

**Schindler (Azura Partners):
building governance from
the ground up**

**Why Geneva is rethinking
business justice**

Keeping pace with change

Lenz & Staehelin managing partners Thierry Calame and Benoît Merkt discuss growth, AI, cross-office integration and the firm's three priorities: people, knowledge and a responsible approach to technology

Editorial

Claudia La Via



What makes a market

For a long time, the strength of a legal market seemed easy to define. Prestige mattered. So did the visibility of its firms, the calibre of its lawyers, and the complexity of the work moving through the system. All of that still counts. But today, those markers are no longer enough on their own. What increasingly defines a serious legal market is something less theatrical and more structural: the quality of the frameworks that support legal work when complexity rises.

That is the thread running through this issue. Not a market trying to reinvent itself, but one asking a more useful question: what actually makes a legal hub credible over time? The answer, increasingly, has less to do with image than with the systems that make excellence repeatable.

The debate around a possible commercial court in Geneva offers one answer. On the surface, it is a discussion about judicial design. In reality, it goes to the heart of market positioning. In cross-border business, dispute resolution is not just a public function operating in the background. It is part of the offer. Businesses care about speed, expertise, predictability and procedural realism. A court equipped for complex commercial disputes would not simply make litigation more efficient. It would signal that Geneva sees legal infrastructure as part of its economic infrastructure.

The same can be said of the legal AI debate. Here too, the tone is changing. The interesting phase is no longer the one driven by novelty, demos and easy excitement. It is the phase in which the market starts asking harder questions: which tools can actually be trusted, under what conditions, and with which safeguards? In law, fluency is cheap. Judgment is not. That is why the future of legal AI will not belong to the most visible platforms, but to the most reliable ones: the systems that can be governed, tested, explained and used without turning legal review into a ceremonial last step.

Inside legal departments, the shift is just as visible. In our interview with Alexandria Schindler, governance emerges not as a defensive layer added after the fact, but as a structure for growth. Building standards across jurisdictions, creating clarity inside the business, and translating regulation into something operational: this is no longer support work in the narrow sense. It is part of how international businesses are built and held together.

The same applies to law firms. Leadership today is no longer measured only by market share, profitability or brand power. It is measured by the ability to read where the market is going and to position accordingly, as confirmed by this issue's interview with the managing partners of Lenz & Staehelin. In mature legal centres, leading firms do more than advise on change. They help define the standards, expectations and ambitions by which a market understands itself.

Put together, these signals point in the same direction. Mature legal markets are no longer defined by prestige alone. They are defined by the strength of their underlying architecture: courts that fit the cases they attract, technology that can be trusted, legal functions that scale with the business, and leadership willing to shape the market rather than simply perform within it.

That may be the real question for Switzerland now. Not whether it already has a reputation, but what supports that reputation in practice. In the end, what makes a market is never image alone. It is the structure behind it. 

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2026 EVENTS CALENDAR

MARCH

- Legalcommunity IP&TMT Awards Milan, 26/03/2026
- LC Inspiralaw Italia Milan, 30/03/2026

MAY

- LegalcommunityCH Awards Zurich, 06/05/2026
- Legalcommunity Tax Awards Milan, 07/05/2026
- The LatAm Women Awards São Paulo, 14/05/2026
- Financecommunity Private Capital Day Milan, 19/05/2026
- Legalcommunity Forty under 40 Awards Milan, 21/05/2026
- Iberian Lawyer IP&TMT Awards Madrid, 28/05/2026

JUNE

- Legalcommunity Week Milan, 08-12/06/2026
- Legalcommunity Corporate Awards Milan, 10/06/2026
- Rock the Law Milan, 11/06/2026
- Iberian Lawyer Energy Day Madrid, 25/06/2026
- Iberian Lawyer Energy Awards Madrid, 25/06/2026

JULY

- LC Italian Awards Rome, 02/07/2026

SEPTEMBER

- LC Energy Day Milan, 10/09/2026
- The LatAm Energy & Infrastructure Awards São Paulo, 10/09/2026
- Legalcommunity Labour Awards Milan, 17/09/2026
- Iberian Lawyer Forty Under 40 Awards Madrid, 24/09/2026

LEGEND

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

OCTOBER

- Inhousecommunity Days Rome, 30/09-2/10/2026
- Inhousecommunity Awards Milan, 15/10/2026
- FinancecommunityES Real Estate Talks and Drinks Madrid, 20/10/2026
- Legalcommunity Litigation Day Milano, 22/10/2026
- Legalcommunity Litigation Awards Milano, 22/10/2026
- Inhousecommunity Day Switzerland Zurich, 29/10/2026

NOVEMBER

- Iberian Lawyer Inhousecommunity Day Madrid, 05/11/2026
- Iberian Lawyer Gold Awards Madrid, 05/11/2026
- FinancecommunityWEEK Milan, 09-12/11/2026
- Financecommunity Awards Milan, 12/11/2026
- Legalcommunity Real Estate Awards Milan, 26/11/2026
- Legalcommunity Marketing Awards Milan, 30/11/2026

2027 EVENTS CALENDAR

JANUARY

- Legalcommunity Energy Awards Milan, 28/01/2027

FEBRUARY

- Iberian Lawyer Labour Awards Madrid, 18/02/2027
- FinancecommunityES Private Capital Talks and Drinks Madrid, 25/02/2027
- Legalcommunity Finance Awards Milan, 11/02/2027

MARCH

- Iberian Lawyer Inspiralaw Madrid, 09/03/2027
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ITALY

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ENERGY		DOWNLOAD SUBMISSION ↓
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*It will be possible to integrate with subsequent deals within Friday 18 April 2025

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Contact Referent elizaveta.chesnokova@lcpublishinggroup.com

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Deadline Submission	04/07/2025	
Report Publication	Nov-25	

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Contact Referent elizaveta.chesnokova@lcpublishinggroup.com

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Contact Referent elizaveta.chesnokova@lcpublishinggroup.com

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Deadline Submission	27/06/2025	

LATAM

Contact Referent janci.escobar@iberianlegalgroup.com

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

Contents

LEGALCOMMUNITYCH MAG 21



20

Keeping pace with change

Lenz & Staehelin managing partners Thierry Calame and Benoît Merkt discuss growth, AI, cross-office integration and the firm's three priorities: people, knowledge and a responsible approach to technology

8

ON THE MOVE

NEW PRACTICE

HFW opens an aviation practice in Geneva:
 Laurent Chassot at the helm

12

ON THE WEB

Healthcare consolidation, private capital and selective
 expansion drive Swiss deal flow

26

Building governance from the ground up

50

Legal AI grows up: from hype to trust

56

Why Geneva is rethinking business justice

60

THE SPORTS LAW ARENA

A new chair for the IOC Athlete's Commission:
 Pau Gasol enters his term amid geopolitical chaos

62

Inside the "innovation box":
 LCA's Prompt Lawyer model

68

The legal "direction" of major film and television productions

74

WLW

Women in Swiss corporate governance:
 the evolving ESG framework



On the Move



NEW PRACTICE

HFW opens an aviation practice in Geneva: Laurent Chassot at the helm

Holman Fenwick Willan (HFW) opened an aviation practice in Geneva under the leadership of newly hired partner **Laurent Chassot** (pictured), joining from Gbf together with senior associate **Yolande Lagrange** and special counsel **Christophe Platel**.

The team advises aerospace sector clients on disputes, insurance, regulatory, and transactional matters, with a particular focus on complex litigation. Their work also includes aircraft transactions and leasing support, bespoke

contract drafting and commercial advice, and operational and regulatory matters, including international and EU air law, airworthiness, and airport regulation.

The move follows HFW's recent recruitment of London-based aviation finance disputes partner **Guy Morrison**, as well as the arrival in January of international arbitration specialist **Vanessa Liborio**, based in Geneva.

MOVES

Andrea Rüttimann to join Sulzer from NKF

Sulzer appointed **Andrea Rüttimann** (pictured) as deputy general counsel, head group legal & corporate secretary, effective 1 May 2026.

In her new role, Rüttimann will lead the group legal team and oversee corporate secretary responsibilities, and working closely with the executive committee and the board of directors on legal, governance and compliance matters.

An M&A and capital markets specialist with a focus on banking and securities law, corporate governance, and market conduct rules, Rüttimann joins from Niederer Kraft Frey (NKF), where she worked from 2016 onward and also began her legal career in 2004. Between her two periods at the firm, she worked at Homburger and at SIX Swiss Exchange, where she served as deputy head for three years.





NEW PARTNERSHIPS

Schellenberg Wittmer appoints two partners and a counsel

Schellenberg Wittmer expands its partnership lineup with the addition of two new partners and one counsel: partner **Sara Rousselle-Ruffieux**, joining in the firm's Geneva office as of March 1st 2026, **Roland Ryser**, appointed partner in the dispute resolution and white-collar crime groups in Zurich

in January 2026, and **Gabriela Svalduz**, counsel and part of Schellenberg Wittmer's white-collar crime and internal investigations groups in Zurich since last February. An accredited labour law expert, Sara Rousselle-Ruffieux covers all aspects of employment law, including individual and collective labour relations, complex remuneration structures, cross-border employment matters, and global mobility. She regularly advises and represents clients before administrative authorities and courts. Litigation specialist Roland Ryser regularly advises and represents individuals and corporate clients in regulatory and business crime matters. His practice spans defending clients in complex investigations, assisting in mutual legal and administrative assistance proceedings as well as advising on anti-money laundering, anti-bribery, and trade compliance matters. A former public prosecutor, **Gabriela Svalduz** specializes in domestic and cross-border white-collar crime litigation, asset recovery, internal investigations, and compliance, including in the area of DLT technologies, blockchain and cybercrime. She regularly advises and represents individual and corporate clients as defendants or injured parties before authorities and courts and supports clients in preventing criminal liability.



APPOINTMENT

LEXR appoints Stephan D. Meyer as a partner

LEXR Law officialised the appointment of **Stephan D. Meyer** (pictured) as a partner. Effective March 1st 2026, Meyer will lead LEXR's blockchain and fintech team in Zurich. Stephan D. Meyer's expertise spans the areas of blockchain, artificial intelligence, and digital innovation. Prior to joining LEXR, he served at MME as part of the firm's DLT team, where he regularly advised on blockchain and fintech projects. Alongside his legal practice, Meyer is also an entrepreneur. He is a co-founder of Obligate, a blockchain-based capital markets infrastructure, as well as Nestermind, an AI platform active in the real estate sector.

NEW PARTNER

KPMG Law appoints Hélène Weidmann

KPMG has officially appointed **Hélène Weidmann** (pictured) as a partner in its tax & legal department, effective 1 March 2026. Weidmann joins from MLL Legal and will lead KPMG Law Western Switzerland, in addition to overseeing the firm's corporate/M&A legal services. Over the course of her legal career, she has held positions at Lenz & Staehelin, where she spent eight years between 2008 and 2016, as well as at Reymond & Associés, Bianchischwald, and MLL Legal.



GENEVA

Charles Russell Speechlys appoints new tax partner

Charles Russell Speechlys expanded its Swiss tax lineup with the appointment of **Frédéric Ney** (pictured) as a partner in Geneva. The tax specialist moves from Bär & Karrer's Geneva office, where he was a senior associate since 2023.

Ney's practice covers national and cross-border tax and succession planning for Swiss and foreign clients. He supports UHNW families on cross-border planning matters and regularly advises on reorganisations and M&A, financing structures and incentive plans.

MOVES

Bratschi appoints Ingrid Cueva Molnar as a partner

Bratschi expands its in tenancy and real estate law lineup in Lausanne with the appointment of partner Ingrid **Cueva Molnar** (pictured), effective since 1 March 2026. Moving from HCML Avocats, the one of Cueva Molnar is a return, as she spent four years with Bratschi between 2020 and 2024. A specialist in real estate and tenancy law, Ingrid Cueva Molnar regularly advises on drafting, reviewing and negotiating commercial contracts. Her practice also spans national and international litigation before civil, administrative and criminal courts.





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INFORMATION



EVENTS



INTELLIGENCE



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On the web



Healthcare consolidation, private capital and selective expansion drive Swiss deal flow

Swiss deal activity this month points to a market shaped by strategic consolidation, financing momentum and targeted acquisitions across healthcare, asset management, digital infrastructure and industrial technology.

