



HERBERT SMITH FREEHILLS AWARDED "DISPUTE OF THE YEAR" BY LATIN LAWYER

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Firm news

Herbert Smith Freehills' successful representation of the Republic of Costa Rica in a high-profile investment arbitration has been named "Dispute of the Year" by *Latin Lawyer* at its 13th annual Deal of the Year Awards.

Each year, *Latin Lawyer* recognizes general counsel and law firms advising on the most significant deals of the year across Latin America. Winners were revealed on April 10 at a dinner ceremony in São Paulo, Brazil, and proceeds raised from the event are being donated to charities from the Latin America region: Instituto Pro Bono in Brazil, Pro Bono Chile Foundation and Venezuela's ProVene.

The New York-based Herbert Smith Freehills team representing Costa Rica was led by Christian Leathley, who is Head of the Latin America Group and US Head of International Arbitration for the firm, and included partner Amal Bouchenaki and associates, Florencia Villaggi, Daniela Páez and Lucila Marchini. Herbert Smith Freehills was co-counsel with the Costa Rica's Ministry of Foreign Trade's ("COMEX") legal team led by Adriana González.

In September 2018, Herbert Smith Freehills, along with COMEX, secured a major victory for the Republic of Costa Rica in arbitration proceedings concerning an investment in a tourism project in Costa Rica's Central Pacific Coast - the "Las Olas Project." The project was shut down when wetlands and forest were discovered on the land, in compliance with local law on protection of the environment. The claimants claimed that Costa Rica breached its obligations under the DR-CAFTA and requested damages in the amount of close to US\$ 100 million. The arbitral tribunal issued unanimously an award dismissing all claimants' claims and ordered the claimants to bear all the costs of the arbitration.

Christian Leathley said: "This decision represents an important step in the spectrum of investment arbitration cases, and it is an honor for the HSF/COMEX team to be recognized for our work on this important matter."

The firm's Latin American team was also recently recognized in the prestigious *Latin Lawyer 250* guide as one of the leading international law firms advising clients in the region and was noted for its work across three practice areas: arbitration, mining & metals, and project finance & infrastructure.

A list of all the *Latin Lawyer* Deal of the Year winners can be found [here](#).

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