by the Workers' Statute, such as those for marriage, bereavement, or relocation, as well as additional leave introduced through

collective agreements (e.g., a day off on your birthday), often require evidence of the cause.

If the "Tinder Leave" is treated as a traditional paid leave, the question arises as to whether the company could require employees to provide proof of using the dating app during working hours or justify their absence for attending a "Tinder date." In this context, it is important to highlight that employees enjoy fundamental rights in the workplace, particularly the right to privacy, as enshrined in Article 18 of the Spanish Constitution (CE), as well as Article 4.2.e) of the Workers' Statute.

Moreover, employee privacy rights are reinforced by Organic Law 3/2018 on the Protection of Personal Data and the Guarantee of Digital Rights, specifically Article 87, which sets clear limits for employers regarding the monitoring of employees' private lives within the workplace. Requiring justification for an absence due to the use of a dating app could be considered a violation of the right to privacy and an unlawful invasion of the employee's private sphere.

While this measure has not yet been implemented in European labor markets, its future adoption cannot be ruled out, especially in a context of increasing digitalization and competition among companies to attract young talent. However, the viability of such a policy will largely depend on the development of

case law that clearly defines the rights and obligations of both employees and employers regarding the intersection of personal and professional life. The implementation of policies like "Tinder Leave" poses significant legal and ethical challenges, and its success will depend on a proper balance between protecting employees' rights and the business strategies aimed at talent acquisition. Without a clear legal framework delineating the boundaries between personal and professional life, there is a risk that this measure could be seen as a "labor disaster" rather than an effective innovation in human resources management.

The "Tinder Leave" could represent an attempt to adapt to the demands of newer generations of workers, but it must be carefully analyzed within the existing regulatory framework and with full respect for employees' fundamental rights. Striking a balance between personal and professional life is a legitimate goal, but its implementation should focus on measures that promote the overall well-being of workers, such as flexible working hours, mental health improvements, and professional recognition.

**Responsable departamento laboral- 4C S.A*

The Coach Approach

Your soft skills are your superpower!

por b rbara de eliseu



In a world where artificial intelligence rules, soft skills are perhaps your most important intangible asset.

Why? Because you cannot hack them! Soft skills are priceless because of their “unhackability”. Leadership, empathy, communication, teamwork, time management, emotional intelligence, decision-making, negotiation, and so on. You can have countless career plans in law firms with lists like this making it sound like you can download an app of career attributes and install these skills on your brain. But it does not work like that, thankfully, there are no shortcuts to acquiring intangible abilities. You must build them!

Why did I wrote “thankfully”? Because soft skills are not

something you just check, you have to build them, bring them into your character. Resilience, trust, adaptability, persuasion, conflict management. How can you have a great team spirit if you cannot adapt? How can a leader earn the trust of the team without communication?

This also means soft skills are interrelated. You can rarely talk about them in isolation. Let us take a mandatory lawyer soft skill as an example: active listening. Active listening is like a unicorn for clients, a magical talent. If a lawyer does not listen to them, he cannot be empathetic, avoid repetitions, resolve conflicts, give instructions to the team.

Good listening skills happen naturally when you cultivate a deeper quality: you must

want to listen, you must be interested, genuinely. If you really want to understand what the person is saying, then these valuable skills will manifest naturally.

How can you develop soft skills?

If you want to develop these abilities, you must understand the personal faculty in which each of the soft skills is rooted, because, as I said, classical soft skills are manifestations of character. Think about it:

- Communication skills come from the need of being understood and understand others. It says you care about others, because you want to be clear, avoid mistakes or misunderstandings;
- Critical thinking is a manifestation of intellectual curiosity;
- Problem-solving comes from the same place and also manifests a deep desire of being useful. Again, interpersonal skills are on the table;
- Work ethic is not so much a skill as it is a sign of good character, but is evidence of solid virtues, probably developed since childhood. Usually, ends up working in favour of good planning, time management and accountability.

Are soft skills changing? Remote work brought to life a vast list of “new” skills,

such as flexibility, decision making or adaptability.

