

# WHAT'S

**AVRIO** ADVOCATI  
Managing legal risks in Europe and beyond.

# HOT



WELCOME TO OUR  
FIRST EDITION OF  
"WHAT'S HOT"  
FOR 2019.



*WE WISH A VERY  
HAPPY NEW YEAR  
TO YOU ALL.*



**LATEST NEWS  
FROM AVRIO**

FIRST EDITION 2019



## Introduction from the Chairman

*Welcome to our first edition of "What's Hot" for 2019.*

Thanks to you, once again we have some very interesting reading in "What's Hot". Apart from the very welcome contributions from our members telling us about their businesses and the latest legal developments in their jurisdictions, this present issue of "What's Hot" will deal with the most hot topic of the moment – Brexit ("Brexit's impact on UK economy"). In addition to that, we will use this issue of What's Hot to remind you about the somewhat changed format of our conferences – the introduction of a Managing Partners' Forum and of informal Legal Sector Focus Group Meetings, and of other ways for our members to get to know each other and the work they do better and to learn from each other. With this goal in mind we are launching a new game that will last throughout 2019. We want to encourage as many of our members to take part in it and to try to win the prize – please read the rules of the game on the following pages.

We enjoyed two excellent conferences in 2018 thanks to our hosts Irwin Mitchell, UK and AVOPARTNER, Switzerland. For 2019 I can promise you more of the same - our host, Stephan Reimer (Dr. Bonn Und Kollegen) is doing an amazing job in preparing Avrio Advocati Spring 2019 Conference in Frankfurt. As for the Autumn 2019, Christian Sarailis (Sarailis Avocats) is preparing to show us the best Quebec City has to offer, along with providing some very high calibre speakers for the conference.

I would like to thank all of you who provided us with your contribution for this issue of "What's Hot". Again, I will use this opportunity to kindly ask you not to forget that "What's Hot" is aimed to be "our" publication, presenting both the work that we do as Avrio Advocati and as individual law firms. But for this, we need your constant contribution in order to keep our publication useful and up-to-date. The same goes for our website. So please, keep providing us stories that you wish to see published in "What's Hot" or on our website by sending them to Marina at [info@avrioadvocati.com](mailto:info@avrioadvocati.com).

I look forward to seeing many of you in Frankfurt in May.

As the sun rises on the New Year, I want to thank you all for all your continued contributions in 2018 that made Avrio Advocati stand out among other professional networks as a forum for business referral, peer-to-peer learning and personal development, and to encourage you to keep doing what you have been doing and in the year ahead of us – it is a huge pleasure for me to be a part of this network that cherishes such a strong professional and personal bonds among its members. Let's continue to support each other and in 2019. Happy New Year!!!

*Regards  
Philip*

**SAVE THE DATES:** *We are pleased to confirm that the dates have been set for our 2019 conferences:*

### **SPRING CONFERENCE:**

**Date:** 23rd - 25th May 2019  
**Location:** Frankfurt, Germany  
**Venue:** Flemings Selection Hotel,  
Frankfurt City



## **AUTUMN CONFERENCE 2018, FRIBOURG, SWITZERLAND**



Thank you to Benoit and everyone involved at AVOPARTNER for doing an amazing job in hosting our Autumn conference in the charming city of Fribourg Switzerland.

The conference agenda tackled some of the most interesting issues that affect jurisdictions worldwide -Mr. Ducommun, Partner in DCH Legal, Lausanne opened the conference by raising our awareness of numerous legal issues linked to innovation and new technologies, and after that our delegates had the great privilege to be walked through various aspects of sovereign debt restructuring, including Eurozone crisis and sovereign debt trends by Mr. Yannis Manuelides, London based finance partner with the international law firm "Allen & Overy" and one of the leading global experts on the matter.



On the second day Prof. Pierre Tercier spoke to us about some of the most challenging aspects of International Arbitration, and after that Mr. Rene Jenny, President of GIPR, Brussels, presented on the legal aspects of international lobbying and the specifics of lobbying at the EU Commission.

As for the social agenda, we all enjoyed exploring a city tour via Tchu-Tchu train and our dinners in beautiful restaurants our hosts selected for us.

Thank you once again to the entire AVOPARTNER team for being such excellent hosts!

## **SAVE THE DATES:**

### **AUTUMN CONFERENCE 2019:**

**Date:** 27th - 28th September 2019

**Location:** Quebec City, Canada

**Venue:** To be confirmed



## SPRING CONFERENCE 2019, Frankfurt, Germany

Avrio Advocati and Dr. Bonn Und Kollegen invite you to the Avrio conference to take place in the cosmopolitan City of Frankfurt, Germany, a global hub for commerce and a major European financial centre.

