



Former Swiss Life counsel sets up Zurich boutique

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Cosmo Sanderson



Robert Rom

A former in-house counsel for Swiss Life who recently left the insurance group after 15 years has opened his own boutique in Zurich and will be offering his services as counsel and arbitrator in M&A and other commercial disputes.

Robert Rom joined Swiss Life in 2003 as senior group legal counsel and worked on institutional and ad hoc arbitrations in a number of jurisdictions during his time there, determining case strategy and guiding external counsel.

Although details of the cases he handled are confidential, he says they were typically M&A cases worth tens of millions of dollars.

He also worked in-house for UBS Group in Zurich between 1995 and 1998 and was partner at a Zurich law firm from 1998 to 2002, primarily dealing with corporate finance and banking issues.

He has experience of mediation as well as arbitration and, in 2015, helped Swiss Life settle a high-profile group action brought against it by thousands of plaintiffs in Austria for the alleged mis-selling of financial products. The case had been in the courts for several years before being referred to mediation, after which it was resolved in a matter of weeks, he says.

Rom left Swiss Life last year to gain a diploma in international commercial arbitration from the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators in London. His new boutique is named RLR Arbitration after his initials, with the name appearing in branding in lower case.

He tells GAR that serving as in-house counsel to large institutions for many years has given him an “insider’s understanding of corporate counsel and executives and their concerns and approaches.”

He has also gained “full circle” experience of the transactions that lead to arbitration and the arbitral process.

He adds that he was persuaded by various colleagues to specialise in arbitration as the next logical step, but will also handle related litigation.

Hans-Peter Conrad, group general counsel at Swiss Life, says Rom “was a very successful, hardworking and extremely valuable lawyer in our legal and M&A department,” with “a natural flair for leading litigation and arbitration, which he always did with a lot of aptitude and great success.”

He was also an “extraordinarily talented negotiator held in high regard by clients and colleagues alike.”

Dirk Meeus, the managing partner of Allen & Overy in Belgium who worked with Rom on several cross-border disputes, says he “combines a very sharp legal mind with remarkable in-depth industry sector knowledge.”

Meeus adds that he was impressed by Rom's analytic skills, strategic considerations and tactical insights and has “no doubt he will make an excellent arbitrator.”

Rom holds a doctorate in law from the University of Zurich and speaks German, English, French and Italian.

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