

Exhibit A

Admission to the profession and disciplinary control

Civil law notaries hold a public office and are therefore subject to special rules concerning appointment and admission.

Civil law notaries are selected and appointed by the State Minister of Justice according to a merit-based system. Regardless of the type of civil law notary, whether “single-profession notaries” or “attorney-notaries”, they are fully qualified to work as judges and attorneys and have undergone additional practical training. Admission to the notarial profession is highly competitive. As well as in other areas of public service, there is a strict selection of the best applicants. Civil law notaries are usually selected among the top law graduates. “Single-profession notaries” generally have to serve at least three years as “notarial candidates” (Notarassessoren) under the supervision of an experienced notary before they can apply to the State Minister of Justice for appointment. Receiving a “training on the job”, “notarial candidates” also work as “officially appointed representatives” of a notary who is temporarily absent or prevented from exercising his function. “Attorney-notaries” are likewise required to work as “officially appointed representatives” before their official appointment as well. Furthermore, they have to take part successfully in special training classes in various areas of notarial practice.

In order to ensure independence and impartiality of the civil law notaries, their number is limited. It is fixed for each state by the State Ministry of Justice within its discretion based on the relevant requirements and demands. Today, approximately 1600 “single-profession notaries”, approximately 7500 “attorney-notaries” and some 500 state-employed notaries practise in some 2000 German cities and municipalities. In order to provide easy access to a notary even in rural areas, each notary is assigned a certain district for his activity. In larger cities several notaries practise in the same district. Notwithstanding the fact that the notary is bound to the district he is assigned to, people are free to choose any notary in the country and the authentic instruments established by a notary are effective and valid everywhere.

Once officially appointed, the civil law notary does not receive a salary from the state. Instead, he or she charges fees to the parties. Such fees are fixed by law and depend on the value of the case. As an exception, in the State of Baden-Württemberg there are also notaries who are state-employed and enjoy the status of civil servants. In turn, the State is entitled to the bulk of the fees.

In case of negligence, a notary is personally liable for all damages caused. Liability insurance is mandatory for all notaries. Furthermore, the regional chambers have established a special fund for damages that are not fully covered by the liability insurance.

All civil law notaries are further subject to the supervision by the President of the competent district court. Negligence and non-compliance with the law can also result in disciplinary sanctions. In addition, all notaries are subject to a regular control of their files and their practice by the supervisory authority.

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