**The conference will take place from 23rd to 25th of May at the FLEMINGS SELECTION HOTEL, FRANKFURT CITY.**



As announced at Fribourg conference, this time we are starting with a formal program a day earlier. On Thursday evening we will initiate the Managing Partners' Forum – this forum is seen as the place where managing partners of Avrio Advocati member firms would gather, share their experiences in managing law firm and discuss various issues concerning law firm management (ranging from day-to-day to strategic aspects of management). Therefore senior partners of Avrio Advocati member firms are kindly urged to join us on Thursday evening and take an active part in brainstorming process design to benefit businesses of everyone involved.

As mentioned earlier, Frankfurt is the European financial centre. Headquarters of the European Central Bank are in Frankfurt. Thanks to the very impressive work of our host, Mr. Stephan Reimer, on Friday morning we will have the guided tour through ECB, followed by presentation of ECB officials. Having in mind security requirements linked to this visit, it is very important for all of you interested in visiting ECB to confirm your attendance and provide required documents and information at least 3 weeks before the visit. Formal registration and conference will start on Friday afternoon upon our return to hotel.

On Saturday, we will have program exclusively dedicated to Avrio Advocati internal matters. We felt our Spring 2019 conference is just the right time to start with something new – as of Frankfurt Spring 2019 Conference we are setting up Legal Sector Focus Group Meetings. The agenda of this group meetings would be informal – participants to explain to the rest of the group the work they do; what are the most interesting legal and commercial developments in their jurisdictions etc. The direct objective of setting this Legal Sector Focus Group Meeting practice is to improve attendees' knowledge of what the other members are doing in their area of practice – subsequently, in time this should lead to the increase commercial activity among our membership, but also will have positive effects on personal development of the attending lawyer irrespective of their seniority level within the law firm.

**For a start, we suggest that following 6 focus groups should be set-up:**

- i) Corporate/M&A;
- ii) Commercial/IP;
- iii) Property;
- iv) Personal injury/Damages;
- v) Dispute resolution;
- vi) Employment/Immigration.



All of the attending delegates would be able to participate in the work of more than one Legal Sector Focus Group Meetings, should they wish to do so. As it is very important to prepare the group meetings properly in order to achieve the best possible results of the work in groups, we would like to kindly ask you to inform us in which of the suggested focus groups you would like to participate to. Our General Secretariat, Marina, will be sending you reminder on this.

Another novelty reserved for Saturday is also part of getting-to-know-your-fellow-member-better process – also as of Frankfurt Spring 2019 Conference and onwards we will have 3 member firms presenting themselves and the work they do in 5-10 minutes time slots. Therefore, we would like to kindly ask you to inform us as soon as possible if you wish to have presentation of your law firm in Frankfurt. Please note that due to time constraint and need to be fair the opportunity to present shall be given on first-come, first-served basis.

## **NEWS** FROM SCOTLAND

You will find a new name from Scotland on our membership list - Wright, Johnston & Mackenzie LLP (WJM for short).

That's because CCW Business Lawyers Limited merged our business into WJM with effect from the beginning of December 2018.

Please visit the WJM website: [www.wjm.co.uk](http://www.wjm.co.uk)

As well as photos of Alison and me, you'll find details of what we, as WJM, can now offer our friends and colleagues in Avrio.

And, don't worry - we'll still be there at meetings. We looking forward to seeing you all again in Frankfurt - but meantime, Alison and I would like to wish you all a very successful 2019.

John



In our previous issue of **"What's Hot"** we had a pleasure to inform you that on our General Meeting in Brighton two new members were accepted to Avrio Advocati membership: Planinić, Šoljić and Partners from Croatia and Urquidy Abogados from Chile.

**Below is brief but very interesting presentation of our Croatian member firm. Once again, welcome Planinić, Šoljić and Partners!**

## **ODVJETNIČKO DRUŠTVO PLANINIĆ, ŠOLJIĆ I PARTNERI**

[www.oukp.hr](http://www.oukp.hr)



Law Firm Planinić, Šoljić & Partners Ltd provides all types of legal services, primarily legal counseling and legal representation to domestic and foreign legal entities, in accordance with the highest standards of legal profession, combining the knowledge and experience of our attorneys at law in different legal areas. Expertise, high professionalism, efficiency, legal creativity, confidentiality, personal approach and ethics characterize our work.