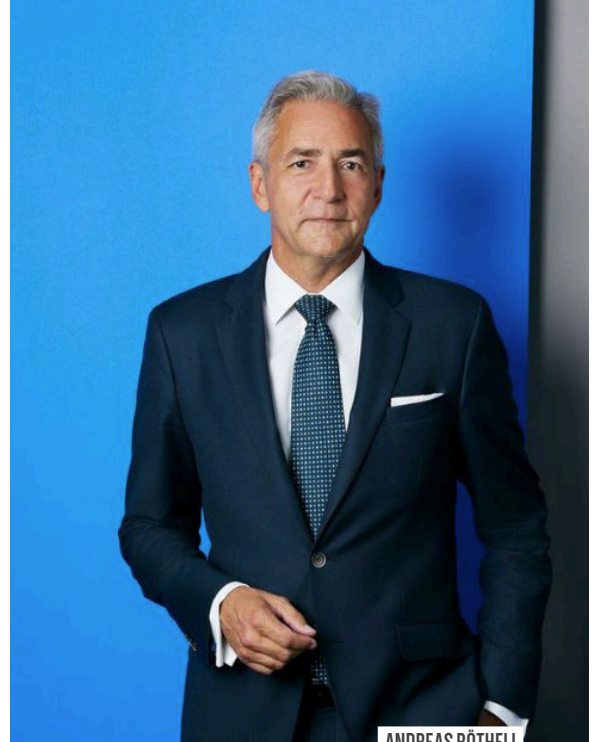
On the transactional side, Lenz & Staehelin advised Vaudoise Assurance Group on increasing its stake in listed real estate manager Procimmo to a 92.27% majority holding, a move that underscores continued consolidation in insurance-linked investment platforms and Swiss alternative asset management. Healthcare and life sciences also stand out: Homburger advised Health & Wellness Partners on its acquisition of Global Market Access Solutions, while Bär & Karrer assisted Airtel, part of Italy's SOL Group, on the acquisition of VitalAire Switzerland from Air Liquide, highlighting sustained appetite for specialist healthcare and homecare assets.

Capital markets remain active as well, with Advestra advising Galderma on a €500 million bond issuance due 2031, reaffirming the role of Swiss issuers in tapping European debt markets for sizeable fundraising. Growth capital and next-generation technologies add a further dimension to the month's activity. Kellerhals Carrard advised the lead investors in Hyperscale Power's €5 million seed round, signalling continued backing for energy and infrastructure innovation, while Bär & Karrer's role in Bitwise's acquisition of Zug-based Chorus One reflects key international interest in Swiss digital-asset and blockchain infrastructure capabilities.

Taken together, these matters depict a Swiss legal market that is supporting majority stake build-ups, cross-border healthcare acquisitions, debt fundraising and venture-backed innovation, while continuing to position Switzerland as a hub for sophisticated M&A and emerging-sector transactions.



XAVIER GRIVEL



ANDREAS RÖTHELI

Vaudoise Assurance increases stake in Procimmo: the advisors

Vaudoise Assurance Group has entered into an agreement to increase its stake and become the majority shareholder in Procimmo Group, a company listed on BX Swiss. Lenz & Staehelin advised Vaudoise Assurance Group, while Advestra and Schellenberg Wittmer represented the majority shareholders of Procimmo. The sale price has been set at CHF 9.50 per share. Subject to prior approval by the relevant authorities, the closing of the transaction is scheduled for early July 2026. Vaudoise Assurance Group's stake will then amount to 92.27% of the voting rights of Procimmo Group.

Corporate and M&A's **Andreas Rötheli** (pictured right) and **Xavier Grivel** (pictured left) led the Lenz & Staehelin team on the matter.

The Advestra team included **Thomas Reutter**, **Sandro Fehlmann**, Stefan Paris Schirm, Jana Wildberger and Valérie Bär (corporate/M&A/capital markets). The Schellenberg Wittmer team included **Jean-Frédéric Maraia**, Andrea Baratta and Lucas Stoll (all tax) and Caroline Clemetson (banking & finance).

PRACTICE AREA

Deal & Transaction

DEAL

Vaudoise-Procimmo

LAW FIRM

Lenz & Staehelin - Schellenberg Wittmer - Advestra

HEAD PARTNERS

Andreas Rötheli and Xavier Grivel (L&S) - Jean-Frédéric Maraia (SW) - Thomas Reutter, Sandro Fehlmann (Advestra)

VALUE

not disclosed



Homburger with HWP Group on GMAS acquisition

Homburger advised medical communications specialist Health & Wellness Partners (HWP Group) on the acquisition of Global Market Access Solutions (GMAS), a globally active market access and health economics consultancy. The Homburger team advising HWP Group included **Andreas Müller** (pictured), **Carlo Sulser**, **Magdalena Stock** and **Fabia Starkermann** (all corporate/M&A), **Luca Dal Molin**, **Angelika Krull** and **Noëmie Beck-Schär** (all IP/IT), **Angela Casey** (employment and executive compensation) and **Laetitia Fracheboud** (tax).

PRACTICE AREA

Deal & Transaction

DEAL

GMAS

LAW FIRM

Homburger

HEAD PARTNER

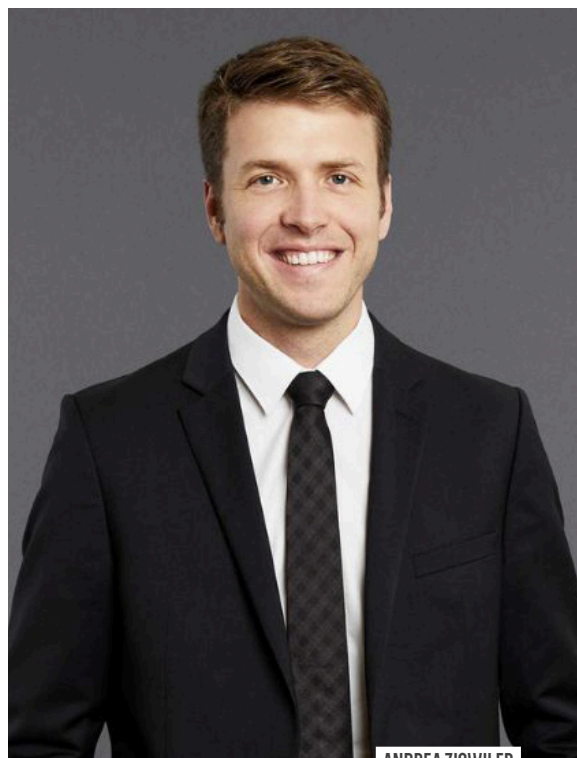
Andreas Müller

VALUE

not disclosed



PAOLO BOTTINI



ANDREA ZISWILER

Bär & Karrer with Airsol on VitalAire acquisition

Bär & Karrer advised Airsol, part of SOL Group — an Italian specialist in the production, research and marketing of technical and medical gases and homecare services sector — on its acquisition of VitalAire Switzerland from Air Liquide.

Paolo Bottini (pictured left) and **Andrea Ziswiler** (pictured right), both M&A, led the Bär & Karrer team on the matter, working alongside Markus Schott and Julia Stempfel, both regulatory, as well as Bryan Bruschi (M&A).

PRACTICE AREA

Deal & Transaction

DEAL

VitalAire

LAW FIRM

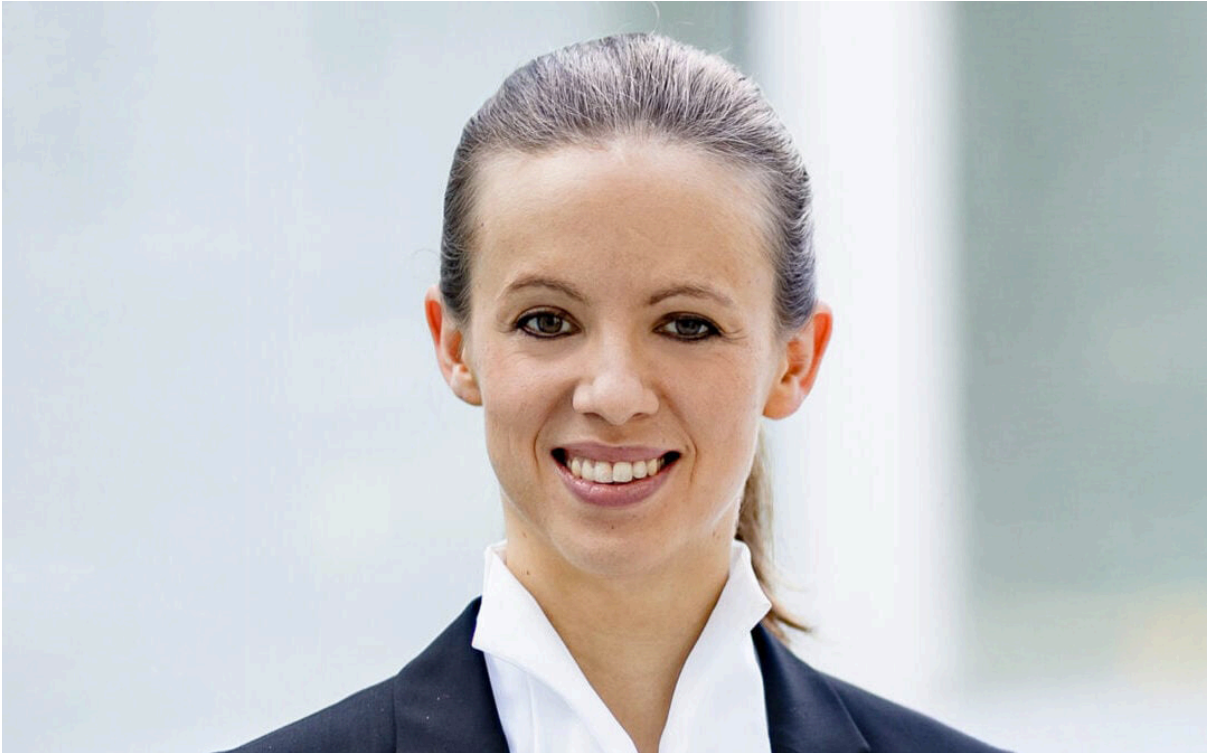
Bär & Karrer

HEAD PARTNERS

Paolo Bottini and Andrea Ziswiler

VALUE

not disclosed



Advestra with Galderma on EUR 500 million bond issuance

Advestra advised Galderma as the Swiss dermatology specialist issued EUR 500 million bonds due 2031 with a coupon of 3.375%. The bonds were issued by Galderma Finance Europe and guaranteed by Galderma Group. The banking syndicate consisted of Citigroup Global Markets Europe, ING Bank, J.P. Morgan, RBC Europe Limited as active bookrunners and BNP PARIBAS, BofA Securities Europe, Crédit Agricole Corporate and Investment Bank and SMBC Bank EU as passive bookrunners. The Advestra team included **Annette Weber** (pictured), **Jana Wildberger** and **Niklas Thoma** (all capital markets) as well as **Céline Martin** (tax).

PRACTICE AREA

Capital Markets

DEAL

Galderma

LAW FIRM

Advestra

HEAD PARTNER

Annette Weber

VALUE

EUR 500 million bond



Kellerhals Carrard in Hyperscale funding round

Kellerhals Carrard Startup & VC Desk advised Vsquared Ventures and World Fund, in connection with their role as lead investors in Hyperscale Power's EUR 5 million seed funding round. Headquartered in Zurich, Hyperscale specialises in the development of compact solid-state transformers. Partner **Umberto Milano** (corporate/VC, pictured) led the Kellerhals Carrard team on the matter, working alongside associate Simon Gluch (corporate/VC), associate Arnault Eckert (corporate/VC), partner Kerim Tbaishat (tax), counsel Céline Schmid (employment).

PRACTICE AREA

Deal & Transactions

DEAL

Hyperscale

LAW FIRM

Kellerhals Carrard

HEAD PARTNER

Umberto Milano

VALUE

EUR 5 million seed funding round



CHRISTOPH NEERACHER



LUCA JAGMETTI

Bär & Karrer with Bitwise on Chorus One acquisition

Bär & Karrer advised Bitwise, a US-based crypto investment firm with more than USD 15 billion in assets under management, on its acquisition of Chorus One, an infrastructure provider for staking services on decentralized networks with headquarters in Zug, Switzerland.

