

Lusophone
legal connections

Joana Pinto: negotiating
the future

The domino effect
of DEI policies

Uría Menéndez: 24 years in Portugal

Co-managing partners Antonio Villacampa and Bernardo Diniz de Ayala on long-term strategies, talent retention, and why Portugal's legal market is more competitive than ever

Editorial

Ilaria Iaquinta



Changing of the guard?

We are witnessing a full-scale generational shift. According to estimates from the *Harvard Business Review*, by the end of 2025, Millennials will constitute approximately 75% of the global workforce. This demographic evolution is prompting many organisations to rethink their leadership models, and the legal sector is no exception.

But what is really changing? Generational differences have always existed within the legal profession, but they have never been as evident—or as decisive—as they are today. The new generations are challenging traditional frameworks, driven by technology and a global culture that values intellectual leadership, innovation, immediacy, and increasingly, personal well-being. They not only have different ideas but also possess a greater capacity to influence real changes within an environment historically known for its

rigidity and hierarchical structure. Currently, four generations coexist in law firms—Baby Boomers, Generation X, Millennials, and Generation Z—but the proportions are beginning to shift. The pillars supporting these structures are starting to be redefined, both in client relations and, in certain cases, in the spaces where key decisions are made. “We are witnessing a transfer of positions and decision-making powers from my generation to a younger generation, encompassing those between 45 and 50 years old who are very important figures in the firm”, notes Pedro Pérez-Llorca in the interview that opens this edition of *Iberian Lawyer*. Additionally, Generation X is beginning to hand over the baton to Millennials in decision-making processes. This change knows no borders. In these pages, Nicola Di Molfetta presents the case of Gianni & Origoni (GOP), one of Italy's most prominent law firms, where a Millennial duo has assumed leadership alongside founding partner Francesco Gianni, integrating into the firm's management and executive committees.

The new leaders, already established as benchmarks for their clients, are preparing to spearhead a structural and cultural overhaul within law firms. The business legal services market is becoming increasingly competitive, driven by the entry of new players and the consolidation of major firms reinforcing the Europe-United States transatlantic axis through strategic mergers. The race for innovation is another significant catalyst for change. Implementing advanced generative artificial intelligence tools becomes a key ally in responding to clients' growing demands for speed and flexibility. And, as always, talent remains the most valuable resource. The new generations seek not only professional development but also purpose, transparency, innovation, and flexibility. Firms that can adapt to these demands will be the ones to attract and retain the best talent, promoting a culture based on collaboration, transformative leadership, and constant feedback. Balancing tradition and transformation will be crucial for the sector's future.

In this edition of *Iberian Lawyer*, we delve into topics reflecting the ongoing transformations shaping the legal market. Among these is the debate sparked by the Trump administration's measures, which have placed elite law firms under scrutiny regarding diversity. We explore the case of Vincent, the artificial intelligence developed by vLex, and revisit the significant milestones marking the 25th anniversary of Jones Day's Madrid office. We also engage in conversation with the managing partner of Sagardoy about the firm's results and strategies, and discuss the legal and economic implications of nuclear plant closures, crucial to maintaining energy balance. In the in-house sector, general counsel from Aena Internacional, CaixaBank, and Transfesa share their current priorities and challenges. In Portugal, we interview the managing partners of Uría Menéndez regarding the firm's future and strategy in the country, and profile Joana Pinto, who transitioned from a corporate role to become a partner at Antas da Cunha Ecija. Lastly, we examine the opportunities and challenges presented by the growth of the legal sector in the emerging markets of the Portuguese speaking countries. ■

2025 EVENTS CALENDAR

MAY

■ LegalcommunityCH Awards	Zurich, 08/05/2025
■ Legalcommunity Forty under 40 Awards	Milan, 15/05/2025
■ The Latin American Lawyer Women Awards	São Paulo, 21/05/2025
■ 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	Naples, 03/07/2025
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SEPTEMBER

■ LC Energy Day	Milan, 11/09/2025
■ The LatAm Energy & Infrastructure Awards	São Paulo, 11/09/2025
■ Legalcommunity Labour Awards	Milan, 18/09/2025
■ Iberian Lawyer Forty Under 40 Awards	Madrid, 25/09/2025

OCTOBER

■ Inhousecommunity Days	Milan, 1-3/10/2025
■ Legalcommunity Real Estate Awards	Milan, 09/10/2025
■ Inhousecommunity Awards Italia	Milan, 16/10/2025
■ Legalcommunity Marketing Awards	Milan, 20/10/2025
■ Inhousecommunity Day Switzerland	Zurich, 23/10/2025
■ Legalcommunity Litigation Awards	Milano, 28/10/2025

NOVEMBER

■ Iberian Lawyer Inhousecommunity Day	Madrid, 06/11/2025
■ Iberian Lawyer Gold Awards	Madrid, 06/11/2025
■ FinancecommunityWEEK	Milan, 10-13/11/2025
■ Financecommunity Awards	Milan, 13/11/2025
■ LegalcommunityMENA Awards	Riyadh, 20/11/2025

2026 EVENTS CALENDAR

JANUARY

■ Legalcommunity Energy Awards	Milan, 22/01/2026
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FEBRUARY

■ Iberian Lawyer Finance Talks and Drinks	Madrid, 03/02/2026
■ Iberian Lawyer Sustainability Summit - Spain	Madrid, 12/02/2026
■ Iberian Lawyer Labour Awards	Madrid, 12/02/2026
■ Iberian Lawyer Inspirallaw	Madrid, 26/02/2026

MARCH

■ Legalcommunity Finance Awards	Milan, 05/03/2026
■ Financecommunity Fintech Awards	Milan, 12/03/2026
■ Legalcommunity IP&TMT Awards	Milan, 19/03/2026
■ LC Sustainability Summit	Milan, 24/03/2026
■ LC Sustainability Awards	Milan, 24/03/2026
■ LC Inspirallaw Italia	Milan, 31/03/2026

LEGEND

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

ITALY

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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	

*It will be possible to integrate with subsequent deals within Friday 17 January 2025

TAX		
Research Period from	01/02/24	DOWNLOAD SUBMISSION ↓
Research Period to	31/01/25	
Deadline Submission	06/12/2024*	
Report Publication	Apr-25	

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FORTY UNDER 40		
Research Period from	01/01/24	DOWNLOAD SUBMISSION ↓
Research Period to	31/12/24	
Deadline Submission	28/02/2025	
Report Publication		

CORPORATE		
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Research Period to	31/03/25	
Deadline Submission	07/03/2025*	
Report Publication	Jul-25	

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Deadline Submission	18/04/2025	
Report Publication	Oct-25	

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

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

LITIGATION		
Research Period from	01/04/24	DOWNLOAD SUBMISSION ↓
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	

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SPAIN AND PORTUGAL

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LABOUR		
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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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Uría Menéndez: 24 years in Portugal

Co-managing partners Antonio Villacampa and Bernardo Diniz de Ayala on long-term strategies, talent retention, and why Portugal's legal market is more competitive than ever

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THE COACH APPROACH

Strategies for retaining senior
and junior lawyers

On the move

PORTUGAL

CMS Portugal appoints three new partners

António Magalhães e Menezes (public law), **Henrique Peyssonneau Nunes** (employment law & pension funds), and **José Manuel Silva Nunes** (real estate) have been appointed as new partners by CMS Portugal.



Caiado Guerreiro announces two non-equity partners

Caiado Guerreiro has announced the promotion of **Stéfanie Luz** and **Duarte Moreno Murtinha** to non-equity partners. Luz is part of the family and succession law department, while Murtinha is a member of the tax practice.



Cláudia Leonardo joins Melo Alves as a partner

Cláudia Leonardo has joined Melo Alves as a partner and head of the litigation and arbitration area in the Portuguese market. With 25 years of experience, she comes from Antas da Cunha Ecija, where she held the position of of counsel.



PRA appoints Pedro Miguel Fernandes as new COO

PRA – Raposo, Sá Miranda & Associados has announced the appointment of **Pedro Miguel Fernandes** as Chief Operating Officer (COO).



Ana Rendeiro to lead CS'Associados' arbitration practice

Ana Sofia Rendeiro, managing associate at CS'Associados, has been appointed as the new head of the firm's arbitration area.



Joana Varela, new head of legal at Grupo Brisa

Joana Varela has been appointed as the new head of legal at Grupo Brisa, a company specializing in the management of road infrastructure and mobility services in Portugal.



NEW MANAGING PARTNERS



Latham & Watkins: Ignacio Pallarés new managing partner in Madrid

Latham & Watkins is preparing for a leadership transition in its Madrid office, with **Ignacio Pallarés** as the new managing partner.



Carlos Martos, new managing partner of Lener in Madrid

Lener has reinforced its strategy with the incorporation of lawyer **Carlos Martos Merlos**, from Toda & Nel-lo, as managing partner of the Madrid office. Martos joins the litigation and arbitration team, led by **Noa Rodríguez**, managing partner of the area..

Miguel Lobón, new managing partner of Ceca Magán in Barcelona

Ceca Magán Abogados has appointed **Miguel Lobón** as the new managing partner of the Barcelona office. Lobón takes over from **Santiago Torent López de Lamadrid**, who has held the position since September 2022, with the objective of positioning the firm in Barcelona and leading a team of 32 professionals, consisting of 22 lawyers and 6 partners..





Emily Monastiriotis: global managing partner of Simmons & Simmons

Simmons & Simmons has named **Emily Monastiriotis** as its new global managing partner, effective May 1. She will succeed **Jeremy Hoyland**, who has held the position since 2011. Currently, Monastiriotis serves as international head of litigation and is a member of the firm's International Executive Committee. Throughout her tenure at the British law firm, she has held various leadership roles.



Igor Martín, new co-managing partner of RSM's tax practice area

RSM has incorporated **Igor Martín**, coming from Martínez-Echevarría Abogados, as co-managing partner of its tax area in Madrid.

NEW PARTNERS IN SPANISH LAW FIRMS

José Pedro Alberca, new partner in economic criminal law at Eversheds Sutherland

Eversheds Sutherland has appointed **José Pedro Alberca** as the new partner of the economic criminal law department in its Spain office, where he was previously counsel and head of the department.



Fernando Martínez Comas joins KPMG Abogados

KPMG Abogados has strengthened its team with the incorporation of **Fernando Martínez Comas** as the new partner responsible for the firm's legal practice in the Balearic Islands and head of tourism at KPMG Spain..





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Three new partners at Martínez-Echevarría: José Méndez, Carlos Gutiérrez, and Luis Mateos

Martínez-Echevarría has announced the incorporation of **José Méndez** as a partner in the Real Estate area. With over 25 years of experience, he has worked in legal advisory for development, construction, investment, urban planning, and historical heritage. Additionally, the firm has strengthened its litigation practice with the addition of **Carlos Gutiérrez** as a partner. Gutiérrez, who was head of corporate litigation at Siemens Gamesa Renewable Energy for 12 years, joins the Madrid office. Lastly, the firm has announced the incorporation of **Luis Mateos** as a partner in the criminal law department, bringing over 30 years of experience.



Ejaso appoints four new partners

Ejaso continues to expand its team with the promotion of four new internal partners: **Daniela Leal** (Innovative Business & Venture Capital), **Alejandra Agustín** and **Roberto Corrochano** (Labor), and **Ignacio Sandamil** (Litigation and Arbitration). Additionally, the firm has launched a new business unit specializing in family enterprises, led by **Sergio Parra**.



Andersen appoints new partners

Andersen has promoted eight new partners: three as equity partners (**Federico Belausteguigoitia**, **Pedro Rubio**, and **Miguel Prado**) and five as professional partners (**Gonzalo Bonany**, **Silvia Vázquez**, **Miguel Ángel Sánchez-Arcilla**, **Begoña Power**, and **Ricardo Pla**).



Ecija promotes Guerrero and Torres as partners and hires Rafael Piqueras

Ecija has strengthened its competition law department with the incorporation of **Rafael Piqueras** as a new partner in the Madrid office, coming from Deloitte Legal España. Additionally, the firm has reinforced its corporate governance and Technology, Media, and Telecommunications (TMT) areas with the promotion of **Juan Carlos Guerrero** and **Marina Torres** as new partners in Madrid.



INTERNATIONAL APPOINTMENTS



Pérez-Llorca incorporates Juan José Soto Arias as a partner in Mexico

Pérez-Llorca continues its commitment to Mexico with the incorporation of Juan **José Soto Arias** as a partner in the Labor and Employment area at the Mexico City office.



Garrigues incorporates Rodrigo Riquelme as a partner in Chile

Garrigues has added **Rodrigo Riquelme** to its Santiago de Chile office, where he will take on responsibility for the construction and infrastructure area. His appointment is subject to ratification at the next Partners' Meeting..



Ontier appoints Fredy Martín Guerra as compliance partner in Peru

Ontier has strengthened its team in Peru with the incorporation of **Fredy Martín Guerra Rojas** as a new partner in its compliance practice..

ASSOCIATIONS

Pablo García Montañés, new president of ASES Spain

The Association of General Secretaries and the Board (ASES) has appointed **Pablo García Montañés**, General Secretary and Board Secretary of Grupo Anbank, as its new president, replacing **Eduardo Muela Rodríguez** (CBNK).





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M&A in 2025: deal values grow, but deals fall to record lows

The first quarter of 2025 closed with an unexpected outlook for the global mergers and acquisitions (M&A) market. According to *Mergermarket's* "M&A Highlights 1Q25: Go, stop and go" report, total deal value grew by 15.5% to \$827 billion. However, the number of deals has plummeted to its lowest level in 20 years, with only 6,955 deals announced.

March was a key month for the quarter, thanks to five mega-deals valued at more than \$10 billion. Notable among these was Alphabet's purchase of Wiz for \$32 billion, the largest 2025 transaction to date. Also in March, Abu Dhabi's OMV and ADNOC merged their polyolefins businesses in a \$16.5 billion deal, followed by Mubadala Investment's \$13.4 billion acquisition of Nova Chemicals. Despite geopolitical uncertainty, these large transactions have responded to clear strategic reasons. One example is the growing demand for electricity for artificial intelligence, which has driven Constellation Energy's \$29.4 billion purchase of Calpine, announced in January. However, the report notes that uncertainty has increased due to President Donald Trump's protectionist policies. Initially, following his inauguration in January, the market expected a more business-friendly environment with less regulation and lower taxes. However, his aggressive stance on tariffs, Ukraine and the Middle East has generated doubts among investors, causing delays in deals and making companies reconsider their strategies.

The M&A market seems to be moving between value growth and a drop-in activity, in an environment where uncertainty continues to set the pace of business.

Sherpa Capital acquires a majority interest in EQOf fluids: advisors



AGUSTÍ CERDÁ



IGNASI FONT



IGNACIO ESCRIVÁ DE ROMANÍ



LUIS GÓMEZ

Sherpa Capital has acquired a 75% majority stake in EQOf fluids, a leading Valencian company in the design and commercialization of modular aluminum piping systems for compressed air and other fluids.

EQOf fluids, founded in 2011 in Gandía (Valencia) has established itself as a benchmark in the sector thanks to its innovative solutions for the distribution of compressed air and other fluids. The company has subsidiaries in France, Italy, United Kingdom and India, and distribution in more than 60 countries. With more than 5,000 projects completed worldwide, EQOf fluids has proven its ability to offer efficient, cost-saving solutions.

KPMG Abogados has advised Sherpa Capital with a team formed by **Ignasi Font** (M&A Tax partner), **Luis Gómez** (legal partner) e **Iñaki Olmos** (director in the Labor area).

Cuatrecasas has also provided legal counsel to Sherpa, with lawyers from both the corporate and finance teams. The corporate team included Ignacio **Escrivá de Romaní** (partner), **Sora Park** (senior associate), **Sofia Lluch** (principal associate), and **Isabel María von Plettenberg** (junior associate), while the finance team was represented by **Agustí Cerdá** (partner) and **Álvaro Pérez-Iriondo** (associate).

PRACTICE AREA

M&A

DEAL

Sherpa Capital acquires a majority interest in EQOf fluids: Advisors

FIRMS

KPMG and Cuatrecasas

ADVISORS

Ignasi Font, Luis Gómez, Ignacio Escrivá de Romaní and Agustí Cerdá

Ashurst advises Lighthouse Properties on €93M acquisition



RICARDO GARCÍA-BORREGÓN TENREIRO



JOAQUÍN MACÍAS



IRIAN SALETA MARTÍNEZ

Lighthouse Properties has successfully acquired the Alcalá Magna Shopping Centre, located in Alcalá de Henares, Madrid, for €93 million. This acquisition strengthens the company position in the Spanish commercial real estate sector, further expanding its portfolio in key urban locations.

The transaction was advised by Ashurst Madrid, with a multidisciplinary team that includes Real Estate with partner **Joaquín Macías, Félix Tirado, María Antonia de Prada, Pedro Montero, María Conejero, Julia Lorenzo** and **Ana María Oprea**; Tax with partner **Ricardo García-Borregón Tenreiro** (partner), **Enrique Muñoz** and **Emma Sevajol**; Banking & Finance with partner **Irian Saleta Martínez, Manuela Sanz** (senior associate) as well as **Ignacio Piñeiro** and **Javier Altemir** and Corporate associate **Cristina López Canosa**.

