

Exclusive

**Regional: Central and Eastern Europe, Southeast Europe**

## **Legal adviser Wolf Theiss expects 10-15 M&A transactions in Poland in 2015**

Source: DealWatch

June 4, 2015 (12:07)

Jun 4, 2015 (DW) - Legal adviser Wolf Theiss sees its pipeline of pending M&A transactions in Poland more robust than it has been in recent years and expects to carry out between 10 and 15 M&A transactions this year, more by a third than last year, a co-managing partner at the Warsaw office of the consultancy told DealWatch.

“We expect 10-15 M&A transactions to sign and/or close in 2015. That is about a third better than our 2014,” Ronald B. Given said in an interview.

The majority of the deals will have values ranging from EUR 5mn to EUR 20mn and around one-fifth of them may be above that range.

“One in particular could be in the EUR 250mn range, which would certainly be a blockbuster by Polish standards,” Given explained.

The advisory expects to act more on buy-side mandates. Most of its clients will be foreign investors, either directly or via their Polish units.

Wolf Theiss is also currently advising BayWa Solar Projects on the development of solar projects in southwestern Poland. So far, the development process does not involve any M&A activity. However, various special purpose vehicles for each particular project are being established at present, so things could change.

The legal firm also advised BayWa Wind on the acquisition of 5 wind farm projects in Poland last year. It concerned farms with a total capacity of 140 MW. The seller was Wien Energie. The deal concerned not only Poland but had also some Austrian and German elements. On that deal, Wolf Theiss has worked closely with its Vienna Wolf Theiss colleagues and German law firm Luther.

Wolf Theiss considers Poland to have the greatest potential for growth within its 13 jurisdiction CEE/SEE footprint. Its traditional advantages continue to serve it well: EU membership, an adequate and constantly improving rule of law, proximity to Germany, a well-educated workforce and lower employee costs than Western Europe.

“The competition for investors throughout the CEE/SEE remains intense. Poland has been trying harder and playing smarter. The increased use of "special economic zones" is an example of these efforts. Most indications are that Poland will continue to succeed,” Given explained, adding that things are certainly not perfect and everyday challenges like permits

and approval processes remain.

According to him, the recent election results in the Komorowski/Duda presidential runoff have called into question the political stability that has also been an important part of Poland's appeal to foreign investors. "The elections in the fall that will determine the prime minister will also be watched very carefully by investors throughout Europe and the rest of the world. We note that Poland has had a steady growth for 25 years irrespective of political changes," he added.

Sectors of special interest to the clients of Wolf Theiss are real estate, outsourcing, military, pharma and healthcare, insurance, automotive and energy.

Wolf Theiss advises InterHealth Canada, the private partner on the first PPP project in the Polish healthcare sector. The project involves the design, construction, equipping and financing of a regional hospital in Zywiec, as maintenance, management and the provision of health care services are also covered. The value of the project is approximately EUR 40mn.

Wolf Theiss also provided legal assistance to Immobil Poland, the private partner in the proceedings regarding the revitalisation of the northern part of Granary Island (Wyspa Spichrzów) in Gdansk. The project is considered to be one of the most attractive real estate development projects in Poland implemented in the form of a public-private partnership.

The company is also advising VINCI Concessions SA on a public tender to select a private investor who will finance, construct, reconstruct, operate and maintain regional roads in the region of Lower Silesia under a public-private-partnership. The project will serve as a model PPP in road construction in Poland.

It also advised the receiver of Alpine Bau on the secondary insolvency proceedings of the company in Poland. Alpine was one of Austria's largest construction companies until its bankruptcy and the collapse of Alpine is the biggest insolvency case in Austrian history with a claimed EUR 4.15 billion indebtedness.

"Wolf Theiss has been intensely focused for the last several years on the inbound possibilities from China across our CEE/SEE network. We regularly travel to Asia to maintain our excellent relationships there with clients and referring law firms." Given said.

According to him, Poland is increasingly seen as a good bridging point between China's markets in Europe and Russia. Improved rail links from China to Poland and then beyond to the west - to Europe - and to the east - to Russia - will bolster this role for Poland.

The executive also noted that he is seeing more cross-border activity within the CEE/SEE than ever before. "Poland is becoming much more of a major investor outside its borders, particularly into the CEE/SEE," Given concluded.

Annie Tsoneva

at/bh

---

Any redistribution of this information is strictly prohibited.  
Copyright © 2001 - 2015 EMIS, all rights reserved.  
A Euromoney Institutional Investor company.