

Empower. Connect. Thrive

A conversation with the newly elected president of AIJA, Kato Aerts

The legal Swiss elite: top M&A advisors for 2024

The best law firms
of the year according
to *Mergermarket* for 2024

Driving the future with precision and purpose

Offices in Zurich, Geneva and Singapore, the ability to bridge local expertise and global challenges, and an ESG-focused approach:
the winning recipe of Schellenberg Wittmer for legal excellence



The slow but steady metamorphosis of the legal profession

As we step into 2025, the Swiss legal profession finds itself at a pivotal juncture, balancing its storied tradition of excellence with the rapid changes reshaping the global legal landscape. This new year brings not only challenges but also unparalleled opportunities for Switzerland to reinforce its position as a leader in innovation and precision within the legal sector. From Zurich to Geneva and beyond, the country is setting the tone for what it means to excel in a world where tradition meets transformation.

Sustainability, digitalization, and the integration of AI-powered tools are not only priorities but active areas of leadership. Such developments underscore a fundamental truth: in an increasingly multipolar legal world, innovation and collaboration are key to maintaining relevance and influence.


This spirit of evolution extends beyond arbitration to the broader legal framework, which is undergoing significant reform in 2025. Updates to the Swiss Code of Civil Procedure, e-commerce VAT

regulations, and teleworking tax rules reflect the country's ability to adapt to both domestic needs and global trends. These changes demonstrate Switzerland's commitment to creating an efficient, accessible, and fair legal system. However, they also bring complexity, requiring law firms and legal professionals to invest in knowledge and flexibility to guide clients through this evolving regulatory landscape.

At the heart of this transformation is the growing demand for legal professionals who can navigate the intersections of specialization, adaptability and global awareness. The legal job market in Switzerland mirrors the challenges of a multilingual, globally connected society, placing a premium on expertise in areas like ESG compliance, cross-border regulations, and technological integration. As in-house legal teams evolve from transactional support to strategic partners, the profession is redefining its role in shaping corporate governance, sustainability and innovation. Soft skills like adaptability, problem-solving and collaboration have become just as critical as technical expertise, underscoring the importance of preparing the next generation for a more complex and interconnected world.

This evolution is mirrored in the diverse approaches taken by Swiss law firms, from boutique firms like **Dantès Law** to global leaders like **Schellenberg Wittmer**. While Dantès Law's expansion into Geneva signals the potential of a specialized, cross-border approach, Schellenberg Wittmer's ESG-driven initiatives and global network exemplify how tradition and innovation can coexist. Together, they highlight Switzerland's unique ability to embrace localized precision while addressing global challenges, offering tailored solutions to clients navigating both Swiss and international legal systems.

Nowhere is this duality more evident than in the growing emphasis on sustainability. ESG compliance is no longer just a box to be ticked but a fundamental shift in how businesses and legal institutions operate. Firms like Schellenberg Wittmer, with their commitment to carbon neutrality and renewable energy initiatives, are setting an example for how the legal sector can lead in promoting environmental and social responsibility. These efforts reflect a broader alignment with the values of a modern, conscious society and illustrate the transformative role that law can play in addressing the most pressing issues of our time.

As we move forward into this year of opportunity, Switzerland remains uniquely positioned to serve as a bridge between tradition and innovation, local expertise and global challenges. The precision and rigor that define Swiss law are complemented by a forward-thinking approach that embraces technology, sustainability and inclusivity. In doing so, the Swiss legal profession not only upholds its reputation for excellence but also charts a path for the future—one that is as dynamic and adaptable as the world it serves. In 2025, the message is clear: the future of law is not about choosing between the old and the new, but about forging connections that ensure both endure. 

2025 EVENTS CALENDAR

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
- The Latin American Lawyer Women Awards São Paulo, 21/05/2025
- Iberian Lawyer Legaltech Day Madrid, 29/05/2025
- Iberian Lawyer IP&TMT Awards Madrid, 29/05/2025

JUNE

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

JULY

- Italian Awards Naples, 03/07/2025

SEPTEMBER

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

OCTOBER

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

NOVEMBER

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

LEGEND

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

ITALY

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

CORPORATE		
Research Period from	01/04/24	DOWNLOAD SUBMISSION ↓
Research Period to	31/03/25	
Deadline Submission	07/03/2025*	
Report Publication	Jul-25	

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

SPAIN AND PORTUGAL

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

SWITZERLAND

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

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

MENA

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

LATAM

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

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with precision
and purpose**

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On the Move



APPOINTMENTS

Baker McKenzie strengthens Geneva tax team with two new counsels

Baker McKenzie has strengthened its tax practice in Switzerland by welcoming Sylvain Godinet and Raphaël Matthys as counsels to its Geneva office. The two legal professionals have extensive experience in international tax advisory, mergers

and acquisitions (M&A), corporate reorganisations, and tax accounting. The expansion reflects Baker McKenzie's commitment to navigating the complexities of international tax regulations and providing robust client support. Sylvain Godinet, who joined in November 2024, has over two decades of expertise, including leadership roles in multinational corporations and teaching tax law at a Swiss university. Raphaël Matthys, who came aboard in January 2025, brings nearly 15 years of experience, particularly in international tax structuring and leading major corporate transactions.

The global tax team at Baker McKenzie spans more than 900 practitioners across 40 countries, reflecting its capability to provide cross-border, specialised support amidst evolving tax landscapes.

MOVES

Catrina Luchsinger Gähwiler joins Barandun as partner

Catrina Luchsinger Gähwiler (pictured) joined Barandun as a new partner, leaving MLL, where she was a partner and where she worked from 2007 to 2024. She also holds numerous positions as a board member of several companies, such as Jungfraubahnen and InCore Bank. Catrina Luchsinger Gähwiler has many years of experience in advising financial institutions and a deep understanding of industry-specific challenges. She specialises in regulatory issues, corporate law, and contract drafting. She also has valuable expertise in the structuring of asset management products such as collective investment schemes, structured products, and investment companies. She is also excellently positioned in the area of debt and equity transactions as well as capital market transactions. As a recognised issuer representative on the SIX Swiss exchange and the BX Berne exchange, she supports clients with complex capital market projects.





APPOINTMENTS & MOVES

Two new partners at MME

MME added two new partners to its firm, Luca Hitz (pictured left) has been promoted to partner, and Salome Wieser (pictured right) has joined as a partner after leaving Ruoss Vogeles where she was partner, both effective as of January 2025. Salome Wieser specializes in national and

international corporate transactions and advises domestic and foreign clients on private M&A and private equity transactions in various industries and restructurings. Another focus of her practice is real estate law, particularly contracts and real estate transactions. She worked at MLL between 2014 and 2018, and then at Barbier Habegger Rödl Rechtsanwälte from 2018 to 2020. Before joining MME she was employed as a partner at Ruoss Vogeles where she spent four years between 2020 and 2024. Luca Hitz joined MME as an attorney in 2014. His focus is in the areas of intellectual property law, technology law, and competition law. Besides established companies, Luca Hitz also advises startups and growth companies, in particular in the technology, entertainment, sports, and health sectors. He develops customized strategies for innovation protection with his clients, helping them in their implementations. He also advises and supports companies on projects in the field of Artificial intelligence (AI) ensuring legal compliance, he worked at the Institute of Intellectual Property (IPI) and as a law clerk at the District Court of Zurich

MOVES

Tomislav Joksimovic, 5Gambit new partner

Tomislav Joksimovic (pictured), from Norton Rose Fulbright, has joined 5Gambit Disputes as a partner, effective January 2025. Tomislav Joksimovic has nearly 20 years of experience as a US lawyer and global litigator. He has worked at Norton Rose Fulbright from 2023 to 2024, and Clifford Chance from 2021 to 2023, to cite his most recent employers before joining 5Gambit. Also, he has advised on cross-border disputes spanning the US, Switzerland, Europe, Asia, and the Middle East. Additionally, Tom has expertise in handling government enforcement actions and complex civil litigation.





NEW APPOINTMENT

Romuald Maier joins Bratschi as partner

Romuald Maier (pictured), as of January 2025, has joined Bratschi as partner from Schochaurer, a firm he was partner of from 2019 to 2024. He will operate out of the firm's St. Gallen office.

Romuald Maier supports companies and private individuals in all aspects of commercial law, in particular in contract and company law as well as in M&A transactions. He also advises on inheritance law and succession planning. Furthermore, he represents his clients in court and carries out notarizations and certifications as a public notary. Between 2014 and 2024 he practiced as a lawyer and a notary at the Schochaurer firm, where he reached the status of partner in 2019. He is also

a member of the exam committee for lawyers and the exam committee for notaries of the Canton of St. Gallen and an attorney of trust of the Austrian Embassy in Berne.

APPOINTMENT

Aline Wey Speirs joins Charles Russell Speechlys as partner

Aline Wey Speirs (pictured), formerly a partner at Altenburger from 2019 to 2024, has joined Charles Russell Speechlys as partner as of January 2025. Aline Wey Speirs headed up the dispute resolution team at Altenburger's Zurich office for five years. She has over 20 years of experience in litigation, mediation, and arbitration. Her primary focus is on complex domestic and multi-jurisdictional commercial litigation and white-collar crime. Aline has extensive asset recovery and protection expertise, including managing cross-border provisional measures such as freezing orders, enforcing foreign judgments and awards, initiating insolvency proceedings, and leading internal investigations. She has regularly appeared before and has successfully tried cases in trial and appellate courts at every level throughout Switzerland, including the Cantonal Courts, the Zurich Commercial Court and the Federal Supreme Court. In addition, Aline has a strong mediation practice and advises private clients on family law-related matters, leveraging her experience as a former substitute Judge. She is also a Member of the Board of Directors at Zugerberg Finanz and Erni Group Holding, both since 2023.





VALFOR Six new partners join the law firm

As of January 2025, Valfor welcomed six new partners. Four from the Lausanne-based law firm Mercuris Avocats, **Olivier Cherpillod**, **Jean-Michel Clerc**, **Martine Loertscher**, **Maxime Rocafort** (joining the Pully's office) and two more, one from Lalive, **Deborah Hondius**, and **Nicolas Gurtner**, from Canonica & Partners. The new partners specialise in commercial law, tax, and dispute resolution, white-collar crime, and contractual matters. The former Mercuris' partners will join the firm's Pully office, while Hondius and Gurtner will be based in Geneva.

