



Global 20: Squire Patton Boggs

By **Kevin Penton**

Law360, New York (July 1, 2016, 4:10 PM ET) -- Squire Patton Boggs has continued to expand its global presence, securing one of the largest firm mergers during the first half of 2016, representing a Chinese creditor as it steered U.S. bankruptcy proceedings for a \$3.5 billion project to the Bahamas, and again earning a spot on Law360's Global 20 list.

A March tie-up with San Francisco-based Carroll Burdick & McDonough LLP brought another 50 attorneys into Squire Patton Boggs' ranks, broadening the firm's services in Hong Kong and reach into Boblingen, Germany, where the firm will serve automotive companies and other clients in the nation's industrial hub of Baden-Wurttemberg.

The strengthened presence in Germany, where the firm already has offices in Berlin and Frankfurt, may prove to be particularly significant given the country's potentially larger role in Europe's economy following the U.K.'s recent vote to depart the European Union, according to Peter Crossley, Squire Patton Boggs' managing partner for Europe and the Middle East.

"We would like to be bigger and more successful there," Crossley said. "What we got with Carroll Burdick, really, really helps us on that front."

The attorneys who had worked with Carroll Burdick are renowned for their expertise in product safety class actions, which Squire Patton Boggs Global Chairman Mark Ruehlmann sees as an excellent intersection with Fiat Chrysler Automobiles US LLC's appointment in October of firm partner Rodney Slater as an independent monitor for the automaker's consent order with U.S. regulators over the under-reporting of deaths and injuries potentially linked to the company's vehicles.

Slater, who had served as U.S. Department of Transportation secretary under President Bill Clinton, will monitor the compliance by FCA — an American subsidiary of Italian-owned Fiat Chrysler Automobiles NV — with the terms of the order, which the company struck last July with the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. The agency had said that the company's own investigation of a "discrepancy" in FCA's early warning reports found the company had under-reported complaints, injuries, deaths and other information.

Slater is leading a team of over 50 attorneys from more than 10 Squire Patton Boggs offices, in an excellent showcase of the firm's expertise in handling matters related to government investigations, litigation and public policy, Ruehlmann said.

Squire Patton Boggs

U.S. headcount: 679

Global headcount: 1,551

Total offices: 45

Offices by Region

Africa: 0 **Asia Pacific:** 8

Europe: 16 **Latin America:** 1

Middle East: 4 **North America:** 16

“To do that project, we never could have got it without Rodney pitching with some other partners both from the Patton Boggs side and the Squire side,” Ruehlmann said, “and you couldn’t staff it without a firm of [1,550] attorneys.”

Meanwhile, Squire Patton Boggs’ white collar practice has been appointed by the U.S. Department of Justice for an 18-month monitorship of Weatherford International Ltd.’s compliance with the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act, following allegations that employees at subsidiaries of the Swiss oil services firm paid bribes and kickbacks to secure business in Africa and the Middle East.

The firm will monitor the company’s compliance with the act in countries such as Brazil, China, Colombia, Congo, India, Iraq, Nigeria and Saudi Arabia, in a project that serves as an excellent example of Squire Patton Boggs’ broader goals for growth in 2016 and beyond, Ruehlmann said.

“To be a global firm, differentiation is the key,” Ruehlmann said. “We’re always looking for opportunities with differentiation, and many of them will complement our existing best-in-class practice with compliance and investigations.”

Ruehlmann also highlighted the firm’s cross-border work in representing CCA Bahamas Ltd., a Chinese construction company that is one of several creditors in the stalled, \$3.5 billion Baha Mar resort. In September, a Delaware bankruptcy judge had dismissed 14 of 15 Chapter 11 cases in the matter so the insolvency proceedings could take place in the Bahamas, where the project is located.

CCA and construction lender CEXIM filed motions to dismiss last July, arguing Baha Mar was not entitled to Chapter 11 protection because all but one of the debtors are organized in the Bahamas and hold few U.S. assets. They also argued the Chapter 11 filings were a bad faith litigation tactic to avoid insolvency proceedings in the Bahamas, where most of the stakeholders have strong ties.

Squire Patton Boggs has nearly two-thirds of its 45 offices outside the U.S., with locations in Europe, Asia, the Middle East and the Caribbean, according to the firm. It has approximately 1,550 attorneys, more than half of whom work outside the U.S., according to data provided by the firm. Overall it has offices in 21 countries, including the U.S.

Like most other global players, Squire Patton Boggs has kept a close eye on Brexit, the colloquial term for the recent nonbinding referendum in the U.K. in which a majority of voters expressed their preference that the nation depart the EU.

While the uncertainty over Brexit has increased Squire Patton Boggs’ work in providing counseling on how the changes may affect clients, there is concern that the separation may cause a broader slowdown in transactional work, particularly in corporate acquisitions, Crossley said. Squire Patton Boggs had seen a 12 to 15 percent increase in its transactional work in Europe over the past year, so it would be a “pity” for that to go away, he said.

Other analysts have expressed concern that Brexit could have an adverse impact on a global economy that is particularly fragile over numerous factors, including the faltering Chinese and European markets. While that in turn could negatively impact the bottom lines of some global firms, Ruehlmann and Crossley said they feel confident that Squire Patton Boggs is well-positioned, noting that smart firms must always anticipate and be ready for the uncertainties and changes that are inherent to the global market.

“We are diversified sufficiently from a practice standpoint, that it provides something of a cushion when some aspects of the firm might be going into a slower period,” Crossley said.

He noted that litigation, international dispute resolution, and particularly regulatory and compliance work have been the primary economic drivers for Squire Patton Boggs over the past year, and that he does not anticipate seeing that work dry up anytime soon.

“That will not be affected in my view by Brexit or by any slight slowdown in the economy,” Crossley said.

--Additional reporting by Sindhu Sundar and Peter Hall. Editing by Edrienne Su.

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