The founder of the law firm, attorney at law Krešimir Planinić, started his legal career in 1994. He gained the title of attorney at law in 1998 and established first the Law Office Planinić in 2002. Year by year the office expanded upon the arrival of highly qualified colleagues and partners, who made possible that today our law firm attracts prestigious clients and projects. Since 2009 team functions in the form of a law firm.

We patiently and steadily continue to work on personal and professional development of our personnel and build the team of excellent lawyers, in order to continue to provide corporate

legal services that are unsurpassed in excellence and value. Each person from the team, as well as each associate, contributes to the company with their knowledge and personality that create pleasant working atmosphere and excellent results. Despite of difference in personalities, talents and legal area of interest and work, flexibility and maximum respect of the client's interests binds us all and represents one of the top working principles to achieve clients' success. Professional responsibility for our legal services is always taken in conjunction with a human approach.

We specialized in the area of banking, investments, pension funds, audit, telecommunications, energy, trade, tourism and construction. Individual projects and projects of multi-national corporations are both included in our scope of work. Additionally, we overlook legal aspects of domestic and foreign investments and provide our legal services in the area of corporate buyout and restructuring.

**Lately we conducted or participated as a legal team in numerous transactions and acquisitions, of which we point out the following:**

- due diligence and legal counseling during the acquisition of part of one of the largest tourist complexes in Slovenia
- due diligence and legal counseling during the acquisition of one of the largest shopping centers in Croatia
- due diligence and legal counseling during the acquisition of one of the largest beverage producers in the Adriatic region
- due diligence and legal counseling during the acquisition of electricity production entities
- due diligence and legal counseling during the acquisition of distribution and gas supply entity
- due diligence in the acquisition of one of the largest meat processing industries in SE Europe
- due diligence in the acquisition of one of the largest entities in the production of automobile parts in SE Europe.

## NEWS FROM ŽIVKOVIĆ SAMARDŽIĆ, SERBIA

### Živković Samardžić celebrates 20th anniversary



Živković Samardžić, one of the Serbia's leading full-service independent law firms, has celebrated its 20th anniversary at an event, organized on October 4th at Dorđol Platz in Belgrade.

The firm that was founded in 1998, as a two partners boutique active in media and telecoms, insurance litigation, private and not-for-profit client practices, has grown in the meantime into the full service practice, 40 lawyers strong, endorsed with the highest rankings in several practice areas by the world's leading legal directories and highly respected by the clients, peers and in the community.

Živković Samardžić partners, associates and staff members were joined in their celebrations by alumni, colleagues and friends from several well respected Serbian law firms, business hubs, associations, members of the academia, in-house lawyers and executives from the number of Živković Samardžić clients, as well as the representatives of the media and the civil society that the firm provided advice to during the past two decades.

*"We are thankful to our clients for their lasting confidence and thankful to our lawyers for their dedication and hard work",* said Nebojša Samardžić, Živković Samardžić senior partner.

*"We intend to keep on building lasting relationships with our clients and preserve what makes us distinctive in this highly competitive market. And that has to be our ability to extend the culture of mutual respect, support and knowledge sharing, that we have built among our lawyers, into the relationships we maintain with our clients".*



## **LEECH TISHMAN** 2018 FIRM REPORT

Avrio Advocati member Leech Tishman is a law firm based in Pittsburgh, PA, with offices in Pasadena, CA; New York, NY; Chicago, IL; Wilmington, Delaware; and Florida.

### **NOTEWORTHY REPRESENTATIONS**

#### **CORPORATE**

- Reviewed contract for special events license for a printing company based in Scotland.
- Corporate structuring for a Bermuda-incorporated energy company, which is a subsidiary of a Chinese state-owned petroleum company; corporate matters included reorganization of overseas holding companies and operating companies.
- Represented a California-based company specializing in bearings, gears, and rolling functional components; researched whether the Department of Defense has delisted its vendor of commercial off-the-shelf components because of the vendor's Chinese ownership.
- Corporate advice regarding ownership restructuring for an Australian-based law firm.
- Represented a Chicago-based architecture, interior design, engineering, and urban planning firm in matters related to architectural and engineering design opportunities in Argentina.
- Represented a sports club based in Lisbon, Portugal regarding the publication of sensitive confidential and private information by a competitor.
- Corporate and transactional services related to the development of high-quality housing in Saudi Arabia.
- Represented a German-based scientific instrument company regarding a \$400,000 loan.
- Freight transportation arrangement for a global logistics company based in Australia.
- Drafted and reviewed existing corporate governance documentation for a technology consulting company in Istanbul.
- Negotiated amendment to a distribution agreement for a global medical technology company based in Sweden.
- Provided counsel to a Canadian company that invests in and operates cannabis cultivation licenses regarding the Pennsylvania medical marijuana program.