Olivier Cherpillod has co-founded Mercuris Avocats, firm where he was a partner. He is a business law expert with extensive experience in general contract law, mergers and acquisitions, corporate law, and labor and immigration law. He provides legal assistance for structured transactions, including company purchases, mergers, demergers, and financial reorganizations. Furthermore, he advises Swiss and foreign clients on setting up, running, or closing subsidiaries in Switzerland. Additionally, Cherpillod is active in regulatory compliance for the health and financial sectors and serves as an auditor for the Swiss Bar and Notary Associations regarding money laundering.

Jean-Michel Clerc is a lawyer specializing in national and international tax, focusing on establishing foreign businesses in Switzerland and tax planning for corporations and individuals using special tax regimes. Clerc is registered as a financial intermediary under the Federal Act against Money Laundering and serves on the boards of various multinational companies. He co-founded Lexartis and Mercuris Avocats.

Martine Loertscher is an expert in labor law at the Swiss and European levels, covering employment contracts, restructuring, litigation, and work permits. She has also gained expertise in social insurance law related to labor issues, including unemployment, old age insurance, and private loss of earnings insurance. Additionally, Loertscher is an expert in immigration matters, including work permits, family reunification, and obtaining Swiss nationality. Her background also includes significant experience in business law, particularly in contract drafting and litigation. Before co-founding Mercuris Avocats with Jean-Michel Clerc and Olivier Cherpillod, she was a partner at Lexartis Avocats since 2012.

Maxime Rocafort, before becoming a partner at Mercuris Avocats in 2021, founded MR Avocats Associés in Lausanne in 2014 and later in Geneva with Stéphane Voisard in 2015. The firm evolved into VR Avocats Associés in 2017. Deborah Hondius has been working at Lalive since 2018. She is a Swiss-qualified lawyer with experience in domestic and international litigation and internal investigations. Her practice encompasses asset recovery, white-collar crime, cybercrime, compliance, and mutual assistance in criminal matters.

Hondius represents corporate and individual clients before Swiss courts, prosecution offices, and regulatory authorities. Nicolas Gurtner has been working at Canonica & Partners since 2011, focusing on criminal law (both Swiss and international) and complex civil procedures. (Pictured from left to right: **Olivier Cherpillod**, **Jean-Michel Clerc**, **Martine Loertscher**, **Maxime Rocafort**, **Deborah Hondius**, **Nicolas Gurtner**).



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INFORMATION



EVENTS



INTELLIGENCE



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On the web



Swiss market spotlight: landmark deals driving legal and financial excellence

The Swiss legal and financial markets have kicked off the year with a flurry of significant transactions, highlighting the strategic expertise of leading law firms and financial institutions. **UBS Switzerland**, with the legal counsel of Homburger, played a pivotal role in financing United Grinding Group's acquisition of GF Machining Solutions — a key move in the precision manufacturing sector. Similarly, Baker McKenzie steered **Blackroll AG** through a transformative management buyout, forging a partnership with KKA Partners to drive the company's growth in the recovery solutions market. Adding further momentum, Walder Wyss advised **Helvetia** on the successful placement of CHF 250 million in dual-tranche bonds, demonstrating innovation in capital markets. Meanwhile, Homburger showcased its cross-border capabilities by advising **Novo Nordisk** on a landmark \$11 billion acquisition of three manufacturing sites, spanning Europe and the United States. These high-impact deals underscore Switzerland's critical role as a hub for banking, M&A, and capital markets, shaping the global business landscape with precision and foresight.



DANIEL HAEBERLI

Homburger advises UBS on GF Machining Solutions financing

Homburger acted as legal advisor to UBS Switzerland in its role as mandated lead arranger, sole underwriter, bookrunner, agent, security agent, and original lender for the financing of United Grinding Group's acquisition of GF Machining Solutions. Homburger's assistance encompassed all Swiss legal aspects of the transaction.

GF Machining Solutions, a leading provider of solutions for precision components and tools manufacturers, as well as the mould-making industry, was acquired by United Grinding Group through a financing structured by UBS Switzerland.

The Homburger team was led by **Daniel Haerberli** and **Stefan Bindschedler**, with additional support from Simone Gloor and Eric Straub, all specialising in financing. Tax-related aspects were handled by Stefan Oesterhelt.

PRACTICE AREA

Banking & Finance

DEAL

UBS - GF Machining Solutions

LAW FIRM

Homburger

HEAD PARTNER

Daniel Haerberli and Stefan Bindschedler

VALUE

Not disclosed



ALEXANDER FISCHER



MATTHIAS TRAUTMANN

Baker McKenzie advises Blackroll AG in buyout by KKA partners

Baker McKenzie Switzerland acted as legal advisor to the shareholders of Blackroll AG in a management buyout that sees the company partnering with private equity firm KKA Partners. The transaction aims to drive Blackroll's continued growth in the active and passive recovery market. The Swiss team at Baker McKenzie provided comprehensive legal counsel, led by M&A partners **Alexander Fischer** and **Matthias Trautmann**. Supporting them were Jasmin Morell (associate, M&A), Markus Wolf (partner, Banking & Finance), Mario Kumschick (counsel, Tax), and Roger Thomi (partner, Antitrust & Competition). Founded in 2013, Blackroll offers a wide range of recovery products and solutions, including digital courses and sleep-related items, and is a leader in its field. KKA Partners, based in Berlin and established in 2018, focuses on medium-sized enterprises in the DACH region.

PRACTICE AREA

Deal & Transactions

DEAL

Blackroll AG buyout

LAW FIRM

Baker McKenzie

HEAD PARTNER

Alexander Fischer and Matthias Trautmann

VALUE

Not disclosed



MARKUS PFENNINGER



RAMONA WYSS

Walder Wyss with Helvetia's on two bond tranches

Walder Wyss advised Helvetia on the placement of two senior bond tranches totaling CHF 250 million. The first tranche is CHF 110 million, with a maturity in 2029 and a coupon of 0.80 percent. The second tranche is CHF 140 million, with a maturity in 2033 and a coupon of 1.10 percent. The proceeds will be used for general corporate purposes, including possible refinancings of outstanding instruments. The bonds are guaranteed by Helvetia Holding.

Walder Wyss acted as legal counsel to Helvetia on this transaction. The team was led by partner **Markus Pfenninger** (transactions, pictured left) and **Ramona Wyss** (transactions, pictured right) and included senior associate Christian A. Schmid (transactions) and transaction manager Ganna Schneuwly.

PRACTICE AREA

Capital Markets

DEAL

Helvetia

LAW FIRM

Walder Wyss

HEAD PARTNER

Markus Pfenninger and Ramona Wyss

VALUE

CHF 250 million



Homburger with Novo Nordisk on new transaction

Homburger advised Novo Nordisk on its USD 11 billion acquisition of three manufacturing sites from Novo Holdings. The completion follows the finalization of Novo Holdings' acquisition of Catalent. The three acquired sites specialized in the sterile filling of drugs are located in Anagni (Italy), Brussels (Belgium), and Bloomington IN (USA).

Homburger advised Novo Nordisk on the transaction. The Homburger team comprised partners **Andreas Müller** and **Anna Peter**, associates Simone Schmid, Bianca Nedwed, Florian Bruggisser and paralegal Maria Braun (all corporate/M&A), counsel Allegra Arnold, junior associates Meret Horisberger and Harun Cetin (all regulatory), associate Jeremy Reichlin (employment) as well as partner Reto Heuberger, associates Juliette Buob and Philipp Stiegeler (all tax).

Pictured from left to right: Andreas Müller, Anna Peter, Reto Heuberger.

PRACTICE AREA

Deal & Transactions

DEAL

Novo Nordisk

LAW FIRM

Homburger

HEAD PARTNER

Andreas Müller and Anna Peter

VALUE

USD 11 billion



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A portrait of a man with short brown hair, wearing glasses, a dark suit, a white shirt, and a patterned tie. He is smiling and has his arms crossed. The image is framed by an orange border.

Driving the future with precision and purpose

Offices in Zurich, Geneva and Singapore, the ability to bridge local expertise and global challenges, and an ESG-focused approach: the winning recipe of Schellenberg Wittmer for legal excellence

by claudia la via

In a world increasingly defined by complexity, Schellenberg Wittmer stands as a model of how a law firm can lead not just by tradition but through innovation and foresight. As Switzerland's premier legal institution, its influence extends far beyond Zurich, Geneva and Singapore, shaping outcomes in boardrooms, courts, and arbitration chambers across the globe.

While its roots are firmly planted in the Swiss legal system, Schellenberg Wittmer's gaze is fixed on the horizon. The firm has carved out a distinct position as a leader not only in core areas like mergers and acquisitions, dispute resolution, and private wealth but also in emerging fields such as Esg compliance and digital transformation. It is this duality—honoring the rigor of Swiss legal practice while embracing the demands of a rapidly changing world—that defines its trajectory.

At its core, Schellenberg Wittmer's strategy is as precise as the reputation it upholds. This is a firm that understands leadership is not about resting on past achievements but about setting the benchmark for the future. Whether through its investment in cutting-edge legal technology, expansion into high-growth markets, or an unwavering commitment to excellence, Schellenberg Wittmer continues to evolve, ensuring its relevance for years to come.

BUILDING A FOUNDATION FOR THE FUTURE

For a firm like Schellenberg Wittmer, staying at the top requires more than just exceptional legal knowledge—it demands strategic foresight. Over the years, the firm has focused on strengthening its core practices while embracing emerging areas of law that are shaping the global legal landscape. With expertise spanning over 21 practice areas, including international arbitration, white-collar crime, and corporate law, the law firm remains a cornerstone of Swiss legal services.

Projections for the coming years are ambitious yet deliberate. The firm aims to solidify its dominance in key sectors such as financial services, technology, and life sciences while expanding its influence in cross-border transactions and regulatory compliance. This vision is supported by consistent year-on-year growth and a commitment to maintaining its position as a trusted partner for businesses and individuals facing high-stakes legal challenges.

