

«Legal counsels are strategic partners»

Interview with Federico Piccaluga, General Counsel Duferco

Law as a chess game: Tamir Livschitz on the rise of 5Gambit Disputes

The ever growing Swiss market Moves and Appointments in 2024

The Best Deals of the year according to *MAG CH*



Editorial

Claudia La Via



2024: A legacy to carry us into the New Year

We've reached another milestone: almost without noticing, we're saying goodbye to 2024 and looking ahead with a mix of hope and apprehension to a new year, full of challenges and expectations. The year just about to end was far from easy on a global level, marked by economic and, above all, geopolitical tensions. Indeed, geopolitics has now become the primary source of obstacles in the economic arena as well. Wars remain the most critical issue, but acute political disputes between blocs and nations, alongside trade conflicts, add to the complexity. These could potentially escalate, particularly with Trump's return to the helm of the US. The more geopolitical tensions and trade conflicts are contained, the more room there will be for growth. Conversely, the persistence or intensification of these tensions and conflicts would present further hurdles for global GDP.

Most economies have played their part so far, indicating that fundamental mechanisms are largely functioning, though with considerable variation. Despite this, there is room for optimism. The outlook presented by the OECD in recent days confirms that the

world is still growing—albeit at a slower pace—and that there is no global recession in sight. It is no coincidence that one of the most frequently used words in the OECD Outlook is resilience, referring to the ability of most economies to mitigate the impact of adverse conditions and continue, at a modest yet steady pace, along their trajectory.

In 2024, Switzerland has also done its part, achieving significant results with its legal ecosystem emerging as a strategic asset. This has enabled the country to stay aligned with its objectives, despite a few setbacks. The legal market, more than many other sectors this year, has demonstrated resilience while also being dynamic. *MAG* has taken stock of the situation, documenting the key moves and appointments that showcase a sector capable of embracing change, fostering talent and expertise, and opening up to new business opportunities.

The growing interest of major international legal groups in Switzerland is further evidence of this trend. For instance, Squire Patton Boggs established an office in Geneva during 2024. The emergence of new legal boutiques and the constant focus on new technologies and their potential for the profession further underscore the dynamism of the legal ecosystem. The strategic importance of the legal environment, increasingly aligned with business, innovation, and sustainability goals, is also reflected in Rolex's recent decision to appoint its first-ever internal general counsel.

The foundations for a positive 2025 are in place, despite everything. Once again, the legal world is ready to play its part.

In this final issue of *MAG* for 2024 — a year that also marked our debut in the Swiss publishing market with this digital magazine — we aim not only to highlight industry trends but also to share important stories. One such story is that of 5Gambit Disputes, a “proudly independent” law firm that exemplifies the uniqueness of the Swiss legal ecosystem: its ability to maintain a global outlook without compromising its individuality. Tamir Livschitz, the firm's co-founder, shared his insights in an exclusive interview, discussing the approaches, strategies, and values underpinning this new venture.

In another interview Federico Piccaluga, GC of Duferco, affirmed that legal counsels are increasingly expected to act as strategic partners, aligning their objectives with companies business goals. This highlights how the legal ecosystem can become a driving force for economic growth — not only for companies but also for the country as a whole.

Enjoy the read, and best wishes for the start of the new year! 🍷

EVENTS CALENDAR 2025

JANUARY

- Legalcommunity Energy Awards Milan, 30/01/2025

FEBRUARY

- Private Capital Talks and Drinks Madrid, 04/02/2025
- Legalcommunity Finance Awards Milan, 13/02/2025
- Iberian Lawyer Sustainability Summit - Spain Madrid, 20/02/2025
- Iberian Lawyer Labour Awards Madrid, 20/02/2025

MARCH

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

APRIL

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

MAY

- LegalcommunityCH Awards Zurich, 08/05/2025
- Legalcommunity Forty under 40 Awards Milan, 15/05/2025
- Iberian Lawyer Legaltech Day Madrid, 29/05/2025
- Iberian Lawyer IP&TMT Awards Madrid, 29/05/2025

JUNE

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

JULY

- Italian Awards Rome, 03/07/2025

SEPTEMBER

- LC Energy Day Milan, 11/09/2025
- 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 Days Switzerland Zurich, 23-24/10/2025
- 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, 2025
- Financecommunity Awards Milan, 2025
- LegalcommunityMENA Awards Riyadh, 20/11/2025

LEGEND

- Legalcommunity / LegalcommunityCH
- LegalcommunityMENA
- LegalcommunityWEEK
- Financecommunity
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FinancecommunityWEEK
- Iberian Lawyer
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ITALY

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

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

FINANCE		
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Deadline Submission	11/10/2024*	
Report Publication	Feb-25	

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Report Publication	Oct-25	

REAL ESTATE		
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Deadline Submission	16/05/2025	
Report Publication	Nov-25	

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

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

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

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SPAIN AND PORTUGAL

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LABOUR		
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Deadline Submission	20/09/2024*	
Report Publication	Apr-25	

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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	

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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		
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Report Publication	Jun-25	

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MENA

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MENA		
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Deadline Submission	27/06/2025	
Report Publication	Jan-26	

LATAM

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ENERGY & INFRASTRUCTURE		
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Research Period to	30/04/25	
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Report Publication	Jan-26	

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ACC Europe: bringing value to the in-house profession across Europe

On the Move



APPOINTMENT

Wartmann Merker: Andrea Roth promoted to partner

Andrea Roth (pictured), senior associate at Wartmann Merker for four years, will be promoted to partner of the firm starting January 2025. Andrea Roth represents clients in commercial disputes before arbitral tribunals (ICC, Swiss Rules, DIS, CAS, LCIA, VIAC, ad hoc) and Swiss courts. Her main areas of focus include commercial matters, banking law, contract disputes and post-M&A litigation. She also serves as an arbitrator in both international and domestic arbitration proceedings. Another focus of her work is to advise and represent clients in the area of international legal assistance in civil and criminal matters, as well as in enforcement and recognition proceedings. She previously served as an associate at Bär & Karrer from 2012 to 2020, and later worked as the regional coordinator for the German Arbitration Institute from 2021 to 2023.

INTERNATIONAL ARBITRATION

LALIVE, Augustin Barrier promoted to partner

International arbitration counsel Augustin Barrier (pictured) has been promoted to partner at Lalive, effective January 2025. Barrier joined Lalive's Geneva office in 2016, proceeding from Dentons, as associate and became then counsel in 2020. He specializes in international commercial arbitration and investment treaty arbitration, with a particular emphasis on joint ventures, supply and distribution, and foreign investments disputes in the energy and mining sectors, notably in Europe and Africa. He has acted as counsel in numerous international arbitral proceedings under various institutions (ICC, LCIA, SCC, NAI, CCJA, ICSID) as well as proceedings governed by substantive and procedural laws, both common and civil law, such as French, Swiss, Swedish, English, Algerian, Nigerian, Mauritanian, OHADA or international law.





LUXURY

Alexander Troller new general counsel at Rolex

Alexander Toller (pictured) has been appointed first-ever general counsel of Rolex. Starting on January 1, the former partner at Lalive for nearly three decades, will take care of the legal needs of the luxury watches brand in Geneva. Alexander Toller has been a leading practitioner at Lalive, where he has acted also as managing partner for over 10 years. He specialises in litigation, with a particular emphasis on financial matters, corporate and shareholder disputes, white-collar crime, estate and inheritance disputes, employment conflicts and, more generally, asset recovery and judicial assistance in civil and criminal matters.

CANTON OF VAUD

Geneviève Page elected associate judge

Geneviève Page (pictured), partner at Oberson Abels has been elected as associate judge of the Administrative and Public Law Court of the Cantonal Court of the Canton of Vaud. Geneviève Page is a lawyer and qualified tax expert. She has been a partner at Oberson Abels for eight years and has been teaching at the University of Geneva in the LLM Tax program for 12 years, where she is a regular speaker at seminars. Her main areas of expertise are personal taxation, corporate taxation, real estate taxation, occupational pensions, and social insurance.





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On the web



Financial markets surge with strategic deals and investments

In recent months, the financial and legal sectors have witnessed a significant uptick in deal-making activities, reflecting a dynamic market eager for growth, restructuring, and innovation. Across industries, major acquisitions, strategic partnerships, and financing operations have underscored the resilience and adaptability of companies navigating today's complex economic landscape.

A particularly notable trend emerges from the **banking and financial services** sector, where institutions are playing a pivotal role in facilitating capital flows, securing investments, and enabling strategic corporate moves. From **Luzerner Kantonalbank's** involvement in Hochdorf Swiss Nutrition's restructuring financing to **Banque Cantonale de Genève's** stake acquisition in Finnova, the banking sector is not only actively reshaping its own ecosystem but also supporting businesses to achieve long-term stability and transformation.

Concurrently, the technology, semiconductor, and cybersecurity markets are experiencing their own wave of momentum. Strategic acquisitions like ZEISS's integration of **Beyond Gravity's Lithography Division** and **Integrity360's acquisition of Adsigno** highlight the accelerating demand for advanced technological solutions and cross-border expertise.

As companies like **Liberta Partners**, Aksia, and others establish footholds in new markets or expand their offerings, the legal advisory community has been instrumental in guiding these intricate transactions. Leading firms such as **Walder Wyss**, **Pestalozzi**, **Advestra**, and **CMS** have demonstrated their expertise in navigating regulatory frameworks, cross-jurisdictional complexities, and sector-specific challenges to bring these deals to fruition.

As we approach the end of the year, this flurry of operations suggests that the **Swiss market** is poised to remain focused on these key topics into the coming year. The sustained momentum in banking, technology, and strategic investments reflects a broader market sentiment: **confidence in strategic growth, sectoral innovation, and investment-driven transformation**. As industries align with new opportunities, the financial and legal sectors are setting the stage for a period of sustained evolution and collaboration.



ALEXANDER VON JEINSEN



BEDA KAUFMANN

Advestra with Liberta Partner in the acquisition of Avenir

Liberta Partners, a Munich-based multi-family holding, has acquired a majority stake in Avenir Group AG, a leading provider of HR outsourcing services and digital solutions headquartered in Switzerland. Advestra acted as legal counsel to Liberta Partners in this transaction. The team included partners **Alexander von Jeinsen** (pictured left), **Beda Kaufmann** (pictured right), associates **Göktuğ Gürbüz**, **Annina Hammer**, **Anna Capaul**, **Fabian Wild**, junior associates **Lina Eisenhut** and **Martina Giacometti** (all corporate/M&A) and tax partner **Laurent Riedweg**, tax associates **Jan Seltmann** and **Philip Frey** (tax). Vischer acted as legal counsel to the shareholders of Avenir Group in this transaction. The team was led by partner **Gian-Andrea Caprez** (corporate/M&A, pictured) and included associate **Sandro Bernet** (corporate/M&A), associate **Elina Weibel** (corporate/M&A), associate **Florian Fallegger** (corporate/M&A) and junior associate **Levi Schoeb** (corporate/M&A).

