

New Balkans Law Office

Employment Law Brochure

ABOUT US

New Balkans Law Office is a Bulgarian legal services provider, with a strong employment law practice. Founded in 2005, the firm has gone from strength to strength, providing advice primarily to international clients and diversifying its portfolio of practice areas. It also has a strong private client practice.

The firm is distinguished by its modern approach and international reach, with offices in both Sofia and London. A number of our lawyers are dual-qualified, particularly helpful when dealing with cross-border issues.

With lawyers experienced in the conduct of both local Bulgarian and international legal business, we are able to strike a balance between local and international demands. Our lawyers' professional experience and academic excellence set us apart from our peers.

CLIENT BACKGROUNDS

We act for clients from different areas of commerce, construction, energy and utilities, infrastructure and project finance, IT, including major local and international companies, financial institutions, recruitment and temporary employment agencies, many small and medium-sized businesses. Key for building and maintaining such successful relationships with our clients is our knowledge of their business and of the broader business environment in Bulgaria. The diversity of our clients makes us flexible in our approach and management of resources, as well as giving us a good understanding across a range of industries.

FAST

We understand our clients' needs for a prompt and responsive service and the urgency for document production that can arise. At the same time, we remain committed to professionalism and attention to detail.

EFFICIENT

We provide specialist teams which rapidly respond to transactional demands. These small, flexible teams deal with your client matters efficiently.

INNOVATIVE

We supervise and train our junior and senior lawyers extensively and value international experience.

FLEXIBLE

We discuss at length each client's budgeting schedule, their prior experience of Bulgaria and manages the engagement in a way advantageous to the client.

AFFORDABLE

Our rates are very competitive and we strive to offer cost structures that are closely aligned with clients' internal budgeting processes and with what is of highest value to them.

Employment Law

Overview and Scope of Experience

Overview of the Bulgarian market

Labour relations in Bulgaria are governed by the provisions of the Bulgarian Labour Code. As other European systems, Bulgarian labour law contains a large number of mandatory provisions which are intended to protect the interests of employees and deal with, among others: the length of the working day, remuneration, the duration of breaks, the length of paid annual leave, health and safety in the workplace, the termination of the employment relationship, and others.

Bulgaria has moved away from over-regulation of the workplace which predated the transition to a market economy. Even so, there are pitfalls in entering the Bulgarian market or experiencing organisational change within it, which require the concerted attention of in-house legal teams and of the senior executives of global corporations as well as the knowledge and assistance of local counsel.

Our Employment Law Practice

NBLO has a full-service Employment Practice Group which deals with all aspects of the employment life cycle – from the negotiation and execution of individual and collective labour agreements, through to their amendment and termination. Whether our clients are establishing new operations in Bulgaria, have an existing labour force or are facing a cross-border reorganisation or redundancy programme, they can rely on expert advice from our experienced employment team.

Our employment practice complements our strong corporate practice: we understand that corporate transactions affect the human capital of an organisation, and the importance of ensuring that employment issues are resolved at an early stage. Good management of such issues is a safeguard against future disputes. Due to our deep understanding of the Bulgarian market, our clients can always rely on us to receive a complete and accurate answer to their queries. We are used to offering integrated services with professionals and counsel from multiple jurisdictions.

We provide tailor-made and cost-effective advice to employers, working with in-house lawyers or HR departments to ensure our input meets their needs.

Our Approach

We represent our clients through all phases and types of employment litigation, ranging from unlawful dismissal, employment discrimination, unpaid remunerations, entitlement to employee benefits, misappropriation of trade secrets and confidential information, unfair competition, etc. Before initiating a trial we always try to settle the case out of the court at the earliest possible stage before our clients have incurred substantial costs. If settlement could not be reached or the client insists on going to court we do our best to defend his interests and almost always win the cases.

We proactively ensure that our existing clients are kept up to date with changing legal requirements where possible and appropriate, by sending them timely updates. These highlight the issues that they would need to consider, and offer suggestions on how to effectively adapt/respond. This is in addition to our generally available publications on employment developments which explain the impact complex legislation might have on our clients' businesses in layman's terms.

Services

The range of services we offer

NBLO's employment team advises on

- employment law effects of mergers, acquisitions, demergers; spin-offs; consolidations and outsourcing;
- compliance with national and international legislation and standards;
- labour discipline, misconduct and discrimination issues;
- individual and collective dismissals and severance agreements;
- employee share/stock ownership and bonus plans;
- employee pension schemes;
- social security contributions;
- health and safety working conditions, workplace accidents and compliance;
- trade union issues/disputes;
- visas and work permits for expatriates;
- employee non-competition and confidentiality commitments; and
- employment contracts and internal rules.

Integrated approach

Often employment issues are so complex they require expertise in other areas, such as corporate law during a restructuring. Expertise in Intellectual Property is necessary if employees are responsible for technological innovations, and in-depth knowledge of tax law is crucial when dealing with senior management contracts and packages. If a company is considering hiring expatriates, a base in immigration law is an asset. New Balkans Law Office understands how interconnected these areas can be, therefore our employment law team works closely with our other specialists.

Workforce Optimisation in the Bulgarian market

Workforce optimisation techniques

New services, such as “staff leasing”, have emerged over the recent years driven by the need for optimisation. We help our clients in:

Staff leasing

A “temporary work agency” concludes individual contracts of employment with employees and assigns them to work in “user undertaking” for a relatively long period of time (from 3 months to several years);

Temporary staffing

Identical to staff leasing, except employees are assigned to the “user undertaking” for a shorter period of up to three months;

Outstaffing

In this case, the “temporary work agency” does not recruit the staff but selects existing staff of the “user undertaking” and places it on its own payroll. Actually the staff is the same and continues to work at the same place, performing the same functions;

Outsourcing

One company provides another one with part of its functions. The client company uses the services provided by the

external company and not only the labour of its staff

Payroll administration

Outsourcing the administering of contracts of employment, additional agreements, remunerations, bonuses, social securities schemes, leave, etc.;

Outplacement services

A set of services provided by a specialized company on behalf of and at the expense of the employer with regard to career consulting and assistance in the search of a new job for employees whose contracts are terminated.

Where to find us

Our offices

CONTACT US

We are always available for consultations on recent developments in Bulgarian law.

SOFIA OFFICE

Sofia Office Manager

sofia@newbalkanslawoffice.com

New Balkans Law Office

14, Shesti Septemvri Street,

Sofia 1000

Bulgaria

Tel: +359 (0) 2 403 1900

LONDON OFFICE

London Office Manager

london@newbalkanslawoffice.com

New Balkans Law Office

27 Redcliffe Gardens

London SW10 9BH

United Kingdom

Tel: +44 (0) 20 7183 0262

www.newbalkanslawoffice.com

NBLO is the legal business of New Balkans Law Office EOOD, a company registered in Bulgaria. Please see further www.newbalkanslawoffice.com/legal.php for the terms on which NBLO's services, including this brochure, are provided.

The main NBLO office is in central Sofia. It is fully capable of supporting the needs of the services that NBLO offers.

Our office located in London is a representative office which undertakes client liaison and allows the firm to serve all the needs of clients directly. You are always able to contact or meet us in London to discuss any issue which require an immediate conference or demand immediate attention in Europe's pre-eminent financial centre.

All types of work performed by our Bulgarian lawyers are supported and liaised on from London.