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INTERNATIONAL BAR ASSOCIATION CONFERENCE 2026

A conference presented by the IBA Employment and Industrial Relations Law Committee  
and the IBA Diversity and Equality Law Committee

# Annual IBA Employment and Diversity Law Conference 2026

22–24 April 2026

Sofitel Warsaw Victoria, Warsaw, Poland

## Working programme

Headline conference sponsor



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All speaker materials and biographies can be found at [www.ibanet.org/conference-details/conf2727](http://www.ibanet.org/conference-details/conf2727)

### Conference Co-Chairs

Aoife Bradley *Byrne Wallace Shields, Dublin; Co-Chair, IBA Employment and Industrial Relations Law Committee*

Yvonne Frederiksen *Schjødt, Copenhagen; Co-Chair, IBA Diversity and Equality Law Committee*

Björn Gaul *CMS, Cologne; Co-Chair, IBA Employment and Industrial Relations Law Committee*

Pål Kvernaas *Haavind, Oslo; Co-Chair, IBA Diversity and Equality Law Committee*

## Wednesday 22 April

### 1800 – 1900 **Gathering with new members and first-time participants**

The committee co-chairs invite new committee members and those attending for the first time to meet informally ahead of the start of the welcome reception.

Ujazdowski Castle Centre for Contemporary Art  
Jazdów 2,  
00-467 Warsaw,  
Poland

Please note that this event is open to registered delegates only. Guests and accompanying persons are not permitted to attend

### 1900 – 2100 **Welcome reception**

Join fellow delegates and speakers before the conference to network at the welcome reception. All registered delegates are welcome to attend.

Ujazdowski Castle Centre for Contemporary Art  
Jazdów 2,  
00-467 Warsaw,  
Poland

Please note that this event is open to registered delegates only. Guests and accompanying persons are not permitted to attend

### MOBILE TELEPHONES

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### Headline social event sponsors



**Coffee /tea breaks and lunch will be held in the Ballroom Foyer**  
**Plenary sessions will take place in Ballroom ABCD**  
**Breakout sessions will take place in both Ballroom AB and Ballroom CD**

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0800 – 1715 **Registration**

0800 – 0830 **Welcome tea/coffee**

0830 – 0845 **Welcome remarks from the Conference Co-chairs and the IBA**

0845 – 0945 **From transformation to resilience: the rule of Law, democratic cooperation, and the future of Europe**

Mr Aleksander Kwaśniewski played an important role in the country's integration into Western structures. A former student leader and journalist, he began his political career under communism in the Polish United Workers' Party. Following the democratic transition he co-founded the Social Democracy of the Republic of Poland and co-organised the Democratic Left Alliance.

As President, Mr Kwaśniewski was instrumental in guiding Poland into NATO (1999) and the European Union (2004). He championed the adoption of Poland's current Constitution (1997) and supported democratic reforms, regional cooperation, and European integration.

*Keynote speaker*

**Aleksander Kwaśniewski** *former President of Poland (1995-2005), Warsaw*

0945 – 1100 **PLENARY SESSION ONE**

**Hot topics and new frontiers in employment relations: a CEE perspective**

The CEE region stands at a critical juncture – confronting increasingly complex regulations, growing demands for workplace flexibility, and rapid AI-driven transformation. At the same time, employers must contend with pressing social challenges, including demographic ageing and labour migration.

This panel brings together private practitioners, in-house counsel, trade union representatives and policymakers to examine the key tensions shaping the contemporary employment landscape. Where does the law diverge from workplace reality? Is the region's traditional regulatory approach sufficient to bridge the gap between legislative expectations and business needs? What is the current state – and the future – of social dialogue? Or has the European Commission effectively assumed the role once played by trade unions?

The discussion will be fast-paced and practice-oriented, crossing borders and perspectives to offer actionable insights into the evolving CEE labour market.