M&A partners **Christoph Neeracher** (pictured left) and **Luca Jagmetti** (pictured right) co-led the Bär & Karrer team on the matter, working alongside Li Wei Dutler and Dennis Loki (M&A) Susanne Schreiber and Fabian Capt (both tax), Daniel Flühmann and Christina Werren (both banking/regulatory), Christian Kunz and Ferdinand Rombach (both digital technology), Laura Widmer and Sandra Schaffner (both employment) as well as Julia Stempfeler (regulatory).

PRACTICE AREA

Deal & Transactions

DEAL

Chorus One

LAW FIRM

Bär & Karrer

HEAD PARTNERS

Christoph Neeracher and Luca Jagmetti

VALUE

not disclosed



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A photograph of two men in dark blue suits and ties standing in front of a window with horizontal blinds. The man on the left is wearing glasses and has his hands in his pockets. The man on the right is also wearing glasses and has his arms crossed. The lighting is dramatic, with strong shadows and highlights from the blinds.

Keeping pace with change

Lenz & Staehelin managing partners Thierry Calame and Benoît Merkt discuss growth, AI, cross-office integration and the firm's three priorities: people, knowledge and a responsible approach to technology

by claudia la via

As client expectations rise and mandates become more demanding, law firms are under pressure to keep pace with innovation while staying grounded in experience, judgment and established expertise. That challenge is becoming sharper in a legal market shaped by growing complexity, cross-border interconnection and the expanding role of AI. At Lenz & Staehelin, the response is framed less as reinvention than as adaptation, rooted in long-standing principles and in the combined strength of its Zurich, Geneva and Lausanne offices. Managing partners **Thierry Calame**, based in Zurich, and **Benoît Merkt**, based in Geneva, describe a shared approach focused on quality, consistency and long-term development. «In difficult times, clients tend to turn to recognised market leaders, and Switzerland is often perceived as a safe haven», they observe. For clients, that means clear advice, dependable execution and partner-led attention across complex mandates. For the firm, it means sustaining high standards while investing in the people, knowledge and tools needed to adapt without losing cohesion. In this joint interview with *MAG*, Calame and Merkt discuss market pressures, AI, cross-office integration and how the firm is navigating change while preserving its culture and partner-led approach.



THIERRY CALAME

Since you both took over in 2021, what are the most important changes you've made at Lenz & Staehelin and what have you protected as non-negotiable?

Attracting and retaining exceptional talent has always been central to our strategy, and we continue to invest in the development of young lawyers. We have also promoted more female partners, while female associates now outnumber male associates. What remains non-negotiable is the quality of our work and our commitment to delivering innovative, independent and pragmatic legal advice, supported by a culture of excellence, respect and collegiality.

When you talk about "growth" at Lenz & Staehelin, what is one priority for this year?

We have continued to grow in recent years in terms of team size and the number of clients we serve, reflecting our investment in people,

THE FIRM IN NUMBERS:

- OFFICES**
Geneva, Lausanne and Zurich
- 52**
Partners
- 25+**
Languages
- 480+**
Employees
- 300+**
Female Employees
- 150+**
Associates and counsels
- 19**
Practices

«Our approach is to maintain very similar and complementary legal offerings across both sides of the country»

Benoît Merkt

technology and service quality. Our vision is based on sustainable growth, responsible innovation and the continued development of our people. Periods of uncertainty can also create opportunities, and Switzerland continues to attract investors. Our priority is to keep strengthening our position with domestic and international clients, and as a point of contact for international firms needing Swiss advice.

As matters grow more complex, how do you make sure L&S delivers the same quality and partner attention across offices and practices?

One of the key elements is our strong sense of partnership and communication. Our structure encourages collaboration and allows us to operate as one integrated team, so clients benefit from the collective expertise of our lawyers across practices. Our national footprint also allows us to assemble teams depending on the needs of a particular matter.

What were one or two mandates in the last 12 months that best reflect the firm today?

A few recent deals illustrate our multidisciplinary approach and our ability to handle complex matters in Switzerland and internationally, often alongside foreign counsel. For example, we advised Valaris on the Swiss law aspects of its USD 5.8 billion all-stock combination with Transocean, working with Skadden and Conyers across corporate, capital

markets and tax. We are also advising Bâloise as lead counsel on its combination with Helvetia, a transaction requiring coordination across M&A, capital markets, regulatory, antitrust, tax and IP work streams. Another strong example is UBP's acquisition of Société Générale's private banking operations in Switzerland and the UK, where we acted as global counsel on a cross-border deal alongside Macfarlanes on the English law aspects.

How important is AI today and in which area are you investing the most?

AI and emerging technologies are reshaping legal practice and, when used responsibly, can significantly enhance the profession. We therefore continue to expand our use of AI to streamline processes, strengthen knowledge management and improve the quality and responsiveness of our client service. We already use AI-enhanced tools including semantic search platforms, drafting assistants, workflows or agents, and translation solutions. These technologies enable faster and more accurate research, improve document review and help reduce drafting errors. At the same time, we remain mindful of the ethical issues associated with these technologies, particularly data security, explainability and bias.



BENOÎT MERKT

«I would want clients to think immediately of strategic judgment, command of the details and flawless cross-border coordination»

Thierry Calame

How do you make sure that investment in AI is matched by the right skills and governance across the firm?

Training plays a crucial role in our approach. Our Knowledge Management team delivers regular internal training on AI tools and legal topics, and we continue to refine how that training is delivered while encouraging external learning opportunities. Upskilling remains one of our priorities, and all staff engage in ongoing training to strengthen existing skills and acquire new ones as technology and law continue to evolve.

Benoît, when it comes to competition, where is L&S putting its weight right now, and what have you strengthened in the practice recently?

Merkt: We are currently involved in all the major cases before the Swiss Competition Commission. Our work covers the full spectrum of competition law matters, including international and domestic cartel cases, dominance cases, relative market power cases and merger control procedures. We have one of Switzerland's largest competition teams, with a strong presence in



both Zurich and Geneva. This allows us to handle complex competition matters across jurisdictions and industries. Many cases involve cross-border elements, requiring lawyers to understand both Swiss and international legal frameworks. Our teams are therefore structured to combine deep Swiss law expertise with the ability to navigate international regulatory environments and coordinate with foreign counsel.

What role do you want the Geneva office to play inside L&S over the next few years, and how do you make Geneva–Zurich collaboration feel seamless for clients?

Merkt: We do not really distinguish between the two offices. Historically, there has always been a parallel evolution between Zurich and Geneva, and our approach is to maintain very similar and complementary legal offerings across both sides of the country. Our national footprint allows us to assemble the right team for each mandate. Depending on the client’s needs and the nature of the matter, we can combine expertise from Geneva and Zurich seamlessly.

Thierry, in high-stakes IP and patent disputes, what do you want clients to associate with L&S immediately?

Calame: I would want clients to think immediately of strategic judgment, command of the details and flawless cross-border coordination. We are deeply engaged in our cases and thoroughly familiar with every aspect of them, while keeping the necessary distance to give strategic advice that reflects the client’s wider business interests. Because these disputes often move quickly and unfold in parallel proceedings, speed and coordination are essential — and both are real strengths of ours.

What is Zurich’s distinct contribution to L&S and how do you ensure that expertise is shared firm-wide?

Calame: Although we are very much one firm, Zurich has a long tradition in IP, tech and life sciences and has played a significant role in developing those capabilities across the firm. What matters, however, is that this expertise is shared rather than siloed within one office. In IP,

as in other areas, we operate as one integrated practice group across all offices, with knowledge management organised on a firm-wide basis.

With AI entering R&D, what are the most practical steps L&S is recommending to protect innovation?

Calame: The key is to protect innovation early and in a structured way. In most cases, it is not a question of patents or trade secrets, but of using both in the right way. Patents are often important where an invention is visible, commercially important or capable of being reverse-engineered. Trade secrets may be the better option for data, models and other know-how that can realistically be kept confidential. Good documentation is just as important: companies should keep clear records of how the innovation was developed, who contributed to it, which AI tools were used and how key decisions were made. That helps not only with patent protection, but also with preserving trade secrets and preparing for possible disputes later on. Contracts are the third key area. Employment agreements, collaboration agreements, licence agreements and AI vendor contracts should clearly address ownership, confidentiality, the use of data and outputs, and access to evidence if a dispute arises. The practical point is simple: businesses should not wait until a problem arises.

If you both had to describe Lenz & Staehelin’s direction for the next three to five years in three keywords, what would they be?

Both: Consistency, certainty and quality. In periods of uncertainty, our clients know that they can count on us to provide dependable support. For our people, these principles reflect our commitment to maintaining high professional and ethical standards, encouraging strong collaboration and team spirit, and continuing to build an environment where lawyers work together to deliver the best possible outcomes for clients. Our long-term strategy focuses on investing in our people, strengthening our internal knowledge base and using technology responsibly to support our lawyers in delivering exceptional work. 🍷

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ALEXANDRIA SCHINDLER

Building governance from the ground up

New standards, transnational connections and capillary communication: how first ever CG Alexandria Schindler is shaping the legal architecture of Azura Partners across borders

by flavio caci

As **Alexandria Schindler** reflects on her first six months as general counsel of private wealth management firm Azura Partners, her thoughts drift back to October 2025, when she first stepped into the role. “I was looking for the next challenge,” she says. “An opportunity to step outside my comfort zone and elevate my skillset to a more strategic level.” After her previous experiences at Ubs and Vontobel, Schindler became the first ever GC for Azura Partners, adding a different level of complexity to her fresh start.

At the center of her priorities, a mantra she returns to repeatedly: building a clear governance framework that works seamlessly across contexts and jurisdictions. Beyond Geneva and a soon to be opened location in Zurich, where Schindler is currently based, Azura Partners operates offices in London, Monaco, New York, Miami, Singapore, Abu Dhabi, Dubai, each one hosting a compliance team that reports directly to the GC. Establishing a legal structure that connects cities, departments and people — and supports the business as a whole — has been a red-circled priority on Alexandria Schindler's agenda since her very first day as she explains in this in-depth conversation with MAG.

What's on top of the priority list today at Azura Partners?

We're really looking forward to building a scalable legal and governance framework. In that sense, the immediate priority is to define the right balance between what we can integrate in-house versus what we can take outsource. As we are growing, we need to understand what we can focus on as a team, and where, instead, we do need to rely on local, external specialists.

Do you have a timeframe in mind for the next steps in that direction?

In the next twelve to twenty-four months, as we understand which areas are gaining the most strategic importance, we can start to internalise accordingly. Our industry's direction is tilting toward data governance and technology themes. From a legal and regulatory perspective, we are going to prioritise those specializations, whether with the help of external counsels, or by internalising completely. Furthermore,

transactional work is becoming increasingly important in the external asset manager space, so it would be quite likely for us to enhance our internal capabilities with a dedicated senior legal team that could be strategically focused on the area.

On that note, do you feel there is a tradeoff between enabling strategic business growth and safeguarding the firm from legal and regulatory risks?

Frankly, I don't think there is. If you design a legal and compliance infrastructure in a way that brings clarity to the business, it doesn't have to be a tradeoff, because everyone knows what they can and cannot do, and the legal function becomes well-established to help drive the company's strategic goals. Clarity, by that measure, is a crucial element for us to transfer within the business.

When it comes to identifying regulatory exposure then, how critical is initiative-taking planning versus working in “firefighter mode”?

Very critical. The more you can do in terms of governance beforehand — setting-up the right guidelines when you are in the “design seat” with the business rather than firefighting and answering questions on an ad-hoc basis — the more you lay a foundation that is elastic enough to scale up in the future. That is truly the best you can do from the legal function's perspective.

«The more you can do in terms of governance beforehand, the more you lay a foundation that's elastic enough to scale up in the future»

When a new regulation comes into force, what is your process for translating it into actionable steps for the business?

It all starts with identification, which is the first step to support the right governance. In the monitoring phase, when the legal team identifies a new regulatory change, a discussion starts, and you begin raising awareness. In that sense, as a general counsel, you have to make sure that the right people and teams are made aware of the right elements at the right time.