On the seller's side, Garrigues provided legal counsel, while Ramón y Cajal advised the financing bank.

PRACTICE AREA

M&A

DEAL

Ashurst advises Lighthouse Properties on €93M acquisition

FIRMS

Garrigues, Ashurst and Ramón y Cajal

ADVISORS

Joaquín Macías, Ricardo García-Borregón Tenreiro and Irian Saleta Martínez

Pérez-Llorca and GA_P advise on the sale of Cortijo Cuevas to Bollo Natural Fruit



PABLO FERNÁNDEZ CORTIJO



PABLO GONZÁLEZ MOSQUEIRA

Bollo Natural Fruit, an agri-food company controlled by Fremman Capital, has closed a deal with Goros Investments for the acquisition of Cortijo Cuevas, an operation with which the group enters the sliced and packaged fruit category.

Cortijo Cuevas is a company with solid experience and trajectory in the fresh cut and packaged fruit industry (IV Range), that is to say, ready to eat. Bollo Natural Fruit, an agri-food company controlled by Fremman Capital, is one of the most important fruit and vegetable groups in Spain.

Pérez-Llorca has advised Fremman Capital and Bollo Natural Fruit group. The Corporate M&A team has advised with the involvement of partner **Pablo González Mosqueira** and lawyers **Ignacio Salas** and **Javier Ihatsu**, while the Regulatory team has been represented by partner **Ana Cremades** and lawyer **María Sánchez**. In the Competition area, partner **Jaime de Blas** has led the advisory work, and in the Tax practice, lawyer **Sergi Aguilar** has provided his expertise.

Gómez-Acebo & Pombo has advised Goros Investments with a team formed by **Pablo Fernández Cortijo**, **Diana Linage** and **Fernando Aldavero** from the Corporate team, as well as **Antonio Ramírez** from the Banking and Finance team.

PRACTICE AREA

M&A

DEAL

Pérez-Llorca and GA_P advise on the sale of Cortijo Cuevas to Bollo Natural Fruit

FIRMS

Pérez-Llorca and GA_P

ADVISORS

Pablo González Mosqueira and Pablo Fernández Cortijo

GA_P advises IVC Evidencia on hospital acquisition



MAFALDA BARRETO

Gómez-Acebo & Pombo in Portugal advised IVC Evidencia, a global company in veterinary care, on the acquisition of ANIMED – Hospital Veterinário de Gondomar, further consolidating its presence in the northern region of the country.

The British-Swedish veterinary group, which has been present in Portugal since 2021, continues to expand across the country and now operates 30 veterinary centers in mainland Portugal and Madeira. The Gómez-Acebo & Pombo team has been advising the group on this expansion project in Portugal. ANIMED is the second veterinary hospital acquired by IVC Evidencia in Porto, following the acquisition of Hospital Veterinário da Póvoa, located in Póvoa de Varzim, which was integrated into the group in 2022.

The team that coordinated the transaction consisted of **Mafalda Barreto** (pictured), managing partner of Gómez-Acebo & Pombo's Lisbon office and partner in charge of the corporate, commercial, and M&A practice area, along with lawyers **Leonor Rocha** and **João Bento Cardoso**.

PRACTICE AREA

M&A

DEAL

GA_P advises IVC Evidencia on hospital acquisition

FIRMS

Gómez-Acebo & Pombo

ADVISORS

Mafalda Barreto



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Uría Menéndez: 24 years in Portugal

Co-managing partners Antonio Villacampa and Bernardo Diniz de Ayala on long-term strategies, talent retention, and why Portugal's legal market is more competitive than ever

by glória paiva

THE LAW FIRM IN NUMBERS

23

practice areas

1,100

lawyers

60%

of international clients

73

countries represented
on the firm's client base

It has been 24 years since Uría Menéndez (UM) opened its doors in Portugal. In 2001, the Portuguese legal market was considerably smaller, dominated by medium-sized firms, many of family origin. The Portuguese economy was beginning to flourish, driven by its recent entry into the Eurozone. Among the three UM lawyers who arrived in Lisbon was the Spanish **Antonio Villacampa**, today co-managing partner in the country. Seven years later, Portuguese lawyer **Bernardo Diniz de Ayala** joined the team and now leads the office alongside Villacampa. Today, Uría Menéndez in Lisbon has 112 lawyers, including 18 partners, and is experiencing a moment of expansion—growing 10% last year in terms of revenue—and consolidation in a much more robust and competitive market. Villacampa and Ayala spoke with *Iberian Lawyer* about this journey.

How do you assess the current moment of Uría Menéndez's office in Portugal?

Bernardo Diniz de Ayala (BA): We are at the best



«What we want is excellence in our clientele, in our lawyers, and to work on the most high-value-added transactions. The financial return naturally follows from that»

Antonio Villacampa

moment in our history, and this is due to the following main reasons: a group of partners fully aligned with the firm's interests, a body of excellent and consistently high-quality lawyers, a portfolio of national and international top-tier clients, professional management extending to all areas, and, lastly, our "one firm" model, which ensures sharing, management unity, and aligned objectives.

What were the main challenges and milestones in these 24 years in Portugal?

Antonio Villacampa (AV): The most difficult part was the arrival. We were a highly regarded firm in Spain but little known in Portugal. We were the first international firm to register with the country's bar association. We had the challenge of assembling the team and made incorporations. There were two relevant milestones: in 2005, the integration of Vasconcelos, F. Sá Carneiro, Fontes & Associados, and in 2009, the entry of Proença de Carvalho (*note: alliance that lasted until 2024*). We also incorporated essential partners like Bernardo Ayala. But staying at the top is even more difficult. The legal market recognises our lawyers as top talent in their respective fields and knows that our career plan produces excellent results.

In which sectors of the economy are Uría Menéndez's clients in Portugal?

AV: In almost all sectors where the Portuguese economy stands out, particularly in the services and financial services sectors, banks, and private equity. Renewable energies and infrastructures are another area that has developed significantly. Real estate and tax have also been strong topics. The firm is very well positioned when it comes to operations and taxation of large clients moving to Portugal. Other important areas include labour and litigation.

What are Uría Menéndez's objectives in Portugal?

AV: Most of our objectives are qualitative and are the factors that have led the firm to experience its best moment, as said by Bernardo Ayala. We also have our quantitative goals, but they are not particularly relevant. What we want is excellence



«Our plan is unique for all of Uría Menéndez's offices. We have a very stable model, a cohesive partnership and a unique career plan based on meritocracy»

Bernardo Diniz de Ayala

in our clientele, in our lawyers, and to work on the most challenging and high-value-added transactions and litigation. The financial return naturally follows from that.

What is the firm's strategic plan for the coming years?

BA: Our plan is unique and global for all of Uría

Menéndez's offices. We have a very stable model, a cohesive partnership and a unique career plan based on meritocracy, applied equally in all offices. The global strategic plan is to maintain the course we have followed in recent years. Our success is more about stability than disruptions and is based on thousands of decisions, big and small, made on a recurrent basis.

Are there any plans for lateral hires in the near future?

BA: We are a homegrown firm with a strong commitment to the career plan of our lawyers. Around 90% of our partners have built their entire careers at the firm, which is a hallmark of Uría Menéndez. As a result, we only make occasional lateral hires and are fully committed to developing our internal talent.

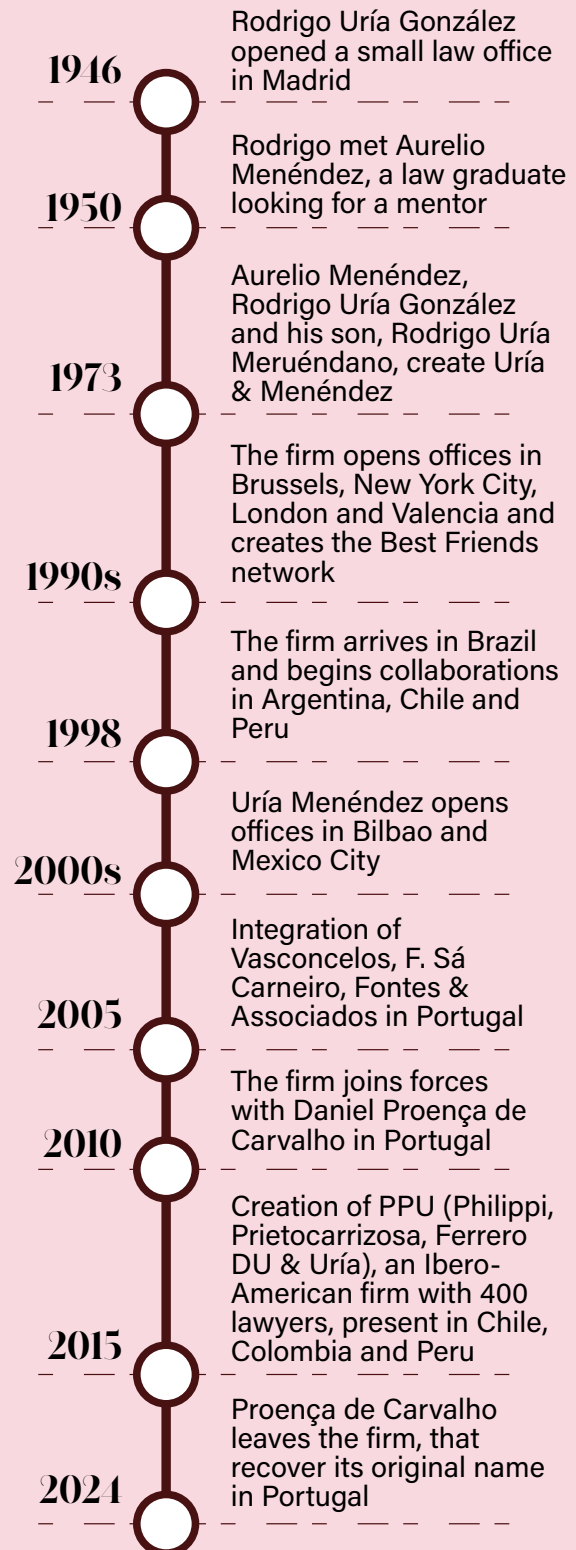
Which practice areas are currently your priorities?

BA: We are quite traditional when it comes to core areas such as corporate, litigation, public, tax, and labour. Within these areas, we make targeted investments in emerging sub-areas, such as energy and natural resources within public law, and digital law within corporate law. We have also been investing significantly in the Non-Performing Loans (NPLs) area, stemming from our litigation and corporate practices. Another topic currently on the table is acquisitions in the defence sector, due to the geopolitical context Europe is experiencing.

How has the firm adapted to recent technological innovations?

AV: The firm is making significant investments in this field. We see AI as a complement to the practice, allowing lawyers to focus on higher-value tasks. At this moment, every professional at Uría Menéndez has access to an AI tool for their daily work. This is an added incentive to continue betting on talent and differentiation in terms of excellence. Technological innovation also allows us to address other important areas, such as mental health, work-life balance, diversity and equality. These are interconnected issues that are very important to us.

URÍA MENÉNDEZ THROUGHOUT THE YEARS



How do you view the strengthening of other foreign law firms in the Portuguese market?


AV: This only confirms that we made a good decision 24 years ago. I don't see the entry of new competitors as a threat. But it does mean we must strengthen the attention we give to our lawyers and our clients, the two main assets we have. I believe the arrival of new firms makes you more aware of the need to take good care of your lawyers and clients.

How do you assess the evolution of the legal market in Portugal in recent years?

BA: Portugal today is a healthy market, just as sophisticated as any other. Portuguese lawyers are as qualified as in other parts of the world, sometimes even with a competitive advantage in languages. But there are two major limitations: the size of the market, which is about four times smaller than Spain's, although it has significant legal competitors. Therefore, the competition is tougher. Another challenge

is the judicial system, which operates at a slower pace, faces resource constraints, and has structural inefficiencies in certain areas. This has a cascading impact on various sectors of the economy.

What trends do you foresee for legal practice in the short and long term?

AV: We feel many changes surrounding the tools we use, such as AI. But the human factor remains highly relevant, which is why we invest in mental health, and balancing personal and professional life. For instance, today we are having lunch with junior lawyers, with whom we maintain an ongoing dialogue. Many of the firm's recent developments are the result of this listening process, such as extending paternity leave to eight weeks, which is also a mandatory measure to avoid discrimination compared to the maternity period. Regarding gender parity, we still have room for improvement. There has been progress, but we continue working to ensure equal opportunities throughout careers. 



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Lusophone legal connections

Legal partnerships between Portugal, Brazil, Africa and Asia are evolving, fuelled by shared history, a common language and new markets

by glória paiva

In February, Vieira de Almeida (VdA) announced the appointment of its first resident partner in Brazil. The timing was no coincidence: Brazilian interest in the European country has never been greater. Likewise, alliances between Portuguese law firms and those in Portuguese-speaking Africa and Asia continue to grow. This movement is supported by strong historical, legal, and cultural ties between these countries, but is also driven by new economic opportunities.

The main Portuguese law firms have been present in the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries (CPLP) since the early 1990s, in a longstanding relationship that also benefits from a common civil law system. Miranda, for example, began its international operations the same year it was founded, in 1987. “Our first client had a major energy project in Angola. Expanding our practice to other Portuguese-speaking countries was a natural evolution”, says **Diogo Xavier da Cunha**, managing partner at Miranda.



DIOGO XAVIER DA CUNHA



FRANCISCA MENDES DA COSTA

The demand for legal advisory services in foreign investments, compliance, and arbitration within the CPLP has kept this exchange active to this day. Recent partnerships include Morais Leitão and JLA Advogados e Consultores in Timor-Leste; Sérvulo and MLA in Cape Verde; Antas da Cunha Ecija and the Angolan law firm DC Lawyers; Melo Alves and LS Lawyers in Macau, and MFA Legal in Angola.

Since these are economies undergoing evolution and diversification, there is still room for growth in all industries, with an emphasis on energy, mining, infrastructure, financial systems, and telecommunications. Angola and Mozambique, currently in economic recovery, stand out in these sectors, while Cape Verde focuses on tourism and clean energy. Guinea-Bissau and São Tomé and Príncipe present opportunities in fishing and agriculture. “In the context of the global economy, Africa has shown one of the highest potentials for growth, attractiveness, and opportunities”, says **Francisca Mendes da Costa**, partner in the public

law department at Sérvulo & Associados. In the Lusophone Africa, the energy and natural resources sectors are among the primary focuses of the Miranda Alliance. “We are also active in sectors such as ports and other infrastructure, construction and real estate, finance, aviation, and agriculture”, explains Xavier da Cunha. Sérvulo also highlights international arbitration, capital markets, corporate governance, public contracts, and public procurement as growing fields. “We have participated in various legislative review and public procurement system update projects in countries such as São Tomé and Príncipe and Angola”, reports Mendes da Costa.

Lusophone Asia, represented by Timor-Leste and Macau, also attracts investors. Timor-Leste

is seeking to diversify its economy, creating opportunities in infrastructure, tourism, and agriculture. The Macau Special Administrative Region, in turn, is seen as a bridge to the Chinese market and offers opportunities in trade, arbitration, and financial regulation, with its casino sector and integration into the Greater Bay Area.

LOCAL ALLIANCES, GLOBAL EXPERTISE

The international presence of Portuguese law firms is usually established through local alliances, ensuring knowledge of local regulatory particularities. The hybrid model combines local expertise with a global vision, allowing for specialized advisory services adapted to each context. “Network-based operations

BRAZIL AND PORTUGAL, A SHARED LEGAL PATH

Brazil and Portugal share enduring ties, including in the legal field. The origins of the Brazilian Bar Association, in the late 19th century, were influenced by the Lisbon Lawyers' Association. “Portuguese lawyers have always been admitted to practice in Brazil, and vice versa”, explains **João Ribeiro da Costa**, partner at Brazilian law firm TozziniFreire. Historically, Portuguese firms have operated in Brazil through partnerships with local firms, he notes.

In the modern world, the exchange between Portuguese and Brazilian legal professionals has had three significant moments, according to the partner. The first was in the late 1990s when privatizations attracted large Portuguese companies to Brazil, such as Galp, Sonae, EDP, and others, which were assisted by Portuguese law firms. The second moment came in 2008 when a major investment by Embraer in a factory in Évora sparked new interest from Brazilian companies in Portugal. Lastly, there has been a significant movement of high-net-worth Brazilians relocating to the former metropolis, says Ribeiro da Costa. According to Brazil's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, more than 500,000 Brazilians live in Portugal. “VdA in Brazil serves many clients with a ‘high-net-worth individual’ profile, who seek support in migration, real estate, and asset-related matters”, says **Fernando Prado Ferreira**, international partner and head of the Vieira de Almeida office in Brazil.

For Brazilian investors, Portugal represents access to the European Union and Portuguese-speaking Africa, Ferreira believes. “There is a massive flow of Brazilians, Angolans, Belgians, Americans, and French people heading to Portugal, interested in real estate purchases, business ventures, and various activities—even in agriculture and winemaking,” he observes.

