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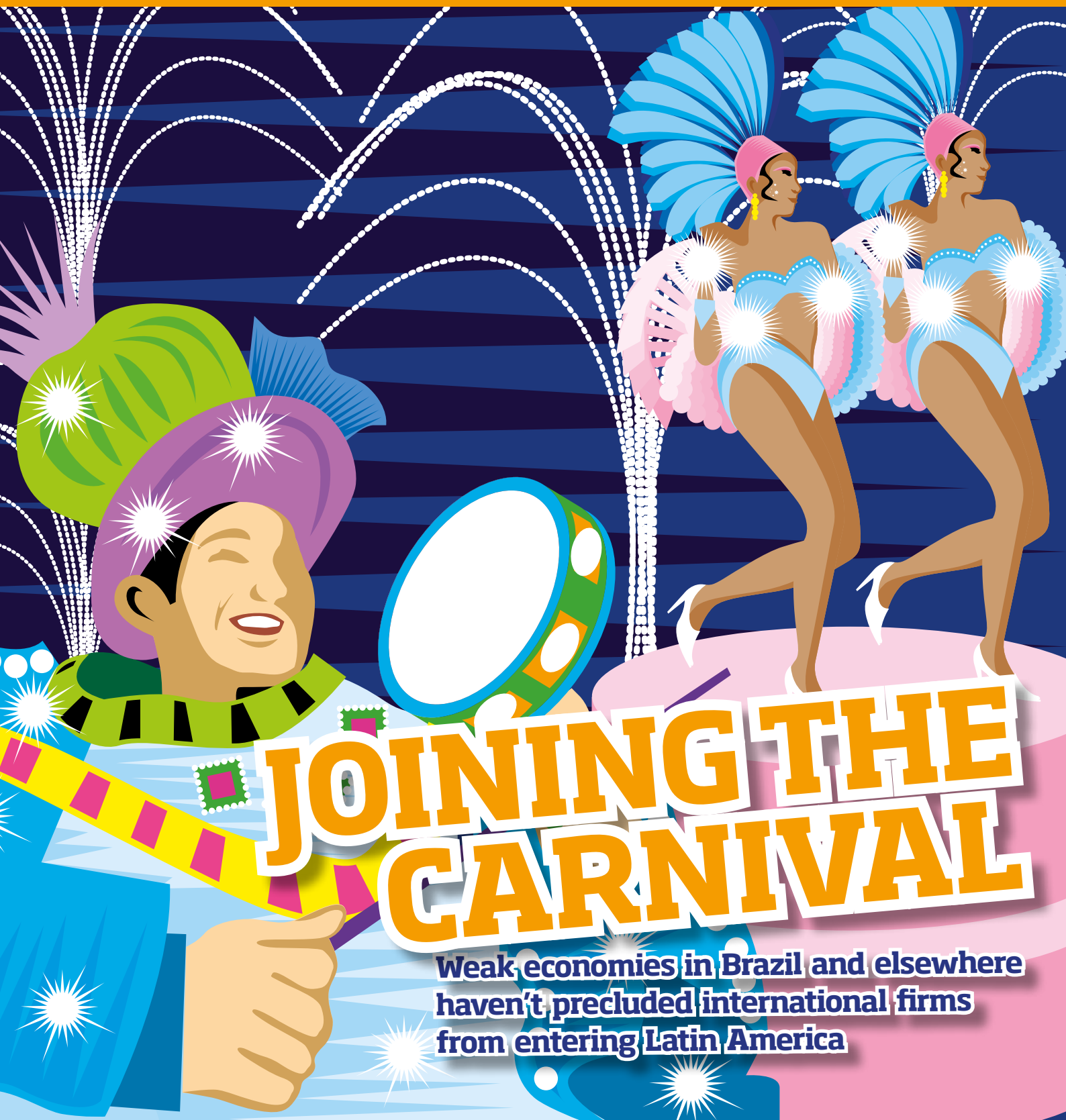
THE LATIN AMERICA ISSUE

COVER LATIN AMERICA CONTINUES TO LURE INTERNATIONAL FIRMS

FEATURE NEW REALTIES ARE RESHAPING LATIN AMERICA ECONOMIES

EXPANSION STRATEGIES FOR ENTERING LATIN AMERICA

BRAZIL NEW REGULATIONS UNDER BRAZIL'S ANTI-CORRUPTION LAW



JOINING THE CARNIVAL

Weak economies in Brazil and elsewhere haven't precluded international firms from entering Latin America

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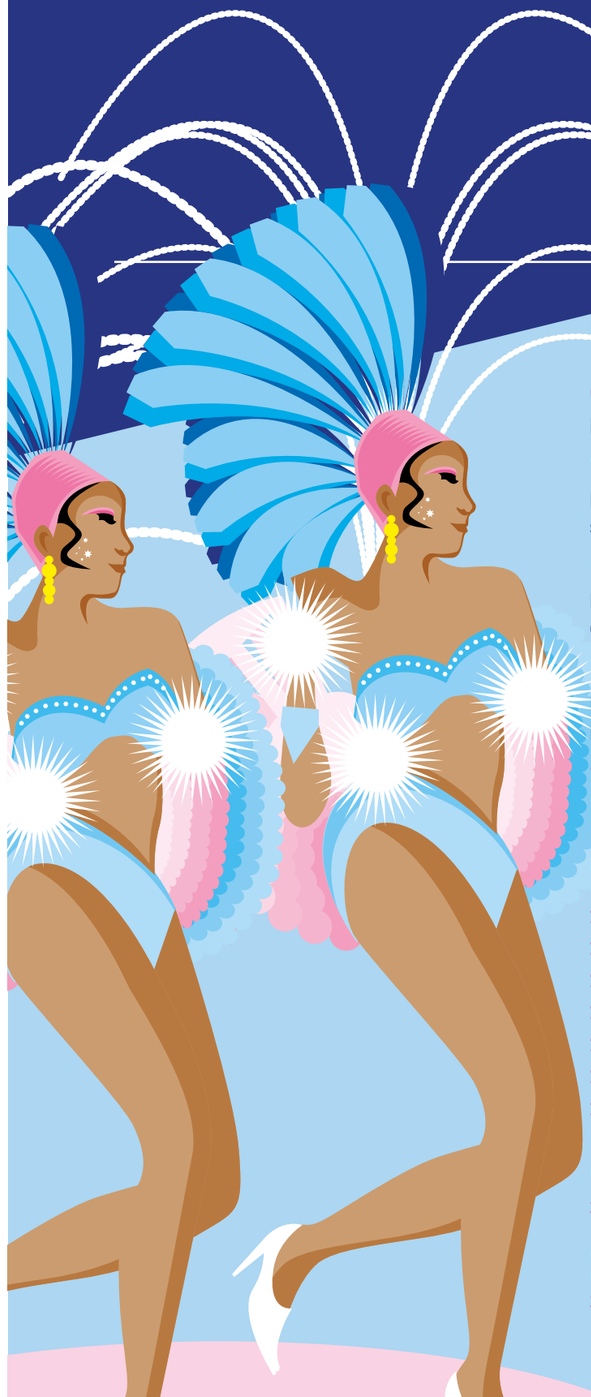

FOCUS ON LATIN AMERICA

NEWS

ON THE MOVE

BIG DEALS

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Contact us

Ellen Hayes
Publisher

Kevin Livingston
Editor-in-Chief
Mobile +36 20 382 1511
Email kevin.livingston@gcgrapevine.com

Julia Foresman
Managing Editor
Office +36 18 828 705
Email Julia.foresman@gcgrapevine.com

Caroline Wren
Art Director; designer
Email carolinewren@gmail.com
www.behance.net/CarolineWren

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Editor's note

You can call it a mess. You can call it an opportunity. You can argue whether the glass is half full or empty. But nevertheless, a lot of international law firms are optimistic about Latin America.

Despite sluggish economies and bleak financial outlooks the idea of a growth emerging marketplace makes some sense, at least to the optimists. While some firms are bailing, more and more are jumping in.

The main reasons are globalization and the fear of recession in larger markets like the United States and Europe, which has already led to some large companies like U.S.-based Carrier, a Connecticut maker of heating and refrigeration units to move production to Mexico.

Latin America was a topic of discussion at the International Bar Association conference in Vienna in October. The discussion centered on the arrival and business development of international firms in Latin America, from the perspectives of local and international firms, and of local, regional and global clients.

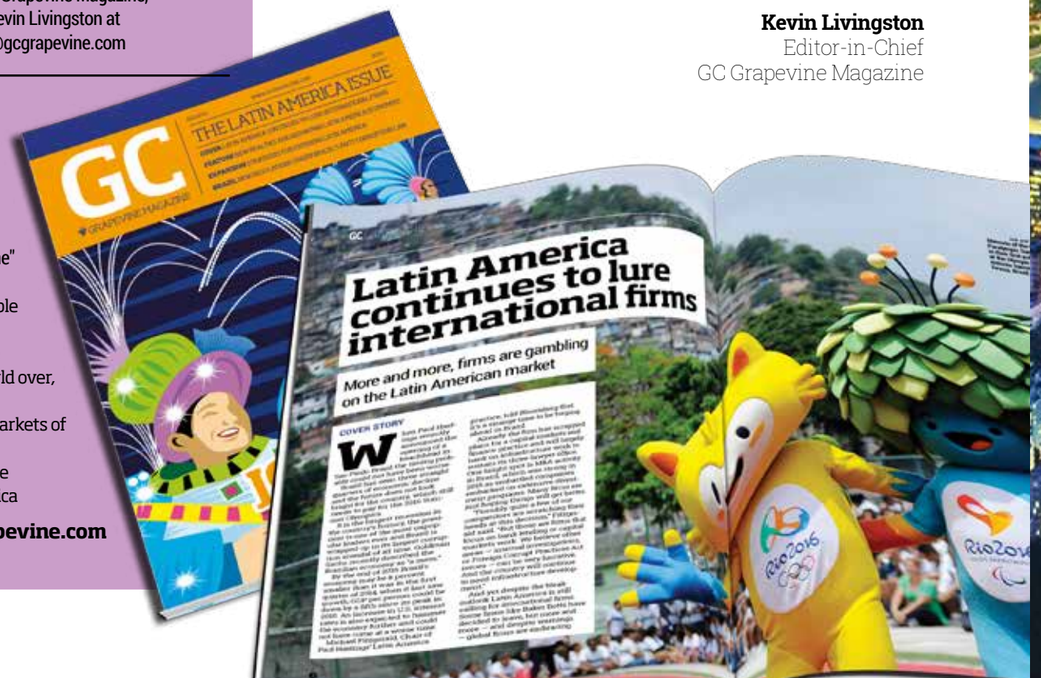
Latin American markets where international firms have a physical presence or where regional and international mergers have been announced was also talked about, with an emphasis on the Brazilian, Chilean, Colombian, Mexican and Peruvian markets.

