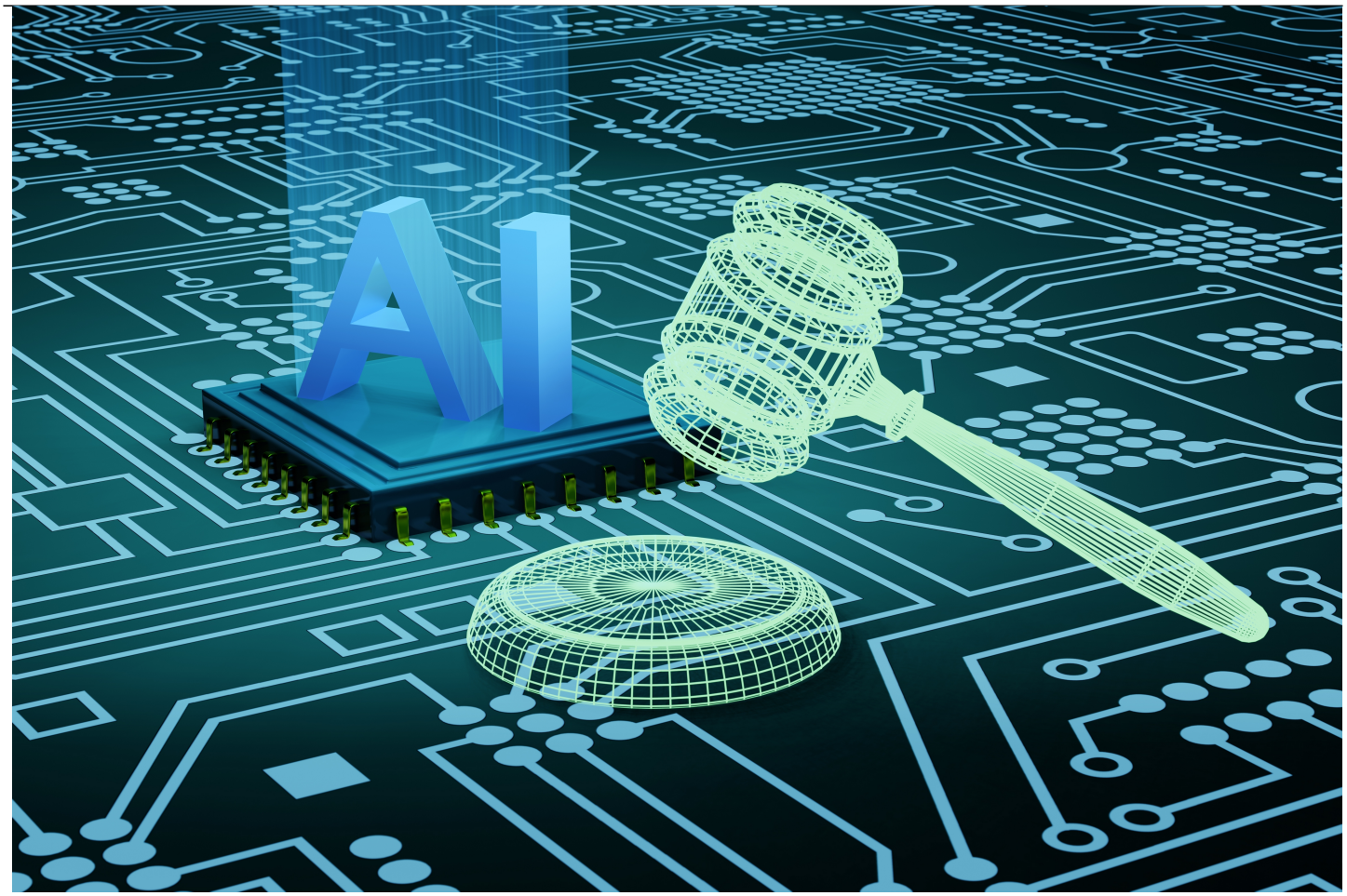


Navigating Global Turmoil: How In-house Lawyers Can Lead

Law Department Management



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Organizations face a global landscape marked by geopolitical conflicts. In their efforts to leverage data and technologies such as artificial intelligence, they are also dealing with competing regulatory frameworks by large powers such as the United States, the European Union, and China — each approaching technology regulation through different lenses.