Why is identification so crucial?

It gives everyone enough time to react, by asking key questions early-on: “Is there an actual impact coming? Can we leverage it? Do we have to make any changes?” — based on those first steps, you are able to identify whether a concrete change is needed and eventually transition from identification to planning mode. Right now, we are dedicating quite a lot of time trying to build the right operational governance framework, so that the answers to many of those key questions are embedded in our system.

As a GC, what are the main complexities of operating across multiple jurisdictions?

Well, time zone is probably a major one [laughs].

**AZURA PARTNERS
 IN NUMBERS**

\$ 5 billion

In assets under management

70+

Employees across 9 locations

25

Nationalities represented in the teams

28

Core families in the network

\$ 2+ billion

Transactions advised



Scheduling meetings with your team when somebody's sitting in New York, and someone else is in Singapore is not that easy. Then, there is the importance of having a global minimum standard in place for the whole company, as well as a global decision-making body offering enough independence to each local entity.

Does that model apply beyond regulatory matters, into strategy?

It does. In terms of exigencies coming from the different markets for example. Clients may have, at times, very different interests, based on where they work from. Again, if the legal function helps create a solid governance base, the group



«We are really looking forward to building a scalable legal and governance framework»

can set a comprehensive strategy and then rely on each local board for ad-hoc calibration and fine-tuning. Moreover, good governance is the foundation of clear communication also within the company, not just one on one, but throughout a broader platform.

Speaking of communication, how important of an aspect is it in your role?

It is an underrated skill. You always hear about flexibility, decision making, risk appetite, clarity, and no doubt these are all fundamental aspects of our job. That said, having the ability to communicate strongly, without always presenting the risks first, but focusing on the strategy and setting a pathway forward: I believe that skill to be critical.

Drawing a balance: what has been the biggest challenge of this new experience to date?

Being a GC does require a certain level of independence. You get to become the judge of your own pathway, and you are constantly benchmarking against yourself. At the same time, I learned how critical it is to delegate. It is truly helpful to be surrounded by people you can rely on, and as the GC, I couldn't be tactically involved in every single issue. Overall, when I reflect on the experience, it has been everything I was looking for: I love every day of it. 🍷

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9th edition

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06 MAY 2026

AURA, Bleicherweg 5 8001 | ZURICH

PROGRAM:

18:00 Check-in & Welcome Cocktail

18:30 Awards Ceremony

19:30 Flying Dinner

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MONDAY 8 JUNE		VENUE - MILAN	
09:00 18:00	Opening Conference: Elite Legal Symposium: (Shaping) The Future of the Legal Market (in Italy and Worldwide)		Hotel Principe di Savoia Piazza della Repubblica, 17 REGISTER
18:30	General Counsel Cocktail		Gatti Pavesi Bianchi Ludovici Piazza Borromeo, 8 INFO
From 20:15	Terrace Party		CastaldiPartners Via Savona, 19/A INFO
TUESDAY 9 JUNE		VENUE - MILAN	
08:00 09:30	Breakfast on finance		Gianni & Origoni Piazza Belgioioso, 2 REGISTER
09:15 11:00	Roundtable: Law Firms and Technology: Does It Make Sense to Build In-House Solutions?		Hotel Principe di Savoia Piazza della Repubblica, 17 REGISTER
11:00 13:00	Roundtable: Post-Deal Integration in M&A: Navigating Financial, Operational and Governance Challenges		Hotel Principe di Savoia Piazza della Repubblica, 17 REGISTER
11:00 13:00	Roundtable: Reputation, Media and Positioning: The New Competitive Capital of Law Firms		Hotel Principe di Savoia Piazza della Repubblica, 17 REGISTER
14:00 16:00	Roundtable: Infrastructure		Hotel Principe di Savoia Piazza della Repubblica, 17 REGISTER
14:00 16:00	Roundtable: Crisis, Transformation and Unpopular Decisions: The Real Job of the Managing Partner Today		Hotel Principe di Savoia Piazza della Repubblica, 17 REGISTER
16:00 18:00	Roundtable: Added value of Lawyers as Entrepreneurs: Building a Law Firm like a Real Business.		Hotel Principe di Savoia Piazza della Repubblica, 17 REGISTER
16:00 18:00	Roundtable: Is the Legal Market Truly Meritocratic?		Hotel Principe di Savoia Piazza della Repubblica, 17 REGISTER
19:00	Women leadership: the in-house cocktail		Baker McKenzie Piazza Filippo Meda, 3 INFO
WEDNESDAY 10 JUNE		VENUE - MILAN	
06:30 08:00	Run the Law		Canottieri San Cristoforo Alzaia Naviglio Grande, 122 INFO
09:00 11:00	Roundtable: From Covenants to Control: Private Debt and Opportunistic Funds in Restructuring and Distressed Negotiations		Hotel Principe di Savoia Piazza della Repubblica, 17 REGISTER
09:15 13:00	Conference: When Good Lawyers Negotiate Bad Deals: What Really Drives Success (and Failure) at the Table		Hotel Principe di Savoia Piazza della Repubblica, 17 REGISTER
11:00 13:00	Roundtable: Geopolitics & Security		Hotel Principe di Savoia Piazza della Repubblica, 17 REGISTER
11:00 13:00	Roundtable: Does Growing in Size Really Mean Creating Value?		Hotel Principe di Savoia Piazza della Repubblica, 17 REGISTER
14:00 16:00	Roundtable		Hotel Principe di Savoia Piazza della Repubblica, 17 REGISTER
14:15 16:00	Roundtable: Cross-Border M&A and Foreign Investment Considerations		Hotel Principe di Savoia Piazza della Repubblica, 17 REGISTER
16:00 18:00	Roundtable		Hotel Principe di Savoia Piazza della Repubblica, 17 REGISTER
16:00 18:00	Roundtable: Are Clients Becoming More Sophisticated? The Evolution of General Counsel		Hotel Principe di Savoia Piazza della Repubblica, 17 REGISTER
19:15 23:00	Corporate Awards		Padiglione Visconti Via Tortona, 58 INFO

THURSDAY 11 JUNE		VENUE - MILAN		
09:00 13:00	Conference: Tax	MAISTO E ASSOCIATI	Hotel Principe di Savoia Piazza della Repubblica, 17	REGISTER
14:00 16:00	Roundtable: Pharma	 HERBERT SMITH FREEHILLS KRAMER	Hotel Principe di Savoia Piazza della Repubblica, 17	REGISTER
16:00 18:00	Roundtable: Fashion & Luxury	Baker McKenzie.	Hotel Principe di Savoia Piazza della Repubblica, 17	REGISTER
19:00	Rock the Law	 ROCK THE LAW	Magazzini Generali Via Pietrasanta, 16	REGISTER

10th
EDITION

LEGALCOMMUNITYWEEK

LC PUBLISHING GROUP

OPENING CONFERENCE

ELITE LEGAL SYMPOSIUM: (SHAPING) THE FUTURE OF THE LEGAL MARKET (IN ITALY AND WORLDWIDE)

08/06/2026
09.00 - 18.00

PRINCIPE DI SAVOIA
Piazza della Repubblica, 17
Milan, Italy

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HERE 

PROGRAM*

- 8:45 Check-In and welcome coffee
- 9:10 **Welcome messages**
Aldo Scaringella, CEO, *LC Publishing Group S.p.A*
- 9:15 **Opening speech: where is the international legal market heading?**
Nicola Di Molfetta, Editor-in-Chief, *Legalcommunity & MAG*
- 9:30 **ROUNDTABLE I. The Italian big firms: mergers and value creation**
Eliana Catalano, Managing Partner, *BonelliErede*
Bruno Gattai, Managing Partner, *PedersoliGattai*
Francesco Gatti, Equity Partner, *Gatti Pavesi Bianchi Ludovici*
Filippo Modulo, Managing Partner, *Chiomenti*
Filippo Troisi, Senior and Co-Managing Partner, *Legance*
Giuseppe Velluto, Co-Managing Partner, *Gianni & Origoni*
- 10:45 **ROUNDTABLE II. Italy through the eyes of global law firms**
Roberto Bonsignore, Partner, *Cleary Gottlieb*
Patrizio Messina, Managing Partner, *Hogan Lovells Italy*
Laura Orlando, Managing Partner and EMEA Head of Life Sciences, *Herbert Smith Freehills Kramer*
Paolo Sersale, Managing Partner, *Clifford Chance Italy*
- 11:30 Coffee Break
- 12:00 **ROUNDTABLE III. Nextgen partners: a new model of leadership in law firms**
Leonardo Graffi, Office Executive Partner, *White & Case Italy*
Michele Milanese, Managing Partner, *Ashurst Italy*
Paolo Nastasi, Managing Partner, *A&O Shearman Italy*
Ermelinda Spinelli, Managing Partner (Italy), *Freshfields LLP*
- 13:00 Lunch
- 14:00 **ROUNDTABLE IV. The business of law: how consulting giants are reshaping the legal market**
Daniele Caneva, Law Leader - IP Department Leader, *EY*
Francesco Paolo Bello, Managing Partner, *Deloitte Legal Italy*
Barbara Pontecorvo, CEO, *PwC Legal STA*
Giovanni Stefanin, Managing Partner, *BDO Law Sta*
- 15:15 **ROUNDTABLE V. Beyond Italy: International Networks, GC – Navigating the Legal Landscape**
- 16:00 Coffee Break
- 16:30 **ROUNDTABLE VI. Business lawyering: when it all began**
Luca Arnaboldi, Managing Partner, *Carnelutti Law Firm*
Enrico Castaldi, Chairman, *CastaldiPartners*
Giovanni Lega, Founding Partner, *LCA Studio Legale* | Honorary Chairman, *ASLA*
Franco Toffoletto, Managing Partner, *Toffoletto De Luca Tamajo*
- 17:45 **Closing remarks**
- 18:00 Light Cocktail

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GENERAL COUNSEL Cocktail

08/06/2026
From 18.30



Gatti Pavesi Bianchi Ludovici
Piazza Borromeo, 8 - Milan

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GC CHAMPIONS LIST 2026
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LAW FIRMS AND TECHNOLOGY: DOES IT MAKE SENSE TO BUILD IN-HOUSE SOLUTIONS

09/06/2026 - 09:15 - 11:00

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POST-DEAL INTEGRATION IN M&A: NAVIGATING FINANCIAL, OPERATIONAL AND GOVERNANCE CHALLENGES

09/06/2026 - 11:00 - 13:00

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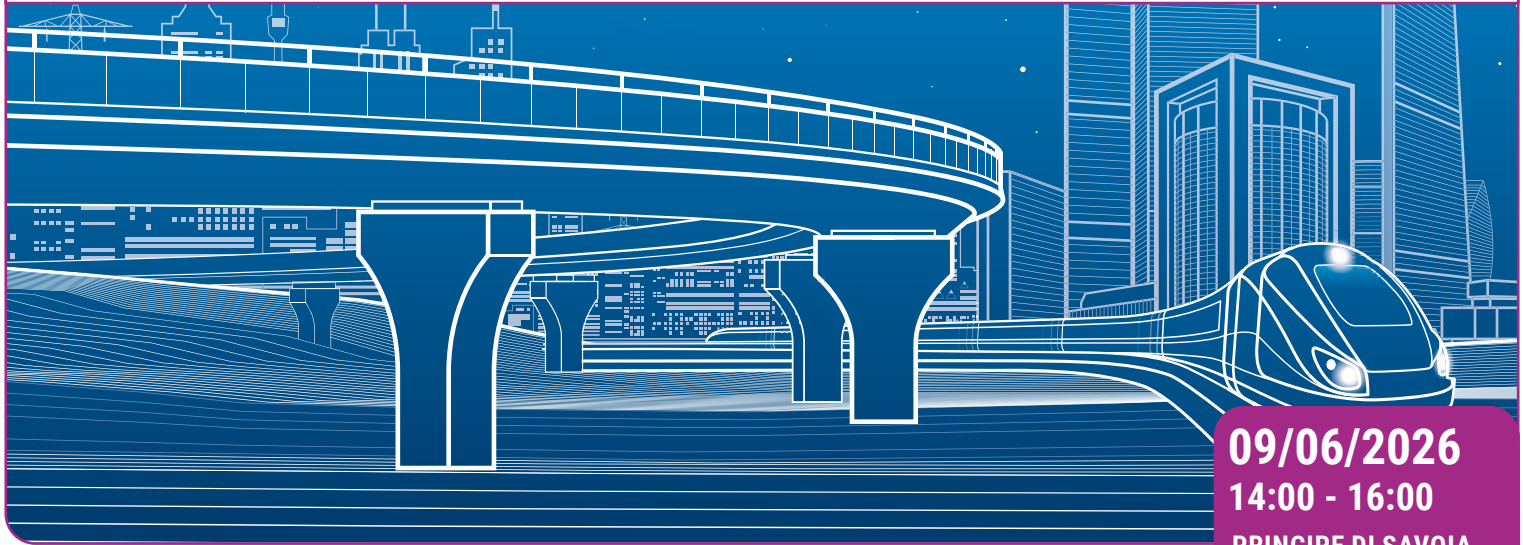
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PRINCIPE DI SAVOIA

Piazza della Repubblica, 17 - Milan, Italy

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McKenzie.**



Women Leadership

THE IN-HOUSE COCKTAIL

9 June 2026
from 19:00

Baker McKenzie
Piazza Filippo Meda, 3 - Milan

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Wednesday

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The fee includes: participation to the run, use of the changing room, gadget, breakfast.

