Spain's Top 30 Lawyers of 2023

Iberian Lawyer **spotlights the 30 leading lawyers shaping Spain's legal landscape in 2023**

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A year marked by global challenges, including the wars in Ukraine and the Gaza Strip and an escalating energy crisis ended. *Iberian Lawyer*, after 12-months of meticulous observation and comprehensive attention to the Spanish legal market, presents a list (in alphabetical order) of business lawyers who stood out for their contributions to the legal landscape in 2023.

This is not a league table but an overview of the Spanish legal scene, acknowledging individuals for their achievements and impact. The selected lawyers are considered the protagonists of 2023 for diverse reasons encapsulated in the criteria of track record, leadership, popularity, and career. Each profile includes a graphical representation, with the weight of these criteria determining their inclusion in this year's list.

The term "track record" encapsulates the primary activities that these legal professionals adeptly managed in the past 12 months, demonstrating their prowess as rainmakers capable of generating substantial business for their respective law firms. From overseeing major operations such as mergers and acquisitions, stock market listings, bond issues, securitizations, and restructurings, to handling partnerships, projects, and disputes, these leaders have left a mark on the Spanish legal landscape or abroad.

"Leadership" criterion evaluates the ability of these lawyers to steer law firms or teams towards success. Their impact extends beyond the legal realm, encompassing efforts to enhance service efficiency, implement cutting-edge technologies, and drive beneficial transformations within the legal profession. Actively contributing to innovation and inclusion, these leaders play a pivotal role in shaping the future of the legal market.

Popularity, denoting the prestige earned among industry stakeholders such as in-house counsels, business lawyers, and headhunters, highlights the transformation of these professionals into influential figures and trendsetters. Their visibility extends beyond the confines of the law firm, positioning them as authoritative influencers capable of shaping decisions within the legal sector. For aspiring legal professionals, they serve as role models, while clients consider them as invaluable advisors.

Lastly, the career trajectory serves as the common thread binding these lawyers together. While all have charted successful paths, some have assumed significant roles within or outside their firms in the past year, further solidifying their influence in the legal domain.

This list is a result of accurate consideration of these criteria, including business lawyers based on their individual contributions over the past year, as per the observations of *Iberian Lawyer*. Here below are the legal trailblazers who have defined the legal landscape in Spain in 2023.

LEGENDA:

TRACK RECORD

LEADERSHIP

POPULARITY

CAREER

Luis Alonso

The head of corporate/M&A at Clifford Chance in Spain and Global co-director of the sports & entertainment practice has been, along with Fernando Irurzun and Miguel Odriozola, the protagonist of one of the most groundbreaking judgments last year: that ruled by the CJEU on the European Superleague project according to which the market for organisation of sports tournaments is not a monopoly held by UEFA and FIFA and should be open to alternative proposals.

NEW

Cristina Camarero Espinosa

In February 2023, Ontier, the law firm where she previously headed the litigation and arbitration practice, appointed her as managing partner. Camarero has taken over the baton from Pedro Rodero, who has assumed the executive presidency of the firm at national level. With more than 20 years of experience she has fully developed her professional career at Ontier.

Esteban Ceca Gómez-Arevalillo

The managing director of Ceca Magán Abogados since 2008 is one of the leading executives in Spain under the age of 45. After Andersen, Ceca Mágan is the law firm that hired most lawyers in 2023 (seven according to data collected by *Iberian Lawyer* and *published in the December-January issue*). Among them the hiring of Isaac Millán, joining in July as the new managing partner of the Madrid office, from the healthcare company Quironsalud.

Íñigo del Val

The head of the M&A practice of Allen & Overy Spain proves once again to be a first-class dealmaker. In 2023 he ranked second in TTR's ranking by total value, advising on 11 Spanish M&A deals with a total value of around €7.793,36 million. For example, he has worked on the Strategic Alliance of Regional Airlines – SARA, the largest European regional aviation airline group; and on the acquisition of Parkia Spanish Holding by Igneo Infrastructure Partners.

