Until 2013 no country had fully legalized cannabis. Some countries like the Netherlands allowed citizens to keep and cultivate marijuana, and let coffee shops sell marijuana, as long as they complied with certain requirements. However, in 2013 Uruguay legalized both medicinal and recreational cannabis, and the legal sale of State-produced cannabis in pharmacies to registered consumers began in 2017. In 2018 Canada became the first major economy to follow Uruguay’s lead and legalized the adult use of cannabis for recreational purposes. Several US states and Washington, D.C. have also followed suit. Cannabis companies rushed to launch “pot stock” IPOs and billions of dollars started to flow to this industry.

But this major policy shift is not free of complications. For example, legalization of cannabis comes at odds with different international treaties establishing prohibition. Inconsistent regulations make this industry still volatile. The US’s strict finance laws on controlled substances impact financial transactions across the globe.

This panel will discuss the current state of cannabis legalization and main comparative regulations, the particularities of the industry that makes cannabis transactions different from those in other sectors, and the most sensitive aspects to bear in mind when working on a cannabis deal.

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