According to the VdA partner, relations between Brazil and Portugal are set to grow, as evidenced by the 14th Luso-Brazilian Summit. In February, heads of government Luís Montenegro and Lula da Silva signed 19 new bilateral agreements to boost trade and exchange. “The ease of communication and travel will only increase collaboration between the two countries. The demand for specialized legal services is expected to grow along with this movement”, Ferreira notes.



JOÃO RIBEIRO DA COSTA

provide a competitive advantage over local and international competitors”, notes Mendes da Costa. However, aspects such as bureaucracy, legislative changes, and political volatility in some countries can bring challenges. According to Xavier da

Cunha, issues like security and political risk also tend to influence foreign investors, especially in the Lusophone Africa. “There is also a strong concern regarding capital movement in exchange control regimes”, he observes.

The legal market in the CPLP is expected to grow with increasing foreign investment and regulatory reforms. “The digitalization of law, the modernization of public procurement systems, and alternative dispute resolution mechanisms will become even more relevant, promoting greater legal certainty in these markets”, adds the partner of Sérvulo. The internationalization of relationships is also expected to help consolidate law as a global profession. “In many Portuguese-speaking countries, new challenges arise from projects that previously did not exist, requiring innovative solutions for their implementation through international collaboration”, says Miranda’s managing partner. 



FERNANDO PRADO FERREIRA

OVERSEAS RECENT MOVES



	JLA Advogados e Consultores
Morais Leitão	— (Timor-Leste)
Sérvulo & Associados	— MLA (Cape Verde)
Antas da Cunha Ecija	— DC Lawyers (Angola)
Melo Alves	— LS Lawyers (Macau)
Melo Alves	— MFA Legal (Angola)
VdA	— new partners in Brazil and Spain



Joana Pinto: negotiating the future

From in-house lawyer to AI-focused partner at Antas da Cunha Ecija, specializing in legal contracts in the IT industry

by glória paiva

Joana Pinto was 11 years old when she first sat at a negotiation table. It was in Guadalajara, Mexico, in the 1980s. The young girl was accompanying her father and uncle, owners of a textile company, who had travelled from Portugal to the Americas to negotiate with new clients. For little Joana, who grew up in Covilhã—a Portuguese city near the Spanish border—accustomed to frequently visiting the neighbouring country and watching Spanish cartoons on TVE, it was not difficult to follow the dynamics of decision-making. Amid various interests at play, her father showed her the way: “I learned from him that the negotiation process has to be good for both sides”, explains Joana, the new partner at Antas da Cunha Ecija and former head of contracting and legal at Accenture Portugal, where she spent 17 years.

Years and important experiences separate her first learning moment from the point where she became a prominent name among Portuguese specialists in legal contracts in the IT industry. Now, since February, she has embraced her latest challenge: transitioning from an in-house lawyer to a partner at a law firm.

According to Pinto, the decision to enter the business world and the technology sector right after graduation was a natural one, even though at the time—the early 2000s—there were no formal training programs in that field. “I am a strong advocate of academic foundations, but I had to learn on the job”, she says. At Grupo Sonae (now Sonaecom), at 23 years old, she was given complex tasks that proved to be a true school for the future. The world of multinational technology companies opened up with Capgemini. “There, I consolidated a rigorous legal approach on one hand and the importance of understanding the business on the other”, she recalls. Two lessons that remain at the essence of her expertise to this day.

A key moment came at 28 when Pinto took over the legal and compliance department at Accenture Portugal, balancing risk management, regulatory compliance, and the pressure for practical solutions to facilitate business. During her almost two decades at the company,

Pinto highlights the daily interaction with professionals from other technical areas as crucial, as they provided her with valuable insights into the core of the business—technology. “The in-house lawyer must know how to ask the right questions to understand the business and align legal strategy with organizational objectives, adding value to the company”, she notes.

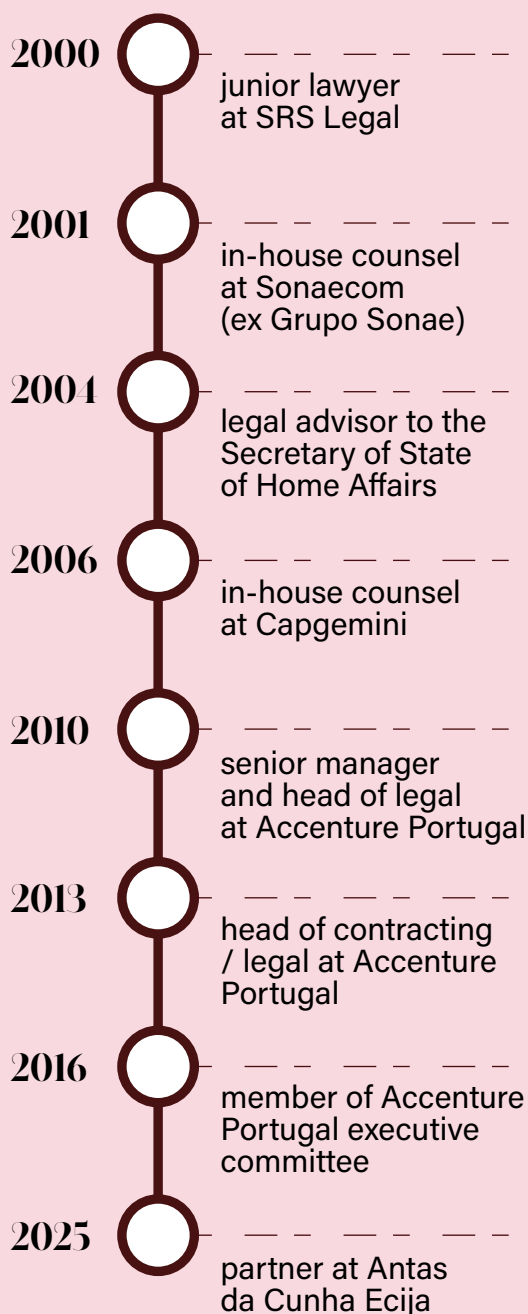
Negotiation was also a major focus. “At Accenture, I also developed leadership skills, learned to negotiate under pressure, and honed the logical reasoning needed to support my recommendations as a legal specialist”, she reflects. Along this journey, she was also responsible for Accenture's legal departments in Angola and Mozambique, which gave her a relevant and multicultural perspective on the need to adapt to the typical differences of clients and companies in markets with their own specific dynamics.

TECHNOLOGICAL DNA

In just over two months, Pinto has already started rolling up her sleeves at Antas da Cunha Ecija. According to the partner, she has found “total support” when it comes to aligning what she has to offer with the firm's strategy. “Antas da Cunha Ecija has a differentiating DNA. It has always positioned itself as a firm with a strong digital component and now presents itself as a full-AI firm”, Pinto points out.

According to her, Antas da Cunha Ecija has been preparing the entire organization for the new technology and digital paradigm. In fact, Pinto has been working with a focus on Artificial Intelligence, supporting clients in defining robust governance models that allow integrating this technology in a strategic and secure way. In this scenario, compliance with emerging digital regulations, such as NIS2 and DORA, is one of the main areas of focus. “We are preparing a program that aims to support clients in building governance models with integrated AI that allow for responsible innovation. Our work spans from capacity building to assessment paths, gap analysis, and continuous monitoring”, she explains.


THE PROFESSIONAL JOURNEY OF JOANA PINTO



Even now, on the other side of the table, Pinto maintains the strategic approach she learned throughout her career: anticipating risks to ensure effective negotiations. “And that’s also what I aim to bring to Antas da Cunha’s clients”, she observes.

KEY SKILLS

For Pinto, communication and curiosity have been essential throughout her career. “It’s a differentiator to know how to communicate, how to explain something complex in a simple way. And being a ‘continuous learner’, with the disposition to always learn new things”, she advises. For a lawyer who is just starting out, Pinto, who also mentors young professionals through C-Level Academy, suggests three attitudes: “Don’t be afraid to fail, ask when you don’t know something, and don’t wait until you’re 100% prepared to take on a new task”. Early on, Pinto negotiated contracts with terminologies she didn’t know and learned during the process, she says. “Many times, it was the confidence someone placed in me and my willingness to deal with the unknown that propelled me”.

For Pinto, it was natural to draw inspiration from her family experience, which still plays a part in her way of negotiating. “My father taught me a lot, especially that the negotiation table cannot be a battlefield; it must be a place of reconciliation that leads to a win-win situation”, she explains to Iberian Lawyer. “Venturing into the corporate world was a very happy decision, and it fulfilled me greatly”, she says. Now, Pinto wants to take her experience in negotiating digital transformation contracts to an even larger number of companies. “A well-designed and well-negotiated contract is much more than a legal document, it is a strategic document. With that, I want to contribute to adding value to the clients”. 



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Pérez-Llorca: drive and renewal

With a 33% increase in 2024 and sales quintupled over the last decade, the firm is focusing on key markets and new governance to tackle future legal challenges

by *ilaria iaquinta*

Constant self-examination, despite favourable figures, to grow further and better: this seems to be the path charted by Pérez-Llorca. Despite having quintupled its sales in the last decade, a continuous growth trajectory over the past five years, and a 33% increase in global turnover in 2024, surpassing €165 million (€133.6 million, +8% in Spain), the firm has not chosen to rest. In fact, it has strongly committed to international expansion, investing particularly in key markets such as Portugal—with the opening of its Lisbon office at the end of 2023, where nearly 45 professionals are already working—and Mexico, through the integration of the firm González Calvillo, completed in July last year, not forgetting the strategic strengthening of its New York headquarters, which now encompasses not only Spanish law but also Portuguese and Mexican law.

But it's not just about geographical expansion. Significant internal decisions have also been made to prepare for the future. The adoption of new governance at the beginning of last year marks the start of a gradual succession after decades of sole leadership by **Pedro Pérez-Llorca**, who has been the firm's managing partner since 1997. This change is materialised in the promotion of key figures such as **Julio Lujambio**, appointed executive partner; **Iván Delgado**, international executive partner; and **Constanza Vergara**, partner and COO of the firm, in addition to the creation of an international partnership board of 30 members that ensures representation from Spain, Portugal, and Mexico. And, to complete this ambitious project, Pérez-Llorca

has decidedly committed to innovation and digitalisation. The integration of Legora, a second-generation generative artificial intelligence tool, demonstrates the firm's commitment to modernising its processes and responding to the growing demand for efficiency and agility in the provision of legal services.

Below, in a frank and revealing conversation with Pedro Pérez-Llorca, the factors that have driven this success are broken down, and the future prospects of one of the most dynamic firms in the legal landscape are glimpsed.

The law firm has concluded a very positive year. Despite geopolitical uncertainties and inflation...

We are very pleased with 2024 and satisfied with the growth over the past decade. The 2024 results are driven by two main factors. Firstly, our activities in the Spanish and Portuguese markets have grown across nearly all practices, both transactional and non-transactional. Additionally, there is an extraordinary factor: our entry into the Mexican market through an integration. Together, these factors explain the 33% figure.

«Spain may be our primary market, but I would like to establish a more balanced business practice»



The law firm has accelerated its international expansion. Can we say that Pérez-Llorca's current ambition is primarily focused abroad? Not exclusively. While our recent international expansion is notable—we've grown from operating solely in Spain to establishing a presence in Portugal and Mexico within a year—our ambition for growth within Spain remains strong. We continue to work with an increasing number of clients, participate in the country's most significant transactions, and expand through both internal promotions and external hires. Therefore, while we are committed to international growth, we maintain a significant focus on expanding our operations within Spain.

How are you progressing in Portugal and Mexico? Are the objectives being met?

Both in Portugal and Mexico, key projects for 2024, we have met our objectives and are very pleased. In Portugal, we began by building the team, hiring lawyers we already knew, member by member. In Mexico, we carried out a merger, integrating a complete firm. These are very different projects, but we have achieved our goals in both markets.

Are you exploring entry into any other markets? What should we expect as the next step?

You should expect significant developments in Portugal and Mexico, as well as growth in our international offices (New York, London, Brussels, and Singapore). Until now, these offices have only offered legal services in Spanish law, but they will now provide expertise in Spain, Portugal, and Mexico. As a result, it makes sense for these offices to expand. The clearest example is New York, where we will soon welcome José Ignacio Rivero, an outstanding Mexican M&A partner. With this, we will become the first Mexican firm practising Mexican law from New York.

THE LAW FIRM IN NUMBERS

468

Lawyers worldwide

92

Partners worldwide

64

Partners in Spain

350

Lawyers in Spain

10 offices

Barcelona, Brussels, Lisbon, London, Madrid, Mexico City, Monterrey, New York, Singapore

The international business accounts for 20% of total revenue. What numerical goals have been set for this segment, and what strategies are being implemented to increase it?

At present, the objective is to see growth and achieve a more balanced distribution. Spain may be our primary market, but I would like to establish a more balanced business practice. We aim to increase that 20%. To this end, we are already making expansions in Portugal, Mexico City, and Monterrey, as well as strengthening our international offices, such as the example I mentioned earlier in New York.

TURNOVER 2024

+33% to €165+ million

+8% to €133.6+ million (in Spain)

«We are witnessing a transfer of roles and decision-making powers from my generation to a younger generation»

All major Spanish law firms seem to be focusing on international expansion. In what way do you think Pérez-Llorca differentiates itself from its competitors in this strategy?

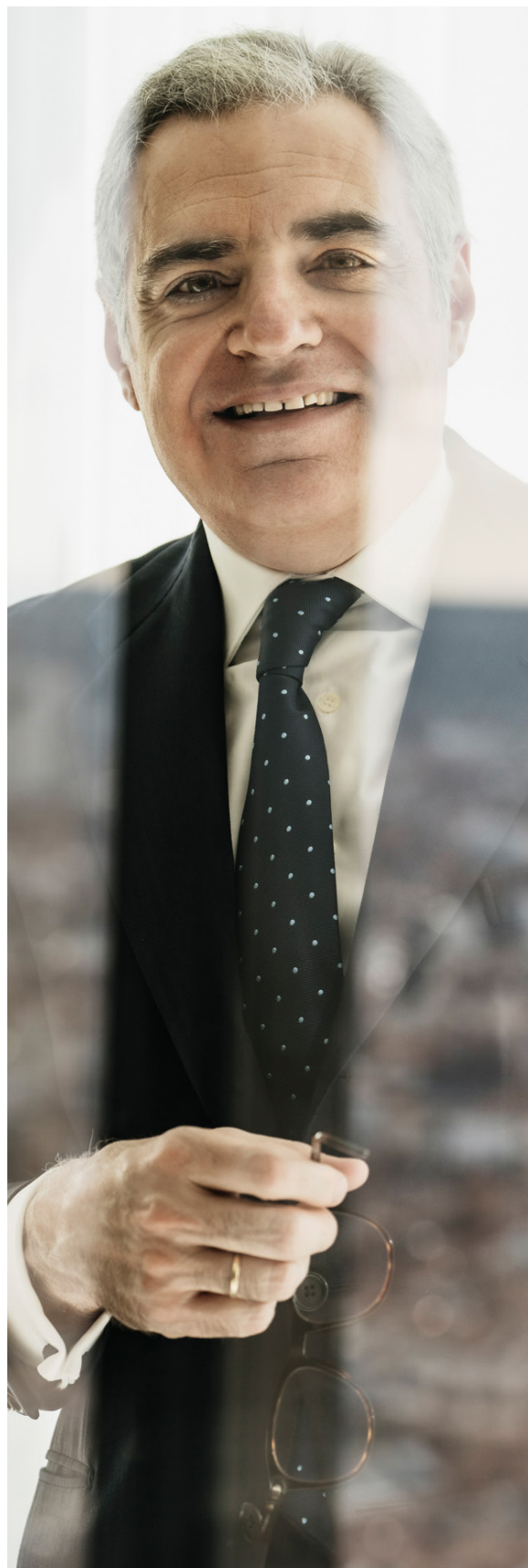
One significant distinction is our approach to the Mexican and Latin American markets. We have chosen to begin with the most important—and perhaps also the most challenging—market: Mexico. Without commenting on how our competitors operate, in our case, I believe a key differentiating factor is that we have entered the Mexican market with a strong and decisive commitment. Another crucial difference lies in our mode of entry: we have integrated one of the country's most prominent firms. I believe these two aspects set our project apart.

Regarding the new corporate governance, what were the motivations for implementing it?

There were two main motivations. Firstly, to organise my succession. I have been the sole managing partner for decades, and in 2023, I turned 55. We all felt it was a good time to begin a gradual succession process. That was one of the primary reasons. The second motivation was to strengthen our governance structures to achieve more and, in particular, to tackle international expansion.

What changes are being observed in decision-making and the firm's culture?

The changes are quite noticeable. We now have a much stronger and more robust management team, allowing us to take on more projects.



Additionally, we are undergoing a generational shift that extends beyond myself and beyond individual people. We are witnessing a transfer of roles and decision-making powers from my generation to a younger generation, specifically those aged between 45 and 50, who hold significant positions within the firm.

