

Grine Lahreche Discusses His Journey From Professional Athlete To Top Private Equity/M&A Attorney With *Lefebvre Dalloz*

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Winston & Strawn Paris partner Grine Lahreche spoke with *Lefebvre Dalloz* about his journey to becoming a lawyer and his path to leading Winston's Private Equity/M&A practice in Paris, following a successful sports career as a champion-level handball goalkeeper. He credits his mentors, his own determination and preparation, and the importance of having "team spirit" as key elements of his success, both on the handball field and in the board room.

"I'm always determined to excel myself," said Grine, who pursued his university studies while juggling a career as a top-level sportsman. Winning his first French championship at 15 and becoming semi-professional at 16, he went on to play at the national level, ending his career by winning the French National 1 title in 2010.

Even as his handball career was coming to a close and his legal career was ramping up, and he was juggling both, he said, "The period during which I continued to play while working as an associate was a sort of soft landing for managing the post-top level. It helped me to move on, even if it wasn't always easy."

As he was building his private equity and M&A practice, Grine became aware of a growing demand for international legal services from his clients and joined Winston & Strawn in 2023, bringing with him a whole team from his firm at the time.

"We certainly had a good network of correspondents, but that was no substitute for having integrated offices. I also wanted to open up my field of activity and not remain solely focused on the Franco-French market, but also to work on a more regular basis in conjunction with the United States," Grine said.

Today, Winston's Private Equity/M&A team in Paris is 20 people, where they advise on investment funds in private equity, as well as founding managers, major groups and family offices on LBOs, capital reorganizations and mergers & acquisitions.

Industry leaders, clients and teammates have sung Grine's praises. SmartTrade Technologies CEO David Vincent describes Grine as an all-round lawyer who, in addition to his ability to anticipate, has a 360° view of each transaction. "He knows how to find the right legal response to a given situation, and how to be creative," he says. "Grine Lahreche has a very good understanding of the dynamics of a case and its stakes, which enables him to be highly responsive in competitive processes."

Mounir Letayf, partner at Winston, says the culture of top-level sport has also undeniably enabled Grine to develop an exacerbated sense of competition, which is necessary in today's environment. "His sporting discipline has given him a real rigor in his work," he said. "One of his greatest strengths is his ability to organize himself extremely well and to surround himself with the right people."

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