



# PRACTICAL LAW

MULTI-JURISDICTIONAL GUIDE 2011/12

## CORPORATE REAL ESTATE

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Essential legal questions answered  
in 23 key jurisdictions

Comparative table

Rankings and recommended  
lawyers in 51 jurisdictions

Analysis of critical  
legal issues





# Argentina



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## THE CORPORATE REAL ESTATE MARKET

### 1. What have been the main trends in the real estate market in your jurisdiction over the last 12 months? What have been the most significant deals?

#### Trends

The main trends in the real estate market include:

- **Residential sector.** In recent years, real estate investment in the residential sector proved to be a safe investment and a means to protect savings. However, as real estate projects are long in duration, the effects of inflation must be considered. Inflation is increasingly becoming the main concern of developers facing new real estate projects.

- **Commercial office sector.** Interest in the construction of new office buildings has increased due to the combination of:
  - a general lack of offices for rent; and
  - increasingly high rents for premium offices.

Demand for office space has also been reduced due to the construction of many new offices in downtown Buenos Aires and in the north corridor of the city.

- **Hotels sector.** Tourism boomed in Argentina following the devaluation of the peso during the last decade. Therefore, there is a huge interest in the development of hotels. The largest projects are located in Buenos Aires and in the main tourist destinations.
- **Rural sector.** The real estate industry in rural locations has been very active since devaluation of the peso in 2002. However, due to government intervention restricting meat exports and affecting wheat prices, expansion of real estate in the rural sector has recently declined slightly.
- **Shopping centres.** There are many opportunities for shopping centre developments, especially in medium-sized towns in the provinces and in Buenos Aires, where the wealthy population is based.

#### Deals

The most significant recent deals are:

- **Pegasus' development of the Tortugas Open Mall.** Pegasus, a well-known investment fund, developed the Tortugas Open Mall, a shopping centre 36 kilometres (km) from the City of Buenos Aires. The shopping centre comprises 150,000 square metres, more than 160 stores and an investment of about US\$120 million (as at 1 September 2011, US\$1 was about ARS4.2).
- **Raghsa SA's construction of the Madero Office.** This is presently the only "green building" in Argentina. It is located in the Puerto Madero area.

- **The sale of the last piece of land in Catalinas Norte.**

Catalinas Norte is the key office space area in the city. The sale was through a bidding process organised by the City of Buenos Aires.

- **The re-opening of the Village Recoleta Mall.** This is one of the key shopping centres in the City of Buenos Aires, with more than 100 stores and 12 cinemas.

## REAL ESTATE INVESTMENT

### 2. How is real estate investment carried out in your jurisdiction and what structures do investors use?

#### Common structures

There are three major business structures through which an investor (either a physical person or a legal entity) can participate in the real estate market:

- Direct acquisition of real estate.
- Participation as shareholder in a company that owns real estate.
- Participation in a foreign real estate investment trust that invests in Argentinean real estate.

#### REITs

Real estate investment trusts (REITs) do not exist in Argentina.

#### Institutional investors

Institutional investors are basically trust managers and investment companies. They are involved in the real estate market as developers of:

- Residential buildings.
- Office buildings.
- Shopping centres.
- Developments in rural areas.

#### Private investors

The role of private investors is often limited to the residential and office markets. Investors willing to take part in these projects:

- Provide the necessary funds to finance the building.
- Receive units of apartments or offices when the developer ends the project.

This scheme is often also used in the hotel market (for example, condo hotels).



## REAL ESTATE LEGISLATION

### 3. What is the main real estate legislation that applies in your jurisdiction?

The main sources of real estate law are the:

- National Constitution (1853).
- Civil Code (1869).
- Condominium Property Act (Act 13,512).
- Registration of Condominium Property Act (Act 19,724).
- National Real Estate Act (Executive Order 20,440/73).
- Real Estate Register Act (Act 17,801).
- Act related to Trusts (Act 24,441).
- Division of Land Act (Act 14,005).
- Previous Horizontal Property Act (Act 20,276).
- Urban Planning Code (Act 449).
- Urban Leases Act (Act 23,091).
- Rural Leases Act (Act 13,246).
- Building Codes of each province.

## TITLE TO REAL ESTATE

### *Title and registers*

### 4. What constitutes real estate in your jurisdiction? Is land and any buildings on it (owned by the same entity) registered together in the same title, or do they have separate titles set out in different registers?