*Session chairs*

**Szymon Kubiak** *Wardynski & Partners, Warsaw; Secretary, IBA Employment and Industrial Relations Law Committee*  
**Agnieszka Pytlas** *Penteris, Warsaw; Senior Vice-Chair, IBA Diversity and Equality Law Committee*

*Speakers*

**Marta Derlacz-Wawrowska** *Vice President Legal, Employment Poland and Eastern Europe, Warner Bros. Discovery, Warsaw*

**Daniela Korn** *Tan Ward, London*

**Stefan Kühteubl** *Schönherr Rechtsanwälte, Vienna*

**Michał Polakowski** *Social Policy Specialist, OPZZ, Warsaw*

1100 – 1145 **Coffee/tea break**

## MOBILE TELEPHONES

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Associate conference sponsor



Conference opening reception sponsor



1145 – 1245

## Breakout session one Ballroom (AB)

### **The lawyer as a brand: how to stand out in a saturated marketplace? Building trust, credibility, visibility and a strong personal brand within ethical and legal boundaries**

Our clients are inundated with articles, LinkedIn/blog posts and webinar invites. We know that personal branding is no longer optional, but what is the most effective way to go about it, without diminishing your professionalism or the legal profession at large? This session explores how to build more than mere visibility and instead develop credibility and genuine trust – online and offline – while also understanding the ethical and legal limits of marketing as a lawyer. Learn what is permitted, what is risky and how to position yourself confidently without crossing professional boundaries – with insights from experts in marketing and in-house roles representing potential clients.

#### *Session Chair*

**Caroline André-Hesse** *Jeantet, Paris; Council Member, IBA Global Employment Institute (GEI)*

**Ronak Ray** *modCounsel, San Francisco, California*

#### *Speakers*

**Steven Cochrane** *CMS, London*

**Marlene Hermann** *EMEA Research Director, Chambers and Partners, London*

**Mikko Kontturi** *AURORALAW, Finland; Website and Communications Officer, Employment and Industrial Relations Law Committee*

**Marzena Sękul** *Head of HR & Employee Relations, Ørsted, Warsaw*

1145 – 1245

## Breakout session two Ballroom (CD)

### **Employment of war veterans and persons with disabilities: global perspectives on inclusive employment - legislative trends and challenges**

Across the world, governments are introducing and revising legislation to promote the employment of war veterans and persons with disabilities (PwDs). Ukraine, for example, will introduce stricter quotas and accountability measures for employers in 2026, accompanied by a more employee-centred approach to hiring PwDs and ongoing reforms to create barrier-free environments for those with disabilities, including war-related injuries. Similar legislative efforts and draft laws can be found in other countries, especially as conflicts continue to increase the number of individuals affected by war.

This session will place these developments in a global context, highlighting the growing trend towards more robust legal requirements and greater support for the employment and inclusion of both PwDs and veterans. We will address key questions for employment lawyers and employers worldwide:

- How are changing liability systems pushing employers toward greater compliance?
- In what ways are new laws shifting the focus to employee needs and inclusion?
- What new obligations may arise as the global community responds to the challenges posed by ongoing conflicts?
- How can employers proactively prepare for evolving requirements regarding workplace accessibility and diversity?

Join us as we examine this important international conversation and discuss practical strategies for legal advisors and employers adapting to these changes.

#### *Session chairs*

**Philip Berkowitz** *Little Mendelson, New York*

**Lauren Salt** *ENS, Sandton; Newsletter Editor, IBA Employment and Industrial Relations Law Committee*

#### *Speakers*

**Luc Deshaies** *Gowling WLG, Montréal, Québec*

**Roger James** *Ogletree Deakins, London*

**Kseniia Lotosh** *Arzinger, Kyiv*

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1245 – 1345 **Lunch**

1345 – 1500 **Breakout session three Ballroom (AB)**

## **Roundtable: managing multinational employment law compliance in an era of constant change across jurisdictions**

With employment laws shifting rapidly across jurisdictions, compliance is more complex than ever. This interactive roundtable brings together experts from various jurisdictions to share strategies for staying ahead of regulatory changes and managing global risk. From tension over return-to-work policies, reputational and staff cohesion issues over geopolitical views and the (mis)use of AI, participants will be invited to work in groups to identify the key challenges facing companies today and how these can be addressed. The session will conclude with each group presenting a list of their proposed challenges and possible solutions. This will be a highly engaging and interactive session.