PURSuing INNOVATION IN LEGAL PRACTICE

Schellenberg Wittmer understands that innovation is not a buzzword—it's a necessity. Legal technology, for instance, has become an integral part of the firm's operations, enabling lawyers to focus on high-value advisory work by automating time-consuming processes. Its flagship initiative, FlexLaw, exemplifies this approach, offering flexible legal support tailored to complex and resource-intensive matters.

Beyond technology, the firm has redefined the client-lawyer relationship by prioritizing efficiency, transparency, and adaptability. Whether handling intricate mergers or advising on ESG compliance, Schellenberg Wittmer ensures that its clients are equipped with solutions that go beyond traditional legal advice.

Schellenberg Wittmer in figures

+150
Lawyers

21
Distinct practice areas

15
Sectors and industries

15
Languages

30
Nationalities



A leadership transition

Schellenberg Wittmer recently ushered in a new era with the election of **Pascal Hubli** as its new managing partner. Hubli, a seasoned legal professional with nearly two decades of experience, has been a part of the firm since 2007. Rising through the ranks, he became a partner in 2017 within the firm's renowned Mergers & Acquisitions Group in Zurich. Known for his expertise in national and cross-border M&A, capital market transactions, and corporate restructuring, Hubli's reputation for excellence and strategic thinking makes him well-suited to lead the firm into its next chapter.

Hubli succeeds **Philippe Bärtsch**, who served as managing partner for five years. During his tenure, Bärtsch led the firm through a period of significant growth and consolidation, ensuring that Schellenberg Wittmer maintained its position at the forefront of Swiss legal services. While stepping down from the leadership role, Bärtsch continues to play a key role within the firm as vice-chair of the International Arbitration Practice group and co-head of the Sports Practice group, leveraging his extensive experience in dispute resolution and sports law. This leadership transition symbolizes not only continuity but also the firm's commitment to evolution and innovation. With Hubli at the helm, Schellenberg Wittmer is poised to navigate the complexities of the modern legal landscape while building on the strong foundation laid by Bärtsch's leadership.

GLOBAL REACH, LOCAL EXPERTISE

While firmly rooted in Swiss legal tradition, Schellenberg Wittmer's presence in Singapore and its network of regional desks give it a truly global outlook. The Singapore office has become a critical hub for handling international arbitration and navigating the complexities of Asian markets. Meanwhile, regional desks focused on areas like Africa, Brazil, and Southeast Asia bring localized expertise to cross-border cases, ensuring that clients benefit from insights tailored to specific markets.

This global approach is underpinned by a deep understanding of local laws, business environments, and cultural nuances. It positions Schellenberg Wittmer as a partner of choice for multinational corporations and high-net-worth individuals navigating cross-border disputes, transactions, and regulatory frameworks.

RESILIENCE IN A CHANGING WORLD

The legal industry is no stranger to disruption, and Schellenberg Wittmer has consistently proven its ability to adapt. From the rise of ESG requirements to the increasing complexity of cross-border regulations, the firm has positioned itself as a leader in addressing the challenges of modern business law. Environmental, Social, and Governance principles, in particular, have become a focal point for the firm (see dedicated box). While a detailed sustainability report offers more granular insights, Schellenberg Wittmer's approach to ESG reflects a commitment to

integrating these principles into its legal advice and internal practices. By doing so, the firm not only meets regulatory demands but also aligns itself with the values of its clients and broader societal goals. 🌱

Collaboration with

300

law firms worldwide

in more than

50

jurisdictions





JULIE RANEDA

Strengthening roots in Asia

Schellenberg Wittmer is further solidifying its footprint in Asia with the ongoing development of its Singapore office. Established as a strategic hub for the firm's operations in the region, the office plays today a central role in addressing the growing demand for expert legal services across Asia's dynamic and complex markets. To support its expanding

team and operations, the firm has recently relocated to a larger office space, a modern office that provides an upgraded working environment designed to enhance team members' well-being and productivity, enabling Schellenberg Wittmer to attract and retain top talent to drive our growth forward.

Since its inception, the Singapore office has been pivotal in the firm's focus on international arbitration, private wealth, and other key practice areas. Its location in one of the world's most prominent business and legal hubs enables Schellenberg Wittmer to provide seamless, client-focused support in cross-border matters involving jurisdictions across the region and beyond. Led by an accomplished team of legal professionals with deep expertise in Asian markets, and by the local Managing director, **Julie Raneda**, the Singapore office exemplifies Schellenberg Wittmer's commitment to excellence and innovation. The team works closely with clients to craft tailored solutions for intricate legal challenges, reflecting the firm's dedication to delivering world-class service while adapting to the unique demands of the region.

The expansion of the Singapore office - recently highlighted also by the addition of **T Pradeep**, as Business development manager, underscores the firm's ambition to grow alongside its clients.



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Dantès Law lands in Geneva

Founder Thibault Stumm shares insights on the firm's growth, its focus on the Swiss market and the willing to foster a fresh approach to cross-border legal expertise

by paolo canazza

A small independent law firm begins its journey in Paris and soon expands into the Swiss market with the opening of a new office in Geneva. This is the story of Dantès Law and its founder, **Thibault Stumm**, who is embarking on this Swiss adventure with the ambition of bringing a fresh perspective to the legal profession while embracing new professional challenges. The recent expansion into Geneva reflects Dantès Law's commitment to addressing the needs of its Swiss-based clients more effectively. The goal is to provide seamless and efficient legal services for individuals and businesses operating between France and Switzerland. With a strong focus on litigation, employment law, and art market law, Dantès Law is dedicated to meeting the unique demands of both local and international clients while maintaining the personalized and innovative approach that sets their practice apart.

To mark the opening of the new office, *MAG* interviewed Thibault Stumm, who shared his vision for the firm, the strategic significance of Geneva, and how Dantès Law continues to prioritize excellence and innovation in its services.

What motivated your entry into the Swiss market?

Our arrival in Switzerland was both a personal and professional decision. As a Swiss national, originally from Basel, I've always wanted to practice law in Switzerland, a legal and cultural environment I know well.

On a practical level, we already have a loyal Swiss clientele who rely on us to handle their transnational and local affairs. Opening an office in Switzerland is our way of being closer to them, offering on-the-ground support with a deep understanding of the local legal landscape. Strategically, we aim to provide high-quality, tailor-made legal services, addressing the needs of both Swiss and international clients, particularly in managing complex cross-border cases.

What are the key areas of focus for your Geneva office?

Geneva, as an international hub, offers an

«Geneva, as an international crossroads, represents a unique opportunity to strengthen our areas of expertise, while remaining committed to our specialization in litigation and employment law»



exceptional opportunity to deepen our expertise while staying true to our specialization in litigation and employment law.

We plan to strengthen our practice in white-collar crime, commercial litigation, and estate litigation, which are at the core of Dantès Law's identity. Our presence in Switzerland allows us to serve clients with cross-border issues even more effectively. Additionally, Geneva's prominence in the art market creates significant opportunities to expand our art market law services. We aim to assist stakeholders like collectors, galleries, and auction houses in navigating disputes and other complex issues unique to the sector.

Finally, employment law remains a cornerstone of our practice. We're committed to meeting the growing demand for corporate clients operating between France and Switzerland, offering solutions tailored to their unique needs.

Switzerland's legal market is known for being localized. Do you see this as a challenge or an opportunity?

I believe it's a tremendous opportunity for Dantès Law. Geneva's strategic location and its localized market come with a significant demand for specialized expertise. Swiss businesses and individuals face international challenges just as French counterparts deal with Swiss legal matters.

Our cross-border expertise, combined with our knowledge of local specifics, positions us

uniquely to address these needs. This dual perspective allows us to deliver tailored solutions that truly add value for our clients.

What are the core values that define Dantès Law?

Our firm's ethos is built on three pillars: exceptional legal expertise, responsiveness, and dedication.

We take a personalized, human approach to each case, fostering trust with our clients and creating legal strategies tailored to their specific challenges. We also uphold Swiss values like precision and rigor, which manifest in our meticulous attention to detail and pragmatic solutions. These qualities allow us to meet the complexities of our clients' needs while maintaining the highest standards of excellence.

How does your boutique approach benefit your art market law practice?

Art market law demands a rare blend of specialized expertise, cultural understanding, and sensitivity to both commercial and heritage concerns. Our boutique model allows us to offer discretion and proximity, two qualities particularly valued in this field. Our approach ensures that each case receives personalized attention and innovative solutions. Clients value our deep knowledge of the art world and our passion for it, which enables us to engage meaningfully with collectors, galleries, auction houses, and cultural institutions to address their unique needs.

How is your Geneva office structured, and what are your plans for its growth?

I'll personally head the Geneva office as a lawyer registered with both the Geneva Bar Commission and the Paris Bar.

We're currently seeking an experienced associate with dual training in Swiss and French law, and we plan to gradually expand the team as our client base grows. Our vision is to build an agile structure while maintaining the high level of expertise that defines Dantès Law.

What differences have you noticed between the Swiss and French approaches to legal issues?


There are indeed notable differences, particularly

«Our ambition is to make our Geneva office a leading law firm for complex cross-border cases»

Switzerland's emphasis on mediation compared to France's more litigious approach. This divergence reflects complementary legal philosophies that enrich our practice. At Dantès Law, we prioritize amicable dispute resolution whenever possible, aligning with our clients' goals and the specifics of each case. This strategy helps preserve relationships, achieve better outcomes, and reduce delays. Understanding these differences allows us to craft bespoke strategies for cross-border cases, ensuring flexibility and efficiency across jurisdictions.

What are your future plans for Dantès Law?

Our goal is to establish the Geneva office as a leading law firm for complex cross-border cases. We aim to strengthen our core practices in France and Switzerland while staying close to our clients and ensuring exceptional responsiveness.

Ultimately, we aspire to build long-term relationships founded on trust, ensuring every client feels heard and supported. This personalized, human-centric approach will remain central to our growth, whether in Switzerland or France. 





2025: a year of legal reforms

From e-commerce VAT rules to civil procedure revisions: how new regulations will redefine Switzerland's legal and economic landscape

Switzerland's legal framework is set to undergo significant changes in 2025 with new regulations affecting various sectors of the economy and legal practice. From revised VAT rules for e-commerce to updates in the Swiss Code of Civil Procedure, these changes reflect Switzerland's efforts to adapt its regulatory environment to global trends and domestic challenges. Such reforms are critical in maintaining the country's competitiveness and addressing evolving legal and economic dynamics. However, they also pose challenges for law firms as they navigate a more complex legal landscape while advising their clients.



