



Turkey's competition bar

Turkey's competition bar, although compact, boasts a broad international clientele and highly trained attorneys who are embracing forthcoming changes to the country's legal regime. **Yasmine Harik** explores which firms are leading the way

Although the Turkish Competition Authority is located in the capital city of Ankara, nearly all of the country's established competition practices call Istanbul home. While the number of firms that specialise in competition law remains limited and teams are still relatively small, they continue to build experience and expertise in tandem with an increasingly sophisticated and predictable enforcer modelling itself after its European counterparts.

Many of the country's leading practitioners honed their skills in Europe or the US, and several of their practices are affiliated with prominent international firms such as White & Case, Dentons, Baker & McKenzie and Locke Lord Edwards. Growing foreign investment and a healthy business climate in Istanbul means all of the leading firms have at least a handful of major, multinational companies on their books.

While Turkey's private bar anxiously awaits the passage of pending amendments to its competition law, the country's best competition lawyers are busy with a full spectrum of work, including cartel investigations, merger clearance and unilateral conduct cases. Firms are also devoting more time to competition training seminars and compliance programmes for both Turkish and foreign clients.

Elite

Standing tall as ever, **ELİG Attorneys at Law** is your best bet for competition expertise in Turkey. Praised by colleagues across the country and internationally, ELİG celebrated its 10-year anniversary in March 2015 with a symposium that brought many of the world's top practitioners and regulators to Istanbul.

ELİG's peers all agree: there is ELİG, and then there is everybody else.

Managing partner and head of the firm's competition practice Gönenç Gürkaynak has nearly two decades of competition work under his belt, having worked at the New York, Brussels and Istanbul offices of White & Case before taking the lead at ELİG in 2005. The perennial *Who's Who Legal: Competition* honouree is assisted by two partners: Korhan Yıldırım, who was promoted in January 2014 after nine years at the firm; and Hakan Özgökçen who joined the partnership this past January. The trio oversees by far the largest competition team in Turkey, consisting of six senior associates – two of whom were lateral hires in 2014 – and 17 mid-level or junior associates who are devoted exclusively to competition work.

Unsurprisingly, ELİG boasts the deepest roster of international and domestic clients, including ExxonMobil, L'Oréal, 3M, Mercedes-Benz and Rolls-Royce, Turkish Airlines and Tetra Pak, as well as nearly 75 per cent of Turkey's cement industry. The firm does approximately three times more merger work than conduct investigations, including advising on acquisitions by GE, Medtronic and Archer Daniels Midland in 2014. Still, ELİG helped medical company Alcon navigate a preliminary investigation by the TCA for alleged resale price maintenance, which resulted in no fine. The TCA found in October 2014 that four companies had colluded to fix the price of fresh yeast, and ELİG client Mauri Maya Sanayi won full immunity for its cooperation.

FIRM	HEAD(S) OF COMPETITION	SIZE	WHO'S WHO LEGAL NOMINEES	CLIENTS
ELITE				
ELİG	Gönenç Gürkaynak	3 partners 3 counsel 11 associates	Gönenç Gürkaynak	Tetra Pak, GE, ExxonMobil, 3M, Turkish Airlines, Mercedes-Benz, Mitsubishi, Rolls-Royce, Archer Daniels Midland, L'Oréal, ÇimSA, Medtronic, Alcon