PRACTICE AREA

Corporate

DEAL

Avenir

LAW FIRM

Advestra - Vischer

HEAD PARTNER

Alexander von Jeinsen - Beda Kaufmann (Advestra) - Gian-Andrea Caprez (Vischer)

VALUE

Not disclosed



ALEXANDER GUTMANS

Lithography from Beyond Gravity becomes part of ZEISS with Walder Wyss

ZEISS has successfully acquired the Lithography Division of Beyond Gravity in Zurich (Switzerland) and Coswig (near Dresden), a leading provider of specialized actuators and complex mechatronic assemblies. Since December 1, 2024, the Swiss high-tech company, formerly known as RUAG International, has been part of the ZEISS Semiconductor Manufacturing Technology (SMT) division. The Coswig site will be integrated into Carl Zeiss SMT GmbH, while Zurich will operate under the name Carl Zeiss SMT Switzerland AG in the future. With this acquisition, the ZEISS SMT division is expanding its production and R&D capabilities to meet the global demand for semiconductor production systems and is strengthening its technological and growth leadership. Walder Wyss advised ZEISS on this transaction under Swiss law. The Walder Wyss team included **Alexander Gutmans**, Partner, Corporate/M&A (pictured), **Simon Olstein** (Associate, Corporate/M&A), **Dario Glauser** (Associate, Employment), **Yannick A. Moser** (Managing Associate, Employment), **Benjamin Sommerhalder** (Associate, Real Estate), **Nadja D. Leuthardt** (Senior Associate, Real Estate), **Michelle Bruni** (Managing Associate, Tax), **Peter Bürkli** (Counsel, Regulatory), **Christoph Burckhardt** (Associate, Corporate/M&A), and **Amina Chammah** (Associate, Data Protection).

PRACTICE AREA

Deal & Transactions

DEAL

Beyond Gravity

LAW FIRM

Walder Wyss

HEAD PARTNER

Alexander Gutmans

VALUE

Not disclosed



ANDREA HUBER

Pestalozzi advised Aksia on establishment in Switzerland

Pestalozzi advised Aksia, an alternative assets specialist advising institutional investors, on the establishment of a legal entity in Switzerland. The firm successfully supported the client on the Finma authorization as a representation office of a foreign asset manager in Switzerland. Pestalozzi also offered comprehensive cooperation including general corporate advisory and advice and employment-related topics. Aksia now holds licenses not just in Switzerland but also in the US through the Sec. The Pestalozzi team included partners **Andrea Huber** (financial services, pictured), **Christian Roos** (corporate & employment), **Nils Harbeke** (tax), and **Jonas Sigrist** (tax). It also included associates **Niku Gholamalizadeh** (financial services), **Martina Herzog** (employment), **Karen Gisler** (tax) and paralegal **Manuela Morel** (corporate services)

PRACTICE AREA

Corporate

DEAL

Aksia

LAW FIRM

Pestalozzi

HEAD PARTNER

Andrea Huber, Christian Roos, Nils Herbeke, Jonas Sigrist

VALUE

Not disclosed



ULYSSES VON SALIS



ADRIAN KOLLER

NKF with Luzerner Kantonalbank on HSN financing

Niederer Kraft Frey advised Luzerner Kantonalbank, acting as agent, and the syndicate of banks on all aspects regarding the amendment of the existing financing for Hochdorf Swiss Nutrition (HSN), in the context of AS Equity Partners' acquisition of HSN.

The sale of HSN, a Swiss milk processing company, to AS Equity Partners occurred during the moratorium of the listed Hochdorf group and it formed part of the respective restructuring efforts. The acquisition provides HSN the opportunity to develop its previous business strategy.

The NKF team was led by M&A/finance partners **Ulysses von Salis** (pictured left) and **Adrian Koller** (pictured right), working with junior associate Géraldine Küderli (all M&A/finance).

PRACTICE AREA

Banking & Finance

DEAL

HSN financing

LAW FIRM

Niederer Kraft Frey

HEAD PARTNER

Ulysses von Salis and Adrian Koller

VALUE

Not disclosed



Walder Wyss with BCGE on Finnova deal

Walder Wyss advised Banque Cantonale de Genève (BCGE) on its acquisition of an 11% stake in Finnova Bankware (Finnova), a banking applications provider serving a third of Swiss institutions. Alongside the investment, BCGE has secured a seat on Finnova's board of directors. Walder Wyss advised BCGE on the transaction. The firm's team was led by partner **Alexandre Both** (M&A, pictured) and included partner Jürg Schneider (IT), counsel Gion Giger (distribution contracts), and associate Matteo Berti (M&A). Dimension acted as financial advisor to BCGE.

PRACTICE AREA

Banking & Finance

DEAL

Finnova

LAW FIRM

Walder Wyss

HEAD PARTNER

Alexandre Both

VALUE

Not disclosed



STEFAN BRUNNSCHWEILER

Integrity360 with CMS on Adsigno acquisition

CMS advised Integrity360 on all legal aspects of the acquisition of PCI QSA (payment card industry qualified security assessor) and cyber security services company Adsigno.

CMS's Switzerland team comprised Zurich managing partner **Stefan Brunnschweiler** (head corporate/M&A, pictured) and senior associate Samuel Felix Gang (corporate/M&A) who also led both CMS teams in the operation. The Swiss team further included associate Anna Mast, (corporate/M&A) and partner Mark Cagienard (tax). CMS's Germany team comprised partner **Hendrik Hirsch** (corporate/M&A), counsel Berrit Roth-Mingram (corporate/M&A), associate Till Alexander von Poser und Groß Naedlitz, (corporate/M&A), partner Boris Alles (employment), senior associate Dela Herr (employment), senior associate Felix Glocker (TMC) and senior associate Katharina Hirzle (TMC).

PRACTICE AREA

Deal & Transactions

DEAL

Adsigno

LAW FIRM

CMS

HEAD PARTNER

Stefan Brunnschweiler (Switzerland) - Hendrik Hirsch (Germany)

VALUE

Not disclosed



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Law as a chess game: the rise of 5Gambit Disputes

Strategic moves and bold decisions. How a Zurich-based boutique firm is redefining international dispute resolution

by claudia la via

5Gambit Disputes is reshaping the legal landscape by combining the flexibility of a boutique firm with the strategic expertise typically found in larger international practices. Founded by former Niederer Kraft Frey partners **Tamir Livschitz** and **Anja Vogt**, this Zurich-based boutique specializes in international disputes and regulatory law. With a multilingual team and a philosophy rooted in adaptability, 5Gambit is carving out a distinct space in the competitive legal market. In this interview, we spoke with co-founder Tamir Livschitz to learn more about 5Gambit's innovative approach and vision for the future.

What inspired the founding of 5Gambit Disputes, and how does it differ from traditional firms?

We noticed increasing challenges in onboarding cases, especially those carrying a risk of publicity. This is not just a Zurich-specific issue but a global trend. Our idea was to create a boutique firm that merges the best of both worlds: the lean and flexible boutique setup with our longstanding expertise gained at a top-tier firm. This setup gives us the flexibility to provide truly tailored solutions for our existing and prospective clients.

Also, while we continue focusing on the complex disputes sector, we were looking for an ability to offer more competitive fee models, which are driven by our lean structure, not by lowering charge-out rates. Our goal is to deliver exceptional service without the overhead and rigidity often associated with large firms.

What does the name "5Gambit Disputes" represent?

The term "gambit" comes from the world of chess, where the right strategy often is decisive. Chess enthusiasts will also know that, while there are a multitude of gambits in chess, there are five particular gambits, i.e. opening sequences, that are most often used.

The name thus reflects our emphasis on strategy. But rather than always deploying the same type of strategy or approach, we invest time to devise a tailor-made strategy that gives our clients the best chance of success. "5Gambit" encapsulates this versatility.

«Our idea was to create a boutique firm that merges the best of both worlds: the agility and client-focus of a small practice with the high-level expertise we gained at a top-tier firm»



TAMIR LIVSCHITZ

Your firm emphasizes a bold, conflict-free approach. How does this shape client strategies?

The boldness should be understood as not being afraid to challenge accepted assumptions or adopt unconventional strategies. This doesn't always mean being aggressive; sometimes, a more measured approach is the key to success. The conflict-free approach of our practice is equally significant. We operate independently, without constraints from alliances or relationships that might compromise our ability to act solely in our clients' interests. This independence allows us to focus on achieving the best outcomes, even if it means stepping on somebody's toes or engaging with third parties others might avoid.

With a multilingual, cross-jurisdictional team, how does diversity enhance your work?

Our team of six lawyers covers six jurisdictions and provides legal services in seven languages, including English, German, French, Spanish, Italian, Russian, and Hebrew. This linguistic and legal diversity allows us to navigate the

«We operate independently, without constraints from alliances or relationships that might compromise our ability to act solely in our clients' interests»

complexities of cross-border disputes more effectively.

Most of our cases have international elements, and working with foreign law firms is a regular part of our work. Being able to understand both the language and the legal framework of different jurisdictions gives us a significant edge. It's a major factor in the positive feedback we receive from clients.

What are the advantages of being an independent boutique in a competitive market?

Independence allows us to focus on our core strengths without being tied to broader firmwide mandates or alliances. Clients benefit from hands-on partner involvement and a lean team structure. We don't take on work outside our expertise, ensuring we deliver at the highest level.

Another advantage is the freedom to collaborate with foreign firms that are the truly best fit for the particular matter at hand. We aren't obligated to refer cases to a specific network or "best friend" firms. Instead, we choose collaborators based solely on the needs of the case. This flexibility is a key aspect of our success.

What are 5Gambit's goals for the next five years?

Our primary aim is to expand our capabilities while maintaining our boutique ethos. We want to cover all types of commercial and regulatory disputes, including areas like investment arbitration, where boutique firms can offer a compelling alternative to larger players.



ANJA VOGT

We're also looking to sharpen our offerings to clients from the US, the Middle East, and Asia. At the same time, we are also expanding the team to ensure a top-end quality offering in all areas of law we cover, while still maintaining our boutique firm setup. Ultimately, we aim to become a recognized leader in high-stakes disputes on both domestic and international fronts.

How is 5Gambit adapting to technological advancements and shifting client expectations?