### *Session chairs*

**Todd Solomon** *McDermitt Will & Schulte, Chicago, Illinois*

**Kathryn Weaver** *Seyfarth Shaw, Hong Kong*

### *Speakers*

**Olivier Kress** *Flichy Grange Avocats, Paris*

**Paulina Miranda** *Philippi Prietocarrizosa Ferrero DU & Uria, Santiago*

**Weronika Papucewicz** *Rymarz Zdort Maruta, Warsaw*

**Rashmi Pradeep** *Cyril Amarchand Mangaldas, Bangalore, Karnataka*

**Nicole Six** *Act Legal, Amsterdam*

**Peter Talibart** *Advisor and Trustee, STOP THE TRAFFIK, London*

1345 – 1500 **Breakout session four Ballroom (CD)**

## **Closing the gap 2.3 – a debate between 2 in-house and 3 lawyers on pay transparency challenges.**

The EU Pay Transparency Directive is reshaping how companies manage remuneration, report pay data and demonstrate equal treatment and the pressure to act is mounting. In this session, two in-house lawyers and three leading practitioners share their first-hand experiences navigating the real-world implementation challenges of pay transparency regulation, with a focus on data readiness, equal value job assessments, and the organisational transformation required to align with the new requirements. We will explore how companies and their legal advisers are building the processes, structures, and culture needed to meet remuneration reporting obligations and what it truly takes to embed pay equality across complex, multinational organisations.

### *Session chairs*

**Tor Olav Carlsen** *BAHR, Oslo*

**Lara Vivas Sanz** *Cuatrecasas, Barcelona*

### *Speakers*

**Alvaro Galli** *Beccar Varela, Buenos Aires*

**Sofia Guijarro** *Executive Consultant Global Mobility Services, Lidl, Frankfurt*

**Anna Hałas-Krawczyk** *Greenberg Traurig, Warsaw*

**Basile Moore** *Global Labor, Organisational Justice & Risk Lead, Sanofi, Paris*

**Silvia Tozzoli** *Cappelli Riolo Calderaro Crisostomo Del Din & Partners, Milan*

1500 – 1545 **Coffee/tea break**

### **MOBILE TELEPHONES**

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Conference luncheon sponsors



# Thursday continued

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1545 – 1630

## **Scio me nihil scire. While AI has all the answers, we need Socrates even more**

In an era where Artificial Intelligence is not just a tool but a foundational shift in the global economy, the Socratic paradox—knowing that we know nothing—becomes the ultimate strategic advantage for the modern legal leader. For senior employment lawyers and law firm partners, the AI revolution of 2026 demands more than just technical adaptation; it requires a fundamental unlearning of the traditional legal service model.

This session will explore the dual impact of AI on the future of work. On a micro level, we examine how AI is redefining the “human” element of the legal profession. As algorithms take over the heavy lifting of data and precedent, the value of a senior partner shifts from information processing to high-stakes ethical judgment, strategic navigation, and the management of a newly hybridized workforce.

On a macro level, this transformation is being spearheaded in one of Europe’s most vibrant economic landscapes. Drawing on her leadership at Google Cloud Magda Dziewguć will highlight why Poland has emerged as a premier European hub for technological competence and digital transformation.

*Keynote speaker*

**Magdalena Dziewguć** *Country Manager, Google Cloud, Warsaw*

1630 – 1745

## **PLENARY SESSION TWO**

### **AI at work: navigating legal and ethical frontiers in a changing world**

AI is transforming how companies recruit, hire, manage performance, discipline and restructure their workforce – but not without legal and ethical challenges. This session will explore this transformation, examining some cutting-edge workplace technologies as well as examining usage data and anecdotes from the front lines. AI may (at least arguably) lead to extraordinary gains in efficiency and productivity.

Among the legal challenges to be examined are the privacy and data protection concerns arising from the vast quantities of data collected about employee behaviour. Likewise, employee use of AI tools risks the loss of confidential or trade secret information. Retaining and collecting such data increases potential cybersecurity and data breach risks. Algorithms may reflect the biases inherent in their underlying data, potentially perpetuating inequalities related to age, gender, ethnicity or background. There are fundamental questions of transparency, explainability and fairness when decisions are made by AI with no human input. Indeed, these issues (and others) point to the need for continued human involvement (if not management) and accountability for the recommendations generated by workplace AI tools.