As you will read inside, many firms are bullish on the strategy, even in places like Brazil, which is gripped by financial recession and political turmoil, firms like Paul Hastings continue to move in. Other firms have simply decided Latin America is not part of their overall strategy and work there can be handled without a physical office..

These are interesting times and Latin America, for now, is an interesting place.

Sincerely,

Kevin Livingston
Editor-in-Chief
GC Grapevine Magazine



Focus on Latin America

JUSTIN VIDAMO

Latin America continues to lure international firms

More and more, firms are gambling on the Latin American market

COVER STORY

When Paul Hastings recently announced the opening of a beachhead in Sao Paulo Brazil the timing probably could not have been worse.

Brazil has seen three straight quarters of economic decline and the future does not look bright for the country, which still needs to pay for the 2016 Summer Olympics.

It is the longest recession in the country's history, the president is one of the most unpopular leaders ever and Brazil is wrapped up in its largest corruption scandal of all time. Goldman Sachs recently described the Brazilian economy as "a mess."

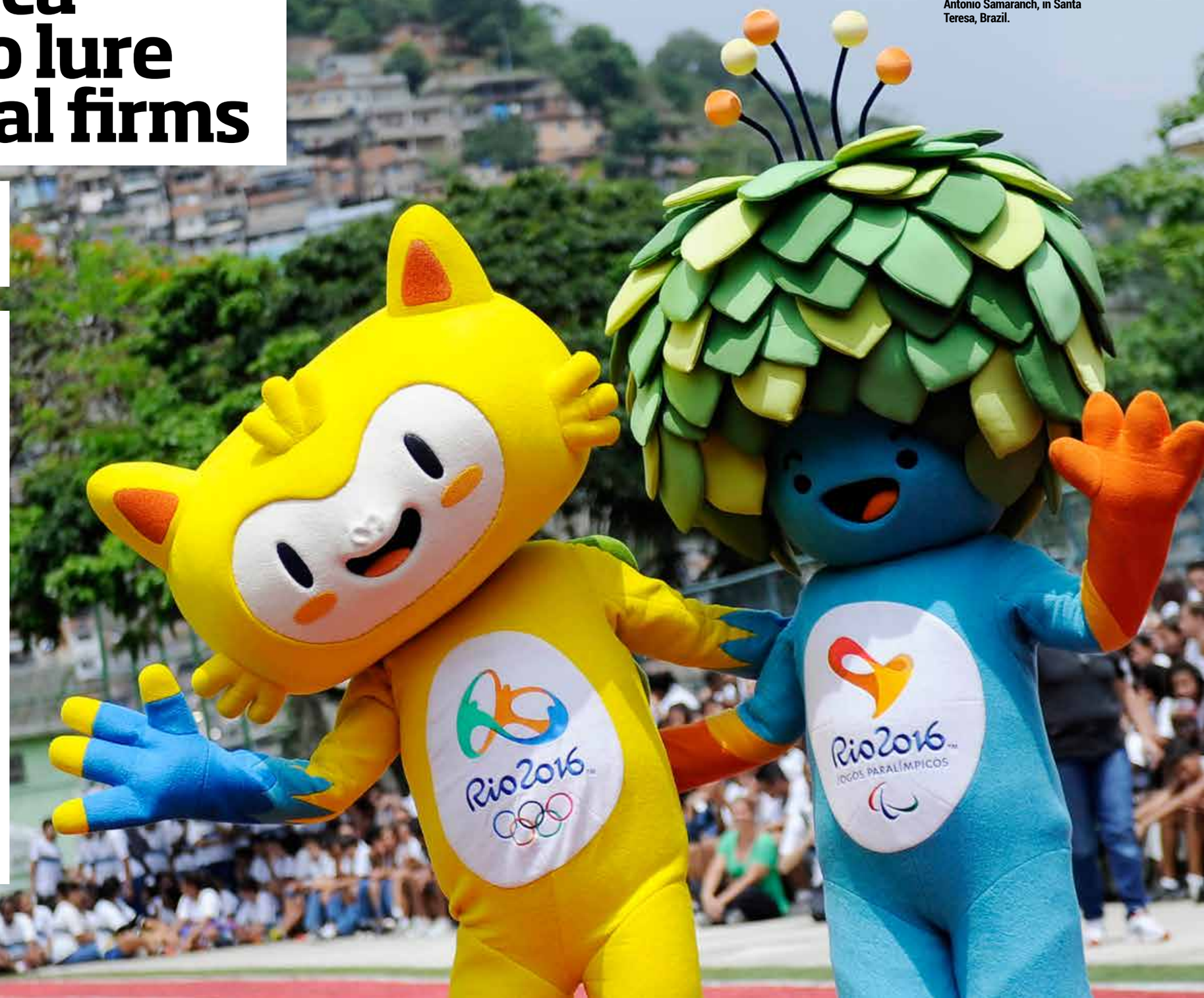
By the end of 2016 Brazil's economy may be 8 percent smaller than it was in the first quarter of 2014, when it last saw growth; GDP per person could be down by a fifth since its peak in 2010. An increase in U.S. interest rates is also expected to hammer the economy further and could not have come at a worse time.

Michael Fitzgerald, Chair of Paul Hastings' Latin America practice, told *Bloomberg* that it's a strange time to be forging ahead in Brazil.

Already the firm has scrapped plans for a capital markets and finance practice and will largely bank on infrastructure work to sustain its three-lawyer office. One bright spot is M&A activity in Brazil, which was strong in 2015 as embattled companies embarked on extensive divestment programs. Many firms are just hoping things will get better.

"Possibly quite a few of our competitors are scratching their heads at this decision," Fitzgerald said. "But those are firms that focus on bank lending or capital markets work. We believe other areas — internal investigations, or Foreign Corrupt Practices Act issues — can be very lucrative. And the country will continue to need infrastructure development."

And yet despite the bleak outlook Latin America is still calling for international firms. Some firms like Baker Botts have decided to leave, but more and more — and despite warnings — global firms are embracing



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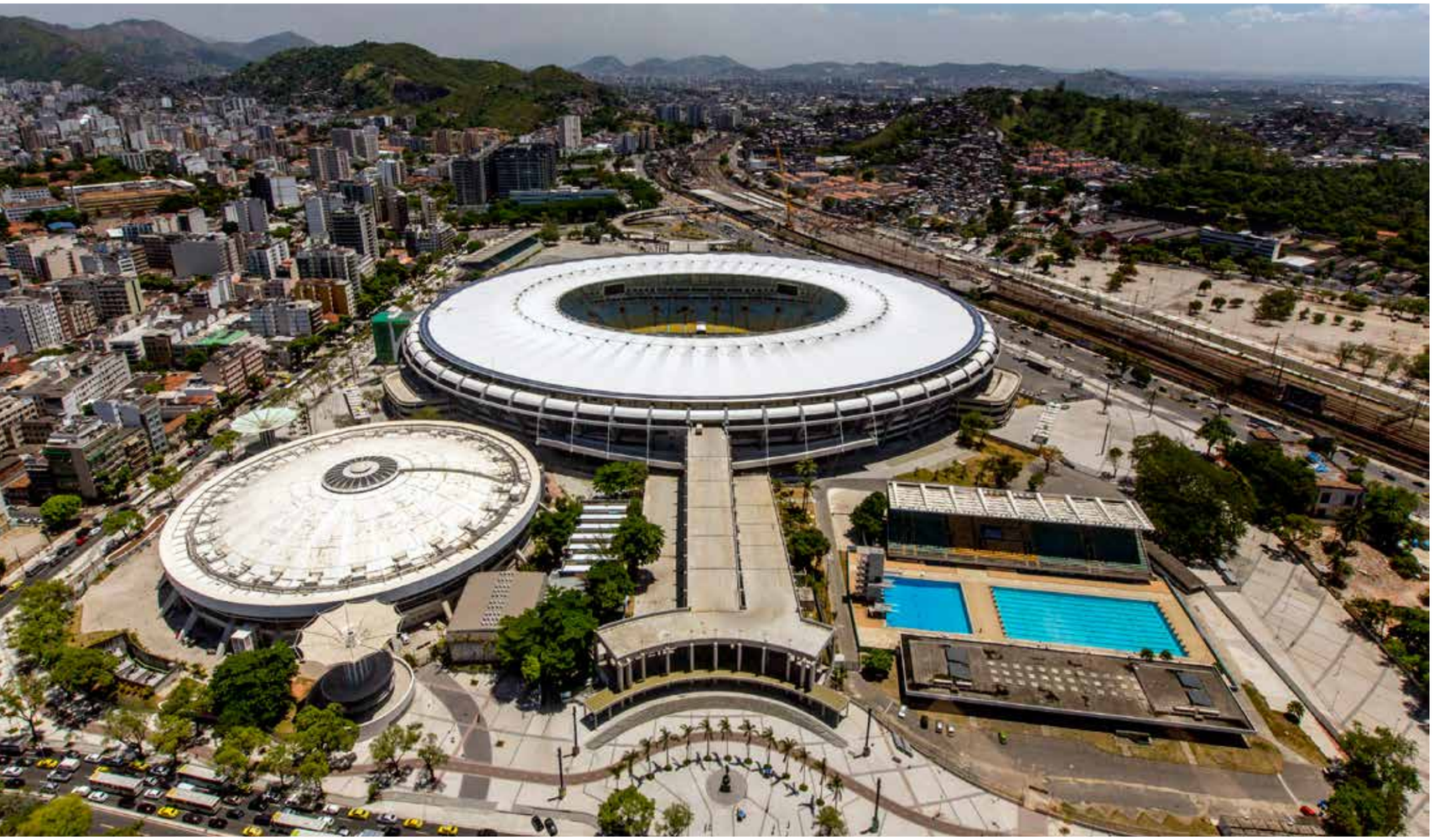
Mascots of the Olympic and Paralympic Games of Rio 2016 in their first public appearance at the Olympic Gymnasium Juan Antonio Samaranch, in Santa Teresa, Brazil.



DANIEL BASIL

The Maracanã Stadium (Estádio do Maracanã) officially the Estádio Jornalista Mário Filho, in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, will be the venue for the opening and closing ceremonies of the 2016 Summer Olympics and Paralympics.

North, Central and South America.

It is a tale that is playing out from Mexico to Argentina. The question is, why? The short answer is that many firms see Latin America as a destination market.