Technology is transforming the legal profession, and boutique firms like ours are particularly well-positioned to benefit. Our lean structure focuses on strategic advice and advocacy—the aspects of legal work that machines can't replicate. We leverage technology to streamline other aspects of case management, reducing costs and freeing up time to focus on complex cases. This approach not only benefits our clients but also allows us to handle a higher volume of work without compromising quality.

Are there trends in sectors like banking, crypto, or commodities that stand out?

We've seen significant growth in crypto disputes, often involving cross-border regulatory issues. As the regulatory landscape evolves, complexity increases leading to more disputes. Banking litigation has also risen, driven largely

by the sanctions imposed following the Ukraine war. These sanctions have had ripple effects in the commodities and energy sectors, where disputes are also becoming more common. Additionally, we're observing an increase in defamation cases, particularly those involving misinformation and AI-generated content.

What do you consider the key factors behind your recognition as "Litigation Lawyer of the Year"?

Clients appreciate clear, straightforward communication, especially when the message isn't what they hoped to hear. Transparency builds trust, and being direct about risks and opportunities is a hallmark of my approach. In court, it's important to show genuine commitment and a fighting spirit. Winning cases certainly helps, but I believe my reputation is built on a combination of honesty, strategy, and dedication to my clients' interests.

What advice would you give aspiring international litigators?

Success in this field demands commitment and a genuine passion for the work. Choose your early roles wisely to gain the best possible experience, work hard, and never stop learning. Excellence doesn't come from shortcuts; it comes from perseverance and a deep love for what you do. 🍷



THE 5 GAMBIT DISPUTES OFFICES IN ZURICH

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08 MAY 2025

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| 17.15 | Check-in | 18.30 | Awards Ceremony |
| 17.30 | Welcome Cocktail | 19.30 | Standing Dinner |
| 18.00 | Roundtable | | |

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«Legal counsels are strategic partners»

From legal expertise to sustainability leadership,
Federico Piccaluga shares lessons from Duferco's dynamic industries

by claudia la via

With a legal career spanning M&A, energy law, and commodities trading, **Federico Piccaluga**, group General counsel of Duferco, has navigated the complexities of international business law with a keen focus on strategy and governance. "From my early days as an intern to my current role as Group General Counsel, each experience has been like developing a photograph in a darkroom — every role brought a new detail into focus, gradually revealing the picture of my professional identity", Piccaluga says. In this exclusive interview with MAG he shares his insights on regulatory evolution, the transformative role of AI in legal operations, and the growing importance of sustainability in shaping corporate decisions.

Tell us about your journey to becoming Group General Counsel at Duferco. What inspired you to take on this role?

I began my journey at Duferco in 2004 as an intern in the steel trading company based in Lugano. Legal matters and international law fascinated me, and Duferco appeared to me as a very stimulating opportunity to further my professional ambitions, while challenging myself into learning from the Group's expertise and international presence. Later, I joined the legal department, became Head of Legal, Tax, and Compliance at DufEnergy Trading in 2013, and then became General Counsel of DXT Commodities (formerly DufEnergy Trading) from 2014 to 2017. These roles allowed me to deepen my expertise in cross-border transactions and energy law while building trust with the Group. In November 2017, I was promoted to Group General Counsel. Every step in my career has brought new clarity to my professional identity.

«The energy legal landscape has grown more complex, particularly with regulations emphasizing decarbonization, sustainability, and technology»

DUFERCO FACTS AND FIGURES:

27,6 B\$
TOTAL REVENUES IN 2023

26
COUNTRIES

2,772
EMPLOYEES

How has the legal landscape for energy evolved over the years? What are the key regulatory challenges and opportunities companies like Duferco face today?

The energy legal landscape has grown more complex, particularly with regulations emphasizing decarbonization, sustainability, and technology. Frameworks like the EU Taxonomy, CSDDD, and CSRD now shape business operations and governance. These requirements influence not just compliance but also what organizations see as opportunities, even for those not directly subject to them. Duferco focuses on aligning with these regulations while viewing them as catalysts for innovation and strategic growth.

How is the role of legal counsel changing today?

Legal counsels have evolved from specialists to strategic partners. Beyond legal expertise, the role demands managerial skills, empathy, and adaptability. AI has automated tasks like document review and contract drafting, allowing counsels to focus on high-value advisory work. Additionally, issues like ESG, data privacy, and ethical governance are now central to legal operations. Sustainability, in particular, requires us to develop solutions addressing environmental, social, and governance challenges with transparency and dedication.



«At Duferco, legal strategy and business strategy are deeply interconnected. My role involves enabling smart decision-making while simplifying complexity into actionable insights»

M&A and international transactions are some of your specialties. Can you share insights into the most complex legal challenges you've encountered in cross-border transactions?

Cross-border transactions are intricate, involving divergent legal systems, regulatory frameworks, and cultural dynamics. One challenge required aligning conflicting regulatory frameworks across jurisdictions while meeting strict timelines. Success relied on meticulous due diligence, understanding geopolitical nuances, and ensuring flexibility to navigate regulatory changes. At Duferco, we turn challenges into opportunities for long-term growth, leveraging complexity to our advantage.

How does your role as General Counsel integrate into Duferco's broader corporate strategy? In what ways do you contribute to driving business decisions and ensuring long-term success?

At Duferco, legal strategy and business strategy are deeply interconnected. My role involves enabling smart decision-making while simplifying complexity into actionable insights. For example, compliance with carbon trading schemes and anti-dumping measures allows us to manage risks and explore sustainability-driven opportunities.

Our legal strategy supports growth by proactively adapting to sector-specific risks and evolving regulations.

In a world increasingly focused on sustainability, what role do you see for general counsels in shaping corporate social responsibility policies?

General counsels play a pivotal role in integrating ESG principles into corporate governance and operations. At Duferco, we proactively address the energy transition, innovation, and social responsibility. Since 2018, we've published an Annual & Sustainability Report based on GRI Standards, aligning our practices with CSRD and EU Taxonomy regulations. This approach helps define environmental impacts and align our activities with evolving regulatory criteria.



Energy

The Energy Division of the Duferco Group is focused on the energy trading, origination and retail businesses



Steel

The Steel Production & Distribution division is focused on Long Products with 960,000 tons among commodities and specialties.



Shipping

The Shipping Division, has been a key for a successful steel production and trading operation, evolving and growing significantly.



Innovation

Duferco is constantly looking at new initiatives across different technologies to enhance the current portfolio and strategy.

Duferco worldwide



What do you find unique about Switzerland's in-house legal culture compared to other countries?

Switzerland's legal ecosystem is marked by precision, pragmatism, and operational efficiency. In-house teams here are highly knowledgeable, fostering close collaboration with external counsel who act as strategic partners. This synergy results in innovative, commercially viable, and legally sound solutions tailored to complex challenges.

What do you seek in a law firm you would like to partner with?

I value law firms with diverse expertise in cross-border transactions, M&A, and compliance.

Responsiveness, reliability, and a commitment to ESG and diversity are essential. Effective communication and tailored solutions are also critical, ensuring alignment with the challenges we face.

What are some of the major legal trends and technological advancements that are reshaping the role of in-house counsels?

AI and digital tools have transformed legal roles, automating routine tasks and enabling focus on strategic functions. However, these technologies require careful regulatory consideration. Sustainability and data governance are also shaping the legal landscape, demanding agility and foresight from legal teams.

What leadership qualities are critical for in-house counsels today? How do you approach mentoring younger legal professionals?

Adaptability, strategic vision, and interpersonal skills are crucial for legal leadership. At Duferco, I foster talent by emphasizing continuous learning and cross-disciplinary training. By equipping young professionals with the skills to navigate complexities, we prepare the next generation of legal leaders to drive innovation and strategic decisions.

What legal and regulatory developments do you anticipate will impact Duferco? How are you preparing for these challenges?

Sustainability, digital transformation, and shifting trade dynamics will significantly impact our industries. We are aligning our frameworks with these trends and investing in team development to address emerging challenges effectively. This ensures Duferco remains resilient and competitive.

As the Association of Corporate Counsel (ACC) country representative for Switzerland, how do you support in-house counsels?

The ACC empowers in-house counsels with insights, networking, training, and advocacy. In Switzerland, I've focused on addressing legal privilege issues and organizing training on regulatory changes, soft skills, and personal development. These initiatives ensure in-house counsels have the tools to excel in strategic roles. 

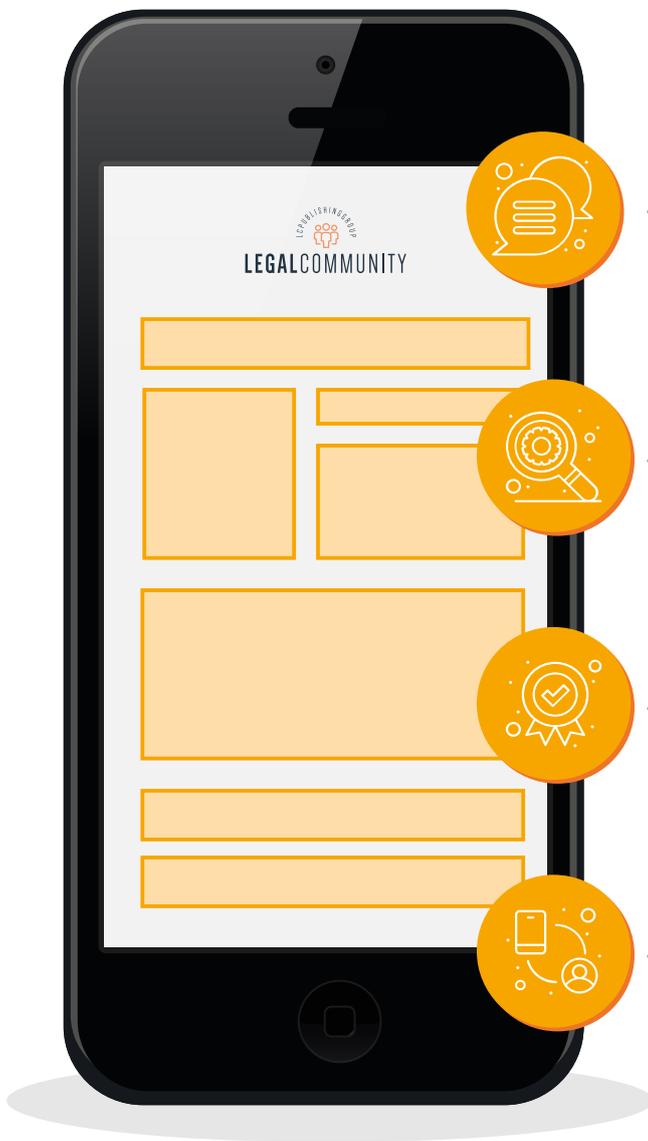
«Switzerland's legal ecosystem is marked by precision, pragmatism, and operational efficiency. In-house teams here are highly knowledgeable, fostering close collaboration with external counsel»



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The ever growing Swiss market Moves and Appointments in 2024

by claudia la via

The Swiss legal market is continuously expanding and becoming increasingly competitive. In 2024 it experienced dynamic changes, with a total of 55 significant moves and appointments across various practices. This reflects an evolving and competitive landscape within the legal profession in Switzerland. Among the moves, 26 new partners were appointed, while 10 professionals took on counsel roles. Additionally, four new General Counsels joined prominent in-house teams. These transitions highlight the legal market's adaptability and strategic growth.