NEW

Manuel Deó

Young and bold, the co-managing and co-founding partner of Ambar has showed to the market that an alternative way to deliver legal services not only is possible but is also a successful move. In 2023 the ALSP opened an office in Lisbon, consolidating its position as the largest operator in Southern Europe counting on 300 partners.

Manuel Echenique Sanjurjo

He stands as one of the unquestionable top advisors in the Spanish mergers and acquisitions market from the past year. The co-head of the M&A and Private Equity Practice Areas at Uría Menéndez, indeed, leads TTR's ranking of legal advisors by the total value of transactions in 2023, having been involved in 19 deals with an aggregate value of €8,196.21 million euro.

Íñigo Erláiz Cotelo

During the first year of Erlaiz's mandates as managing partner, Gómez-Acebo & Pombo experienced an interesting 10% growth, reaching €75.16 million— a notable achievement. Additionally, over the past year, he has also secured for the law firm significant lateral hires, such as those of Alexander Kolb as new partner for the commercial department and of Andrew Ward as a new partner in the competition and European Union Law practice group.

NEW

Pedro Fernández

In 2023 he was the lawyer who worked on the highest number of M&A transactions according to TTR's ranking, with 23 transactions totalling €432.40 million. Partner in Pérez-Llorca since January 2017, he has more than 20 years of experience in M&A and capital markets leads the Venture Capital & Start-up practice at the law firm.

Javier Fernández-Samaniego

Besides being acknowledged as one of Spain's leading innovators in the legal industry, in the past 12 months Samaniego Law's former managing partner was picked by Osborne Clarke to spearhead its new office in Miami. His responsibility involves assisting clients in the US, Latin America, and Europe, while collaborating closely with the US teams on both coasts.

Rafael Fontana

Last May the Spanish Minister for Justice, Pilar Llop, granted him the Grand Cross of the Order of Saint Raymond of Peñafort, recognizing his work and drive in the legal sector during the over 40 years he has been practicing law. The senior partner of Cuatrecasas has held many senior positions at the firm over the last 20 years. He is responsible for leading Cuatrecasas's strong impetus, positioning it as a benchmark law firm in the sector and promoting its international expansion process.

NEW

Javier Fontcuberta

The distinguished corporate lawyer known for his expertise in mergers and acquisitions (M&A), corporate governance, and international business transactions has become the new number one of Cuatrecasas, five months after the tragic passing of Jorge Badía. Under his leadership, the law firm achieved a turnover of €352.66 million in the fiscal year 2022, marking a new record in its history and a 4.68% increase from the figure in 2021. In 2023, the law firm as been recognised by the FT as the most innovative law firm in Europe (outside the UK).

María Pilar García Guijarro

She has been leading Watson Farley & Williams in Spain for 13 years as managing partner. She has more than 25 years of experience in M&A and Private Equity transactions. Last year she handled 20 transactions worth a combined total of 356.40 million. Among them, the acquisition by General Electric – Energy Financial Services of a 50% stake in a 364 MWp renewables portfolio.

José Giménez Cervantes

Since 2021 he leads Linklaters in Spain as managing partner. Last year, he secured the the hiring of Alex Ferreres, former head of the procedural and arbitration area at Uría Menéndez's Barcelona office, as a partner in the procedural law area. In general, assistance to large companies is his speciality, above all in sectors with a strong regulatory component. In 2023 for example, he advised Eni on the acquisition of HLS Bonete TopCo.

He is the number one of Latham & Watkins in Spain. He is responsible for the firm's exponential growth in recent years. When it comes to M&A, Latham is unrivalled according to the legal advisor rankings compiled by Mergermaket. Indeed, in 2023, the firm ranked first in the Spanish rankings for deal value, having been involved in 24 transactions worth around €14.771 bn.