WHERE:

Canottieri San Cristoforo
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PROGRAM:

6:15 am general gathering
6:30 am race departure
7:00 – 8:30 am use of the changing room and breakfast

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FROM COVENANTS TO CONTROL: PRIVATE DEBT AND OPPORTUNISTIC FUNDS IN RESTRUCTURING AND DISTRESSED NEGOTIATIONS

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WHEN GOOD LAWYERS NEGOTIATE BAD DEALS: WHAT REALLY DRIVES SUCCESS (AND FAILURE) AT THE TABLE

Speakers*

Barbara Benzoni, Head of Legal of the International Mid-Downstream and Chemical activities, *Eni*

Lodovico Bianchi Di Giulio, Group General Counsel, *BIP Group*

Christopher M. Campbell, Senior Counsel, Litigation, *Baker Hughes*

Giuseppe De Palo, Mediator & Arbitrator, *JAMS (New York)*

Alice Flacco, Esq., General Counsel & EVP Legal and Compliance, *MicroPort CardioFlow*

Francesco Marchi, Director of Negotiation Expertise, *ALTERNEGO*, visiting professor at *Sciences Po (Paris)* and *College of Europe (Bruges)*

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GEOPOLITICS & SECURITY

SPEAKERS*:

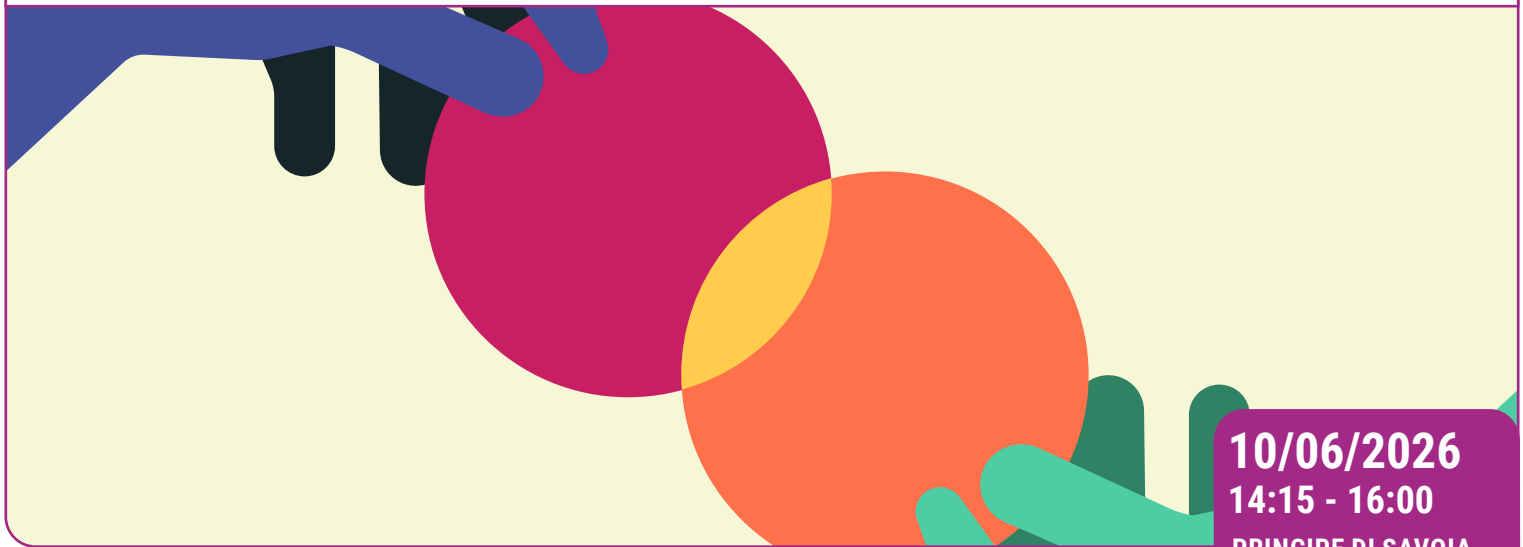
Carlo Altomonte, Associate Dean & PNRR Lab Director, *SDA Bocconi*

Fabrizio Pagani, Partner, *Vitale & Co.* | Former, G20 Sherpa and OECD Director

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CROSS-BORDER M&A AND FOREIGN INVESTMENT CONSIDERATIONS

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19.15 CHECK-IN

19.30 COCKTAIL

20.15 CEREMONY

21.00 STANDING DINNER

PADIGLIONE VISCONTI


Via Tortona, 58 | Milan





11/06/2026
16:00 - 18:00

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Piazza della Repubblica, 17
Milan, Italy

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ROUNDTABLE

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FASHION & LUXURY

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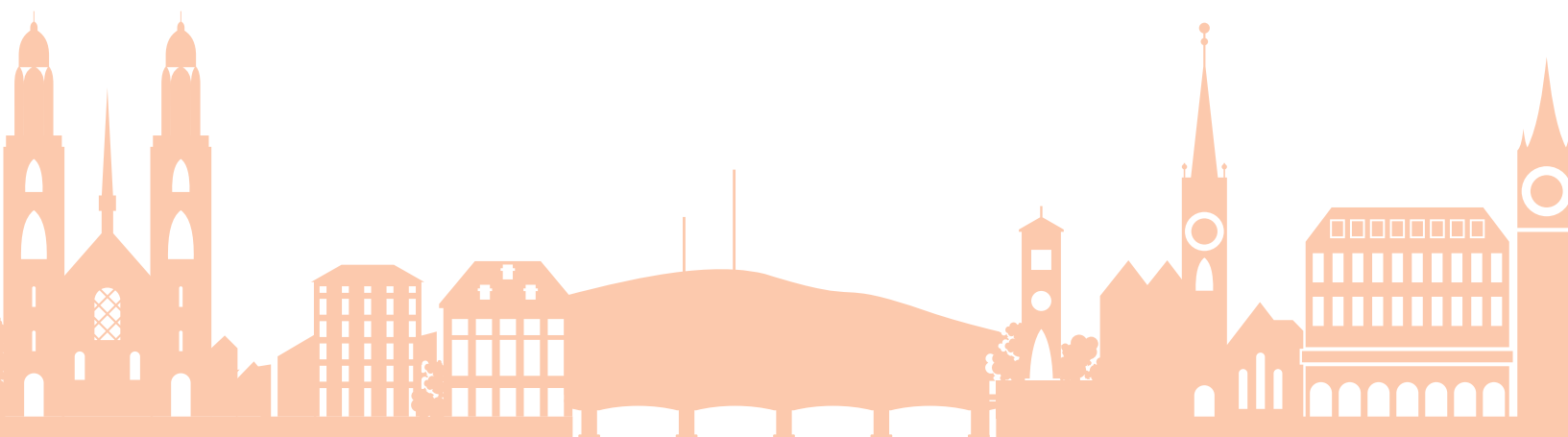
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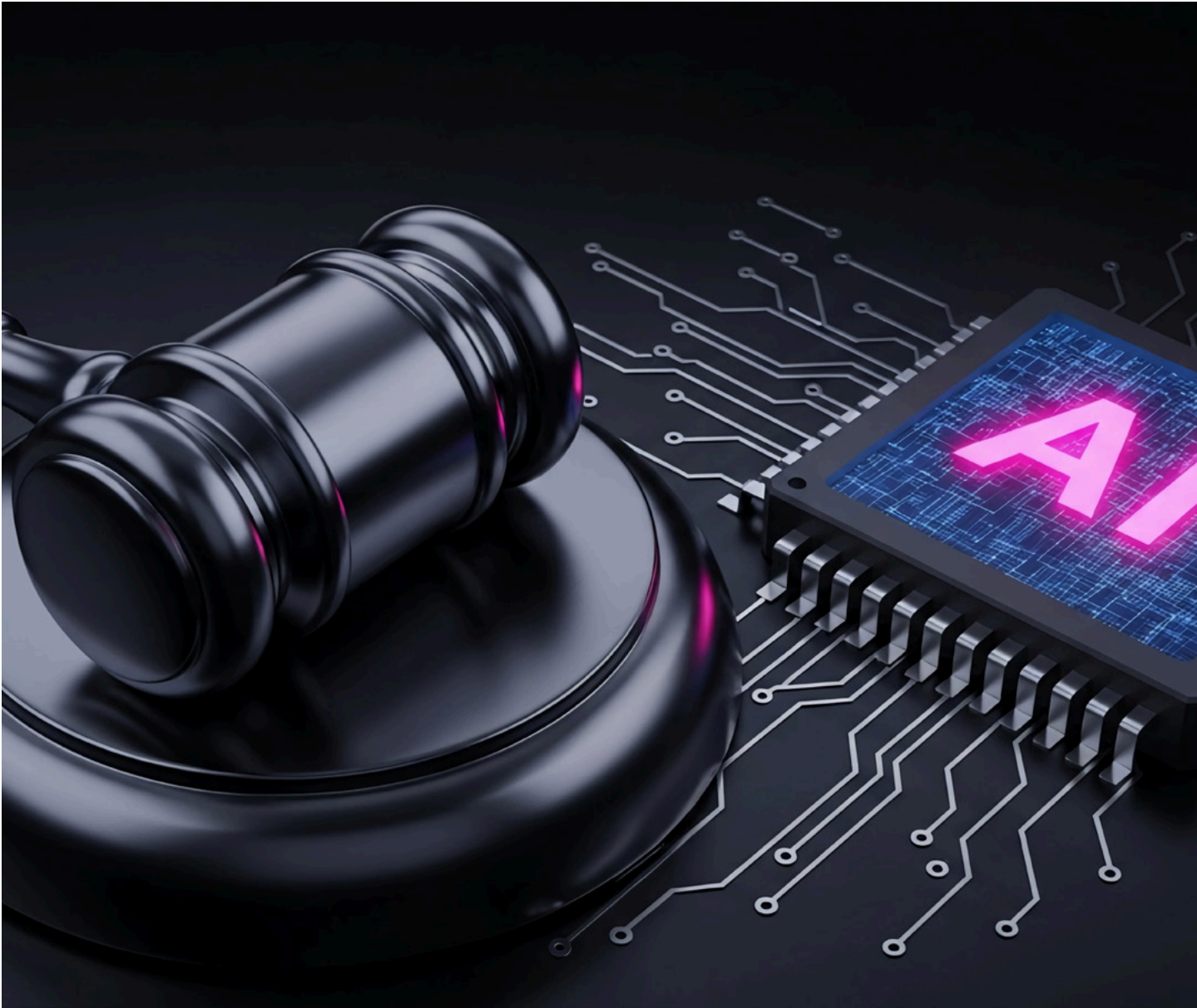
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Legal AI grows up: from hype to trust

At Geneva International Legal Week, where *Legalcommunity* was media partner, the legal AI conversation moved beyond excitement into harder territory: governance, localisation, courtroom limits and the new skills the profession now requires

by claudia la via

For all the noise around legal AI, the most interesting thing happening now may be that the conversation is finally growing up.