1. Revisions to the Swiss Code of Civil Procedure: enhancing accessibility and efficiency

The Swiss Code of Civil Procedure (CPC) is set to undergo major revisions aimed at improving access to justice and enhancing procedural efficiency. According to Altenburger Ltd. legal + tax, the changes include reducing financial barriers for plaintiffs by lowering cost advances and broadening legal aid eligibility. Additionally, there is a greater emphasis on mediation and alternative dispute resolution methods to alleviate court burdens. These revisions are expected to streamline dispute resolution and benefit both individuals and businesses. However, as Altenburger highlights, "lawyers and litigants must familiarize themselves with the revised framework to avoid procedural pitfalls, particularly as the transitional provisions might introduce complexity in ongoing cases".



2. VAT reforms for e-commerce: simplifying compliance

Switzerland's new e-commerce VAT rules, effective from 2025, aim to align the country's tax regime with international standards. Notably, all cross-border e-commerce transactions will now be subject to Swiss VAT, regardless of the seller's domicile. As explained by Swiss experts of Marosa VAT, the reforms impose registration and collection requirements on foreign sellers, reducing unfair competition for local businesses. While the new rules simplify compliance for the Swiss Federal Tax Administration, they place additional burdens on e-commerce businesses that must adapt to the changes quickly. Law firms will likely play a pivotal role in guiding these businesses through the regulatory adjustments, ensuring adherence and avoiding penalties.



3. The Federal Act on the Taxation of Teleworking: addressing cross-border challenges

With the rise of remote work, the Federal Act on the Taxation of Teleworking will introduce standardized rules for taxing employees working across borders. Effective January 1, 2025, this law resolves ambiguities that arose during the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly for multinational companies with employees based in Switzerland. According to L&E Global, this act ensures fairness and clarity in the taxation of teleworkers, balancing the interests of employees and employers. However, it also requires businesses to reassess their tax planning and payroll systems. As such, law firms specializing in employment and tax law will be integral to implementing these changes seamlessly.




4. Reforms in social security contributions and pension planning

Changes to Switzerland's social security contributions and pension rules in 2025 aim to bolster the sustainability of the Swiss pension system. Experts from Swiss Life, leading provider of life and pensions and financial solutions, note that these reforms include increased contribution rates and adjustments to retirement benefits to reflect demographic trends. While these updates are vital for the long-term health of the pension system, they pose challenges for businesses and individuals in managing costs. Legal professionals must assist their clients in understanding and integrating these reforms into financial and estate planning strategies.

BROADER IMPLICATIONS FOR SWISS LAW FIRMS

These regulatory changes collectively reshape the Swiss legal landscape, presenting opportunities and challenges for law firms. On one hand, they provide firms with avenues to expand their advisory services in tax, employment, and commercial law. On the other hand, staying ahead of these complex changes demands significant investments in training and legal research.

Moreover, the interplay of these regulations—such as the impact of teleworking tax rules on cross-border dispute resolution—requires holistic legal strategies. As many Swiss legal expert aptly summarized, “navigating 2025 will not just be about understanding individual regulations but about mastering their combined impact on clients”. 





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KATO AERTS

Empower. Connect. Thrive

The International Association of Young Lawyers (AIJA) steps up to highlight the power of networking and continuous learning as well as the importance of a constant attention to mental and physical well-being. A conversation with the newly elected president, Kato Aerts

by claudia la via

In September 2024, **Kato Aerts** assumed the presidency of the International Association of Young Lawyers (AIJA), a global association dedicated to empowering young legal professionals. a community of over 6,000 people in more than 100 different countries, AIJA has long been a cornerstone for fostering international collaboration, professional development, and leadership in the legal community. Under Aerts's leadership, the association is poised to strengthen its mission, ensuring it remains a dynamic force in addressing the evolving needs of young lawyers. "My presidency is guided by three promises: empower, connect, and thrive", Aerts shares as she reflects on the guiding principles shaping her tenure. With these promises at the forefront, she has introduced key initiatives to equip young lawyers with the tools to excel, foster global connections, and enhance AIJA's relevance as a forward-thinking organization. Among her efforts, she highlights the creation of an editorial board and the launch of the AIJA Journal, both of which provide a platform for young lawyers to showcase their expertise and voice their perspectives on critical issues shaping the profession. She also emphasizes the importance of strengthening connections within the legal community, citing the development of the in-house counsel board as a step toward fostering collaboration between in-house and private practice lawyers. Furthermore, mental health has emerged as a major focus of her presidency. Following a comprehensive survey on well-being challenges in the legal profession, AIJA has initiated programs to support resilience and balance for its members.

AIJA focuses on empowering young lawyers worldwide. How do you plan to strengthen this mission and ensure the association stays relevant?

Accessibility is central to AIJA's mission. Regional meetings ensure that lawyers from diverse geographies can engage with its programs, fostering inclusivity. Equally important is the association's commitment to creating platforms where young lawyers can showcase their expertise and leadership. Mentorship programs and sessions on topics such as artificial intelligence, sustainability, and legal technology help members remain competitive in the ever-evolving global

«AIJA provides a dynamic and inclusive platform for building skills, networks and international profiles»

AIJA in numbers

+6000

individual and supporting members

+100

countries with active members

+700

law firms of all sizes

65%

of members in leadership positions in their law firms

legal market. By staying attuned to member feedback and embracing new trends, AIJA ensures its continued relevance.

What makes AIJA essential to young lawyers, and how do you see its role evolving in the global legal landscape?

AIJA is essential because it offers young lawyers opportunities that go beyond technical training, focusing on leadership, collaboration, and personal growth. It provides a dynamic and inclusive platform for building skills, networks, and international profiles. As the legal landscape evolves, AIJA will address emerging challenges such as cross-border compliance, diversity in



«Our recent survey on mental health revealed challenges like high stress, work-life imbalance and insufficient support systems. Addressing these issues is a key focus for us»

leadership, and legal technology. By fostering a strong sense of community, the association ensures its members are well-equipped with the skills and connections needed to excel in a global profession.

Mental health is a pressing concern in the legal profession. What steps is AIJA taking to address this challenge?

A recent AIJA survey on mental health revealed challenges like high stress, work-life imbalance, and insufficient support systems. Addressing these issues is a key focus of the presidency. AIJA is running workshops and webinars to raise awareness and offer practical strategies for managing stress. Advocacy efforts promote healthier work environments, and peer support groups and mentorship programs foster openness

and community. AIJA's podcast, *Spotlight AIJA*, has also dedicated a season to mental health, sharing expert advice and actionable tools. To further these efforts, the association is preparing a white paper proposing systemic solutions to mental health challenges in the legal profession.

As we stepped into 2025, what milestones or achievements do you aim to celebrate at the end of your term?

Several milestones define the goals for this presidency. These include the successful integration of the In-House Counsel Board and its engagement at AIJA's flagship events, as well as the launch of the AIJA Journal as a platform for young lawyers to establish themselves as thought leaders. Mental health initiatives, including tailored programs and workshops, are also a key focus. A highlight will be the 63rd International Young Lawyers' Congress in Washington D.C. in August 2025. This event will combine academic and professional development opportunities, reflecting AIJA's commitment to empowering its members on a global scale.

With globalization, technology, and evolving legal systems, what do you see as the biggest challenges and opportunities for young lawyers in the coming years?

The legal profession is undergoing rapid change. Technological advancements like Artificial

«Emerging fields such as sustainability, data privacy and ESG compliance are ripe for innovation, offering young lawyers the chance to specialize in high-demand areas»

intelligence and automation require lawyers to continuously upskill to remain competitive. Cross-border legal work presents additional complexities, demanding expertise in international law and strong global networks. However, these challenges also create opportunities. Emerging fields such as sustainability, data privacy, and ESG compliance are ripe for innovation, offering young lawyers the chance to specialize in high-demand areas. Those who embrace change and actively pursue growth will find themselves leading in this evolving landscape.

What inspired you to take on this leadership role, and what advice would you offer young lawyers navigating today's complexities?

Leading AIJA is both a personal and professional milestone. My mission with the association is to empower young lawyers and foster international collaboration.

Moreover, my involvement with AIJA has been instrumental in shaping my career and this presidency represents an opportunity to give back to an organization that has profoundly influenced me. My involvement with AIJA has been instrumental in shaping my career, and this presidency represents an opportunity to give back to an organization that has profoundly influenced me. I advise young lawyers to embrace opportunities with enthusiasm—whether through volunteering, attending events, or tackling challenging projects as these moments often open doors to unexpected possibilities. 📌





Future-proof legal professionals

Adaptability, specialization and strategic alignment: the market demands new specialists and open doors to fresh opportunities. Charlotte Jacobs (Robert Walters Zurich) tells *MAG* how the Swiss working scenario is evolving

by claudia la via

Switzerland's legal profession is at a pivotal juncture in 2025, shaped by the nation's global financial prominence, multilingual culture, and evolving regulatory landscape. This year has seen a surge in demand for legal professionals who can navigate complex compliance challenges, address the rising importance of sustainability, and adapt to technological advances in the field. These dynamics, unique to Switzerland, set the stage for a transformative era in the legal and compliance job market.

According to **Charlotte Jacobs**, Senior Manager at Robert Walters Zurich, "Switzerland exhibits several unique trends compared to other European countries. There is particularly high demand for legal talent in the banking, financial services, pharma, and biotech sectors". As a global financial hub, Switzerland faces strong demand for legal professionals with regulatory expertise, particularly those familiar with cross-border regulations such as those governed by the Swiss Financial Market Supervisory Authority (FINMA). Compliance officers and legal advisors with these specialized skills are indispensable in many industries.

Jacobs also highlights the continued growth in private equity and mergers & acquisitions (M&A), which has created opportunities for legal professionals specializing in corporate law, due diligence, and international transactions. "Multilingualism and international experience are critical advantages in Switzerland's multilingual environment," she adds. Fluency in German, French Italian and English, combined with experience in cross-border collaboration, gives candidates a distinct edge in this competitive market.