Real estate property is not distinguishable from land ownership. Therefore, buildings and other constructions on a particular piece of land cannot be owned independently from the corresponding land. Buildings are considered fixtures which belong to the owner of the land, under statutory provisions of the Civil Code.

Titleholders are considered to own the land and everything below and above the land, subject to specific legal restrictions (for example, restrictions relating to aerospace, utilities and mining).

Therefore, the land itself, as well as any buildings on the land, are registered together.

### *Evidencing title*

### 5. How is title to real estate evidenced?

Legal title to real estate requires both the:

- Execution of a sale deed, passed before a notary public.
- Transfer of the property.

Legal title is effective from the date of grant. However, to be fully enforceable against third parties, the title must be filed with and registered in the Real Estate Register of the relevant province.

### *Information in the public register*

### 6. What are the main information and documents registered in the public register of title?

The main information and documents which must be registered in the public Real Estate Register are:

- Public deeds creating, transferring, declaring, modifying or terminating interests in real property.
- Judicial decisions establishing attachments or other precautionary measures on real property, or restraining orders preventing the owners from disposing of the property.
- Preliminary sales agreements of real estate property under the Registration of Condominium Property Act, or of real estate divided into lots under the Division of Land Act.

### *Protection from disclosure*

### 7. Can confidential information or documents be protected from disclosure in the public register of title?

There is no requirement to register all documents; only the most relevant information is included in the Real Estate Register.

Persons with a legitimate interest in discovering the legal status of the property, documents, precautionary measures or restraining orders can request judicial authorisation to obtain a copy of the relevant title deed, recorded in the Notary's College (*Colegio de Escribanos*) in the province where the deed was granted.

The information available at the Real Estate Register can be obtained through reports or certificates issued by it.

### *State guarantee of title*

### 8. Is there a state guarantee of title? Is title insurance available? If so, is it commonly used?

There is no specific state guarantee relating to the accuracy of records made by officers based on public deeds or other documents. However, third parties contract with the registered owner of the real estate based on the information available at the Real Estate Register. Any party incurring loss due to a registration error can sue the state for damages caused by the inaccuracy of the Real Estate Register.

Title insurance is not yet available. Insurance companies are currently analysing the Argentinean market in relation to the possibility of providing title insurance. However, it is unlikely that title insurance will become available in the near future.

## Tenure

### 9. How can real estate be held (that is, what types of tenure exist)?

Ownership of real estate is governed at national level by the Civil Code, which applies to all real estate located within Argentina. Under the Civil Code:

- Legal titles which exist *in rem* can only be created by law.
- There are a limited number of *in rem* titles that can be admitted and registered (for example, mortgages, leasehold rights, servitudes and usufruct).

All real estate rights are derived from ownership and generally comprise:

- **Ownership rights.** Similar to common law, these rights are defined as those pursuant to which a certain thing is subject to the absolute will and discretion of a given person (subject to any specified legal restrictions).
- **Personal rights.** These rights may also exist in relation to real estate (for example, leases and gratuitous use).

## SALE OF REAL ESTATE

### Main stages and documents

### 10. What are the main stages and documents in the sale of real estate?

#### Marketing

Real estate brokers are usually hired for the sale and purchase of real estate or for lease transactions. Real estate is usually marketed in newspapers, or directly marketed to clients and investors.

#### Commercial negotiation

Commercial negotiations depend on the size and value of the real property that is being sold or leased.

#### Pre-contractual arrangements

A buyer's offer to purchase real estate property, made through a broker, often includes a reserve. Under the reserve, the potential buyer provides a deposit to the seller or broker of a certain amount of money, as proof that the offer is reliable (see below, *Sale contract*). If the agreement is not completed for reasons attributed to the potential buyer, the potential buyer will lose the amount of money deposited (usually 5% to 10% of the purchase price offered).

The reserve creates a period of exclusivity for the potential buyer against rival buyers. If the seller accepts the reserve, but subsequently withdraws his acceptance of the offer, the seller must reimburse the deposit/reserve received from the potential buyer plus an additional amount equal to the deposit/reserve.