*Session Chair*

**Helen Daniel** *Helen C Daniel LLB, Toronto, Ontario*

**Nils Van Dijkman** *HEUSSEN, Amsterdam*

*Speakers*

**Franklin Cachia** *Chief Legal & Compliance Officer, Mifinity, Ta' Xbiex*

**Kelsey Ippolito** *Legal Engineering Manager, EMEA, Harvey, London*

**Frank Kohls** *Managing Director Human Resources Germany/ Austria/ Switzerland, IBM, Stuttgart*

**Ekta Verma** *Senior Legal Counsel, Sprinklr, Gurugram, Haryana*

1900 – 2300

### **Conference reception and dinner**

Join your fellow delegates and speakers for a seated dinner. Please register by Tuesday 14 April 2026 to secure your place at the conference dinner.

Arkady Kubickiego

Plac Zamkowy 4, 00-307 Warsaw, Poland

Ticket price: €115

Transport will not be provided.

Please note that this event is open to registered delegates only. Guests and accompanying persons are not permitted to attend

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**Plenary sessions will take place in Ballroom ABCD**  
**Breakout sessions will take place in both Ballroom AB and Ballroom CD**

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0830 – 0900 **Welcome tea/ coffee**

0900 – 0930 **Are you ready to be interviewed, recruited, managed, and fired by AI?**

A seasoned change management and BD expert with a distinguished track record across professional services and international trade firms. Serves as a Change Mentor®, supporting leaders and organisations in navigating complex change and transformation processes. He is also a Certified Advanced Trainer of the Prosci® change management methodology a credential held by only five individuals in Poland. Executive MBA lecturer. Harvard Business School and MIT Sloan Blockchain Technologies program alumnus.

*Keynote speaker*

**Paweł Dudek** *Business Development and Change Management, Pawel Dudek Interim Management, Warsaw*

0930 – 1045 **PLENARY SESSION THREE**

**Outsourcing without borders: global services between integration, compliance and emerging restrictions**

Global companies face increasing pressure to design outsourcing models that are efficient, legally compliant and sustainable. This session explores how international service structures can be strategically developed and integrated into existing business operations while navigating complex labour, regulatory and ethical requirements. Key issues include:

- labour and employment law risks in international outsourcing (eg, co-employment, transfer of undertakings, worker leasing rules and local employment regulations);
- compliance considerations such as data protection, works council involvement, information and consultation duties and whistleblower requirements;
- economic opportunities and limits of cross-border services, including growing political and regulatory anti-offshoring measures in various jurisdictions;
- governance and practical implementation, focusing on contractual safeguards, oversight mechanisms and effective monitoring structures;
- cross-border employment classification risks; and
- data protection and employee-related privacy requirements across jurisdictions.

This session offers a practical overview of key developments, legal pitfalls and strategic considerations for building future-proof global outsourcing models.

*Session chairs*

**Hans Georg Laimer** *ZEILER, Vienna*

**Edith Nordmann** *ACG International, Amsterdam; Deputy Conference Quality Officer, IBA International Commerce and Distribution Committee*

*Speakers*

**Kiersten Lucas** *Stephenson Harwood, Dubai*

**Sławomir Paruch** *PCS, Warsaw*

**Anshul Prakash** *Khaitan & Co, Mumbai, Maharashtra*

**Thomas Winzer** *Gleiss Lutz, Frankfurt*

1045 – 1130 **Coffee/tea break**

#### **MOBILE TELEPHONES**

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1130 – 1245

## Breakout session five Ballroom (AB)

### Collective voice in a fragmented world: trade unions, collective bargaining and worker representation in a global context

Trade unions have played a defining role in Polish history, but globally many are facing declining membership and struggling to adapt to rapid changes in the labour market. While some jurisdictions maintain strong union traditions, others see unions losing influence despite increasingly sophisticated statutory protections.

This session explores why these differences exist and what drives the overall drop in union membership. Are unions adapting quickly enough to challenges such as AI, hybrid work reducing physical presence and organisational opportunities, shifting workforce identities, diversity considerations and the expectations of younger generations? How does the tension between collective agreements and the growing focus on individualised solutions impact their relevance?

