



IGNASZAK

# LAW COMPANY

## – FROM POZNAN TO GLOBAL MARKETS

According to European Union Council, the Kingdom of the Netherlands is the fourth country in Europe in terms of the most favourable corporate tax regime. Over the recent years, Amsterdam has also transformed into Europe's business capital. Poznan-based companies also find their way to that destination and are aided by Attorney at Law **Magdalena Martinez-Ignaszak**, who established the Ignaszak Law Company B.V. law firm and Ignaszak Law Company Holding B.V. at the end of 2023 in the Dutch capital. How is it possible?

– Working at global market level has always been my dream – Confess Attorney at Law **Magdalena Martinez-Ignaszak**, while also adding that she does not intend to disappear from Poznan.

– This is where I started my professional career, and where I still run my own law firm. I am actively engaged with Poznan's finest art galleries, and supporting The Olga Slawska-Lipczynska Secondary Ballet School, and nothing changes in this regard.

Henceforth, I'll simply do timesharing between Amsterdam and Poznan.

INTERVIEWER: **ANNA SKOCZEK** | PHOTOS: **FOTBUENO**

**More than a decade of activity within the Poznan law market is a long time.**

**Magdalena Martinez-Ignaszak:** I admit it (laughs). I also have several years of professional experience from Warsaw, where I lived and worked for a large corporation. Nevertheless, I choose to come back at one given moment and today I consider this to be one of the best career-related decisions in my life. However, not all decision were like that. Unfortunately, the Walczak & Ignaszak Law Company joint project rapidly became a failure. I was ultimately forced by circumstances to close this chapter. Today each of us is following their own path in his respective professional career. Parting ways was a breakup point and cemented my business values. From my career beginnings, I have managed to successfully build relationships that continue to this day, both professional and personal, which are also important workwise and help us grow. Almost from the start, the Poznan-based team I have been working with has been stable and virtually unchanged. We are a group of specialized experts that has been serving regular clients for many years.

**Which cases?**

We primarily specialize in economic law, particularly cooperating with companies implementing large infrastructural and building projects. My previous professional experience, prior to opening my own law firm, surely turned out to be crucial in terms of both technical knowledge and the complex construction process.

**What experience are we talking about?**

I worked in the legal department of one of the largest construction companies in Poland, which is currently a huge capital group. This provided me with considerable substantive background, more than just in the field of law. In running a specialized law firm, it is crucial to know what your clients are dealing with and be familiar with the actual issues they may encounter. This includes knowledge of different aspects related to their operations, which consequently generates significant opportunities for working with experts, firmly rooted in their sector. Speaking the same business language is surely a huge advantage.

Besides, we usually conduct all the cases for our clients, not only these strictly related to their core business. However, I try to avoid family and criminal cases, which I refer to my trusted colleagues.

**Why? I guess that all kinds of cases, let's call them moral, are sometimes more compelling than supporting investment projects or negotiating contracts.**

This is primarily because I don't feel comfortable to work on cases, which it does not feel right to me. As one Attorney at Law who taught me a lot once said: "good work will prove its worth". I am grateful to her because I will remember these bold words all my life. In addition, contrary to appearances (laughs), I am a person sensitive to injustice, especially towards children. When it comes to commercial cases, this side of my personality is not triggered and teased. I focus on facts, look up for out of the box solutions, negotiate, represent clients in business discussion and do not have to consider the emotions of the other party. Reaching the intended goal is important. I'm afraid this approach would not work for me when conducting, for example, family cases, where distancing myself and switching off my emotions would be difficult. I know myself well in this respect, so already at the stage of selecting my university major, I knew that to gain the greatest satisfaction in my work I must choose business and commercial law. I get the most pleasure in working on construction projects, which I experienced already as a child, admiring my father who ran his own construction company.

**Is this your natural environment?**

As earlier mentioned, the fact that my father ran a large construction company significantly impacted choosing and developing my own professional career. Unfortunately, my life faced me off with having to deal with his premature death at a rather young age. Therefore, working in a way that construction law remains close to my heart became my life goal. It's a great passion of mine. In addition, my father always told me, surely perversely: "Magda, you must go beyond Poland. Poland is important, but too small for you". He was my role model and, as it turns out, he was always right.

