

MoFo Hires Ex-OFAC Atty From Paul Weiss Ranks

By **Emily Lever**

Law360 (July 6, 2022, 3:02 PM EDT) -- Morrison Foerster LLP has added a former federal sanctions enforcement attorney to its national security practice group, the firm announced Wednesday.

Rachel Fiorill, most recently of Paul Weiss Rifkind Wharton & Garrison LLP, is the latest of three hires to come to Morrison Foerster's Washington, D.C.-based national security and risk management group with experience at the Office of Foreign Assets Control, or OFAC, the federal sanctions authority.

Fiorill's move was motivated by the broad and international character of Morrison Foerster's sanctions practice, she told Law360, noting that the group provides advice on the sanctions regimes of many jurisdictions besides the U.S.

"It's really not just OFAC that global financial institutions need to be thinking about as they navigate sanctions issues," Fiorill told Law360 on Wednesday. Clients need to be "advised not just on U.S. sanctions but also how a client's business is impacted by rising complexity in evolving sanctions regimes."

Fiorill worked at OFAC from 2014 to 2016 on investigations into compliance with sanctions on Syria and sanctions related to the Russia-Ukraine conflict unfolding at the time. She also worked on sanctions on Iran and the implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, or JCPOA, better known as the "Iran nuclear deal."

"As part of my role in enforcement, as well as in private practice, I've had the opportunity to lay eyes on hundreds of OFAC compliance programs and how those compliance expectations do and do not vary across industry," Fiorill said. "Having the opportunity to collaborate with other attorneys at MoFo who also have that agency experience gives us a somewhat unique perspective on what — if it's close to the line — may be likely to trip an enforcement wire, or where OFAC may be willing to provide some comfort."

Fiorill's plan for her tenure at Morrison Foerster is to work with U.S. and non-U.S. banks, as well as private equity, fintech and cryptocurrency clients. She will focus on internal investigations, help respond to government investigations and work with Morrison Foerster's corporate practice to vet corporate transactions for sanctions issues.



Rachel Fiorill

Despite her previous experience working on U.S. sanctions on Russia following its 2014 invasion of Crimea, the current battery of sanctions against the country due to its invasion of Ukraine in February raises unprecedented issues, Fiorill said.

"Cross-border transactions with Russia, even if permitted, are incredibly difficult to effectuate, as well as reputational challenges for U.S. and other clients," she told Law360. "Russia is the largest economy to ever be so aggressively sanctioned by the U.S., [and] the incredible parallel nature of the sanctions that have been imposed by the U.S. and other allies magnifies the impact of the sanctions."

At Morrison Foerster, Fiorill is to reunite with John Smith, who co-leads the firm's national security practice and was a director of OFAC. "Her blend of OFAC enforcement and private practice experience will be a tremendous asset for our clients," Smith said of Fiorill in a statement.

Also revolving-door hires from sanctions enforcement posts are Andrea Delisi, a former assistant chief counsel for OFAC, and Brandon Van Grack, who worked on criminal investigations related to sanctions and export control for the U.S. Department of Justice.

Fiorill holds a law degree from Georgetown University Law Center and a master's in public policy from Georgetown University.

--Editing by Stephen Berg.