

Christopher Coffin

Partner and Litigation Practice Group Leader

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Education: Wadham College, Oxford, B.A. History

Admitted: England and Wales, 1980

Year joined: 1995

Year became partner: 1995



Overview

Christopher is the leader of Withers' international practice group, and a commercial litigator with 30 years' experience of large cases. Christopher advises on commercial disputes, ranging from oil-related disputes to derivatives disputes, loan recoveries, and asset tracing, fraud, contentious insolvency and professional negligence. He has a particular interest in advising clients from the CIS region. He has spoken at conferences in Moscow, St Petersburg and Almaty.

He has acted for many international banks, insolvency practitioners, insurance companies and members of the legal profession including High Court judges.

He is an experienced negotiator and has successfully represented clients at many mediations.

"Christopher is an '*outstanding lawyer and tactician*' who gets consistent praise for his client care. He is '*always aware of the sensitivity of difficult situations*.'" (Chambers and Partners 2012)

Highlights

- Representing the former state owned Romanian oil import/export company in a high value complex arbitration.
- Successfully representing a barrister in a case which went to the House of Lords and set out the test for lawyers' negligence when advising on settlement.
- Successfully representing a client in a high profile case alleging the negligent dispensation of a dangerously high dosage of steroids.
- Representing the Romanian governmental agency responsible for enforcing judgements obtained in Romania in England and throughout the world.
- *Birnam Enterprises Limited* - representing Birnam, a BVI subsidiary of a large Russian mining company, in a dispute in the English commercial court about a cargo of lead ingots held at the Russian port of Novorossiysk. Trafigura commenced proceedings in the commercial court alleging that they had title to the lead but an injunction was also made by the Russian court in proceedings initiated by the original seller of the lead for the return of the ingots on the basis of non-payment. The case was ultimately settled at mediation.
- *Algozaibi Group v Maan Al Sanea & the Saad Group* : High Court proceedings arising out of a US\$9.2 billion fraud. In these high profile proceedings, Withers are defending the Algozaibi Group in numerous banking litigation actions as well as obtaining injunctive relief against Mr Al Sanea and his companies in an attempt to recover the proceeds of the fraud. A worldwide freezing order has been obtained and Withers has obtained disclosure orders to assist in the tracing of the subject assets. The London proceedings are being run in conjunction with proceedings in New York, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, UAE and the Cayman Islands.
- Representing a publicly owned company in recovering the proceeds of a fraud perpetrated on it by its in house accountant. This involved obtaining urgent injunctions first in England and then in Cyprus to freeze the stolen money and then secure its return.
- Representing a grain exporter in a dispute over quality with the purchaser.
- Representing a hotel developer in a case against the project manager whose failings caused the half built hotel to have to be demolished.
- Representing five Italian banks in a jurisdictional challenge to the English courts based on the place where payment had to be made under a confirmed letter of credit.
- Representing a Chinese bank which successfully disputed the registration in England of a default judgment obtained against it in the Italian court.
- Representing a BVI company in successfully obtaining judgment setting aside a company voluntary arrangement on the grounds of material irregularity on the basis that the contracts for the purchase of land in St Petersburg entered into between the debtor and alleged Russian vendors, which created the liability of value sufficient enough to pass the CVA, were shams.

- Representing the sellers of a substantial stake in a publically listed CIS natural resources company in defence of a fraud claim by the purchasers, which included complex issues of disclosure pursuant to freezing orders and search and seizure relief obtained by the claimants.

Memberships

- British Italian Law Association
- British Russian Law Association
- British Kazakh Law Association

On a personal note

Chris has recently taken up cycling and cycled to Paris in May 2007. His other interests include organic vegetable gardening and vintage sport cars.