#### Sale contract

The purchase agreement is a contract by which the seller agrees to deliver and convey a real estate property to the buyer in exchange for a purchase price. Through the purchase agreement, both parties are bound to execute the corresponding public transfer

deed. To assure protection against the seller's bankruptcy or reorganisation proceedings, the buyer must pay at least 25% of the purchase price under the reserve.

#### When legally binding

The offer is based on conditions offered or foreseen in the reserve. The broker then takes the real estate off the market while the seller decides whether to accept the offer. Once the seller accepts the reserve, there are several alternatives in relation to when the parties are legally bound, depending on the payment conditions.

#### Registration

To be enforceable against third parties, the public deed of transfer of title must be registered in the relevant provincial Real Estate Register.

#### When title transfers

The transfer of title to real property is made before a notary public, through a deed that is registered in the Real Estate Register in the province in which the real estate property is located.

Between the parties, the transfer is completed once the public deed is executed.

In relation to third parties, see above, *Registration*.

### Seller's liability to the buyer

### 11. Does a seller have any statutory or other liability to the buyer in a disposal of real estate?

Buyers of real estate are, by law, granted an eviction guarantee. This entitles the buyer to sue the seller for damages if the buyer loses the real estate due to a judicial decision supporting a third party's claim to a better title to the property.

The seller is also responsible to the buyer for hidden defects in the real estate property, provided the defects:

- Are relevant.
- Existed before the sale.

The existence of hidden defects means the buyer can file legal proceedings to either:

- Terminate the agreement, with the return of the purchase price plus interest.
- Reduce the purchase price but continue with the purchase.

The time limit for either lawsuit is three months from the date the buyer becomes aware of the defect.

### Due diligence

### 12. What real estate due diligence is typically carried out before an acquisition?

Before the execution of any arrangement, it is advisable to perform a detailed audit or due diligence in relation to:

- The parties of the transaction.



- The object or purpose of the transaction (that is, the real estate property itself, including the ownership background, its conditions, its legal and administrative status, and any environmental concerns).
- Any issues related to the target project or development (for example, feasibility and the applicable regulatory framework).

The legal audit should be completed simultaneously with other similar analysis and studies carried out by the following professionals:

- Notary public.
- Accounting and financial advisors.
- Architects.
- Engineers.
- Land surveyor.

#### *Sellers' warranties*

### **13. What real estate warranties are typically given by a seller to a buyer in the sale of corporate real estate and what areas do they cover?**

The seller must warrant that:

- The seller holds perfect title to the real estate property (that is, that there are no doubts regarding the seller's capacity to sell).
- There are no liens or encumbrances that prohibit the seller from freely disposing of the property.
- The property is free from occupants or tenants.

The seller can also warrant that, under municipal zoning regulations, the real estate property can be used for a specific commercial activity.

#### *Inheriting liability*

### **14. Can an owner or occupier inherit liability for matters relating to the real estate even if they occurred before it bought or occupied it?**

The buyer can inherit liability for damage relating to the real estate if the damage occurred before the purchase. The Civil Code provides for objective liability in certain cases, which means the owner/buyer is presumed responsible for damage caused by defects in the property, unless he can prove guilt of either:

- The seller.
- A third party.

Therefore, the buyer has the burden of proving that the damage to the property existed before the purchase. However, the parties can agree that the seller will not be responsible for the damage caused before the purchase.

If it is not possible to determine precisely the extent of the damage caused by each party, the Environmental General Act

(Act 25,675) establishes joint and several liability of the seller and the buyer, regardless of any potential right of recovery between the parties.

#### *Retention of liability after disposal*

### **15. Does a seller or occupier retain any liabilities relating to the real estate after it has disposed of it?**

The seller is liable for any damage caused to the real estate property, up to the date it transfers the real estate to the buyer (however, see *Question 4*).

However, the seller is responsible for hidden defects in the real estate property, if both the (*Civil Code*):

- Defects are relevant.
- Buyer claims for the damage within three months from the date it becomes aware of the defect.

The parties can set out who will be liable for hidden defects in the purchase contract. However, the seller retains liability for environmental damage from any hazardous waste it created, as it is responsible for managing that hazardous waste from the moment it is created until its final disposal.