AN EVOLVING LEGAL LANDSCAPE

The Swiss legal market saw a diverse array of movements, reflecting both client demand and a growing focus on niche areas. Among the sectors with the highest activity, construction and real estate led the way, together with corporate and commercial law. Other areas such as intellectual property and tax law also experienced notable transitions, underscoring the multifaceted growth of the sector.

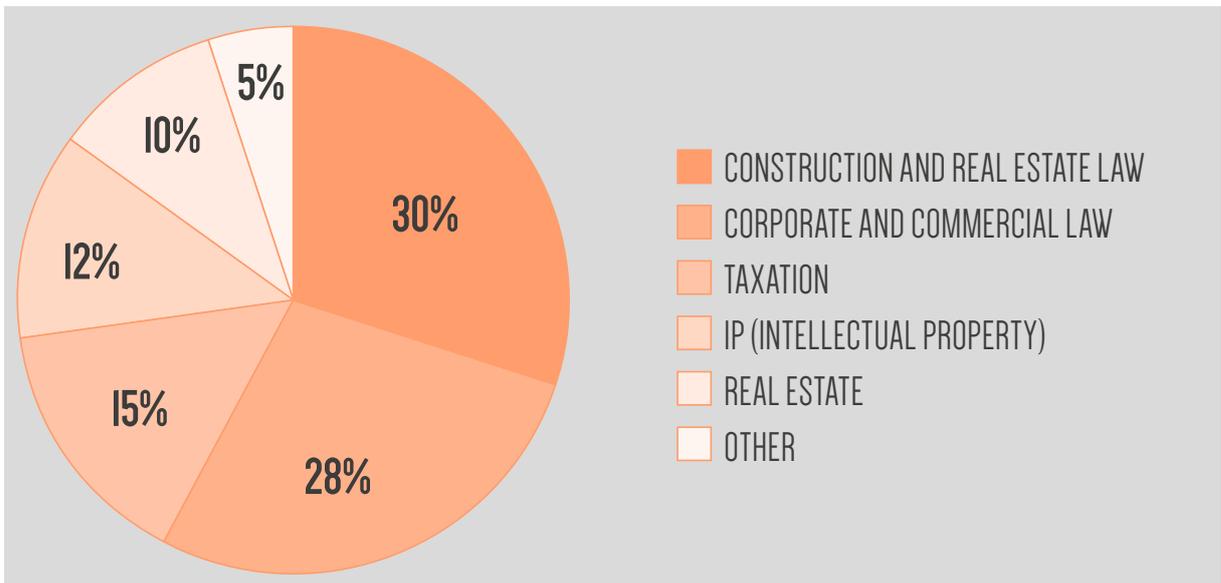
IN 2024

46 among moves and appointments

26 new partners

10 new counsels

SECTORS WITH THE MOST MOVEMENT



GENERAL COUNSEL APPOINTMENTS

In addition to law firm moves, the in-house legal sector has seen significant developments. Four General Counsels were appointed to lead legal operations at prominent companies, signaling the importance of strong legal leadership in navigating Switzerland's complex regulatory environment. Key appointments include:



Alexander Troller at **Rolex** in Geneva, specializing in litigation with a particular emphasis on financial disputes. Troller will come into effect in 2025 even though the appointment was made in November 2024 and he is the first ever general counsel to be appointed at Rolex.



Martin Oesch joined **SGS** in Zurich as General Counsel in May 2024. He replaces Olivier Merkt. Prior to joining SGS, he served as Group General Counsel & Corporate Secretary at Barry Callebaut, where he played a pivotal role in shaping the company's direction and contributing to strategic M&A and expansion projects.



Lukas Studer took on the General Counsel role at **Holcim** in Zug, enhancing the company's legal infrastructure in November. He had joined Holcim in 2008 and had been General Counsel Corporate and M&A since 2017, supporting corporate, finance and M&A. As the lead lawyer in the execution of Holcim's fast-paced growth and portfolio transformation, he played an essential role in the company's successful M&A strategy, with more than 100 transactions closed in the last five years.

Schellenberg Wittmer was particularly active, welcoming several prominent new partners with **Stéphanie Chuffart-Finsterwald** who joined the firm's Geneva office, bringing expertise in Intellectual Property and Communications Law, **Simone Nadelhofer**, a leading dispute resolution expert, who strengthened the Zurich office. Moreover, **Matthias Gstoehl**, known for his cross-border expertise, became partner in the firm's international tax law practice in 2024.

Walder Wyss also bolstered its team with, **Adrien Alberini**, a Partner with a focus on technology law and Alain Alberini with a focus on intellectual, working across Geneva and Lausann. Meanwhile, **LALIVE** brought on board **Andrea Florin**, who will enhance its civil and employment law expertise in Zurich.

In a significant development for the Swiss legal market, 2024 saw also "new entries" in the market, such as **Proxima Legal**, a young and dynamic new

player focused on a tailored customer approach. With a lean structure and a focus on innovative solutions, the firm aims to challenge traditional models and meet the evolving demands of clients. At the same time, **Squire Patton Boggs**, a global law firm with over 45 offices worldwide, established its presence in Switzerland for the first time. The firm's new office is positioned to cater to cross-border transactions, litigation, and arbitration, further enriching the country's legal ecosystem.

TOP 3 FOR PARTNERS APPOINTMENTS

SCHELLENBERG WITTMER

BMG AVOCATS

WALDER WYSS

KEY TRENDS FROM 2024: WOMEN PERCENTAGE IN PARTNERSHIPS

While women represented 40% of total appointments, the data indicates progress, though further efforts are needed to achieve parity in senior roles. Geneva and Zurich dominated as the most active cities for legal appointments, with Zug emerging as a growing hub for specialized practices.

About 40% of total appointments are women

INTERNAL PARTNERSHIP APPOINTMENTS

Swiss firms also focused on nurturing internal talent, promoting several lawyers to partnership positions. Notably, **Walder Wyss** and **Schellenberg Wittmer** led in internal promotions, highlighting their commitment to talent development. 🇨🇭

«In July Squire Patton Boggs opened its 17th European location with the launch of an office in Geneva»

THE 3 MOST SIGNIFICANT MOVES

Stéphanie Chuffart-Finsterwald. She



moved to Schellenberg Wittmer as Partner in September 2024. She heads Life Sciences, Intellectual Property, and ICT practices in Geneva. She advises on a range of R&D, compliance and venture projects, IP strategy, Data

Protection as well as dispute resolution matters and has led a prominent practice at Sigma legal, where she worked as a partner since 2019. Prior to that, she had been working as a managing associate at Bianchi Schwald.

Elena Sevila. She is a renowned arbitration



specialist with over 15 years of experience, specialises in construction, infrastructure and energy (EPC and other construction contracts, production sharing, operating agreements), mining, telecoms, technology, financial services and

hospitality. She has acted in matters relating to agency, distribution contracts, shareholders' agreements, unfair competition and antitrust. Coming from Andersen in Spain, where she worked as a director, between 2013 and 2021 and later as a partner, from 2021 up until January 2024, she joined 5Gambit Disputes in May 2024.

Kate Sherrard. Financial services partner



and Commodities & Shipping group co-head, Kate Sherrard has been appointed in July to lead the launch of the new Geneva office of Squire Patton Boggs. She will focus on building around core strengths including commodities & shipping,

international trade, international dispute resolution, government investigations and sanctions.

PARTNERS MOVES

NAME	SURNAME	FROM	TO
STÉPHANIE	CHUFFART-FINSTERWALD	SIGMA LEGAL	SCHELLENBERG WITTMER
SIMONE	NADELHOFER	LALIVE	SCHELLENBERG WITTMER
MATTHIAS	GSTOHL	LALIVE	SCHELLENBERG WITTMER
PHILIPPE	GILLIÉRON	GILLIÉRON AVOCAT	BMG AVOCATS
ALEXANDRE	MAZURANIC	WHITE & CASE	BMG AVOCATS
DANILO	DELGADO	JUNOD, MUHLSTEIN, LÉVY & PUDER	BMG AVOCATS
LAURENCE	KRAYENBÜHL	LEGAL INSIGHTS AVOCATS	BRATSCHI
LEONID	SHMATENKO	EVERSHEDS SUTHERLAND	5GAMBIT DISPUTES
HUGO	BARBIER	UNIVERSITY OF AIX MARSEILLE	PETER&KIM
ALAIN	ALBERINI	SIGMA LEGAL	WALDER WYSS
VINCENT	PFAMMATTER	SIGMA LEGAL	WALDER WYSS
AUDE	PEYROT	HARARI AVOCATS	WALDER WYSS
NICOLETA	TIMOFTI	CURTIS MALLET-PREVOST	SQUIRE PATTON BOGGS
ELENA	SEVILLA	ANDERSEN / SPAIN	5GAMBIT DISPUTES
FABIANO	MENGHINI	LENZ & STAEHELIN	NIEDERER KRAFT FREY
NADINE	ZOLLINGER	SUNRISE	EVERSHEDS SUTHERLAND

APPOINTMENTS TO PARTNERSHIP & EXECUTIVE ROLES

LAWFIRM	NAME	SURNAME
LALIVE	AUGUSTIN	BARRIER
ASVORO	SIMON	LANG
ASVORO	ULRICH	SAUTER
BAKER MCKENZIE	VALENTINA	HIRSIGER
LENZ & STAEHELIN	RÉBECCA	DORASAMY
LENZ & STAEHELIN	ANJA	AFFOLTER MARINO
SCHELLENBERG WITTMER	CHARLES	GOUMAZ
SCHELLENBERG WITTMER	ROLAND	WILD
WENGER PLATTNER	MICHAEL A.	SCHIFFERLI
SQUIRE PATTON BOGGS	KATE	SHERRARD