At an event organised within Geneva International Legal Week, where *Legalcommunity* was media partner, AI returned to the centre of the debate. This time, however, the tone was different: less dazzled by the technology itself, and more focused on the conditions under which it can actually be trusted in law.

In Geneva, the discussion was no longer framed around whether artificial intelligence will transform the legal profession. That premise has already been absorbed. The more serious question now is what kind of AI legal institutions, law firms, companies and courts can actually afford to rely on — and under what governance.

That shift matters. In law, unlike in many other sectors, “good enough” is rarely good enough. A plausible sentence is not a legal answer. A polished paragraph is not a reliable authority.

FROM INTELLIGENCE TO APPROXIMATION

Rachid Guerraoui, professor of distributed computing at École Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne, offered a useful reminder: large language models are powerful not because they reason like classical algorithms, but because they predict likely answers from patterns in data. That is also what makes them risky in law: they can sound authoritative without being accurate, and fluent precisely where legal nuance matters most.

GOVERNANCE BEFORE ADOPTION

That tension resurfaced in the discussion around governance and adoption. **Thomas Spörri**, regional attorney at Global Deal Team, Microsoft EMEA, described a legal market in which firms and in-house teams increasingly feel pressure to use AI, whether from management, clients or sheer competitive momentum. But he also suggested that the



THE GENEVA LEGAL ASSOCIATION'S PRESIDENT, SANDRINE GIROUD, DURING THE GILW26 IN GENEVA

most mature organisations resist turning AI into a purely cost-cutting narrative. “Successful legal organisations are the ones that take control of the narrative,” he said. His other comment was equally direct: “AI in law is here to support, not replace.”

That distinction matters because the most interesting role for legal professionals may not be internal adoption alone, but mediation. The real opportunity may lie in helping clients translate provider frameworks into workable governance: who is accountable, where the data sits, how risk is allocated, and what remains non-delegable. In that sense, law firms are not just potential users of AI. They may increasingly become the legal and governance layer between provider and enterprise client.

Grégoire Mastrangelo of the International Olympic Committee added a useful corrective to the market’s obsession with pilots and

experimentation. The starting point, he argued, should not be the technology but the problem. Too many organisations begin by asking what AI can do, instead of where the real operational need lies. Legal teams, in that model, cannot be brought in at the end. Governance has to be built in from the start.

THE SWISS QUESTION

Beneath the discussion of governance sat a more territorial issue: law is still local. Data regimes are local. Courts are local. Professional responsibility is local. But the dominant AI tools are built for scale, trained across jurisdictions and optimised for generic use. That creates a structural mismatch. A platform may perform well globally and still be poorly suited to legal work in Switzerland, where language, doctrine, procedural culture and confidentiality rules can all matter in highly



specific ways. In legal practice, the question is not only whether a model is technically capable. It is whether it understands where it is.

That is why security, localisation and trusted infrastructure have moved to the foreground. For legal and regulated use cases, “secure” increasingly also means knowing where data is stored, whether the cloud environment is appropriate, which subcontractors sit behind the service, and whether the institution can still explain, audit and control what the tool is doing.

THE COURTROOM PROBLEM

The issue becomes even sharper in disputes. When the conversation turned to courts and arbitration, the AI debate stopped being abstract and became procedural.

Daniel Kinzer, partner at CMS von Erlach Partners and vice-president of the Geneva Bar Association, pushed the discussion toward a practical question: how far, exactly, can judges and arbitrators go in using these tools? At what point does assistance become delegation? And what should be disclosed to the parties?

The danger is not limited to hallucinated case law. It is also the subtler risk that AI-generated work looks coherent enough to pass an initial review while silently distorting the record — by omitting a decisive submission, flattening a nuance, inventing a legal source or giving false weight to a marginal point. In court, the cost of error is not only reputational or economic. It can affect due process itself.

And here again the most important insight was deceptively simple: law is not just information. It is interpretation under institutional constraints. It lives in files, facts, language, burden of proof, procedural stages and local legal culture. An AI system may help organise some of that. But it cannot be assumed to understand it.

THE JUNIOR LAWYER QUESTION

If the courtroom discussion exposed the limits of AI, the closing part of the debate exposed a different anxiety: what happens to the next generation of lawyers if machines take over the

work on which legal training has traditionally been built?

Dorothee Schramm, vice-president and member of the board of the Silicon Valley Arbitration & Mediation Center, tackled the issue from the standpoint of legal business models. The real pressure point, she suggested, is not AI alone but the billable-hour logic that still shapes large parts of the profession. “The billable hour system is pretty bad for most players because it rewards inefficiency,” she said. If AI reduces the time needed for due diligence, first drafts and document-heavy work, that old model becomes harder to defend. “Every AI tool will give you an army of young lawyers,” she added.

Roxana Sharifi, lead innovation and legal tech at CMS von Erlach Partners, addressed the training issue more directly. “General AI training within a law firm is pointless: different teams do different work. Moreover, different seniority levels ask different questions. The only effective model is a tailored one: identify real workflows, separate practice groups, train in small groups, and let lawyers see not only what works but exactly how and why the system fails”.

The future lawyer, then, will not be defined by a willingness to use AI, but by the ability to verify it, constrain it and improve on it. In law, the essential skill may soon be neither resistance nor enthusiasm, but disciplined judgment.

THE NEW REALISM

That may be the clearest takeaway from Geneva. What emerged was not a rejection of AI, but a new realism about it.

The profession seems to be moving away from the fantasy that a universal platform can solve legal work at scale simply because it can generate text. What matters now is more demanding: governance, explainability, localisation, trusted infrastructure, human review and the preservation of legal judgment as a real function rather than a ceremonial last step.

In legal AI, the next phase will belong not to the loudest tools, but to the most trusted ones. ■

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Why Geneva is rethinking business justice

With its proposal for a specialist commercial court, Geneva is opening up a broader question: how to align justice more closely with the realities of international business

by claudia la via

For a sector that in Switzerland generates more than CHF 12.4 billion in revenue and includes more than 11,700 lawyers, the question of how disputes are handled is not just institutional. It is also economic.

In Geneva, that debate has now crystallised around a concrete proposal: the creation of a commercial court designed to hear business cases with specialist judges and, in international matters, the possibility of working in English.

The idea is not being pitched simply as a matter of image. Its supporters argue that Geneva's current court structure is not fully aligned with the profile of the market it serves: international, multilingual and often technically complex. The proposal, backed by the Geneva International Legal Association and the Geneva Bar Association, is to create a commercial court sitting as a single cantonal instance, composed of professional judges and specialist lay judges from the business world, with a more pragmatic approach to language in international cases.

That backdrop matters. Since 1 January 2025, the revised Swiss Code of Civil Procedure has opened the way for cantons to make greater use of English in international commercial disputes. Geneva's promoters are now trying to use that opening to push a broader reform: not just a new



SANDRINE GIROUD

«It's not
two-tier justice;
it's tailored
justice»

Sandrine Giroud

procedural option, but a court structure intended to deliver shorter proceedings, more specialised decision-making and greater legal certainty in commercial litigation.

A COURT FOR COMPLEX DISPUTES

Sandrine Giroud, who is both President of GILA and the current President of the Geneva Bar Association, says the push reflects a longer-term shift within Geneva's legal community. "There was a disconnect with the local reality of judicial matters, which did not take into consideration the specificities of international commercial matters," she says. In her view, the current project is the result of that gap finally being addressed. "What struck me was the enthusiasm of the people involved: business lawyers, both dispute and transactional, in-house counsel, and representatives of the business community. They had long hoped for a framework that better reflects the needs of business. There just wasn't the right platform".

That helps explain why the project is being framed less as a bid for visibility than as an effort to bring judicial infrastructure into line with economic reality. The working paper argues that ordinary civil courts, which handle a wide range of matters, do not always offer the degree of expertise, predictability and procedural economy expected in high-value business disputes. A dedicated commercial court, by contrast, would be designed for precisely those cases, with specialist judges and assessors better placed to



JEAN-RENÉ OETTLI

understand financial, technical and industry-specific issues.

Jean-René Oettli, partner at Borel & Barbey, makes a similar point from the perspective of disputes practice. “Beyond its procedural celerity and language flexibility, a commercial court would bring two decisive advantages: efficiency and predictability. Parties, including those with no ties to Geneva, could elect to have their disputes heard by a single cantonal instance combining professional judges with sector-specific business experts, ensuring decisions grounded in real commercial practice”.

The most visible part of the proposal is the

«A commercial court would bring two decisive advantages: efficiency and predictability»

Jean-René Oettli

use of English. It is also the most politically delicate. One obvious criticism is that English-language proceedings risk creating a form of justice tailored to multinational companies and inaccessible to others. Giroud rejects that reading. “It’s not two-tier justice; it’s tailored justice,” she says. “When a dispute has unfolded in English from the start — the correspondence, the documents, the witnesses — forcing everything through translation does not necessarily improve justice. It often just adds friction”.

The project paper takes the same pragmatic approach. It envisages briefs, exhibits and hearing records being filed in English with the parties’ consent, while the final judgment would still be rendered in French. Its authors argue that this would preserve the accessibility of the case law and the ease of enforcement in Switzerland, while reducing translation costs and delays in cross-border cases.

Still, the stronger argument for reform is not linguistic. It is functional. Giroud is careful on this point. “The first objective is to offer a better solution for the local economy,” she says. “Only after that comes the ability to attract more cases to Geneva”. That distinction matters, because it shifts the proposal away from rhetoric about international prestige and towards the needs of businesses already operating in and through Geneva. A faster court, a single cantonal instance, specialist adjudication and less procedural waste in multilingual cases are all features that matter first to users of the system, not to the city’s branding.

At the same time, the initiative is meant to build on the popularity of Swiss law, which remains one of the most frequently chosen governing laws in international contracts, and to promote those advantages in the hope of drawing more work — whether disputes or transactional mandates — to Geneva.

MORE THAN A PROCEDURAL REFORM

There is, of course, a competitive dimension. Other Swiss cantons already have commercial courts, and Geneva’s lawyers clearly do not want the city to look under-equipped in a field where



LAURE LAVOREL

Judicial specialisation is increasingly part of the standard offer. But the more interesting point is broader than inter-cantonal rivalry. Across jurisdictions, business parties have become more demanding about where they litigate. Speed, procedural economy, judicial expertise and linguistic realism now weigh heavily in forum selection. Geneva's supporters are effectively arguing that reputation alone is no longer enough; institutions have to match the market they claim to serve.

Some of the backing for the project goes further than that. **Laure Lavorel**, international legal director and board member of the Swiss Association of In-house counsel, describes a commercial court as “the last missing piece of a sophisticated economic and political ecosystem” and argues that it could help turn Geneva into a more significant venue for cross-border dispute resolution. That is plainly an expansive view of what judicial reform can achieve. But it also helps explain how the project is being understood by part of the business community: not simply as a court reform, but as an institutional upgrade with implications for Geneva's wider economic positioning.


That is why this debate extends beyond court design. It sits at the intersection of legal policy and economic policy. GILA's own materials

«It is the last missing piece of a sophisticated economic and political ecosystem»

Laure Lavorel

describe the project as a way to improve judicial efficiency, legal certainty and economic competitiveness. That is advocacy language, and it should be treated as such. But it also captures a real shift: in cross-border commerce, dispute resolution is no longer a background condition. It is part of the infrastructure through which jurisdictions compete for mandates, investment and high-value legal work.

The political process is only beginning. Giroud says the next step is for the Geneva Bar Association to file a draft act before June. After that, the question will move into cantonal politics, with no expectation of a quick outcome. “A realistic horizon is 2028,” she says.

That may sound distant. But the real significance of the project lies less in the timetable than in what it says about Geneva's view of law itself. The city is no longer discussing commercial justice as a narrow procedural matter. It is treating it as part of its economic infrastructure — not a slogan, and not yet a court, but a serious attempt to align legal institutions with the realities of international business. 

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The sports law arena

A new chair for the IOC Athlete's commission: Pau Gasol enters his term amid geopolitical chaos

by flavio caci

At the end of February, the IOC Athlete's commission elected former basketball player **Pau Gasol** as its new chair. The Spaniard succeeds **Emma Terho**, who served from Tokyo 2020 through Paris 2024, crossing the finish line of her mandate with the latest edition of the Winter Games in Milano-Cortina.