THE STRATEGIC SHIFT IN IN-HOUSE LEGAL DEPARTMENTS

One of the most notable shifts in the Swiss legal profession is the evolving role of in-house legal departments. Traditionally focused on transactional work, these teams are now integral to broader corporate strategies, particularly in the realm of Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) compliance. Jacobs notes that



«As a global financial hub, Switzerland faces strong demand for legal professionals with regulatory expertise, particularly those familiar with cross-border regulations»

Charlotte Jacobs

«Legal teams are playing a pivotal role in advising on ESG compliance, integrating sustainability, social responsibility, and governance best practices into corporate policies, contracts, and reporting mechanisms»

Charlotte Jacobs

“legal teams are playing a pivotal role in advising on ESG compliance, integrating sustainability, social responsibility, and governance best practices into corporate policies, contracts, and reporting mechanisms”. In-house legal teams are increasingly tasked with managing ESG-related risks, addressing shareholder activism, and ensuring transparency in corporate sustainability initiatives. This shift has elevated their importance as strategic partners within organizations. “Cross-functional collaboration has become essential” - Jacobs explains - “with legal departments working closely with sustainability, risk management, and finance teams to develop and implement ESG strategies aligned with corporate objectives”.

THE TALENT CHALLENGE: ATTRACTING AND RETAINING THE BEST

The rising demand for specialized legal professionals has intensified competition among Swiss law firms and corporations. Organizations are adopting multifaceted strategies to attract and retain top talent. “Swiss law firms and companies are addressing this challenge through competitive compensation, flexibility, and technology integration”, Jacobs states. Offering attractive salary and benefits packages is crucial for securing experienced professionals in high-

demand roles such as Senior Legal Counsels and Compliance Officers.

Flexibility, including remote work options and adaptable hours, has become a cornerstone of retaining talent in high-pressure roles. Jacobs adds that leveraging legal technology is also pivotal, as it enhances efficiency and appeals to tech-savvy professionals seeking innovative opportunities in the legal sector.

THE GLOBAL-LOCAL BALANCING ACT

Switzerland's position as a global financial hub demands a delicate balance between international regulations and the country's robust local legal framework.

“Swiss companies and legal professionals are navigating the interplay between international regulations and local Swiss law by leveraging cross-border expertise, implementing dual compliance strategies, and collaborating with global networks”, Jacobs explains.

Utilizing advanced compliance technologies further supports this balance, enabling companies to adhere to evolving global standards while maintaining compliance with Swiss regulations.

EQUIPPING THE NEXT GENERATION OF LEGAL PROFESSIONALS

For young legal professionals and graduates entering the Swiss market, aligning with these trends is critical to building a successful career. Jacobs emphasizes the importance of specialized knowledge in areas like ESG compliance, data privacy, and cross-border regulations such as anti-money laundering (AML) and the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act (FCPA). Practical experience through internships in law firms or corporate legal departments is invaluable. “Language skills are a significant advantage”, Jacobs notes, with fluency in German, French, and English opening doors in Switzerland's multilingual market. Familiarity with legal technology tools and soft skills like adaptability, problem-solving, and communication are also indispensable in today's dynamic environment. ■

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The legal Swiss elite: top M&A advisors for 2024

The best international and local law firms of the year
in Switzerland by deal value and volume according
to *Mergermarket*

The Swiss mergers and acquisitions (M&A) market in 2024 has been marked by sharp contrasts, offering mixed signals for investors. After a strong start with a series of high-profile transactions, the pace slowed dramatically in the third quarter. However, the year-end outlook remained optimistic, thanks to a rebound in activity during the fourth quarter, including some landmark deals. The first quarter of 2024 set the stage for an active M&A market in Switzerland, with four billion-euro deals completed. The largest transaction was **Swisscom's €8 billion acquisition of Vodafone Italia**, a strategic move to strengthen its presence in the Italian market.

By the end of the first half, the Swiss M&A market recorded three additional billion-euro transactions, including **Novartis's acquisition of Mariana Oncology for \$1 billion**, with further earn-outs of \$750 million. These deals highlighted the strong appetite for cross-border acquisitions in high-growth sectors such as technology and healthcare.

The latest *Mergermarket* EMEA Advisory Rankings 2024, shed light on the evolving dynamics of the Swiss legal advisory market. A closer look at the rankings by value reveals that a significant portion of the top-performing firms are not Swiss, but rather international players such as **Kirkland & Ellis, White & Case, and Skadden Arps**. This dominance suggests that many of the high-value transactions in Switzerland were international deals involving Swiss counterparts. Switzerland's open economy and its reputation

as a hub for global business likely contributed to this trend. International firms are often called upon for their global expertise, especially in complex cross-border transactions that require a deep understanding of international law and multi-jurisdictional regulations. Consequently, these firms are well-positioned to secure roles in high-profile deals, even in markets traditionally dominated by local firms.

SWITZERLAND RANKINGS BY VALUE: KEY PLAYERS AND HIGHLIGHTS

1. Kirkland & Ellis: a meteoric rise to the top.

Leading the pack in 2024, Kirkland & Ellis has achieved a remarkable turnaround, catapulting from the 63rd position in 2023 to claim the top spot. With a total deal value of \$29.88 billion across 12 deals, the firm has posted a staggering 1,500.3% growth in value compared to its 2023 performance (\$1.87 billion). This meteoric rise underlines Kirkland & Ellis's growing influence and ability to secure high-value transactions in Switzerland.

2. White & Case: a close second. White & Case follows closely with a deal value of \$27.57 billion, completing 15 deals in 2024. The firm registered a similarly impressive 1,032.5% growth compared to its 2023 performance of \$2.43 billion. Its success demonstrates the firm's consistent ability to handle substantial and complex deals.

Ranking			2024			2023
2024	2023	Company Name	Value (USDm)	Deal Count	% Value Change	Value (USDm)
1	63	Kirkland & Ellis	29,878	12	1500.3%	1,867
2	47	White & Case	27,565	15	1032.5%	2,434
3	1	Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer	26,361	21	-47.2%	49,935
4	44	Skadden Arps Slate Meagher & Flom	24,790	9	797.2%	2,763
5	19	Linklaters	18,183	12	69.7%	10,716
6	65	Ropes & Gray	14,176	6	822.9%	1,536
7	4	Homburger	13,843	23	-41.3%	23,574
8	24	Paul Weiss Rifkind Wharton & Garrison	13,406	4	78.7%	7,500
9	28	AGO Shearman	13,022	11	102.5%	6,432
10	68	Slaughter and May	10,939	4	730.6%	1,317

source: Mergermarket: Global & Regional M&A Rankings 2024

3. Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer: maintaining momentum. Retaining its third-place position, Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer recorded a deal value of \$26.36 billion across 21 deals. While its total value represents a 47.2% decline from \$49.39 billion in 2023, the firm's high deal count underscores its market presence and ongoing trust among clients.

4. Skadden Arps Slate Meagher & Flom: steady growth. Ranking fourth, Skadden Arps Slate Meagher & Flom saw a significant rise in deal value, reporting \$24.79 billion across nine deals—an impressive 797.2% increase from its 2023 figure of \$2.76 billion. This growth reflects the firm's strategic success in securing larger, more lucrative deals.

5. Linklaters: moderate gains. Linklaters rounds out the top five with a deal value of \$18.18 billion, up 69.7% from \$10.72 billion in 2023. The firm completed 12 deals, marking steady progress in the Swiss market.

EMERGING TRENDS AND NOTABLE SHIFTS

- **Surge of US-based firms:** US-based firms like Kirkland & Ellis and Skadden Arps are making substantial inroads into Switzerland, evidenced by their dramatic improvements in rankings and value growth. This reflects an increasing preference among Swiss clients for firms with global reach and specialized expertise.

- **Local firms hold their ground:** Despite the dominance of international firms, Swiss firms like Homburger remain competitive. Ranked seventh with a deal value of \$13.84 billion, Homburger managed to secure 23 deals, showcasing its resilience and ability to compete on its home turf.
- **Diverging performances:** While some firms such as Ropes & Gray posted phenomenal growth rates (822.9%), others experienced significant declines. For example, Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer saw a nearly 50% drop in value, underscoring the volatile nature of the market.

RANKINGS BY DEAL COUNT: A DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE ON MARKET LEADERSHIP

While the rankings by deal value provide insight into high-stakes, high-value transactions, the rankings by deal count reveal a different dimension of the Swiss legal advisory market. This metric emphasizes the ability of firms to secure and execute a high number of deals, showcasing their breadth of activity and client trust across a variety of transaction sizes.

Bär & Karrer: dominating deal volume

Topping the rankings by deal count, **Bär & Karrer** completed 46 deals in 2024, reaffirming its role as a leader in the Swiss market. Despite achieving the highest transaction volume, the total deal value amounted to \$7.78 billion, reflecting a focus on mid-sized deals rather than blockbuster transactions.

Ranking			2024			2023
2024	2023	Company Name	Value (USDm)	Deal Count	Count Change	Deal Count
1	3	Baer & Karrer	7,783	46	3	43
2	1	CMS	350	39	-6	45
3	6	Lenz & Staehelin	7,137	36	6	30
4	5	Niederer Kraft Frey	2,623	30	-6	36
5	2	Baker & McKenzie	3,337	25	-19	44
6	4	Walder Wyss	2,326	24	-19	43
7	7	Homburger	13,843	23	-6	29
8	10	Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer	26,361	21	1	20
9	8	Vischer	177	21	-7	28
10	9	DLA Piper	1,874	20	-3	23

source: Mergermarket: Global & Regional M&A Rankings 2024

This strategy demonstrates the firm's deep-rooted relationships with Swiss clients and its ability to manage a steady flow of deals across multiple sectors.

CMS: consistent performance

Ranking second with 39 deals, **CMS** reflects a similarly robust pipeline of transactions, though it experienced a slight decline in deal count compared to 2023 (45 deals). With a deal value of \$350 million, the firm appears to specialize in smaller transactions, leveraging its extensive network and local expertise.


Lenz & Staehelin: balancing value and volume

In third place, **Lenz & Staehelin** recorded 36 deals with a total value of \$7.14 billion. This places it among the few firms that exhibit both high transaction volume and substantial deal value, signaling its ability to handle a diverse range of transactions—from smaller domestic deals to larger, cross-border transactions.