Is it necessary to transition from sole leadership structures to more diverse leadership teams to drive ambitious projects in an evolving legal market?

I believe that each firm must find its own path. I wouldn't dare to say that a single formula works for everyone. In our case, there were several reasons to make decision-making more collegiate. Firstly, I had been the sole managing partner for a long time. Secondly, we wanted to facilitate generational succession. And thirdly, we are transitioning from being a firm that operated solely in Spain to one that is active in multiple markets. We believe that, to achieve this, a slightly broader management team is essential.

In recent years, you have strongly invested in digitalisation and introduced artificial intelligence systems. What concrete results are you achieving, and how do you perceive clients' responses? Is this a demand they explicitly express?

Clients expect us to be faster, more efficient, and more secure, without specifying how to achieve it. We are constantly exploring ways to meet these expectations. In our view, technological tools like Legora contribute to all three aspects, and so far, this project has yielded highly positive results. At present, we measure two key factors: its usage (whether it is low or high) and its impact on our work efficiency. The indicators are strong in both respects: many lawyers regularly access Legora, integrating it into their daily work, and the overall effect on efficiency and performance has been positive. As a result, we will continue to invest in this technological approach.

We are witnessing major mergers on the international stage, such as those between A&O and Shearman & Sterling, as well as HSF and Kramer Levin. What is your assessment of the impact of these mergers on the global market?

«I see a highly competitive market, with strong and well-established Spanish law firms»

These mergers are quite a particular phenomenon. We are not experiencing a wave of mergers in the legal market worldwide; rather, we are seeing a number of strategic mergers that facilitate British firms' access to the US market, driven by that specific need. In continental Europe, there is no comparable trend. Nor is this the case in Latin America, with the exception of our integration with González Calvillo, along with similar operations undertaken by some of our competitors. Ultimately, the integrations between British and American firms are highly visible, but they represent a rather limited phenomenon, mainly focused on gaining access to the United States.

How do you view the Spanish legal services market in comparison to other foreign markets? What opportunities and shortcomings do you identify in the national landscape?

I see a highly competitive market, with strong and well-established Spanish law firms. There are five major Spanish firms that hold a significant share of the legal market, particularly in transactional and regulatory work. I believe this is one of its defining characteristics. It is an open market, where some international players—mainly British firms—are also present, alongside the legal branches of the Big Four, which have carved out their own space. We have built sophisticated, institutionalised, and well-structured firms with a certain degree of internationalisation, allowing us to offer high-quality services. Overall, I am satisfied with the work we have all accomplished together.



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**YOUR SPACE,
YOUR VOICE.**



FERRAN SALA

An elephant in the room

Ferran Sala, managing director of vLex Europe, analyses the impact of artificial intelligence in the legal sector

by julia gil

The expression “there's an elephant in the room” has been used to describe obvious but uncomfortable realities. From the climate crisis to digitalisation and automation, many sectors have had to adapt to inevitable transformations. Today, that elephant has a name: artificial intelligence. Everyone is talking about it, but its actual implementation in the legal sphere still faces challenges and resistance.

The legal sector, historically conservative in its methods and tools, is beginning to experience the effects of technological transformation. One of the most visible examples of this change is the incorporation of systems based on generative artificial intelligence, such as the one developed by vLex, a global legal intelligence platform that provides legal professionals with access to legal and regulatory information, Vicent AI. Since its launch five years ago, it has evolved to become, by 2023, a legal search engine based on generative artificial intelligence capable of analysing complete legal documents, respecting national legal frameworks through coordinated work between engineers and specialised jurists who correctly apply the rules in Spain, the United States, the United Kingdom and other countries.

But it is not just about improving access to information. The tool has incorporated new capabilities ([link to the news](#)), such as the transcription and analysis of audiovisual content, which allows law firms to process

«Many firms already use some AI tools, but the question is how they use them»

recorded court hearings or video statements with the same agility with which they analyse texts. In this context, firms such as Sagardoy, Pérez-Llorca and Cuatrecasas have already integrated this technology into their daily operations, not only to streamline processes, but also to redefine the way in which they provide their services. “Many firms already use some form of AI tool, but the question is how they use them”, says **Ferran Sala**, CEO of vLex Europe. The key is not just adoption, but strategic integration.

A SECTOR IN TRANSFORMATION

The challenge is not a minor one. The implementation of artificial intelligence in law firms in Spain faces significant challenges, not only in terms of technological adoption, but also in the reconfiguration of work processes. Although many firms have already incorporated AI tools into their daily operations, the real challenge lies in how they are used and to what extent they can transform legal practice. The speed at which this technology is evolving is another determining factor, forcing firms to be constantly updated to avoid being left behind. As Ferran Sala points out, “everything related to artificial intelligence has a very rapid obsolescence”, which means that solutions that are innovative today may become insufficient in a matter of months.

Another of the most relevant aspects is the impact of AI on the training and career development of junior lawyers. “Before,

VICENT AI

Law firms using it: Sagardoy, Cremades, Pérez-Llorca, Cuatrecasas, among others.

Companies: IBEX 35 companies

Academic institutions: ESADE

Bar Associations: Barcelona and Madrid Bar Associations.



learning meant reading, summarising and drafting. Now, AI does it better and faster, but without the learning process that forges the profession”, explains Sala. Younger lawyers can access complex information as quickly as an experienced partner, but without having gone through the traditional learning path. The new generation of lawyers access precise answers in seconds, without having gone through the manual exercise that traditionally structured their training. This opens up a key question: how to ensure that lawyers develop their own judgement in an environment where technology facilitates answers without requiring the same learning effort? “Young lawyers need to think of themselves more as strategic consultants than as traditional lawyers. Bringing innovation into the firm should be as essential as speaking English or French”, he adds.

VLEX EN CIFRAS

2000

Year founded

2.8m

Registered users

+100

Jurisdictions available

+1.000m

Legal documents

+2.500

Legal data sources

SPAIN AND THE IA IN THE INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT

In terms of technology adoption, Spain is in a prominent position in Europe. “The Spanish market is more advanced in technology adoption than other European countries such as Italy, France or Germany”, says Sala. However, compared to the UK and the US, there is still a more conservative mentality, with many firms waiting to see success stories before making the leap.


It is not only law firms that are in the transformation race. Large corporate law firms are also exploring how artificial intelligence can redefine their role. “AI can streamline document review, optimise contract management and reduce the cost of external office hours. It's not just about reducing costs, it's about making every hour of advice really add value”, explains Sala. With this paradigm shift, legal departments can stop being seen as units that slow down processes and become strategic players in decision-making.

THE REVOLUTION

The development of AI agents capable of autonomously executing complex tasks is one of the most anticipated trends in the coming years. “We are not talking about five or ten years; the revolution is happening now”, Sala stresses. Before long, AI will not only be answering questions, but will be performing entire processes, from document drafting to case

«The Spanish market is more advanced in technology adoption than other European countries»

management.

But if one thing is clear, it is that technology, however advanced, will not replace the human role in key decision-making. “Technology can give you the legal guidance, but you have to do the human part”, explains Sala. In complex litigation, strategic negotiations or emotionally charged conflicts, judgement and experience remain irreplaceable. The legal sector faces an inescapable dilemma: adapt to artificial intelligence or be left behind in a changing market. While AI adoption poses challenges, its strategic implementation can be a defining competitive advantage. “Artificial intelligence is the elephant in the room, and lawyers cannot ignore it”, concludes Ferran Sala. 

«Everything related to artificial intelligence has a very rapid obsolescence»





The domino effect of DEI policies

From law firm bashing to uncertainty in Europe:
how diversity policies have become a legal and political battlefield

by julia gil

The Spanish legal profession is observing with concern the recent measures adopted by **Donald Trump's** administration against several law firms in the United States. With the excuse of reinforcing meritocracy and reducing discrimination, the administration has targeted firms that have worked for the Biden administration or the Democratic party. However, the most targeted firms have been those whose lawyers participated in cases against Trump, collaborated with Hillary Clinton or in the investigations related to the assault on the Capitol. These include Jenner & Block, Paul, Weiss, Rifkind, Wharton & Garrison LLP (Paul, Weiss), Perkins Coie, Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom and WilmerHale.

Perkins Coie was the first to sue the US government, arguing that the executive order was an abuse of power aimed at punishing the firm for representing clients with Democratic Party ties. Subsequently, WilmerHale and Jenner & Block joined the legal action, denouncing similar measures against them. Other firms, on the other hand, have reached settlements with the White House. Paul, Weiss has been heavily criticised for scrapping its internal diversity policies and donating \$40 million in pro bono legal work to support the administration's causes ([link to news story](#)).

IMPACT IN SPAIN AND EUROPE

On 17 March, the US Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) sent letters to 20 law firms requesting information on their employment practices related to diversity, equity and inclusion ([link to official letters](#)). Among the firms affected are A&O Shearman, Debevoise & Plimpton, Cooley, Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer, Goodwin Procter, Hogan Lovells, Kirkland & Ellis, Latham & Watkins, McDermott Will & Emery, Milbank, Morgan, Morgan, Lewis & Bockius, Morrison & Foerster, Perkins Coie, Reed Smith, Ropes & Gray, Sidley Austin, Simpson Thacher & Bartlett, Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom, White & Case and WilmerHale. All are required to respond by 15 April with information and documentation on their diversity policies.

The aim of this investigation seems to be to verify that the application of these practices does not generate reverse discrimination, a recurring argument in the Trump administration. To this end, different aspects have been put under scrutiny, such as summer programmes for law students, decisions on affiliation, remuneration and recruitment strategies.

Of the firms investigated, five have a presence in Spain: Hogan Lovells, Latham & Watkins, A&O Shearman, White & Case and Freshfields. Although the action originates in the United States, its effects could be felt in Europe and particularly in Spain, where diversity regulation is strict and mandatory for companies and law firms.

In the Spanish legal profession, the issue has generated intense debate. While some US law firms based in Spain, with whom Iberian Lawyer has been able to speak, have avoided taking a position and are internally evaluating



JACOBO MARTÍNEZ



their position, others are rethinking the advice they provide to US companies in the country. On the other hand, UK law firms based in Spain have shown a firmer stance on maintaining and reinforcing their DEI policies.

A STEP BACKWARDS

Uncertainty about the impact of these measures is palpable. From the firm Eversheds Sutherland, **Jacobo Martínez**, managing partner in Spain, has expressed his concern: "Throwing away IED policies, either by going with the flow or by mistakes in their implementation, is a step backwards". Martínez stresses that in Spain and Europe these policies will continue to be mandatory and that a commitment to diversity and inclusion is fundamental to the development of the legal sector.

The fear is that the Trump administration's decisions could negatively influence regions

with less regulated EIL policies, slowing down progress on diversity and inclusion. "Having a well-managed EID policy is a strategic weapon for any company, as it improves performance and creates attractive work environments", says Martínez.

DOMINO EFFECT

The Trump administration's actions against large law firms in the United States have generated a domino effect that could reach Spain. The pressure on law firms' DEI policies is a clear statement of intent and highlights the influence that every decision in Washington can have on the global legal community.

The industry in Spain is watching cautiously and preparing for possible changes, but the position of many law firms is clear: inclusion and diversity are not just a regulatory requirement, but a strategic necessity for the future of law. 

Expert Opinion



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MARTA DELGADO ECHEVARRÍA

Jones Day celebrates 25 years

Managing partner Marta Delgado reflects on the firm's evolution, the keys to its leadership, and future challenges

by Iliaria Iaquina

The year 2025 marks a significant milestone for Jones Day in Spain, as it celebrates 25 years since the opening of its Madrid office. It was in the year 2000 that the international firm commenced its operations in the Spanish capital. Since then, as **Marta Delgado Echevarría**, managing partner since January 2023, recalls in a conversation with *Iberian Lawyer*, “the firm has evolved in step with the business world and in line with the firm's own development. We are an integrated firm within a global firm and we work under the principle of one firm worldwide, something deeply ingrained in our culture and which has grown significantly in the last 10 or 15 years”.

MILESTONES

Over the past 25 years, Jones Day's Madrid office has experienced significant growth, both in the number of lawyers and the diversity of its practice areas. “As an American firm, we place great emphasis on litigation and corporate transactions. However, we have also seen remarkable development in other practices, particularly financial markets, global disputes, and real estate”, explains Marta Delgado. Currently, the areas with the most lawyers are real estate and financial markets (each with seven lawyers, *ed.*), followed by corporate and global disputes (each with six, *ed.*). However, this distribution has already begun to change with the recent addition of **José Luis Pita** and **Borja Carpintero** as partner and of counsel, respectively, to the finance team currently led by **Javier López Antón** and **Iván Martín-Barbón**—a development officially announced by the firm and exclusively reported by *Iberian Lawyer* (here the news). The global disputes team “is notably active in the legislative development of class actions in Spain, a matter of particular relevance to us as a U.S. firm, given that approximately half of our global revenue comes from the global disputes area”.

One area that has recently gained prominence is real estate, considered one of the firm's major specialties. “Currently, we have seven lawyers and continue to grow. We are involved in the most sophisticated mandates in the market. We offer advice from the transactional side, with Javier Muñoz as a partner, and from the urban planning

«Our challenge is to integrate technology without losing the humanistic focus that sets us apart»



JONES DAY SPAIN IN FIGURES

2000

Year of establishment in Spain

41

Number of lawyers

13

Number of partners

«When you're a very young associate, you're mostly surrounded by women. However, as you take on more responsibility, the number of women decreases»

and real estate law side, with Luis Jiménez-Díaz, providing a comprehensive perspective that few firms can offer”, adds Delgado.

Unlike other firms with more hierarchical structures, Jones Day emphasises the active and direct involvement of its partners and senior lawyers in each matter, as highlighted by the managing partner. “We place great value on high-quality advice and added value. In the complex litigation and transactions, we handle, it's rare for a matter to be led solely by an associate; typically, the partner or partners involved are very present”, she explains. This operational model has driven sustained growth for the firm, not only in revenue

but also in the strategic expansion of its practices. “Our revenue growth is directly linked to our business model, where partners or senior lawyers participate directly in operations. This allows us to achieve high levels of profitability without the need to exponentially increase our workforce”, Delgado notes. Jones Day's advisory approach is also characterised by its comprehensive focus: “We concentrate on sophisticated, high value-added law, where the partner's contribution is key to success”, Delgado concludes.

LEADERSHIP

Since 2023, Marta Delgado has led Jones Day's Madrid office, a firm where she has developed her



«Spain is clearly a key country for business projects in renewable energy and infrastructure»

entire professional career. “I spent many years learning as an associate, dedicating myself to working hard and learning a lot, not only about law but also about how client relationships work, how a firm operates, what the firm's objectives are, and also about personal leadership”, says Delgado. She was appointed partner in 2017, following a long period as an associate and later as of counsel. One of the biggest challenges has been the change in perspective upon assuming leadership. “The real difference was adopting a more global perspective, looking after the interests of the entire office. That is, not only for partners and counsel but for all staff, associates, the careers of associates, and all practices equally. What is sought is joint success based on collaboration”, she points out.

Female leadership in a sector where senior positions are still predominantly held by men has been a significant factor in Delgado's professional journey. “When you're a very young associate, you're mostly surrounded by women. Today, in our firm, there's a clear majority of female associates over male associates. However, as you take on more responsibility and commit fully to the firm, the number of women decreases”, she explains. She adds, “For me, the trust the firm

places in you has been key, but also the trust you place in yourself”. Delgado also highlights her personal experience with diversity initiatives: “Here, I've been greatly supported. Leading the diversity initiative in the Madrid office was very rewarding. It allowed me to have very interesting conversations with female and male lawyers, learn, and understand other points of view. Understanding other perspectives is the key to personal, professional, and also business growth”. She concludes, “As a woman, I've never been held back here. I firmly believe that we live in a world where this is not only possible but is already happening”.

OBJECTIVES

In recent years, Delgado explains, “we have experienced a growth of approximately 10% to 15% in the number of lawyers compared to previous periods. However, the increase in revenue has been significantly higher, as our strategy focuses not merely on increasing the number of lawyers, but on maintaining a high revenue per lawyer”.

Looking ahead, Delgado hints at significant upcoming developments: “We will soon announce other interesting additions in strategic areas where we plan to grow, but it is still too early to reveal them”. A global strategic priority for the firm is energy transition and infrastructure. “Spain is clearly a key country for business projects in renewable energy and infrastructure. From Madrid, we are fully committed to supporting our clients in these processes”, she states. Technological innovation is also among the firm's top priorities, especially artificial intelligence. “We are dedicating substantial resources to testing the latest advancements in generative artificial intelligence. We understand that nothing can replace a lawyer's legal judgment, but we are committed to integrating these tools to enhance our processes”, Delgado explains. Furthermore, the managing partner emphasizes the firm's technological positioning: “We advise some of the world's leading artificial intelligence developers. We are fully informed about the latest developments”. She concludes by stressing that “human value will remain essential. Our challenge is to integrate technology without losing the humanistic focus that sets us apart”. ■

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The capacity market

A real opportunity for energy storage in Spain?

by mercedes galán

Spain is advancing in its energy transition, but the intermittency of renewables poses a challenge: ensuring electricity supply. To address this, the government has revived the capacity market, a mechanism to incentivise firm power. After a failed attempt in 2021, in December 2024, it presented a new proposal, which is crucial given the progressive closure of nuclear plants and the risk of greater energy dependence. One sector that could benefit from this market is energy storage, which emerges as a potential solution to compensate for renewable variability. But is it truly an opportunity?