Dentons is one firm that is strongly committed to the region. Jorge Alers, the firm's Chief Executive Officer for Latin America and the Caribbean, said the strong upward momentum of Latin American economies presents public and private companies with tremendous opportunities.

"Fortunately, the quality and sophistication of the legal markets in Latin America and the Caribbean have improved so significantly during the last 30 years that today there are many law firms in the region that are competitive with the most elite firms around the world. In other words, there is no shortage of talented and experienced lawyers in the region," he said.

The topic was a hot one at the International Bar Association conference in Vienna in October. The discussion was described as a session that aimed to debate the arrival and business development of international firms in Latin America, from the perspectives of local and international firms, and of local, regional and global clients.

The idea was to take a closer look into the different Latin American markets where international firms have a physical presence or where regional and international mergers have been announced, with an emphasis on the Brazilian, Chilean, Colombian, Mexican and Peruvian markets.

And the take away from most speakers was, Latin America is still appealing.

According to panelists, the growth of Latin America as a destination for law firms comes down to law firms following their clients' mobility and their desire to expand operations and rising economies in the regions.

Compliance is also top of mind for general counsel extremely concerned about corruption and Federal Corrupt Practices Act (FCPA) violations. That opens many doors for law firms.

"You need to understand the needs of international clients and be global," said Pessoa de Araljo of Baker & McKenzie in London.

Sergio Galvis of Sullivan & Cromwell in New York – a firm that helped build the Panama Canal – was the speaker at the session and added, "There is a new paradigm. Globalization has always been around but now it exists with intensely domestic market growth."

"Law firms are making a footprint from one Latin American Country to another," said Hugo Baquerizo of McKinsey & Company in Bogota, Colombia. "Latin America is a market in and of itself and it demands attention. A few years ago it was Asia, before that Eastern Europe and now it is Latin America."

On the distinction between international and global, William Wood out of the Houston office of Norton Rose Fulbright has this to say:

"The whole world market has changed and the borders are disappearing. In Latin America we've signed all types of treaties but the investment by private enterprises across LATAM is driving the reality of the economy

"You will have all model of firms, global, regional, local and it is an evolution, Latin America is not that different, more similar to Europe. At some point firms will need a direct presence," he said.

Then again, some firms like Linklaters have a less ambitious but more selective LATAM Strategy. They had an office in Brazil, but closed it while still maintaining a limited presence for English & IS law deals. The firm, however, continues to have an interest in Mexico.

Back to Brazil, there is still hope that the Olympics might at least distract from the internal political struggles and cast a brighter light on the country in terms of investment and FCPA work.

According to Ronaldo Veirano of Veirano Advogados in Rio de Janeiro Brazil has been cracking down hard on corruption.

The largest scandal in Brazilian history — "Operation Carwash" — has led to hundreds of people being arrested, including senators and CEOs. Five major companies are linked to the crimes.

For legal service providers, FCPA and infrastructure might be a good start while waiting for an economic rebound.

"All I can say about Brazil is, there is no debt, it is full of natural resources and a really large consumer class," Veirano said. "If we look over a period of the next 10 to 20 years, we will continue to grow, we will continue to consume and we will continue to generate demand for many type of services. The long-term perspective for Brazil maintains positive. The next three quarters will be very rocky, but Brazil will continue to be one of the major economies together with China, India and Russia.

"Brazilians are remarkable in terms of the ability to make things happen," he added. "The level of entrepreneurs and creativity is something that helps the forward success. The World Cup is an example. Brazil is probably better prepared now. The Olympics will be an event in terms of sufficient readiness, but it will be an event that people will enjoy going to. When people look back they will say 'that was a perfectly organized event'".

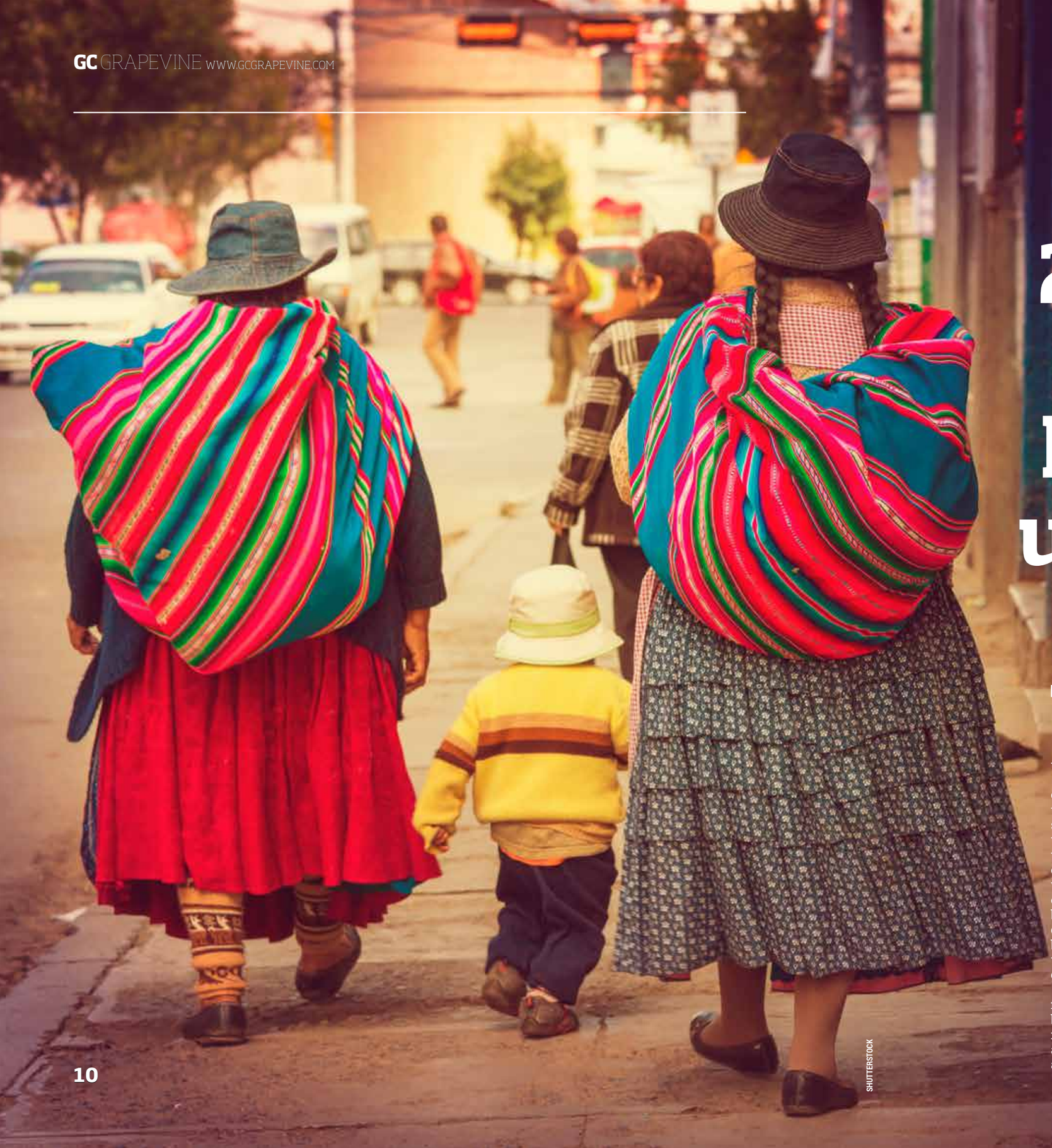
> "Latin America is a market in and of itself and it demands attention. A few years ago it was Asia, before that Eastern Europe and now it is Latin America.
>
> **HUGO BAQUERIZO**
> **McKinsey & Company in Bogota, Colombia**

Whether the Olympics will have a positive impact on foreign investment in Brazil, however, is up in the air.

"The main thing unfortunately at the moment regarding the political crisis is the Olympic games will be overshadowed," Veirano said. "I think it is going to be a temporary blip, there is maybe some legacy from the Olympic games, but the most dominating thing will be the political situation."

Call it a gamble or an opportunity. Latin America remains on the radar.

■ **KEVIN LIVINGSTON**
Editor-in-Chief, GC Grapevine Magazine
Kevin can be reached at kevin.livingston@gcgrapevine.com
Ellen Hayes reported from Vienna.



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LATIN AMERICA TRENDS

2016: Latin America living with uncertainty

New realities will shape economies

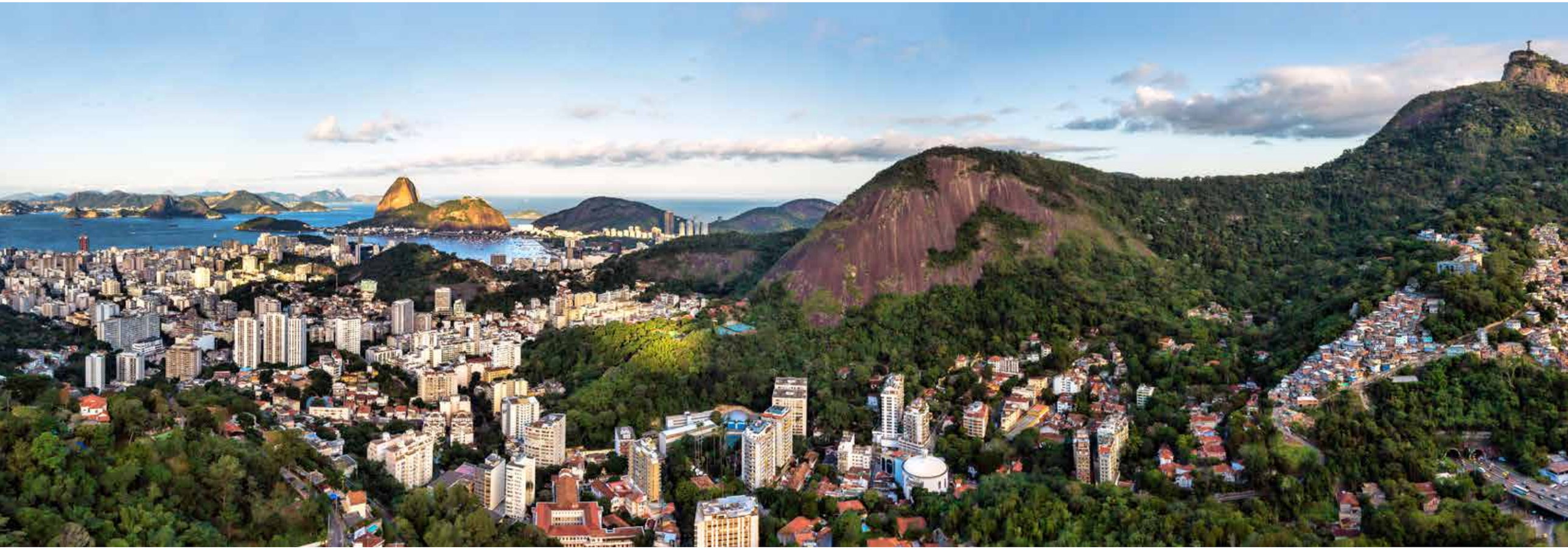
We are barely into 2016 and it's already clear that we've inherited much of 2015's tumult and uncertainty.

