

Promotions and hires in Europe and North America

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Compass Lexecon and E.CA Economics have hired and promoted economists respectively, while Noerr hired from Mayer Brown in Brussels; Cooley promoted two in the US; Travers Smith promoted a senior counsel; and Hannes Snellman hired two senior associates.

Noerr

Jens Peter Schmidt, 50, joined Noerr's Brussels office as a partner after 19 years at Mayer Brown, where he managed the firm's Brussels competition practice.

He was attracted to Noerr by the excellent reputation of its antitrust team, he said, as well as the firm's strategic focus on "key complementary practices", such as digital economy, compliance and investigations, privacy, regulatory and its "renowned transactional practices".

He called Noerr a "dynamic and well-managed collegiate partnership".

Schmidt said, "I absolutely realise that I am leaving many friends at Mayer Brown, and the decision to move was not easy for me." The firm has always treated him well, he said, and he is deeply thankful for the trust and confidence Mayer Brown's global management placed in him.

“At the same time, I am looking forward to working with my new colleagues at Noerr,” Schmidt said. “Post-Brexit, Brussels will have a more important role, and we aim at fulfilling that role through further integration with the well-established Noerr practices in Europe, for example in relation to regulatory, privacy, and trade.”

He will “remain very active in the transactional space” and, due to Noerr’s expertise in industries such as automotive, logistics, or financial services, he does not expect too much of a change in the focus of his practice.

“I would expect to be more active in compliance and internal investigations, distribution and digital issues, given Noerr’s reputation in Germany,” he said.

Schmidt joined Mayer Brown as a partner in 2001 and from 2014 he led the competition practice as managing partner of the Brussels office. He began in private practice in 1998 as an associate at Shearman & Sterling in Düsseldorf.

Schmidt advised on the successful challenges against a joint venture by BHP Billiton and Rio Tinto on behalf of the European steel industry, which involved parallel investigations at EU level and in Germany.

He worked on the EU Phase II investigation into Caterpillar’s deal with MWM, which he said was “demanding” but resulted in an “unconditional clearance”. Most recently, he advised on an EU Phase I review for Global Houghton, which “raised challenging remedy-related issues” that his team eventually resolved, he said.

Fabian Badtke, head of Noerr’s competition practice, said the firm is “pleased to have gained such a high-profile, internationally highly respected Brussels-based antitrust expert who has an excellent feel for the market and always has an eye for cross-practice cooperation”.

Noerr has five equity partners and seven salary partners in its global competition practice.

Mayer Brown did not respond to a request for comment.

Compass Lexecon

Rameet Sangha has left AlixPartners to join Compass Lexecon as a senior vice president in London.

Sangha said she is delighted to return to the economic consultancy, and looks forward to working with colleagues to help clients with merger and antitrust issues in the UK and internationally.

She started her career as a consultant at PricewaterhouseCoopers in 1997, then joined Lexecon – as Compass Lexecon was then called – as a principal in 2000. Sangha moved to Charles River Associates in 2005, and to AlixPartners in 2015.

She has advised GlaxoSmithKline in relation to the UK’s Competition and Markets Authority investigation into reverse-payment settlements GSK made with several generic manufacturers over the drug paroxetine. This week, Advocate General Juliane Kokott said the agreements can be found to be anticompetitive and may qualify as an abuse of dominance.

Sangha also advised golf club manufacturer Ping in its appeal to the UK Competition Appeal Tribunal against a CMA decision to fine the company £1.45 million for banning online sales of its golf clubs. The tribunal upheld the CMA’s decision but slashed the overall fine on Ping by £200,000. The Court of Appeal this week upheld the tribunal’s finding.

AlixPartners did not respond to a request for comment.

E.CA Economics

E.CA Economics has promoted Thomas Hildebrand to director in Berlin, effective as of 1 January. He had been a principal since 2018.

Hildebrand, 38, said he has always enjoyed the “rigorous economic thinking, the steep learning curve and in particular the great team spirit in the firm” since he joined it in 2011. He added that he is looking forward to the new responsibilities in his role as director.

E.CA director and founder Rainer Nitsche said Hildebrand has strong empirical skills and is an excellent economist.

Fellow director and founder Hans W. Friederiszick said, “Thomas has been successfully managing some of the largest projects within E.CA covering all areas of competition economics.”

E.CA now has more than 30 competition economists in Berlin and Brussels.

Cooley

Cooley has promoted Dee Bansal and Megan Browdie to partner, effective from 1 January. Both practise in Washington, DC.

Bansal, 37, said she is “honoured and thrilled” to be welcomed into such “an exceptional and accomplished group of partners”, both in the antitrust practice, and in the firm as a whole.

