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MARIA MULLA

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OVERVIEW

Maria has a busy commercial litigation practice both within the UK and internationally. She specialises in commercial litigation, arbitration, civil fraud, all aspects of company and partnership law and corporate and personal insolvency.

Much of Maria's practice has an international element. She is registered in Part II of the Dubai International Financial Centre's Register of Legal Practitioners and is frequently instructed on high value cases within this jurisdiction, and on matters in the Abu Dhabi Global Market. Maria frequently advises and assists on proceedings in the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man.

Maria is regularly invited to speak at international conferences and has spoken at Dubai Arbitration Week, TL4 Fire Dubai, TL4 Fire CI and IOM, and IWIRC Channel Islands Network. Maria has been recognised by being listed in the 2025 The Lawyer Hot 100 List.

Notable recent cases include:-

Commercial litigation, civil fraud, and insolvency

- Acting for the Defendants against a £1.5 million claim for alleged breaches of warranty pursuant to a Share Purchase Agreement, which included a counterclaim for payments due under the SPA amounting to £2.2 million (London Circuit Commercial Court).
- Acting for the Defendant in a claim alleging breach of warranty pursuant to a Share Purchase Agreement arising out of the sale of a home and lifestyle company.
- Acting for a company director defending a £2.5 million claim for alleged breach of fiduciary duty and fraud (alleged falsification of accounts and related party transactions) and defending a worldwide freezing

injunction. Advising on connected minority shareholder issues.

- Acting for multiple Defendants defending a £1.5 million claim for an alleged repudiatory breach of contract and breach of obligations pursuant to a guarantee and indemnity, which included Part 20 claim.
- Acting for multiple Defendants defending a multi-million pound claim for alleged sums due pursuant to a loan and guarantee agreement and pursuing a large multi-million pound counterclaim (Commercial Court).
- Defending a claim for alleged unpaid management fees against some of the former members of a well-known rock band.
- Advising on bankruptcy proceedings arising out of a foreign judgment.
- Representing the Petitioner at a 2 day contested winding up petition sought on the 'just and equitable' ground.
- Advising on the recognition and enforcement of various multi-million-pound US judgments in the jurisdiction of England & Wales.
- Acting for the Claimant in their claim against the Defendants for breach of a Services Agreement, establishing a competing business, and breach of confidence and misuse of confidential information, where a springboard injunction and imaging order was also sought (led by Paul Nicholls KC).
- Representing the Claimant in his claim for a declaration and damages arising out of the disposal of a hard drive containing the private wallet key to his Bitcoin (currently valued at over £500 million) in a household waste centre. The case concerns the ownership of tangible property, intangible property, and cryptoassets (led by Dean Armstrong KC).
- Advising on applications for Norwich Pharmacal Orders and Bankers Trust relief in the context of cryptoassets and an NPO in respect of data held by various dating websites.
- Instructed on behalf of clients in heavy applications (including for strike out/summary judgment) in the High Court.

Company disputes

- Acting for the Petitioner in his s.994 petition at trial seeking to establish a quasi-partnership and seeking to establish that increased salary renumeration provided to other directors amounted to unfairly and prejudicial conduct.
- Acting for the Petitioner in his s.994 petition at trial seeking a buy-out order from the Respondent at trial in relation to a successful petrol station business.
- Acting for the Petitioner at trial in a winding up on the just and equitable grounds following irretrievable deadlock in the company and where there has been a complete loss of substratum in the Company.
- Acting for the Petitioner in his s.994 arising out of failed multi-million-pound airline venture.
- Assisting at trial and in the Guernsey Court of Appeal in a landmark case in respect of an unfair prejudice petition in Guernsey. The judgment from that case may be accessed .

- Instructed on a complex derivative claim arising out of a competing overseas business.

Arbitration

- Representing the Respondent (Sole Counsel) in a multi-million-pound LCIA arbitration arising out of a energy contractual dispute between two well-known parties. Further advising upon and contesting jurisdiction.
- Dealing with complex jurisdictional arguments and applications.
- Advising on whether an arbitration agreement is valid and enforceable (and advising on the applicable law), in the context of an arbitration clause which refers to the now defunct DIFC-LCIA Rules.
- Applications pursuant to s.9 Arbitration Act 1996.
- Instructed on anti-suit injunctions and anti-arbitration injunctions and dealing with connected litigation in the Commercial Court, DIAC, and DIFC.
- Written submissions on expedited proceedings in DIAC.
- Arbitrations in the ICC, LCIA, and DIAC on commercial disputes, agency agreements, shareholder disputes.
- Advising on injunctive relief in the context of arbitral proceedings and ongoing proceedings.
- Advising on a cryptoasset dispute which has proceeded to arbitration.

