



## YPOG welcomes seven new partners

**Berlin/Hamburg/Cologne/Munich, December 16, 2024** – The law firm YPOG will be welcoming seven additional attorneys and tax consultants to the partnership in 2025. Dr. Benedikt Flöter (Berlin) and Dr. Anika Patz (Berlin) will become Equity Partners, while Michael Blank (Berlin), Dr. Isabella Denninger (Munich), Tobias Lovett (Berlin), Sophia Merzapour (Cologne) and Pia Meven (Berlin) will make Associated Partner.

Dr. Carola Rathke, Co-Managing Partner, comments: "We welcome our new Partners and look forward to continuing our great cooperation with them. The expansion is an important step on our path to growth, as it enables us to continue to provide our clients with the best possible advice." Dr. Benjamin Ullrich, Co-Managing Partner, adds: "YPOG is ever-evolving. With the skills of our new Partners and all our colleagues, we are ideally positioned for our continuous expansion. We look forward to growing together and meeting the changing requirements of the legal market and of our clients."

**Dr. Benedikt Flöter** (Berlin) will expand YPOG's IP/IT/Data Protection practice. He has extensive expertise in advising investors and companies from the venture capital ecosystem on questions of IP/IT law. His focus is on legal issues of innovative technology companies in the context of financing rounds and business model-related issues as well as advising on business operations, drawing on his specialist market knowledge with regard to AI start-ups. Benedikt specializes in drafting agreements on software licensing, cooperation and R&D regarding the development, training, protection and exploitation of AI software, including regulatory matters of the EU AI Regulation and of data protection law.

*"Artificial intelligence will give rise to a technological revolution that will impact all areas of our lives. I am delighted to be afforded the opportunity to support this development, together with our great team, and to further develop the advisory practice for technology companies and founders at YPOG."*

Benedikt studied law in Konstanz, Warwick (UK) and Bonn and was a visiting scholar at Chicago-Kent College of Law. He completed his practical legal training in Hamburg in the IP/IT department of an international commercial law firm, a specialized IP/IT boutique law firm and the Competition and Copyright Chamber of the Regional Court of Hamburg. Before joining YPOG, Benedikt was a senior associate at Taylor Wessing in Hamburg and Berlin.

**Dr. Anika Patz** (Berlin) will continue to expand the firm's advisory practice in the areas of regulatory, Financial Services, Fintech + DLT. Her clients include banks, financial services and securities institutions, crypto asset service providers, institutional investors and fintechs as well as stock exchanges and multilateral trading centers, whom she advises, in particular, on regulatory matters as well as on compliance and money laundering issues. Her focus is on blockchain-based business models and on regulatory matters relating to trading, custody and issuance of crypto assets and securities including security token offerings (STOs), stablecoins and non-fungible tokens (NFTs). Anika is considered to be an expert on the new EU Regulation on markets in crypto assets (MiCAR) and, together with her team, she successfully advised on the first license for the operation of a DLT TSS under the EU DLT Pilot Regime.

*"As a Partner at YPOG, I very much look forward to continuing to pursue forward-looking and innovative business models with our clients and to advising them together with my highly valued and highly specialized team."*

Anika studied law at Berlin's Humboldt University, where she also completed her Ph.D. in 2015. Her practical legal training at the Higher Regional Court of Berlin included stints at Germany's Federal Ministry of Finance and at the European Commission in Brussels (Directorate-General for Financial Stability, Financial Services and Capital Union – FISMA). Anika then worked at the Berlin law firm lindenpartners (with a secondment to Solarisbank AG and its subsidiary, Solaris Digital Assets GmbH) and as in-house counsel for Börse Stuttgart



Digital Exchange. Before joining YPOG, she was a senior associate at Eversheds Sutherland in the team of Dr. Carola Rathke.

**Michael Blank** (Berlin) will drive the further development of the Funds practice at YPOG. His focus is on providing comprehensive advice to the initiators of venture capital, private equity and other alternative asset funds in all tax and regulatory matters as well as on the drafting and negotiation of the associated legal documentation. He also provides advice on specific fund-taxation issues, with a particular focus on cross-border structures.

*"YPOG's Funds practice is a unit of highly specialized and creative experts who share a unique team spirit. I very much look forward to further expanding our practice and its product range in my new role and to developing innovative solutions with our clients."*

Michael studied law and international business law at the University of Erlangen-Nuremberg and the University of Cambridge. He then worked as a research assistant at the chair of tax law at the University of Erlangen-Nuremberg and was a visiting scholar at the Center for Business Taxation at the University of Oxford and at Harvard Law School. After his practical legal training at the Higher Regional Court of Berlin, Michael started as an attorney at SMP and joined YPOG when the firm was founded.