Over the past twelve months, conflicts destabilized regions, the global economy threatened stagnation, and voters went to the ballot box to shake up entrenched paradigms. In each of these trends, Latin America was no exception. In 2016, the outcomes from these events will become apparent, with leaders grappling to resolve conflicts both new and old and to reorient their countries' economies under new realities.

The past year's news has been filled with horrific stories: Syria's bloody conflict, terrorist attacks from California to Paris to Beirut, and Ukraine's grinding crisis against Russian backed separatists. Closer to home, we hear about the gang and drug violence that has transformed Honduras, El Salvador, and Venezuela into some of the world's most dangerous places. However, it's not all bad. There are some bright spots with Guatemala and Colombia's homicide rates continuing to improve. Similarly, Colombia's peace agreement with the FARC is set to wrap up in March, ending the hemisphere's longest running insurgency.

The global economic slowdown is a drag on all of these situations. The end of Latin America's commodity super-cycle and the collapse in oil prices (with a barrel of oil dropping below $30 in January) is wreaking havoc.

For markets, these low prices are driving volatility and an estimated $400 billion in investment cuts or delays for oil and gas companies. Similarly, for



CHENSIYUAN

Aerial panorama of Santa Teresa, a neighborhood of Rio de Janeiro, with the Christ the Redeemer, Tijuca Forest and Sugarloaf Mountain.

> But just because regional issues aren't debate headlines doesn't mean they aren't important and engaging with Latin America and will remain critical for both current officials and whoever wins the presidency.
>
> **ANTONIO GARZA**
> **Counsel at White & Case in Mexico City**

countries that relied heavily on the high commodity prices for revenue inflows, such as Venezuela, Brazil, and Argentina, the loss in income is crippling.

Yet the increasing pressure is also helping to shake up stale political dynamics. When combined with disgust over corruption and weak rule of law, Latin American voters have taken steps that diverge radically from the past.

Impeachment proceedings are underway for Brazilian President Dilma Rousseff, Guatemalans arrested a sitting president on corruption charges, Argentineans broke from the Kirchner legacy and elected President Mauricio Macri, and Venezuelan voters punished Chavismo by ushering in a majority of opposition legislators.

In Mexico, these economic and political forces are also present, but the big issue remains the country's rule of law. In an op-ed last March, I argued that 2015 should be the year of Mexico's rule of law, but there has been little progress to date.

There are still no traces of the 43 Ayotzinapa students who went missing in September 2014, corruption and conflict of interest allegations continue to dog the Peña Nieto administration, and Joaquin El Chapo Guzmán, the head of Mexico s Sinaloa Cartel, rode a motorcycle out of the country s most secure prison this past summer before proceeding to host actors Sean Penn and Kate del Castillo for tacos in his Mexican hideout.

Nevertheless, we shouldn't give up hope just yet.

Mexico is already starting off the year on a better foot. El Chapo is once again behind bars and now facing extradition to the United States. On the country's energy front, the latest oil and gas tender was not only transparent, but also highly successful, with a 100 percent success rate for placing the 25 fields.

Meanwhile, the country's overall economy is picking up with the United States' recovery, and is expected to grow steadily at 2.6 percent for 2016 and by over 3 percent in the following years. However, it's worth restating that without progress on strengthening Mexico's rule of law, these successes are taking place on shaky ground.

In the United States, this year's big news story will be the November presidential election. With this backdrop, discussions on Latin America's developments are likely to be overshadowed by U.S. domestic and national security issues — though some hot-button topics such as our diplomatic opening with Cuba and the migration of unaccompanied children from Central America could pop up from time to time.

But just because regional issues aren't debate headlines doesn't mean they aren't important and engaging with Latin America and will remain critical for both current officials and whoever wins the presidency.

Every new year brings the expected and unexpected, validating some predictions while simultaneously proving how imprecise our forecasts can be. However, with Latin America's policymakers grappling with both new and old problems in front of an electorate that is constantly demanding more from its leaders, I think it is safe to say that it's going to be an interesting year.

ANTONIO GARZA
Former United States Ambassador to Mexico, currently serves as Counsel at White & Case in Mexico City

Mr. Garza served seven years as the U.S. Ambassador to Mexico (2002-09), and is acknowledged as one of the top experts on U.S.-Mexico relations. He previously held statewide elected office in the U.S. serving as chairman of the Texas Railroad Commission, the lead regulator for the Texas energy sector, and earlier in his career served as Texas' 99th Secretary of State where he was tasked with serving as the state's lead liaison on border and Mexico policy. The Ambassador began his public service along the U.S./Mexico border as Cameron County Judge. He is a lawyer and currently serves as counsel in the Mexico City office of White and Case LLP.

LATIN AMERICA EXPANSION

Strategies for entering Latin America

More and more, big U.S. firms are expanding in Latin America

Despite economic slowdowns in certain parts of Latin America, the region's changing political and social climate is attracting U.S. law firms looking to be better positioned to do business where their multinational clients operate.

Holland & Knight LLP, Greenberg Traurig LLP, White & Case LLP, Baker & McKenzie, DLA Piper, Norton Rose Fulbrightand Mayer Brown LLP are among the firms with multiple offices in Latin America. As Latin America has stabilized, particularly in Mexico and Colombia, international law firms have opened in major commercial centers amid structural reforms.

Latin America is still considered an emerging market. Even though Brazil has a large economy, it has experienced a slowdown in its GDP. However, forecasts indicate other parts of Latin America are poised for opportunity and growth. For example, a World Bank forecast projects the Mexican economy will accelerate with GDP growth strengthening from 2.9 percent in 2015 to 3.5 percent in 2017.

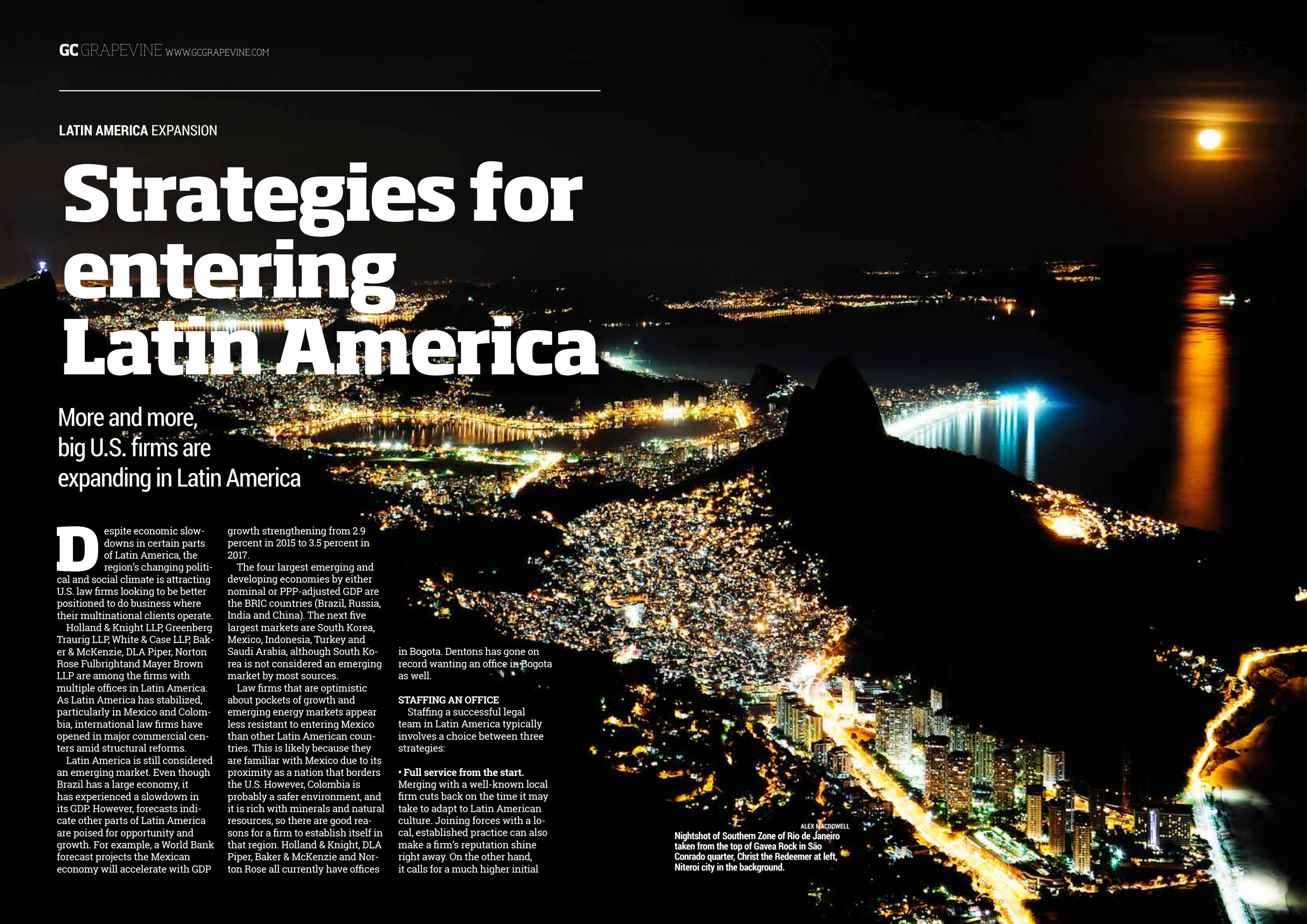
The four largest emerging and developing economies by either nominal or PPP-adjusted GDP are the BRIC countries (Brazil, Russia, India and China). The next five largest markets are South Korea, Mexico, Indonesia, Turkey and Saudi Arabia, although South Korea is not considered an emerging market by most sources.

Law firms that are optimistic about pockets of growth and emerging energy markets appear less resistant to entering Mexico than other Latin American countries. This is likely because they are familiar with Mexico due to its proximity as a nation that borders the U.S. However, Colombia is probably a safer environment, and it is rich with minerals and natural resources, so there are good reasons for a firm to establish itself in that region. Holland & Knight, DLA Piper, Baker & McKenzie and Norton Rose all currently have offices in Bogota. Dentons has gone on record wanting an office in Bogota as well.

