

# Freshfields Austria head leaves to set up boutique

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Tom Madge-Wyld

Axel Reidlinger, former head of Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer's competition practice in Austria, has established a new business law boutique in Vienna.



Axel Reidlinger

Reidlinger will continue his competition practice at the boutique Reidlinger Schatzmann Attorneys-at-Law, alongside fellow name partner Hanno Schatzmann, who will focus on general corporate work.

Speaking to GCR, Reidlinger, 48, says it is the right time to start something new and he is confident the new firm will be a success.

"Freshfields is a great firm, but I have the opportunity to start a new project alongside a good friend. A smaller firm will allow me to be a bit more flexible and independent within the Austrian competition law market," he says.

"Very large companies have started segmenting their legal work and, for specialists like me, working within a smaller unit will offer the chance to access new clients in a different environment."

He says it is always for the clients themselves to decide who they instruct, but he is leaving Freshfields on good terms and he will not be looking to poach business from his old firm.

Reidlinger became a partner at Freshfields in 2001, having originally joined Heller Löber Bahn & Partners in 1994, before the firms merged in 2000. He worked out of Freshfields' Brussels office for several years, prior to heading the firm's competition practice in Vienna.

He has wide-ranging antitrust experience, particularly advising clients before the Austrian and European competition authorities. In 2012 he guided Hutchison Whampoa's €1.3 billion acquisition of Orange through EU merger approval and in 2013 he advised Spanish construction firm Fomento de Constucciones Contratas on its sale of Alpine-Energie to investment fund Triton.

David Broomhall, global co-head of Freshfields' competition practice, says: "Axel has been a great colleague over many years. He has decided the time is right for him to try something different and we wish him every success in his new venture."

Reidlinger Schatzmann will open in May. Reidlinger has not taken any colleagues with him from Freshfields, but he expects the new firm to employ around 8 to 10 lawyers once it is up and running.

Freshfields now has 50 competition partners worldwide. Its competition practice in Vienna will continue with six dedicated antitrust lawyers.

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