



GLOBAL BENEFITS VISION

Knowledge & Wisdom for Global Employee Benefits Professionals

SLEEP

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HEALTH

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FORGOTTEN

LINK



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**SLEEP, HEALTH, AND WORKPLACE
PRODUCTIVITY ARE LINKED**


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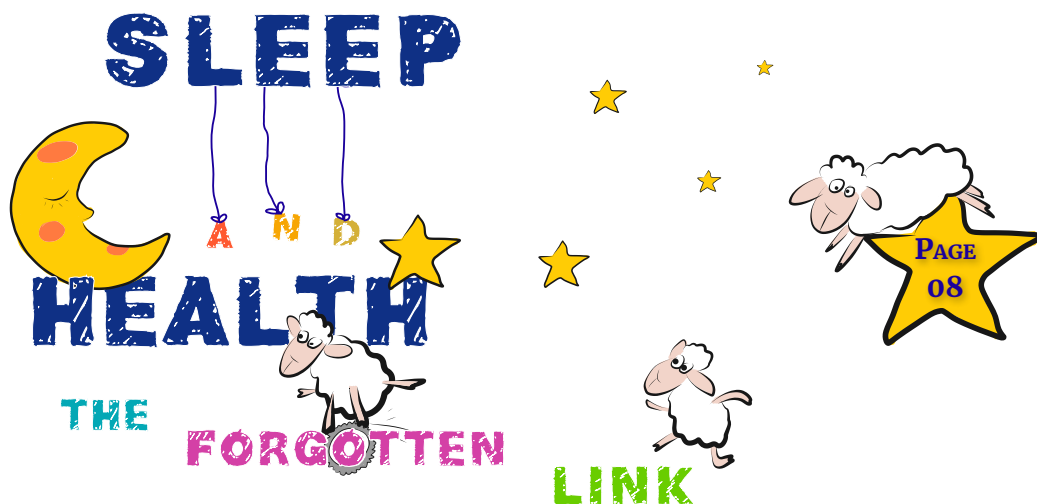
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ABBISS CADRES LLP – FOUNDING PARTNERS OF THE CELIA ALLIANCE

Managing Partner

Guy is the Managing Partner of Abbiss Cadres LLP and one of the founding Partners of the CELIA Alliance. After a decade of experience leading UK and international employment and employee incentives practices in UK and international law firms based in the City of London, Guy founded Abbiss Cadres in 2008.

His expertise is multi-disciplinary and wide-ranging, including tax and social security planning to employment law and corporate and regulatory issues affecting his areas of practice. His work focuses on the design and implementation of effective pay and reward structures for executives, employees and consultants, both in the UK and internationally. He also has considerable experience dealing with top executive employment issues and international assignment structuring.

Guy is a recognised leader in the UK legal market most recently being advised that he has once again been selected as a "Leader in his Field" in the UK by Chambers and Partners independent legal directory 2016 edition.



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INTERVIEW **GUY ABBISS**

Navigating the ever-changing global HR, Law & Tax, and Communications maze: An interview with Guy Abbiss, Managing Partner of Abbiss Cadres LLP and one of the founders of the CELIA Alliance of professional service firms

*Guy Abbiss of Abbiss Cadres LLP granted GBV his first interview with
an international publication about his role in developing a global service
in Law & Tax Services, People Consulting, and Communications*

Global Benefits Vision: *What are the core businesses and main activities of Abbiss Cadres and CELIA Alliance, and how do they relate to the global employee-benefits industry?*

Guy Abbiss: The raison d'être of Abbiss Cadres is to be a specialist multi-disciplinary practice that encompasses employment law, immigration, compensation and benefits, and taxation (including cross-border employment taxation and social security) data protection and corporate law expertise, as well as global mobility and HR consulting and wider communications expertise. Our mix of skills is focused specifically on enabling corporate employers to make the most of their people.

We “focus on the practical,” as our advice has to work. As well as our expert advisory services we also deal with our clients' compliance issues, such as tax filing services, including payroll and social security compliance. We combine true consulting skills with an expert technical approach.

Our model is unique in the U.K., providing a range of multi-disciplinary services with the sole aim dedicated to helping our clients make the most of their people.

As far as soft skills are concerned these include working with clients on the communications aspects of their benefits programs; advising

them on policy issues related to employees' global mobility; advising directly on what benefits they should offer; and designing corporate share incentive programs.

CELIA Alliance replicates our law and tax focussed offerings—all the disciplines between feasibility and implementation of a benefits program—on a global basis. We can cover projects for one employee in a single jurisdiction all the way to major global projects. CELIA Alliance members have run projects in over 70 countries in the past few years, as has Abbiss Cadres. Our clients increasingly look to implement benefits on a global basis, using multi-jurisdictional strategies. As they become more global, rewarding their people across borders requires more than just technical assistance. They need compliance management, communications, and consulting assistance too.