**Dr. Isabella Denninger** (Munich) will be expanding and significantly shaping the firm's advisory practice in the area of tax controversy. Her focus is on corporate tax law (national and international), tax audits and tax disputes, including opposition and appeal proceedings before the tax courts and Germany's Federal Fiscal Court.

*"As a passionate ultra trail runner, I know that endurance, determination and the right strategy are key – same as with tax disputes. As an Associated Partner at YPOG, I look forward to working with my great team to help our clients navigate safely through complex tax terrain and get them safely across the finish line."*

Isabella studied law with a focus on domestic, international and European tax law at Munich's Ludwig Maximilians University. After her practical legal training in the Munich Higher Regional Court district and parallel to pursuing her Ph.D., she worked as an attorney in a transaction-focused commercial law firm. Subsequently, she was admitted as a tax consultant and as a certified tax attorney. She obtained her Ph.D. in tax law at the Friedrich Alexander University of Erlangen-Nuremberg. Prior to joining YPOG, Isabella worked in renowned commercial law firms in the field of tax law with a particular focus on M&A tax, corporate tax law and tax controversy.

**Tobias Lovett** (Berlin) specializes in matters of corporate law with a particular focus on venture capital. In his new role as Associated Partner, he will continue to expand and strengthen the Transactions practice. He advises both companies and investors on a wide range of financing rounds from seed to Series E as well as on exits. At YPOG, Tobias applies his unique skills in advising foreign clients looking to invest in the German market. He benefits in particular from his international experience and his knowledge of the European market as a whole.

*"Since I joined the firm in January 2022, YPOG has grown significantly, and I am delighted to be part of this impressive journey that has seen YPOG become one of the top law firms in Germany. I look forward to all that lies ahead and to playing a greater role in the continued growth and development of the firm's international reputation and client base."*

Originally from the UK, Tobias studied law at the University of Reading, which included a year abroad at the University of Trier, the first of many future stays in Germany. He completed his Master's in London and Berlin and was admitted as an English solicitor in 2017. Prior to joining YPOG, he was a senior associate at CMS



Cameron McKenna Nabarro Olswang LLP in London. He also completed secondments at CMS Hasche Sigle in Berlin and at M Ventures (Merck Group).

**Sophia Merzapour** (Cologne) will continue to shape and expand YPOG's Tax practice as an Associated Partner. Her focus is on advising high-net-worth individuals, family offices and medium-sized and large companies on current and structural taxation issues. Sophia also advises funds as well as private and commercial investors in the area of venture capital.

*"One of YPOG's greatest strengths is its team spirit, coupled with a highly qualified and committed team that is always focused on the individual needs of its clients. As an innovative law firm, YPOG is also consistently one step ahead and able to meet the demands of the market. As an Associated Partner, I am therefore delighted to continue to expand our practice group together with our dynamic team at the highest professional level and thus to the complete satisfaction of our clients."*

Sophia studied business administration with a focus on taxation at the University of Worms. Prior to joining YPOG, she was a Senior Associate at SMP (2018). Before that, she worked as a tax consultant at Flick Gocke Schaumburg and as a tax senior consultant at the audit firm BDO Wirtschaftsprüfungsgesellschaft AG. In parallel to her employment, she completed an LL.M. in Corporate Tax Law at the University of Cologne.

**Pia Meven** (Berlin) will be co-responsible for the further expansion of the Transactions practice at YPOG. She also provides comprehensive advice on corporate and reorganization law with a focus on the establishment of European Companies (SE) as well as carve-outs and corporate reorganizations.

*"I am delighted to be able to contribute my expertise in transaction and corporate law advice as an Associated Partner at YPOG. Team spirit and close cooperation as well as advice at the highest professional level are key to achieving excellent results for our clients."*

Pia studied law in Berlin. Having completed her legal studies, she worked as a research assistant at Flick Gocke Schaumburg. Her practical legal training at the Higher Regional Court of Berlin included stints at international law firms in Berlin and Frankfurt am Main. She has been working as an attorney at SMP and YPOG since 2020.

## **About YPOG**

YPOG is a law firm specialized in tax and business law, active in the core fields of Funds, Tax, Banking + Finance, and Transactions. The team at YPOG represents a broad client base, which ranges from emerging technology companies and family-run SMEs to large corporations, as well as private equity, and venture capital funds. YPOG is one of the leading advisors for venture capital, private equity, and fund structuring in Germany. The firm and its partners have been recognized nationally and internationally by JUVE, Best Lawyers, Legal 500, Focus, Chambers and Partners as well as Leaders League. Today, YPOG has more than 150 experienced attorneys, tax advisors and tax specialists and a notary, in four offices, located in Berlin, Hamburg, Cologne, and Munich.

Further information: <https://www.ypog.law/en/> and <https://www.linkedin.com/company/ypog>

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