Niederer Kraft Frey and Baker McKenzie: holding steady

Both **Niederer Kraft Frey** (30 deals) and **Baker McKenzie** (25 deals) highlight the mid-tier players in terms of deal count. However, Baker McKenzie saw a significant drop in deal volume, completing 19 fewer deals than in 2023 (44 deals). This decline may suggest a shift in focus towards higher-value deals or a temporary slowdown in client activity.

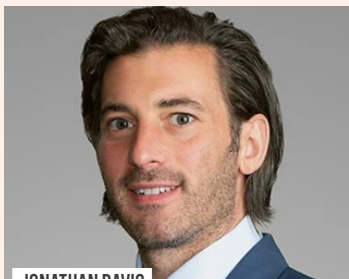
Walder Wyss and Homburger: local strength

Local players like **Walder Wyss** (24 deals) and **Homburger** (23 deals) continue to play a prominent role in the Swiss legal market. While their deal counts are lower than international competitors, they remain strong contenders, balancing their volume with impressive deal values. Notably, Homburger appears in both the rankings by value and volume, showcasing its versatility. 



TOP M&A DEALS AND LEGAL ADVISORS

Kirkland advised Amcor on \$37 billion merger with Berry global



JONATHAN DAVIS



SOPHIA HUDSON

Kirkland & Ellis advised Amcor on a definitive agreement in which the company will combine with Berry Global Group Inc. through an all-stock merger. The combination brings together two highly complementary businesses to create a global leader in consumer packaging solutions, with a broader flexible film and converted film offering for customers, a scaled containers and closures business and a unique global healthcare portfolio. With the deal Switzerland-based Amcor will acquire US-based Berry Global in an all-stock transaction valued at US\$8.43 billion (\$13 billion), turning the packaging giant into an even bigger force in the consumer and healthcare packaging markets. Berry shareholders will receive 7.25 Amcor shares for each Berry share, valuing Berry stock at US\$73.59, a 9.75% premium over its last close. The merged company, which will be named Amcor plc, is expected to have combined revenues of US\$24 billion and adjusted EBITDA of US\$4.3 billion.

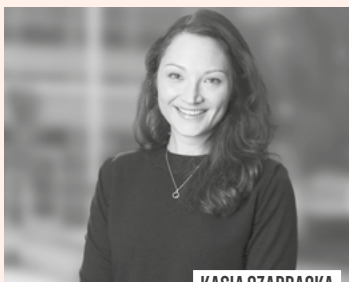
The merger is expected to close by mid-2025 and aims to achieve US\$650 million in synergies by the end of the third year. It will bolster Amcor's presence across 140 countries and over 400 facilities, reinforcing its strength in consumer and healthcare packaging, the company said in a statement.

The Kirkland team included corporate lawyers **Jonathan Davis**, **Carlo Zenkner**, **Andrew Norwich** and **Eric Schiele**; capital markets lawyers **Sophia Hudson** and **Katherine Shaia**; debt finance lawyers **Rachael Lichman** and **Brittany Taylor**; antitrust & competition lawyers **Andrea Murino** and **Jack Coles**; executive compensation benefits lawyers **Scott Price** and **Jared Whalen**; and tax lawyer **Jared Rusman** (all based in New York).

White & Case advises Swisscom and Fastweb on acquisition of Vodafone Italia



MARK POWELL



KASIA CZAPRACKA

Global law firm White & Case LLP has advised Swisscom and its Italian subsidiary Fastweb on the merger control review before Italy's competition authority (AGCM) and the Foreign Subsidies Regulation (FSR) review by the European Commission for their landmark US\$8.3 billion acquisition of Vodafone Italia.

In a precedent-setting outcome, AGCM cleared the deal on December 20, 2024, following a phase-two investigation and after accepting Swisscom's behavioral remedies. The European Commission had previously approved the transaction under the FSR. The deal closed on December 31, 2024.

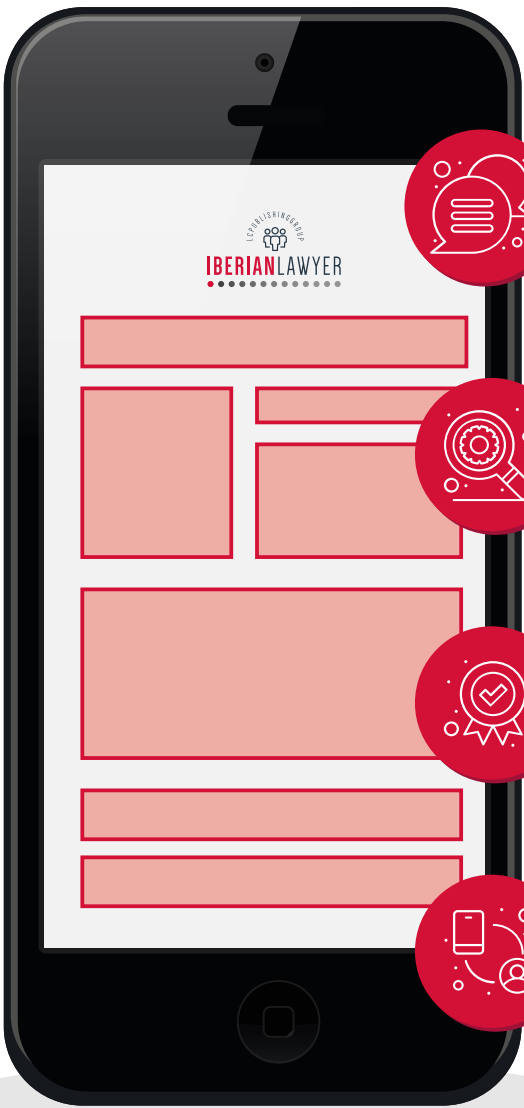
The deal establishes a leading converged challenger in Italy, with more than 20 million mobile and 5.6 million fixed lines.

The White & Case team that advised on the transaction was led by partner **Kasia Czapracka** (Brussels), with support from partner of counsel **Mark Powell** (Brussels, London), local partner **Martino Sforza** (Milan, Brussels), counsel **Irina Trichkovska** (Brussels) and associates **Tommaso Poli** (Brussels, Milan), **Cornelius Börner**, **Daphne Emvalomenos** and **Enrique Fayos de Arizón** (all Brussels).



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Dedalus: new legal leadership to tackle the challenges of 2025

Giovanni Cucchiarato, the group's long-time general counsel, and Carola Lulli, the new chief legal, regulatory, and governance officer, discuss the transition with MAG

by *michela cannovale*

Among the 80 shifts in in-house legal roles observed by our editorial team in 2024, one was **Carola Lulli's** transition. Formerly the general counsel of Sky Italia (succeeded by Angelica Orlando), Lulli became Dedalus's new chief legal, regulatory, and governance officer in September. Dedalus operates globally in the digital health sector, offering solutions that span the entire continuum of care and support healthcare organizations, laboratories, and diagnostic centers.

Lulli reports directly to CEO Alberto Calcagno and oversees legal, regulatory, and governance functions. This integrated approach to compliance and risk management is crucial in highly regulated sectors like healthcare. She works closely with group general counsel **Giovanni Cucchiarato**, group chief risk & compliance officer **Valentina Paduano**, and group data protection officer **Selina Zipponi**.

MAG visited their offices to understand how the new leadership structure is working through a dual interview with Carola Lulli and Giovanni Cucchiarato.

NEW ENTRY

Carola Lulli's career

Carola Lulli served as general counsel at Sky Italia from 2022 to 2024. Previously, she spent over 11 years at Fastweb as antitrust, operator relations, and litigation officer. From 2018 to 2021, she chaired Flash Fiber and was on the FiberCop board from 2021. Earlier, she was legal and regulatory manager at H3G (2005–2008). Her in-house career began in Sky Italia's legal department (1998–2005), after working for the Italian Senate, drafting legislation.

«Together with my colleagues in the legal team, I follow the management's decisions, striving to support the business and guide it towards safer and more profitable paths»

Carola Lulli

Ms. Lulli, what has changed within Dedalus's structure following your appointment as chief legal, regulatory, and governance officer?

The main changes within the company's internal departments center on business focus. Dedalus aims to strengthen three key pillars: product concentration, customer focus, and market positioning. It also seeks to establish a cohesive internal structure and address the competitive and regulatory aspects of its market. Drawing lessons from other industries, such as telecommunications, could also be valuable.

Was your role created to help achieve this goal?

C.L. Exactly. The intention is to have a transversal function that encompasses legal, compliance, and data privacy, acting as the bridge to management. It is a more managerial role compared to the past, aligning with my experience in other companies. Together with the legal team, I follow management's decisions, supporting the business and guiding it toward safer and more profitable paths in client relations, partnerships, disputes when necessary, compliance, and data protection.

How familiar are you with this type of organizational structure?

C.L. I believe my experience at Sky Italia and as part of Comcast can serve as a useful reference for this new challenge. The proposed model is particularly effective because it allows for

«Dedalus has experienced significant growth in recent years, but there is still much work to be done to further consolidate and develop the group»

Giovanni Cucchiarato

greater efficiency and agility, both in action and in resource use, and makes sense especially at the group level and in multinational contexts.

Mr. Cucchiarato, you have been with Dedalus since 2020. How did you react to the announcement of the new structure?

My team and I went through an initial adjustment phase since the creation of the chief legal, regulatory, and governance officer role impacted all activities. Personally, my initial concern was understanding the effect of this change on my role. However, I was quickly reassured by the management's appreciation of the work done so far. I introduced Carola to the Dedalus legal team, which includes about 20 people across various countries. Her arrival was well-received and seen as an opportunity to access new perspectives,

thanks to her previous experience in various contexts, including Sky Italia and the Comcast group.

Which areas can benefit the most from Ms. Lulli's expertise?

G.C. Her expertise in regulatory, competition, and antitrust matters will be particularly valuable. Dedalus has seen significant growth in recent years, but much work remains to consolidate and further develop the group.

How is your work routine organized today?

G.C. We work together daily, with an extended team meeting every Monday. Constant contact across various fronts ensures alignment and enriches the work significantly.

Mrs Lulli, why did you decide to join Dedalus?