Dubai International Financial Centre and Abu Dhabi Global Market

- Acting for the Claimant in an urgent application for injunctive relief in the DIFC arising out of the Respondents allegedly establishing a competing business contrary to the terms of written agreements.
- Acting for the Defendants in defending an alleged breach of a Supply of Goods Agreement and in pursuing a counterclaim for loss of profit and future contracts.
- Defending and pursuing freezing injunctions in the DIFC.
- Advising on and drafting jurisdictional objections in the DIFC.
- Acting for the Appellant in an appeal in relation to the jurisdictional challenge to the jurisdiction of the DIFC where a contract specifically excluded the same.
- Advising on winding up proceedings in the ADGM.
- Advising on a freezing injunction in the ADGM.

Channel Islands and Isle of Man

- Advising on a large multi-million-pound contractual dispute in the Isle of Man.
- Assisting on a high-profile case in the Royal Court of Guernsey arising out of an unfair prejudice petition, alleged breach of fiduciary duty, and an alleged derivative claim pursuant to Guernsey Company Law, which was successful following a five-day trial. This was also successful in the Guernsey Court of Appeal.

Public interest

- Maria is part of the legal team representing several survivors in their legal actions against Mohammed Fayed and Harrods (and other entities). Maria has appeared in the Financial Times, Sky News, BBC News, BBC Radio 4 and BBC R5 speaking on the matter and the associated issues that arise from the different legal actions.
- Maria is also instructed on behalf of Heidi Clutterbuck in her claim for breach of confidence/privacy against West Mercia Police for losing her lifetime right to anonymity as a survivor of abuse.
- Maria represents the Family of Madeleine Cusack in the ongoing inquest proceedings (led by Dean Armstrong KC) on a pro-bono basis.

EXPERTISE

ARBITRATION

Maria undertakes arbitration work either as sole counsel or junior counsel in international arbitrations across a range of different sectors, rules and institutions, including arbitrations conducted under the rules of the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC), the London Court of International Arbitration (LCIA) and DIAC.

Maria is instructed on various ancillary court applications, including injunctions arising out of arbitral proceedings.

Recent arbitration work includes representing the Respondent in a high value LCIA arbitration arising out of a contract dispute between two well-known parties. Further advising upon and contesting jurisdiction.

Advising on whether an Arbitration Agreement is valid and enforceable (and advising on the applicable law), in the context of an arbitration clause which refers to the now defunct DIFC-LCIA Rules. Applications for a stay pursuant to s. 9 Arbitration Act 1996.

Dealing with a large ICC dispute concerning the supply of goods and materials between the UK and Brazil.

Instructed on two very high value ICC disputes concerning matters of insurance/reinsurance.

COMMERCIAL LITIGATION

Maria has substantial experience dealing with all aspects of commercial litigation and frequently appears in high value matters representing an array of different clients including directors, partners, investors, high net worth individuals, companies, and technology start-ups representing their interests either at trial, or in interim applications (including heavy applications).

Commercial disputes constitute a large proportion of Maria's practice and encompasses contractual disputes (UK, and overseas), advising shareholders in complex joint venture disputes, breach of share purchase agreements, and disputes where allegations of misrepresentation and fraudulent misrepresentation have been

alleged.

Maria has considerable experience in interlocutory applications including injunctions which may be required urgently and frequently appears in the High Court dealing with the same.

This includes freezing injunctions, worldwide freezing injunctions, anti-suit injunctions, anti-arbitration injunctions, s. 9 stay applications, search orders, imaging orders, and prohibitory and mandatory injunctions.

Maria is frequently instructed on franchise disputes and matters where franchisees, business partners or employees have established a competing business. Maria acts frequently in obtaining urgent injunctive relief in respect of the same and acting on behalf of the clients in the underlying claims (which may be claims for breach of contract, economic torts, breach of confidence and intellectual property rights).