COUNSELS APPOINTMENTS

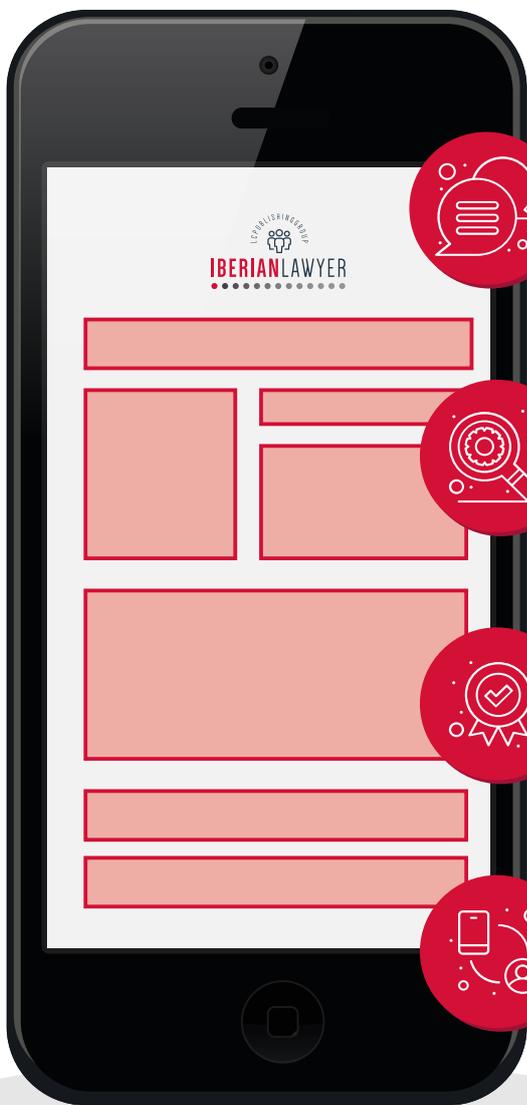
NAME	SURNAME	FROM	TO
ALEXANDER	TROLLER	LALIVE	ROLEX
ALEJANDRO	BES	Novartis	AXMED
MARTIN	OESCH	Barry Callebaut	SGS
LUKAS	STUDER	Holcim General Counsel Corporate and M&A	HOLCIM



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The Best Deals of 2024

A spotlight on landmark transactions across banking, technology, pharma, and consumer sectors, featuring the top Swiss legal advisors driving change

by claudia la via

In 2024 the Swiss economy has proven to be relatively resilient to the weakness in the Eurozone and especially in Germany, Switzerland's second largest export market. Investments remain key as are deals. This year the country has been at the core of international deals where Swiss law firms played a pivotal role. Moreover, corporations also confirmed that they are increasingly using M&A to drive growth and adapt to rapid change, such as the AI revolution. The Swiss deals market in 2024 was marked by robust activity across

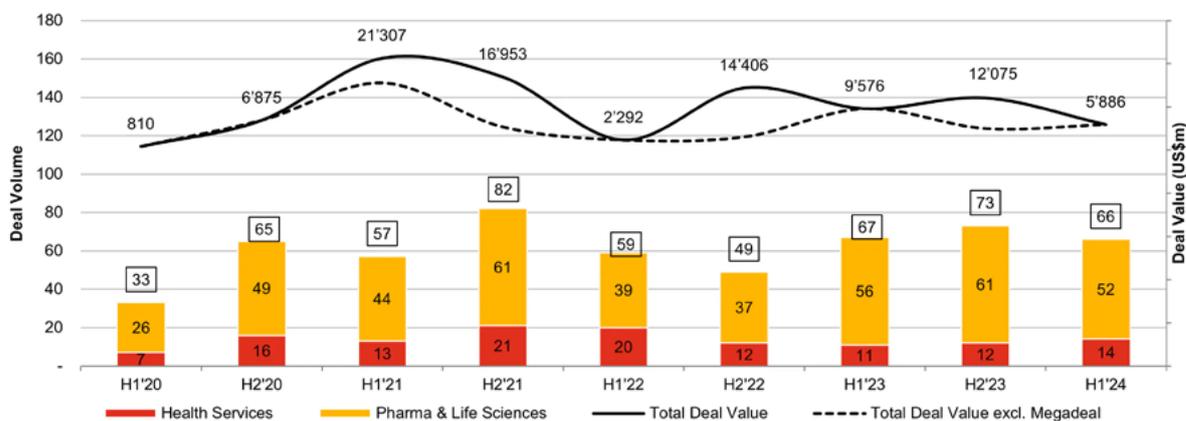
a wide array of industries, with transactions showcasing Switzerland's reputation as a global hub for innovation and strategic business development. Key sectors driving this dynamic growth included **banking and finance, technology, pharmaceuticals, and consumer goods**, reflecting a diverse economic landscape and Switzerland's unique positioning as a nexus for global commerce. The **technology sector** also witnessed remarkable activity, driven by advancements in artificial intelligence, robotics, and augmented reality.

- 
BANKING AND FINANCE
 High-profile mergers and financing deals dominate.
- 
TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION
 AI, robotics, AR, and digital commerce drive growth.
- 
PHARMACEUTICALS AND LIFE SCIENCES
 Core sector with generics, biosimilars, and healthcare innovation.
- 
PROFESSIONAL SERVICES
 Consolidation and cross-border growth in consulting and governance.
- 
CONSUMER GOODS AND LUXURY
 Strategic investments in e-commerce and health-driven consumer products.

Despite the continued slowdown in global health industry M&A activity, the Swiss market concluded a total of about 75 deals in 2024 according to *MAG CH* reporting, in which either the buyer or seller was based in Switzerland. In terms of the most notable deals - focusing on the Pharma sector - Novartis has shown a strong appetite. With the announcement of three strategic acquisitions, namely Mariana

Oncology, IFM Due, and Calypso Biotech, the Basel-based life sciences giant decided to add to its radiopharma, biotech, and pharmaceuticals pipelines. Additionally, Lonza has announced capacity-driven acquisition plans by purchasing a major US manufacturing facility from Genentech, a subsidiary of Lonza's Basel-based neighbour Roche. In both cases legal advisors were international.

Swiss Health Industry M&A Activity



Source: PwC m&a trends health industry 2024 mid year update

In the Tmt sector, instead, the acquisition of Vodafone Italy by Siwsscom was the most important deals of the year.

Here are some key insights for Switzerland deals in 2024.

1. Sector-specific growth:

The pharmaceutical, technology, and financial services sectors were poised for significant M&A activity. Companies in these sectors were seeking to strengthen their innovation capabilities, consolidate operations, and expand their market presence, driving a number of acquisition deals.

2. Digital transformation and sustainability:

Swiss companies were increasingly focused on digital transformation and sustainability, which is leading to strategic acquisitions. Companies were targeting firms with advanced technologies and sustainable practices to enhance their competitive edge and align with evolving market trends.

3. Stable economic and regulatory environment:

Switzerland's stable political climate, strong regulatory framework, and investor-friendly policies continued to attract both domestic and international investors. This stability provided a supportive environment for M&A activities, ensuring smooth transaction processes and favourable investment conditions.

4. Resilience amid global uncertainties:

Despite potential economic uncertainties worldwide, Switzerland's robust economy and strategic positioning in the global market maintained a positive M&A outlook. The country's ability to overcome economic challenges and maintain investor confidence will be key to driving M&A momentum also along 2025.

TOP SWISS LEGAL ADVISORS

According to *MAG CH* the below law firms were the most active legal advisors in 2024. Here is a list of their most important deals.



PIERRE ALAIN GUILLAUME

WALDER WYSS

Walder Wyss has had a standout year in 2024, demonstrating its legal expertise across diverse industries and transactions. From cutting-edge technology acquisitions to financial market activities and strategic mergers, the firm has been instrumental in shaping key business developments in Switzerland and beyond. Below are the highlights of Walder Wyss's landmark deals of the year:

ABB acquires Sevensense Robotics

Walder Wyss played a pivotal role in ABB's acquisition of Sevensense Robotics, a Swiss start-up specializing in AI-enabled 3D vision navigation technology for autonomous robots. Having supported Sevensense from its inception, Walder Wyss advised the sellers on this transaction. The deal highlights the firm's commitment to fostering innovation and supporting startups throughout

their growth journey. The team, led by Florian Gunz Niedermann, ensured a seamless transaction for all parties involved.

UBS provides financing for SIX Exchange Group's acquisition of Aquis Exchange

Walder Wyss acted as legal advisor to UBS Switzerland AG in its role as mandate lead arranger for the financing of SIX Exchange Group's acquisition of Aquis Exchange Plc. This high-profile transaction, announced in November 2024, represents a strategic expansion for SIX Group in the European financial markets. The Walder Wyss team, led by Lukas Wyss and David Borer, expertly navigated the financing's legal and regulatory complexities.

RealWear acquires Almer Technologies

In a strategic move to enhance its leadership in wearable computing, RealWear acquired Almer Technologies, a Swiss innovator in augmented reality (AR) headsets. Walder Wyss advised RealWear on all legal aspects of the transaction, which was financially backed by TeamViewer. The acquisition signals a significant leap forward in empowering industrial workers with cutting-

edge AR solutions. Marion Bähler and her team provided expert guidance, ensuring the transaction's success.

Sandoz issues EUR 600 million Eurobonds

Sandoz, a global leader in generics and biosimilars, successfully placed EUR 600 million senior guaranteed Eurobonds on the SIX Swiss Exchange. Walder Wyss acted as counsel to the Joint Lead Managers, including Société Générale, BofA Securities, and HSBC. David Borer led the team, demonstrating the firm's capital markets expertise in facilitating this significant transaction.

Mercer Acquires hkp///group

Walder Wyss served as Swiss legal counsel to Mercer, a subsidiary of Marsh McLennan, on its acquisition of hkp///group, a leading human resources consultancy in the German-speaking world. This strategic acquisition strengthens Mercer's capabilities in human capital and corporate governance advisory services. The transaction was expertly managed by a team led by Florian Gunz Niedermann, showcasing Walder Wyss's proficiency in cross-border corporate transactions.



BAER KARRER

BÄR & KARRER

Year 2024 has been a landmark year for Bär & Karrer, a leading Swiss law firm renowned for its expertise in complex and high-profile transactions. With its involvement in a series of transformative deals, Bär & Karrer has cemented its reputation as a trusted advisor for some of the most significant business decisions in Switzerland and beyond. Below, we highlight the most notable deals where the firm played a pivotal role:

Sale of Hero Group's Production Facility to Ricola

Bär & Karrer advised the Hero Group in the strategic sale of its production facility to Ricola. This deal underscores the firm's adeptness in navigating the intricate aspects of corporate sales within the food and health sectors. Baer & Karrer's legal guidance ensured a seamless transition, aligning the transaction with the strategic goals of both parties.

