



Bruno Soter

### Barbosa Müssnich replaces managing partner

Brazilian law firm **Barbosa Müssnich & Aragão's** first managing partner, Bruno Camara Soter da Silveira, has left the firm after four and a half years in the role.

Finance and capital markets lawyer Elaine de Paula Palmer has taken over his position with a two-year renewable tenure.

Soter, one of Barbosa Müssnich's founding partners, says when he became managing partner, he agreed to remain in the role for at least three years, and that having exceeded that by 18 months, he felt "All the major projects that my partners and I had identified as priorities when I was elected had been implemented over those years, bringing a cycle in the management of the firm to a close."

He will now move to California to study for an MBA at Stanford University. Although he emphasises that his relationship with the firm will continue, he says it is still too early to say whether he will return at the end of the course.

He characterises his tenure as managing partner as "a time of profound change for the firm," saying, "the firm was able to accelerate the process of institutionalisation and now has a longer-term vision, a clear strategy and, above all, more coordination and collaboration among its professionals and practice areas."

Palmer says, "Mr Soter fulfilled his role with great commitment and talent. Due to the strength of his principles and the management skills acquired during the years, he was able to promote a great deal of professionalism and institutional maturity."

Soter and Palmer have been working closely together to ensure a smooth transition.

Palmer is also a founding partner of the firm. She began her career with Gouvêa Vieira Advogados, and in 1994 was invited by Francisco Antunes Maciel Müssnich to join the group that would go on to found Barbosa Müssnich.

She says, "The major challenge for any managing partner is to guarantee the firm's growth without losing quality of work and services. This is a continuing process that never ends."

Under her stewardship, Palmer says she does not expect any substantial changes to the firm's strategy saying, "Basically, our intention is to carry on with the process of professional management initiated many years ago, when we hired our first external manager, in 2000, and afterwards with the adoption of the managing partner in 2005. The goal is to continue in the solid process of a law firm's professional management."

The firm's last significant strategic move came in March when Soter announced Barbosa Müssnich's withdrawal from the Affinitas alliance, headed by Spanish firm Garrigues, saying that problems arose when it became clear that Garrigues has long-term plans to merge with the firms in the network.

"We were not clear on how that greater integration would deliver for our clients," he explained. "It would be very disruptive to stay in the alliance but on a different path – it is better to say openly we see things differently."

Palmer says the firm has no immediate plans to forge any new alliances.