Lawyers have a crucial role to play in helping their organizations navigate the turmoil and remain competitive. Below are perspectives to help in-house lawyers approach this landscape.

Takeaways from the keynote session ***Regulation in the Crossfire: The Global Legal War Over Tech and More*** *at joint gathering of the* ***2025 ACC Europe Annual Conference*** *and* ***ACC Chief Legal Officer Global Summit****, with* ***Anu Bradford****, Henry L. Moses Professor of International Law and Organizations at Columbia Law School, including a discussion with* ***Javier Fontcuberta****, Managing Partner at Cuatrecasas, and* ***Eva Argilés****, General Counsel at Applus+.*



Anu Bradford, Henry L. Moses Professor of International Law and Organizations, Columbia Law School



Javier Fontcuberta, Managing Partner, Cuatrecasas



Eva Argilés, General Counsel, Applus+

Tectonic shifts in the global landscape

Businesses are facing strong global shifts and pressure points, such as the impact of geopolitical conflicts, rising trade protectionism, and an increasingly complex patchwork of regulations from competing powers.

Technology is a driver of global competitiveness, with vast societal implications such as for individuals' privacy, control by authorities, and the dissemination of information.

Check out an overview of ***10 AI Trends in 2025***, in the ACC Artificial Intelligence Toolkit for In-house Lawyers**,** an ACC resource sponsored by Kilpatrick Townsend & Stockton LLP

Artificial intelligence is a field where major powers compete. These are three major frameworks for the advancement and regulation of technology:

- A market-driven model that relies on maximizing innovation and entrepreneurship,
- A state-driven model, with state control of technology and a focus on social stability, and
- A rights-driven model that focuses primarily on preserving the rights of individuals.

Major powers export their influence in different ways — the American model through the power of technology companies, the Chinese model through the export of digital infrastructure, and Europe's model through the export of regulatory power, for example with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

Additionally, **companies often have an interest in extending compliance with EU rules** across their global operations, instead of parsing out compliance programs — especially as the European Union is one of the largest consumer markets in the world and a key market for businesses.

Businesses may operate in environments where multiple influences are at play — for example, markets where there are US tech companies, Chinese infrastructures, and European regulations.

Friction points can take various forms, such as export controls, investment restrictions, subsidies, and tariffs. Bradford highlighted a recent rise in economic protectionism and uncertainty that businesses must navigate in connection with the fluctuating tariffs situation.

At the same time, businesses rely on global supply chains, and they would have a difficult time reducing the globalized dimension of their supply chains in a cost-effective manner.

In this context, businesses must adapt to existing frictions and find ways to remain competitive.

Learn practical strategies for navigating the tariffs landscape, with **Managing Import and Tariff Risks During a Trade War**, by Foley & Lardner

European challenges in focus

Challenges that Europeans face in the technology market: Europeans largely depend on services provided by US technology companies, and that top investment in quantum computing and technology ventures mostly comes from the US or China.

Differences in entrepreneurial culture: Some regions, where an entrepreneur whose project fails will still be able to raise capital, whereas in other areas, such as Europe, bankruptcy is too often viewed as a final failure that prevents any subsequent fundraising by the entrepreneur.

The importance of attracting global talent. Over 50 percent of US$100 billion startups in the United States have an immigrant founder.

Implications for in-house counsel

In this context, a lawyer's role is increasingly important to help their organization remain competitive.

- **A leadership opportunity.** The current context presents a tremendous opportunity for in-house lawyers to lead, rethink the business, and shape the landscape.
- **Agility and creativity** are needed to find solutions and to adapt operations and supply chains.
- **Understanding new markets.** Lawyers should guide the business as it explores working with new suppliers, customers, and venturing into new jurisdictions.
- **Taking a broad perspective.** In-house lawyers shouldn't limit themselves to legal analysis. To offer strategic guidance, they must understand how the geopolitical context and frictions shape the legal and business environments of their organization.
- **Help the business anticipate** where today's context is taking the organization in a year.

To be effective leaders for their organizations, now more than ever, in-house lawyers should develop and demonstrate curiosity, creativity, knowledge, courage, confidence and ambition, and continue to educate themselves and the people around them.

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