



LEGALINK
INTERNATIONAL BUT PERSONAL

THE INTERVIEWS
SERIES

#21

FEBRUARY, 2019

Alfonso López-Ibor

VENTURA GARCÉS
& LÓPEZ-IBOR ABOGADOS

VENTURA GARCÉS
LÓPEZ-IBOR



Alfonso López-Ibor

– VENTURA GARCÉS
& LÓPEZ-IBOR ABOGADOS

“I have seen the network grow and improve thanks to the excellent job of the chairmen and committee members.”

What is new with your firm?

This year has been important for us in terms of growth. The most important development is that we have just opened a new office in Valencia, on Feb 1st. Valencia is the 3rd largest city of Spain and the capital of a region of 5 million people, responsible for 11% of the Spanish GDP. The economy of Valencia is vibrant and export oriented. It will be a source of outbound/ inbound cross border work in the years to come.

The Valencia office will focus on medium export-oriented companies and the main practice areas will be commercial, tax and dispute resolution.

Another improvement is that In October we expanded our Madrid office, by doubling the space to 1500 m2.

The third important development over the past year is that the firm expanded certain practices areas and has created new ones. For instance, we have launched a Personal Data Protection practice in Barcelona by the hiring of specialist lawyers with standing

practical expertise. In Madrid we have employed new lawyers for our insolvency practice which is widely recognised in the market.

We have also created a new business on small/massive insurance claims throughout the territory of Spain. We are providing these services not only where we have offices but also in Galicia, Castille, Andalucia, and have the prospect of expand these services to the rest of Spain.

Finally, we are launching a new practice to advise Latin-American and Chinese investors interested in buying Spanish properties and benefit from the “golden visa” legislation. For obvious reasons several of our new clients requiring this service come from Venezuela.

Ventura Garcés López-Ibor is now composed of 45 lawyers including the Valencia lawyers (qualified lawyers and partners).

Which practice areas are the most in demand in your firm?

The bread and butter of our firm has been Commercial and M&A, a service where we have always been recognised practitioners for medium sized companies. Another practice that is also very significant for us is Commercial Litigation. After a long and deep recession, we are now seeing a new demand of services by private equity investors, as the Spanish market is offering good opportunities to buy companies at the present. We are currently rebuilding our practice in this area.

Aside from this, aviation, Insolvency and employment are very relevant practices where we are recognised as a leading firm.

Can you share an example of cross-border work with another Legalink member?

We have received more referrals in numerical terms than we have sent out. In economic terms we have sent out more significant work though. A good example is one of our major clients, a printing publishing company, that has generated a large deal when buying the Readers Digest in two stages. In the first stage, US, Finland and Sweden were involved and we referred them to Buchanan Ingersoll, HPP and the previous Swedish member. Two years later they bought the same business in Germany, Austria and Switzerland, so we referred the client to Rittershaus, Fiebinger Polak and Brastchi Ltd. This is the most significant referral. We have sent some work to Grasty Quintana Majlis and to Muñoz Tamayo y Asociados firms related to FinTech, and to Sérvulo in Portugal as well, and we hope to do it more in the future.

We have received work in Employment Law (Bernard O'Connor), some in Litigation but basically, we have worked with Mishcon de Reya in Finance matters, in M&A and Competition with Rittershaus and in corporate and other matters with Weightmans.

Locations for expanding

We have witnessed a very significant improvement in Latin America, although there are still countries to be covered such as Ecuador. One region to increase coverage is central America but broadly speaking the committees have done a very good work in this area.

Adding new members in Europe - which is on the agenda of the European Group - is a challenge. It would be interesting to also add members in the U.S.A. in cities like San Fran-

cisco, Chicago and Denver for example, where we have clients.

As regards to Legalink, are you happy about your firm's membership? What can we do better?

I am personally happy, and I have seen the network grow and improve thanks to the excellent job of the chairmen and committee members. I can only praise them for their successful efforts.

A permanent issue is the follow up between the conferences. This is a human challenge and one of the most defiant tasks and members firms are more responsive now than in the past. The network should not confine itself to meeting twice a year and it is important that the machine is kept working between conferences.

It is important that the network gets known by all the lawyers inside the firms. The Academy has been a great initiative and we have decided to send lawyers every year to these academies, not only with the idea that they will have a good time but also for them to know the advantages of the network. The initiative of the academy is very useful also to generate work.

Without question Legalink has a small secretariat compared to other networks which limits what the network can do. The one thing in the future is to step by step reinforce the secretariat to allow the development of additional initiatives.

What is your favourite thing to do in your spare time?

Tennis, gardening, reading and writing.