

## Swiss-Peruvian launches Geneva boutique

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*Franz Stirnimann Fuentes*

**Franz Stirnimann Fuentes** – a Swiss-Peruvian national who defended Ecuador in its environmental feud with Chevron – has left the partnership at Swiss firm Froriep to launch his own disputes boutique in Geneva.

The new firm, Stirnimann Fuentes Dispute Resolution, opened on 1 February.

Stirnimann will act as counsel in commercial arbitration and Swiss litigation and accept appointments as arbitrator in commercial and investor-state cases.

As well as a number of cases before Swiss courts, he brings with him two instructions as counsel in Geneva-seated arbitrations concerning a Swiss private bank and a petrochemical joint venture in Saudi Arabia respectively.

Stirnimann says he has seven cases pending as arbitrator, including several ICC construction disputes. The cases are seated in Switzerland, France, UK, Spain, Mexico, Colombia and Abu Dhabi.

He has sat as arbitrator in over 40 arbitrations, including recently in an investor-state arbitration seated in Stockholm. He was recently appointed by Switzerland to the ICSID panel of conciliators.

During a transition period, Stirnimann says he will work as co-counsel with other Swiss lawyers and law firms. He intends to build up a team of lawyers with a similar international background and to continue to work as Swiss local counsel for international law firms.

**Yves Derains**, co-founder of Derains & Gharavi in Paris, says: “I had the privilege to sit on a tribunal under Franz’s presidency. I was impressed by his thorough knowledge of the case, his ability to make swift but well-reasoned decisions and his administrator’s skills. I have no doubt about his success in his new challenge.”

Born in Colombia, Stirnimann began his career at Gomez-Acebo & Pombo in Madrid in 1996. He joined Winston & Strawn in Washington, DC in 2001, where he was promoted to senior associate.

He joined Lalive as counsel in 2009 and spent three years there before returning to Winston & Strawn as a partner in 2012. He joined the partnership at Froriep in Geneva in 2015.

Spanish arbitrator **José María Alonso** says he also sat on a tribunal chaired by Stirnimann in which he was “able to deal with and resolve all the complicated incidents that have arisen in the proceeding. Therefore, I believe he is a magnificent arbitrator.”

While at Lalive, Stirnimann acted for tobacco producer Philip Morris in its high-profile ICSID [claim](#) against Uruguay.

At Winston & Strawn, Stirnimann was part of the team that defended Ecuador against an investment treaty [claim](#) by Chevron relating to a US\$9.5 billion environmental judgment by a local court. Earlier, he also acted in the dispute over Russian mobile company Megafon.

At Froriep, Stirnimann acted for the Czech Republic before the Swiss Supreme Court in annulment proceedings relating to an investor-state award in the solar sector.

Swiss arbitrator **Pierre-Yves Gunter**, who has seen Stirnimann both as counsel and arbitrator, says: "Franz has a rather unique profile. A great mix between Europe and Latin America. He equally excels as counsel and arbitrator and is always perfectly prepared. I wish him all the best and have no doubt that he will continue being successful."

Stirnimann has authored several publications including on investment treaty arbitration in Switzerland and the pharmaceuticals sector and on enforcement.

He is listed as a “Thought Leader” for his experience in arbitration by GAR’s sister publication *Who’s Who Legal*.

Stirnimann studied at Zurich University and Fribourg University in Switzerland, Georgetown in Washington, DC and Durham University in UK, and lectures on international arbitration at universities in Switzerland and Latin America.

He is admitted to practise in Switzerland, England and Wales and in New York. He works in English, Spanish, German, and French.

**Jean Marguerat**, Froriep’s managing partner in Geneva, says: “We understand Franz’ desire to pursue his arbitration activities in a boutique. We have appreciated working with him over the past years and wish him every success for the future.”