

Despina Katsikakis elected President of the British Council for Offices

3 years ago



Despina Katsikakis, Executive Partner & Global Lead, Total Workplace at Cushman & Wakefield, has been elected as President of the British Council for Offices (BCO) with immediate effect. She succeeds Mark Kowal, Partner at Sheppard Robson. Peter Crowther, Managing Director at Bruntwood, becomes Senior Vice President today.

Despina is one of the leading voices in the office sector. She has over 35 years of experience advising global companies such as Microsoft, Barclays, Unilever and BP as well as investors of landmark developments worldwide. She pioneered the role of workplace consultancy in the 1980s and led the transformation of the workplace as an experience. In her role at Cushman & Wakefield and, as President of the British Council for Offices, she continues to lead on latest trends, guiding the approach towards offices that enhance employee wellbeing, deliver social value and business performance.

Since joining the BCO's Board of Management in 2021, Despina has advocated for a human-centric approach to workspaces. She chaired the 2023 BCO Conference in Dublin, which explored how offices can contribute to ensuring the social, economic and environmental sustainability of cities. As BCO President she will champion the role of the office in supporting resilience and providing inspiring places for people and society to thrive.

Mark Kowal's 16-month presidency focused on the overarching ambition of maintaining the relevance of the BCO in a fast-shifting context. This saw a launch of bold changes to the BCO's Guide to Specification to address both hybrid working and revised net zero carbon targets.

Other changes to the BCO's Presidential Team include Peter Crowther's promotion to Senior Vice

President. Peter is Managing Director at Bruntwood and joined the BCO Board of Management in 2022. He served in the BCO Northern Region Committee and the National Awards Judging Panel.

The BCO's Honorary Treasurer, James Clark, Partner at Core Five will also be standing down and is to be succeeded by Bruce Paterson, Founding Partner at Quantem.

Despina Katsikakis, President of the BCO and Executive Partner & Global Lead, Total Workplace at Cushman & Wakefield, said: 'It is an honour to be appointed President of the BCO. With the role of the office increasingly focused on people, experience and social impact, under my leadership the BCO will focus on the unprecedented level of change that is affecting our industry, to drive research and provide a forum for discussion of how we can develop new skills, measures and indices that will shape inspiring offices for a resilient future. I am looking forward to working closely with the BCO committees and members to share knowledge, ideas and debates.'

Mark Kowal, Immediate Past President of the BCO and Partner at Sheppard Robson, said: 'It has been an honour to be President of the BCO and I thank the organisation and its Board of Management for all their support. In my term, I was committed to readdress the role of the office in our lives, and shape how buildings can encourage innovative and fresh thinking, while introducing greener solutions. My focus remains on supporting the BCO as Immediate President and I wish best of luck to Despina for her presidency.'

Richard Kauntze, Chief Executive of the BCO, said: 'I am delighted to welcome Despina Katsikakis as President of the BCO. Despina is a hugely respected and experienced thought-leader on the workplace and, as Senior Vice President, led the BCO's sell out annual conference in June. I wish her every success for her presidential year.

I would like to thank Mark Kowal for his exceptional hard work and dedication during his presidency. As the office sector emerged from the pandemic, under Mark's leadership the BCO has continued to strengthen its role as a leading voice in office design and workplace trends. Mark was an outstanding President of the BCO and should be hugely proud of all he achieved.

I must also express my gratitude for James Clark, who is stepping down as the BCO's Honorary Treasurer, for his commitment and service to the organisation. It is a pleasure to welcome Bruce Paterson as the incoming Honorary Treasurer."