#### *Seller and buyer costs*

### **16. What costs are usually paid by the buyer? What costs are usually paid by the seller?**

#### **Buyer's costs**

The buyer usually pays:

- The costs of title research carried out by the notary public.
- Fees to the notary public. The notary public is usually appointed by the buyer (since the notary public is appointed by the buyer).
- 50% of the stamp tax.
- Between 1% and 5%, as agreed in each case, of the price paid as commission to the relevant real estate brokers. Purchases of urban real estate property are generally subject to a commission of between 1.5% and 3%, while commission on rural estate purchases vary between 1% and 2%.

#### **Seller's costs**

The seller usually pays:

- 50% of the stamp tax.
- Between 1% and 5%, as agreed in each case, of the price paid as commission to the real estate brokers.
- The cost of the certificates of title to the real estate property, and the certificates reflecting that there are no restraining orders preventing the owner from disposing of the property.
- Taxes, fees and services to be paid in relation to the property.



## REAL ESTATE TAXES AND MITIGATION

### 17. Is value added tax (VAT) (or equivalent) payable on the sale or purchase of real estate?

VAT is generally not payable on the sale of real estate property.

However, VAT may be payable on improvements made by construction companies to real estate property belonging to them, when the property is sold. In these circumstances, the taxable base (that is, the amount that is taxable) is determined by the agreed value of the improvements, as provided in the purchase agreement (provided the agreed value is not lower than the increase in the fiscal value of the property due to the improvement or its proportional cost). The common applicable rate is 21%. Improvements for housing purposes are levied at a 10.5% rate.

### 18. Is stamp duty/transfer tax (or equivalent) payable on the sale or purchase and who pays?

Stamp tax is payable on any sale or purchase agreement that bears the signature of both parties, at the rate specified by the province.

The taxable base is the total value of the transaction as set out in the purchase agreement. The applicable rate varies (usually about 3% of the purchase price) depending on the province.

Local tax authorities can claim the total stamp tax due from either party to the transaction. However, it is customary for each party to simply pay 50% of the due stamp tax.

To pay the applicable tax, a tax return must be filed. The term for paying the tax depends on the relevant province but is usually ten to 20 working days.

Subject to certain limitations, the purchase agreement for a family's only residence is exempt from stamp tax in some provinces.

### 19. Are any methods commonly used to mitigate real estate tax liability on acquisitions of large real estate portfolios?

The most common methods used to mitigate tax liabilities when acquiring a real estate portfolio are:

- To fulfil the procedure outlined in the Act 11,867 on the transfer of going concerns. This procedure involves a notification to the Tax Authority.
- The creation of an escrow account to cover any potential tax liabilities. The buyer usually requests an indemnity letter from the seller.
- For the buyer a request from the seller for an indemnity letter against potential tax claims.
- Holding business premises.

## HOLDING BUSINESS PREMISES

### *Climate change targets*

### 20. Are there targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from buildings in your jurisdiction? Is there legislation requiring buildings to meet certain minimum energy efficiency criteria?

There are currently no targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from buildings.

However in 2003, the Province of Buenos Aires enacted Act 23,059 to implement an energy efficient system for insulating buildings (although the regulatory details of this law are not yet published).

In addition, a draft law was passed in the legislature of the City of Buenos Aires which promotes sustainable construction.

### *Third party outsourcing*

### 21. Is it common for companies to manage their real estate portfolios and their accommodation needs by using third parties through outsourcing transactions?

Companies usually hire real estate brokers and advisers to manage their real estate portfolios and their accommodation needs.

### *Restrictions on foreign ownership or occupation*

### 22. Are there restrictions on foreign ownership or occupation of real estate, or on foreign guarantees or security for ownership or occupation?

#### Authorisations required for border areas

The purchase of real estate property by foreign persons in frontier security zones (that is, zones that are between 150km from terrestrial borders and 50km from shorelines) is subject to prior and special authorisation issued by the National Commission for Security Zones.

#### Corporate law considerations

To become a shareholder of an Argentine company, foreign companies must do the following:

- Register with the competent Argentine Public Registry of Commerce.
- Demonstrate that the Argentine company:
  - performs its main activity outside Argentina;
  - holds sufficient assets outside Argentina;
  - has decided, at board level, to register the company in Argentina; and
  - provides details relating to its shareholders.

In addition, if a foreign company develops habitual business in Argentina, it must either (*section 123, Business Association Act*):

- Register a branch in Argentina.
- Establish a local subsidiary.