Notable recent case include:-

- Acting for the Defendants defending a £1.5 million pound claim for alleged breaches of warranty pursuant to a Share Purchase Agreement and pursuing a counterclaim for payments due under the Share Purchase Agreement for £2.2 million (London Circuit Commercial Court).
- Acting for the Defendant in a claim alleging breach of warranty pursuant to a Share Purchase Agreement arising out of the sale of a home and lifestyle company.
- Acting for a company director defending a £2.5 million pound claim for alleged breach of fiduciary duty and fraud (alleged falsification of accounts and related party transactions) and defending a worldwide freezing injunction. Advising on connected minority shareholder issues.
- Acting for multiple Defendants defending a £1.5 million claim for an alleged repudiatory breach of contract and that the Defendants are obligors pursuant to a guarantee and indemnity. Part 20 claim.
- Acting for multiple Defendants defending a multi-million pound claim for alleged sums due pursuant to a loan and guarantee agreement and pursuing a large multi-million pound counterclaim (Commercial Court).
- Defending a claim for alleged unpaid management fees against some former members of a well-known rock band.
- Advising on the recognition and enforcement of various multi-million-pound US judgments in the jurisdiction of England & Wales.
- Acting for the Claimant in their claim against the Defendants for breach of a Services Agreement, establishing a competing business, and breach of confidence and misuse of confidential information, where a springboard injunction and imaging order was also sought (led by Paul Nicholls KC).
- Representing the Claimant in his claim for a declaration and damages arising out of the disposal of a hard drive containing the private wallet key to his Bitcoin (valued at over £500 million pounds) in the household waste centre The case concerns the ownership of tangible property, intangible property, and cryptoassets (led by Dean Armstrong KC).

Maria is also registered as a Part II Practitioner in the DIFC, Dubai and is presently instructed on several high value matters in the DIFC in addition to advising on matters in the ADGM.

Recent matters in the DIFC and ADGM include the following:

- Successful in the matter of Eshraq Investments PJSC v Gargash [2021] DIFC CFI 077 following a five day

trial.

- Acting for the Claimant in an urgent application for injunctive relief in the DIFC arising out of the Respondents allegedly establishing a competing business contrary to the terms of written agreements.
- Acting for the Defendants in defending an alleged breach of a Supply of Goods Agreement and in pursuing a counterclaim for loss of profit and future contracts.
- Acting for the Appellant in an appeal in relation to the jurisdictional challenge to the jurisdiction of the DIFC where a contract specifically excluded the same.
- Advising on winding up proceedings in the ADGM.
- Advising on a freezing injunction in the ADGM.
- Maria is also instructed to advise on insolvency proceedings in the DIFC and ADGM.
- Maria also advises on and assists with matters proceeding in the Channel Islands and Isle of Man.

Maria is able to deal with all costs issues arising out of the above including at detailed assessment.

Maria is Public Access registered and is happy to be instructed on a Public Access basis by clients directly, where appropriate.

Maria is ranked in Tier 2 for Commercial Litigation in the Legal 500 Regional Bar.

CIVIL FRAUD

Maria has a wide experience of claims dealing with allegations of fraud and dishonesty and related asset recovery. This includes obtaining and resisting freezing orders, proprietary claims involving the tracing or following of assets, conspiracy claims and claims for fraudulent misrepresentation and deceit.
Often in such cases Maria will be instructed to obtain urgent injunctive relief. Maria has considerable experience in interlocutory applications including injunctions which may be required urgently, and frequently appears in the High Court obtaining or defending the same.
This includes freezing injunctions, worldwide freezing injunctions, search orders, imaging orders, and prohibitory and mandatory injunctions.
Her experience includes:
• Advising, and representing several Defendants in a complex multi-million-pound joint venture dispute (with an overseas element) where unlawful means conspiracy was alleged (and the unlawful means conspiracy allegation later withdrawn following challenge);
• Claims against directors and defending directors where breach of fiduciary duty and fraud have been alleged;
• Advising and representing a Defendant in a multi-million-pound claim where fraud and breach of fiduciary duty was alleged;
• Advising and representing the Estate of a deceased Defendant accused of fraud and breach of fiduciary duty;