Flexibility as the ability to adapt successfully to changing situations and environments (like it happened during Covid-19).

Adaptability is frequently listed on top. In a law firm, flexibility might mean the ability to pivot from one case to another. I mean the ability to move from one project to another, without forgetting to adapt your talents and your hard skills to the new work.

Decision making in interpersonal and one-on-one situations, especially in conflict resolution, discernment helps you cut through the surface noise so you can understand what is really bothering someone.

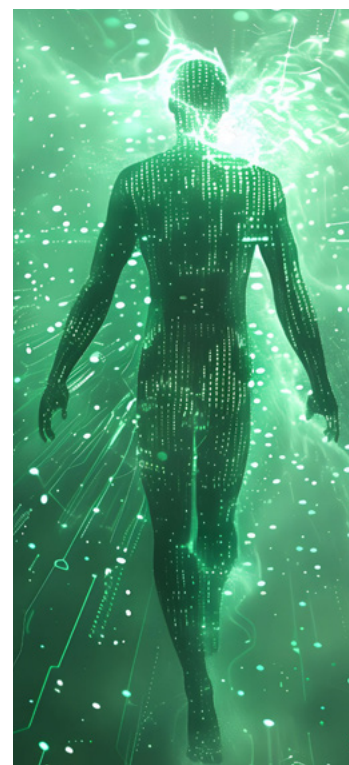
Nowadays, these are important skills in a world of change. But the basic soft skills are still gold! Never underestimate them.

Classics like empathy still matter?

Empathy is one of the least understood but most critical of all lawyers' soft skills. So many of other skills depend on empathy. Ethical awareness, conflict resolution, active listening, good communication, diversity awareness, all is developed from empathy.

You must be able to put yourself in someone else's place to understand them. You must understand them to listen well, to truly communicate and even to work as a team. Empathy is critical for good leadership. You must truly understand where each member of your team is coming from, what they have gone through, what they are going through, to manage them well.

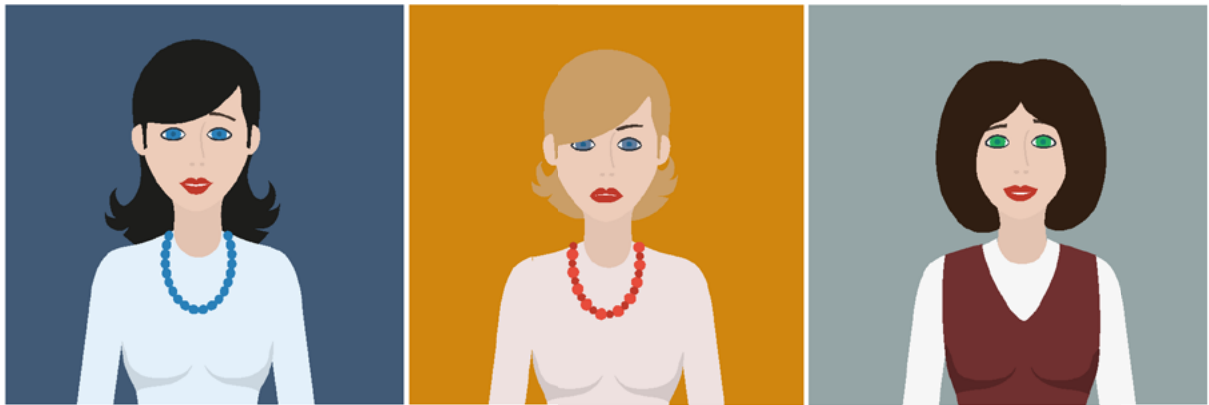
Finally, the way you use these soft skills, the way you work on them, putting into them your curiosity, your knowledge, your life experiences, makes them unique, and that is the reason why they are your superpower.





Mujeres

EN EL DERECHO: CAMINOS DE ÉXITO



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de **Iberian Lawyer** y **Women in a Legal World**
dedicado
a las **juristas líderes**,
compartiendo sus trayectorias, inspiradoras
y su visión del liderazgo femenino



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