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**From the very beginning of my career, I have always managed to build relations that have continued to this day. Both professional and personal, which are also very important work-wise and help us grow.**

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**At the end of last year, you made your dream come true and opened a company in Amsterdam.**

Yes! And I am very proud of this achievement. This is yet another cornerstone of the business growth – International consultancy primarily based on advisory services related to expanding the business onto European markets. We also provide our clients with tax advisory services, which is of extreme significance, particularly in the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

**Did you consider The Netherlands when the thought of opening a branch in another country crossed your mind?**

No, such opportunities have come around. Amsterdam became somewhat of a natural choice because I found a business partner, in addition to my life partner. I am currently building my own team in Amsterdam, and to my surprise, it is a team made up of Polish lawyers, who are quite abundant over there, and I must frankly confess that they are outstanding at what they do. I met some exceptional specialists who operate both in Amsterdam and Poland. This makes cooperation easier. Please remember that Amsterdam comes with great potential of becoming the capital of European business. It is also a great gateway to other international markets, particularly manifested after 'Brexit', when the significance of the nearby London diminished slightly in this respect.

**Who are the clients of the Ignaszak Law Company in Amsterdam?**

This group already today includes both Polish clients wanting to expand their businesses onto global markets and foreign clients who intend to open their company offices in Poland but need support in this regard. Moreover, please note the fact that according to the Council of the European Union, the Kingdom of the Netherlands is the fourth country in Europe in terms of the most favourable corporate tax regime. If the entrepreneurs decided to expand onto other European markets, they often register their business in Amsterdam. Feel free to contact me for the details, of course!

**So, registering a business in Amsterdam comes only with benefits?**

I acknowledge, Amsterdam is not affordable, you need to have enough funds to be able to proceed with such a solution, but at the same time, I would like to bust a myth that it is an idea for the big players only. There are several thousand companies registered in Amsterdam, having their registered office there primarily for tax benefits. That is something that a medium-sized or even smaller Polish entrepreneur thinking of expanding onto international markets can afford. The structure of my operations in Amsterdam is the same, as the one I offer my client from Poland, and as exhibited by thousands of companies from Europe and the United States. My objective was to verify the solutions

proposed to clients, precisely in this area of my activities, and to be fair it was only its small portion. Ignaszak Law Company office is in Amsterdam's prestigious financial district (ZuidAs), and although I feel at home, I pay a high price for the opportunity to develop my career.

**Did you have any concerns before you opened your company in Amsterdam?**

Of course, and I consider it a normal demonstration of common sense. I believed I would be all alone, without any acquaintances and good connections, in a country I hardly knew. However, the reality turned out quite different. While working on my own business, I cooperate with top Amsterdam-based law firm, Loyens & Loeff, which guided me through all the procedures. This constituted invaluable experience and already at this stage I met people who I am starting to work with. Many things happened just like that and I am certain that this is the consequence

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**After the several years of my career I already know that three issues are crucial for clients, namely, direct contact with the person who is handling a specific case, a stable work team, and regular clients, because one satisfied client will bring in three more.**

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of my business partner support, who makes true my ambition to build something extraordinary, based on mutual respect and loyalty. He is a Dutch national and has been simultaneously working for the most recognized companies around the world for decades, acting as a statutory director, board member and fulfilling other C-level duties. Taking risk is not easy, but it is worthwhile for the sake of something greater, which is why we do it. I'm certain he will be able to tell you more about our joint business in future editions of 'Poznan-style success' [Sukces po poznanSKU]. The fact that Amsterdam is virtually English-speaking, which facilitates communication is also crucial from the perspective of development and business. I find it an interesting experience to talk with the representatives of the Embassy of the Republic of Poland in the Hague or at the Office of the Polish Investment & Trade Agency

