

## Curtis promotes five

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Simon Batifort and Arianna Sánchez are new partners in Curtis' New York office

Curtis Mallet-Prevost Colt & Mosle has promoted two new international arbitration partners and three new counsel as part of its round of New Year promotions.

**Simon Batifort** and **Arianna Sánchez** were promoted to the partnership in New York, while **Marat Umerov** in Washington, DC, **Irene Petrelli** in Milan and **Nurlan Mukhitdinov** in New York, Almaty and Astana were all promoted to counsel.

Batifort was part of the Curtis team representing Venezuela that convinced an ICSID annulment committee to slash US\$1.4 billion from a US\$1.6 billion award in favour of ExxonMobil – thought to be the largest ever annulment at ICSID. The oil company has since resubmitted its claim.

He has also successfully represented Turkmenistan in a number of investment treaty cases, including persuading an UNCITRAL tribunal to throw out a joint treaty claim by 22 unrelated investors, and defended India in treaty claims brought by Vodafone over a retroactive tax bill.

Batifort was promoted to counsel at Curtis during last year's New Year promotions. A French national, he is dual qualified in Paris and New York.

He teaches investment treaty arbitration at Brooklyn Law School in New York. Batifort says he looks forward to "continuing to practise international arbitration and public international law at the highest level in this new capacity" and to strengthening the firm's "reputation of excellence."

Sánchez, who was promoted to counsel with Batifort last year, worked alongside him on the *ExxonMobil v Venezuela* case. She is also defending Venezuela against a US\$29.17 billion ICSID claim filed by ConocoPhillips over the expropriation of two heavy crude oil projects in the Orinoco belt.

Sánchez is dual-qualified in Mexico and New York. She has taught at the Instituto de Empresa in Spain.

She says she looks forward to "strengthening our commercial and investment practice, especially in Latin America."



Counsel Marat Umerov (New York), Irene Petrelli (Milan) and Nurlan Mukhitdinov (Washington, D.C.)

One of the new counsel, Mukhitdinov, is a Kazakh national who is based in New York but also works in the firm's Almaty and Astana offices.

He has experience advising the national oil and gas company of Kazakhstan and has been involved in ICSID and UNCITRAL investor-state arbitrations.

Before joining Curtis, Mukhitdinov taught subsoil, land and ecological law at the Kazakh State University.

Umerov is a Russian national based in Washington, DC, and also admitted to practise in New York. Before joining Curtis, he was a tribunal secretary at ICSID and also worked for the International Monetary Fund.

At Curtis, he has acted for Indonesia in a US\$1.3 billion mining claim at ICSID brought by London-listed Churchill Mining. He has also advised Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and other states.

Italian Petrelli was part of a Curtis team that represented Uganda in a tax-related UNCITRAL arbitration brought by Total. She also assisted Cyprus in its written and oral submissions before the Court of Justice of the European Union in the *Achmea* case and Tanzania in an ICSID arbitration brought by the Hong Kong subsidiary of Standard Chartered Bank.

She is also advising on the *ConocoPhillips* and *ExxonMobil* cases against Venezuela and has an LLM from Queen Mary University in London.

Curtis chairman **George Kahale** said the promotions are “well deserved”, adding: “all five have star potential and are a good indication of the firm’s deep and diverse talent in this field across its offices.”