

Thomas Cooper and Penningtons Manches Announce Merger

Wednesday 12 June 2019

Thomas Cooper, a specialist law firm known for its work in shipping, maritime law, commodities trade and international arbitration, has announced that it is to merge with top 50 UK law firm Penningtons Manches. Shipping will remain a sector of core focus for the new combined business, which will be known as Penningtons Manches Cooper.

The firm – which has been serving the sector since 1825 – has for the last few decades been expanding to meet the international needs of its client base: in addition to its London practice, it has successfully established offices in Paris, Madrid, Piraeus (Greece), Singapore and Sao Paulo.

This increasing international scope was one of the significant drivers behind the merger. [Tim Kelleher](#), Thomas Cooper's senior partner, explains:

“Our international offices have done very well, attracting significant clients and undertaking increasingly complex work. However, over the last five years or so it has become apparent that, to be in a position to really take advantage of the new opportunities that come our way, we needed to scale up, and that the best way of doing so was to join forces with another firm.

Penningtons Manches is a thriving business and we've been seriously impressed with the senior team's vision and strategy throughout this process. Following the merger we'll be able to utilise the increased resources and turnover, as well as a robust operational structure, to help facilitate further growth and innovation. Our clients will benefit from a wider service offering both in the UK and internationally – in particular, they will have access to skilled teams specialising in real estate, private wealth, corporate and project finance, immigration, tax and insolvency and restructuring.”

He concluded: *“We were looking for an ambitious firm of a certain size and profile, but the cultural fit and shared vision were the key drivers behind our final decision.”*

Another important strategic motivation is the recognition that English law is the primary law of choice for parties in international transactions and disputes, not just in shipping and trade but in finance, investment, infrastructure and more. With its existing international profile, Thomas Cooper is in a position to capitalise on this, but has seen the need for a greater offering in other areas of practice to do so.

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For Penningtons Manches, the merger brings Thomas Cooper's strength in shipping and expertise in international litigation and arbitration to complement its rapidly growing capabilities in this field – a practice area that grew 33% in the last financial year alone.

In addition, the location of the international offices will provide the new business with strategic potential to further develop a global client base and ensure continued access to Europe in the post-Brexit era.

David Raine, Penningtons Manches' CEO, said:

"This is a very exciting and historic day for both our firms. Thomas Cooper has a long and proud history in shipping, maritime and cross-border work, with a strong client base served by highly skilled specialist lawyers. The large-scale work undertaken by its international arbitration and litigation teams will really enhance the growing importance of this area of work within our current business."

He added: *"We are very much aligned from a cultural point of view. Most firms talk of offering a personal, partner-led service and a commitment to putting the client at the centre of everything. This really needs to be a given so it is refreshing and exciting to meet other lawyers like ours who go beyond that, and who evidently love the work they're doing."*

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Editors' notes:

Thomas Cooper LLP is an international law firm with offices in London, Madrid, Paris, Piraeus, São Paulo and Singapore.

Thomas Cooper provides services to clients throughout a range of industry sectors, with particular focus on: **Maritime, Finance, International Commodities and Trade, Corporate & Commercial, Employment, Insurance & Reinsurance, Energy, Commercial Litigation, Private Client & Real Estate and Yachts and Super Yachts**. Lawyers from our international offices work as integrated teams to provide practical, commercially focused legal advice. Our International locations allow us geographical coverage to be competitive in the global market and to provide steadfast quality legal services to our clients.