COMPANY & PARTNERSHIP

Maria deals extensively with Company and Partnership disputes and has a number of ongoing matters proceeding presently which include several s.994 disputes, and a winding up on the just and equitable ground.
• Maria is also currently instructed on several high value partnership disputes that include issues over
• partnerships at will and advising on a point of variation pursuant to s. 19 of the Partnership Act 1890).
• Maria has specific experience of Partnership disputes in areas including healthcare, and agricultural partnerships.
• Maria has substantial experience of dealing with derivative claims. Maria was recently instructed on a large derivative claim where a number of breaches were alleged in the context of a family business (settled at mediation).
• Maria is presently instructed on a very complex derivative claim.
Maria has experience of dealing with company director disqualification proceedings.
Notable company cases that Maria has been instructed on recently include the following:-
• Acting for the Petitioner in his s.994 petition at trial, seeking to establish a quasi-partnership and seeking to establish that increased salary renumeration provided to other directors amounted to unfairly and prejudicial conduct.
• Acting for the Petitioner in his s.994 petition at trial seeking a buy-out order from the Respondent at trial in relation to a successful petrol station business.
• Acting for the Petitioner at trial in a winding up on the just and equitable grounds following irretrievable deadlock in the company and where there has been a complete loss of substratum in the Company.
• Acting for the Petitioner in his s.994 arising out of failed multi-million-pound airline venture.

Maria also has an understanding of corporate governance and human rights and is able to advise corporations on their corporate due diligence and the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights which builds on Maria's academic and practical experience obtained in this area prior to coming to the Bar. This is an area which is likely to expand in the future.
Maria advises directors on their individual duties in this area.
Maria is also Public Access registered and is happy to be instructed by a Company or Directors directly to advise when appropriate.

CRYPTOASSETS

Maria has experience in handling crypto-related disputes, both as standalone matters and where they intersect with other areas of her practice, including insolvency, asset tracing, and commercial litigation and arbitration.

Her work in this field ranges from advising on crypto-asset disputes in arbitration proceedings to handling applications for Norwich Pharmacal Orders and Bankers Trust relief. Notably, she acted in ***Howells v Newport City Council*** [2025] EWHC 22.

Maria is also well-placed to act in disputes arising in this jurisdiction and internationally, including in the DIFC Digital Economy Court in Dubai, where she is a registered Part II practitioner.

INTERNATIONAL & OFFSHORE

Maria is registered as a Part II Practitioner in the DIFC, Dubai and is presently instructed on several high value matters in the DIFC in addition to advising on matters in the ADGM.

Maria has been working in the area for six years.

Recent matters in the DIFC and ADGM include the following:

- CA 004/2025 - (1) Oran (2) Oaken v Oved - Counsel for the successful Appellant (leading Sajid Suleman) in this landmark appeal on jurisdiction.
- Counsel for the Appellant in the CFI 057/2021 Almheiri listed for a two day Court of Appeal hearing in March 2026.
- Successful in the matter of Eshraq Investments PJSC v Gargash [2021] DIFC CFI 077 following a five day trial: https://www.maitlandchambers.com/resources/news-view/maria-mulla-succeeds-in-defending-all-claims-on-behalf-of-her-clients-shehab-gargash-daman-investments-psc-and-daman-real-estate-capital-partners-limited-against-claims-advanced-by-eshraq-investment
- Acting for the Claimant in an urgent application for injunctive relief in the DIFC arising out of the Respondents allegedly establishing a competing business contrary to the terms of written agreements.
- Acting for the Claimant in a proprietary injunction pursuant to Law No. 2 of 2025
- Acting for the Defendants in proceedings in the CFI in defending an alleged breach of a Supply of Goods Agreement and in pursuing a counterclaim for loss of profit and future contracts.
- Acting for the Appellant in an appeal in relation to the jurisdictional challenge to the jurisdiction of the DIFC where a contract specifically excluded the same.
- Advising on winding up proceedings in the ADGM.
- Advising on a freezing injunction in the ADGM.
- Maria also advises on and assists with matters proceeding in the Channel Islands and Isle of Man and has recently advised on a large multi-million-pound contractual dispute in the Isle of Man.
- Assisting on a high-profile case in the Royal Court of Guernsey arising out of an unfair prejudice petition, alleged breach of fiduciary duty, and an alleged derivative claim pursuant to Guernsey Company Law, which was successful following a five-day trial and then successful in the Court of Appeal. The matter is now proceeding to the Privy Council.