GBV: *Do each of your partners in CELIA Alliance have special divisions for Compensation & Benefits as well as more specialized Employee Benefits divisions?*

GA: The members of CELIA Alliance have varying business models but all have a focus on clients' people needs, of which benefits are a key part. They range from multi-service law firms to smaller specialized consultancies.

GBV: *How do Abbiss Cadres and CELIA Alliance define employee benefits? Is it only expats and global mobility or does it go beyond that to include pooling and captive reinsurance?*

GA: Even though they are focused on the corporate HR side of things, some of our members may get involved in product structuring. That is a part of the whole multi-disciplinary advisory services picture.

GBV: *What can you tell us about CELIA Alliance's plans for the next two years?*

GA: They are twofold. First is the development of know-how, more insightful knowledge in terms of process and strategy. Second is CELIA's geographical expansion into new territories, and hand-in-hand with that, more sophistication on the marketing side. We want to raise CELIA's profile, which we haven't attempted up to now, being content simply to service the needs of our member firms and their clients. So, beyond our multi-jurisdictional newsletter updates, external marketing and PR activity is a recent thing. Hence, our first interview with GBV.

GBV: *How exactly will you accomplish all that, from a resources standpoint?*

GA: The main focus of our resource allocation has been in coordinating know-how and updates from 18 jurisdictions every quarter. For example, we produce taxation know-how papers and articles that require technical as well as editorial input from partners and editorial staff, to make them meaningful to non-English speakers and to communicate clearly. We are now investing in more marketing and business development resources so we can now broaden our message and raise our profile internationally in our target markets.

GBV: *Can you recall for us some of the history of Abbiss Cadres, when it started and a little about its first years?*

GA: Abbiss Cadres was founded in 2008 drawing on a lot of my experience leading employment services practices in global and other significant law firms in London, as well as working for a major global HR and benefits consultancy. It started small in a one-room office. Very soon it became apparent that clients liked having a model that focused on them and their goals, and which helped them address their challenges. Many professional services firms try to fit clients around their own internal facing organisation rather than what we see as the logical approach of organising around the client's needs, not only in terms of what services to offer, but crucially, how to deliver them.

GBV: *What of the CELIA Alliance? Can you recall some of its first years?*

GA: The Alliance started as an informal group of law firms who had worked together for several years on various cross border issues in the HR space.

We all recognised that the digitization of information (not of knowledge) and the advent of Google have put great downward pressure on fees, as information becomes increasingly freely available. We saw that the future of professional service firms was to be able to deliver strategic advice to enable companies to achieve their corporate visions. Increasingly those visions are international – hence the need to display a strong offering to clients to enable them to meet their international HR objectives.

So, CELIA Alliance started as that handful of professional services firms with a shared vision of delivering multi-disciplinary services

CELIA members have managed recent client projects in over 65 countries around the world.



© website CELIA Alliance

to international HR. We started it as a non-exclusive alliance and have kept it that way. Other global alliances are usually exclusive alliances trying to control the flow of work from their clients to enable them to direct it among their members, whereas the CELIA Alliance has no such restrictions. This allows us to work with whomever is best for the job, or who our clients prefer, rather than solely through alliance members. All CELIA Alliance members work with other law firms from time to time, and as our clients prefer.

At the same time we have strong relationships within CELIA among members and we meet every three or four months to organise future Alliance activities and share expertise.

This way clients get the best of both worlds – access to specialist multi-jurisdictional expertise from firms who are very used to working together to agreed values, but who are equally happy working with the client's preferred advisers in any jurisdiction.

We became a formal alliance in 2010 and grew rapidly. We are now in 18 countries and hope to be in 25 within six months.

GBV: *Do you envision Abbiss Cadres and/or CELIA Alliance expanding into other core businesses at some point?*

GA: As an Alliance we are looking at incorporating members who offer other service areas to our international clients in the HR space beyond law and tax. We are also looking to aggressively expand our geographical coverage, and to continue our work developing our “know-how” beyond technical updates and commentaries. We are turning our focus on “show how” – showing our clients how to approach common multi-jurisdictional projects in order to manage the major risks they pose. Clients want practical insights that enable them to make appropriate operational decisions and coming up with content to deliver that is possible as there is much homogeneity in European HR-facing law and tax regulation.

This also accords with our aim to help our clients address their challenges on a strategic cross-border basis.

GBV: *How would a client contact CELIA and yourself? Is the CELIA Alliance London the main point of contact, or is it one of the local CELIA Alliance members?*

GA: They could contact [CELIA Alliance](#) directly (the alliance is run by Abbiss Cadres as an information-sharing structure and does not exist as a corporate entity in its own right) or the client can speak with any [CELIA Alliance member](#) to identify what it is trying to achieve, and where it is trying to achieve it.

