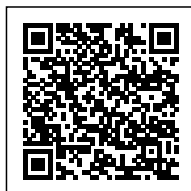


# STEPTOE STRENGTHENS LATIN AMERICA PRACTICE GROUP

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## **International law firm Steptoe & Johnson announced its association with Fernando Quintana Merino, a Brazilian lawyer admitted to the bar in Brazil.**

Merino received his legal degree in Brazil from the University of the State of Rio de Janeiro. He earned an LL.M. from Columbia University and has worked in New York, London and Brazil. Merino brings extensive international experience and has held different positions in the financial services sector, working with CS Garantia, JP Morgan Chase, and Merrill Lynch from 1997 to 2008. In 2008, he became the general counsel of CSN, Companhia Siderurgica Nacional, the largest integrated steel manufacturer in Latin America. In 2014, he joined Grupo Pão de Açúcar, the Brazil-based food multinational, as its general counsel. Most recently, Merino has been acting as an independent board member at Eletropaulo, the energy distributor, and Igua Ambiental, the water and sewage company in Brazil.

While Merino initially will be a consultant to Steptoe and will remain in Brazil, the firm expects he will ultimately relocate to Washington, DC. At Steptoe, Merino will focus his practice on the areas of compliance, investigations, corporate governance,

regulatory and white-collar enforcement, disputes, corporate restructurings, private equity, and other financial services matters.

The move is set to tap into the growing opportunities in Brazil for law firms focusing on international investigations and compliance. "Fernando is well known and highly respected in the Brazilian business and legal communities," said Phil West, the chair of the firm, "During his time as corporate counsel and in compliance roles, he has gained significant experience with the type of complex regulatory and dispute matters that are a major part of Steptoe's practice, and his association with us will help further develop the firm's Brazil and Latin America practices."

In the statement, Merino commented: "Steptoe has an outstanding reputation in international regulatory and dispute matters, areas which are increasingly important in Brazil. These matters will continue to become more multijurisdictional, complex and integrated, making Steptoe's experience and capabilities very important. I look forward to helping the firm expand their Brazil and Latin America practices even further. The firm recognizes the importance of the Brazilian economy and the fact that Brazilian companies have become major investors in the United States, Europe, and China, among other destinations, and that many US and other nonBrazilian multinationals have significant operations in Brazil. Brazil expects a major inflow of foreign capital in the upcoming years and Brazilian companies are expecting to further internationalize their activities. We are well positioned to help clients on those matters."

Steptoe is home to 30 lawyer-team dedicated to international regulation and compliance in offices around the globe. The team covers regulatory requirements such as export controls, economic sanctions, anti-corruption, anti-money laundering, customs and immigration, and investment reviews by the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States. The firm already has a small Brazil-focused group, spearheaded by Lucinda Low, head of the firm's compliance, investigations, trade and enforcement department. Low has lived in Brazil and is fluent in Portuguese. The team also includes Pablo Bentes, a native of Brazil who joined the firm in 2012 after serving six years as a legal officer in the Appellate Body Secretariat of the World Trade Organization in Geneva.