

Volterra Fietta promotes in London

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Volterra Fietta has announced the promotion of counsel Giorgio Francesco Mandelli to partner, 18 months after he joined the specialist public international law firm from Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer.

An Italian national, Mandelli began his career at Freshfields as a trainee solicitor in 1998. He moved to Wilmer Cutler Pickering Hale and Dorr in London in 2002 before returning to Freshfields in New York in 2007. He was promoted to counsel in January 2014, and joined Volterra Fietta two months later.

His promotion, which takes effect on 1 November 2015, will bring the firm's partner count to six, following the addition of former Canadian government lawyer Christophe Bondy to the partnership in July.



Giorgio Mandelli

Volterra Fietta's co-founder Robert Volterra said he is "delighted to welcome Giorgio into the partnership". Volterra, who also worked with Mandelli at Freshfields, says, "He is a talented lawyer and clients love working with him; at the same time, he is a fun member of the VF team. His addition to the partnership demonstrates our commitment to growth through internal promotions from our team of talented associates and counsel, as well as through high quality lateral hires."

Co-founder Stephen Fietta also congratulated Mandelli, saying, "Giorgio is an excellent lawyer and colleague and a real pleasure to work with. I am delighted by his well-deserved promotion to partnership at the firm."

During his time at the firm, Mandelli has advised a number of G20 states on a broad range of international law issues. He is also part of the Volterra Fietta teams representing claimants in ICSID proceedings against Venezuela – one brought by subsidiaries of US glass container manufacturer Owens-Illinois and another brought by subsidiaries of the US's Koch Industries.

He also represents the claimant in an investment dispute with a European state brought under the auspices of the SCC Arbitration Institute.

Mandelli is "thrilled to be joining the partnership". He tells GAR, "at Volterra Fietta, my exposure to complex and challenging work across the spectrum of public international law has been second to none. It will be a privilege not only to help to build on the firm's successes to date, but also to contribute to the firm's exciting vision for the future."

Paulina Pietkiewicz, director of operations at private equity fund manager Abris, tells GAR that Mandelli is “crucial” to the team and an “extremely good lawyer”.

“Giorgio is a great counsel, very focused, and detail-oriented”, she says. He is also “extremely hard-working”, with “a forensic eye” and “a great sense of humour”.

While at Freshfields, Mandelli was heavily involved in Latin America-related work, including as part of the team acting for ConocoPhillips in its multibillion-dollar ICSID claim against Venezuela and in an ICC arbitration against the state’s national oil company, PDVSA. He was also part of the team that helped French oil company Total win unspecified damages against Argentina in an ICSID claim that concluded in December 2013.

Nigel Blackaby, global co-head of international arbitration at Freshfields, tells GAR that Mandelli will be “an excellent addition” to the Volterra Fietta partnership. “Giorgio was someone who always demonstrated leadership and judgment during his time with us – we knew it would serve him well wherever he ended up. We are very much looking forward to working with him or against him in the future.”

Alexander Yanos, co-chair of the treaty arbitration group at Hughes Hubbard & Reed and a former partner at Freshfields, says the promotion is “well-deserved”. “Giorgio is a skilled advocate and an attorney dedicated to providing the best possible service to his clients. At the same time, he is a team-builder. Everyone wants to work with him! I have no doubt that he will continue to assert himself as an important member of Volterra Fietta’s team and that his profile in our community will continue to grow.”

Mandelli’s practice encompasses energy, natural resources, telecoms, joint ventures and insurance disputes, and he has acted as counsel in institutional and ad hoc investment treaty and commercial arbitrations, including under the ICSID, ICSID additional facility, SCC, ICC, LCIA and UNCITRAL Rules.

He is qualified as a solicitor-advocate in England and Wales and as an attorney in New York. A graduate of Princeton University, he obtained his law degree from the University of Oxford and an LLM (International Legal Studies) from New York University School of Law.

He speaks English, Italian, French and Spanish.

Volterra and Fietta co-founded Volterra Fietta in 2011 after leaving Latham & Watkins. Since then, the partnership has added Graham Coop, formerly of the Energy Charter Secretariat in Brussels, and Patricio Grané Labat from Arnold & Porter.

Among other recent instructions, the firm is helping to defend Nigeria against an ICSID claim lodged in 2013 by two US oil companies under Nigeria’s 1995 investment law. Volterra, Bondy and Ghana-based sole practitioner Rose Rameau have joined a counsel team that already included Nigerian lawyer Aare Afe Babalola. The claimants filed a memorial on the merits in June.