

A Romanian lawyer enters the European Club “Business Elite 40 under 40” 2023 edition. Casiana Duşa, founder of the Romanian Arab Investments House and trailblazer by her specialization in Islamic law: This recognition confirms to me that success does not come by chance, but it is built with hard work



Casiana Duşa, a lawyer with former practice in Dubai and specialization in *Islamic Law*, who founded Romanian Arab Investments House to support Muslim business community with interests in Romania and the Middle East, entered the select club of European elite under 40 years. She is among the top 40 entrepreneurs in Europe, who are rewarded for their success, ambition, regional relationships and inspiration for young generations. "I received with great emotions my first international trophy, which comes as a crowning of my efforts, dedication and passion made to promote *Islamic Law* in Romania and to grow my heart project Romanian Arab Investments House. This recognition confirms to me that success does not come by chance, but it is built with a lot of work, many previous failures, power, patience and sacrifices", declared Casiana Duşa for ^{Biz}Lawyer.

Business Elite Awards is one of the most popular and prestigious programs for international awards, originated from SUA and Canada which, according to the organizers, rewards excellence in business, by yearly identifying remarkable entrepreneurs who bring a unique vision and positive change in their country by unique concepts and elite expertise. The review of nominations submitted in 2023 for the section "40 under 40" was based on complex selection criteria and the Executive Committee of the Business Elite identified the top 40 remarkable professionals under 40 years on each continent. After the galas already organized in Toronto for the awardees from Canada and in Las Vegas for those from the USA, on June 15th, the "40 under 40 Europe" Gala took place in Istanbul, at the famous Ciragan Palace.

Among the criteria underlying the nominations are the former career progress and professional achievements, the potential to expand to new markets, the international exposure, the actual values and concept, the international recognition and experience, level of innovation, creativity and other entrepreneurial skills in conducting business practices, as well as reputation in the business community.

More about the award and her achievements, in an interview given by Casiana Duşa on the date of the "40 under 40 Europe" Gala held at the famous Ciragan Palace in Istanbul, Turkey

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^{Biz}Lawyer: Casiana, you are among the few Romanian lawyers specializing in Islamic law, if not the only one

from the local market and this "exclusivity" is expected to generate projects that other legal professionals may not have access to. What means to be a lawyer specialized in Islamic Law in Romania? How do you position yourself in this market for legal services?

Casiana Duşa: Being a trailblazer always involves, in any field, both an extraordinary challenge and a commensurate responsibility. The launch of the Islamic Law niche and the Islamic-inspired business models in Romania is part of the mission I created around the Romanian Arab Investments House, which is to share my know-how acquired in the legal and entrepreneurial field in the United Arab Emirates with Romanian clients. Through this approach, I aim to optimize their investment plans towards the best returns and to offer them all the legal support necessary to be contractually protected in any Romanian-Arab business partnership, as well as precise guidance in the most diverse issues of Emirati law. Through all these, I position myself at the base of the pyramid made of the key players on the market for legal services dedicated to international business and foreign investments, the growth of this practice being organic, along with the consolidation of Romanian-Arab business relations and the increasing need for the services I promote.

What were the most common requests from clients? What were they interested in? What type of consulting did they require and on what type of projects?

Since I started building this concept in Romania, through pro-bono activity and until now, through the Romanian Arab Investments House, the most frequent cases have come from the following fields: real estate investments and property management, distribution of products from various industries, relocation of businesses, international assets sharing, financing of Romanian projects compatible with Islamic principles, establishment of legal entities for fiscal optimization, contractual damages, etc. Basically, my clients came and come from two categories, namely entrepreneurs who need specialized legal and business advice to ensure that they carry out successful transactions and on the other hand, entrepreneurs who only realize this need when they face problems whose negative effects I shall mitigate and re-strategize.

You worked for a period of time in the Middle East, where you collaborated with one of the large consulting firms in the area. What experience did you get there? What kind of projects were you involved in? Did you create a "business map" in the Islamic world, do you know which doors to knock on when a client has interests in that area, do you have a network of collaborators there?

The collaboration I had in the Middle East, in the Dubai International Financial Center, decisively marked my professional path and opened my horizons beyond the international legal world to the Arab business environment. This is explained by the fact that since my beginnings in Dubai, I have been involved in a wide range of business projects (internationalization of companies, relocations, distribution of premium products, financing projects), but also legal cases of a medium to high degree of complexity (negotiation and preparation of international contracts of any type, acquisitions/negotiations/disputes in major real estate projects, contract negotiation/attraction of liability for local agents, establishment of legal entities with foreign partners and expansion of some groups of companies, as well as any legal issues related to the day-to-day activity of a company).

