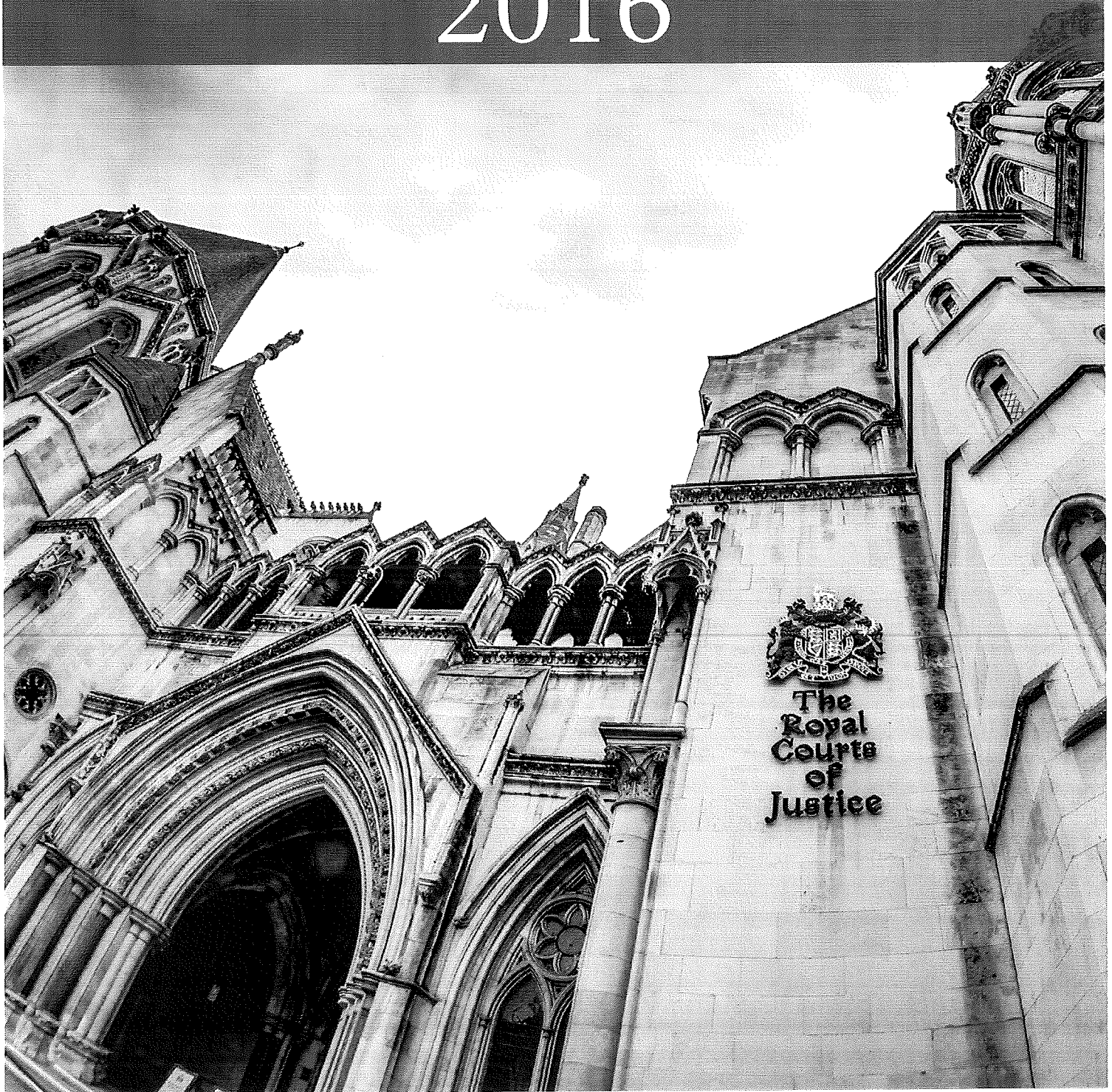
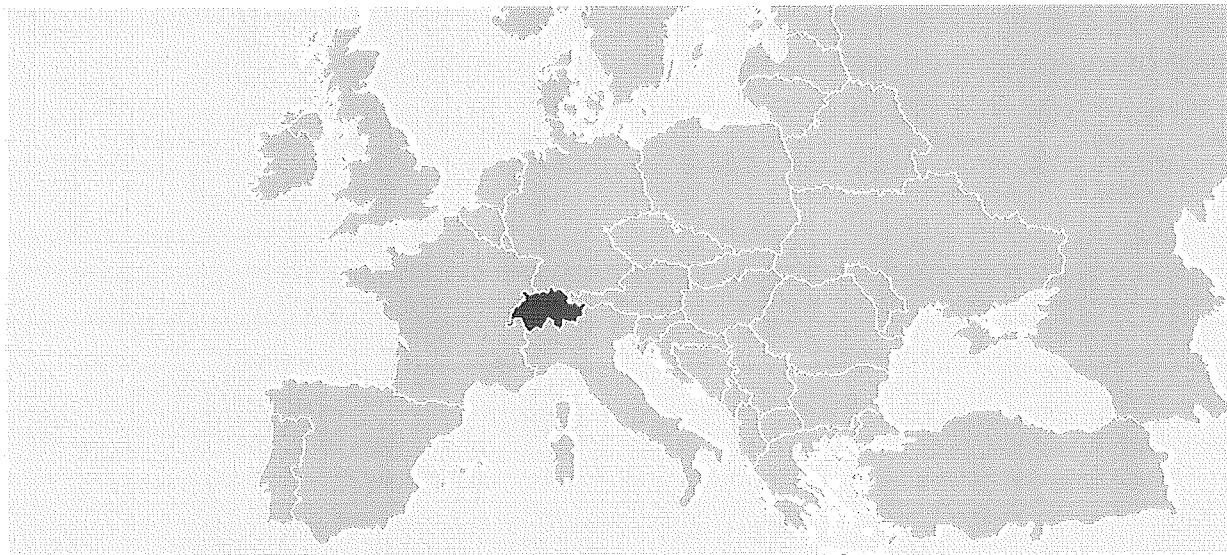