### Issues on change of control

#### 23. Does change of control of a company affect its holdings of real estate?

A change of control of a company does not affect its holdings of real estate. However, foreign-controlled local companies in frontier security zones are considered to be foreign companies.

### Compulsory purchases

#### 24. In what circumstances can local or state authorities purchase business premises compulsorily? Is the purchase price market value?

The National Constitution (Constitution) provides the government with the power to compulsorily purchase real estate for public use (*Article 17, Constitution*):

- In certain circumstances provided by law.
- If compensation is paid.

Public use comprises any activity for public welfare (for example, construction of a new highway) (*National Expropriation Act (Act 21,499)* (Expropriation Act)).

The following steps are taken during a compulsory purchase:

- A declaration of public use by law.
- The filing of expropriation judicial proceedings.
- A price appraisal of the property determined previously by a court.
- A court order for the expropriation and determining the amount of compensation.
- The property being taken from the owner after payment of the compensation.

Compensation must be determined by a court order which takes into consideration the value of the real estate property when both the:

- Property is taken.
- Compensation is actually paid.

The compensation must reflect both (*Expropriation Act*):

- The market value of the real estate property.
- Any damages that are a direct consequence of the expropriation (that is, the compulsory purchase).

However, any type of compensation that could be a product of lost profits is excluded from the calculation of compensation (*Expropriation Act*).

### Municipal taxes

#### 25. Are municipal taxes paid on the occupation of business premises? Are there any exemptions?

Business premises can be subject to several municipal contributions, which vary according to the province in which the business is located.

The main contribution levied on business premises is the inspection of security and hygiene contribution. This is usually calculated by applying a fixed rate on the company's gross income. The rate is usually 0.5%.

Business premises may also pay other contributions, depending on their commercial activity and location. These contributions include the:

- Contribution for lighting, sweeping and cleaning of streets.
- Contribution for publicity and propaganda made.

### REAL ESTATE FINANCE

#### 26. How are acquisitions of large real estate portfolios or companies holding real estate generally financed?

Acquisitions of large real estate portfolios or companies holding real estate are generally financed with equity. It is common for small groups of investors to join together to create trusts for financing the acquisition of large real estate portfolios.

#### 27. How is real estate commonly used to raise finance?

It is uncommon to use real estate to raise finance. However, it is possible for real estate to be used as a collateral guarantee for the receiving of finance.

#### 28. What are the most common forms of security granted over real estate to raise finance? How are they created and perfected (that is, made valid and enforceable)?

Finance is generally acquired in residential and office construction projects using a guarantee trust, in which the real estate is transferred to a trustee. These trusts are generally created by a property developer, who may later become trustor or trustee.

Investors assume a role of both a:

- Trustor, by providing the necessary funds for the construction.
- Beneficiary, by being entitled to receive a unit (such as an apartment, a lot and so on) at the end of the project.

#### 29. Is real estate securitisation common in your jurisdiction?

Real estate securitisation is not common in Argentina.

### REAL ESTATE LEASES

#### Negotiation and execution of leases

#### 30. Are contractual lease provisions regulated or freely negotiable?

The parties cannot agree to set aside the provisions of the Urban Leases Act which regulates contractual lease provisions.

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### 31. What are the formal legal requirements to execute a lease?

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Since a lease is a private agreement it can be executed with no express formalities, the only formal legal requirement to execute it is that the agreement must be in writing and duly signed.

#### *Rent levels and reviews*

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### 32. How are rent levels usually reviewed and are there restrictions on this? Is VAT (or equivalent) payable on rent?

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The following are prohibited, whatever the cause:

- Currency updates in relation to the rent.
- Price indexation (that is, a normalised average price for a given class of goods or services, during a certain amount of time. The index measures the economy's price level or a cost of living).
- Costs variation.
- Debt restatement.

The effect of inflation is mitigated in real estate business contracts, mainly through the following mechanisms:

- Price escalation clauses in leases.
- Price variation according to the cost of the lease.
- Fixed prices combined with variable prices for the payment of the purchase price of new apartments.

These rules are based on the use and custom of the local real estate market and have been backed by local courts.

VAT is payable on real estate leases at a rate of 21%. In some cases, VAT may be subject to certain exemptions in relation to residential, agricultural and governmental uses.