Starting with the period when I actually lived and worked in Dubai, but also afterwards through my ongoing projects, I managed to build a network of important contacts in various fields, which relationships have been eventually transformed into current collaborations that I leverage to my clients' benefits.

Tell us about Romanian Arab Investments House (RAIH). How do you see its future?

Over time, RAIH has consolidated partnerships with important market players and collaborators in the Middle East, but also in other jurisdictions, whose ancillary services RAIH uses to its clients' benefit. I strive to lead RAIH to the level of a top partner, preferred by Romanian entrepreneurs who invest in the United Arab Emirates, but also by key players on the Emirati market who have business interests in our country.

What type of services can you offer - as a lawyer and business consultant - and what is the profile of the client who uses your services?

Broadly speaking, I can provide any type of service involving investment advice and legal assistance in or in relation to the UAE, considering that RAIH has partnerships that enable it to meet the most diverse needs of entrepreneurs.

More precisely, I can offer support to Romanian investors who want to do business in the Emirates, to make local investments in real estate or in any other field, or to clients who are facing legal problems.

My legal expertise covers lato sensu Emirati law and stricto sensu, specific real estate, commercial and corporate legislation. Thus, I can offer my clients support with the preparation/review of necessary documents, negotiation of business opportunities, professional legal opinions, amicable resolution of disputes, full assistance in real estate transactions, relocation, etc. Moreover, I can provide specific business consulting for setting up and running a successful business, expanding/internationalizing successful brands, as well as optimizing real estate investment returns and more.

Tell us about the projects you worked on in the last year, in Romania... Which were the most interesting in terms of scope, difficulty, outcome?

In the last year, among the ongoing and public business projects, I could mention the relocation of Casa Concrete and the entry of Lushi Lush products to the Emirati market. Casa Concrete is probably the most far-reaching, as it aims at a complex strategy, starting with real estate transactions involving assets in Romania, consolidating the brand on the Emirati market, generating projects at the local level, establishing an entity and later a factory in Dubai, to eventually completing a full relocation, both residential and commercial.

Most legal projects were in the real estate field, covering assistance with property acquisitions and management thereof, as well as dealing with conflicts between buyers/landlords and agents.

Is it difficult to access a financing line granted on Islamic principles? Can Romanians find and access such financing? What would be your input here?

The simplest option to access a line of Islamic financing is to establish a legal entity in the United Arab Emirates, as banks and private investors prefer such a context. On the other hand, it is not excluded that financiers are willing to place funds in landmark projects in Romania, provided that the opportunities are configured according to the criteria they are looking for. Therefore, one of RAIH's directions is to promote the implementation of Islamic business models to financing projects developed in our country, thus bringing an undeniable advantage that would attract the interest of many entrepreneurs in the Islamic world. More precisely, my contribution would consist, on the one hand, in the analysis of compliance with Islamic principles and on the other hand, in the structuring of projects according to the defined criteria.

What is your soul project that you are proud of?

Each project has its own specifics and challenges, regardless of complexity, so I would prefer not to make a ranking. However, I consider Romanian Arab Investments House a soul project.

How is the demand for such services in this niche promoted by you and how is it expected to evolve? What's next in your business?

I am happy to note that the demand for services in this niche is increasing, which proves the interest of Romanian entrepreneurs in the Emirati market, as well as the fact that they have become aware of the importance which specialized consultancy has on their business. This aspect motivates me to move forward and strengthen the

mission of RAIH.

Based on your international professional achievements so far, the involvement in networks abroad, the concept developed through RAIH and the fact that you are the promoter of Islamic Law in Romania, you were remarked and received an award dedicated to excellence in the business world, for entrepreneurs aged between 30 and 40 years. You were included in Business Elite "40 under 40". How did you receive the news and what does this recognition mean to you?

I am honored to be included in the excellence top of 40 entrepreneurs under 40 in Europe in 2023, receiving with great emotions my first international trophy, which comes as a crowning of the efforts, dedication and passion made to promote Islamic Law in Romania and to grow RAIH. This recognition confirms to me that success does not come by chance, but it is built with hard work, many previous failures, power, patience and sacrifices.