

LEVENTE CSENGERY

PARTNER, KCG PARTNERS



KCG PARTNERS



of the employment and litigation groups, at Clifford Chance as a senior associate managing the labor law team and supporting the litigation team, and at Salans, focusing on employment law and dispute resolution.

Csengery has been married for 18 years and is a father of two, a 15-year-old boy and a 12-year-old girl. His wife is also a lawyer who worked for 20 years in the Ministry of Justice, heading the EU infringement procedures department.

He describes himself as a passionate “forest wanderer” and a hunter.

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HOW HAS THE LEGAL PROFESSION CHANGED SINCE YOU QUALIFIED, AND WHICH WAS YOUR BIGGEST CHALLENGE?

Many changes have hit the legal profession since I started my career, and these seem to come much faster than what I used to hear from my uncle, Blaise Pasztory, a well-known international lawyer practicing for 60 years from the 1960s in the United States and later in Hungary. A few of these changes are i) the utterly swift legislation procedures, sometimes lacking the appropriate amount of time for preparation for the legal community and society, ii) the “always being available” theory, iii) instant communication on several channels, and iv) the occasional lack of humility of the new generation towards work and other people. In addition, a significant challenge nowadays is that clients tend to wish to receive advice immediately and in full complexity. So, lawyers have much less time to understand their clients’ business, which largely influences the level of service. “A lawyer knows nothing but understands everything,” as they used to say in our profession!

BACKGROUND INFO

Levente Csengery is one of the founders of KCG Partners and has worked with partners Eszter Kamocsay-Berta, Gabriella Gálík and Rita Párkányi for almost 20 years. KCG Partners has been built on their pervasive friendship and “brothers and sisters in arms” attitude.

Csengery graduated from the University of Szeged as a Doctor of Law. After graduation, he spent two and a half years attending the New York University School of Continuing and Professional Studies, acquiring a certificate in U.S. law and methodologies. He also did a Master of Laws program at Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law, New York, in 2004.

Before founding KCG Partners, Csengery worked at the global law firm Gide Loyrette Nouel as the head

Name of law firm	KCG Partners Ügyvédi Társulás
Top local executive	Eszter Kamocsay-Berta
In charge of position since	2014
Name of associate non-Hungarian law firm or cooperation network	Ally Law
Year of Hungarian law firm’s establishment	2014
HQ in Hungary	1052 Budapest, Türr István utca 9.
Website	www.kcgpartners.com

HOW DO YOU EXPECT DIGITIZATION AND ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE TO AFFECT THE LEGAL PROFESSION?

Undoubtedly, both have a great impact on the legal field, although it is bigger for digitization thus far. Considering the digital filing and search systems in our everyday work, programs assisting tremendously in the public administrative and filing procedures, as well as virtual connectivity, all can boost the legal profession and enhance attorney-client communication. AI is a bit different; we have been discussing it for more than a decade already, but most legal professionals have not yet met with it due to the size of their practice, agility and willingness to use it or to other circumstances. It is still the “music of the future” how deeply AI will penetrate a conservative profession like the law, where personal relations and connections hold the utmost interest and influence. As we usually say in our office, whatever AI can take over in the office, let’s let it.

TECHNOLOGY ASIDE, WHAT WILL BE THE NEXT SIGNIFICANT LEGAL TREND TO SHAPE THE MARKET HERE?

Due to geopolitical trends and events in Europe and the wider world, economies tend to close, and blocks appear to progress. Europe, especially the CEE region, is dependent on these tendencies, and the sort of development we saw in the last decade appears now to be held back. So, legal trends that help put things back on the right track should take the lead, such as pro-growth structural reforms. Aside from international private law, public law might also arise since states are becoming more prominent market players.

GIVEN THAT HUNGARY HAS A VERY TIGHT LABOR MARKET IN ALMOST ALL FIELDS, ARE YOU CONCERNED ABOUT FINDING ENOUGH SUITABLY QUALIFIED JUNIOR LAWYERS?

This is the ultimate challenge not only for every law firm but for every other company because this problem reaches far beyond the legal profession. KCG Partners has continuously grown organically; we always tried to cherry-

pick the right personal fit for the team and integrate them effectively. Thanks to this policy, we have a lot of colleagues who started with us as summer interns or trainees and have now become senior associates.

We often initiate pioneer projects, like the so-called “Studia Pragmatica” project we invented with a vocational college. In this program, university students work in our office as paralegals under a closely controlled mentorship program. They are jointly selected by the college and us and involved in actual legal tasks. Some are even seconded to clients with a mentor. This program is unique and has several advantages for all participants. During this period (which lasts for a semester), the students realize what legal work in a law office looks like and how it feels to be a team member. For the client, they get the support they need and might find new candidates; since the students get to know the client as well as the client becomes acquainted with the student, they might continue working together after graduation. For us, we might also find our new generation trainees, if they wish to stay. After more than three successful semesters of practice, it seems it is helpful for students to leave the safety of academia to gain some field experience.