#### *Length of term and security of occupation*

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### 33. Is there a typical length of lease term and are there restrictions on it? Do tenants of business premises have security of occupation or rights to renew the lease at the end of the contractual lease term?

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Urban leases have a minimum term of:

- Two years, if leased for residential purposes.
- Three years, if leased for commercial purposes.

In both cases, the maximum term is ten years. The parties cannot agree to lease terms shorter than the minimum or longer than the maximum.

Unless expressly agreed, the tenant cannot renew the term of the lease at its termination.

#### *Restrictions on disposal*

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### 34. What restrictions typically apply to the disposal of the lease by the tenant?

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In both rural and residential leases, it is often expressly agreed that, without the express written agreement of the landlord, the tenant cannot:

- Sublet the real estate property.
- Assign its rights under the lease agreement.

In the absence of this agreement, the tenant can sublet the real estate.

#### *Use of premises within a corporate group*

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### 35. Can tenants usually share their business premises with companies in the same corporate group?

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If real estate property is leased to a well-known company (that is, a company with a known brand, track record and commercial activity) for business purposes, it is usual to allow the right to sublease or assign the agreement. In these circumstances, well-known companies are authorised to sublease because they will remain as guarantors of the sublease.

#### *Repair and insurance responsibilities*

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### 36. Who is usually responsible for keeping the leased premises in good repair?

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The tenant is required to make general repairs as necessary for the regular use of the real estate property.

However, it is generally understood that the owner pays for extraordinary repairs (that is, repairs which go beyond the necessary repairs for regular use of the property). There is an exception to this principle when the repairs are due to the tenant's fault or negligence. In these circumstances, the tenant must pay these costs.

Improvements in the real estate cannot be made without the express agreement of the landlord.

### 37. Who is usually responsible for insuring the leased premises?

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The lessee (tenant) is usually responsible for obtaining general fire and civil liability insurance (covering damages that might occur in the leased real estate). The lessor (landlord) is held as the beneficiary of those insurance policies.

#### *Grounds for termination*

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### 38. On what grounds can the landlord usually terminate the lease? Can the tenant terminate the lease in certain circumstances?

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Both the landlord and the tenant can terminate the lease due to:

- An act of force majeure.



- Total eviction from the real estate.
- Partial eviction from the real estate (that is, an eviction resulting from the landlord depriving the tenant of use of a portion of the leased premises).

#### Landlord

The landlord can terminate the lease due to:

- Non-payment of rents (if this has been agreed in the lease agreement).
- Performance of harmful works or unauthorised improvements to the premises.
- Changes to the agreed use.
- Abandonment of, or damage to, the real estate.

#### Tenant

The tenant can terminate the lease due to:

- A unilateral decision to terminate the agreement.
- Existing defects in the real estate that hinder its use.

#### *Tenant's insolvency*

### 39. What is the effect of the tenant's insolvency under general contract terms and insolvency legislation?

The Reorganization and Bankruptcy Act (*Act 24,522*) (Bankruptcy Act) refers to preventive and bankruptcy proceedings, among others, in relation to both physical persons and companies. Under the Bankruptcy Act, insolvency rules are mandatory and therefore cannot be modified by agreement between the parties.

#### Preventive proceedings

There is no specific regulation established by law, but preventive proceedings (that is, proceedings foreseen in the Bankruptcy Act to avoid the bankruptcy of the debtor) are subject to general bankruptcy rules. Under these rules, the preventative proceedings can continue after the filing of bankruptcy proceedings until the declaration of the tenant's bankruptcy, if the tenant requests this within a certain time. In this case, the debtor tenant will continue performing his obligations under the lease agreement.

#### Tenant's bankruptcy

If the real estate is for commercial use, the lease agreement is suspended on the tenant's bankruptcy until the judge makes a final order (unless the judge orders the immediate continuation of the lease after the bankruptcy). The landlord must appear before the bankruptcy judge and state his desire to continue or terminate the agreement. If the court does not make a decision within a certain term established by law, the lease will terminate.

## PLANNING LAW

### 40. What authorities regulate planning control and which legislation applies?

The authorities responsible for planning control vary depending on the:

- Province in which the real estate is located.