#### **MERGERS & ACQUISITIONS**

- Acquisition of specified oil and gas projects for an oilfield company located in China.
- Franchise acquisition on behalf of an individual in Australia.
- Acquisition of target entities via stock purchase transaction for a telephone services company located in Mexico.
- Represented an international company, specializing in fasteners and locks and located in Sweden, in an acquisition.

#### **RECENT ARTICLES, EVENTS, AND RECOGNITIONS**

- Intellectual Property Partner Danton K. Mak was featured in The Straits Times International Edition. The article, "US involvement in Belt and Road Initiative may start with California, says Chinese diplomat," discussed US involvement in China's Belt and Road Initiative.

- Aviation & Aerospace Partner Steven M. Taber was quoted in the Associated Press. The article, titled “New flight paths lead to airplane noise complaints across US,” discusses The Federal Aviation Administration’s continuing efforts at revising flight paths and procedures as part of its NextGen program, and resulting noise complaints from affected communities.
- Aviation & Aerospace Partner Steven M. Taber authored an article in an issue of The Legal Intelligencer. The article, titled “Energy-Dominance Agenda and Regulatory Challenges,” discusses the Trump administration’s intention to “support the growth of all fossil fuel industries by pushing for greater exports and lightening the regulatory burden,” part of its NextGen program, and resulting noise complaints from affected communities.
- Government Relations Partner Steven D. Irwin attended the American Middle East Institute’s 11th Annual Conference, held in Dubai, United Arab Emirates in October 2018. The conference, entitled “Disruptive Technologies & the Next Economy,” represented an extraordinary opportunity to showcase U.S. technologies and connect with influential decision-makers and investors in the Middle East.
- Leech Tishman served as Corporate Banquet Chair at the Hong Kong Association of Southern California’s (“HKASC”) 26th Chinese New Year Gala.

## RECENT LEGISLATIVE DEVELOPMENTS IN THE UNITED STATES

- Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (“WCAG”) 2.1 was published on June 5, 2018. WCAG 2.1 are stable, referenceable technical standards that explain how to make web content more accessible to people with disabilities. The EU web accessibility directive that came into force in EU member states on September 23, 2018 references WCAG 2.1 as the standard to be used. In the U.S., Section 508 has just been updated to WCAG 2.0 (entering into force January 18, 2018); now that WCAG 2.1 is the new official W3C recommendation for web accessibility, we expect that there will be an increasing expectation for U.S.-based websites to live up to WCAG 2.1.
- Recent Immigration changes will affect employers, employees, professional workers, and business owners. In November 2018, the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (“USCIS”) announced a notice of proposed rulemaking that may impact the H-1B visa lottery process as early as 2019. In August, USCIS posted a new policy memorandum that changed how those in F, J, or M visa status (international students and scholars) begin accruing “unlawful presence” (“ULP”) in the U.S. In July, USCIS announced two major policy changes that affect U.S. employers seeking to sponsor foreign workers for nonimmigrant visas.

## BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES IN THE UNITED STATES IN 2019

- As of November 2018, 10 states and Washington, D.C. have legalized recreational marijuana. An additional 33 states currently allow for the use of medical marijuana. As the cannabis industry continues to grow, opportunities will arise for various businesses, including investors and banks; doctors; ancillary service companies, such as advertising, packaging, and logistics; and real estate brokers, owners, or developers. Since each state determines the legality of medical marijuana, cannabis for recreational use, or both, we estimate that sound legal advice will become increasingly necessary for cannabis companies, as well as third-party businesses that work directly with cannabis companies or operate in the cannabis industry.

Irwin Mitchell prepared very informative and business-wise optimistic article on Brexit's impact on UK economy. Enjoy the reading!

## BREXIT'S IMPACT ON UK ECONOMY

Bryan Bletso, partner at law firm Irwin Mitchell, highlights the impact of Brexit on the UK economy and highlights what might be in store for the future.

The influence that Brexit will have on the UK economy is difficult to predict and the next couple of months will be crucial in determining what our future relationship with the EU will be like.

