

IBERIAN LAWYER'S RECOGNITION TO THE TOP 50 WOMEN INSPIRALAW 2021



Last June 1, after one year and a half, Iberian Lawyer held its first live event. It couldn't have been on a better occasion. The InspiraLaw Diversity & Inclusion gala night 2021 gathered more than a hundred representatives of the Spanish and Portuguese Legal market, who witnessed the recognitions ceremony where the 50 selected women in our April issue were publicly recognised with an award. The day started with a round table around the Gender Gap topic that counted on the participation of several prestigious lawyers both from law firms and companies that debated about this reality. The main conclusion: things are changing, slower than desired, but they certainly are.

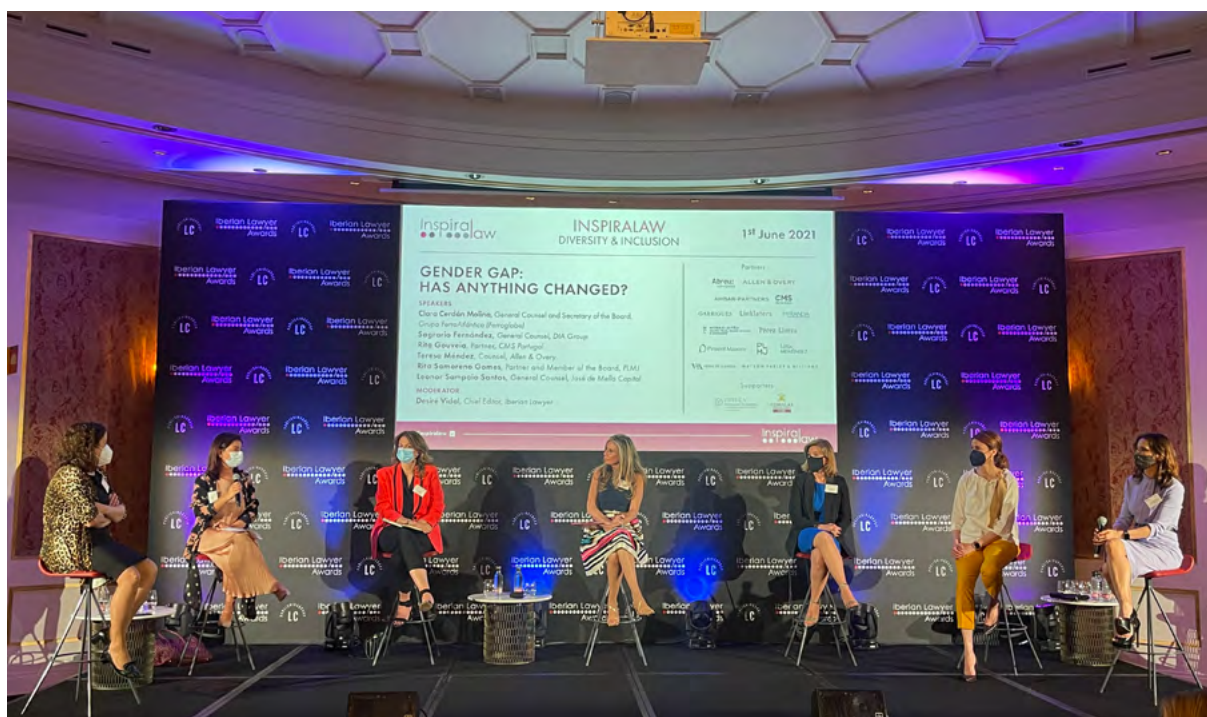
On June 1, Iberian Lawyer held its InspiraLAW Diversity & Inclusion gala night 2021, which counted on outstanding participation from the Legal market of Spain and Portugal. The 50 women from the Spanish and Portuguese Legal market that were recognised on our April issue were publicly recognised during the gala night that was held at the recently opened Four Seasons luxury hotel.

Once again this year, Iberian Lawyer wished to highlight the important work carried out by the top women lawyers in the Iberian Peninsula, both in law firms and in-house. For this list, Iberian Lawyer took into account their recognised specialisation in their respective practice areas, their academic work and their active membership of associations and organisations that work to promote equality and diversity in the Legal sector. In addition, their careers in decision-making positions within the firms or companies and the assessment made of them by other colleagues as inspiring women have also been valued. Some of them are already veterans, and others appear for the first time on this

selection, which only aims to contribute to the great daily work that all these and many other women in the Legal sector carry out.

GENDER GAP: A MATTER OF IMPLICATION AND TIME

The day started with the round table titled: "**Gender Gap, has anything changed?**", moderated by Iberian Lawyer chief editor Desiré Vidal, that counted on the participation of Clara Cerdán Molina, general counsel and secretary of the Board of Directors at Grupo FerroAtlántica (Ferroglobe), Rita Gouveia, CMS Portugal Dispute Resolution partner, Teresa Méndez Flórez, Allen & Overy M&A counsel, Rita Samoreno Gomes, PLMJ Dispute Resolution partner and member of the Board of Directors, Leonor Sampaio Santos, general counsel at José de Mello Capital and Sagrario Fernández, general counsel at Grupo DIA. The participants debated for an hour about



several interesting topics around this matter; gender and education, quotas: quid juris, the causes of unequal career advancements or women leadership in the Legal sector. After the round table, the speakers gave Iberian Lawyer their insights about the main topic discussed during the session: Gender Gap, has anything changed?