THE LAWYER
Market Reports

THE GLOBAL LITIGATION 50 2016



GENEVA



For a relatively small, conservative community, Geneva's litigation and arbitration market had a quite a racy 2015. True, total turnover for the firms surveyed by *The Lawyer* rose only marginally and lawyer numbers were fairly static.

However, Winston & Strawn checked out after 20 years in the Swiss city; Matthew Parish left Holman Fenwick Willan to set up his own arbitration practice; and, perhaps most significantly, Vanessa Liborio de Sousa left Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld to set up a Geneva office for Orrick Herrington & Sutcliffe.

Liborio was not the only partner to leave Akin Gump. Geneva managing partner Charles Adams was appointed as US ambassador to Finland last year. The impact was marked with revenue at Akin's Geneva office falling from \$6.4m to \$2.4m.

It means that by revenue Akin Gump no longer holds the number two spot in this year's ranking, as it did in 2014, but is now number four.

For Orrick, the new Geneva office was an ambition for a number of years, according to Liborio. The crux was finding Swiss lawyers who were "not scared of US firms" in terms of American practices' proactive culture and business development strategy.

The idea is to keep the Geneva office boutique-sized and add Swiss corporate law and tax law expertise.

Size-wise, Orrick is unlikely to impinge on the larger firms in the market.

Sidley Austin remains far and away the largest litigation and arbitration practice in Geneva with a total 21 lawyers of which



Partners report they are seeing more Russians choose Geneva for arbitration

eight are partners. That number was boosted in 2015 by the newly promoted Dorothee Schramm and Iain Sandford. Revenue fell slightly in 2015 from \$20.6m to \$21.6m.

The change in revenue was far more pronounced at White & Case where it rose from \$4.5m to \$7m. The New York-headquartered firm expanded its Geneva practice from a World Trade Organisation-focused office into international arbitration with the appointment of partner Anne Veronique Schlaepfer from Schellenberg Wittmer.

White & Case's new partner also gave the firm Swiss law capability, allowing it to cater for Russian and CIS-based clients.

Partners report that they are seeing more Russians choose Geneva for arbitration.

Although London's prestigious law courts are still a major draw for Russia's rich and their businesses, Switzerland's neutrality and its legal system's openness to arbitration means it is becoming more attractive.

