

## REMINDER – PERIODIC FILING, NOTICE AND REPORTING REQUIREMENTS FOR PRIVATE EQUITY FUNDS

December 28, 2010

To Our Clients and Friends:

Despite the perception that private equity funds are unregulated, they (and their managers/advisers) are, in fact, subject to various types of regulation under U.S. federal law, most especially in the wake of Congress' recent enactment of the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act (the "Dodd-Frank Act").

With year-end approaching, we wanted to remind our private equity clients and friends to check their internal compliance policies, fund partnership agreements, side letters and/or "tickler" lists to ensure that they are up-to-date and in compliance with the requirements – including any annual or quarterly reporting requirements – that may be imposed by law or pursuant to those compliance policies, partnership agreements and side letters. Examples of filing and delivery requirements (in addition to tax reporting and filing and financial reporting obligations) include the following:

**Registered Investment Advisers.** All U.S. and non-U.S. investment advisers that are registered with the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission (the "SEC") under the U.S. Investment Advisers Act of 1940 (the "Advisers Act") must file with the SEC, within 90 days after the end of the registrant's fiscal year, an updated Part I of the registrant's Form ADV. Part 2 of the Form ADV must be revised in connection with the annual update to reflect the recently adopted amendments to Form ADV. As a result of these amendments to Form ADV, Part 2A will take the form of a narrative brochure describing the firm that will be filed with the SEC. In addition, most registrants will have to prepare a brochure supplement (which will not be filed with the SEC) that contains information concerning firm personnel who provide investment advice to clients. Our August 18, 2010 Client Update, *SEC Amends Advisers Act Registration Form*,<sup>1</sup> describes the recent amendments to Form ADV in greater detail.

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<sup>1</sup> Available at <http://www.debevoise.com/newsevents/pubs/publications/detail.aspx?id=c9e46484-15c1-4f06-bbb7-2f975a3fc080>.

**Registration of Unregistered Investment Advisers.** As discussed in our July 21, 2010 Client Update, *Advisers Act Registration and Regulation of Private Fund Managers and Non-U.S. Institutions After the Dodd-Frank Act*,<sup>2</sup> most U.S.-based fund advisers (as well as many non-U.S.-based fund advisers) who are not currently registered as investment advisers with the SEC will be required to register under the Advisers Act by July 21, 2011. If they have not already done so, these firms should begin that process in January. We look forward to assisting our unregistered clients with this important undertaking.

**Annual Compliance Review.** A registered investment adviser must maintain, adopt and implement written policies and procedures reasonably designed to prevent violation of the Advisers Act by the adviser and its employees. In addition, the adviser must review, no less frequently than annually, the adequacy of these policies and procedures and the effectiveness of their implementation. In addition, many unregistered advisers maintain compliance policies and procedures. If they have not already done so, registered and unregistered advisers should begin planning the annual review of their compliance policies and procedures.

**Filings Pursuant to the U.S. Securities Exchange Act of 1934 (the “Exchange Act”).** In addition to forms, such as Schedule 13D, Schedule 13G and Form 4 (which must be filed following certain purchases and sales), there are certain additional filings that may need to be made periodically with the SEC, such as:

- *Form 5:* Directors, officers and 10% stockholders of SEC-registered issuers (*i.e.*, public companies) may be required to file with the SEC an annual statement of beneficial ownership on Form 5 of certain transactions (such as gifts) exempt from the Form 4 “changes in beneficial ownership” filing requirements, as well as for transactions that should have been reported on a Form 4 but were not. If a Form 5 must be filed, it is due within 45 days of the issuer’s fiscal year end.
- *Form 13F:* Institutional investment managers (including private equity managers) that exercise investment discretion over \$100 million or more (by fair market value) of Section 13(f) securities must report their holdings of such securities on Form 13F. For this purpose, Section 13(f) securities are, generally, securities traded on an exchange (including Nasdaq) and restricted securities of the same class. (The SEC publishes a

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<sup>2</sup> Available at <http://www.debevoise.com/newsevents/pubs/publications/detail.aspx?id=490f5846-948a-40d1-9429-dab70972b51f>.

quarterly “Official List of Section 13(f) Securities.”<sup>33</sup>) In determining whether a fund manager has discretion over \$100 million or more of Section 13(f) securities, a manager should aggregate each fund and other securities, portfolios and accounts over which it exercises investment discretion. However, when determining whether a fund manager has discretion over \$100 million or more of Section 13(f) securities, the manager need not count securities issued by a person whom the manager “controls.” The 2011 filing requirement will be triggered if, on the last day of any month in 2010, Section 13(f) securities under management are in excess of \$100 million. In that case, a Form 13F will need to be filed by February 14, 2011, and thereafter on a quarterly basis.