Société Générale's Swiss private banking unit sold to UBP

Société Générale entrusted Bär & Karrer to oversee the sale of its Swiss private banking unit to Union Bancaire Privée (UBP). The deal marked a significant shift in the Swiss banking landscape, with Bär & Karrer skillfully managing the complex regulatory and transactional hurdles to ensure a successful outcome.

L'Oréal's acquisition of a 10% stake in Galderma

In a key international deal, Baer & Karrer provided legal counsel to L'Oréal for its acquisition of a 10% stake in Galderma, a leading dermatology

company. This transaction highlights Bär & Karrer's strength in advising global leaders on strategic investments in the health and beauty sectors.

UBS-Credit Suisse merger: a historic consolidation

Bär & Karrer played a central role in one of the most talked-about deals in the financial sector—the merger of UBS Switzerland and Credit Suisse. The firm's unparalleled expertise in financial regulations and corporate law ensured the smooth progression of this historic merger, shaping the future of Swiss banking.

HOMBURGER

In 2024, Homburger played a pivotal role in some of the year's most transformative deals, showcasing its expertise across diverse industries. From luxury fashion acquisitions to groundbreaking mergers and high-stakes arbitration cases, the firm solidified its standing as a premier legal advisor. Below is a summary of the key transactions where Homburger's counsel was instrumental:

MyTheresa acquires YOOX NET-A-PORTER from Richemont

Homburger advised MyTheresa on the Swiss aspects of its acquisition of YOOX NET-A-PORTER (YNAP) from Richemont in exchange for a 33% equity stake in MyTheresa. This landmark transaction positions MyTheresa as a leader in the global luxury e-commerce space. Homburger's team, led by Daniel Hasler, ensured regulatory compliance and smooth execution for this transformative deal set to complete in 2025.

Arbitration Revision for U.S. Gymnast Jordan Chiles

In a high-profile arbitration case, Homburger filed a request for revision with the Swiss Federal Supreme Court on behalf of Olympic gymnast Jordan Chiles. The case centers on a disputed decision that cost Chiles her bronze medal at the 2024 Olympics. Homburger, led by Gabrielle Nater-Bass, provided legal expertise to challenge the Court of Arbitration for Sport's ruling, leveraging new video evidence to advocate for Chiles' reinstatement as a medalist.

Twelve Capital and Securis Investment Partners merge

Homburger served as legal counsel for Twelve Capital in its merger with Securis Investment Partners, creating a global leader in Insurance-



FLAVIO ROMERIO

Linked Securities (ILS) with \$7.8 billion in assets under management. The firm's team, co-led by Hansjürg Appenzeller and Daniel Daeniker, advised on corporate, competition, and tax aspects, contributing to the successful consolidation of these industry leaders.

SIX Group's acquisition of Aquis Exchange

Homburger acted as counsel to SIX Group in its acquisition of Aquis Exchange, a strategic deal uniting Europe's challenger exchange with a fully integrated exchange value chain. Homburger's team, co-led by Jürg Frick and Stefan Kramer, navigated the legal complexities of this transaction, which enhanced SIX Group's technological and market capabilities.

Financing Deutsche private equity's acquisition of IMPAG Group

In another significant deal, Homburger advised UBS and other syndicate banks in connection with the financing of Deutsche Private Equity's acquisition of IMPAG Group, a multinational specialty chemical distributor. The team, led by Jürg Frick, ensured compliance with Swiss legal frameworks, enabling this cross-border transaction to proceed efficiently.

KPMG Switzerland and KPMG UK merge

Homburger provided legal counsel to KPMG Switzerland on its merger with KPMG UK, creating a \$4.4 billion business combining audit, tax, and advisory expertise. This deal strengthens the firms' multinational reach and service capabilities. Homburger's team, led by Daniel Hasler, ensured the merger's successful execution, addressing corporate, competition, and tax considerations.

TOP DEAL 2024



Swisscom acquisition of Vodafone Italy

Swisscom has acquired 100% of Vodafone Italia for EUR 8 billion on a debt and cash free basis with the aim of merging it with Fastweb, Swisscom's subsidiary in Italy. Vodafone Italia and Fastweb will bring together complementary high-quality mobile and fixed infrastructures, competencies, and capabilities to create a leading converged challenger in a market with material growth opportunities. The increased scale, more efficient cost structure and significant annual run-rate synergies of EUR ~600 million will enable the combined entity to unlock significant value for all stakeholders, sustain investments in the Italian telecommunication market and offer

innovative, competitively priced converged services, improving performance and user experience for customers across all market segments. The transaction is a key step for Swisscom to achieve its strategic objective of profitable growth in Italy. Swisscom intends to increase the dividend and expects to retain its excellent corporate credit rating.

Following the announcement of the acquisition of Vodafone Italia on 15 March 2024, Swisscom notified the transaction to the EU Commission, Directorate-General for Competition, under the Foreign Subsidies Regulation on 19 August 2024. On 23 September 2024, the EU Commission confirmed that the waiting period has elapsed, thus clearing the transaction unconditionally.

The legal advisors:



Legance

Legance assisted Swisscom with a multi-disciplinary team led by senior partner Filippo Troisi and partner Francesco Florio with senior counsel Laura Li Donni, who handled the commercial agreements, managing associate Walter Campagna, senior associate Paolo Piccirilli and associates Emilio De Niro, Luigi Gaudiosi and Elettra Prati for the

m&a profiles. Regulatory, IT and golden power aspects were followed by partner Valerio Mosca with senior associate Carlo Corazzini and associate Margherita Carere, while labour aspects were followed by counsel Marco D'Agostini with managing associate Daniele Dellacasa. The IP profiles were followed by partner Monica Riva with senior associate Carlo Polizzi and associates Andrea Bardi and Sara Geninatti.



McDermott Will & Emery

McDermott Will & Emery assisted Swisscom as tax advisor with a team led by partner Andrea Tempestini and comprising partner Alessio Persiani, counsel Giuseppe Mazarella and associates Mauro Pisano, Michele Mantiero, Giovanni Sajeve and Sara Piccinni.



White & Case

White & Case assisted Swisscom on antitrust matters, with a team led by partners Veronica Pinotti, Katarzyna Czapracka, Mark Powell, local partner Martino Sforza and senior associate Tommaso Poli.



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The digital shift in the legal industry

How ecosystem-wide integration and strategic technology adoption are reshaping legal operations for the digital age

by eric eck*



The legal industry is experiencing a profound digital transformation, moving from isolated advancements to end-to-end digitization. This shift is driven by the need for seamless integration and efficiency across all participants in the legal ecosystem—law firms, in-house legal teams, internal corporate clients, and other functions. As businesses digitize their operations, legal departments must also adapt to remain effective and aligned with these broader systems.

Lessons from the automotive industry

The transformation in the legal field can be understood through a parallel with the automotive industry. Over 40 years ago, automakers revolutionized efficiency through the adoption

of Electronic Data Interchange (EDI). This innovation enabled just-in-time manufacturing and lean production by facilitating real-time data sharing between manufacturers and suppliers. Today, EDI is a standard in automotive operations, streamlining processes such as purchase orders, invoices, and shipping notices.

Similarly, the legal industry is now at a turning point where technological integration between law firms and clients must advance. Such integration would enable real-time collaboration and data sharing, unify workflows to synchronize processes with compliance and audit requirements, and improve both cost management and value creation. These elements are essential for ensuring that the industry can operate with efficiency and precision in an increasingly digital world.

The case for ecosystem-wide integration

Current legal operations reveal significant inefficiencies, with both law firms and in-house teams heavily investing in overlapping technologies. On one side, law firms rely on proprietary systems for practice management, document

handling, and time recording. On the other side, in-house teams use specialized tools alongside enterprise resource planning systems, often resorting to spreadsheets to bridge gaps. This duplication inflates costs and fragments workflows.

A shared legal platform could address these inefficiencies by unifying processes across the ecosystem. Not only would this reduce IT expenditures, but it would also enhance security, compatibility, and collaboration. By creating a more seamless and cost-effective approach to managing legal matters, such a platform could foster genuine ecosystem-wide integration.

To achieve this transformation, the legal industry must prioritize infrastructure architecture IA over Artificial intelligence. A robust and collaborative digital foundation is the critical first step toward meaningful change.

As digitization continues, security and compliance have become paramount. An integrated ecosystem would establish a framework for robust data governance, ensuring privacy and regulatory compliance across jurisdictions. A unified platform could serve

as a single source of truth, reducing the risks inherent in fragmented systems while offering streamlined and secure workflows.

The role of AI in legal transformation

Artificial Intelligence (AI), particularly Generative AI (GenAI), has become a focal point in conversations about the future of law. While GenAI offers improved individual performance — analogous to the leap from handwritten letters to email — it does not fundamentally change the competitive landscape if widely adopted.

The true opportunity lies in comprehensive digital transformation. By creating systems that facilitate seamless data flow across the ecosystem, the legal industry can use AI as part of a broader, more impactful strategy rather than as an isolated tool.

Back to basics: data and knowledge sharing

At the heart of this transformation is the need for better data and knowledge sharing. Law firms must leverage client data to deliver actionable insights, while in-house teams should expect not only outputs but also the data behind them to build institutional knowledge.

Clients can play a pivotal role by setting clear expectations through billing guidelines and governance mechanisms. Just as the automotive industry collaborated to address systemic challenges and create mutual

benefits, the legal sector can similarly adopt an approach that fosters collaborative innovation. By enabling data to flow freely across the legal ecosystem, supported by shared platforms and AI tools, the industry can create a foundation for true transformation.

Toward meaningful collaboration

At **Guirbaden**, we aim to foster this digital transformation. For law firms, this includes improving client onboarding processes such as KYC, AML, and conflict checks while aligning invoicing with clients' systems. For in-house teams, the focus is on streamlining contracts and integrating legal projects with broader business objectives. True transformation lies in embracing a fully digital ecosystem where collaboration becomes the standard rather than the exception. By fostering convergence and aligning tools and processes, the legal industry can strike a balance between efficiency, innovation, and value creation — delivering better outcomes for all stakeholders.

Looking ahead

Projections for 2035 indicate a 50% growth in the legal services market and a 300% increase in technology investments. This growth suggests that technology will support the industry rather than disrupt it, reinforcing the importance of meaningful and intentional digital transformation. By prioritizing collaboration and creating systems for seamless data flow, the legal sector can fully embrace its potential in the

WHAT GUIRBADEN DOES

Guirbaden is a company which aims to transform how law supports corporate operations, through digitized processes in law, compliance, integrity and ethics. The goal is to transform how law firms and legal teams collaborate leveraging tech within their broader ecosystem services and to help both law firms and in-house legal teams to modernize their operations through digital transformation.

www.guirbaden.com



digital age. While adopting AI is essential, it represents only a fraction of the solution. The true challenge — and opportunity — lies in fostering ecosystem-wide integration. Success depends on recognizing that IA comes before AI: infrastructure architecture must precede artificial intelligence for meaningful transformation to take root.

