



Marco Wirtz and Jan Peeters.

PEETERS EUREGIO LAW

## Prioritising cross-border business support

TEXT: LAUREN WALKER | PHOTOS: PEETERS EUREGIO LAW

**Expanding a business to international markets can provide new potential for growth and diversification. On the other hand, international business comes with the often-unpredictable pitfalls of the application of foreign law and tax systems. Peeters Euregio Law specialises in providing legal and tax advice for companies looking to work across borders.**

While working in a big law firm in Hasselt, Jan Peeters, lawyer and founder of Peeters Euregio law, noticed the increasing need for professional legal advice in international business. The fact that his former firm did not focus on cross-border activities was a shortcoming in the eyes of Mr Peeters: "I found it strange, as internationally the Euregio offers great potential." Therefore, he founded Peeters Euregio Law, a law

firm specialised in providing legal guidance in international business.

### Reside at the core of business

Situated on the newly built Corda Campus in Hasselt (the former Philips site), the firm employs five lawyers specialised in business-to-business law covering multiple disciplines, including corporate and commercial law, tax law, intellectual property, IT law and employment law. Mr Peeters comments on the importance of the location: "Because we mainly focus on business law, we want to surround ourselves with companies and therefore reside at the core of business".

Peeters Euregio Law is equipped to represent its cross-border clientele, as Mr Peeters explains: "Our lawyers are specialised in dealing with cross-border legal

cases. We are fully capable of supporting companies, both big and small, looking to operate across borders. Among our clients are Belgian companies who aspire to move their business abroad, but we primarily deal with foreign clients who recognise the benefits of trading in Belgium." What mainly distinguishes Peeters Euregio Law from others is its ability to assist foreign corporations, active in Belgium, in dealing with the country's national law and tax system. As a result of many years' experience in dealing with cross-border matters as well as foreign law studies, the firm's lawyers have profound knowledge of several foreign law systems. This allows them to advise foreign entrepreneurs about the – often subtle but far-reaching – differences between Belgian law and the law of their home country.

### Building bridges over legal borders

International business implies involvement of differing judicial systems, as Marco Wirtz, co-founder of the firm, explains: "There are considerable differences in the legal systems. For example, compare the Dutch legal system to the Belgian system. Both countries are often mentioned in one breath by foreign entrepreneurs, but they have very little in common apart from the language. From employment law to transferring property, there are great disparities." Mr Peeters added: "Strange enough, if anything, the 'legal border' between the EU countries has become more strict in my past 35 years of practising law. If we are looking to stimulate economic growth in the Euregio areas, we must find a way to bridge the gap between these legal systems." Mr Wirtz states that this is exactly where Peeters Euregio Law can assist: "We ensure legal support of the highest standard for those who are ambitious and internationally minded."

The lawyer's office also includes a Dutch and a German helpdesk. These desks are created to assist Dutch and German companies who are looking to work across borders in Belgium. In this way, foreign entrepreneurs can easily contact the firm when they have questions about cross-border employment, tax or commercial law. However, Mr Peeters feels they should do more: "At the end of the day, this is not enough for us: if you



want to grow internationally, businesses should be able to transcend these borders. In order to facilitate doing business in Belgium, our firm has created a one-stop shop for foreign businesses, assisting from the start of the activities to daily tax and accountancy matters."

To adequately meet the increasing complexity of international business during times of globalisation, and to further improve the services offered by Peeters Euregio Law, the firm has established partnerships with both Belgian and foreign tax advisers, accountants and payroll

administration, all specialising in cross-border entrepreneurship.

Mr Peeters concludes: "Although cultural and legal differences between the Euregio's countries will always play a part when considering cross-border business, this shouldn't limit progress. It's important not to focus on what makes us different, but focus on the things that connect us."

For more information on how to access cross-border legal and tax support, visit: [www.euregio.law](http://www.euregio.law)



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