

## 'You Have to See the Bigger Picture': Gianni & Origoni Embraces ESG

*The Italy-based international firm has launched a 20-lawyer, nine-partner ESG focus team, part of a growing trend to offer a one-stop sustainability solution for clients.*

By **Anne Bagamery** | maggio 18, 2021 at 02:00 AM

It started at a private equity conference in Sweden in 2018: A team of Italian lawyers heard presentations on the growing field of ESG investments and realized that, as a firm, they needed to be more involved in this new area in order to support their clients.

Today, Gianni & Origoni has a 20-lawyer, nine-partner ESG focus team, part of a growing trend among law firms to offer a one-stop solution for clients interested in managing the risks and opportunities of sustainable business practices.

The ESG team includes lawyers from across the firm's practice areas, including corporate governance, M&A, labor, environment, banking and finance, capital markets, energy and infrastructure, tax and competition.

"It's probably easier to say, 'Which practice areas are not involved?'" Gianluca Ghersini, an M&A and private equity partner and a leader of the team, told Law.com International during a recent interview.



*Gianluca Ghersini*

Though the initial idea to form the group stemmed from work with the firm's roster of private equity and financial services clients, demand has grown to the point where "ESG touches on practically every area where we advise clients, both public sector and private sector," Alessandra Ferroni, a labor and restructuring partner and another ESG team leader, said.



The partners mentioned, in particular, clients needing advice on new regulatory frameworks in Europe governing sustainability, as well as on how to address new insistence by investors that companies comply with increasingly rigorous standards for ESG business practices.

"Financial markets are very up to date on these requirements," Ghersini said. "But sometimes you have to explain why they are important in terms that are familiar: money and costs, growth and value. That is where we often come in."

*Alessandra Ferroni*

Antonio Auricchio, co-managing partner of Gianni & Origoni, echoed that sentiment.

“Companies, financial institutions and investors are undergoing a profound transition,” Auricchio said in a statement announcing the formation of the team.

“Sustainability and ESG issues are no longer a choice, nor a necessity, but instead a core business priority, an opportunity that must be seized to maximize their long-term value and growth as well as their positioning and performance on a global level,” Auricchio said.

Interdisciplinary focus teams are a feature of Gianni & Origoni’s organization. With the addition of the ESG group, the firm now has 11 such teams, in areas ranging from art law to fintech to life sciences to sports law.

The teams work closely with professionals outside the legal profession in areas such as technology and accounting.

The firm also collaborates with Bocconi, a leading Italian university, on a master’s degree in sustainability and energy management. The program is for students and young professionals from a variety of backgrounds.

“Networking with other professionals is very important, especially in these broader areas,” Ferroni said.

Ghersini added: “In tech, in the law, in many areas, it’s not enough just to know one thing well. You have to see the bigger picture.”