THE ROLE OF ENERGY STORAGE

The capacity market seeks to incentivize technologies that provide firmness to the electrical system, and energy storage fits perfectly within that profile. Batteries, pumped hydro, and other technologies could participate in auctions to ensure energy availability during critical moments. As **María Pilar García Guijarro**, managing partner of WFW's Madrid office and Head of Energy in Europe and America, points out, "the sector has long been calling for the approval of the capacity market and the holding of the first auction because it is expected to have a very positive impact." While awaiting details of the first auction, it is expected to boost financing and transactions in energy storage in Spain, she explains.

From the legal and financial sectors, doubts are already being raised about the viability of the system. According to **Antonio Morales**, a partner at Baker McKenzie and Head of the firm's Public Law, Infrastructure, and Energy Department, "it is positive to develop such a mechanism that can incentivize the use of technologies that provide firmness and flexibility to the electricity system. These mechanisms are essential for stimulating investments in generation capacity and ensuring security of electricity supply, thus preventing the premature closure of essential infrastructure for the system".

However, Morales also notes that this capacity market will entail an additional cost for the electricity system, which will be financed by



MARÍA PILAR GARCÍA GUIJARRO

energy retailers through unit prices updated periodically by ministerial order. "Developing a capacity mechanism that ensures a secure electricity supply is essential to meeting the challenges of the current energy transition," he adds.

Regarding its implementation, **Gonzalo Olivera**, Head of Energy and partner at Addleshaw Goddard, highlights the main associated risks as "the possible insufficiency of service provision periods, which could hinder the profitability of investments made by developers." Additionally, he warns of "the lack of specificity in certain key parameters for each auction call, which generates uncertainty about the real impact of the mechanism, its conditions, and its attractiveness for developing new investments in the sector," he explains.

REGULATORY CHALLENGES AND OBSTACLES

The deployment of renewable energy requires mechanisms to ensure system stability, and the



ANTONIO MORALES

capacity market could provide this. As Olivera points out, "to attract more investment, it would be essential to achieve greater compatibility between the remuneration obtained in capacity auctions and other existing remuneration mechanisms. In the case of energy storage, this would improve the economic viability of projects, making investment in this sector more attractive and sustainable in the long term."

According to Morales, "the capacity market, by maintaining a balance between supply and demand, helps ensure electricity supply security and incorporate new storage technologies." Moreover, international experience shows that in countries like the United Kingdom or Belgium, similar mechanisms have driven the growth of energy storage and the signing of longer-term contracts. Therefore, he concludes: "I do believe that the capacity market can improve the current state of energy storage in Spain."

Olivera highlights that legal certainty is key to attracting investment in energy storage, but regulatory instability has been an obstacle.

"It is crucial that legislation is reasonable, predictable, and quickly adapts to the sector's needs." He also underscores the importance of efficient implementation and the participation of all stakeholders to improve project processing and ensure its effectiveness.

Regarding whether dependence on energy imports could make Spain vulnerable to geopolitical factors, García Guijarro points out that "price volatility in the Spanish electricity market is closely related to its marginalist nature and the price-setting system," which exposes the country to external factors such as international conflicts or supply disruptions. She highlights that while the growth of renewables will reduce this dependence, their intermittency requires measures such as energy storage and, in agreement with others, a stable regulatory framework to ensure the system's autonomy and stability.

THE NUCLEAR CLOSURE CONTEXT

The closure of nuclear power plants poses a challenge to the stability of the electricity system, as they have historically been a firm generation source. García Guijarro states that "nuclear power plants accounted for around 20% of electricity production in 2024," so their progressive closure between 2027 and 2035 must be offset by more renewable generation and storage. She stresses that speeding up project processing will be key to ensuring system stability and compensating for renewable intermittency.

As Morales points out, nuclear energy, since it does not emit greenhouse gases and provides a constant supply, is a key alternative to cover renewable intermittency and reduce vulnerability to global energy crises. "Closing nuclear power plants is a mistake; extending their lifespan beyond the planned 40 years would strengthen the country's energy security and ensure system stability during the transition to a more sustainable model," he concludes.




GONZALO OLIVERA

Olivera agrees, stating that "as these technologies will be implemented progressively and greater energy demand will arise—such as that generated by data centers or hydrogen production—it will be necessary to continue relying on fully manageable generation facilities in the short and medium term. Nuclear plants, which are more profitable and cleaner than other alternatives, could play a key role in this context," he affirms.

AN ONGOING DEBATE

García Guijarro believes that Spain's energy transition is viable but requires stability: "The current measures are ambitious but achievable if resources are allocated to administrations to streamline procedures and a stable regulatory framework is maintained, without abrupt changes that deter investors." She highlights that energy investments are long-term and need a solid plan balancing decarbonization and security of supply while also fostering electricity demand. "Without private capital support, it will be difficult to achieve the expected pace of transition."

Morales emphasizes that the capacity market can ensure supply and promote energy storage, but warns that its success will depend on its ability to adapt to change: "Although this mechanism can have a lasting positive impact, its effectiveness will depend on its ability to adapt to the rapid evolution of the electricity system and technological innovations." 

CURRENT SITUATION AND OUTLOOK FOR ENERGY STORAGE IN SPAIN

- **Energy storage capacity in Spain:** The country has over 20,000 megawatts (MW) of energy storage systems, positioning itself as a European leader in installed capacity.
- **Renewable energy share in electricity generation:** In 2024, renewables accounted for 56.8% of Spain's electricity generation, with wind energy contributing 23.2%, nuclear 20%, and solar photovoltaic 17%.
- **Storage target for 2030:** Spain is projected to reach 5 gigawatts (GW) of energy storage capacity by 2030, driven by the development of the capacity market.
- **Battery profitability:** Batteries are expected to achieve returns exceeding 10% in their initial years of operation, stabilizing between 6% and 8% by the end of the decade.
- **First capacity market auction:** Spain's first capacity market auction is expected to be defined during the first half of 2025, offering sustainable revenue for energy storage.

Sources: Iberdrola, Red Eléctrica, AEPIBAL

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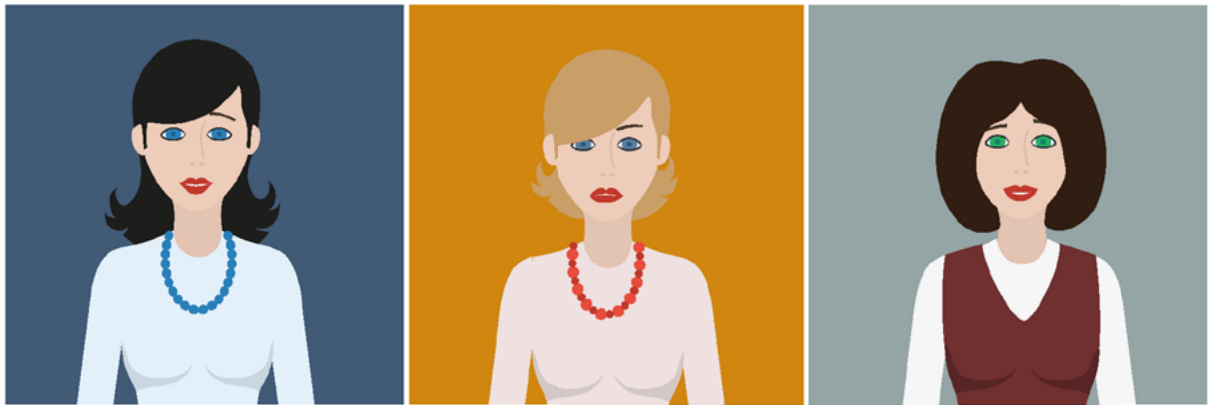


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ÍÑIGO SAGARDOY, MARTÍN GODINO

Sagardoy: from tradition to the forefront of labor law

by mercedes galán

Since its founding in 1980 by **Juan Antonio Sagardoy Bengoechea**- a key jurist in the drafting of the Workers' Statute- the law firm Sagardoy Abogados has undergone remarkable evolution. From a family law firm, it has grown into a specialized labor law firm with a presence throughout Spain and an increasing international projection. At *Iberian Lawyer*, we spoke with its managing partner, **Martín Godino**, about the values that have shaped this journey and the challenges posed by the future of work.

TRAINING AS A GROWTH DRIVER

One of the firm's hallmarks has always been its commitment to training. This approach has fostered internal promotion and the consolidation of a stable structure. A clear example is the career path of its managing partner, **Martín Godino**, who joined the firm at the age of 24 and now leads it alongside **Iñigo Sagardoy**, executive president. "The continuous updating and training of lawyers is the key element that has allowed us to

maintain excellence in advising our clients and has ensured a stable professional career development," explains Godino.

In this context, the firm has promoted its training center, Sagardoy Business & Law School, led by **Vanessa Izquierdo**. The center offers specialized training programs in labor law, human resources management, and courses on AI applied to law and business for clients and companies. "Since the firm's foundation, we have never seen professional practice and academic experience as separate areas but as complementary ones, which is why for us, providing training is a relevant part of our mission as a leading firm in labor law practice," states the firm's managing partner.

THE IMPACT OF AI ON THE LABOR MARKET

Digital transformation and automation are profoundly reshaping the labor market, and the legal field is no exception. Sagardoy has identified artificial intelligence as one of the most transformative factors, though its



SAGARDOY OFFICE

application also raises questions. "We are not yet fully aware of the impact AI will have on professional practice, particularly in such a sensitive area as labor law. However, we are convinced that human intervention must play a leading role to ensure that AI serves as a support and development tool for our advisory services, rather than a substitute for them," says Godino.

Nevertheless, legal and ethical challenges also arise regarding job automation, the protection of workers' rights, and collective bargaining. The firm actively works in these areas, advising companies and labor unions on adapting to new technological realities.

NATIONAL CONSOLIDATION AND INTERNATIONAL EXPANSION


Following its 2022-2025 Strategic Plan, Sagardoy continues to expand its territorial presence with offices in Barcelona, Bilbao, Málaga, and Seville. In addition, it is a founding member of **Ius Laboris** (International Employment Law, Pensions and Employee Benefits Alliance), an international network of specialized law firms, which allows it to provide advisory services in multiple jurisdictions, from Europe to Latin

America.

In the last financial year, Sagardoy Abogados surpassed €34 million in revenue, achieving the best results in its history. With a team of more than 60 lawyers and 24 partners, Sagardoy remains committed to a professionalized and specialized structure. "In a field like ours, people are the most valuable asset we have, and therefore, we must take the utmost care in their competence, promotion, and personal and professional development," states the managing partner.

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

Recently, the *Swiss fund Ufenau Capital Partners* acquired a stake in the firm, marking a turning point in its growth strategy. The objective, according to Godino, is clear: "To offer broader and more sophisticated services to our clients, strengthen our technological capabilities, and consolidate our leadership position."

The investment will allow the firm to incorporate new complementary services and enhance its digital transformation. A step that confirms Sagardoy's commitment to an innovation-driven model without losing sight of its roots. 



MARTÍN GODINO

THE LAW FIRM IN NUMBERS

1980

Year of foundation

60

Number of lawyers

24

Number of partners

€34 million+

2024 Revenue

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Law and its dilemmas

On the eve of the 2025 World Law Congress, Javier Cremades reflects on the role of legal professionals as guardians of human dignity in times of digital disruption, polarisation and threats to democracy

by ilaria iaquinta

In a world where digitalisation and globalisation are reshaping social, political and economic structures, the law is facing one of its greatest modern challenges: adapting without losing its essence. Against this backdrop of rapid change, Santo Domingo is getting ready to host the 29th edition of the World Law Congress, which will take place from 4 to 6 May 2025. Organised by the World Jurist Association in collaboration with the World Law Foundation, the event will bring together judges, lawyers, academics and political leaders from over 70 countries.

“The Dominican Republic offers an interesting model”, explains **Javier Cremades**, president of the association (founded in Washington in 1963 by a judge, **Earl Warren**, a lawyer, **Charles Rhyen**, and a statesman, **Winston Churchill**, *ed.*) to *Iberian Lawyer*. “It is a country with low levels of polarisation, consistent alternation in power through free and democratic elections, and a plural, digitalised public opinion”. This stands in contrast to other countries in the region, where failed states prevail and the rule of law is absent. For Cremades, Santo Domingo is “an example of how to build sustainable human development based on equitable access to resources”.

THE PROGRAMME

The opening day will feature key figures such as **Carolina Mejía**, Mayor of Santo Domingo, and **Stephan Harbarth**, President of Germany’s Constitutional Court, who will join Cremades for the official launch of the congress. With more than 300 speakers, the programme will explore today’s most pressing topics: judicial independence, human rights, freedom of expression, sustainability, artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, data protection and the impact of technology on justice systems. “Essentially, a jurist, like a doctor, practices a profession rooted in care — care for the community and for human dignity,” Cremades emphasises.

Panel discussions will bring together senior judges and international experts in a bid to build bridges between diverse legal perspectives. “It is crucial to avoid becoming ‘technical idiots’, that is to say specialists who excel in a specific field

but lack awareness of the broader context. Jurists must act as citizens and intellectuals committed to the well-being of society. Opening the debate to all sectors enables a better understanding of how the public lives and their genuine challenges, thereby more accurately reflecting the objectives in future public policies and legal practices”, he adds.

The congress will also serve as a launchpad for an ambitious international cooperation initiative. Lawyers from 25 countries will offer pro bono legal advice to children who are victims of abuse of power, under a project called Justice for Children, led by Indian lawyer **Bhuwan Ribhu**, trustee of the World Law Foundation. The foundation aims to become a kind of Médecins Sans Frontières for law — defending children from all forms of abuse, especially sexual abuse. The launch of the first Latin America–Europe Erasmus legal exchange, in partnership with the Tatiana Foundation, will also be presented during the event.



DEMOCRACIES UNDER PRESSURE


In a conversation with Iberian Lawyer, Javier Cremades reflects on the role of the World Jurist Association: “This association was born in the midst of the Cold War, bringing together judges, lawyers, professors, and all branches of law. Today, the risk also lies within our own democracies; the system can collapse. This is largely due to how autocracies have penetrated democracies using technology”. He warns of a paradox of our time: “The freedoms we have so wonderfully developed have been subject to abuse. Democracies are all under siege and threat. Therefore, it is essential that we debate this and remind all jurists worldwide that the true purpose of anyone dedicated to law is to promote peace, freedom, and human dignity”.

Cremades highlights the primary challenges confronting the legal field in today's digitally driven environment: “The debate on freedom of expression is pivotal. Traditionally, in North American, German, Spanish, or Italian jurisprudence, it has been granted a preferential position because it ensures a free public opinion, indispensable for democracy and the rule of law. However, today, disinformation and post-truth pose a threat”. He further emphasises another critical challenge: “Defending the independence

of the Judiciary, which is the most vulnerable against an increasingly pressured Executive Power”.

As for the most pressing challenges for the legal community, the president of the WJA is clear: “First and foremost, we must reclaim and strengthen the fundamental purpose of the jurist: to protect the dignity and freedom of individuals. This is the primary challenge, encompassing areas such as environmental law, procedural law, tax law, administrative law, among others – but always with the individual at the centre. The second challenge is to reinforce the community's commitment to the rule of law and to institutions, especially in a polarised context where some view judges as politicians in robes. Without citizen engagement, neither the Constitution nor institutions – no matter how perfect – can uphold the rule of law. Finally, it is vital to strengthen the separation of powers, as a well-informed public opinion and the safeguarding of truth are essential in countering the internal threats to our democracies. Moreover, it would be ideal to expand the rule of law system to more countries, but for now, we must ensure that we protect what we already have”.

ROOTS AND FUTURE

The World Jurist Association, under the leadership of Cremades, seeks not only to preserve its foundational legacy but also to adapt it to contemporary times: “On one hand, we aim to honour and connect with the founding principles envisioned by historical figures such as Churchill and others who paved the way for future generations: promoting peace through law. Additionally, in the midst of the 21st century, we face current challenges and opportunities that will help us better understand where the threats to peace and the rule of law lie. This is essential to guide our work towards building a constantly evolving world”. He concludes with a pivotal question: “Public power is only legitimate if exercised in accordance with a human-centred Constitution, placing the individual at the core. The key question is: do laws govern, or does force govern us? This congress represents a vital horizon for all of us”. 



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MARÍA DE LOS REYES ESCRIG TEIGEIRO

Landing in international markets

From Aena Internacional's legal department, María de los Reyes Escrig manages the regulatory challenges of the group's global expansion

por Ilaria Iaquina

Leading the international legal department at Aena Desarrollo Internacional, **María de los Reyes Escrig Teigeiro** coordinates the legal aspects of the airport group's operations across multiple markets from Spain. It is a considerable challenge, given that each country operates under distinct regulatory frameworks and faces unique hurdles.