STAFFING AN OFFICE

Staffing a successful legal team in Latin America typically involves a choice between three strategies:

• **Full service from the start.** Merging with a well-known local firm cuts back on the time it may take to adapt to Latin American culture. Joining forces with a local, established practice can also make a firm's reputation shine right away. On the other hand, it calls for a much higher initial



ALEX MACDOWELL

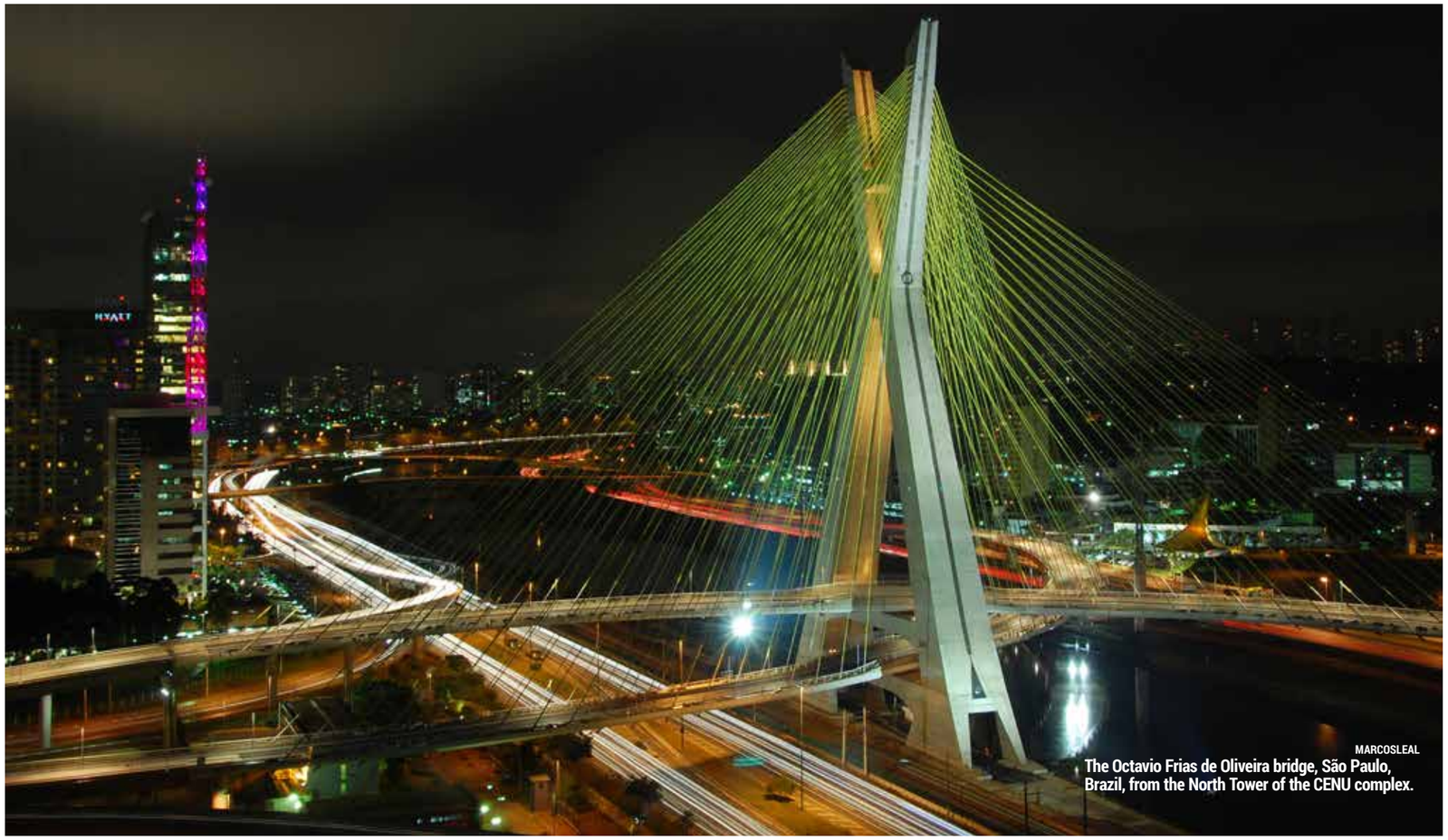
Nightshot of Southern Zone of Rio de Janeiro taken from the top of Gavea Rock in São Conrado quarter, Christ the Redeemer at left, Niteroi city in the background.

> As we sit on the cusp of Latin America's growth, there are international law firms exploring its countries to see which offer the most promise.
>
> **BRUCE LUBIN**
> **Lippman Jungers LLC**

capital outlay than a smaller-scale strategy. A prime example is the merger/acquisition in August 2014 of the prominent, 75-lawyer Mexican practice of Barrera, Siqueiros y Torres Landa with Hogan Lovells. In a press release announcing the move, Hogan Lovells' CEO Steve Immelt said, "2013 ushered in sweeping structural reforms for Mexico, which could unlock major potential for investors and companies in a broad range of industries that are looking to capitalize on the current environment."

• **Build on a boutique firm.** Acquiring a local boutique firm that focuses on either one practice or multiple practices, but is not full service, will provide a springboard for expansion into full service. Jones Day incorporated this strategy in 2009 by combining with the top-tier Mexico City-based law firm De Ovando y Martínez del Campo, S.C. The two firms collaborated for 20 years before combining forces. Jones Day has now expanded to the point where Mexico City considers it "full service."

• **Assemble a dream team.** This strategy involves various rainmakers from different firms bringing other attorneys with them from their old firms. We have not yet seen this approach executed in Latin America, but it has been done in the U.S. with varying degrees of success. Ideally, all sides can work together and do so productively and amicably, but it is contingent upon the way the integration process is approached. The challenge in Latin America, as it is elsewhere, is defining the rainmaker's role in the new entity: who is the leader and would the other rainmakers fall in line?



MARCOSLEAL
The Octavio Frias de Oliveira bridge, São Paulo, Brazil, from the North Tower of the CENU complex.

START WITH A STRATEGY

Before making a move to open shop in Latin America, it is advisable that law firms familiarize themselves with certain cultural barriers.

For example, overhead costs will vary. Prime office space prices in Brazil are considerably higher than in Mexico or Colombia and are on par with New York City.

Central American countries including Honduras, Guatemala and El Salvador may still be too unsafe to consider locating to. Chile and Peru are growing economies (Baker McKenzie currently has offices in Chile and Peru) and have GDPs that are on a much smaller scale.

From a regulatory perspective, it is easier to operate in Mexico and Colombia than in Brazil, where The Brazilian Bar Association (Portuguese: Ordem dos Advogados do Brasil or "OAB") prohibits international firms from practicing local law. While there are no roadblocks to opening in Colombia, it is one of the world's most difficult places to enforce a contract. According to the World Bank's latest ease-of-doing-business rankings, when it comes to contract enforcement, Colombia ranks 168 out of 189 economies globally because it takes 1,288 days, 33 procedures and costs 47.9 percent of the value of the claim to enforce an agreement.

Latin American labor and employment laws can also be tricky because they typically reflect the political history and values of the respective countries and offer disproportionate protections for employees. Foreign investors can face higher risks than they might in the U.S. and are wise to get advice from firms that have boots on the ground to navigate the legal and regulatory landscape.

MAKING THE COMMITMENT

Moving into Latin America may take a commitment of between three and five years before profits materialize. For many firms, this path is not the desired one, so they seek out alternative options for expansion. Yet, for other typically larger practices, there is enormous potential in Latin America's future and it is well worth the capital investment to see it through.

Of course, commitment is not defined merely by the number of years on the ground and the investment made. Latin America is rich with culture and each distinct culture has its own set of mores beyond the legal landscape. Building a presence in Latin America will not succeed if it starts out as a hasty decision to replicate what other law firms have done. Rather, the payoff can be generous for firms that take a long-term approach; understand the costs and regulatory landscape; and, most importantly, understand the importance of cultural acceptance and integration.

A LOOK AROUND LATIN AMERICA

• **Bogota, Colombia.** Bogota is not only bursting with natural resources, but also has the benefit of government stability. Additionally, it offers a comprehensive legal framework for business and its regulatory procedures are far more simplified than other countries in the region. Bogota has become a sanctuary for people from Venezuela, a country that likely sits on the largest oil reserve anywhere in the world.

• **Mexico.** Mexico is one of the largest economies in the world and is considered an emerging market. Law firms are eyeing international capital markets and the growth of public/private partnerships in the infrastructure sector. Energy reforms, in particular with respect to Mexico's oil industry, will also likely fuel substantial growth. With its open economy and its wide-ranging free trade agreements, the country is wide open for possibilities. Mergers with small-to-medium-sized firms tend to yield the best opportunities for foreign law firms.

• **Brazil.** Many law firms have entered Brazil in the past 10 years. Although it is an emerging market, success has been limited due to a slow-growing economy and the OAB, which poses tough regulations for new firms looking to open up in the region. Firms with an existing presence, however, are trying to retool and shift their focus to project finance and away from capital markets, an area where Sao Paulo, specifically, has not seen many deals in the past three years. It has also become increasingly difficult to open an office in Brazil because international firms are not able to practice local law. Another disadvantage comes from vast cultural differences and a different language (Portuguese) than what is spoken throughout the rest of Latin America (Spanish). However, law firms have been expanding into Rio de Janiero, which is known as the energy capital of Brazil.

Hogan, Baker Botts and Norton Rose have recently opened offices in Rio.

As we sit on the cusp of Latin America's growth, there are international law firms exploring its countries to see which offer the most promise. One way or another, a law firm must service its clients wherever their business takes them. Currently, many are bullish on Latin America as the next frontier. In the end, as always, the ultimate decision is dictated by whatever it takes to keep clients happy and for law firms to maintain their profits.

■ **BRUCE LUBIN**
Lippman Jungers LLC
Bruce Lubin is a senior managing director in the New York office of Lippman Jungers LLC, a global legal recruiting firm. With more than 10 years' experience as a legal recruiter, Lubin has placed groups and individual partners at top-tier law firms around the globe. He can be reached at Bruce@LippmanJungers.com.

Regulations under Brazil's Anticorruption Law: Practical implications

BRAZIL LEGAL CHANGES

Shedding light on effective compliance

Federal Decree 8.420/2015, the long-awaited executive decree issuing regulations under the Anti-corruption Law, sheds light on questions that can guide companies in adopting policies to mitigate potential risks in their interactions with government agents.

