

# Italian boutique hires ex-HSF lawyer

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Jack Ballantyne 05 June 2020



Monique Sasson

Former Herbert Smith Freehills lawyer **Monique Sasson** has joined D|J R Arbitration & Litigation, an Rome-Milan boutique set up in 2018.

Sasson joined as of counsel last month after two years in the Milan office of another Italian firm, Macchi di Cellere Gangemi, where she held the same position.

Sasson joined HSF in London in 2000 and was promoted to senior associate. In her five years there she worked on one of

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the early fast-track arbitrations arising from commitments made to the European Commission for the protection of third-party operators by a company involved in a merger.

After leaving HSF, she studied at Queen Mary University in London and completed a doctorate at the University of Cambridge on the rules of municipal law and investment treaty arbitration.

**Loukas Mistelis**, director at the Queen Mary School of International Arbitration, says Sasson has “extensive experience in arbitration, litigation and conflicts of laws in Italy, UK and the US.” He adds that D|J Arbitration & Litigation is a “natural professional home for her”.

Sasson also worked as a JAMS arbitrator and mediator based in New York after relocating there. She moved to Italy and [joined](#) Macchi di Cellere Gangemi in 2018.

Her practice focuses on arbitration in the energy sector. She advises on enforcement and set-aside proceedings in the Italian courts and also worked on the Parmalat insolvency litigation in Italy, which gave rise to civil and criminal actions.

She is admitted to the bar in Italy, UK and in New York.

Austrian arbitrator **Christoph Schreuer** says: “Monique is a brilliant lawyer and will be a great asset for D|J.”

In her new role, Sasson says she will advise on international commercial arbitration and help the firm to develop an investment law practice. She will also sit as arbitrator.

D|J Arbitration & Litigation has offices in Rome and Milan and was founded in late 2018 by **Maria Beatrice Deli** and **Giacomo Rojas Elgueta**, who are professors of law at University of Molise and Roma Tre University respectively. Deli has also served as secretary-general of the ICC’s Italian

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national committee for the past seven years.

The two founders both sit as arbitrators and Rojas Elgueta and Sasson also accept appointments as expert witness.

Sasson appeared as an [expert](#) for Russian Oleg Deripaska in a €600 million investment treaty claim against Montenegro that was [rejected](#) last year. Rojas has acted as a private and comparative law expert for Italy in several Energy Charter Treaty cases including claims by Luxembourg entity [Belenergia](#) and Dutch investor [CEF Energia](#).

Sasson says: "In the post-covid-19 world, economic recovery policies will inevitably include attracting all types of foreign investment, and ISDS, in various forms, will continue to be a crucial element of that. I am very excited to be working together with professors Deli and Rojas as ISDS evolves and new ways of balancing the interests of investors and states emerge."

Sasson says that during March and April in Italy, "everything stopped" in domestic arbitration and sourcing new client work was more challenging during the lockdown. However, she says international arbitration has remained "business as usual," and she has now returned to work in Milan and recently took part in a case-management hearing as arbitrator via Zoom.

Deli, who worked with Sasson earlier in her career at Italian firm Chiomenti, says: "The arbitration community in Italy needs more practitioners with the type of international experience that she gained in London, Cambridge, and New York City. Giacomo and I look forward to expanding the practice at D|R Arbitration & Litigation with Monique."

**Claudio Visco**, managing partner at Macchi di Cellere Gangemi, says Sasson's "mix of academic and professional activity always places her in the position to identify problems and issues in complex and new situations. From a personal standpoint she is an outstanding person, well known and widely appreciated by colleagues and clients. I wish her all the best for her future career."

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