**Eric Eck is the founder of Guirbaden*



In-house legal privilege: a game-changer for corporate legal protections

How the revised Swiss civil procedure code aligns with global standards and empowers corporate legal counsel

Effective January 1, 2025, Switzerland introduces a groundbreaking legal privilege for in-house counsel. This change, rooted in the revised Swiss Civil Procedure Code (CPC), represents a significant step forward for corporate legal protections. For years, Swiss companies faced challenges that their counterparts in jurisdictions like the EU and the United States had already addressed. With this revision, Switzerland moves toward parity, strengthening the confidentiality of internal legal communications and ensuring companies are better equipped to navigate complex legal landscapes. Experts highlight the importance of this development, stating that Swiss companies have long been at a disadvantage, especially in cross-border disputes where legal privilege is often decisive.

CLOSING THE GAP: WHY THIS CHANGE WAS NECESSARY

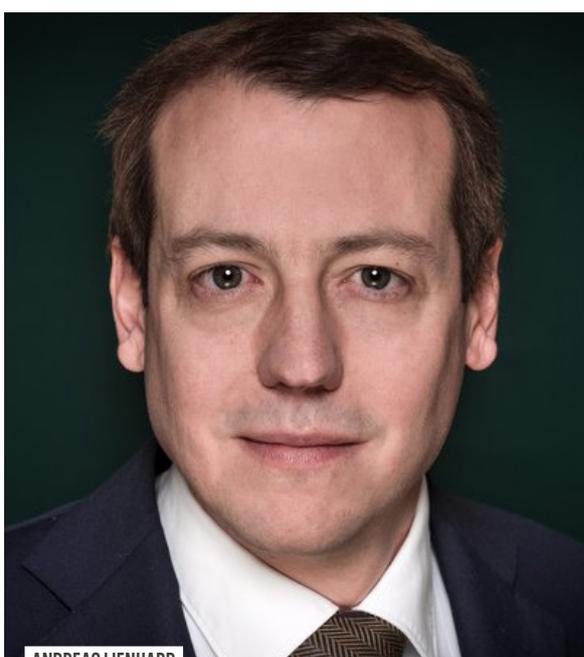
Historically, Swiss law provided no privilege to in-house counsel, leaving corporate legal departments vulnerable. Communications with internal legal teams could be compelled in court proceedings, particularly in jurisdictions with robust discovery rules, such as the United States. This lack of protection often placed Swiss companies at a disadvantage in global markets. The introduction of Article 167a to the CPC rectifies this imbalance. The new provision

allows in-house counsel to refuse cooperation in civil proceedings under specific circumstances, provided their activities align with those traditionally performed by attorneys. This shift aligns Switzerland with international norms and offers companies much-needed protection in both domestic and cross-border disputes.

THE SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS OF THE PRIVILEGE

Under the revised code, in-house legal privilege applies when the company is registered in the Swiss Commercial Register and the legal department is led by a licensed attorney. The privilege is limited to activities that fall within the realm of legal expertise, such as drafting contracts or advising on compliance. Notably, it does not extend to administrative or criminal proceedings, which some commentators see as a missed opportunity.

Bär & Karrer's analysis underscores these limitations, noting that "such protection is confined to civil litigation, leaving gaps in other areas of law". Pestalozzi adds that while the change is a positive development, the practical application of the privilege may face challenges due to ambiguities in the law, particularly regarding how companies organize their legal departments.



ANDREAS LIENHARD



ANTHONY E. BRAHAM

IMPLICATIONS FOR SWISS COMPANIES

The introduction of in-house legal privilege is expected to enhance the ability of Swiss companies to safeguard sensitive information. This is particularly significant in international disputes, where expansive discovery laws have historically placed Swiss firms at a disadvantage. By aligning with global standards, the new privilege provides a competitive edge to Swiss companies, allowing them to engage in cross-border activities with greater confidence. Pestalozzi's legal insights highlight the potential for these changes to foster consistency in legal proceedings: "This development not only protects corporate communications but also strengthens the legal standing of Swiss companies in an increasingly interconnected global market", comments Andreas Lienhard, Partner at Pestalozzi.

CHALLENGES AND PERSPECTIVES

Despite the optimism surrounding this development, several uncertainties remain. One key issue is the interpretation of the term "in-house legal service". Altenburger's analysis points out that the law does not explicitly define whether

the legal department must be a distinct unit. This ambiguity may lead to varying applications of the privilege, especially in companies where compliance and legal roles overlap. Additionally, the exclusion of administrative and criminal cases from the privilege raises concerns about the completeness of the protection. Legal experts argue that extending the privilege to these areas would provide companies with a more comprehensive shield against legal exposure.

The introduction of legal privilege for in-house counsel marks a pivotal moment in Swiss legal history. By addressing a long-standing gap, the revised CPC empowers Swiss companies to protect their internal communications more effectively. While the new provision is a welcome change, its limitations and ambiguities call for careful interpretation and possibly further refinement in the future. As Anthony E. Braham, partner at MCE Avocats et Notaires, eloquently points out, "this is not just a legal amendment; it is a signal to the world that Switzerland is ready to embrace the standards of modern corporate law". The challenge now lies in ensuring that this progress translates into meaningful protections for all stakeholders in the Swiss legal ecosystem. 



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«Generative AI? Criminal law deserves better»

A search engine for criminal law designed to facilitate the research activities of lawyers, magistrates, and students. While many legaltech companies are rushing to implement generative algorithms, Winfried takes a contrarian approach: “The reliability of the information is an insurmountable flaw.” **MAG** interviewed the platform’s co-founder, Alberto Aimi

by giuseppe salemme

The impact of generative AI on the legaltech market has been immediately massive. The frantic rush to integrate new algorithms into existing platforms has been widespread.

But **Alberto Aimi** chose not to join. A former lawyer, now both an academic criminal law expert and a computer science enthusiast, Aimi is — alongside Davide Romano, a data scientist with years of experience in legaltech — the co-founder of Winfried. This is a research platform designed for anyone in need of a “galactic guide” to criminal law: lawyers, judges, and students alike.

“You can think of Winfried as a 2.0 version of the classic printed courtroom code,” Aimi explains to *MAG*. Winfried (a name inspired by the creator’s German studies) operates on an essential principle of law: when a state condemns a citizen’s conduct, from parking violations to homicide, it must specify the violated rule. “Our system allows users, starting from a specific charge, to access all possible information related to that rule or set of rules, enabling a complete and immediate study of the charge itself”. The platform’s data model is proprietary and is personally maintained by the two founders, Aimi and Romano, with support from Francesca Manfredini, a researcher at the University of Milan, and lawyer Giuliana Petronio.

A standout feature of Winfried is that it doesn’t use generative AI to meet user requests. “We have nothing against the technology itself, obviously; it’s about how you use it”, Aimi clarifies. “We use intelligent algorithms where they can be helpful, for example, to facilitate understanding of user searches. But generative AI has an unsolvable flaw: the reliability of the information it produces”.

Indeed, the generative algorithms behind LLMs like ChatGPT, Claude, or Gemini are designed to emulate human language convincingly, not to deliver reliable results. “Criminal law deserves better. Those who work in the field know that the law is built on a combination of logical reasoning that inevitably leads to a certain conclusion. There aren’t endless possible answers

or combinations — there’s just one. And when it comes to punitive law, the need for precision even takes on constitutional significance”.

From closed testing to growing adoption

Today, Winfried is in an open alpha phase, making it freely available to anyone in exchange for feedback on the platform’s functionality. “We started development in 2022 and then tested it privately with some lawyers. Since February, when we opened it to the public, we’ve already reached 2,000 users. We were quite surprised by this, given that word of mouth has been our only marketing strategy. But it confirms that there was a real need for something like this”.

In the past few months, three criminal chambers in Italy (Bologna, Savona, and Novara) have recommended using Winfried; the courts of Turin and Piacenza have also started testing it experimentally. Financially, the startup has garnered support from several angel investors, including US-based entrepreneur Jacopo Tagliabue. By early 2025, the entire platform will transition to a subscription model, with one exception: “We want Winfried to always be free for all students — not just university students, but also those in specialized law schools, bar exam prep courses, or judiciary entrance programs”, promises Aimi. “I was once an apprentice myself. I know what it’s like to shell out thousands of euros every year to buy legal codes while studying and working, often earning little or nothing”.

Ambitious goals for the future

Winfried’s future plans are clear and ambitious, highlighting how the platform is truly a product created by legal professionals for legal professionals. “Our future development aims to align with a growing trend in Europe: the idea of treating punitive law as almost unified. In recent years, there’s been recognition that multimillion-euro tax or antitrust penalties can be as punitive, if not more so, than a suspended prison sentence. With these common principles emerging, we aim to become the go-to platform for punitive law. The goal is to attract investor interest to scale the product both nationally and across Europe”, Aimi concludes. 📌



ALBERTA ANTONUCCI

The new frontiers of digital identity

New contracts regulate concepts such as avatars, image licenses, and Artificial Intelligence.

Here's how they work and the unresolved issues they present

di alberta antonucci*

Digital identity has become a pivotal issue in modern society, especially as it intersects with intellectual property and the virtual representation of real individuals. As the legal landscape evolves, innovative agreements between technology companies and internationally renowned celebrities are beginning to take shape. These contracts address cutting-edge issues such as digital avatars, image licensing, and artificial intelligence (AI), highlighting how digital identity is transforming within commercial, technological, and legal contexts.

DEFINING DIGITAL IDENTITY

Digital identity encompasses the data and information that define and characterize an individual in online or virtual environments. Under these agreements, tech companies seek authorization to create and exploit highly realistic 3D avatars based on the celebrity's likeness. Utilizing advanced techniques like photogrammetry and artificial neural networks, these avatars replicate not only physical appearance but also voice, behaviors, and mannerisms. The goal is to offer users on tech platforms an immersive interaction experience with a virtual figure that feels "alive and real".



The meticulous process to create these avatars includes:

- 3D scans of the head and body, alongside comprehensive photographs from multiple angles to ensure precise facial structure representation.
- 360-degree perspectives of the head and detailed close-ups of key facial features (eyes, nose, mouth, ears).
- Vocal samples, recorded at high bitrates, encompassing various emotional tones—such as laughter or contemplative speech—to accurately simulate the person's voice.

BALANCING COMMERCIAL USE AND IDENTITY PROTECTION

These new agreements, exemplified by cases involving a Russian and an Italian celebrity, reveal the delicate balance between commercial exploitation and safeguarding identity. Companies are granted exclusive licenses to develop immersive digital experiences with the avatar, enabling real-time interaction with users via interactive chat.