One of the more important matters dealt with in the regulations is the criteria that compliance programs must meet in order to be taken into consideration when determining penalties, as provided for in article 7 (VIII) of the Anticorruption Law. The criteria consolidate best practices internationally and, for the most part, are based on the U.S.'s experience in fighting corruption.

According to the regulations, some of the main elements that contribute to an effective compliance program are: senior management's commitment to the program, implementation

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> The Anticorruption Law provides for fines ranging from 0.1 percent to 20 percent of an offender's annual gross revenue.
>
> **ADRIANA DANTAS, ANNA CAROLINA DE OLIVEIRA MALTA AND LUIZ EDUARDO NOVAES DE ALCANTARA BARBOSA,**
> **Mussnich & Aragao Advogados**

of policies and procedures to mitigate identified risks, which must be reviewed periodically, periodic training programs, due diligence checks on third-party suppliers and prior to concluding corporate transactions and the authority and independence of the internal structure responsible for implementing the program, which must not only be accessible by channels of communication, but investigate non-compliant conduct and impose disciplinary measures, if need be.

If these criteria are met the compliance program can have a significant impact on fines applied under the Anticorruption Law, and both Federal Decree 8.420/2015 and the rules issued by the Office of the Brazilian Comptroller General (CGU – Controladoria-Geral da União) establish metrics that can guide authorities in calculating fines.

The Anticorruption Law provides for fines ranging from 0.1 percent to 20 percent of an offender's annual gross revenue. The uncertainty generated by this enormous range has been attenuated by the new regulations and the rules issued by the CGU.

CGU Instruction 1/2015, for example, states that the term "gross sales revenue" means gross revenue as defined under income tax legislation, less applicable taxes.

In order to calculate the percentage fine (within the 0.1 percent to 20 percent range) based on the offender's gross revenue, the authorities must take a series of aggravating and attenuating factors into account.

The attenuating factors can cut up to 10 percentage points off the fine and compliance programs alone can result in a four-point reduction. Moreover, if the offender can show that the company's management had no knowledge of the corrupt conduct and had made it clear that corrupt conduct would not be tolerated, and that the offender had not committed an offense of the same nature in the last five years, the fine cannot exceed 10 percent of gross revenue.

A compliance program that meets all the criteria under the regulations can therefore reduce the fine from 10 percent to 6 percent even before taking into consideration additional reductions for cooperation and spontaneously reporting the offending conduct to the authorities. Clearly, effective compliance programs can represent concrete benefits for the companies that adopt them.

In order to benefit from a reduction in the fine, companies must submit a Profile Report, containing a description of the company's internal structure, its interaction with government agents and its shareholders and a Conformity Report describing in detail how the compliance program functions. Authorities can also conduct interviews and request additional documents.

The CGU recently reformulated its "Pro-Ethics" program (Pró-Ética). Under the new regulations, companies can sign up on an annual basis to have their compliance programs undergo a detailed assessment. Companies whose compliance programs achieve a "passing grade" is entitled to use the "Pró-Ética" seal for one year.

With the recently issued rules and regulations, the uncertainties surrounding how compliance programs would be assessed have been largely eliminated and the benefits of the programs are now even more apparent.

These are challenging times in Brazil, and Brazilian authorities are making an effort to change the business culture. Companies that adapt quickly to the new climate will certainly come out ahead.

> Effective compliance programs can represent concrete benefits for the companies that adopt them.
>
> **ADRIANA DANTAS, ANNA CAROLINA DE OLIVEIRA MALTA AND LUIZ EDUARDO NOVAES DE ALCANTARA BARBOSA,**
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The content of this article is intended to provide a general guide to the subject matter.

Can crisis in Brazil create opportunity?

ANTONIO THOMÁS KOENIGKAM OLIVEIRA

Brazil continues to remain colorful, festive and optimistic about the future

RAFAEL BALERONI
Partner at Souza Cescon in Brazil
Rafael Baleroni is a partner in the Project Finance, Banking and Finance, Infrastructure and Government Relations and Insolvency and Restructuring areas at Souza Cescon. Mr. Baleroni has been particularly involved in several transactions in the oil & gas, shipping and energy industries.

INTERVIEW RAFAEL BALERONI

Overall, how do you view the current legal business market in Brazil?

The current legal business market has been affected by the downturn of the Brazilian economy in different ways. At the same time as work related to capital markets, infrastructure financing in general and in the oil gas sector specifically have been heavily hit, the crisis creates opportunities in restructuring, financing structures outside the capital markets, distressed M&A and M&A benefitting from the depreciation of the local currency. Mostly, it is a shift in the type of demand.

With Brazil set to host the 2016 Olympics what opportunities exist for law firms and business investors?

The Olympics represented a great opportunity specially for infrastructure related work, not only directly linked to the Olympic sites (such as arenas and the athletes village), but also for mobility projects, hotels, leisure, specially in the city of Rio de Janeiro. Other cities, in particular São Paulo, also benefitted from works pushed by the Olympics (and the World Cup), with the renewal of airports and improvements in hotel chains.

Law firms benefitted from activities in the public biddings and financings for the infrastructure, M&A in the hospitality businesses for the expansion of international hotel chains and real estate practices.

From a financing perspective, local public banks and local infrastructure groups were the main providers of debt and equity, which frustrated international lenders and investors. Now that most projects are completed, new opportunities arise for branding/marketing, leisure and tourism. Further, the economic downturn may result in financial restructurings of World Cup- and Olympics-related projects that assumed debts based on unfulfilled expectations of demand. The hospitality sector, in particular, may undergo further consolidation.

Brazil's economy has been falling for three straight quarters yet that hasn't stopped global firms from entering the market. What factors is most contributing to this desire to open offices in the country? What is the potential?

The sense is that, while the economy is suffering, the opportunities for law firms have shifted but not really diminished. Moreover, the Brazilian economy is already very connected internationally and should be more so in the future. Economic prospects also tend to become positive in a 2–3 year term, so that the economy shortfall is not seen as a deterrent for anyone expecting to include or expand its presence in Brazil aiming at the medium and long term.

Corruption scandals have made headlines lately. Should they be viewed negatively as a problem or positively in the sense that strong efforts are being made to curtail corruption?

While the news on corruption affects the short-term political and business environments, halting investments in certain sectors, there are still transactions going on, with increased concerns on due diligence and ethical matters.

Nevertheless, the investigations should be seen, overall, in a positive way, in the sense that legal and democratic institutions are working: there is freedom of press, and independence of the press, the public prosecutor office, and the Judiciary Branch.

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Despite the involvement of important political figures in power, the rule of law is being respected in the country. No alternatives outside of the constitution have been even considered and defendants are having their day in court, with grievances being heard by appellate courts. All of this is evidence that the robustness of democratic institutions in Brazil is ahead of several other developing countries, and the ongoing corruption scandal may result in medium-term benefits such as cleaner business and political practices.

Therefore, although the current general feeling may be pessimistic, Brazil has a history of successful and innovative financings, solid democratic institutions (when compared with other leading emerging economies) and offers plenty of opportunities for investors and financiers with a certain appetite for risks and creativity to overcome obstacles.

Where do you see Brazil in two years in terms of the economy and the legal market?

2018 will hold a presidential election and, perhaps, the ongoing lawsuits will be closer to final their stages. A clearer picture will exist and it is probable that the economy will show signs of recovery. Whoever has positioned itself properly will start to reap the benefits. Legal work may undergo a new change. ■

News

BRAZIL NEWS

Paul Hastings pushes into Brazil despite economy

Firm will focus on infrastructure and corporate compliance

Paul Hastings announced recently that it hired Brazilian energy and infrastructure project development lawyer Roberta Bassegio, a Brazilian to head its new office in São Paulo.

The firm originally announced plans to open the São Paulo office, its first in Brazil, in March. The office opening was delayed while the firm waits on final regulatory approval from the Brazilian government.

Previously, Bassegio was a partner at Brazilian law firm Veirano Advogados. Paul Hastings now has three lawyers lined up for its office in Brazil: Bassegio will be joined by Steven Sandretto and Arnaldo Rego, two lawyers now based in the firm's New York office.

Brazil is part of a larger Latin American strategy for Paul Hastings, which already operates in Mexico, Peru, Columbia, and Argentina, according to the firm. But a slumping economy has led the firm to dump plans for an initial focus on capital markets and project finance. Since the firm made the decision to launch a Brazil office, economic news out of the country has been terrible. Brazil's GDP has shrunk for three straight quarters. Economists have warned of a depression.

Still, Paul Hastings sees a silver lining with the upcoming 2016 Olympics.

Michael Fitzgerald, Chair of the firm's Latin America practice, told Bloomberg that it's a strange time to be forging ahead in Brazil.

"Possibly quite a few of our competitors are scratching their heads at this decision," Fitzgerald said. "But those are firms that focus on bank lending or capital markets work. We believe other areas — internal investigations, or Foreign Corrupt Practices Act issues — can be very lucrative. And the country will continue to need infrastructure development."

Specifically, Fitzgerald pointed to the 2016 Summer Olympics in Rio de Janeiro as a reason for betting on Brazil: Because the country's development bank doesn't have enough money to finance all the projects necessary to pulling off the event, the Olympics have become an opportunity for outside investors, he said.

"We think there'll be a lot more international money flowing into Brazil," Fitzgerald said. "We hope to capture a portion of that with our infrastructure experience, where Roberta is a specialist."

He told Bloomberg that he stood by an initial projection of a staff of 8-10 lawyers, though: "We are starting with three lawyers on the ground with at least two spending a lot of time there. It could grow to 8 to 10 depending on the level of business."

■ GC GRAPEVINE STAFF

LATIN AMERICAN NEWS

Baker Botts exits Latin America

In the midst of Brazil's latest economic turmoil, Baker Botts has elected to shutter its only office in Latin America. The Houston-based firm has been systematically downsizing its operations over the last several years amid deteriorating market conditions.

As reported by Law360, firm spokesman Stephan Hastings remarked: "In the end we had two lawyers who were involved with the Rio office — one has relocated to Moscow and the other is based in New York City."

The firm will continue to service Latin American clients remotely.

Despite Baker Botts' exit, other firms remain undeterred by stormy business conditions.

In their continued trek toward becoming a global powerhouse, Dentons recently announced their entry into Latin America with plans to merge with Colombia's Cardenas & Cardenas and Mexico's Lopez Velarde Heftye y Soria.