"Aena Internacional is the subsidiary driving our expansion beyond Spain, with majority stakes in Brazil and the United Kingdom, as well as minority interests in Colombia, Mexico, and Jamaica", Escrig explains. The general counsel's daily work revolves around three key areas: internal legal advisory, coordination of acquisition and expansion operations, and legal oversight of international subsidiaries. "Our role not only ensures regulatory compliance but also safeguards the company's interests in each market and aligns the legal strategy with Aena's overall objectives", she emphasises.

CHALLENGES

Managing airport concessions in such diverse markets entails facing multiple regulatory and operational challenges. "When we operate outside Spain, we must keep an open mind to understand different regulations and cultures. Sector-specific regulations, concession conditions, legal security aspects, and even

«We seek reputable firms with specific expertise and the ability to manage international projects»

the political context can have a decisive impact on each project", she explains. In this regard, conducting thorough due diligence is essential. "We do not just analyse purely legal aspects, but also the country's political and economic stability. Identifying potential risks before starting operations is crucial", she adds. A key challenge is harmonising different regulatory frameworks within a common operational model, ensuring consistency across all jurisdictions. To navigate this complexity, the support of external advisors specialising in international airport regulations is fundamental. "We seek reputable firms with specific expertise in airport concessions and the ability to manage international projects. We particularly value agility, cost transparency, and the capacity to coordinate advisory services across different jurisdictions", she explains. Among the key criteria, the digitalisation of



AENA'S OFFICES IN MADRID

«Being involved in decision-making from the outset allows legal criteria to be incorporated, facilitating the sustainability and success of projects»

document management and the ability to meet tight deadlines—common in acquisition or international bidding processes—are also highlighted. Maintaining continuous and fluid relationships with these advisors is essential to respond swiftly to unforeseen changes. Moreover, Escrig emphasises the importance of cultural adaptation in legal department. “It is not just about knowing the law, but also about understanding how to apply it in each specific cultural context. Flexibility and empathy towards different ways of working in other countries are key to our success”. In this sense, having local teams in each subsidiary proves to be a decisive strategy, as it allows for greater agility in decision-making and a better understanding of each country’s regulatory framework.

In a highly regulated sector, legislation is constantly evolving. Currently, one of Aena’s top priorities is sustainability in its three dimensions: environmental, social, and governance. “Environmental regulation is one of the most dynamic areas at the moment.

Aena has been working on this for years, with initiatives such as our Climate Action Plan, which includes impact assessments and continuous monitoring of regulations”, explains Escrig. Another crucial aspect is the regulation of carbon emissions and their impact on airport infrastructure. “The aviation sector is facing increasing regulatory pressure to reduce its carbon footprint, and we must ensure that our operations comply with the highest standards in this regard”, she emphasises.

The regulation of airport tariffs is another key factor in the management of concessions. In some markets, restrictions on tariff-setting can impact profitability and investment planning. “Part of our legal work involves analysing how these regulations affect our business model and ensuring that the conditions remain sustainable in the long term”, explains Escrig.

Finally, the general counsel highlights the increasingly significant role of regulation in airport security and data protection. “Airports are critical infrastructures, and any changes in security or technology require substantial investments”, she points out. The management of risks related to cybersecurity has also gained greater importance, prompting Aena to strengthen its audits and advanced monitoring systems to ensure operational security across all its airports.

DIGITALISATION


Digitalisation has fully entered Aena’s legal department, streamlining processes and enhancing operational efficiency. “We are implementing technological tools that simplify and optimise daily work. One of these is Clarity, a digital platform developed in collaboration with the IT department to manage legal cases and enquiries more efficiently”, explains Escrig. Furthermore, the firm is exploring the potential of artificial intelligence in the legal field. “We have a pilot AI project aimed at automating processes and reducing administrative burdens. This will allow us to focus on tasks that bring greater strategic value to the company”, she highlights. However, the implementation of these innovations also presents new challenges,

such as the continuous training of the team to maximise the use of these digital tools.

With the aim of optimising efficiency in legal department, Aena is making progress in developing automated platforms for contractual risk analysis, thereby facilitating informed decision-making in real time. “We are creating systems that allow us to assess potential legal scenarios more swiftly before they become a problem”, says Escrig. Internal training in new technologies is another key pillar of this transformation. “It is essential that our team is well-versed in the latest digital tools and understands how to strategically leverage them in our daily work”, she emphasises.

FROM LAWYER TO ‘BUSINESS PARTNER’

In addition to leading the digital transformation within the legal department, Escrig plays a key role in strategic decision-making within the company. As a member of the Executive Committee of Aena Desarrollo Internacional and the board of directors of several foreign subsidiaries, her role extends beyond the strictly legal sphere. “Being involved in decision-making from the outset allows legal criteria to be incorporated, facilitating the sustainability and success of projects. This helps to mitigate future risks and enhances transparency in governance”, she explains.

For Escrig, the role of the corporate lawyer is undergoing a significant transformation. “In-house counsel is no longer just a legal risk analyst but a strategic partner. We must develop new skills, such as strategic vision, negotiation, rapid adaptation to regulatory changes, and advanced digital competencies”, she notes. She also emphasises that foresight and anticipating regulatory changes will be crucial in the coming years. “The future of legal counsel lies in a more global and integrated approach within corporate strategy, where we do not simply respond to problems but anticipate them before they arise”, she adds. “It is a very exciting time that demands effort but also presents opportunities to truly be part of the international business’s growth and success”, she concludes. 

«In-house counsel is no longer just a legal risk analyst but a strategic partner»



LEGALTECH DAY



**THE BOUNDARY
BETWEEN AUTOMATION
AND HUMAN DECISIONS**

29 MAY 2025

09.00 - 14.00

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PROGRAM*

- 09:00 Registration and Welcome Coffee
- 09:20 Welcome Message
- 09:30 Opening Speech
- 09:45 **Roundtable I - Human vs. Machine:
Shaping the Future of Legal Decision-Making**
- 11:15 Coffee Break
- 11:45 **Roundtable II - Fintech & Venture Capital:
Investing in the Future of Finance**
- 13:15 Questions and Final Comments
- 13:30 Light Lunch

SPEAKERS*

Alice Garlisi, Legal IP & Media Counsel, *Fever*

Elisabet Rojano-Vendrell, Legal Director - Spain & Latin America, *MENARINI Group*,
Country Representative Spain, *ACC Europe*

Miguel Romera Marroquín, Head of Corporate, Compliance & Risks Legal, Regulatory
Affairs and Corporate Security, *Vodafone España*

Carmen Ruiz Lorente, Head of Legal, *Huawei Technologies España*

* in progress

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DE MADRID



LAURA DE RIVERA

Laura de Rivera: "The in-house lawyer has transitioned from advisor to strategic player"

The general counsel of CaixaBank discusses the impact of AI, sustainability, and the evolving role of the in-house lawyer

by mercedes galán

With a legal and financial career spanning nearly two decades, Laura de Rivera — State Attorney and current director of legal department at CaixaBank — leads a team of almost 200 professionals in an environment of constant regulatory and technological change. In this interview with Iberian Lawyer, she reflects on how the role of in-house counsel has evolved, the challenges of digitalisation in the legal sector, and the importance of diversity within organisations.

Did you always know you wanted to be a lawyer?

Not at all. As a child, I was fascinated by engineering, especially large infrastructures like bridges and ports. However, over time, I realized I was drawn to interpersonal relationships and the legal structures governing them — both between individuals and companies. Although there were no lawyers in my immediate family, there was always an interest in the field, which led me to study law. Interestingly, I combined it with a master's degree in finance, thinking I would pursue a career in the financial sector. But life has its way of guiding you, and in the end, I found my calling in the legal world, beginning my professional journey in public administration and later transitioning to the corporate sector.

How does the perception of in-house lawyers has changed within large companies?

There has been a significant shift in how in-house lawyers are perceived. We have moved from being mere advisors at the end of the decision-making process to becoming active participants in business strategy. Today, in-house lawyers are involved from the conception of a product or service, identifying potential risks and designing legal structures to mitigate them. We stopped being just legal consultants and became key decision-makers.

How is this strategic role ensured within a financial institution?

At CaixaBank, we have over 200 professionals within the General Secretariat, organized by specialty to support different business areas. We participate in multiple committees, collaborate

with external law firms, and have structured processes in place to provide comprehensive legal services. We closely monitor regulatory changes, from their initial drafts to their final approval, ensuring we can anticipate necessary adjustments and guarantee compliance effectively.

Digitalization is transforming every sector. How is it integrated into CaixaBank's legal department?

In our department, we strongly believe in technology as a tool for transformation. We have a dedicated transformation unit focused on process automation and eliminating manual tasks to optimize lawyers' workloads. Artificial intelligence can significantly enhance our work and improve our efficiency. We aim to free up time for high-value tasks, although this process requires safeguards and continuous reviews. Technology does not replace legal judgment, but it certainly helps us work more efficiently.

How do you balance the use of these technological tools with compliance and legal ethics?

Technology is a fundamental work tool, and artificial intelligence offers vast opportunities — provided it is used appropriately. To ensure regulatory compliance, we have a three-line defense system. Legal advisory serves as the first line, managing legal and regulatory risks. The second line, regulatory compliance, oversees the adopted criteria and ensures procedures are followed. Finally, the third line, internal audit, verifies that the entire system functions correctly. Additionally, we have a legal and regulatory risk policy, dashboards with metrics and KPIs, allowing us to maintain continuous oversight.

How do corporate values influence decision-making within the legal department?

Our corporate culture is based on three pillars: transparency, trust, and sustainability. Sustainability is particularly crucial for CaixaBank, given that our principal shareholder is the "la Caixa" Foundation, which has a strong social commitment. Within the legal department,

we encourage collaboration across teams and a unified approach to decision-making. We also have contract and litigation management tools, and we hold periodic meetings to share knowledge, not only internally but also with the legal teams of our affiliated entities. This promotes collaboration and ensures consistency in our legal approach.

Do you believe sustainability and social responsibility can help attract talent?

Without a doubt. Our shareholder structure and commitment to sustainability set us apart from other financial institutions. This is an added attraction for many professionals who seek meaningful impact through their work. Today's professionals look for more than just a job; they want an environment where they can grow, balance their personal lives, innovate, and contribute to a positive social impact.


Let's discuss diversity and inclusion. What remains to be done in corporate legal departments?

At CaixaBank, we have made great progress. Women in management positions accounted for 43.4% at the end of 2024, surpassing the target of 43% in 2023 and with a target of 45% in 2027, and we have reached 40% women on the Board of Directors. In the legal department, almost half of the team is made up of women. We are committed to meritocracy and equal opportunities with initiatives such as Wengage, which promotes gender, generational and cultural diversity. We believe that combining experience with fresh perspectives is essential, and this is something we will continue to work on.

What key skills do you consider essential in the banking legal sector?

Beyond a strong legal foundation in financial law, we look for transversal skills such as empathy, negotiation abilities, and clear communication. We work with diverse profiles, including engineers and data analysts, so the ability to communicate effectively and collaborate is crucial.

Finally, what advice would you give to young lawyers aspiring to work in the legal or financial sector?

Never stop studying and learning. This sector is constantly evolving and requires curiosity, research, and adaptability. It's also important to thoroughly understand the company you are joining. At CaixaBank, for example, we are committed to a socially responsible universal banking model with a long-term vision, built on quality and close customer relationships. Sharing these values is key to integrating into our team. Finally, it's essential to remember that lawyers do not just apply laws — we shape ideas and turn them into reality. It's an incredibly creative profession. 





ENERGY DAY

SAVE THE DATE

19 June 2025 • Madrid

- 09:00 ● ☕ CHECK-IN & WELCOME COFFEE
- 09:30 ● WELCOME MESSAGES
- 09:40 ● WELCOME SPEECH
- 10:00 ● SESSION I:
- 11:15 ● ☕ COFFEE BREAK
- 11:45 ● SESSION II:
- 13:00 ● CLOSING REMARKS
- 13:15 ● 🍴 LIGHT LUNCH

SPEAKERS*

Virginia Beltramini, General Counsel and Secretary of the Board, *Moeve*
Javier Ferrando de Martín-Pinillos, Associate General Counsel, *Grenergy Renovables*
Chema Zabala Lopez, Managing Director, *Alantra Energy Transition*

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JULIA ÁNGELES GARCÍA NAVARRO

The steps towards a dream fulfilled

Iberian Lawyer talks to Transfesa in-house lawyer Julia Ángeles García Navarro about her career and the publication of her first novel, *El año que pasamos jugando a no ser nosotros* (The year we spent playing at not being us)

by julia gil

Julia Ángeles García Navarro, secretary of the board, legal, risk, insurance and compliance director of Transfesa, has always been passionate about reading. Ever since she was a child, she found refuge in books in Cordoba in the 1960s where entertainment was scarce. She grew up among the pages of **Pedro Antonio de Alarcón** and other great authors, and, without knowing it, she was building her own narrative voice. Over time, stories ceased to be just something she read and became something that she sought out. Her professional life took her down the path of law, but writing kept calling her until it finally led her to publish her first novel. “A writer does not pursue history, but history pursues him”, says García Navarro. Because, just as in fiction, in life, stories find us when we least expect them.

BETWEEN LAW AND STAGE

Why study law and drama? “The question is why I decided to do law”, explains García with a smile. Raised in a traditional Córdoba where the idea of studying only an artistic career was not an option, she was forced to choose a plan B. At 16, she was already studying for a degree in dramatic arts, but her father insisted that she should pursue a “normal” career. Law was a throwaway choice that soon turned into an

«A writer does not pursue history, but history pursues him»

unexpected passion. “I’m passionate about law”, García admits, “it’s a vocation I discovered by chance and after having tried another option”.

His training was as intense as it was varied: after completing his studies, he prepared himself for four years to sit the civil service exams for notaries and registries. A period that she remembers as hard, but which marked a differential factor in her career. “It was like a priesthood, but it gave me a knowledge of law that was three times that of my colleagues”. However, the competitive examination did not go as he had hoped, and after failing for the second time, he decided to change course and move to Madrid.



PRESENTATION OF THE NOVEL “EL AÑO QUE PASAMOS JUGANDO A NO SER NOSOTROS” ON MARCH 13, 2025 BY THE AUTHOR JULIA A. GARCÍA (PEPA VEGA) WITH EMILIO DEL RÍO GENERAL DIRECTOR OF LIBRARIES, ARCHIVES AND MUSEUMS OF THE MADRID CITY COUNCIL AT THE HEADQUARTERS OF THE ECJJA LAW FIRM

FROM THE COURTS TO BIG BUSINESS

In the capital, García Navarro began his career in a small law firm specialising in drug trafficking and serious crimes. “My first court case was the Nécora case”, he recalls. Suddenly, he found himself in the Audiencia Nacional, facing human dramas of enormous importance, where his clients were risking their freedom. Subsequently, he worked in another firm, EM Abogados, a more generalist firm, where he dealt with all kinds of cases, from criminal matters, through inheritance or divorce, to insolvency proceedings. “Unlike in a large firm where you start and give support, for seven years I saw all areas in the same office”, explains García.

But her curiosity and desire to learn led her to explore other sectors. From private law, she moved into the world of technology consulting with Capgemini, where she experienced the Y2K and the technology boom. During this period, García recalls that providing legal support in a context of lack of regulation was an exercise in constant creativity. “We were trendsetters in the legal field”, he says. As an anecdote from this period, García recalls that, until his arrival at the company, he had never had the opportunity to use a computer. “My first connection to the Internet was there, fortunately my intern **Gonzalo F. Gállego** (ed: currently a partner at Hogan Lovells) gave me some practical classes”, he explains with a laugh.

In 2003, with the view that it is never too late to learn, García jumped to Grupo Lar, a totally different sector and regulation to what he had seen so far, and when the sector began to falter due to the real estate bubble, he returned to Capgemini for a period of 14 years. “It took a lot of

adaptability to change business repeatedly, but it gives you a very global vision. In the end, what you use in one sector you can use in another”, says the lawyer.

THE DREAM

But it's not all law. Julia A. García Navarro has also honoured her artistic side with the publication of her first novel *El año que pasamos jugando a no ser nosotros* (The year we spent playing at not being us), a project that has taken 10 years to see the light of day and which she signed with the pen name **Pepa Vega**, in honour of an ancestor and to avoid comparisons with the famous Spanish writer with whom she shares a first and second surname.

The story follows Olivia, a woman stuck in a rut who, one day, decides that the “infernal ramp” of her garage is not worth facing. Without spoilers, the novel is a compilation of many pieces. “I wanted to make a paradigmatic character, from a very specific generation”, she explains. Even so, it is not biographical, although the protagonist shares her passion for theatre and cinema.

Despite receiving offers from publishers, García decided to self-publish her work on a digital platform: “For someone new like me, whose aim is not to make a living from literature or earn money, but simply to fulfil a dream, self-publishing is a wonderful thing”, she says. A choice that, according to her, many authors consider at some point.