However, this raises critical issues regarding the integrity and protection of image rights. The agreements must clearly stipulate that ownership of the celebrity's image remains with the licensor, while the company receives a license to use such rights within the digital project. Intellectual property (IP) control, crucially, remains with the licensor to prevent unauthorized or improper uses that could damage the celebrity's reputation.

Further considerations include protecting derivative works created from the avatar, such as adaptations or customizations of the digital image. Sublicensing may be permitted but only under stringent conditions to ensure that the celebrity's image is used appropriately and securely.

DIGITAL ENDORSEMENTS AND EXPANDED PRESENCE

One of the most significant aspects of these agreements is digital endorsements, where a celebrity's avatar promotes products or services

on social media and during live-streamed events. This enables celebrities to extend their influence beyond physical boundaries and even earn royalties tied to the avatar's success in subscription services or product sales.

This mirrors traditional practices on social media platforms but introduces a novel expansion of digital identity: avatars can be adapted across various multimedia platforms and personalized to reflect users' aesthetic preferences, such as makeup or digital clothing. This customization fosters a deeper connection between the avatar and its audience, allowing fans to "own" a part of the celebrity's image.

ETHICAL DILEMMAS AND OPEN QUESTIONS

As digital identity becomes more complex, ethical issues arise. Contracts typically include clauses to limit avatar usage and manipulation in specific contexts, safeguarding the celebrity's digital integrity. However, unresolved ethical challenges persist, including:

- Post-mortem digital identity: Who controls an avatar's existence after the celebrity's death?
- Autonomy of avatars: Could an avatar evolve independently, and who bears responsibility for its actions?

For example, if an avatar continues to "exist" post-mortem, how can its behavior be aligned with

the values of the deceased individual? Currently, privacy and intellectual property laws touch on managing personal data after death, but no specific regulations address the management of deceased individuals' digital avatars. Some contracts attempt to mitigate these risks with clauses limiting avatar use in defined contexts and subjecting continued digital existence to oversight.

TOWARDS A COMPLEX FUTURE FOR DIGITAL IDENTITY

Digital identity is increasingly evolving into a form of virtual legacy that can outlive the individual it represents. Deciding whether and how an avatar should continue to interact with the public raises both opportunities and concerns.

The contracts governing digital identity and commercial avatar use underscore the growing complexity of identity itself. Balancing technological innovation with personal rights and ethical considerations is vital. Protecting digital identity means not only preserving physical image but also managing and defending its virtual and digital representations.

This is only the beginning of a future where, if properly managed, digital identity can open new avenues for commercial opportunities and interaction while preserving the integrity, dignity, and legacy of the individual it represents. 📄

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MARÍA ROCHA BARROS

ACC Europe: bringing value to the in-house profession across Europe

Iberian Lawyer speaks exclusively to the newly appointed president for Europe of the world's largest association of in-house lawyers, Maria Rocha Barros (Booking.com)

by julia gil

With an “eagle eye” capable of spotting risks and opportunities before they materialize, in-house counsel have moved from being mere legal advisors to become strategic players within companies. According to ACC’s Chief Legal Officers Survey, 58% of these professionals oversee three or more business functions outside of legal, and 27% take on five or more. This expanded role positions them as key partners of the CEO and Board in high-impact decisions. In this context, associations such as ACC Europe play an essential role in the development and visibility of these leaders. In an exclusive interview with Iberian Lawyer, Maria Rocha Barros, newly appointed president of ACC Europe in October 2024 (link to the news), shares the objectives that will mark her mandate. Rocha, who is also responsible for all legal, compliance and public affairs matters for Booking.com worldwide, takes over from Eva Argilés (Aplus+), who remains active on the association's board. Her priorities include strengthening diversity, promoting mentoring programs and consolidating key events such as the upcoming Annual Conference, scheduled to be held in Barcelona.



MARÍA ROCHA BARROS, EVA ARGILÉS

You have recently been appointed as the new president of ACC Europe, what does it mean to you to take on this new position?

I am truly honoured to be elected president of this organization and I can't help but feel a sense of added responsibility towards our community. I've been involved with ACC Europe for six years now in various roles, and throughout this time I've witnessed the incredible growth of the association. I am really excited to partner with the Board of ACC Europe – whom I now proudly call friends – to drive the next phase of our chapter's growth.

How do you think female leadership has influenced ACC Europe's growth and success?

Female leadership has been instrumental in the growth and success of ACC Europe. Leaders like Eva Argilés (general counsel Aplus+) have paved the way with their visionary and inclusive approach. Eva has been an inspiration to me: always optimistic, with a great combination of

ACC AND ACC EUROPE IN FIGURES



persistence and calm at the same time, a true challenger of the status quo and creative. We would not be where we are today, as the largest chapter of the Association of Corporate Counsel, if it were not for her vision. Additionally, leaders such as Veta T. Richardson, ACC's president and CEO, and Cristina Gonzales, current global president, exemplify how inclusive and empowering ACC is to women and minorities, further reinforcing the organization's commitment to diversity and equity.

What actions will you take to further advance diversity within the organization?

ACC Europe's mission is to promote the interests of all in-house counsel in Europe. During my tenure as president, my goal is to advance diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) within the in-house counsel community through the pursuit of diversity in our volunteer base, strategic partnerships with like-minded organizations and programs for our members that coincide with this goal. We are a global organization and leverage, in all our activities, our pan-European structure. For example, in the coming months we will be launching the successful ACC mentoring program in Europe, offering our members in the region the opportunity to connect and learn from each other.

What are your main objectives as head of the association across Europe?

My two main objectives are, firstly to improve the recognition and value of the in-house profession across Europe and, secondly, to support the next generation of leading in-house lawyers in their development.

How do you intend to improve the recognition and value of these professionals?

I am determined to raise awareness of the importance of this role among stakeholders. In recent years, the role of in-house counsel has undergone an incredible evolution. Today, we are not only legal advisors, but also essential business strategists and partners to the CEO, the Board and the C-Suite. Our role in guiding organizations through turbulent times is crucial, and we act as a check and balance on the most important strategic decisions made within companies. With our "eagle eye" view of the business and our perspectives on the external environment, we provide valuable insights to create value, manage risk and make sound business decisions. According to ACC's Chief Legal Officer Survey, 58% of CLOs oversee three or more business functions beyond legal, and 27% oversee five or more.



And how will they provide that support to future generations?

Having a support network like ACC Europe - and ACC in general - offers in-house counsel the opportunity to share best practices and build meaningful connections, allowing us to learn from each other and strengthen our collective expertise. For me, the return on investment is clear, and I have personally experienced it time and time again.

You have witnessed the growth of the association over the past six years, what would you highlight most about its evolution over this time?

In the last six years, we have become the largest global chapter of ACC, with more than 3,800 members, which is a testament to our vibrant and engaged community. We have developed new ways to connect and interact with our members, whether face-to-face or online. I fondly remember the early days of building our community on LinkedIn, which has become one of our most effective communication channels. Navigating the challenges of the pandemic was no easy task, but it allowed us to evolve our organizational strategy. Our strong volunteer community has become very strong and enthusiastic. We have also made the ACC Europe Annual Conference the largest event for in-house counsel in the region.

In introducing this new role, you mentioned your enthusiasm for “mobilizing ACC Europe for our next phase of growth and development.” What strategic initiatives is ACC Europe leading in the coming year?

In the coming months and throughout 2025, we will continue to focus on increasing value for our members and strengthening our community. Recently, we have started to look at the visibility of the 'ACC Europe' brand to ensure we can support as many in-house legal professionals in Europe as possible. With LinkedIn we are looking to grow our community and engage more deeply with it. And, our flagship event, the Annual Conference, which plays a key role in strengthening our community.

With increasing digitization and automation in the legal sector, how is the role of the in-house lawyer changing?

ACC EUROPE ANNUAL CONFERENCE

ACC Europe's Annual Conference will be held in Barcelona, Spain, May 21-23. According to Rocha, they expect it to be their largest event yet. The program led by this year's co-chairs, Fiona de Kerckhove (Deputy General Counsel and Cloud Solutions Advisor, SAP, UK), Russell Hunter (Legal and Regulatory Compliance Director, Counsel, Clear Channel International, UK), and Elisabet Rojano (Legal Director - Spain and Latin America, Menarini Group, Spain), will provide practical sessions for both senior leaders (such as general counsel) and the next generation of legal leaders.

With our responsibilities expanding beyond traditional legal functions, operational efficiency has become crucial. Investing in technology solutions can help us improve this efficiency, allowing us to focus our skills and efforts on areas where we can bring the greatest strategic value to our organizations. At the same time, our responsibility is to help our organizations navigate the ever-changing technology landscape, particularly as it relates to artificial intelligence (AI). In-house legal professionals play a key role in advising senior management on how to respond to these changes responsibly and ethically.

And what role does the association play in supporting lawyers in adapting to these changes?



ACC Europe plays a key role in supporting in-house lawyers during this transition. We offer a range of educational resources. For example, at the Annual Conference, one of the main topics to be discussed will be AI, and we will also give attendees the opportunity to experience demonstrations from legal technology sponsors.

In turn, he is responsible for all legal, compliance and public affairs matters for Booking.com worldwide, leading a team, which by 2025 will exceed 200 professionals. In your opinion, what are the biggest legal challenges facing legal departments and their teams?

AI is transforming our industry and, while it offers great opportunities, it also brings with it a whole new set of risks and ethical questions that we need to manage carefully. Another big challenge we face is dealing with complex and constantly changing regulations around the world. Keeping up with all the regulatory changes that can impact a global business is no easy task. Complying with regulations while trying to remain agile and not miss opportunities is a carefully orchestrated act that requires tremendous efforts from legal teams.

This brings me to talent. I think in-house legal departments are a very exciting place to work, where professionals can make decisions, live with their impact and learn from it. Attracting and retaining talent, as well as keeping them engaged and growing, is a key focus for any general counsel. New generations expect more than a salary from their jobs (and rightly so!).

How do your roles at ACC Europe and Booking.com complement each other?

At ACC Europe, I have the opportunity to connect with a wide variety of in-house legal teams from different countries, sectors, experience levels, life paths and very inspiring backgrounds. This broadens my perspective, brings new insights and overall gives me tremendous energy that I bring to my daily work. On the other hand, thanks to my role as Booking.com's chief legal and public affairs officer and a member of the company's board of directors, I am deeply involved in the strategic and operational decisions of a leading online travel platform with a global presence. This gives me insights that I turn into ideas on how to support in-house counsel in day-to-day challenges and advance the profession. 





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