"Throughout the five years since I was elected to the IOC AC," Gasol said in an official statement, "I feel like I've really understood the importance of our work, the impact we can have, and the challenges we have ahead of us."

While the commission's constant and officially stated mission remains to ensure athletes' representation across the Olympic movement, priorities on the athlete protection front can evolve quite rapidly.

Kirsty Coventry, now chair of the IOC, was leading the commission when the pandemic unfolded, muting nearly every other front for a long hiatus. In response to those exceptional circumstances, Coventry's eight-year term, as well as those of her fellow outgoing members, was extended by a year.


Emma Terho, Coventry's successor, placed a strong focus on athletes' wellbeing, introducing financial support measures such as the Airbnb Athlete Travel Grants and strengthening career-transition support through Athlete365—two areas that have attracted growing attention in recent years.

Looking at the present moment, with Gasol now

at the helm, a recurring hurdle facing the athlete community is a pervasive climate of geopolitical instability, which is generating multiple situations that test and stretch existing athlete-protection standards.

One illustrative episode came from the United Arab Emirates. When the country became the target of Iranian missile and drone strikes, in retaliation for an attack carried out on February 28 by the United States and Israel, the tennis tournament scheduled in Fujairah—an hour's drive from Dubai—between 3 and 6 March was thrown into doubt. Yet despite the climate of alarm, on March 3 Japan's Hayato Matsuoka and Belarus' Daniil Ostapenkov were cleared to take the court for their qualifying match. During the game, however, a bomb alarm signaling a possible air strike went off as a nearby oil terminal was reportedly under drone attack. After a brief look toward the chair umpire, the players and everyone on court, ball boys and girls included—had to grab their bags and leave the facility.

After the tournament was cancelled for the remainder of the week, along with another event scheduled for the following week, players faced the additional hurdle of returning home amid surging travel prices.

The episode served as a stark reminder that the sporting world does not exist in a bubble, separate from global events. With Los Angeles 2028 in sight, Gasol's term starts with that unfortunate awareness.  Copyright © 2026, LegalcommunityCH

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IMAGE CREATED WITH AI

Inside the “innovation box”: LCA’s Prompt Lawyer model

Facts and figures from one of the initiatives that best captures how the profession is evolving in this historical moment. *MAG* speaks to partner Benedetto Lonato: “The goal? To increase legal intelligence”

by nicola di molfetta

Innovation as a method, not a slogan. That is the hallmark of LCA's approach to the technological transformation reshaping the legal profession. One part of this journey is the project known as Prompt Lawyers.

Leading the work is lawyer **Benedetto Lonato**, a partner and member of the management committee with responsibility for innovation and

technology, who describes the initiative to MAG. The premise is clear. This is not merely about selecting and using tools; it is about the architecture of work.

"Prompt Lawyers represent 7-8% of our professionals and devote around 20% of their time to studying AI tools and transforming the firm's working processes", Lonato tells MAG. This is not an isolated task force, but a distributed laboratory. "They are the first to test AI-integrated workflows, genuine operational case studies".

Their contribution, however, goes beyond experimentation. "They document the prompts they develop, codify prompting methodologies — including how to get the AI itself to build prompts and how to question it about output quality — and they are progressively building replicable workflows for each area of application". In other words, innovation is systematised and made a shared asset within the firm's ecosystem.



BENEDETTO LONATO

«We are aiming to improve quality, not to cut time. In long, repetitive tasks, the machine - well coordinated with the person - offers a clear added value in terms of accuracy»

NAMES AND SURNAMES

The 20 professionals in the project

The group of Prompt Lawyers is led by the management committee with **Benedetto Lonato** and is made up of **Elena Rachele Agnelli, Giancarlo Aiello, Emilio Barozzi, Alberto Basilico, Guido Berti, Christian Caserini, Francesco Chiarparin, Giacomo Cioccarelli, Vincenzo Coccoluto, Gianmarco Corradi, Maria Alessia Di Gioia, Annalisa Gobbo, Olivier Macquet, Nicole Meyerhoff, Fabrizio Miceli, Valerio Navarra, Federica Pecorini, Laura Scarola, Nicoletta Serao, Giuseppe Serenelli, Riccardo Sismondi and Veronica Scuro.**

Looking ahead, the vision is that of “a law firm in which AI will be invisible but indispensable: not a distinguishing element, but an integral part of the way a lawyer thinks, decides and works”.

REVERSE MENTORING: THE TWIN TRACK OF LEARNING

The project dovetails with an organisational model that moves beyond the traditional, top-down transmission of knowledge. “Traditional models deliver established results, but they have a structural limitation: knowledge flows only in a radial direction, from the centre outwards, with senior professionals as the sole hub of dissemination”.

Reverse mentoring instead introduces “a twin track: learning from the centre and towards the centre”. A mechanism which, according to Lonato, makes it possible “to move faster — a crucial factor, especially for domestic firms — while also valuing the expertise of seniors and the energy of juniors in a virtuous exchange”.

Quality oversight remains with the most experienced professionals, but “younger colleagues take on direct responsibility”. The purpose is clear: “There is only one objective: to increase legal intelligence and the quality of the service. Everything else — including recognising emerging talent — is a natural consequence”.

SELECTION AND A CULTURE OF INNOVATION

Becoming a Prompt Lawyer is not a formal appointment, but the outcome of a structured process. “Selection is carried out through internal surveys on aptitude and skills, interviews with department heads, and an analysis conducted by a mixed team that includes members of the management committee and the IT & Innovation team”.

Technical skills matter, but they are not decisive. “What we look for above all is a particular mindset: deep curiosity about innovation, and a willingness to get involved by investing time in activities that fall outside day-to-day practice”. The commitment is substantial: “It is an effort estimated at around 20% of overall time, especially in the early years of exploration”. LCA has opted for an inclusive approach. “Everyone at LCA knows what Prompt Lawyers do and supports them; conversely, Prompt Lawyers guide others in developing skills for interacting with AI”. Immersion must be collective: “Around 70% of our professionals have access to the same tools as Prompt Lawyers, because change has to be both rooted and radical”.

«As for the objectives, the target is operational: To implement the systems and ensure their effective use by 70% of our professionals across all work processes»



THE LCA PROMPT LAWYER TEAM

FROM LEGAL RESEARCH TO LARGE-SCALE ANALYSIS

Artificial intelligence is already operational across several practices. “If I had to identify where the impact is already tangible, I would mention the retrieval of notions and information to build legal positions and legal notes, and document review in large-scale analysis processes”.

The philosophy, however, is far removed from the rhetoric of efficiency at any cost. “We are aiming to improve quality, not to cut time”. In long, repetitive tasks “the machine – well coordinated with the person – offers a clear added value in terms of accuracy”. Today, “more than 50% of our professionals complete at least one work session each day using the AI tools available”.

AI is also entering internal processes: administration, timesheets, conflict checks,

and recruitment of collaborators. “The scope is expanding rapidly”.

CULTURAL RESISTANCE AND GOVERNANCE

LCA says it moved early. “We developed an internal solution that we have been using for years, before the advent of the major platforms”. That head start made it possible to address the central issues gradually: data security and training.

“The core issues were easy to anticipate: data security and training the next generation”. In this journey, the arrival of Professor Edoardo Raffiotta proved decisive: he coordinates a team dedicated to the firm’s internal AI regulation. “We set up a team coordinated by Prof Raffiotta, which has provided us with shared policies signed by all professionals”. The rules are

binding: “Each professional agrees to be guided by the firm in the process of adopting AI, using exclusively the tools and methods indicated”. The internal solution “resides and operates exclusively on storage that we own: a controlled environment where we run experiments”.


AISEEK, E-BIBLES AND THE OPENED “BOX”

The Prompt Lawyer project sits within a research-and-development path launched more than six years ago, with support from consultants such as Alessandro Musella of Vectis and the Sintia Lab team. Over that period, LCA has analysed more than 50 software solutions and has helped develop proprietary tools such as Aiseek, dedicated to analysing documentary know-how, and E-Bibles, for advanced management of digital case files. E-Bibles, Lonato explains, “is a project born before the development of AI solutions”, yet it remains central. “It generates bundles and virtual bindings that can be consulted by clients and colleagues”. It will be enhanced through integration with new tools.

Aiseek is different: “the product we have invested in most, through successes and difficulties”. It was created to “reorganise internal know-how, making it easier to consult and understand (one of the great Achilles’ heels of many law firms and in-house legal departments, whatever people may say). Then, the business intelligence projects developed over the years also deserve a mention. They were all demanding paths, with a few slip-ups, but their fundamental merit was that they made us open the ‘box’ for the first time”. The value, beyond individual tools, is cultural. “We removed that reverential fear of what one admires without knowing it, exploring the inside together with IT specialists and engineers who are now part of our team”. A process that has made the firm “more aware, to the benefit — including in terms of security — of the service we provide to clients”.

TRANSPARENCY AND 2026 OBJECTIVES

The relationship with clients does not change in substance, but it gains a dimension of dialogue. “We are totally transparent on the subject. We offer in-depth sessions to the in-house legal teams that approach us”. The idea is clear: “We have to move forward together”.

As for objectives, Lonato steers clear of software-house metrics. “Talking about ROI is more of a sales thing at this stage”. The target is operational: “To implement the systems and ensure their effective use by 70% of our professionals across all work processes”. A replicable model? “Certainly. But it requires financial investment and, above all, time.” Because “the time invested today cannot be capitalised in any other way than in the working methods of tomorrow”. 

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BREAKING NEWS

The alliance with Harvey: 200 lawyers mobilised

In recent days, Harvey AI Corporation and LCA Studio Legale announced a strategic collaboration under the banner of generative artificial intelligence, with the aim of integrating AI in a structured way into legal practice.

The project involves more than 200 professionals and aims to create one of the first major Italian working groups integrated with AI systems. Not occasional use, but advanced customisation and shared streamlining of processes across all departments, thanks also to the contribution of the in-house “prompt lawyers”, specialising in the design and validation of queries to generative systems.

“LCA is committed to integrating Harvey deeply within the firm to give its lawyers additional tools and transform the way they work,” says John Haddock, CBO of Harvey.

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MANUEL ALONSO, ROSSANA D'ONZA, JOSÉ MARÍA MÉNDEZ AND PAMELA MAFUZ

The legal “direction” of major film and television productions

Corporate structures, incentives, financing, rights and talent mobility: what happens behind the camera. *Iberian Lawyer* speaks with Baker McKenzie’s Media team in Spain

by ilaria iaquinta

“Roll camera, slate, action!” is the formula that opens each take on a set. But anyone who thinks that a major film production or TV series is just studio and cast is mistaken: it is also an industrial project. A corporate structure is designed, contracts and the travel of professionals from different countries are planned, tax rules and requirements to access incentives are aligned and, often, international financing documentation is “translated” into the local legal reality.

It is in that space —between development, production, financing and distribution— that the work of Baker McKenzie’s Media team in Spain sits, active for 25 years under the leadership of partner **José María Méndez**. Over this time it has participated in productions such as *Clash of the Titans* and has supported shoots in Spain for global titles such as *Game of Thrones*. More recently, it has been involved in productions including *The Walking Dead: Daryl Dixon* and *Asteroid City*.



The approach, Méndez explains to *Iberian Lawyer*, “is sector-focused and multidisciplinary, with the idea of functioning as a one-stop shop for the client”. In practice, the Media team includes tax partner **Manuel Alonso**, banking & finance partner **Rossanna D’Onza** and labour & immigration counsel **Pamela Mafuz**. The core comprises around a dozen lawyers and, when a matter requires it, draws on the firm’s international network for cross-border issues. The aim, in Méndez’s words, is “to try to speak the same language as the client” and ensure that the client “wastes as little time as possible”, something crucial in an industry where every day of filming counts.