## REAL ESTATE ORGANISATIONS

### Argentine Real Estate Chamber (*Cámara Inmobiliaria Argentina*)

**Main activities.** This body was founded in 1980 by a real estate broker, to create an entity that would represent the industry. It has a direct link to the government and helps to preserve the common interest of the sector.

W [www.cia.org.ar](http://www.cia.org.ar)

### Association of Housing Businessmen (*Asociación de Empresarios de la Vivienda*)

**Main activities.** This institution offers a web service related to the housing sector.

W [www.aevivienda.org.ar](http://www.aevivienda.org.ar)

### Argentine Construction Chamber (*Cámara Argentina de la Construcción*).

**Main activities.** This institution offers a web service related to the construction sector.

W [www.camarco.org.ar](http://www.camarco.org.ar)

### Ministry of Social Development and Environment - Secretariat of Environment and Sustainable Development (*Ministerio de Desarrollo Social y Medio Ambiente -Secretaría de Ambiente y Desarrollo Sustentable*)

**Main activities.** This body regulates environmental issues.

W [www.desarrollosocial.gov.ar](http://www.desarrollosocial.gov.ar)

### Undersecretariat of Urban Development and Housing (*Subsecretariade Desarrollo Urbano y Vivienda*)

**Main activities.** This body assists urban construction projects, including supervision and co-ordination. It participates in the development of construction projects and the commitment to develop urban and housing programmes in public, national and provincial areas.

W [www.vivienda.gov.ar](http://www.vivienda.gov.ar)

- Urban distribution (that is, guidelines to be followed for city planning).

The municipalities (that is, locally elected governing bodies) are generally responsible for controlling and regulate the construction. The following are the most significant rules for construction and planning:

- Urban Planning Code.
- Building Codes.
- Authorisation Code.
- Environmental Impact Act.
- Internal regulations.

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#### 41. What planning consents are required and for which types of development?

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The following planning consents are required:

- Approved Use Certificate (180 days' duration).
- Conditional Use Certificate (365 days' duration).
- Other authorisations specific to the activity involved.
- Real estate developments require an Environmental Aptitude Certificate which:
  - determines whether or not to carry out the plan, programme or project;
  - sets the conditions to be performed in order to protect the environment and natural resources (if the plan, programme or project is to be carried out).

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#### 42. What are the main authorisation and consultation procedures in relation to planning consents?

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##### Initial consents

In relation to initial planning consents, the main authorisation and consultation procedures are overseen by:

- General Management of Works Control and Cadastre (*Dirección General de Fiscalización de Obras y Catastro*).
- General Management of Authorisations and Permits (*Dirección General de Habilitación y Permisos*).

The Environmental Aptitude Certificate is a required initial consent (see Question 41).

##### Third party rights

Third parties can take legal action to stop a project, by filing precautionary measures. Interested and/or potentially affected parties can file complaints in circumstances where the works require:

- The activity to be categorised.
- An Environmental Aptitude Certificate.

##### Public inquiries

After analysing the activities, projects, programmes or enterprises that are categorised as having a significant environmental effect, the government must convene a public hearing within ten working days (*Environmental Impact Act*).

##### Initial decision

From the receipt of the application, the Environmental Aptitude Certificate takes about 180 days to be issued.

##### Appeals

There is a right of appeal against planning decisions, but there is no specific appeal system in the Environmental Impact Act. Planning decisions can be appealed through administrative proceedings (*Administrative and Tributary Litigious Code of the City of Buenos Aires*).

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##### REFORM

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#### 43. Are there any proposals to reform real estate law in your jurisdiction?

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There are currently several proposals in the House of Representatives to modify the Horizontal Property Act.

In addition, there is a project related to the regulation (and in particular, limitation) of the purchase of rural real estate by foreign persons.

##### CONTRIBUTOR DETAILS



##### PEDRO NICHOLSON

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**Qualified.** Argentina, 1991

**Areas of practice.** Real estate; hospitality; mergers and acquisitions.

##### Recent transactions

- Advice to Interurban, regarding the legal structuring of a shopping centre in Tigre, Province of Buenos Aires.
- Advice to K Group Holdings, on creating the necessary legal framework for its global rental system in the Yoo Nordelta project.
- Advice to Eidico, the Celentano Group and VAN Developers SRL in the development of what will become the largest mixed-use real estate project in the Province of Tierra del Fuego (including residential units, apartment houses, a shopping centre, offices, and a hotel).