Also last fall, Paul Hastings LLP announced that it had hired an energy and infrastructure lawyer from a top Brazilian law firm to serve as a partner and chair of the firm's proposed new office in Sao Paulo. Michael Fitzgerald chair of the firm's Latin American practice group, noted that despite recent economic upheaval, "[Brazil] remains a key market with regional and global importance for the firm's clients."

However, no international firm enjoys the longstanding and expansive presence in Latin America more than Baker & McKenzie LLP. At nearly 750 attorneys spanning more than a dozen offices, Central and South America represents the fastest growing market for the firm.

According to Law 360, Claudia Prado, the chair of the Latin American region for Baker & McKenzie, noted that, "political instability may be part of what is causing other firms from expanding further in Latin America, but added that other international firms have not quite found the right models to succeed in the region."

■ GC GRAPEVINE STAFF

NEWS

Despite lifting of sanctions Europeans still cautious on Iran

The lifting of nuclear-related sanctions in Iran earlier this year marks a cause célèbre for a nation long shunned by the U.S-led Western business community.

At the same time, European companies continue to tread carefully due to remaining legal uncertainties that could take some time to clarify.

Specifically, many would-be European business partners are wary of running afoul of other sanctions imposed by the United States that have not been lifted. Indeed, according to a Reuters news report, "a lack of dollar clearing, the absence of an established mechanism for non-dollar sales, insufficient clarity on ship insurance and the reluctance of banks to provide letters of credit to facilitate trade are all giving cause for caution."

Once a seller of 800,000 barrels per day to European refiners, Iran's prominence has been eclipsed by oil from Arab states and Russia.

Russian Lukoil's chief executive, Vagit Alekperov and chief executive of Swiss trading house Mercuria, Marco Dunand, are just two of the many concerned voices among executives. Dunand indicated that European governments need to be considerably more forthcoming with advisories on how, for example, ship insurance and banking would operate before resumption of imports to Europe.

"As a European citizen," Dunand told Reuters, "I can probably trade it again provided I don't use U.S. dollars. But then if you use a euro-dollar conversion, does it become a gray zone?" he said.

It is widely anticipated that companies that purchased Iranian crude before the sanctions would resume purchases shortly. In anticipation of this boost and despite the glut of global supply, Iran has expressed an eagerness to recapture old customers and raise output.

Still, with aged equipment and a dearth of new legislation, industry experts foresee tight competition for investment with other producers. Some have indicated they would invest only if Tehran offered attractive terms materially different from its previous buy-back schemes.

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>
> **MARCO DUNAND**
> **chief executive of Swiss trading house Mercuria**

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NEWS

Law firms feel increasingly squeezed by clients, report says

In a desperate attempt to meet increasing client demands law firms are running the risk of damaging their reputations, according to a recent report by Steven Vaughan of Birmingham University.

According to Vaughn, three quarters of the lawyers surveyed by Birmingham University said that they are being forced into accepting more challenging conditions when they are commissioned by clients and that there is little room for discussion. Many said that the balance of power had shifted from law firms to their clients.

In some reported cases, banks have even suggested which law firms should represent other parties in deals. Some clients are also insisting that certain kinds of advice, including tax, should be given for free.

The report titled, "Research on lawyer-client relationships in large firms: Independence, reputation and risk report", is based on interviews with 53 senior corporate and finance lawyers from 20 of the largest UK firms. Source: Solicitors Regulatory Authority

■ GC GRAPEVINE STAFF

NEWS

DLA Piper restructures pay structure

DLA Piper has announced plans to redesign its pay structure, introducing a points system as the firm pivots toward a reward structure based on profits.

The firm is also introducing a separate lockstep for new partners as they develop their practices. The plan garnered the support of nearly 95% of partners in offices throughout Europe, Africa, Asia, and the Middle East.

Under a new banded system, partners will be assigned points matched to a profit share. The firm is hoping to create a more standardized process that is designed to reward the best performers.

Under the new system, the band extends at the top so that only the top performers can enter the highest-paid bands. The firm will also make changes to its bonus system, with the bonus pool shifting from 5% of the group's profit to a range of 4–8%, with no maximum for star performers.

Legal Business, Co-chief executive Simon Levine explained: "The benefit of a structured points system is that it brings clarity and order to your partnership remuneration system. Rather than everyone being on their own deal you have a set amount of bands. It's a meritocracy, but with a level of order, like in a lockstep. The difference is that you don't automatically go up for every year you've been with the firm, you go up or down based on performance."

Levine further explained: "We are very keen to give our new partners comfort and support as they look to build their business. It's a massive statement from the firm, and a testament to the partnership, that we want to nurture and support our senior associates to partner and beyond. We're trying to build a culture that makes people want to remain here for the long-term."

■ SOURCE: GC STAFF

NEWS

Baby Boomers dominate law leadership positions in the United States

Just 3 percent of law firm leaders are between 32 and 50

A recent study shows that roughly 85 percent of law firm managing partners ay top U.S. law firms are in the 50 to 65-year-old age group, according to research from legal marketer Heather Morse.dotshock

Her report also found that 12 percent of law firm leaders between 65 and 85 years of age and only 3 percent are between 32 and 50.

According to Dealbook, which has reported on the statistics: "a generational divide is percolating just under the surface [in law firms]. Rising associates in the millennial generation, worried about the future, are pushing up against the current law firm leaders, who are almost uniformly older men intent on staying for a few more years to top off very successful careers.'

Indiana University law professor William Henderson was quoted by Dealbook as saying that he is not aware of any law firms that have made what he called "a millennial shift". ■ SOURCE: ABA

> Rising associates in the millennial generation, worried about the future, are pushing up against the current law firm leaders
>
> **DEALBOOK**

NEWS

Study suggests seismic legal industry shift: Are robot lawyers on the way?

Altman Weil's 'Law Firms in Transition Survey' suggests a potential retirement crisis, a growing threat from non-traditional competitors and an increased belief in the ability of AI to carry out work currently done by people.

Legal consulting company Altman Weil surveyed managing partners and chairs of 320 US law firms with 50 or more lawyers. The survey found that although in 63 percent of law firms, partners aged 60 or older control at least one quarter of total revenue, only 31 percent of law firms have a formal succession planning process. It's not clear who, or what, will replace them, as around 60 percent of responding firms said that they expect first-year associate classes to continue shrinking.

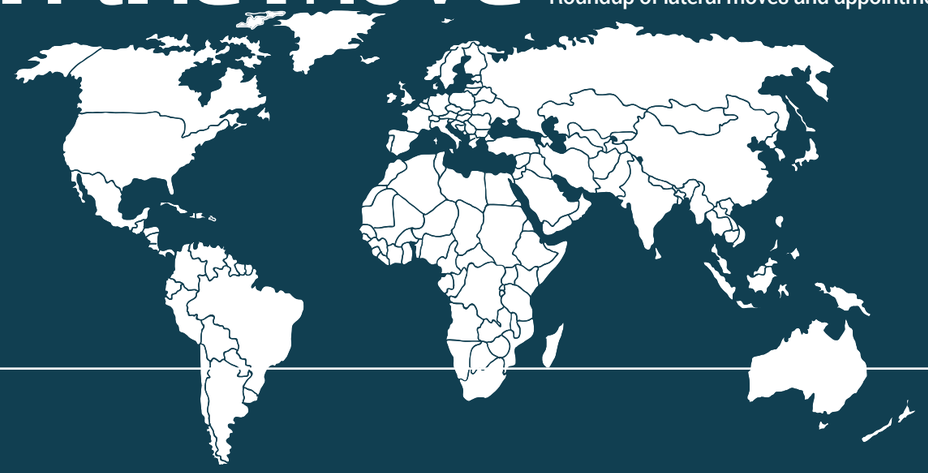
Non-traditional competitors are also actively taking business from law firms and the threat they pose is believed to be growing. Sixty-seven percent say they are losing business to corporate law departments that are legal work inhouse, while a further 24 percent see this as a potential threat. Furthermore, 24 percent responded they are currently losing work to client technology solutions, with another 42 percent viewing this as a potential threat to their firms' business.

The report also suggested an increasing belief in the ability of technology to perform work currently done by people. Only 20 percent of those surveyed this year insisted computers could never replace human practitioners, while the figure was 46 percent in 2011.

■ SOURCES: BLOOMBERG BNA; ALTMAN WEIL

On the move

Roundup of lateral moves and appointments



Law firm moves

French firm Jeanet expands in Budapest

As of January 2016, Kornél Szabó has joined the Jeantet Budapest team in order to reinforce its M&A and Competition practices. Kornél has more than 10 years' experience in magic circle law firms, in the fields of M&A, competition and state aid, including JEREMIE venture capital investments.

François d'Ornano, in charge of the Central European activities of Jeantet, commented, "Kornél's expertise and position on the Hungarian market enables our office to reinforce itself in the fields of competition law and state aid but also to further develop its Hungarian client base."

Jeantet's Budapest office, opened in November 2015 and it has a team of 12 lawyers covering all fields of business law, namely corporate transactions and M&A, real estate transactions, restructuring, competition and state aid, labor law, data protection, e-trade, litigation, finance and banking, and insurance law.

The team is managed by partner François d'Ornano, with the support of local partner Ioana Knoll-Tudor and is very active in the South-East Europe region with members of the team being qualified in different other jurisdictions and able to provide legal services in Hungarian, French, English, German and Romanian languages.

Jeantet is a leading French independent business law firm, established in Paris in 1924, delivering tailored, high-value added services, with a commitment to ethics and human values.

Jeantet offices in Paris, Casablanca, Luxembourg and Geneva, together with its offices in Budapest and Kiev, have more than 130 attorneys, including 30 partners.

Igor Lozenko joins Avellum Partners finance practice as a senior associate

Igor Lozenko will be also involved in capital markets and debt restructuring projects. Igor focuses on cross-border finance, international capital markets transactions, debt restructurings and renewable energy. He regularly advises international and Ukrainian clients on a wide range of offerings, both debt and equity, secured financings, syndicated loans, project finance and trade finance transactions.

Mayer Brown adds Julian Lemor and Birgit Hübscher-Alt

Mayer Brown announced that it is continuing the strategic growth of its Corporate & Securities practice in Germany with the addition of Private Equity partners Julian Lemor and Birgit Hübscher-Alt in the firm's Frankfurt office. The partners will join Mayer Brown in spring 2016 from King & Wood Mallesons LLP, where Mr. Lemor is currently the leader of that firm's German corporate department. They both worked for SJ Berwin LLP since 2007, which is now part of King & Wood Mallesons. With their focus on M&A and corporate law, Mr. Lemor and Ms. Hübscher-Alt are also active in representing family offices and advise on corporate successions as well as complex restructurings of company groups and risk insurances with respect to M&A transactions.