THE AUDIOVISUAL INDUSTRY

According to Méndez, Spain’s appeal for a major production stems from a combination of competitive production costs, climate and a variety of locations —“we have sea, desert, mountains, fore-

sts, big cities”, as well as “wonderful weather”, he adds— together with logistics that make it easier to move crews quickly. Added to that visible side is another, less “scenic” yet equally decisive: the evolution of the regulatory framework. Méndez recalls that, over the years, the team has accompanied sector operators in dialogue with institutions to promote a more competitive framework aligned with international standards. And the interest, he stresses, is not merely perception. In fact, the latest report by the Spain Film commission estimates that for every euro incentivised the economic return reaches 9 euros. That confidence is also reflected in operations: “Spain has shown very significant seriousness” and that is why “whole seasons are now being shot in the country”, which “implies a very important sense of seriousness and legal certainty”, he adds.

When a major foreign studio decides to produce in Spain, the first operational question is which “vehicle” is appropriate to film, hire, pay and sustain the project financially. The corporate structure and contractual architecture must fit local require-



MANUEL ALONSO

ments and international expectations, including funders’ control and reporting demands, Méndez explains. In practice, this translates into engaging service production companies and suppliers, setting production-control safeguards and organising documentation to minimise unforeseen issues.

Tax is the other major pillar. Alonso explains that the production must “fit with the tax incentive” and notes that Spain distinguishes, in practice, between schemes for international productions and for Spanish/European productions, depending on creative and technical elements. In regulatory terms, the deduction under article 36 of the Corporate Income Tax Law (LIS) has a maximum cap of 20 million per production and, for series, 10 million per episode. In the Canary Islands, a specific framework increases percentages and limits, with sector references around 45%–50% and, in some cases, up to 54% on the first million. The nuance, he underlines, is not to “force” the rules, but to structure sensibly; for example, if the project has “European DNA”, consider its classification as European because it “facilitates sales in Europe”.



PAMELA MAFUZ

FINANCING

The financial dimension is also central. D'Onza explains that, in major international productions, funders participate with standards and documentation typical of the US market, often governed by California law. The challenge is to “land” the security structure in Spain, where the system is “much more formalistic”, she says, and to give the funder comfort even in crisis scenarios (delays, overruns or the need to take control of the project). In addition, the link between incentives and financing is direct: expenditure that qualifies for incentives is often more financeable because repayment of the financing depends on obtaining the relevant certifications, not on commercial success.


Another critical point is the chain of rights. “You have to ensure that all the rights necessary for the ultimate transfer to the studio are acquired”, Méndez summarises. In practice, this requires contracts and consents covering pre-existing materials—for example, music, archive materials or trade marks—as well as an orderly documentary set for distribution and insurability, including an E&O policy, where applicable.

Operationally, international talent mobility often becomes the point of no return, because if the team cannot enter, filming does not start. Mafuz explains that, in big-budget productions, professionals arrive from many countries and planning must cover permits, residence rules, prior presence in the Schengen area and the choice between entry with a passport, a visa or other sector-specific rou-

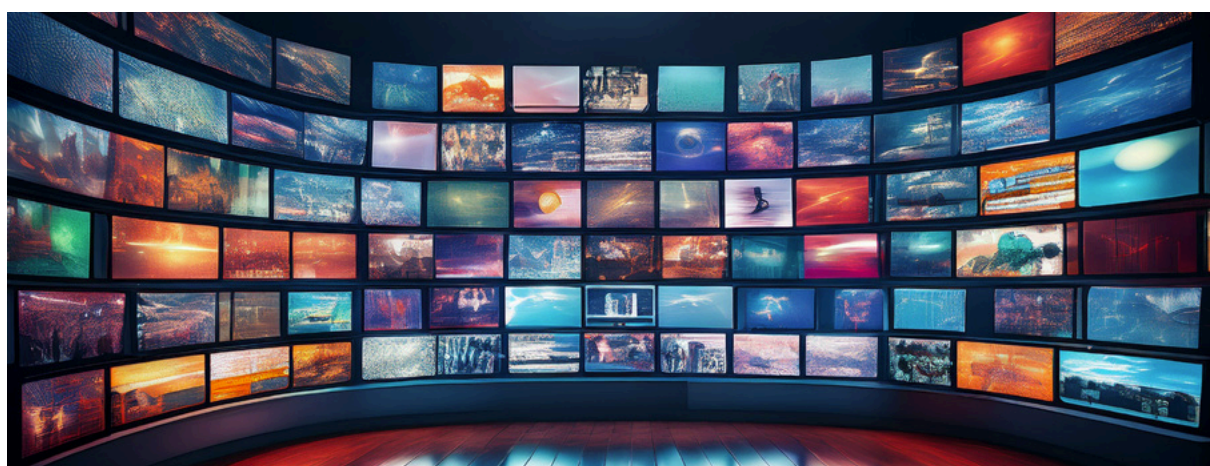
tes for the audiovisual industry. She also notes that since November 2021 the operational framework has become much more favourable for artists and technicians in the sector, reducing friction and timeframes. Immigration has moved from a framework poorly adapted to the sector to regulation that is very favourable and attractive.

A STEP FURTHER

Méndez specifies that the difficulty lies in aligning and proving that “the regulatory side, the tax side, the labour side, the financial side will work”. And he warns that reliability is decisive: “In some European markets, recent experience has shown that this alignment has not always been achieved and expectations regarding the perception of incentives have not been met.” In practical terms, there are times when non-negotiable deadlines weigh heavily, alongside the coordination of many actors and an administrative interlocution that is not always sector-specific.

To take matters a step further, the team points to four clear levers. First, reduce administrative friction and increase speed. Second, promote greater audiovisual specialisation within the Administration. Third, review the design of the caps when the aim is to attract high-budget productions. And finally, strengthen regulatory stability, especially around international mobility. On this last point, Mafuz sums it up: “I prefer a higher-ranking rule”, because “one order can be repealed by another”. The ultimate goal is to continue consolidating Spain as an international benchmark audiovisual hub. 

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Women in a Legal World

Women in Swiss corporate governance: the evolving ESG framework

by elisa garcia gonzalez*



Switzerland has traditionally addressed gender equality in the corporate sphere through a measured regulatory framework based on transparency and reporting rather than strict prohibitions or sanctions. In recent years, gender equality has moved beyond labour law and emerged as a component

of corporate governance and ESG accountability. Issues once treated mainly as internal employment matters - such as equal pay, representation in leadership and fair treatment in the workplace - are now part of a broader regulatory discussion on governance, reporting and sustainability.

From an ESG perspective, gender equality is closely linked to how companies structure their governance and account for their practices. Developments in Swiss law illustrate this shift, integrating equality considerations into the wider framework of corporate governance and sustainability oversight.

Equal pay and corporate governance

The legal foundation is not new. Article 8 paragraph 3 of the Swiss Federal Constitution guarantees equal rights for

women and men and expressly provides for equal pay for work of equal value. The Gender Equality Act, in force since 1996, gives effect to this principle by prohibiting discrimination in employment relationships.

What is more recent is the way Switzerland has embedded this principle in corporate governance processes. Since 1 July 2020, employers with 100 or more employees must conduct an internal equal pay analysis, have it reviewed by an independent body, and communicate the results to employees and shareholders. If the initial analysis shows that equal pay has not yet been achieved, the exercise must be repeated after four years.

This framework reflects a broader shift from individual discrimination claims towards preventive compliance within corporate governance. In practice, it requires companies

to examine and disclose remuneration structures more systematically. Pay equity therefore becomes not only a matter of employment law compliance, but also an indicator of the credibility of a company's governance practices in an increasingly ESG-oriented regulatory environment.

Gender representation in corporate leadership

A similar dynamic can be observed in corporate leadership. Swiss company law has introduced gender benchmarks for large listed companies: women should represent at least 30% of the board of directors and 20% of executive management. Where these benchmarks are not met, companies must explain the shortfall in their remuneration report and outline measures planned to improve representation. The provisions entered into force on 1 January 2021, with transition periods of five years for boards and ten years for executive management.

The Swiss framework therefore relies mainly on transparency and reporting obligations to encourage change and increase gender diversity in corporate leadership. Whether this approach will prove sufficient remains open to debate. According to the Federal Statistical Office, women accounted for 37.7% of employees in managerial or supervisory positions in 2025. While this represents progress, it still falls short of parity at

the highest levels of corporate leadership. In 2024, the gender wage gap in upper and middle management remained at 13.98%.

Overall, the Swiss framework reflects a cautious approach that relies on transparency and corporate governance mechanisms to promote gender equality, although disparities remain significant.

Gender equality and ESG reporting

These developments acquire broader significance in the reporting framework surrounding Swiss companies. Following the indirect counter-proposal adopted after the Responsible Business Initiative, certain large companies have been required since 1 January 2022 to publish an annual report on non-financial matters covering environmental, social and governance issues, including social and personnel matters, human rights and anti-corruption.

As companies must report publicly and systematically on these aspects of their activities, gender equality becomes part of how companies explain how they are governed and how they manage their societal impact. In this context, equal pay falls within the social dimension of ESG, while gender representation on boards and in executive management relates to the governance pillar. In practice, however, these issues are closely linked: claims of responsible governance

are difficult to sustain where inequalities in pay or access to leadership persist.

A framework still in progress

Seen in this light, the Swiss framework is more significant than it may first appear. It remains cautious and incremental, favouring transparency and gradual adjustment rather than coercive measures. Yet it has moved beyond purely aspirational commitments.

Switzerland now combines a constitutional guarantee of equality, a mandatory equal pay analysis for larger employers, gender benchmarks for listed companies and a national strategy aimed at advancing equality in professional and public life. The Federal Council adopted the Gender Equality Strategy 2030 in 2021, and the interim evaluation published in December 2025 recognised tangible progress, particularly in professional and public life, while also confirming that the strategy's objectives have not yet been fully achieved. The Swiss approach remains a work in progress. Gender equality has become an integral element of corporate governance and ESG accountability in Switzerland.

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**WLW Young & ESG Trainee Associate at Sidley Austin*

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Editor-in-Chief

aldo.scaringella@lcpublishinggroup.com

Editor

claudia.lavia@lcpublishinggroup.com

In collaboration with

flavio.caci, nicola.di.molfetta, ilaria.iaquinta, elisa.garcia.gonzalez

Group Editor-in-Chief

nicola.dimolfetta@lcpublishinggroup.com

Deputy Group Editor-in-Chief

ilaria.iaquinta@lcpublishinggroup.com

Graphic Design & Video Production Coordinator

francesco.inchingolo@lcpublishinggroup.com

Design Team and Video Production

andrea.cardinale@lcpublishinggroup.com
riccardo.sisti@lcpublishinggroup.com

Group Market Research Director

vincenzo.rozzo@lcpublishinggroup.com

Market Research Manager, Italy

guido.santoro@lcpublishinggroup.com

Market Research Assistant

elizaveta.chesnokova@lcpublishinggroup.com

CEO

aldo.scaringella@lcpublishinggroup.com

General Manager and Group HR Director

stefania.bonfanti@lcpublishinggroup.com

Group Communication and Business Development Director

helene.thiery@lcpublishinggroup.com

Group CFO

valentina.pozzi@lcpublishinggroup.com

Events Coordinator

chiara.rasarivo@lcpublishinggroup.com

Events Department

alicia.gonzalez@lcpublishinggroup.com

Group Conference Manager

anna.palazzo@lcpublishinggroup.com

Communication & Social Media Executive

alessia.donadei@lcpublishinggroup.com
fabrizio.rotella@lcpublishinggroup.com

Group Marketing & Sales Manager

chiara.seghi@lcpublishinggroup.com

Administration Office

cristina.angelini@lcpublishinggroup.com
lucia.gnesi@lcpublishinggroup.com

General Services

marco.pedrazzini@lcpublishinggroup.com
andrea.vigano@lcpublishinggroup.com

For information

info@lcpublishinggroup.com

Newsroom

flavio.caci@lcpublishinggroup.com
newsroom@lcpublishinggroup.com

Publisher

LC Publishing Group S.p.A.

Head office:

Via Savona, 100 - 20144 Milano
Registered office:
Via Tolstoj, 10 - 20146 Milano
Tel. +39 02.36.72.76.59
www.lcpublishinggroup.com

Iberian office:

C/ Rios Rosas, 44 A - 2º G.H
28003 Madrid, Spain
T: +34 91 563 3691
info@iberianlawyer.com
www.iberianlawyer.com
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