We will examine how multinational employers can navigate diverse systems of industrial relations across borders, and whether the traditional union role remains crucial – or how it must evolve – to stay relevant in a fragmented and digitally transforming world. Furthermore, the session questions whether the traditional union role is still crucial and explores unions' future significance.

#### Session chairs

**Octavio Canton** *Galicia Abogados, Mexico City*

**Kara Preedy Kliemt**, *Berlin*

#### Speakers

**Luca Failla** *Failla & Partners, Milan, Italy*

**Agnieszka Fedor** *Soltysinski Kawecki & Szlezak, Warsaw*

**Philippe Grabli** *Oneida Associés, Paris*

**Almudena Álvarez Otero** *álvarez lentner, Madrid*

1130 – 1245

## Breakout session six Ballroom (CD)

### Navigating the right balance between diversity data collection, privacy laws and cultural nuances in a global context

Many companies are committed to advancing the employment of equity-seeking groups and understanding workplace diversity. They monitor diversity metrics internally and increasingly expect their suppliers to collect and share similar data, aiming for a comprehensive approach to inclusion across the supply chain. However, achieving this goal on a global scale brings significant challenges.

Organisations must contend with a complex landscape of privacy laws that differ widely from country to country, including strict restrictions on collecting and processing sensitive personal data. In some jurisdictions, even asking questions about race, ethnicity or other protected characteristics can be prohibited or culturally sensitive, making data collection difficult or even impossible. Employers also face cultural differences in how diversity and equity are understood or prioritised, which can affect both the willingness of individuals to disclose information and the effectiveness of global diversity initiatives.

Legal frameworks and reporting requirements may conflict or lack harmonisation, leading to uncertainty and potential liability when operating across borders. As a result, employers and their legal advisors must navigate challenges such as ensuring legal compliance, building employee trust, maintaining data accuracy and adapting their strategies to respect local expectations. This session will discuss international best practices, risk mitigation strategies and how to strike the right balance between promoting diversity and complying with privacy and cultural norms worldwide.

#### Session chairs

**Sophie Maes** *Claeys & Engels, Brussels; Conference Quality Officer, IBA Diversity and Equality Law Committee*

**Ajay Singh Solanki** *AZB & Partners, Mumbai, Maharashtra; Co-Chair, IBA Disability Rights Working Group*

#### Speakers

**Maciej Andrzejewski** *Senior Labour & Employment Counsel (Europe), ABB, Warsaw*

**Erika Collins** *Faegre Drinker Biddle & Reath, New York*

**Henric Diefke** *Mannheimer Swartling, Stockholm*

**Simge Kublay Can** *Bozoğlu İzgi, Istanbul*

1245 – 1345

**Lunch**

#### MOBILE TELEPHONES

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- 1345 – 1415 **Future-ready leadership in law: how leaders stay relevant in the age of AI, demographics and new work models**  
Tina Sobocińska an HR Influencer, Strategic Advisor, and the Founder of HR4future, a C-level HR leader with over 20 years of experience in global organizations such as PwC, DHL, and Schneider Electric.  
Tina is the Founder and Leader of the Digital HR Champions network and a Board Member of the LiderShe Association. She lectures at SGH Warsaw School of Economics, SWPS University, and Kozminski University.  
She is a podcaster and an international conference speaker.  
*Keynote speaker*  
**Tina Sobocińska** *Founder and HR Strategic Advisor, HR4future, Warsaw*
- 1415-1445 **Will robots replace us**  
Listed among the Top 22 Robotic Process Automation influencers globally by Business Analysts Hub. Harvard Business School alumnus. Experienced leader with a strong background in the computer software industry. Regional Vice President at UiPath, developing AI technology that mirrors human intelligence with increasing sophistication, transforming how businesses operate, innovate, and compete.  
*Keynote speaker*  
**Piotr Zajac** *Solution Consultant, AI/ML, UiPath, Warsaw*
- 1445 – 1600 **PLENARY SESSION FOUR**  
**A fireside chat: inside the client's mind: what general counsel and HR leaders expect when hiring law firms and how legal tech is changing the game**  
What do general counsel and HR leaders really look for when hiring external counsel? This session reveals client expectations, how legal tech is reshaping service delivery and what law firms must do to stay relevant.  
*Session chairs*  
**Annalisa Reale** *Chiomenti Studio Legale, Milan; Vice-Chair, IBA Women Lawyers' Committee*  
**Michael Royal** *Little Mendelson, Dallas, Texas*  
*Speakers*  
**Richard Harris** *Chief Legal Officer, Robert Walters, London*  
**Alina Kocięka** *Senior Corporate Counsel Employment CEE, Amazon, Munich*  
**Wojciech Olszewski** *Legal Director CEE & Strategic Commercial Affairs EMEA, Align Technology, Wrocław*  
**Melanie Scotto** *Legal Director, Global Labor, Employment & Employment Litigation and US Franchise Development, Taco Bell, Irvine, California*
- 1900 – 2100 **Closing reception**  
Museum of Modern Art  
Marszałkowska, 103  
Warsaw  
The closing reception is open to all registered delegates to attend. Guests and accompanying persons are not permitted to attend.