We note that the SEC recently proposed rules that, if adopted, will require 13(f) filers to also file an annual report on Form N-PX (a form currently used by registered investment companies to report on their proxy voting) to disclose how they voted on executive compensation-related shareholder advisory votes required by Section 14A of the Exchange Act (enacted as part of the Dodd-Frank Act). These proposals are often referred to as the “say-on-pay”, “say-on-frequency” and “say-on-golden parachute” votes. If adopted, the filings would likely be required to be made by August 31, 2011.

- *Schedule 13G:* All 5% beneficial owners of SEC-registered issuers who are exempt from the “long-form” filing requirements of Schedule 13D must nonetheless disclose such holdings (and any changes in such holdings that have not been previously reported) on the “shorter-form” Schedule 13G. Eligible Schedule 13G filers include investors who acquired shares pre-IPO, certain qualified institutional acquirers and investors who are considered “passive” (because they hold less than 20% of the securities and did not acquire the securities with the intent to exercise control with respect to the issuer). If a Schedule 13G must be filed, it is due within 45 days of the end of the calendar year in which the reporting requirement was triggered.

**Annual Privacy Notices.** Certain private equity funds are required by U.S. law to send a privacy notice to each limited partner who is an individual at the start of the partner’s relationship with the fund and annually thereafter. The privacy notice must describe the fund’s policy regarding disclosure of current and former limited partners’ non-public information and, in certain cases, must permit any limited partner who is an individual to opt out of the fund’s disclosure of such information.

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<sup>33</sup> Available at <http://www.sec.gov/divisions/investment/13flists.htm>.

On November 16, 2009, the U.S. Federal Trade Commission, the SEC and other U.S. federal regulators joined together to issue a long-anticipated model privacy form that private equity funds and other financial institutions may use to make privacy disclosures. Use of the model form<sup>4</sup> is not mandatory, but firms that elect to use the two-page model benefit from a regulatory safe harbor.

#### **ERISA-Related Filing Obligations.**

- *Annual VCOC/Plan Assets Certifications:* Many private equity funds operate as “venture capital operating companies” (“VCOCs”) in order to avoid being deemed “plan assets” subject to the U.S. Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (“ERISA”), and have agreed with some or all limited partners to deliver an annual certification as to the fund’s VCOC status. Other funds have agreed to ensure that the capital commitments of “benefit plan investors” not exceed 25% of the fund’s total capital commitments (the “25% test”) so that the fund’s assets are not deemed “plan assets” subject to ERISA, and some of these have agreed with some or all limited partners to certify that this is the case. Funds should conduct the VCOC or “25% test” analysis as applicable, whether or not they are required to certify compliance with the test; and should prepare to deliver any required certifications in a timely manner.
- *Form 5500:* Some private funds are operated as “plan assets” subject to ERISA. Such funds typically agree either to (a) file as a direct filing entity (“DFE”) on IRS Form 5500 or (b) provide ERISA investors with the necessary information concerning the fund to include on the investor’s IRS Form 5500. If a fund files as a DFE, the return (Form 5500) is due 9½ months after the end of the fund’s fiscal year.

Under current Department of Labor guidance, a private fund that relies on the “25% test” described above is also required to provide information to its ERISA investors concerning direct and indirect compensation received by its manager or general partner as well as placement fees paid in connection with a plan’s purchase of an interest in the fund. This information is reported on the Form 5500 of the ERISA investor. Private funds should comply with requests by ERISA investors (including those set forth in side letter provisions) because ERISA investors are required to identify on Form 5500 each service provider, such as a fund manager, that fails to provide the necessary information.

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<sup>4</sup> Available at <http://www.sec.gov/news/press/2009/2009-248.htm>.

**Other Contractual Requirements.** Most private equity fund agreements provide for the delivery of annual audited, and sometimes quarterly unaudited, financial reports to limited partners. Private equity fund agreements as well as side letters often also include a number of additional annual and/or quarterly non-financial reporting or certification requirements. Be sure to check your partnership agreements and side letters carefully for any additional contractual obligations.

In addition to the obligations addressed above, there are various tax filing and reporting obligations that we would be happy to discuss with you. Also, although this Client Update focuses only on contractual and U.S. federal legal requirements, many other jurisdictions (*e.g.*, the jurisdictions where a non-U.S. fund and/or its manager is organized or operates) impose or are in the process of implementing (*e.g.*, the AIFM Directive in the EU) additional filing and regulatory requirements, which we can also assist our clients in evaluating. Please feel free to contact us if you have any questions about the above.

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