

# Yukos Arbitrator Poncet Leaves CMS For Solo Practice

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Law360, New York (January 13, 2017, 11:07 PM EST) -- International arbitration veteran Charles Poncet, known for his role in issuing the contested \$50 billion Yukos award against Russia, said Friday that he will leave the European megafirm CMS and start his own practice as an independent arbitrator.

Poncet, 70, told Law360 on Friday that he didn't plan on slowing down his work upon leaving CMS von Erlach Poncet Ltd., the Swiss affiliate of the European megafirm that he joined in 2014. He said he was motivated by a desire to avoid the client conflicts that come with being a member of such a large firm and make himself available to hear more disputes.

"I had a terrific experience and a terrific time within the CMS network, and I really mean this, where I made a lot of friends and I met some really terrific people," he said. "But an organization with 4,000 people in it is bound to generate conflicts of interest."



Charles Poncet

The lawyer is known for being the claimant's chosen arbitrator on the tribunal that issued a record-setting award against Russia under the Energy Charter Treaty that was thrown out last year by a Dutch court in a decision that has since been appealed. He has also worked on civil litigation and contract disputes, white collar matters and media law cases, according to CMS' website.

Poncet's departure to his solo practice, to be called PoncetLaw, comes amid even more growth for CMS, the Frankfurt-based law and tax giant with affiliates around the world. The coalition of law firms [last year announced](#) that it would merge its U.K. division with [Nabarro LLP](#) and [Olswang LLP](#) to form the world's sixth-largest law firm.

That merger, expected to wrap up May 1, came a little over two years after Poncet's old firm, ZPG Avocats SA, joined forces with what was then CMS von Erlach Henrici Ltd. and became CMS' Geneva outpost.

In an interview, Poncet said he looked forward to focusing on his work and reducing the time he devoted to the administrative side of running a law firm.

A Swiss native who speaks four languages, Poncet studied at the University of Geneva and received his law degree in 1982. He also received a master's in comparative law at Georgetown University Law School.

Poncet started his legal career at Staehelin Hafter & Partners and joined Poncet Turrettini Amaudoux & Neyroud, a firm started by his father, in 1975, according to CMS' website. He moved to what was then [Lalive & Budin](#) in 1981 and started his own firm, which eventually

became ZPG, in 1986.

--Editing by Catherine Sum