The IBA, its officers and staff accept no responsibility for any views expressed, presentations or materials produced by delegates or speakers at the Conference.

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## KEY CONTACTS



**MICHAEL LEFTLEY**  
Partner  
Head of Employment & Immigration Group, UK  
+44 (0)7909 996755  
[E-mail](#)



**SARAH HARROP**  
Partner  
Employment & Immigration, UK  
+44 (0)7595 777926  
[E-mail](#)



**RICHARD YEOMANS**  
Partner  
Employment, UK  
+44 (0)7747 800591  
[E-mail](#)



**MONIKA KRZYSZKOWSKA**  
Partner  
Head of Employment, Poland  
+48 605 125 344  
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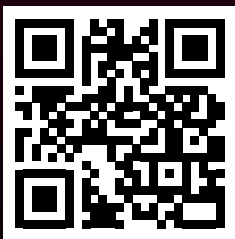
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We understand the needs of many sectors. We work with Polish and foreign firms from almost all sectors of the economy. With business relations in over 90 countries, we effectively support clients operating locally, regionally and globally.



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## Navigating Tomorrow's Legal Landscape Today

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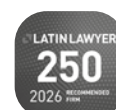
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## **Supporting international employers navigating the Polish workplace**

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- Anti-mobbing and anti-discrimination policies
- DEI strategies, codes of ethics
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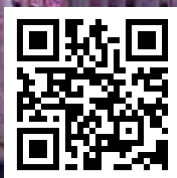
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# International Employment Lawyer

## OUR EVENTS

Bringing together senior in-house counsel, HR and ER professionals, and private practitioners, IEL summits and masterclasses offer first-class networking opportunities and are a key forum for discussing the big issues keeping multinational employers awake at night.

## NEWS

The IEL editorial team delivers timely reporting on the latest news, trends, and updates from the employment law community. Our daily news briefings provide in-house counsel, private practitioners, HR professionals, and c-suite readers with insights into the business, legal, and compliance challenges facing employers nationally, regionally, and globally.

## SURVEYS

Our thought-leadership surveys showcase individuals at the forefront of labour and employment law worldwide – including prominent female practitioners, rising stars, and in-house experts.

Featured individuals offer their thoughts on the world of work – both today and tomorrow – providing valuable insights into the trends, challenges, and innovations driving change across the globe.

## OUR TOOLS

IEL's workflow tools allow multinational employers to explore, track, and compare key legal and compliance considerations across different jurisdictions.

## IEL MONITOR

The IEL Monitor is a fully searchable resource that catalogues incoming and recently enacted employment and labour legislation across the world.

Developed alongside in-house teams, and in partnership with leading local law firms, the Monitor provides timely insights into legislative change in more than 100 jurisdictions

## IEL ELITE

The IEL Elite is an extensive who's who of leading employment law teams across the globe, updated annually by our independent research team. These practices impress with their performance on groundbreaking mandates, unwavering reliability on business-critical workforce issues, deft handling of major cross-border projects, and proven credentials as important partners to the world's leading employers.