C.L. Certainly because of the trust and respect for managers currently at Dedalus who come from Fastweb, with whom I have worked extensively in the past (such as Alberto Calcagno, former CEO of Fastweb and now CEO of Dedalus; Luca Mastropalo, former chief consumer and small business officer at Fastweb and now COO of Dedalus; and Alice Tassin, former head of finance sales and now CFO of Dedalus). For me, it was a completely new experience and thus a challenge: I stepped out of my comfort zone in the audiovisual and telecommunications sector, where I had worked for years, to explore a different market. That said, I maintain a strong personal connection with Sky, which I thank for the positive professional experience. 



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FOREIGN PERSPECTIVES



Charles Russell Speechlys' plans for Italy

The firm is the latest international law firm to open in Milan. Specializing in advising private clients, families, and HNWIs, the Italian team is led from London by Nicola Saccardo, while the Milan office is managed by Maria Cristiana Felisi, formerly of Maisto. "It's a time of significant growth: we expect new additions," they told *MAG*

by giuseppe salemme

The roots of Charles Russell Speechlys run deep, reaching back to late 19th-century England. However, the firm achieved its current structure in November 2014 through a merger with another British firm, Speechly Bircham.

This marked the beginning of the modern era for Charles Russell Speechlys, starting with around 500 professionals and £130 million in revenue. Over the next decade, the firm grew to over 700 lawyers and £200 million in global revenue. It expanded its presence in the Middle East (Doha and Dubai) and Asia (Hong Kong and Singapore), while strengthening its offices in France (Paris), Switzerland (Geneva and Zurich), and Luxembourg. These are all key international financial centers, fitting for a firm boasting one of the largest and most specialized private client departments in Europe.

In 2022, the firm tasked **Nicola Saccardo** with establishing and developing a practice focused on Italy. A lawyer and accountant specializing in wealth taxation, Saccardo moved to London in 2011 with Nctm before heading the London office of Maisto e Associati. “I was immediately drawn to the opportunity to create the Italian department of such a renowned firm in advising private clients, entrepreneurial families, and family offices”, Saccardo told MAG. “With about 90 dedicated professionals, we’re talking about the most prominent private client department in London”.

The Italian team grew steadily over the next two years, with the arrivals of **Gabriele Colombaioni** and **Alessandro Leardini** (from Maisto), **Daniele Mogni** (from PwC), and **Davide Cotroneo** (from Chiomenti)—all tax specialists based in London. Having teams operating outside their jurisdictions of expertise has always been a hallmark of the firm's strategy, oriented toward assisting HNWI's worldwide while offering expertise in typically Anglo-Saxon instruments like trusts. Nonetheless, the firm decided to open an office in Milan.

The decision became official in November 2024, nearly marking the tenth anniversary

of the merger with Speechly Bircham. **Maria Cristiana Felisi**, an expert in family law and wealth management, was chosen to lead the new office. Professionally developed at the firm of Angelo Carlo Pelosi and later at Pavia e Ansaldo, Felisi founded the civil law practice at Maisto e Associati in 2017, where she and Saccardo first worked together. Joining Felisi in Charles Russell is counsel Giovanni Angelini, also from Maisto.

MAG has closely followed the developments of this latest international law firm to focus on Italy. The move is driven by the growing appeal of Italy to major entrepreneurial families, though it aims to extend beyond that. The new offices, temporarily overlooking Piazza Duomo, will soon be replaced by a permanent Milan headquarters, which Saccardo and Felisi promise will offer plenty of room for growth.

How would you describe Charles Russell Speechlys to those unfamiliar with it?

N.S.: Today's firm stems from a highly successful 2014 merger, which created London's most prominent private client-focused legal department. In the UK, the firm is essentially full-service, with private clients, real estate, litigation, corporate, and commercial as its main service lines, as is the case in Paris. In other countries, expansion often focuses on specific practices: corporate, tax, and funds in Luxembourg; litigation and private clients in Switzerland; and

«We aim to create a team of professionals capable of guiding clients in realizing their visions, whether entrepreneurial or family-oriented»

Maria Cristiana Felisi



MARIA CRISTINA FELISI, GIOVANNI ANGELINI

real estate and infrastructure in the Middle East. In all cases, the firm's strategy centers on private capital—private clients, private businesses, and family offices—and the internationality of its structure and expertise.

Why Italy?

N.S.: The firm's interest in Italy has grown alongside the influx of HNWIs to the country, which has become increasingly attractive in recent years. Additionally, Italy hosts many prominent entrepreneurial families, representing the ideal clientele for our services. These were the factors that convinced me to join Charles Russell two years ago and build a team with strong tax expertise.

What prompted the need to open in Milan now?

N.S.: This reflects the need to closely follow clients who have moved here from all over the world. Taxes, family law, residential real estate—we assist those relocating with typical activities such as buying a home, changes to succession laws, and

marital property regimes. This is why we chose Maria Cristiana and Giovanni, whose expertise in family law, inheritance, and wealth management perfectly complements our existing capabilities.

M.C.F.: The other part of the Milan strategy is expanding our Italian client base—families, HNWIs, and family offices. We already advise several such clients, and they too will benefit from the internationality of our new structure. Mobility is now part of daily life, and many major families have businesses, assets, or simply reside in various

**«Taxes, family law,
residential real estate:
we assist those relocating
to a new country
with all the typical activities
that come with it»**

Nicola Saccardo

parts of the world. Having access to the expertise of an international team is crucial, and we've already seen strong interest from many parties.

Will leadership remain decentralized? Are transfers from London to Milan expected?

N.S.: We're not ruling anything out. It's a time of significant growth, and we'll undoubtedly see additions to both offices. I'll certainly spend a lot of time in Milan, though I'll remain based in London.

Do you have other examples of teams focused on specific jurisdictions but managed from abroad?


N.S.: Absolutely. Building specialized practices for jurisdictions where we don't have physical offices is a key strategic choice. It allows us to better serve specific clients. For example, we have a team of American lawyers based in Asia, active for years and now part of our Singapore office. In London, we have one of the world's most renowned Canadian lawyers for advising Latin American families. Generally, we have many professionals qualified in other jurisdictions but active from London, often specializing in trusts, which are frequently governed by Anglo-Saxon legal systems.

What development prospects do you foresee for the Milan office?

M.C.F.: We expect significant growth in tax and private client areas, as well as non-residential real estate, particularly in hospitality. These are areas we already cover but aim to expand. The same goes for entrepreneurial activities of the families we advise, or their family offices—investments, real estate, potential disputes, acquisitions.

How do you plan to grow? Will you focus on young professionals or more senior profiles?

N.S.: We'll undoubtedly need young professionals, but we're not ruling out the addition of more senior individuals. Each case will be evaluated individually, focusing on their specific characteristics and potential synergies with the firm's activities and strategy.

M.C.F.: We aim to create a team of professionals capable of guiding clients in realizing their visions, whether entrepreneurial or family-oriented, while respecting their dynamics and values and leveraging all available tools to achieve results. This requires deep legal expertise. 

THE ISSUE

Is Italy really so attractive to foreigners?

More and more wealthy individuals are choosing Italy as a place to live, work, and raise families. This is one of the reasons that prompted an international private client-focused firm like Charles Russell Speechlys to open an office in Italy.

But what explains this renewed interest in Italy? According to the firm's professionals, it's not just the proverbial dolce vita—although that plays a part. "The current situation results from several factors," explains Nicola Saccardo, partner of the firm's Italian practice. "First, at the end of 2016, Italy introduced a very favorable flat tax regime on all foreign income and capital gains for those who settle in the country. At the same time, similar regimes in other countries, including the UK, were discontinued. This made Italy attractive to many families from France, the US, and South America, who were also perhaps concerned about political situations at home." Italian lifestyle, the Mediterranean diet, and the country's landscapes undoubtedly play a role. But the ability to meet these families' needs matters even more. "Today, Italy offers high-level international schools, universities with English-language programs, and a range of services that allow foreigners to feel stable and secure. Legal support from firms like ours ensures that the legal aspects of their lives proceed smoothly," concludes Maria Cristiana Felisi, head of Charles Russell Speechlys' Milan office.

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MAFALDA MASCARENHAS GARCIA

Legal expertise against cyber threats

Mafalda Mascarenhas, the new IBM's lead counsel for cybersecurity in the EMEA, talks about leadership, mentorship, and new challenges at the tech giant

by glória paiva

A global network of lawyers who support each other: this is how IBM's legal team operates worldwide. The tech giant's legal departments have been adapting to rapid technological innovation. Recently, a whole dedicated Cybersecurity legal team was established to address the surge in cybercrimes and increasingly complex regulations in response to these threats. For **Mafalda Mascarenhas Garcia**, who has been with IBM for 11 years, this evolution marked a career milestone. In July, the Portuguese lawyer became lead counsel for cybersecurity in the EMEA region. Previously head of IBM Portugal's legal department, Garcia is now responsible for navigating the technical and legal transformation of the sector across Europe, the Middle East, and Africa. She spoke exclusively to Iberian Lawyer about her new challenges.

How did your career at IBM evolve to this point?

It has been a long and enriching journey. I started in Portugal's legal department but quickly took on international responsibilities. Initially, I worked as a global contract liaison, connecting teams in the U.S. and EMEA during a major contract structure overhaul. This helped me build a strong internal network within IBM's highly collaborative legal department—more like a Roman legion where everyone supports one another.

Then?

Later, I took on litigation responsibilities across Spain, Portugal, Greece, and Israel, becoming the litigation lead lawyer for Europe. I worked in areas such as cloud services and privacy, managing challenges like European regulations for data center access. I also oversaw privacy compliance for The Weather Company, a B2C enterprise that differed greatly from IBM's usual B2B operations—a significant learning experience. In recent years, the focus on cybersecurity intensified with the growing complexity of European legislation. In July, I transitioned to cybersecurity lead counsel for EMEA, reporting directly to the U.S. and fully dedicating myself to this critical area.

Why did IBM create a dedicated cybersecurity legal position?

Cybersecurity has become a strategic priority, driven by stringent European regulations like the NIS 2 Directive and the DORA Regulation. Cyberattacks can devastate companies, communities, and individuals, which is why the European Commission has prioritized security. The cyberlegal role demands expertise in regulations and the ability to integrate legal and business teams to foster a strong security culture. At IBM, we have rigorous processes to manage events ranging from minor incidents to high-risk scenarios. Advocacy for regulatory clarity is also a significant focus.

