

ALEJANDRO TOURINO



MOVING INTO MEXICO

Spanish law firm ECIJA began 2020 by announcing its merger with Mexican firm Chacón & Rodríguez, marking the former's entry into Mexico, the 11th Latin American country in which it has a presence.



“For us its big news to enter a market as important as Mexico, and we have had the intention to enter the country for some time, but until now we had not encountered the appropriate partner with whom to do so,” **Alejandro Touriño** (pictured), managing partner at ECIJA in Madrid, tells *The Latin American Lawyer*.

The firm's Mexico City office is its 22nd regional location.



22

the number of Latin American countries
in which ECIJA has a presence

“There is a very clear reason why we wanted to be in Mexico, ECIJA is a firm that has seen much growth over the past few years, and especially in Latin America, but Mexico had not been part of our portfolio, and many clients of ours were requesting representation in Mexico, and it was necessary for us to offer our services in Mexico,” Touriño says.

“We have many important clients with a presence in Mexico and we wanted to accompany them there and become one of the main players in the Mexican legal sector.”



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“Chacón & Rodríguez, the firm with which we have partnered already has a strong portfolio of clients in Mexico, and we also have clients in Spain with a presence in Mexico, or which are looking to enter the Mexican market, so it has not been a case of starting from zero,” he says.

He says that the firm's clients in Mexico, or those looking to enter Mexico, are active in multiple sectors, from energy and infrastructure to tourism and retail.

“Spain is one of the largest investors in Mexico and therefore it was an obligatory step for us to enter Mexico.”

“Mexico is a very attractive market for many reasons, for its proximity to the US, with more than 100 million inhabitants, and which has undergone political changes that are generating business opportunities, and we have seen many clients keen to take advantage of those opportunities in Mexico,” he says.

“We have a presence in 11 countries in Latin America, both small and large countries, from Chile to the Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico, and there is a very direct economic link between Spain and the region, and Mexico is not the exception.”

ECIJA has merged with 15 firms during the last two years, and nine mergers took place in 2019, including with Chinese firm Grandall, the fifth largest law firm in that country, as part of its

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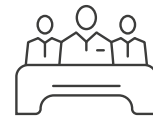
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policy to consolidate as one of the top-tier firms on the global stage by connecting its clients with the whole world.

CLIENT-DRIVEN

“We are also looking to grow our presence in Latin American even further, with a route map to enter new territories such as Colombia, Peru, Brazil and Uruguay, in order to serve clients that have a presence in multiple jurisdictions in Latin America.



12

the number of offices ECIJA has in Latin America

“We are a very client-driven firm and we want to accompany our clients wherever they are active.

We are seeing Spanish clients earning more revenue in Latin America than they do in Europe, and we want to serve them in the Americas, as well as taking advantage of the cultural and linguistic links between Spain and Latin America.”

And Touriño believes that, in Mexican law firm Chacón & Rodríguez, ECIJA has found its ideal partner.

“For us, Chacón & Rodríguez is the ideal partner because of the cultural link, and while there are many firms with technical expertise, we feel we have a common vision in terms of providing

a modern legal service and adapting to our clients,” he says. “For us, all of that is key. We also share a common growth plan, as that firm seeks to internationalise, and the challenge going forward is to put together a good technology law team in Mexico, on a par with our other offices in other countries.”

Ricardo Chacón, founding partner of Chacón & Rodríguez, and now managing partner at ECIJA Mexico, said in a statement during the announcement of the merger that “both firms share not only the business perspective and distinction in dealing with costumers, but also equal values, a commitment to diversity and meritocracy in our structures”.



96

the number of partners
at ECIJA

‘A FIRM WITHOUT A FLAG’

There are challenges to setting up shop in a new jurisdiction however, he says.

“We are a firm without a flag, in Mexico we are Mexican, we are not using a Spaniard as a country manager in Mexico, for example, and that is important, to be autonomous and to be a local firm, and our aim is to become one of the most important players in digital law in Mexico.”

“The firm was born in Madrid, but our local offices are exactly that, local: In Costa Rica the

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SPAIN IS ONE OF THE LARGEST INVESTORS IN MEXICO AND THEREFORE IT WAS AN OBLIGATORY STEP FOR US TO ENTER MEXICO

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office is staffed by Costa Ricans, in Barcelona by Catalans, etc., and that is the same policy we are following in Mexico,” he says.

The Mexican team, which will work under the ECIJA brand, will be led by the new partners of the firm Ricardo Chacón, Joaquín Rodríguez, Alejandro Linares and Armando Salinas, who will be supported by a team of 21 professionals, aiming to grow significantly in the following months.

The multi-disciplinary team offers ample professional experience, specialising in advising Mexican and foreign clients in international transactions, mergers and acquisitions, litigations, project finance, aeronautical law, compliance, technology law, telecommunications laws, pharmaceutical laws, energy laws and real estate laws, among others.

The merger with Chacón & Rodríguez brings ECIJA’s headcount to 96 partners and more than 500 professionals spread across 12 countries: Spain, Portugal, Dominican Republic, Costa Rica, Chile, Honduras, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Guatemala, Puerto Rico, the US, and now Mexico. ■