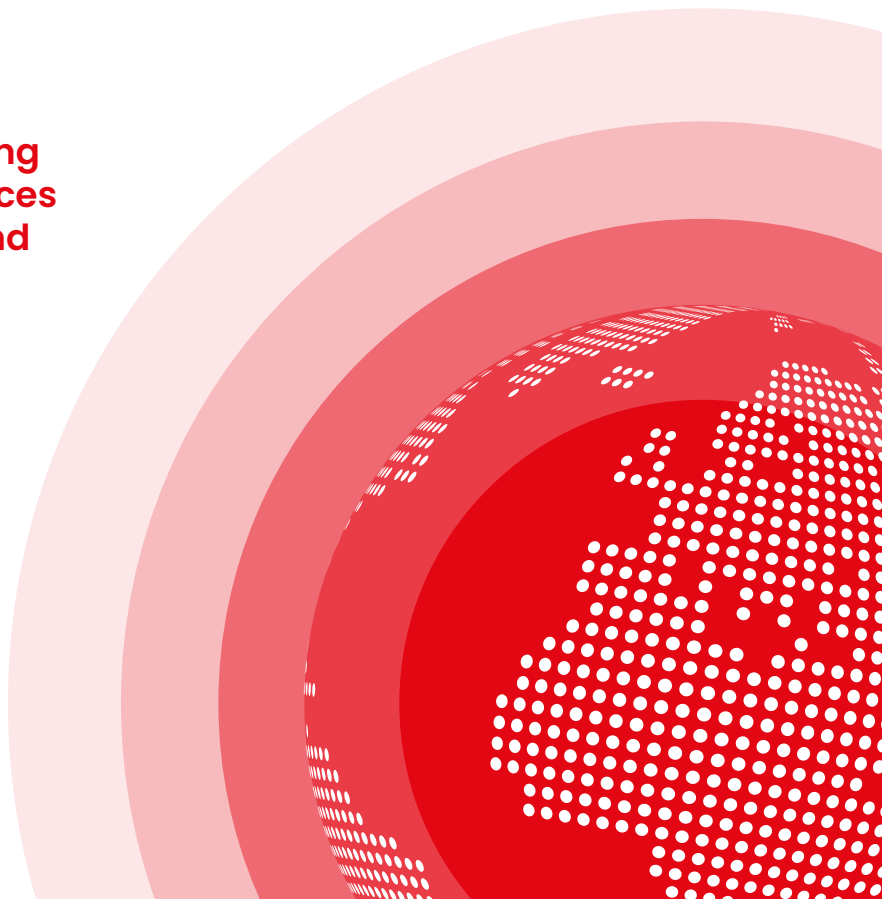
**“For any in-house lawyer navigating global HR, IEL’s events and resources are among the most impactful and thoughtfully curated.”**

Vincent Miranda, **Dun & Bradstreet**

**“IEL’s daily email updates deliver employment law developments as they break, giving me timely insight without having to search for it.”**

Becky McAlees, **Unilever**

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- ✓ salary and bonus systems
- ✓ GDPR compliance



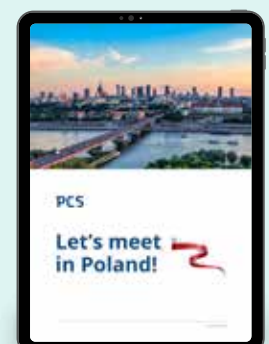
Our lawyers work from six offices across all of Poland's business hubs. Our support often transcends the borders and covers our clients' operations across the entire CEE region, making sure that the client receives business-friendly, quality advice harmonised across several jurisdictions.

[DOWNLOAD THE LATEST HR LAW BRIEF: CEE ISSUE](#)

Discover our "PCS Guide to Poland", where we share our absolute favourite spots on the map and recommend the food we simply cannot resist.

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Our team works closely with international clients and law firms on multi-jurisdictional projects, ensuring alignment between Polish requirements and global strategies. With extensive experience in cross-border cooperation, we act as a trusted Polish partner – providing clear, practical advice and integrating seamlessly into international teams.

### CONTACT



**Marek Kanczew**

marek.kanczew@rzmlaw.com  
+48 600 092 413



**Dr Weronika Papucewicz**

weronika.papucewicz@rzmlaw.com  
+48 607 092 898

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