TERESA MÉNDEZ ALLEN & OVERY

"Things have changed, and they will continue to change faster and more intensely. It is the duty of those of us who have been here longer to foster that trend by supporting and coaching young female lawyers and working on a day to day basis to eliminate barriers that they may still face. It is their task, on the other hand, to come into the profession without fears, setting big goals and working hard to reach them. Finally, in my view, it is essential to convert certain debates that have been traditionally labelled as concerning women to debates concerning persons, particularly those about work-life balance. Young lawyers today have a different attitude regarding this and other topics, and I am confident that they will be essential to make the change smoother. In brief, things have changed, but new generations will be able to accelerate that change if we support them."

LEONOR SAMPAIO SANTOS JOSÉ DE MELLO CAPITAL

"We are slowly narrowing the gender gap. But we need to do more to close this gap at a higher speed. We need more women role models in senior management; we need to implement procedures in every step of the way to change the existing culture. We cannot change culture with policies. That helps, but we need all the management (men and women) committed to this agenda in everyday business to get an effective change. A culture open to diversity will benefit not only women but the companies

themselves. Several studies have shown that companies with women in executive management perform better, are more profitable and more socially responsible. Furthermore, society is clamming this change. It is a matter of sustainability. Companies that overlook sustainability principles will not succeed in the future."





RITA SAMORENO GOMES



CLARA CERDÁN MOLINA



RITA GOUVEIA

RITA SAMORENO GOMES PLMJ

“Great progress has been made so far and there is wider commitment in narrowing gender gap. There is an increasing number of female lawyers taking the lead on large international firms for the first time and at PLMJ we went from 19% to over 30% female partners representation in just five years. I believe progression should be based on merit and the objective of any gender-related policy must be to remove barriers to the fair functioning of merit-based evaluations and career advancement. Gender gap is a complex issue involving culture and unconscious biases so we must focus on what has been holding woman back. Access to informal networks is surely one factor in the legal professions. Networking should be on top of women’s agenda and firms should raise awareness to the importance of having wide and diverse networks and help their female talent accessing them. This is about empowering women to reach their full potential so this discussion will soon be obsolete.”

CLARA CERDÁN MOLINA | FERROATLÁNTICA GROUP (FERROGLOBE)

“In recent times there has been a greater awareness of the need to promote the presence of women in Boards and in Committees of companies. However, in my opinion it has been approached in a feminist belligerent way and this has caused the confusion of men, the tension in society and the confrontation of men and women. In conclusion, there is still much to do on the gender gap, it is essential to change the approach to progress. Without hostilities, without tension, in a positive tone and building. It is necessary to consider the greater presence of women on Boards and Committees as a benefit for companies and for society for which both men and women have to start by creating and getting rid of the social biases to which we are all subjected and promote family co-responsibility and labour flexibility as basic measures of change, meritocracy being the basic criterion for promoting in companies.”

RITA GOUVEIA CMS PORTUGAL

"20 years ago, in Dispute Resolution practice, women were the exception and often made part of the team as trainees or junior lawyers only. Today, women lead teams in a Litigation or Arbitration case, are appointed as arbitrators and have gained their own place in the legal world. 20 years ago a client requested to replace me in the legal team handling a construction case as it was a 'men's world'. The partner in charge of the matter refused to do so and convinced the client of the merits of having me on board. At the time I understood the client's request (which would be the rule) and was surprised by my partner's attitude (which was an exception). Today this situation would be unthinkable and the exception would be a woman understanding such request and the rule would be that partner's reaction. Both men and women contributed to this change."

SAGRARIO FERNÁNDEZ DIA GROUP

"Personally, I believe that some progress has been made in terms of the gender gap thanks to a very important international movement around this topic that for many years has demanded specific decisions and actions from companies and regulators to be translated into reality. However, the data continues to confirm the existence of a



SAGRARIO FERNÁNDEZ

large inequality when we look at how many women hold top executive or Boards of Directors positions. I don't think we have to look only at this. Achieving these positions is the result of a career that must give the same opportunities and through decisions based on meritocracy and talent. We continue to need speakers for this goal of reducing differences to be met. It is up to each one of us to accomplish it. It is a responsibility that we have with the new generations but it is something that we all have to do 'together'."

A MARVELLOUS GALA NIGHT IN A MAGNIFICENT SCENARIO

Following the round table, the recognition ceremony started with **Aldo Scaringella**, LC Publishing Group owner and director, and **Michael Heron**, Iberian Lawyer Portugal editor as presenters. After this, a gorgeous delicatessen-tasting dinner was served by the Four Seasons.

"Life always starts from women. InspiraLaw is the event for the re-birth of our Legal community, starting from women again. As always throughout human history. That's why I'm really honoured and particularly pleased to be here with you tonight. Thanks to all the women for what they do professionally and personally," declared Aldo Scaringella.

Thirteen prestigious law firms from Spain and Portugal supported the 2021 InspiraLaw gala: Abreu Advogados, Allen & Overy, Ambar Partners, CMS, Dentons, Garrigues, Miranda & Associados, Morais Leitão, Pérez-Llorca, Pinsent Masons, PLMJ, VdA Vieira de Almeida and Watson Farley & Williams. Católica | Faculdade de Direito (Escola de Lisboa) and Universidad Pontificia Comillas were supporters as well.

INSPIRALAW

CELEBRATION

NIGHT 2021

[PHOTO GALLERY](#)

[VIDEO](#)

**RITA
CORREIA**
Miranda & Associados