in Amsterdam, or even the Netherlands-Polish Chamber of Commerce in Warsaw in English. At this point I must stress that the Kingdom of the Netherlands is extremely safe when it comes to corporate law. To register a company over there, one needs to satisfy specific requirements, that are much more stringent compared to Polish legislation. It requires establishing permanent cooperation with people qualified to host a position that is equivalent to that of a chief financial officer in our country. However, such a person must be a citizen of this country at the same time. Another requirement is a permanent seat and an actual office, which, of course, we offer to our clients. The only path to success for us is going beyond the expectations of our clients and satisfying their needs, while handling both countries with the same quality standards owing to our local teams that provide excellent market-based solutions. All this makes having a registered office in Amsterdam a certain quality guarantee, a particular reliability certificate.

**On the one hand, you open the door to Polish entrepreneurs wanting to operate in Western Europe, while on the other hand, to large global corporations, who want to make their entrance into on Polish market...**

That is what I intend to achieve. For entrepreneurs from other countries, Poland is an attractive country in terms of locating a business. We are certainly benefiting from the recession that our western neighbours, Germans, are currently tackling. Ignaszak Law Company cooperates with the Netherlands-Polish Chamber of Commerce based in Warsaw, Polish-German Chamber of Commerce with its seat in Warsaw (I admire their excellent activities in Poznan), the Office of the Polish Investment & Trade Agency in Amsterdam and has built very good relations with the Embassy of the Republic of Poland in the Hague. I must also say that I have met strong, active, and exceptionally knowledgeable women all around, which makes me believe in my own success.

**What are the most common issues clients approach you with?**

Let me start by saying that most clients working with my team have been with us for many years and continue to recommend us further. I am also very happy that despite numerous difficulties experienced over the last year, I continue to have the same stable and close-knit team. I get attached to people and maybe that is why I value working with the same team and same clients so much. It's a dream for a lawyer who loves what she does. Most cases we currently conduct are large contracts, starting from the negotiation stage, through the performance itself, to ultimate settlements, which confirms the fact that we bond with companies for many years. Most of our clients today are



companies with a construction or related profile, providing services related to that field, as well as transport and logistics companies, or those selling materials or implementing projects worldwide based on international law. We are also a group of specialized people managing contracts based on FIDIC Conditions of Contract. In all of this, primarily due to the complex nature of large investment projects, the fact that we are present and operate within a specific environment with no shortage of conflicts should be considered. Clients see us in action and know how we operate. Cooperation sometimes starts from a courtroom meeting, but unfortunately only when standing on opposing sides.

#### **How come?**

I remember a situation when I represented my client in the courtroom, and six months after closing the case, I received a phone call from the opposing side asking to accept another of their cases. I am sure that the client who knows this situation is smiling when reading this interview. So please let me send my best regards, I must reveal, it was a very nice feeling, because I was aware that the other party did not treat me as an enemy, but rather appreciated my professionalism and skills. The difference in the performance of lawyers comes not only from substantive knowledge, but also commitment. And open and sincere dialogue with clients regarding their needs helps all of us in being successful in this challenging world. I never use tracing paper. I always tell people that I am there for them. It doesn't matter what time it is. If I can-

not pick up, I'll call back, but I am there. It is particularly important now, when certain doubts have arisen regarding my presence and availability in Poznan. After several years of professional career I realized that three issues are crucial for clients, namely, direct contact with the person who is handling a specific case, a stable work team – I am so exceptionally grateful that my team is professionally growing and at the same time their loyalty towards me make me feel safe – and regular clients, because one satisfied person will bring in three more. I believe this is the principle of one's business sustainability.

#### **And it works?**

The latest may be achieved if the former two elements are ensured. A positive attitude is vital to me; therefore, I always try not to complain about the challenges, overcoming them which helps me to develop. Well, I can't say it's easy, because it isn't. Everything I do now requires time, excellent work organization, passion, and financial outlays. Simultaneously, I consider this as developing and fulfilling my professional dreams. Growth allows me to become better. I want to provide my clients with the highest-quality services, that's why I live and work in two countries. Cooperation with international, primarily Central European, partners is closer than we think. It's all at your fingertips.

**Also from Poznan! █**