

Peterka & Partners' specialist M&A team and international law firm links mean it is the best breed for mergers and acquisitions advice in the Czech Republic

Mergers and acquisitions move the world. That is not news. In the first half of 2007 transactions totalled \$2trn (£970bn). The volume of small and medium transactions remains unchanged or occasionally increases, despite the current crisis in the American mortgage market. This development is supported by the capital increase and worldwide harmonisation of interest rates and, therefore, similar results can be expected next year.

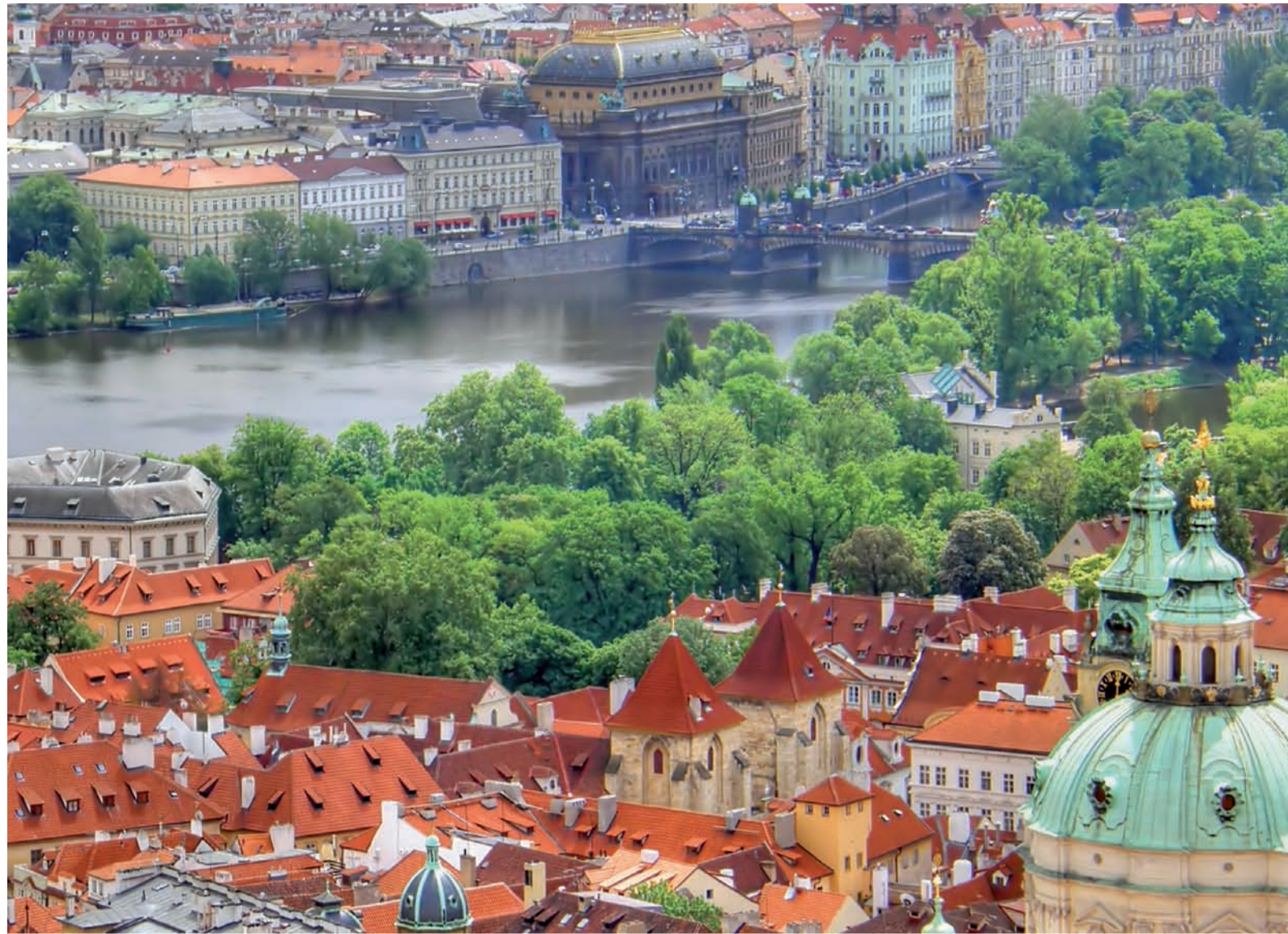
The number and volume of these transactions have significantly increased in central and eastern Europe. In addition to entities outside the region, local investors (mainly Russian) are investing in the region and, as a result, are playing an important role on European markets (for example in IT). The acquisition boom is mainly occurring within the construction industry and financial services.