Mayer Brown hires Perry Yam in London

Mayer Brown has strengthened its private equity offering with the hire of Perry Yam as partner and head of Private Equity in London. Yam's appointment is part of an ongoing global initiative to expand the firm's private equity offering. Perry, who was Head of Private Equity for Europe & the Middle East at Reed Smith, has considerable experience across many elements of private equity, including venture and development capital, buyouts and bolt-on acquisitions.

Stephen Levy joins Dentons as corporate partner in London

Dentons has hired corporate partner Stephen Levy who will be joining the firm in London from Pinsent Masons, where he had been a partner since 2006. As well as strengthening Dentons' leading M&A capability, Levy will work within its global private equity group and handle cross-border and UK M&A and private equity transactions, Levy has advised international and UK private equity funds including Kohlberg Kravis Roberts, H.I.G. Capital, Anchorage and Montagu Private Equity.

Matthew Arnold joins Dentons'

Dentons' financial markets and commercial disputes group has been strengthened by the arrival of Matthew Arnold in the Banking and Finance Litigation group. The team of 11 partners, 34 associates and 30 paralegals from Baldwin, led by Steven Mills and Clare Stothard, is predominantly focused on financial litigation and investigations work for major banks. They have experience of handling complex disputes for investment and retail banks and other financial institutions

James Moore joins Dentons as a senior business advisor

Dentons welcomed James Moore to join the firm as a senior business advisor. Moore will work in the Vancouver office and bring strategic advice to clients in British Columbia, as well as across Canada and around the world, according to the firm.

Baker & McKenzie adds James Thompson and Joanna Hewitt

Baker & McKenzie added James Thompson and Joanna Hewitt as partners to their office in London, which further strengthened its Corporate Practice, the firm announced. Thompson and Hewitt both have a wide range of experience with transaction and the additions are expected to enhance the firm's markets and corporate capabilities.

Baker & McKenzie welcomes Michael DeFranco

Baker & McKenzie welcomed Michael DeFranco as their global chair of the firm's Mergers & Acquisitions practice. Mr. DeFranco will be leading the Firm's 1,200 attorney strong global Mergers & Acquisitions practice and help to transform the firm's business around the world.

Baker & McKenzie appoints Costin Mihailescu

Baker & McKenzie appointed Costin Mihailescu as partner and Christian Reineby as associate separately to enhance the firm's M&A practice. Mihailescu and Reineby are both proficient in the area of Private Equity and their arrivals will be a great asset to the firm's M&A team.

Aldona N. Gorman joined Baker & McKenzie in Chicago

Baker & McKenzie announced that Aldona N. Gorman joined Baker & McKenzie's North American Compensation and Employment Law practice as counsel in Chicago, bringing more than 16 years of experience advising companies on effectively and competitively compensating their global workforce. Gorman advises multinational companies on the global implementation, administration and ongoing legal, regulatory and tax compliance of their equity-based and incentive compensation plans.

Bird & Bird appoints Paul Waszink as a senior associate

Bird & Bird appointed Paul Waszink to join their

Tech & Comms and Media sector groups as a senior associate in The Hague. Mr. Waszink will brings more than 15 years' experience in the industries, which is going to reinforce the firm's position as a top law firm in the related industries, the firm said.

Greenberg Traurig welcomes Paul M. Seby as Shareholder

Greenberg Traurig welcomed Paul M. Seby in its Denver office as Shareholder in the firm's Environmental practice. Seby has comprehensive experience in various types of environmental industries.

Jones Day appoints Julia E. McEvoy as a partner

Jones Day hired Julia E. McEvoy as a partner in the firm's Washington Office. McEvoy will work on the firm's Antitrust & Competition Law practice and will be in charge of advising senior DOJ and Obama Administration officials. The firm said the addition will enhance the antitrust team.

Jones Day addes Mark Crean as a partner to its Sydney Office

Jones Day added Mark Crean as a partner to its Sydney Office. Crean is going to work on the firm's Australian M&A Practice with his solid knowledge on mergers and acquisitions and private equity. The addition will empower the firm's ability to offer better service to its clients globally, the firm said in a statement.

Bryce D. Linsenmayer joins K&L Gates as a corporate/M&A partner

K&L Gates has added Bryce D. Linsenmayer as a corporate/M&A partner in the Houston office. He joins K&L Gates from Baker & Hostetler LLP. With a focus on U.S. and cross-border mergers and acquisitions and securities law, Linsenmayer advises issuers and investment bankers in public offerings, strategic partnerships, and domestic and foreign private placements of debt and equity securities. He also counsels clients on corporate matters in the energy, cyber security, healthcare, environmental and technology industries, and focuses a major part of his practice on advising corporate boards in insolvency and pre-insolvency situations.

K&L Gates adds three new partners in Sydney

K&L Gates has added three new partners to its Sydney office, welcoming corporate and transactional partners Nick Humphrey, Hal Lloyd, and Daniel Atkin. The three join K&L Gates with a team from Sparke Helmore Lawyers.

Nick Humphrey has more than 20 years of experience advising on a broad range of domestic and international mergers and acquisitions and private equity transactions.

Hal Lloyd has more than 20 years of experience advising corporate acquirers, target boards, private equity funds, distressed investment funds, investment banks and insolvency practitioners in both Australia and the United States.

Daniel Atkin is a corporate lawyer with a focus on M&A and private equity/venture capital transactions. His clients include a mix of domestic and international large corporates, private equity, venture capital and corporate venture funds, and emerging companies.

K&L Gates appoints real estate partner Chris Wille in Brisbane

K&L Gates continues to bolster its Brisbane office with the appointment of real estate partner Chris Wille. He joins K&L Gates from Holding Redlich Wille and advises major institutional property investors and developers on the various aspects of commercial, retail and residential property, including due diligences, acquisitions, disposals and development.

K&L Gates appoints Paul W. Sweeney

K&L Gates appointed Paul W. Sweeney as chairperson of the board of directors of public counsel in Los Angeles. Sweeney will be involved in the firm's commercial litigation practice and advise on business conflicts and breach of warranty claims.

K&L Gates's Warsaw office adds Gregor Ordon

K&L Gates's Warsaw office added Gregor Ordon as partner in the banking & asset finance practice and Adrian Jonca as a partner in the tax practice. Ordon and Jonca will bring comprehensive information to the clients in order to maintain close relationships with German, Austrian, and Swiss market leaders.

Garrigues announced that Víctor Baca in Lima office

Garrigues announced that Víctor Baca, a lawyer with almost 20 years experience, has joined the firm as Of Counsel, bolstering the administrative law team at the Lima office. He was previously head of the administrative law practice at Peruvian law firm Ferrero Abogados. Baca has acted as legal counsel on major projects, advising on the obtainment of enabling instruments, public procurement, promotion of private investment and on penalty proceedings.

■ GC GRAPEVINE STAFF

Big deals

Esin Attorney Partnership advises EBRD on its investment in Turkey's first corporate bond with TRLIBOR as its benchmark

The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) has investes in bonds issued by Ronesans Holding A.S. (Ronesans Holding), one of Turkey's largest construction and infrastructure companies.

Acting as an anchor investor, EBRD invested TRY 100 million in the TRY 200 million bond issuance, the first in Turkey to use the Turkish Lira Interbank Offered Rate (TRLIBOR) as its benchmark rate.

It is part of a larger TRY 500 million bond program of which two-thirds have already been issued. The capital raised will cover Ronesans Holding's funding needs and support the currency composition of Ronesans Holding's balance sheet. Investment in Ronesans Holding's bond issuance marks the first transaction under the EBRD's recently approved TRY 700 million program dedicated to supporting Turkish lira-denominated bonds.

"EBRD delivered very strong support for the Turkish economy as investments hit a record high of EUR 1.9 billion in 2015. Turkey reconfirmed its position as the top destination for EBRD finance. Hopefully, EBRD will continue to finance the Turkish economy and Turkish corporates in 2016 and this investment must be a solid sign of this expectation. We are happy and equally proud to have taken part in this first-of-its-kind transaction which underlines EBRD's commitment to support the Turkish economy," commented partner Muhsin Keskin.

A team of lawyers from Esin Attorney Partnership, a member firm of Baker & McKenzie International, advised EBRD on the bond acquisition. Partner Muhsin Keskin advised EBRD with support from Senior Associate Caner Elmas and Associate Deniz Erden in Istanbul.

The proceeds from the EBRD investment will be used for the construction of a EUR 342 million state-of-the-art hospital in Elazig, Turkey, under a PPP scheme, and also for refinancing a portion of the existing debt of Ronesans Holding's balance sheet.

■ GC GRAPEVINE STAFF

Dentons and WeWork Labs forge a relationship

Dentons, the global law firm, and WeWork Labs, the international community of innovative startups, have forged a relationship that will facilitate access to Dentons' legal guidance and specialized support for WeWork Labs members in New York City.

Lawyers with Dentons' Venture Technology group will be available to WeWork Labs members during office hours sessions at five New York City locations. In addition, Dentons will host legal and business related informational events for startups as well as provide thought leadership on relevant trends that are impacting the startup ecosystem.

"Dentons is pleased to support the exciting new ventures that comprise WeWork Labs' New York tech community," said Randolph Adler, partner and co-chair of Dentons' Startup Program." We look forward to working with WeWork's members and helping them navigate the multitude of legal and business issues related to operating, financing and scaling a fast-moving startup."

"We are excited about collaborating with WeWork Labs– working with startups and other emerging growth companies in the tech sector globally is our sweet spot," said Victor Boyajian, global head of the firm's Venture Tech practice.

"Entrepreneurs really gain from our unique global perspective and reach from hot spots from San Francisco, Silicon Valley, New York and London to Berlin, Shanghai and beyond."

Dentons' Venture Technology group is a top-ranked practice focused on technology and life sciences, with a core emphasis in digital media, mobile, adtech, data privacy and fintech. The Dentons team works with startups and later stage venture capital-backed emerging growth companies as they execute upon their strategic growth plans and drive to exit.

"We are delighted to be working with the Dentons Venture Technology team to enhance the WeWork experience for our Labs community," said Daniel O'Duffy, Director of WeWork Labs.

"Many members of the WeWork Labs community have global ambitions and will be sure to benefit from the international perspective and opportunities that Dentons' Venture Technology team has to offer."

-WeWork is a platform for creators, providing more than 30,000 members around the world with space, community, and services through both physical and virtual offerings and currently has more than 50 physical locations in 17 cities and four countries around the world.

■ GC GRAPEVINE STAFF