

# HERBERT SMITH FREEHILLS PARTNER RACHEL LIDGATE TALKS ENERGY DISPUTES AT LONDON'S FIRST EVER DISPUTES WEEK

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Today Herbert Smith Freehills Partner [Rachel Lidgate](#) will speak on a panel entitled '*Energy Disputes in a Disrupted World*', at the first-ever London International Disputes Week (LIDW) to be hosted in the Capital.

Rachel has over 10 years' experience in advising clients in the oil, gas and power industries on contractual and other disputes. She has carved out a highly successful practice acting for clients in the energy and TMT sectors and has extensive experience of High Court litigation, international arbitration, expert determination and mediation.

LIDW, which is being hosted this week across the City, brings together legal practitioners from around the world to celebrate the heritage of London as a disputes centre and to consider the future of global dispute resolution.

Herbert Smith Freehills is a proud founding member of this important event and has joined forces with more than 50 other firms, barristers chambers, academics, legal commentators and dispute resolution organisations to launch this inaugural week.

Here, Rachel answers some questions about why LIDW is so important for the Capital and some key issues related to Energy Disputes.

**Why is it important that London hosts its first International Disputes Week?**

London is a key centre for disputes. The conference is an opportunity to take stock and look to the future, in particular recognising challenges we face (such as Brexit). My view is that London has unrivalled judges, lawyers and legal infrastructure but we must ensure that remains the case.

**You have over 10 years' experience in advising clients in the oil, gas and power industries on contractual and other disputes. In your mind, what are the main global issues facing clients for potential disputes in the energy sector?**

Recently we have seen the emergence of class actions in the energy sector, both in relation to climate change generally and in relation to specific allegations of environmental and physical damage in areas of production. This is a trend that looks set to continue. In the UK, the English Supreme Court has recently opened the door to claims for negligence against parent companies relating to the actions of subsidiaries in other jurisdictions, which will concern international organisations. There remain geo-political risks doing business in emerging markets and in relation to the impact of international sanctions, for example in Venezuela and Iran (of course, the latter could have a significant impact on oil prices, which will have ramifications across the energy sector and beyond). In more mature basins, the challenge of decommissioning aged assets brings some opportunities, but also the potential for new types of disputes.

**Disruptive technological innovation continues to be a hot topic in the energy sector. How are emerging technologies changing the sector?**

Energy companies are investing heavily in digital technology, for example relating to automation and more advanced data processing. As a general trend, the sector is becoming increasingly connected. There are threats and opportunities here; notably questions of cyber-security and data protection. The insurance industry will need to adapt to address these risks, but parties will also have to address new potential types of liability in their contracts.

For more information about the event, please visit the website: <http://lidw.co.uk/>

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