Ignacio Gómez-Sancha

NEW

María González Gordon

Since July she is the new co-managing partner of CMS Albiñana & Suárez De Lezo, together with César Albiñana. González is also a member of the firm's board of directors and management committee. She also continues to lead the law firm's industrial property, intellectual property and digital business area and at international level, she is a member of the executive committee and co-global head of digital business of the network, leading a working group made up of more than 250 partners specialising in this area around the world.

NEW

Joaquín Latorre

He has been the partner in charge of PwC Tax & Legal since 2015. Over the years he has been in charge, within the law firm (which he joined in 1996), of the operations, human capital and clients and markets functions. Under his leadership, PwC has strengthened its presence and territorial capillarity (with offices in 19 provinces) and in 2022 recorded a turnover of €177.6 million, ranking fourth in the revenue ranking in Spain and just below the three largest Spanish law firms.

Mónica Martín de Vidales Godino

She co-manages Garrigues' corporate/ commercial department since 2013 and is one amongst the undisputed professionals of M&A in Spain. The law firm tops the TTR's ranking by number of transactions of legal advisors involved in private equity, venture capital and asset acquisitions deals in 2023, with 188 transactions for a total value of €2.170,43 million.

Jacobo Martínez Pérez-Espinosa

He has just been named deputy chair of Eversheds Sutherland Europe, beginning a two-year term. In 2013 the Eversheds Sutherland's managing partner in Spain and member of the law firm's European Executive Committee has also been re-elected within the Spanish board of directors for the next three years. With this re-election the law firm has reaffirmed its project and roadmap that has allowed an exponential growth over the last years. He will now pursue the ambitious target to reach revenues of €30 million by the end of 2025.

Pilar Menor

She is one of the leading employment lawyers in Spain and is considered as a thought-leader and role model. The senior partner of DLA Piper co-chairs the employment group globally, leading a team of 400 lawyers operating in 40 jurisdictions and holds several internal positions dedicated to diversity and inclusion.

José Vicente Morote Sarrión

After three years in co-direction with Íñigo Rodríguez Sastre he has been re-elected managing partner and chairman of the board of directors of Andersen Iberia. He is also head of the Public and Regulatory law department for Spain and Portugal since 2013. At the international level, he is one of the most influential lawyers in the organization worldwide as a member of the law firm's Global Board and Leadership Committee, as well as a member of the European Board, the European Management Committee, and Director of the legal area for Andersen Europe.

NEW

Rodrigo Ogea

He has been reelected as co-managing partner of Baker McKenzie in October, a position he has held since 2017 and which share with Bruno Domínguez since 2022. He co-manages the international law firm with the highest turnover in Spain: Baker McKenzie. The law firm, which was the first to land in Spain from abroad (in 1965) recorded a turnover of EUR 92.96m in 2022, an increase of approximately 23% year-on-year. Since 2020, he is one of the four elected members of Baker McKenzie's EMEA Steering Committee.

Pedro Pérez-Llorca

With nearly 30 years at the helm of Pérez-Llorca, he stands out as one of the managing partners with a consolidated track record in mergers and acquisitions. Under his guidance, the law firm has experienced unprecedented growth in the last year in terms of revenue, reaching €112.8 million in 2022, surpassing KPMG Abogados, and has achieved significant international expansion.

Isabel Rodríguez García

The leader of the Investment Funds practice at King & Wood Mallesons – who also holds various positions in major companies and associations – has been as usual very active in the funds market. Among the deals she worked on last year the launches of Harvest Hospitality fund and of the investment vehicles Qualitas Funds VI and IB Deuda Impacto España, the closing of the funds Nexxus Iberia Private Equity II and Enion I Energy Fund.

Verónica Romaní Sancho

The head of the Energy team at Gómez-Acebo & Pombo is a widely recognised lawyer active in project finance, banking & finance, energy & natural resources. Among the various deals she has been involved in this year there is the refinancing of the Mula solar photovoltaic project, the acquisition by Naturgy of renewable assets from Ardian and the sale of Sotysolar.