Peterka & Partners is one of a few Czech-based law firms that has managed to capitalise on this M&A boom. Realising that current growth in this area will generate a lot of work in the long term, the firm has formed a special practice group devoted solely to M&A. "Today, our M&A team is really strong," says Jan Liska, partner, who oversees the M&A practice group.

The practice group was established several years ago in response to the growing M&A market. "We had the right combination of people who had been involved in M&A. It was the vision of the firm to be ready for the boom in M&A projects in the Czech Republic, especially in connection with its accession to the European Union. It was evident that it would come, so we prepared ourselves," explains Ondrej Peterka, managing partner and founder of the firm.

The firm's M&A team is a dynamic group of skilled, qualified and experienced lawyers and tax advisors, who are attentive to clients' wishes and offer solid advice and creative thinking.

Peterka & Partners is able to compete successfully with branches of large multinational law firms in the M&A arena. It offers services of equal quality for a competitive price. It has the breadth of experience of a large firm, with personal attention to clients and a quick response time. It also has international experience and a team that is trained to global standards. The firm is used to handling multinational problems, so its capacity is multijurisdictional. The Prague office normally cooperates with the branch offices in Bratislava, Slovakia and Kiev, which without difficulty can assemble special-



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ists who speak various languages and are familiar with foreign legal systems. Cross-border transactions form the main part of Peterka & Partners' activities.

In addition to this, the firm's membership of TerraLex®, a worldwide network of independent law firms, and the International Lawyers Network (ILN) further strengthens its ability to secure for its clients an extended range of complex and qualified services in almost all the countries of the world. Through these exclusive associations it has access to the resources and expertise of partner offices, which rank among the foremost law firms in their respective countries.

Peterka & Partners offers its clients exact, accurate and complex services. "We understand that mergers and acquisitions lead to problems which are closely connected with the transaction itself, such as legal and tax due diligence or tax optimisation," comments Ondrej Peterka. "We deal with proceedings regarding approvals of concentrations before national competition authorities. Employment issues are also subject to our consideration. Furthermore, we prepare contractual and related documents, hold negotiations and arrange for accountancy due diligence."

The skills of the firm's M&A practitioners, who are among the best lawyers in the country, are complemented by the proficiency of the members of

its tax practice. "Tax issues are integral to accomplishing strategic M&A initiatives," says Magdalena Vyskovska, head of the tax practice group.

In addition, the firm is technologically advanced and can always flexibly react to clients' requirements. It uses document management software (DMS), by Interwoven, the newest software for data management which allows the firm to process thousands of documents. Consequently Peterka & Partners can offer an integrated system of work which always results in the best value for clients.

The 'client first' approach pervades every aspect of the firm's culture. Peterka & Partners is focused on its clients' stra-

Icopal, IG Pharma, S&T Group, VEOLIA Water and VINCI Group on complex M&A transactions.

"Our clients are a mixture of companies of different sizes, industries and countries of origin, ranging from world-leading international holdings to local companies trying to expand their business nationally and more often also internationally," Jan Liska states, adding that about 80% of the firm's clients come from outside the Czech Republic.

The firm has had a strong year, competing successfully in large deals. For example, a team of lawyers led by Ondrej Peterka and Jan Liska provided legal advice to the Belgian company Delhaize Group, which owns a chain of retail stores in eight countries, on the sale of all of its 96 Delvita brand stores in the Czech Republic to the German group REWE for €100m (£72m).

Peterka & Partners' strong market standing is confirmed by world-famous and prestigious guides to the legal profession, including Chambers Global, IFLR 1000, Legal 500 and PLC Which Lawyer? Yearbook and Cross-border M&A Handbook, which rank the firm among just

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tegic needs and concentrates on being flexible, reacting quickly and thoroughly to the requirements of its clients.

Drawing on its distinct cross-border experience, the firm's M&A practice group has been instructed by many of the world's leading companies, including Boiron, Fournier Pharma and Solvay, Group Delhaize, Iberofon Plasticos,

a handful of recommended law firms in the Czech Republic, not only in M&A but also in real estate and dispute resolution. Ondrej Peterka was named in the PLC Which Lawyer? 2007 edition as one of a few recommended individuals in corporate and M&A in the Czech Republic. ■

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