

ZOLTÁN FORGÓ

MANAGING PARTNER, FORGÓ, DAMJANOVIC & PARTNERS LAW FIRM

**WHAT HAS BEEN THE HIGHLIGHT OF YOUR LEGAL CAREER TO DATE?**

Let me pick two things. When I was 30, I had just come back from a six-month foreign secondment and had recently been appointed partner at Weiss-Tessbach. So, I was ready for any kind of challenge, and it came. I got instruction from a U.K.-based international law firm to provide litigation support in a sizeable cross-border financing transaction-related case. I had to prepare several legal analyses about Hungarian privatization, corporate law and enforcement of foreign judgments.

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Later, I had to present the whole material to the High Court in London in a Hungarian expert legal witness statement. Finally, I found myself in the witness box and was subjected to cross-examination by both parties' barrister teams. It went very well, and from that time, I knew that being an international business lawyer was the only path for me to follow.

Obviously, the absolute highlight in my working life is being the managing partner of Forgó, Damjanovic & Partners Law Firm (and its predecessor) for more than 20 years. Back in 2000, we started based on the methods of an international law firm. This meant a very strong work ethos and striving for quality, above all. After some hiccups, we gradually shaped and found our own model, where client focus, quality work, and caring for the people we work with are equally important. I am incredibly proud of what we have achieved, the human qualities of our people, the way we cooperate with each other, the caliber of cases we work on, and the international mix of the clients we assist.

WHY WOULD YOU RECOMMEND LAW AS A GOOD CAREER CHOICE?

Law can be a good choice for any young student who enjoys reading and composing texts and generally has good oral communication skills. Being an attorney, I particularly like the

Name of law firm	Forgó, Damjanovic & Partners
Name of associate non-Hungarian law firm or cooperation network	The Harmonie Group, World IT Lawyers, ICC Fraudnet
Address	1123 Budapest, Alkotás utca 17–19.
Website	www.fdlaw.hu
Top Local Executive	Zoltán Forgó, Gábor Damjanovic
In charge of position since	2000
Year of Hungarian law firm's establishment	2000
No. of attorneys with license to practise in Hungary on Sept. 15, 2021	8

freedom that this vocation offers. On the one hand, when dealing with the law in any given situation, there are always several solutions, and you can opt for the best alternative for your case. On the other hand, as an attorney, you are not dependent on one particular client or employer; eventually, your existence as a lawyer only depends on your professional qualities and expertise.

WHAT IS THE MOST INTERESTING NEW FIELD OF LAW, IN YOUR OPINION AND WHY?

I am most fascinated by the evolving new niche practice areas, and I would specifically name the area of corporate disputes. Back in the '90s, international law firms brought in new transactional standards and methods. Slowly but surely, Hungarian lawyers working with international firms, like me at that time, developed their own M&A practice and documentation. But it took quite a while for sophisticated laws firms to take on board dispute resolution. Our firm identified litigation in 2010 as a critical area to be developed further. I consider that only in the last couple of years did the corporate disputes practice grow to be a new standalone niche area, where a lawyer needs strong M&A/corporate experience, dispute resolution knowledge and attitude

at the same time. The common ground of the two different areas is that you have to present compelling arguments, but while in a dispute, you fight until your last breath, in a transaction, you always have to find solutions that meet both parties' expectations. When you can combine these two approaches in corporate disputes, it can be creative and complex.

WHAT ARE THE BIGGEST CHALLENGES FACING LAW IN HUNGARY?

The legislation is becoming more complex in every area, but in a situation that counts for the client, you will find that what is in the law is just the starting point. You have to dive into the court rulings and advise the clients on how this problem is usually dealt with. However, this is often still not enough. Clients turn to you with multifaceted issues, and you have to be able to intelligently advise at a general level on all the problems arising, and if needed, dig deep into some specialist areas. So, for a practicing lawyer, I think that one of the biggest challenges is to keep up with the individual legal areas that are becoming more sophisticated by the day, while at the same time being a good all-round lawyer to be able to advise clients in complex situations.

BACKGROUND INFO

Zoltán Forgó graduated from ELTE University in 1992 summa cum laude. After some years as head counsel of the investment arm of the Hungarian Credit Bank, he joined Weiss-Tessbach Budapest in 1995, becoming a partner in 1998. He spent some time on secondment at Linklaters London and Weiss-Tessbach Vienna.

Since 2000, he has been the managing partner of Forgó, Damjanovic & Partners Law Firm (and its predecessor). He is primarily an M&A specialist with a great deal of experience in complex litigation cases. Forgó is also an arbitrator of the Commercial Arbitration Court in Budapest. He enjoys coaching students of the Bibó Special College of Law, which he has been doing for many years.

