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Skills and Professional Development



We live in a world of Brexit, border walls, and trade wars.

This month's issue of *ACC Docket* dives into the world of international business, technology, and dispute resolution. In these pages, you'll find the latest thinking on blockchain contracts, new multinational tax rules, and the continued development of international arbitration.

In the practical and pragmatic world of an in-house lawyer, ACC continues to focus on what matters to you now and what will matter in the future. The association and its staff constantly think about what will make you more successful, more engaged, and more fulfilled in your work. And the international aspects of our work are fundamental; a big part of your success.

International commerce and interaction, however, is not a welcome topic in populist circles. We live in a world of Brexit, border walls, and trade wars. Neo-nationalism and ideology politics flourish, even when the trade-offs are stark, tangible, and immediate. In-house lawyers — many of whom work for multinational companies and organizations — cannot live in that world. Even those of us who are solo practitioners in local firms must think of problems on an international scale.

You cannot address privacy in the United States without considering the EU General Data Protection Regulation. You cannot think of healthcare regulation in France without wondering if the US Food and Drug Administration will change their policy on generic approvals. And no lawyer in China right now is turning in for the night without checking the latest policy tweets from Washington.

As always, in-house lawyers must be internationally minded. That is because we must be realistic and pragmatic. Our clients depend on it, even if it seems as if we are the last bastion of the *realpolitik*.

But there is hope. We know, from experience, that a populist backlash to international cooperation is short lived. History has proven, generation upon generation, that myopic world views eventually collapse under external pressure.

Eventually, the internationally-minded lawyer reading this journal will thrive and prevail.

There is a simple reason for this, and it is pure biology. Charles Darwin first observed what we now see as obvious: Organisms mutate through reproduction, and the mutations best suited to an environment will flourish and reproduce. Those organisms that adapt, will survive.

And international cooperation is a mutation that has repeatedly survived and thrived. From the Roman empire to Mongol kingdoms, from Ottoman caliphates to the current world order, the communities that succeed are those that are open to outside exchange. And in our modern global economic environment, the social-capitalism of the day is the dominant species. And it has been, in one form or another, since the end of Europe's feudal era.

So if you are reading this journal, conscious of your international role, but forlorn at the insular discourse around you, do not despair. Darwin taught us that the most adaptable are the most likely to survive, and in-house counsel are always adaptable.

[Bill Mordan](#)



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