Billing can be done with one invoice, or through multiple invoices for separate jurisdictions or subsidiaries.

GBV: *How do you coordinate your activities at the global level with the different countries/CELIA Alliance members?*

GA: Our people manage the projects on an ongoing basis; the seniority of the staff depends on the complexity of the individual project. It can range from partners handling cross-border solutions for clients to managers or paralegals under supervision handling clients' ongoing administrative needs.

CELIA members recognize that client service is about working together, and members are only chosen through the recommendation of other members who have already worked with them. If the level of service and cooperation doesn't meet our exacting standards, that member ceases to be a member.

The alliance meets every quarter and maintains close contact with members, which allows us to build strong relationships. So when we need a response from a particular jurisdiction, the response is there and it is meaningful.

GBV: *Do you conduct any thought-leadership or lobbying activities? If so, can you describe them?*

GA: Alliance members belong to a number of other professional organizations which add value in terms of contacts, lobbying, and coordinating activities with governments. Abbiss Cadres is a member of IFS Proshare, which has an interest in employee share schemes and the Employee Share Ownership Centre, as well as the European Share Ownership Centre. Our lawyers are also members of and sit on the committees of the Employment Lawyers Association, including the legislative policy committee which comments on all manner of proposed HR-related legislation.

CELIA itself does not do this on a Pan-European basis; it is the national regulators and governments who drive the regulatory process in the EU.

CELIA Alliance also publishes a client newsletter every quarter. It takes a unique multi-disciplinary approach, covering developments across the CELIA Alliance territories. It keeps our members and clients abreast of the material developments in their jurisdictions. Our focus is client-centric for now.

GBV: *Does the vast reach of the United States, in terms of business and judicial matters, affect your business and that of your clients?*

GA: Many of our clients are U.S.-based global corporations, so it does not affect them to any great degree. They are used to working in different jurisdictions and especially with their own regulators. Likewise, clients in Europe take compliance issues in a market like the United States in their stride. Having said that, some European clients are often taken aback by the jurisdictional reach of U.S. law outside the U.S. but mainly those not having a significant or longstanding U.S. focus.

While rules of jurisprudence differ greatly, and are sometimes alien to both sides, it is just as hard for U.S. corporations operating in the EU, and we spend a significant amount of time having to explain to our U.S. counterparts on jurisprudence developed by the EU Courts.

One recent example of a conflict in this increasingly interconnected world is the recent European Court Attorney General's Ruling on the "Safe Harbor." The ruling says that the "Safe Harbor" is not consistent with European law, because of the mass surveillance of data by U.S. intelligence services. There are going to be moments when jurisdictional interests clash.

This will tend to happen more and more often, and not just between the United States and Europe. We can see it happening among EU member states, as for example in social security treatment and the different way

in which member states treat EU directives. That causes internal conflict between national interpretations of multi-national (EU) law, because jurisdictions take different views and approaches – even in a unified jurisprudence there can be conflict. ∞



ABBISS CADRES

YOU AND YOUR PEOPLE

Law & Tax
People Consulting
Communications



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ABOUT ABBISS CADRES

Established in 2008, Abbiss Cadres is the only multi-disciplinary practice of its type in the UK specially licensed by our regulator to provide our clients with a broad range of legal and non-legal services.

We provide our services to many multi-national groups as well as UK headquartered businesses ranging from public companies with a global footprint to smaller privately owned, often venture capital backed, organisations.

We combine specialist expertise in tax and social security, employment law, and employee incentives as well as broader HR consulting and communications services.

Our professionals offer an innovative mix of skills and experience from legal, tax, HR and communications consulting and corporate backgrounds which enables us to deliver a comprehensive range of expert services unique among UK professional services firms.

All our people share a commitment to client service, technical excellence and practical insight applied to advance our clients' commercial objectives.

We pride ourselves on our client relationships. Achieving a meaningful understanding of the requirements of each of our clients is key to delivering effective, tailored support which allows us to help our clients achieve their objectives.

Internationally, we work with our colleagues in the CELIA Alliance and Correspondent Firms around the world to provide coordinated, high quality, cost effective services.

Follow us on *Twitter* @Abbiss_Cadres for the latest updates on HR and Employment related matters in the UK.

For more information, please call +44 (0)20 3051 5711 or email us at info@abbisscadres.com.

www.abbisscadres.com

ABOUT CELIA ALLIANCE

What makes CELIA different from other international law or accounting firms or alliances is its combination of expert legal and tax services.

Services range across the full range of Compensation and benefits, Employment and Labour law and International Assignments (hence the name CELIA) as well as complementary legal and tax services.

CELIA also offers comprehensive international assignments and global mobility, tax and social security compliance services.

CELIA can help you make the most of employing, organising, paying, incentivising and moving your people within and across borders.

Follow us on *Twitter* @CELIA_Alliance for latest news and updates affecting global employers.

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