

Brekoulakis joins London chambers

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Stavros Brekoulakis

Stavros Brekoulakis has joined London barristers set 3 Verulam Buildings in addition to his role as professor at the School of International Arbitration at Queen Mary, University of London.

Brekoulakis, who is Greek, has taught many in the arbitral world courses on international commercial arbitration, investment arbitration, international construction contracts, commercial litigation and law and conflicts of law during their time at Queen Mary.

He has also written on the role of third parties in arbitral proceedings and on arbitrability and is currently writing a book with **Audley Shepard QC** on policies, including public policy, in English arbitration law.

He serves as an arbitrator and expert specialising in construction cases and was nominated for the best prepared and most responsive arbitrator award by GAR in 2017 and 2018. With **David Brynmor Thomas**, he is editor of the GAR Guide to Construction Arbitration, now available in a new edition.

Brekoulakis is director of the Institute for Regulation and Ethics at Queen Mary and co-chair of the ICCA Queen Mary Task Force on Third-Party Funding.

He is also a member of the ICC Commission on Arbitration and an ICC task force on emergency arbitration proceedings.

He is regularly listed as a future leader by Who's Who Legal: Arbitration.

At 3 Verulam Buildings, Brekoulakis joins well-known arbitration specialists including **Ali Malek QC**, **Sophie Nappert** and **Christopher Harris** and former English judge turned arbitrator **Sir William Blair**. He will offer his services as counsel, arbitrator and expert.

Flying the 3 Verulam Buildings flag, Brekoulakis recently spoke at the international arbitration conference of the Brazilian Arbitration Committee, CBAr, in Salvador, north-east Brazil, discussing the development of the field in the past 30 years and whether it has achieved cultural integration or is heading towards cultural fragmentation (beyond the obvious civil law/common law divide).

Agents of cultural integration that he said have helped develop "a critical mass of common understandings or cultural assumptions about how international arbitration works" include international organisations such as UNCITRAL that have unified the law of arbitration (for example through the New York Convention and UNCITRAL Model Law and rules); soft law developers such as the IBA; arbitral groups such as ICCA and CBAr which "bring down cultural barriers" through their conferences and seminars; educational "incubators" such as Queen Mary and the Vis moot; and the actual experience of practice which forces lawyers from different parts of the world to work together and share techniques and ideas.

Among the "less conspicuous" agents of integration, he also highlighted the cultural effect of international arbitration scholarship, daring to include GAR.

"While GAR started as a journalistic project of narrow scope and limited audience, it has now developed as a major force on information and new cases from a wide range of jurisdictions," he said. "Information which we were never able to reach so directly and on such a regular basis before. For me every evening in London (or Brazil close to lunchtime), GAR opens a window to the world of international arbitration which makes us all familiar with foreign developments and thus amplifies our international understanding and outlook as arbitration lawyers."

But although we have reached significant agreement on how arbitration works, Brekoulakis said key areas of disagreement still remain including on substantive questions such as the role of public policy and whether arbitration agreements can bind non-signatories and on I procedural matters.

There's also the "fundamental cultural disagreement" about whether arbitral awards are rooted in national legal systems or transcend them - or something in between.

While the "clear path" is towards greater integration, as international arbitration expands its boundaries and "wins over more jurisdictions" he said it also has to become "more nuanced" - adding "cultural colour" to many of the shared assumptions.

"In the years to come, international arbitration will resemble more 50 shades of cultural grey than a monochrome, monotonous integrated background," he predicted.

Since his return from Brazil, Brekoulakis has introduced GAR's latest lifetime achievement award winner, Vis moot founder **Eric Bergsten**, at last week's GAR Live Vienna.

Commenting on Brekoulakis's admission to 3VB, Sheppard, who is co-head of international arbitration at Clifford Chance, says "Stavros is not only one of the leading academics in the field of international arbitration, but he is also a very fine advocate and arbitrator, familiar with the civil law and the common law. 3VB have chosen well. Stavros is equally fortunate to have as new colleagues many outstanding arbitration practitioners.

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