PÉTER LAKATOS
MANAGING PARTNER, LAKATOS, KÖVES & PARTNERS LAW FIRM

MANAGING PARTNER, LAKATOS, KÖVES & PARTNERS LAW FIRM

WHAT DID YOU PICK YOUR LEGAL SPECIALITY AREA?

It was clear from the very beginning that I was interested in the civil law area in the broader sense. In the '80s, when I was at law school in Budapest, the borders were closed. We were allowed to travel to Western Europe just once in every third year. We all wanted to find a way to travel, and were very interested in anything which had some international element and that led my attention towards cross-border legal matters. I started to work with Péter Köves, in the law firm he had just established soon after the political changes in Hungary and after my graduation as an LL.M student in Washington DC. As the borders opened up and the huge transition started from a socialist economy and legal system to a market economy and legal system, I was part of the legal advisory team advising one of the international consortia bidding for the new GSM license. That was my first telecom project, which led to many others over the years. I like modern technology in general, my first telecom project, which led to many others over the years. I like modern technology in general, therefore I found and felt at home in my specialty area in this way. Most of the international telecom and technology companies which have ever came to this country became our client at some point in the last three decades, such as France Telecom, British Telecom, Deutsche Telekom, Cable and Wireless, Mannesmann, Vivendi, Alcatel, UPC, TDF, Antenna Hungária, HTCC, Teledemnik International, Invitel, Digi, Nokia, LG, Vodafone etc. There is no legal area on which we haven’t advised such clients over the decades. We have handled a wide range of complicated issues with regulatory, M&A, labor, tax and litigation aspects. In addition to telecom matters, I also advise clients on other complicated matters, whether it is multibillion euro EPC [engineering procurement construction] contract-related issues, or high profile accident-related legal matters. Always providing the intellectual challenge, which I am looking for.

HOW DID YOU PICK YOUR LEGAL SPECIALITY AREA?

It was clear from the very beginning that I was interested in the civil law area in the broader sense. In the ’80s, when I was at law school in Budapest, the borders were closed. We were allowed to travel to Western Europe just once in every third year. We all wanted to find a way to travel, and were very interested in anything which had some international element and that led my attention towards cross-border legal matters. I started to work with Péter Köves, in the law firm he had just established soon after the political changes in Hungary and after my graduation as an LL.M student in Washington DC. As the borders opened up and the huge transition started from a socialist economy and legal system to a market economy and legal system, I was part of the legal advisory team advising one of the international consortia bidding for the new GSM license. That was my first telecom project, which led to many others over the years. I like modern technology in general, therefore I found and felt at home in my specialty area in this way. Most of the international telecom and technology companies which have ever came to this country became our client at some point in the last three decades, such as France Telecom, British Telecom, Deutsche Telekom, Cable and Wireless, Mannesmann, Vivendi, Alcatel, UPC, TDF, Antenna Hungária, HTCC, Teledemnik International, Invitel, Digi, Nokia, LG, Vodafone etc. There is no legal area on which we haven’t advised such clients over the decades. We have handled a wide range of complicated issues with regulatory, M&A, labor, tax and litigation aspects. In addition to telecom matters, I also advise clients on other complicated matters, whether it is multibillion euro EPC [engineering procurement construction] contract-related issues, or high profile accident-related legal matters. Always providing the intellectual challenge, which I am looking for.

WHAT WOULD YOU CHANGE TO IMPROVE THE LEGAL ENVIRONMENT IN HUNGARY?

Clearly, the Hungarian legal system went through major changes in the last three decades. I remember the funny situations, for example in a case when I had to explain to a countryside judge what subcontracting means. Luckily, the quality of the legal environment in the middle and long run.

THE LEGAL ENVIRONMENT IN HUNGARY?

Clearly, the Hungarian legal system went through major changes in the last three decades. I remember the funny situations, for example in a case when I had to explain to a countryside judge what subcontracting means. Luckily, the quality of the legal environment in the middle and long run.

BACKGROUND INFO

Péter Lakatos, managing partner of leading law firm Lakatos, Köves and Partners (LKT), is a tough lawyer and trouble-shooter in court cases and negotiations and a leading expert of the Hungarian telecommunications, media and technology sectors. He has played a leading role in the development of the Hungarian TMT sector and also helped to create the telecoms legal framework in several southeastern European countries. Recently, Lakatos advised Vodafone on its UPC cable business acquisition and Rosatom on its involvement in the Paks NPP, and advised PE fund MidEuropa and logistics company Waberer’s on its IPO. He is ranked as a leading lawyer in Hungary by Chambers, IFLR and Legal 500. He is also a proud father of three children and can also be heard and seen at lawyers’ galas and balls as a pianist in the Sentiments Piano Duo, where he plays together with his musician wife, Eva Molitor.

OF WHICH ACHIEVEMENTS YOU ARE MOST PROUD?

My grandfather was an attorney-at-law with a traditional practice in a small town in Hungary. He graduated just after World War I and actually finished his legal practice in the late ’1980s. He had seen a lot of life and history. Once he stated that he had met with more than 30,000 people during his almost six decades of practice. He told me his big stories at courts and with other famous negotiators. My father, who was not a lawyer but a language teacher, always taught me to think, and to do it critically; a basic principle which I try to teach my children. So their influence was clearly a decisive factor which drew me to law as a profession. I also need to mention the civil law Professor Vékás from the law school, whose intellectual approach and very high level of professionalism clearly enhanced my motivation and desire to become a practicing lawyer who deals with complex problems.

I am generally considered to be a problem solver but also a litigator if the case requires it. So, when an interesting issue comes up, whether it is one which requires working out alternative legal strategies and where a deal can be negotiated and finally agreed, guaranteed and implemented with legal means, or my client’s legal position has to be represented, protected and enforced at court, that is the intellectual challenge which I like most in my profession.

WHAT DREW YOU TO LAW AS A PROFESSION?

For example being a partner of Clifford Chance for more than 14 15

In charge of position since
2006

Managing partner
Péter Lakatos

This information is not considered to be of high legal value or accuracy, as it is not sourced from a reputable legal database or data provider. The information is presented for informational purposes only and should not be relied upon for legal advice. Please consult with a qualified legal professional for accurate and reliable legal information.