How has IBM's legal department evolved?

IBM's legal department evolves alongside the business. Over a decade ago, IBM focused on consulting, infrastructure maintenance, hardware, and software. Today, hybrid cloud and AI, including generative AI, have become key areas of focus. These shifts demand that lawyers constantly update their knowledge to address emerging technological and legal challenges. Cybersecurity is a prime example. It is now a highly specialized area, but the European legal market lacks sufficient expertise in this field, unlike the more developed field of data protection.

«Cyberattacks can devastate companies, communities, and individuals, which is why the European Commission has prioritized security»

US\$27 BILLION

is how much cybercrime is projected to reach by 2027

45%

of companies could face cybersecurity issues in their supply chains

Does IBM Portugal's legal team work with external firms?

Yes, we rely on external firms for niche areas like labor law, financial law, or during workload peaks. We frequently collaborate with firms such as Sérvulo & Associados, Vieira de Almeida, CCA Law Firm, and Garrigues. However, IBM's legal department is robust and globally integrated, with a Legal Resource Center in Ireland. This center acts as a "delivery hub," where young lawyers from across Europe provide international support, gaining diverse expertise.

What are the main challenges in cybersecurity law?

Europe is the most targeted region for cyberattacks, with cybercrime projected to reach \$27 billion by 2027. Nearly 45% of companies could face cybersecurity issues in their supply chains. Moreover, European regulations like NIS 2 and the Cyber Resilience Act impose strict security measures and mandatory reporting, presenting both technical and financial challenges for the companies. The key is balancing security with development, ensuring compliance without stifling the businesses' growth.

What projects is your team currently focused on?

We are tackling complex legislation implementation, where legal terms often conflict with business models and include vague yet stringent requirements. Additionally, cybersecurity education is essential, requiring ongoing training for lawyers. For instance, I have organized cybersecurity workshops for external lawyers, and we plan to continue these initiatives. Another recent, notable project that us lawyers are supporting, involves using generative AI tools to streamline the analysis of cybersecurity terms

from clients. This AI-driven tool helps identify acceptable and non-acceptable clauses, expediting legal and technical reviews and enhancing efficiency for IBM's internal and external clients.


What was your transition from private practice to in-house counsel like?

The responsibility level increased significantly. In-house counsel are directly accountable for their decisions. This requires a deep understanding of the business and close interaction with internal teams. When I joined IBM, transitioning from M&A to IT, I quickly learned about the industry with help from colleagues and continuous training. For example, visiting a data center early on enhanced my ability to negotiate cloud contracts effectively. IBM's quarterly financial pressures add urgency to closing deals, with the legal team playing a critical role. Operating within a global hierarchy, we escalate decisions for approval, but we maintain the autonomy of local lawyers, whom we trust to provide valid opinions based on the legal context of each country.

How do external and in-house lawyers differ?

Communication is the most significant difference. At IBM, brevity and clarity are paramount. We prefer concise, bullet-pointed reports over lengthy opinions. External lawyers often struggle with this, accustomed to writing extensively. Response speed is also critical. Quick replies stand out, as internal clients demand timely advice under tight deadlines. At IBM, we continuously train lawyers to simplify communication, a skill still underdeveloped in many private law firms.

How to promote gender equality in the legal context?

Mutual support among women is crucial. I mentor female lawyers and advocate for inclusivity. IBM fosters a culture that respects work-life balance and conducts annual training on topics such as harassment and discrimination. While I don't experience bias at IBM, law firms remain male-dominated, especially in conservative countries like Portugal. Women still face pay gaps and cultural barriers, including exclusion from the "all-men's club." Supporting young women is vital as they navigate these challenges. 



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Shaping the future of arbitration

Zurich hosts from 29th of January to the 2nd of February the The Swiss Arbitration Summit 2025: a global platform for innovation, collaboration, and practical insights in arbitration practices

A platform where the global arbitration community can converge, discuss, and drive forward the evolution of arbitration practices. This is the aim of the Swiss Arbitration Summit, which heads to Zurich from the 29th of January for its second edition. Far from being a conventional conference, it combines thought-provoking discussions with networking opportunities and practical workshops, all set against the vibrant backdrop of Switzerland's legal and cultural landscape. At the heart of this year's Summit is the theme: **"Shaping the Future of Arbitration Together"**. With over 550 participants from more than 45 jurisdictions attending last year's inaugural edition, the event has swiftly established itself as a landmark in the arbitration calendar. Two cornerstone conferences—the ASA Winter Conference by the Swiss Arbitration Association (ASA) and the Innovation Conference by the Swiss Arbitration Centre—will delve into pivotal issues shaping the arbitration landscape. In addition, the Summit will also include dozens of HYPERLINK conferences hosted by law firms and organisations on various arbitration-related topics.

ADDRESSING CHALLENGES AND SETTING TRENDS

Switzerland's arbitration scene has long been renowned for its adaptability and innovation. However, **Dilber Devitre**, Counsel at Homburger and a member of the event's organizational task force, emphasizes that Switzerland is not



DILBER DEVITRE

THE PROGRAM

The second edition of the Swiss Arbitration Summit will take place in Zurich from January 29 to February 2, 2025. It is organised under the aegis of ASA and the Swiss Arbitration Centre by a Task Force composed of Felix Dasser (Homburger and President of ASA), Korinna von Trotha (Executive Director of ASA and the Swiss Arbitration Centre), Nikolina Marusic (ASA), Manya Gopalakrishnan (ASA), Andrea Meier (Walder Wyss), Dilber Devitre (Homburger), Juliette Asso (LALIVE), and Nino Sievi (Nater Dallafior). The ASA Winter Conference will open with a distinguished panel featuring Andrea Meier, Carine Dupeyron, Steven Finizio, Yoshimi Ohara, and Leyou Tameru, who will explore how courts and tribunals assess the extension of arbitration clauses in jurisdictions such as France, the UK, the US, India, Ethiopia, Kenya, Singapore, Japan, and Switzerland. Discussions will cover trends in extension cases, evolving theories, and regulatory needs.

A second panel, comprising Utku Cosar, Laurence Shore, Teresa Giovannini, Manish Aggarwal, and Carole Malinvaud, will examine the unique challenges of extending arbitration clauses to funders, states, subcontractors, and parent companies. The final panel, featuring Christopher Boog, Christian Koller, Cecilia Carrara, Nadja Jaisli Kull, Eduardo Damião Gonçalves, and Stefan Kröll, will focus on arbitration in corporate disputes, including the complexities of binding shareholders to arbitration clauses.

In addition to these cornerstone panels, attendees can benefit from practical workshops and networking opportunities. The Innovation Conference will focus on AI-powered tools, with hands-on sessions led by Marc Veit, Nathalia Schomerus, Karin Mülchi, and Nicolas Torrent. A masterclass on oral advocacy, hosted by ASA below 40, will feature experts such as Domitille Baizeau, Steven Finizio, and Christopher Boog.

The Summit also includes a variety of social events, from a networking breakfast by ArbitralWomen to a pub quiz night and a weekend getaway in the Swiss Alps, blending professional enrichment with unique opportunities to connect with peers.

For more details, visit [swissarbitrationsummit.org](https://www.swissarbitrationsummit.org)



merely reactive. “Swiss arbitration doesn't adapt to trends. We set them”, she remarks. Devitre highlights sustainability and digitalization as areas where Swiss arbitration has been proactive. “For example, the Swiss rules no longer require hard copies of submissions, and we explicitly provide for remote hearings via videoconference. This year, the adoption of the Green Arbitration protocol ensures that the Summit itself aligns with sustainable practices”. This forward-thinking approach is vital in an increasingly multipolar arbitration world. “In today's competitive landscape, being good isn't enough—you have to be known”, Devitre adds. That is also something we want to address with the Summit. We want to show the global arbitration community that with its focus on party autonomy, efficiency and neutrality, Switzerland offers an arbitration framework that is highly attractive to international business

INNOVATING WITH AI AND EMBRACING THE FUTURE

One of the most anticipated sessions of the Summit is the Innovation Conference, where the focus will be on how AI can transform the practice of arbitration. Experts will provide practical demonstrations of AI-powered tools, from drafting assistance to prompt engineering workshops. These sessions promise to equip practitioners with skills to navigate the growing

intersection of technology and arbitration. “The tools will be showcased aren't just theoretical; they're already making a tangible impact on how we handle large-scale arbitrations”, says Devitre. By integrating technology into practice, the Summit not only prepares arbitration professionals for current challenges but also sets a precedent for embracing future innovations.

THE IMPORTANCE OF COLLABORATION

Beyond the panels and workshops, the Summit's programme reflects a commitment to inclusivity and diversity. Topics range from ESG concerns to sports arbitration, with speakers from various legal backgrounds and a balanced representation of genders and experience levels. Accessible paid and free events ensure that professionals from all walks of life can participate. For Devitre, such events play an essential role in maintaining Switzerland's global arbitration prominence. “Switzerland has always been one of the most popular arbitration destinations. Gathering the community here allows us to share experiences, address challenges, and continue learning together”. In an era of rapid change—whether through technology, shifting global trends, or new regulatory challenges—the Summit underscores the importance of collaboration. It offers not just insights into current issues but also a roadmap for shaping the arbitration practices of tomorrow. 



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18:20 **Discurso de bienvenida**

ALDO SCARINGELLA, CEO, LC Publishing Group S.p.A.

18:30 **Mesa Redonda "CAPITAL PRIVADO Y SU INFLUENCIA EN LA ECONOMÍA GLOBAL ACTUAL"**

PONENTES*:

CARLOS GAZULLA, Partner, Private Equity, AltamarCAM Partners

RAFAEL LOPEZ ARMENTA, Managing Partner, Buenavista Equity Partners and Managing Partner, Private Equity-Buy Out

DAVID MARTÍN, Managing Director, Co-Head of Iberia, Tikehau Capital

LEOPOLDO REAÑO, Managing Director, DeA Capital Alternative Funds SGR

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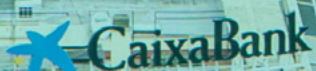
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20:00 **COCKTAIL**

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