INSOLVENCY & ASSET RECOVERY

Maria is experienced in all aspects of insolvency.
Maria regularly provides advice, advocacy, and drafting in the following areas:-
• Administrations;
• Allegations of misfeasance (Mariahas recently been instructed on several matters);
• Preference claims;
• Transactions defrauding creditors;
• Void dispositions;
• Transactions at an undervalue and whether such transactions may be set aside in accordance with s.339 of the Insolvency Act 1986;
• Directors Disqualification proceedings;
• Fraudulent and wrongful trading;
• Reported test cases pursuant to Schedule 10 CIGA Re A Company [2020] EWHC 3740 (Ch);
• Liquidation;
• Statutory demands;
• Winding up petitions;
• Winding up on the 'just and equitable ground';
• Advising Trustees in Bankruptcy on whether property may be disclaimed;
• Advising Trustees in Bankruptcy on whether property forms part of the Estate in accordance with s. 283 Insolvency Act 1986;
• Advising Trustees in Bankruptcy on search orders to retrieve assets;
• Injunctions on the behalf of the Petitioning Creditor and Debtor to restrain the presentation of a winding up petition;
• Substantive hearings on whether there is a genuine triable issue to set aside a statutory demand;
• Validation orders;
• Advice on, and all drafting in relation to the use of a prohibited name;
• Advising on overlapping property and insolvency matters.
• Advising on substantive issues that arise out of the above.
• Maria is a speaker for the Insolvency Practitioner's Association.
Maria has recently advised on a complex matter on the prospects of restraining a winding up petition.

Maria has recently acted for the Petitioner in a winding up petition (two day contested hearing) on the 'just and equitable' ground following the irretrievable breakdown in trust and confidence between the parties and a deadlock.
Maria is ranked in Tier 5 for Insolvency in the Legal 500 London Bar.

ADR

Maria is an accredited Mediator and mediates a large variety of disputes including those in her practice area but also in other practice areas.

Maria is known for her approachable but straight-talking manner when acting as Mediator to ensure the parties achieve the outcomes they desire.

Maria mediates disputes remotely and in -person in the UK and in other jurisdictions if needed.

MEDIA & ENTERTAINMENT

Maria has experience of dealing with a wide range of media, entertainment, and intellectual property matters.

Maria was junior counsel in ***Lloyd v Kruger*** [2018] 2011 (Comm) and played a key role in the success of the case representing the Defendant Howard Kruger against allegations of deceit and fraudulent misrepresentation in relation to the quantity and quality of audio- and audio-visual assets within the TKO and Elm Street Media Catalogues.

Maria also has experience of dealing with disputes concerning unpaid royalties and in particular has acted for Channel Zero (TV company) dealing with a breach of contract claim for unpaid royalties which was settled successfully without proceeding to trial.

Maria has also acted for the family of a reggae artist in their unpaid royalties claim.

Maria has experience of intellectual property and copyright issues and has brought and defended claims for breach of intellectual property rights and unpaid royalties.

Maria has experience of defamation cases and is able to deal with all aspects of these cases including pleadings and preliminary issue hearings, to Trial. Maria has advised on a number of defamation cases and has an interesting case ongoing in the Media and Communications List presently.

Maria also has experience of dealing with malicious falsehood cases. In 2024 she successfully represented a legal professional in his malicious falsehood claim to trial.

Maria is also instructed on breach of confidence and privacy cases and is representing Heidi Clutterbuck in her legal action.

PUBLIC INTEREST AND OTHER AREAS

Maria is part of the legal team representing a large number of survivors in their proposed legal actions against Mohammed Fayed and Harrods (and other associated entities). This is a case that Maria is very passionate about and has appeared on various TV and radio programmes discussing the same.

DIRECTORY QUOTES

"Manages client expectations in a sensitive but direct manner. Maria stands her ground and is able to support

her position when challenged. Excellent in conference and has a good grasp of the facts and surrounding case law/legal position."

LEGAL 500 UK INSOLVENCY (2027)

'Maria is very good with clients in conference. She provides clear and approachable advice and is approachable to instructing solicitors.'

LEGAL 500 COMMERCIAL LITIGATION (2025)

"Maria provides very robust advice that is easy to understand and is exceptional at managing the clients."

LEGAL 500 INSOLVENCY (2024)

NOTABLE CASES