Top Geneva litigation firms, ranked by lawyers

RANK	FIRM	NUMBER OF LAWYERS 2015	NUMBER OF PARTNERS 2015	REVENUE (\$M) 2015
1	SIDLEY AUSTIN	21	8	20.65
2	WHITE & CASE	10	2	6.96
3	BAKER & MCKENZIE	7	1	6.68
4	AKIN GUMP STRAUSS HAUER & FELD	3	2	2.36
5	ORRICK HERRINGTON & SUTCLIFFE	2	1	1.86
6	KING & SPALDING	1	0	0.94

Most firms agree that the busiest sectors in both 2015 and in this current financial year are construction and infrastructure, energy – courtesy of the volatile oil price – and post joint venture or M&A arbitration.

One trend that has emerged in Geneva during the past year is third party-funded arbitration which, according to Liborio, can give companies that cannot afford it access to justice. However, she says that third party-funded arbitration should be used with moderation, rationally and mindful of conflicts of interests.

On the flipside, it will be a long time before mediation becomes a trend. *The Lawyer* asked respondents about alternative methods of dispute resolution in Geneva and it appears mediation is unlikely to ever really take off, not least because Europe simply does not have the same skilled lawyers found in other

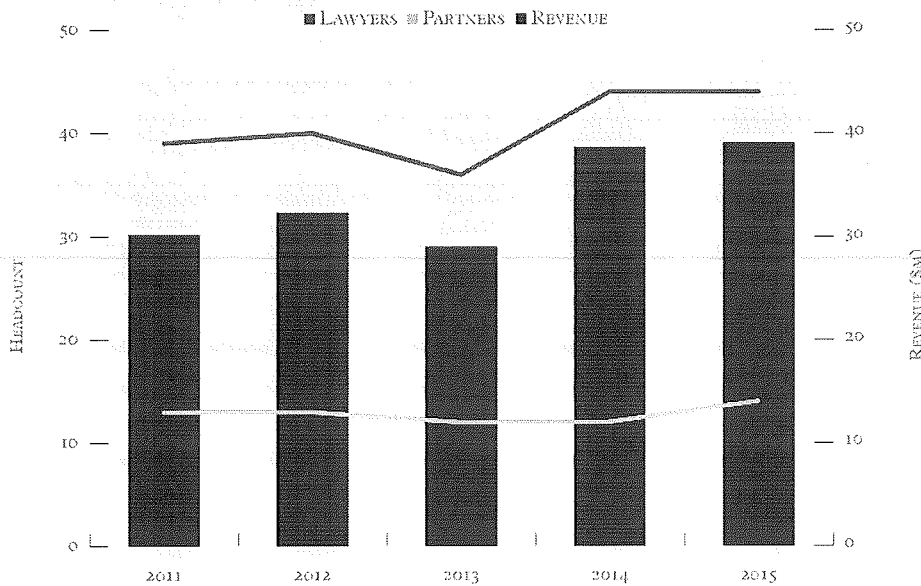
more established markets such as the US. There, retired judges become mediators but in Europe there is not the comparable expertise.

Then there is the dreaded ‘B’ question. How will Brexit affect the legal market in Geneva, given it is the home of the World Trade Organisation?

For all firms *The Lawyer* spoke to, it was far too early to tell, especially since at the time of going to press, the High Court had ruled that the Government must put enacting Article 50 to a parliamentary vote.

However, Andrew McDougall, an international arbitration partner at White & Case and the head of dispute for Europe, the Middle East and Africa, said: “Overall, it will lead to more disputes rather than less.” ■

Headcount and revenue trends in Geneva, 2011-15



NOTE: TO ENABLE AN ACCURATE COMPARISON, THE REVENUE, LAWYER NUMBER AND PARTNER NUMBER FIGURES SHOWN IN THIS GRAPH ARE ONLY BASED ON FIRMS THAT SUBMITTED ALL THREE METRICS IN EACH OF THE LAST FIVE YEARS. THEREFORE THE TOTALS FOR HEADCOUNT AND REVENUE SHOWN IN THE GRAPH DO NOT MATCH THE TOTALS IN THE TABLE AS A NUMBER OF FIRMS HAVE BEEN OMITTED.