We recently held some joint events with leading think-tank, the Centre for Economics & Business Research (Cebr), on this topic and it was clear that irrespective of what scenario develops and what deal we are able to secure, the rate of economic growth here in the UK will fall in the short-term.

It is important not to be too gloomy though and in addition to helping clients deal with the many challenges that they will face, we are confident that there will be many new opportunities to explore.

If we look at the previous couple of years, there are signs that give me room for optimism. For example, the level of foreign direct investment (FDI) into the UK has remained high since the UK's decided to leave the EU. The level of FDI in 2017 into the UK was £50.8 billion and although this represents a fall from 2016, 2017's figure is in fact the highest since 2008.

The US remains by far the most important source of FDI in terms of job creation, followed by Germany and India.

The UK continues to be a highly attractive place in which to invest and it is clear that despite the uncertainty of Brexit, the economy has been very resilient and there are some recent examples of investment, such as Boeing's £40m capital injection into a manufacturing site in Sheffield.

City growth

Irwin Mitchell also published some research into which locations in the UK will perform best after Brexit. The UK Powerhouse report says Cambridge, Reading and Milton Keynes will see year-on-year GVA growth in the 12 months to Q2 2019 around the 2% mark. Places like Newcastle and Liverpool on the other hand are expected to see growth at below 1%.

Pointing to the growth in economic hotspots, the report says many locations in the South and East of England have increasing amounts of highly skilled jobs in the technology and knowledge-based sectors. It adds that work of this nature contributes much-needed research and innovation which drives productivity in competition with foreign goods.

These locations are also set to benefit from significant transport investment such as the East-West rail link and Crossrail. These connections will make it far easier for labour across the region to travel with ease for employment and business reasons - particularly important when free movement of labour from the EU is curtailed.

The report highlights that locations such as Leeds and Manchester are in a stronger position to adapt to the changing economic landscape following Brexit. It says that although they are vulnerable, they have a diverse and dynamic economic base. Both were in the top 10 for year-on-year job creation in Q2 2019.

It adds that while the North West and Yorkshire regions do present some important opportunities for long-term growth, much of this appears to be concentrated in cities that are already well-established. This is in contrast to the towns and cities in Southern England where economic activity has seen expansion into other cities in the area, supported by growing transport links. One of the recommendations from UK Powerhouse, therefore, is that the UK post-Brexit should focus on how investment can be used to encourage increased growth across the country.

## **Resilience**

The UK will ultimately be responsible for managing and securing its own trade deals and though there are clear opportunities, these will have to be balanced alongside the short term risks which will be realised shortly after the UK's official departure.

One thing, however, that the last decade has taught us is that despite the hugely disruptive force of the financial crisis, the UK economy has been incredibly resilient.

It is vital that the challenges we now face are tackled head on and that new opportunities that emerge are also taken advantage of. The UK is a global powerhouse and we need to stay positive and work together to ensure this remains to be the case.

While the report shows that many cities will face challenges in the aftermath of Britain's departure from the EU at the end of March, there are also opportunities, especially for cities which are willing to adapt.



## PARTICIPATE IN THE GAME WIN THE PRIZE

Guy Rulkin (redsky legal, Belgium) has an excellent idea on launching a new game for our members and having some fun. We liked the idea so much, so we decided to pursue it immediately having in mind that the beginning of the year makes the perfect game start.

As it is commonly known, we encourage all of our members to have as many face to face meetings with each other as possible, not only during the conferences but through the rest of the year. This is the best way to further build and deepen personal and professional relationship among our members.

### Therefore

we invite all of our members to capture moments of meetings with other Avrio Advocati members by taking a photo (necessarily with a glass, or even a cup/mug in their hands) and sending it to our General Secretariat at [info@avrioadvocati.com](mailto:info@avrioadvocati.com) throughout the year (conference time also counts!), until 10th of December 2019. Some of these pictures will be posted on a regular basis on the "Members Only" page of our website.

We invite all our members to send by 31st of January 2019 to the aforementioned e-mail address their estimate on how many face to face pictures we are going to receive until the game closing date.

The one member that is the closest to the exact number of photos received will be the lucky winner of the attractive prize we prepared (but we decided to still keep a secret!!!).

**The winner will be announced in our January 2020 issue of "What's Hot" and the prize handed over at our Spring 2020 Conference.**

Last but not least, a special prize will be awarded to the best "face to face meeting photo". All people in your firm can play, so please feel free to forward this e-mail.

Let the games begin!!!!

**FACE TO FACE #1**