LEGAL INFLUENCE


It was not she who decided to write the novel; rather, the novel pursued her. “As a lawyer, I'm always writing stories. Thirty per cent of my work is in trials; the other 70 per cent is being a psychologist, understanding the issues and putting them on paper”, she says. That paper can take many forms: a lawsuit, a contract, a legal report? In this case, the paper took the form of a novel, the cornerstone of which is a contract signed “in blood”.

“Becoming a writer should happen to all lawyers”, he says with a smile. Her obsession as a lawyer is that her legal writing should be

«In my time
at Capgemini
we were trendsetters
in the legal field»

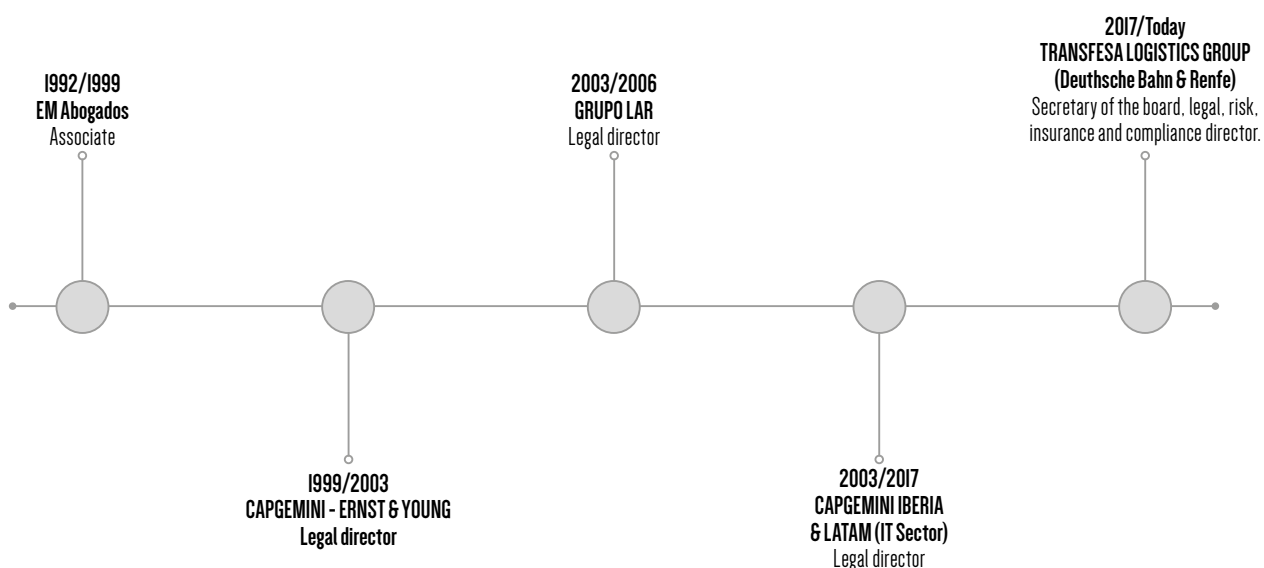
clear. That is why her training in law has left an indelible mark on her writing: “Everyone who reads it tells me that it is agile, easy to read and engaging. That, no doubt, is a direct influence of my legal training”, García explains.

Eight years in a senior management position and now a published novel: what challenges do you see for the future? “In the short term, I want to enjoy myself without worrying about the long term”, she answers. The lawyer and writer does not reveal whether there will be a second part of her book. “Right now, I feel fulfilled, and I’m not worried about the future. Rather than setting myself new challenges, I want to enjoy this moment: my project in Transfesa and my novel. Before writing another one, I want to live it and see how people receive it.

Lawyer or writer? Her answer is clear: she wouldn’t give up either. “I couldn’t choose, I want to continue to enjoy both”, she concludes. 

«The idea of becoming a writer should happen to all lawyers»

JULIA ÁNGELES GARCÍA NAVARRO’S PROFESSIONAL CAREER TIMELINE





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29 May 2025 • Madrid

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19.30 CHECK-IN

19.45 WELCOME COCKTAIL

20.30 CEREMONY

21.15 STANDING DINNER

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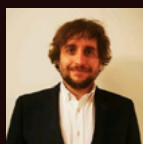
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**Andrés
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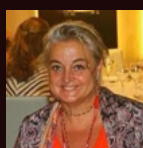
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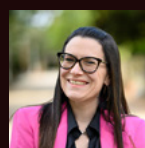
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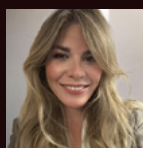
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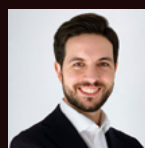
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GIUSEPPE VELLUTO, GIUSEPPE DE SIMONE

Gop identity

Gianni & Origoni closes another year of growth, renews its partnership and compensation committee. At the helm, the duo Velluto-De Simone, who, along with senior partner and founder Francesco Gianni, sit on the management committee. Focus on people, careers, and internationalization

by nicola di molfetta

The latest development at the firm has been the transition in the role of co-managing partner between lawyers **Antonio Auricchio** and **Giuseppe De Simone**. A handover that was planned and scheduled in July 2023, when the firm also renewed its executive committee. Giuseppe De Simone, born in 1976, joins **Giuseppe Velluto**, born in 1970. Gianni & Origoni (GOP) will have, for at least the next three years, its first millennial leadership duo at the helm, which, together with senior partner and co-founder **Francesco Gianni**, forms the management committee and participates in the executive committee.

Both Velluto and De Simone have climbed the organizational hierarchy of the professional association, advancing step by step. They both served as office partners, the former for the Milan office, the latter for Rome. Both were also part of the executive committee as elected members and today hold this position by right as co-managing partners. "I was also the recruiting partner", recalls De Simone, whom MAG met along with Velluto at the Piazza Belgioioso office in Milan. People will be a recurring theme in this discussion. After all, people are the most important asset of a law firm, the factor that determines its development and success. Regarding this, 2024 has also been a year of growth for the firm, as confirmed by the data. "We recorded a revenue increase of 9%", says Velluto. "Which means we are at about 188 million euros". A performance driven by the corporate M&A area, but not only that.

Mergers and acquisitions are certainly the driving force of the organization. The *Mergermarket* observatory recorded 65 announced transactions over the year, with a total value of approximately 10.5 billion dollars, marking a 39.5% increase. Among these, just to mention a few, are the assistance to Ita Airways in its transition to Lufthansa and support for KKR in its entry into Enilive and the acquisition of TIM's network. The firm is there, present in key operations. A trend that 2025 seems to be confirming. Again, just as an example, it is worth mentioning the role that Gianni & Origoni plays in one of the most interesting cases in the so-called banking sector reshuffle, advising MPS in the takeover bid for Mediobanca.

THE FIRM IN NUMBERS

1988

Year of founding (Rome, Milan, and New York)

490

Total professionals in Italy and abroad

58

Partners

165

Staff

11

Offices in Italy and abroad

5

New partners who joined the firm in the past year

€188 million

Revenue in 2024

+ 9%

Revenue growth compared to the previous year



Precisely because it is a leading practice area, despite its strong market positioning, corporate M&A continues to be a sector in which the firm invests. In May 2024, the Milan office opened its doors to **Massimo Tesei** and a team of five professionals, including a partner, who arrived from the boutique Di Gravio Avvocati, a firm with significant influence in the industrial corporate and mid-market sector. “We have made a series of targeted additions”, says De Simone, “bringing in profiles that are contributing to the development of practice areas where we have identified growth opportunities”. Apart from M&A, much of the firm's effort has been directed toward tax and litigation.

In the tax and fiscal sector, the firm welcomed first **Luca Dal Cerro**, formerly of Legance, and then Professor **Giulio Andreani**, formerly of PwC TLS, along with a team of three professionals. In litigation, the firm brought in **Cecilia Buresti** with three colleagues, formerly of Norton Rose Fulbright, who are particularly active in insurance litigation. Most recently, **Eviana Leung** joined as counsel at the Hong Kong office.

The direction is towards strengthening the full-service nature of the firm, from which, De Simone emphasizes, “we cannot depart. Today, we have about forty professionals in administrative law, at least seventy in litigation, and forty in tax.

LATERAL HIRES

New professionals who joined the firm (January 2024 - January 2025):

- **Eviana Leung**, Counsel, Litigation, Hong Kong (February 2025)
- **Cecilia Buresti**, Partner + team of 3 Associates, Litigation & Arbitration, Milan (January 2025)
- **Giulio Andreani**, Partner + team of 3 Counsel, Tax, Milan (January 2025)
- **Amb. Vincenzo De Luca**, Of Counsel, Internationalization, Rome (January 2025)
- **Edoardo Brillante**, Counsel, Financial Markets Law, Milan (December 2024)
- **Massimo Tesei**, Partner + team of 5 professionals, including one partner (Carlo Mecella), M&A, Milan (May 2024)
- **Luca Dal Cerro**, Partner, Tax, Milan (January 2024)

TREND

REVENUE TREND

(Figures in million euros)

Year	Revenue (€) mln
2024	188
2023	172
2022	160
2021	150

We have also continued to grow in intellectual property and have focused on more niche areas with significant growth potential, such as the space economy and cybersecurity”, where, since the arrival of partner **Stefano Mele**, the firm has developed high-level expertise.

The market demands and rewards firms capable of handling complex transactions, organizations that can ensure the same level of quality in support across all aspects of a deal. “The market - adds De Simone - demands a complete ability to respond. I specialize in banking & finance, but I often have to deal with tax, administrative, or regulatory issues. Clients expect a firm like ours to have the same level of competence in every area. Being full-service today means being able to respond efficiently to this type of need”.

“But this, - adds Velluto -, is also a goal we pursue through internal growth. We are fully committed to enhancing our talents, and this for at least two reasons: first, because we want to consolidate and preserve the GOP identity; second, because the market must be assured of professionals with the highest technical standards”.

This is why, over the past two years, the firm has worked with great attention to reforming its partnership. “Today, we have fifty-eight equity partners and twenty-four non-equity partners”, states Velluto, “and the latter now have a very different status compared to before”. “In fact”, De Simone interjects, “today, non-equity partners are professionals who possess the qualities needed to access equity. Our non-equity partnership

is essentially an incubator for equity, meaning that at our firm, those who become non-equity partners are effectively on track to achieve equity within a period that can be estimated at approximately three years”.

And that is not all. The firm has decided to free itself from the constraints of the traditional “up or out” logic, which usually dictates that those who do not advance must leave. “Our vision is forward-looking. “Up or out’ is not a relevant concept anymore”, says Velluto. “We have differentiated career paths by creating alternatives to partnership, with the roles of senior counsel and of counsel. The goal is to enhance the unique strengths of each of our professionals”.

“Professional excellence”, adds De Simone, “is a principle that Gianni & Origoni cannot compromise on. The focus on people and talent has always been at the core and will shape the future, creating professionals with different characteristics, nurturing individual potential, and establishing conditions for growth opportunities. In other words, ensuring a better environment for everyone by valuing human capital, respecting individual inclinations, aptitudes, and potential”.

The definition of career paths is another key aspect of the excellence strategy pursued by the firm. Engaged, like all firms, in the so-called “war for talent”, Gianni & Origoni has raised salaries for junior lawyers. Today, a first-year associate starts with a salary of 36,000 euros and can earn up to around 145,000 euros per year, plus bonuses, by the time they reach the highest level of seniority before transitioning to a counselship or partnership.

However, according to co-managing partners Velluto and De Simone, it is not just about money. “Employee retention”, says Velluto, “is also linked to offering perspectives, a project they can identify with, and above all, the firm’s ability to demonstrate attention to their well-being”. More than focusing on smart working, attention is placed on work-life balance, training, and personal and professional growth. “We are lawyers. We have always done smart working, as we have always been used to working from anywhere and at any time”.

DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

taking action against gender-based violence


GOP Cares is the firm's initiative that brings together activities in support of the environment (GOP Cares Green), people (GOP Cares Social), and governance (GOP Cares Work), with the goal of promoting sustainable development. The firm's commitment to Diversity & Inclusion has received formal and significant recognition with the UNI 125:2022 certification for gender equality.

With the recent #UGUALEPERTUTTE initiative, Gianni & Origoni has taken a stand against gender-based violence by offering its professional expertise in a program aimed at providing information, training, and support. The project involves professionals actively engaging in high schools, leading educational and awareness campaigns for students.

"We invest heavily in training for younger professionals", De Simone points out, "supporting their professional growth through academic training programs, as well as training with our clients and partner firms. We try to involve younger colleagues in the firm's life and decision-making processes. We have established an associate committee to accelerate the institutionalization process of the firm and facilitate dialogue with younger colleagues in a two-way dynamic".

Returning to the issue of salaries, De Simone states that "the trend is to increase compensation for younger professionals. The problem is that there are fewer and fewer aspiring lawyers. And among them, we need to attract the best. Salaries and economic prospects are one factor. Then there is the project, career path transparency, and the focus on the individual. In other words, the GOP identity".

Regarding careers and compensation, the most significant governance change in the past year has been the expansion of the mission and the composition of the compensation committee. The firm has created an independent body responsible for defining the remuneration of equity partners, non-equity partners, senior counsel, and of counsel. "It is a fully independent body", says Velluto, "meaning that none of its eight members is, or can be, a member of the management or executive committee".

Additionally, De Simone explains, "it works twelve months a year. And this is crucial because it means that it monitors professionals throughout the year, tracks business performance continuously, and has the ability to intervene to improve progress and results as needed". The compensation committee is also characterized by a diverse composition in terms of practice areas represented and generational background. 

CULTURAL OBJECTIVE

The first international academy

In 2024, the firm launched the GOP International Academy, a training initiative sponsored by the Italian National Bar Council, the Higher School of Advocacy, the Law Society of England and Wales, and the Bar Council. Through this academy, the firm promotes legal culture. The initiative allows Italian lawyers and English solicitors to enhance their knowledge in international contexts and deepen their expertise in business law. The first edition of the GOP International Academy was held in London, featuring the course "Business Law: new developments in theory and practice". The second edition will take place from July 21 to July 25, 2025.



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DAVID MARTÍN

Tikehau Capital: transforming the agri-food sector

Following the acquisition of the paprika company Juan Navarro García, we spoke to the managing director and co-head of Iberia at Tikehau Capital about this sustainable investment and its commitment to regenerative agriculture as a driver of change

by julia gil

Every day, when you open a newspaper or read the news, the picture is the same: geopolitical uncertainty, regulatory changes and markets in constant transformation. In this context, adaptability is key for any investor. Tikehau Capital has demonstrated this with its private equity strategy, which not only navigates this complex environment, but also identifies opportunities for growth. The firm has opted for thematic investment based on four major megatrends: cybersecurity, aerospace and defence, decarbonisation and regenerative agriculture. The latter has taken centre stage with the creation of a fund of more than 500 million euros, backed by Unilever and AXA Climate, with the aim of transforming the agri-food industry through more sustainable production models. Following this line, Tikehau has made its first investment in the Spanish agricultural sector with the acquisition of Juan Navarro García ([here the new](#)), a company from Murcia with more than 150 years of history and leader in the production of paprika and natural ingredients. The operation reinforces its commitment to the development of a more sustainable supply chain and the growing demand for natural products in the food industry. Moreover, its growth is driven by clear consumer trends: the rise of natural ingredients, the reduction of chemicals in food and the increasing demand for ethnic and spicy flavours. To find out more about Tikehau's strategy in Spain and its plans for Juan Navarro García, we spoke to **David Martín**, head of private equity in the country, co-CEO with **Cristian Ruquerol** ([see new here](#)) and co-manager of the regenerative agriculture strategy.

«Consumers are increasingly focused on natural and additive-free products, which opens a great opportunity in markets»

What are your plans for growth and what role will sustainability play in your strategy?

Our plan for JNG is based on boosting its growth within its niche market as a hyper-specialist in paprika. Consumers, especially younger consumers, are increasingly focused on natural and additive-free products, which opens a great opportunity in markets that are looking to eliminate clean labels. Therefore, we aim to strengthen their supply chain with a more sustainable approach. Growth will be primarily organic, building on its positioning within global sustainable agriculture initiatives. However, we also see strategic acquisition opportunities to strengthen their value proposition in ingredients and sustainable paprika. Together with Juan Luis Martinez, CEO of the company, and Queka Real Partner, as a minority shareholder, we want to consolidate its leadership in this segment and accelerate its expansion.

How does the Regenerative Agriculture fund contribute to the transformation of the agri-food sector and how does it align with long-term sustainability trends?

FINANCIAL ADVISORS IN THE ACQUISITION OF JUAN NAVARRO GARCÍA

Company	Advisors
Tikehau Capital	Altamar Advisory Partners
Tikehau Capital (due diligence)	PwC
Juan Navarro and Queka	BBVA
Juan Navarro and Queka	LEK Consulting

«The agri-food sector is responsible for around 25% of global CO2 emissions»

Our investment strategy is fully aligned with global sustainability trends. The agri-food sector is responsible for around 25% of global CO2 emissions, so its transformation is essential to meet the challenges of population growth and food production between now and 2050. Our goal is to accelerate this transition by investing in companies that help reduce land degradation and promote a more sustainable production model aligned with biodiversity.