She said her client base is increasingly finding itself “mired” in antitrust litigation, including complex class actions, and Department of Justice, Federal Trade Commission and state Attorney General investigations.

“As a partner, I hope to help continue to get our clients out of these matters, which can be detrimental if not handled properly,” Bansal said.

She joined Cooley in 2012 after having been an associate at Winston & Strawn.

In 2015, she was part of the Cooley team that successfully defended Patheon from a complaint by soft gel producer Procaps after the plaintiff alleged that Patheon’s acquisition of a Procaps rival violated the antitrust laws.

Browdie, 36, said it has been her goal since joining Cooley to make partner.

“I see great things ahead for the firm and our rockstar clients and am thrilled about being a part of it,” she said.

She said she could not be more excited to build and grow Cooley’s antitrust group and the Washington, DC, office. Cooley clients face some of the most fascinating issues of the day, she said, and “I hope to be right there with them as a trusted adviser.”

Browdie became an associate at Cooley in 2010 after receiving her law degree. She had interned at the FTC’S bureau of competition in 2009.

She represented security systems company Alarm.com in its acquisition of business units from iControl Networks. The team successfully defended the company from Honeywell's attempts to block the merger, with both sides agreeing to a settlement.

Cooley partner Howard Morse said he has worked closely with Browdie and Bansal for many years and he is "proud now to call them my partners".

"I have worked together with Megan on numerous mergers and Dee on government investigations and litigation and both are superb antitrust lawyers," he said.

Cooley now has 12 partners in its global competition practice.

Travers Smith

Travers Smith has promoted Paul McComb, 35, to senior counsel.

McComb said he is "delighted" and that it is a "privilege to work alongside such a talented and dedicated group of colleagues".

He is looking forward to the challenge of continuing to grow the practice, "particularly with Brexit on the horizon", which is likely to "result in a significant uptick in activity in merger control and antitrust investigations in the UK," he said.

In his new role he will continue to have a broad competition practice, including in mergers, cartel investigations and competition law relating to commercial agreements, he said. "It's important to the development of our practice, and our lawyers, that all members of the team are exposed to a range of competition law and merger control matters".

McComb said Travers Smith has enjoyed real success in recent years and is "consistently involved in high-profile, challenging cases" including a range of merger control, antitrust and competition litigation matters, "which provides a great variety of work".

He joined Reynolds Porter Chamberlain in 2012, where he spent three years as an associate, before his move to Travers Smith.

McComb regularly advises clients on transactional merger control matters. He has advised Breedon Group on several corporate deals, including its acquisition of Hope Construction Materials in 2016.

More recently he advised Breedon on its acquisition of Lagan in 2018, which secured the Group's expansion into Ireland, and he is advising the company on the acquisition of a significant package of assets from Cemex.

Head of competition Nigel Seay said that he is delighted with Paul McComb's promotion and that it is thoroughly deserved. "Our Competition Practice has seen significant success and growth over recent years. Paul has been an important part of that story and I look forward to working with him to continue to develop the practice in his new role."

Hannes Snellman

Helena Lamminen, 35, joins Hannes Snellman as a senior associate

Lamminen worked for several years in the public sector and was previously legal counsel at the Swedish Post and Telecom Authority, having joined in 2016.

She moved to Hannes Snellman due to its “strong Nordic approach” and said it was the perfect chance to combine her previous experience working with competition authorities, regulatory matters and her experience of the Nordic market.

She has previously advised on large regulatory cases, particularly in the telecoms industry. She has also litigated on investigations concerning cartels and other competition law infringement cases.

Lamminen started her career as a research officer at the Finnish competition authority in 2008 and in 2014 became legal counsel with the Finnish Defence Forces. She then spent a year at the Finnish Communication Regulatory Authority, before joining the Swedish Post and Telecom Authority in 2016.

Lauri Putkonen, 30, moves to Hannes Snellman from Merilampi.

He said that Hannes Snellman has a strong brand and an extremely experienced team. “I felt that my experience in both competition and procurement fitted well into the firm’s strategic goals; I also share Hannes Snellman’s values,” he said.

Putkonen is “very excited” about the role and said it is a “unique opportunity to join an established and growing team” and to work with the “most talented legal professionals”.

Putkonen started as an associate at Merilampi in 2016 and was promoted to senior associate in 2019. He joined the firm in 2014 as a trainee.

He was part of the team representing Sweco before Finland’s Competition and Consumer Authority (FCCA) in merger control proceedings related to Sweco’s acquisition of NRC Group.