

## In The News

# Akerman Senterfitt Lawyers Published in Inaugural *Focus Latin America* Magazine

May 30, 2013

Carlos Mendez-Peñate and [Luis A. Perez](#), co-chairs of Akerman's Latin America & the Caribbean Practice, [Luis O'Naghten](#), chair of the firm's International Litigation & Arbitration Practice, [Neisen Kasdin](#), Office Managing Shareholder of the Miami office and a leader in Akerman's Real Estate Practice Group, as well as [Alejandro Garcia Villalpando](#), a shareholder concentrated in cross-border taxation, were published in the inaugural issue of *Focus Latin America*, a chronicle of the business of law around the Americas. The magazine, published by ALM Media (American Lawyer Media), the publisher of the legal industry's leading publications, was circulated nationally as a special report in *Corporate Counsel* and *American Lawyer*, as well as regionally in South Florida's *Daily Business Review*.

For its first edition, *Focus Latin America* provided reports on the various regions and sectors most fertile for lawyers to develop business and grow practice areas, ranging from deal flow in Brazil to alternative funding in Mexico and trade disputes within Venezuela. The Akerman lawyers provided a viewpoint of the Latin American legal and business market from New York and Miami, illustrating how these gateway cities act as platforms to serve clients across the globe. Through interviews and commentary they addressed key trends impacting U.S. firms and their clients in Latin America.

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In a Q&A on page 30, Mendez-Peñate and Garcia Villalpando, examined a groundbreaking new product in Mexico, the first REIT in the market, named one of the biggest equity deals of the year in Latin America priced at more than US \$1.7 billion. Together they discussed what the REIT means for the market and its players, and why REITs are an efficient way of bringing capital into the region. “From an investor’s viewpoint, REITs are an attractive asset class because exposure to real estate is usually part of any diversified portfolio. They are a very efficient vehicle for creating exposure to real estate assets without sacrificing liquidity.”

In the story titled, “A Gateway Opens Wider,” on page 62 of the magazine, Perez explained Akerman’s strategic alliance model for its Latin America & the Caribbean Practice. Aside from representing multinational corporations and recruiting practitioners licensed in foreign jurisdictions, the firm has established a significant presence throughout the region by partnering with local law firms. “The moment you open an office in any jurisdiction, you become not a best friend but a competitor. We don’t want to be viewed as competitors; we much prefer to have best friend relationships through alliances.”

Additionally, on page 68, Kasdin was quoted in the story, “Navigating Miami’s Unfamiliar Waters,” where he compares Latin American developers in Miami to their U.S. counterparts, as well as the investor shift after the recession. “The reputation is that Latin American developers are fee sensitive, but the difference today is that they really seek out the expertise... and are willing to pay for it. Too much is at stake.”

Finally, in the story titled, “Bringing Peace to Trade Disputes,” on page 76, O’Naghten highlighted a very important arbitration concern in Latin America – whether or not a country within the region will respect the awards that are issued. He described a recent arbitration where a Fortune 500 company

sued a Venezuelan government entity over a failed investment deal. The International Court of Arbitration chose to conduct the arbitration in a neutral forum in Madrid, Spain. The result was a small award to the company, but the Venezuelan court has not yet enforced the award.