In addition to the agricultural sector, what other industries are on Tikehau Capital's radar in Spain and Portugal?

At the private equity level, in addition to the agricultural sector, we are very focused on areas such as cybersecurity, aerospace and defence. These industries are very much connected to the increases in defence budgets in Europe and the need for a stronger and more united Europe. As our CEO mentioned, there will be no real focus on ESG without a robust European defence that upholds the core values of the European Union. Above and beyond the political currents we are seeing, there is the individual or company's own decision to address greater energy efficiency. We believe that this trend will accelerate, not slow down. Moreover, generational change is also driving this transformation. New generations will no longer want to work in companies that do not promote equal opportunities, regardless of what regulators say. The world has changed, and anyone who doesn't understand this has a problem.

The global economic uncertainty has impacted access to financing and private equity activity. How is this context affecting your strategy in Iberia?

For us, energy, food, digital and defence sovereignty are key issues, and we believe these will strongly drive growth in Europe. Europe has a great opportunity to react and be more united, especially with the programmes that Germany is announcing on defence infrastructure. This is an opportunity to reduce dependence on the US and Asia, and we are investing in these sectors, which leads us to see an expansionary investment cycle. Europe must provide certainty and clarity in its strategies, and this is happening. Our strategies are aligned with these objectives and we are optimistic.

How is private equity evolving in Europe and how do you think Tikehau will take advantage

TIKEHAU CAPITAL EN CIFRAS

2017

Madrid Office Foundation

35

Operations in the Iberian Peninsula

€1 billion

Capital invested in Iberia

€2 billion

Capital raised in Iberia

20 professionals

Iberia staff

of the new trends of consolidation and international expansion?

It is clearly in a consolidation phase, with a move towards larger platforms that allow for geographic diversification. Investors are increasingly looking for firms that are present in several countries to have access to local opportunities, and that is precisely the strategy of our firm, which operates in 17 countries. In terms of the investment model, it is becoming increasingly concentrated, seeking relationships with a diversified product and geographic offering. Fundraising has been complicated in recent years, and this trend is also setting the tone both locally and internationally. On the investment side, although the market remains challenging, we are seeing a revival in M&A activity, with more activity and greater willingness to close deals. Despite the uncertainties, the dynamics are more positive and disciplined.

What are Tikehau's main objectives in Iberia and how does the firm plan to support sustainable growth in this key market?

In the medium to long term, Tikehau Capital has a fairly demanding pipeline in the Iberian market. In the current context, where there are fewer auction processes, entrepreneurs are looking for partners that bring real value. When our themes fit their needs, it is easy to demonstrate the ecosystem and the tools we offer to support their growth. In this environment, we are finding many opportunities through bilateral conversations. 🗣️



«I think 2025 will be a transition year»

INSPIRALAW

Celebration Night 2025



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On March 7 *Iberian Lawyer* held its InspiraLaw "Diversity & Inclusion" 2025 gala night.

Fifty women from the Spanish and Portuguese legal professions were recognised for their work and careers during a ceremony at The Westin Palace Hotel in Madrid, which brought together prominent figures from the in-house world and the private sector. Iberian Lawyer selected the list of winners, announced in [the March issue](#).



Winners

Patrícia Afonso Fonseca	novobanco
Eva Argilés	Applus+
Almudena Arpón de Mendivil	Gómez-Acebo & Pombo
Yolanda Azanza	Pérez-Llorca
Raquel Azevedo	PLMJ
Mafalda Barreto	Gómez-Acebo & Pombo
Silvia Bauzá	EY
Ana Bayó Busta	Bayer
Virginia Beltramini	Moeve
Rita Branquinho Lobo	Novabase
Ana Buitrago	PwC
Cristina Camarero Espinosa	Ontier
Telma Candeias	Bolttech
Clara Cerdán Molina	Solarig
Rosa Espín	Ambar
Marlen Estévez Sanz	RocaJunyent
Isabel Fernandes	Grupo Visabeira
Rocío Fernández Domínguez	DIKEI Abogados
Carmen Flores Hernández	EJASO
Mariana García Fernández de Mesa	Accor
María Pilar García Guijarro	Watson Farley & Williams
Paula Gomes Freire	VdA Vieira de Almeida
Ana Gómez Hernández	CECA MAGÁN ABOGADOS
Ana Gómez Ruiz	Amadeus
María González Gordon	CMS Albiñana & Suárez de Lezo

Winners

Isabel Lage	Fidelidade
Silvia Madrid	UniCredit
Mónica Martín de Vidales Godino	Garrigues
Pilar Menor	DLA Piper
Teresa Minguez Diaz	Porsche Ibérica
Patricia Miranda Villar	OIUGO
Alicia Muñoz Lombardía	Santander
Mariana Norton dos Reis	Cuatrecasas
Teresa Parada Cano-Lasso	The HEINEKEN Company
Teresa Pereyra Caramé	ECIJA
Leonor Pissarra	SRS Legal
Alexandra Reis	Tabaqueira / Philip Morris International
Diana Rivera	Cuatrecasas
Ivone Rocha	TELLES
Isabel Rodríguez	Addleshaw Goddard
Elisabet Rojano-Vendrell	MENARINI Group
Mireia Sabatè -	Baker McKenzie
Davinia Sánchez De la Cruz	Kepler-Karst
Aurora Sanz Tomás -	Grant Thornton España
Inês Sequeira Mendes	Abreu Advogados
Jimena Urretavizcaya Gil	AGO Shearman
Andrea Viale	idealista
Rosa María Vidal Monferrer	BROSETA
Rosa Zarza	Garrigues
Teresa Zueco	Squire Patton Boggs







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World Compliance Association

Integrity as a competitive advantage: going beyond being compliance

by emilio ibañez



In the European Union, regulations are often seen as a barrier that limits the competitiveness of companies compared to their competitors in markets with more flexible regulations.

Starting by the cost of being compliance, the companies, especially small and medium-sized companies, may be overwhelmed by the cost and complexity of complying with regulations, which can affect their competitiveness. Following by bureaucracy and

restrictions, the complex and restrictive regulations can hinder a company's flexibility in adapting quickly to market changes, which may stifle innovation.

However, the context in which companies operate in the EU may also have some positive aspects as stability and trust. The regulations, such as those protecting the environment or data privacy (e.g., GDPR), not only guarantee high standards of security and sustainability but also build consumer trust. This trust can be translated into increased customer loyalty and a long-term competitive advantage.

Also, incentive for innovation. Stricter regulations push companies to innovate in order to meet new standards. This approach can strengthen the competitiveness of companies that successfully adapt to these requirements, differentiating themselves from the competition.

The European Union itself is recognizing it and is working to simplify regulations and improve the regulatory environment with the aim of reducing the administrative burden, particularly for small and medium-sized companies, and facilitating compliance without compromising safety, sustainability, or protection standards.

One example is the omnibus directive, which has several objectives as clarify and simplify European regulations by making EU regulations clearer, simpler, and easier to apply by eliminating unnecessary bureaucracy. Strengthen consumer protection by ensuring that regulations are adapted to guarantee higher security, rights, and access for consumers across the EU. Adapt to new market challenges by adjusting laws to new economic, technological, and social realities, such as digitalization and e-commerce.

And, increase competitiveness by making European markets more competitive, both internally and in their relationship with global markets, reducing unnecessary barriers and costs.

In this context, does it make sense to go beyond mere regulatory compliance? Integrity goes beyond merely adhering to the rules; it challenges companies to act in a way that reflects their values and responsibility to their communities. Compliance mainly focuses on risk mitigation and legal conformity, but integrity is about cultivating trust, transparency, and accountability throughout the company. Compliance can be seen as the minimum threshold, whereas integrity provides the framework for companies to elevate their business practices beyond legal obligations.

Promoting both regulatory compliance and integrity principles with equal intensity has very positive effects as enhanced reputation and consumer trust due to companies that promote integrity, beyond merely complying with regulations, develop a strong reputation. Consumers increasingly value transparency, sustainability, and respect for human rights. These practices generate trust and loyalty, which strengthens the brand in the long term.

Also, attractiveness to investors and strategic partners since

investors seek companies that operate ethically and responsibly (with integrity), and those prioritizing ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance) criteria prefer companies that show a genuine commitment to sustainability. This can open doors to new financing opportunities and strategic partnerships. Being proactively compliance with future regulations has a positive effect. Adopting ethical practices before new regulations are required not only positions companies as industry leaders but also reduces legal and financial risks by being prepared to meet future standards.

Talent retention is also important. Professionals, especially younger generations, value transparent and ethical practices in the companies they work for. Companies that promote integrity can attract and retain top talent, as individuals seek organizations aligned with their values. A corporate culture centred on integrity minimizes risks, both legal and reputational and it's a long-term risk reduction. Companies that only meet the minimum regulatory requirements may be more exposed to fraud scandals or bad practices that damage their image and lead to costly lawsuits. Going beyond regulatory compliance has a positive social and environmental impact and enables companies to actively contribute to sustainable development, improving not only the quality

of life in their surroundings but also ensuring the long-term viability of their business by operating within ecological and social boundaries.

Finally, it's a competitive advantage in the market. Ethical companies tend to be more innovative, as an ethical framework fosters the search for creative solutions to social and environmental problems. In ultra-competitive markets, ethics and sustainability are key differentiators.

As conclusion, in an increasingly interconnected business environment that is more conscious of social and environmental impacts, going beyond regulatory compliance is a smart business strategy. Companies that operate with integrity not only minimize risks but also capitalize on key opportunities in terms of reputation, talent attraction, and innovation, positioning themselves for sustained and responsible growth.

**Regional Ethics & Compliance Officer, Nissan*

Women in a Legal World

Collaboration for the smart era

by valentina yane gauffin*

On 20 February 2025 Women in a Legal World (WLW) successfully hosted the fifth edition of its Breakfast with Ambassadors, an event fostering high-level dialogue on pressing global challenges. This year's edition held -as always- at Lupicinio International Law Firm, centered on the themes discussed at World Economic Forum -Davos Forum-: Governance, Ethics & Technology. The discussion explored how to navigate the challenges of digital transformation while ensuring

ethical responsibility and global cooperation.

The session was opened by Lupicinio Rodríguez, who emphasized the importance of looking after citizens, companies, and entrepreneurs, encouraging investment, and representing states with a humanistic approach.

The event continued with an introduction by Ms. Fátima Rodríguez, Head of Criminal Law at Lupicinio International Law Firm, who welcomed

attendees. Ms. Marlen Estévez, President of WLW, highlighted the need for international collaboration to address technological challenges. To conclude the introduction, Ms. Valentina Yane, President of WLW Young, gave a brief speech emphasizing the importance of cooperation and bridge-building, which is exemplified by WLW's ongoing expansion across multiple countries, including Ecuador, Colombia, France, and Peru; a key effort to foster legal talent worldwide.



A distinguished panel of Ambassadors engaged in the colloquium, sharing their thoughts on the intersection of technology, governance, and ethics.

H.E. Ms. Genevieve V. Lukusa Kayembe (Democratic Republic of the Congo) emphasized the need for responsibility in technological advancement, stating that companies must commit to transparency in product development, governments should regulate with ethics, and educators must equip students and professionals with the knowledge to navigate new technologies. She underscored that while innovation presents a great opportunity, it must always align with human values to ensure ethical and responsible progress.

H.E. Ms. Vesna Andree Zaimovic (Bosnia and Herzegovina) emphasized that people often misunderstand what digital transformation truly means, overlooking society's preparedness to navigate this new reality. "Responsibility starts with us—we must invest more in education to equip society with the skills, competencies, and resilience needed to face future challenges" she stated. She highlighted the importance of media literacy as a key aspect of this preparedness, as it fosters critical thinking and promotes awareness of media influence.

H.E. Ms. Nairimas Sharon Ole-Sein (Kenya) discussed the role of technology in diplomacy and economic empowerment, highlighting Kenya's pioneering initiatives. She showcased the e-mobile financial system, which has greatly benefited small, women-led businesses, the Digital Master Plan, which has expanded internet access, and Silicon Savannah, an innovation hub driving sustainable development.

Ms. María Elena Agüero, Secretary General of the Club de Madrid, an organization that brings together more than 100 former heads of state and government, as well as experts and academics to discuss democracy issues. the importance of global coordination in technology governance, emphasizing that regulation, standards, and societal engagement must be addressed at an international level. She cited key initiatives, including the 4th International Conference on Financing for Development, set to take place in Seville this June, and the Digital Transformation Summit, as crucial platforms for shaping the digital future.

H.E. Ms. Fatma Omrani (Tunisia) pointed out that while AI presents vast opportunities, it also poses risks for women, with approximately 11% of jobs currently held by women at risk of being lost to automation. She also

noted that in Tunisia, women remain underrepresented in fields like mathematics and engineering, which are crucial for AI development. However, she emphasized that AI has the potential to help close the gender salary gap, with initiatives like the Pioneer program already attracting 60,000 female applicants. She further highlighted the importance of training young people, particularly women, through EU programs such as Digital Program and Horizont in Tunisia, to ensure they are equipped for the future of AI.

The event concluded with the Ambassadors themselves highlighting the significance of the fact that this year in Spain, more than 33% of the Diplomatic Corps is made up of female Ambassadors.

Through initiatives like Breakfast with Ambassadors, WLW continues to provide a platform for high-level discussions that shape policies and promote ethical, inclusive, and forward-thinking approaches to global challenges.

**President Women in a Legal World Young*

The coach approach

Strategies for retaining senior and junior lawyers

by b rbara de eliseu



Talent retention is one of the main challenges faced by law firms today. In a highly competitive market, where specialised knowledge and interpersonal relationships are valuable assets, losing qualified professionals can have a significant negative impact. Therefore, it is essential to develop effective strategies to retain both senior and junior lawyers, recognising that each group has different needs and expectations.

Lawyer retention involves a series of common challenges that may arise at different career stages. Whether it is an excessive workload, during which lawyers frequently face long hours and intense emotional demands that can lead to burnout and a desire to change environments; or a lack of recognition, with no feedback mechanisms or appreciation of their efforts, which also contributes

to dissatisfaction; career progression can also be difficult and unclear, creating the perception that growth opportunities are limited; lastly, the imbalance between personal and professional life can push some lawyers to seek alternatives outside the firm or even leave the legal profession in search of a better quality of life.

Although these challenges are common, strategies to mitigate them must be tailored to the specific needs of each seniority level.

Senior lawyers are a valuable asset for law firms, bringing experience, accumulated knowledge, and strong client relationships. Thus, when it comes to retaining lawyers with this profile, some strategies are essential:

1. Valuing knowledge and experience: senior lawyers

must feel that their expertise is recognised. While seemingly basic, assigning them simple or repetitive tasks may contribute to feelings of underappreciation. On the other hand, creating mentoring programmes where they can share their knowledge, whether with clients or younger lawyers, not only values their role but also reinforces their sense of belonging and contribution;

2. Flexible working arrangements: senior lawyers may sometimes wish to reduce their working hours without completely leaving the market. Whether because they have personal or family projects they wish to pursue or because they feel it is time to slow down. Providing flexible schedules, part-time roles, consultancy work, or involvement in specific projects can be an effective solution;
3. Involvement in strategic leadership: involving senior lawyers in the firm's strategic decisions allows them to contribute with their broad perspective and strengthens their commitment to the organisation.

On the other hand, junior lawyers are essential for the vitality and innovation of law firms. For this group of professionals, retention strategies should focus on

training, career progression, and quality of life. Here are some good examples:

1. Professional development plans: junior lawyers are particularly attentive to growth opportunities. Establishing clear career progression plans with defined objectives and transparent promotion criteria is crucial;
2. Mentoring programmes: pairing junior lawyers with experienced mentors promotes a continuous learning environment and strengthens internal bonds. It is important to involve only senior lawyers who are genuinely capable of providing this support;
3. Diverse skills training: providing junior lawyers with varied learning opportunities, covering both hard and soft skills, helps them grow and boosts their confidence. Many are particularly interested in technological tools that optimise legal practice. Therefore, investing in digital training and resources can help the firm grow while retaining these young professionals;
4. Work-life balance: younger lawyers value workplaces that promote mental well-being and offer flexibility. Policies that encourage remote work, hybrid models, or reduced working hours are increasingly appreciated. If taking vacations becomes an issue, you will lose them!

5. Feedback culture: junior lawyers need to feel that their efforts are noticed and rewarded. Implementing a regular feedback culture helps them feel valued and supported.

If you are just starting or looking to improve, do not try to reinvent the wheel! Ensure that, at the very least, these elements are present in your law firm.

Of course, integrating these strategies heavily relies on the role of leadership in law firms. It is therefore essential that managing partners and other decision-makers foster an organisational culture that values intergenerational collaboration, encourages experience-sharing, and promotes an inclusive and respectful environment. Furthermore, leaders must demonstrate openness to understanding the different motivations of each lawyer and implement flexible strategies that provide for these diverse profiles.

Retaining both senior and junior lawyers is a challenge that requires personalised strategies and a strong organisational culture. Recognising the unique characteristics of each group and implementing policies that value both experience and commitment is essential to ensuring that law firms thrive in an increasingly dynamic and competitive market.



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