



## Community round-up: Latham recruits two counsel in Brussels

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Latham & Watkins has recruited two counsel to its antitrust practice in Brussels.

Philipp Studt, 35, joined the firm from Noerr on 2 May. He said he is very excited to have made the move because of Latham & Watkins' reputation, as well as the unique nature of his role – which focuses on foreign direct investment matters. FDI regimes are “proliferating” around the world, particularly in Europe, and now represent a key regulatory hurdle for many transactions, he said.

Studt joined Noerr as a senior associate in September 2020. There, he was part of the team that advised chemical company Linde in its €66 billion tie-up with Praxair. The deal was reviewed and conditionally cleared by antitrust enforcers in [Canada](#), Chile, the [US](#), [EU](#), [India](#), [China](#) and [Korea](#) between August and October 2018.

Studt started his career as a trainee at VVGB Avocats in Brussels from September 2012 to February 2013, before he joined Dentons as a trainee from March to December 2013. He was then promoted to junior associate at the firm in January 2014.

Studt also spent time as an associate at Hogan Lovells, Linklaters and Mayer Brown between 2014 and 2020.

Wesley Lepla, 32, has also joined Latham & Watkins, effective 15 June. He said he is thrilled to have joined the team in Brussels.

Merger control cases are becoming “increasingly complex” around the world and Latham & Watkins' expertise in this area is “unparalleled”, he said, noting that he has been “significantly impressed” by the firm's competition team over the years – especially regarding the breadth and depth of the transactions it has been involved in.

Lepla moved to Latham from Covington & Burling, which he first joined as an associate in 2016 before being [promoted](#) to special counsel in April 2021. Prior to Covington, he was an associate at Skadden from November 2015 to July 2016 and an associate at Jones Day from 2013 to 2015.

At Covington, Lepla helped advise Discovery in its \$43 billion acquisition of WarnerMedia, which Chile's National Economic Prosecutor's Office cleared with behavioural remedies in February and the European Commission unconditionally approved in January.

A spokesperson for Covington said the firm thanks Lepla for his contribution and wishes him well.

Lars Kjølbye, a managing partner at Latham & Watkins in Brussels, said he is delighted to have Lepla and Studt join the team. Their hires are part of what continues to be a serious investment in the firm's merger control and foreign direct investment practices, he added, noting that the firm expects to hire more partners this year.

Lepla and Studt's hires come a year after the firm's competition practice snagged Carles Esteva Mosso, the head of the European Commission's state aid unit and the former head of its merger division, for its partnership in Brussels.

Latham & Watkins has 60 partners in its competition practice, with 13 in Brussels.