

Interview with Peter Kavelaars on the MasterCourse Human Resources and Global Mobility

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Peter Kavelaars has been a professor in Economics of Taxation at the Erasmus School of Economics, Erasmus University Rotterdam since 1996. In addition, between 1989 and 2019 he was a director of the Academic Desk at Deloitte Tax Advisors in Rotterdam. Furthermore, he was a professor of Tax Law at the University of Leiden from 1997 until 2002 and a professor at the University of Curacao in 2016-2020. His auxiliary activities consist of being the chief editor- of NTFR-B and of the Pensioenbrief, as well as an annotator and contributor at various tax periodicals. Furthermore, he is (co)author or (co)editor of a number of books and other publications.

Since September 2016, the Dutch Institute for Taxation and Economics (FEI) of the Erasmus University Rotterdam offers a worldwide unique academic course on **Human Resources & Global Mobility** (HR GM). This course has been created together with the Expats Academy. The next edition of this thirteen-month course will be held online and will start in January 2021. Peter Kavelaars is the Academic Director of the HR GM course.

1. You have been involved with the Erasmus University for a long time now, why did you decide to also join the Dutch Institute for Taxation and Economics (FEI)?

This has a reason which is more organizational than substantive. In 2005 the faculty group of Fiscal Economics was moved to FEI. In practice we still spend most of our time organizing the BA and MA in Economics of Taxation at the Erasmus University. In addition, FEI organizes numerous commercial MasterCourses such as HR GM. I personally am associated with the Erasmus School of Economics and with FEI.

2. What exactly does the position of a HR GM professional entail?

Within international companies, foreign employees are often sent to the Netherlands and Dutch employees are often sent abroad. Being posted abroad is an intense experience for the involved employees and their families and requires a solid coordination and planning of many issues. These issues can be personal, professional, relevant to the Netherlands or to the other country involved. They are intensely relevant for the employees and their families and are often complex. The HR GM professional supports and assists their expats with these issues.

3. Why is the HR GM-professional essential for the success of the company?

Every company needs to keep their employees satisfied and well taken care of. The HR GM professional is responsible for the wellbeing of the expats and therefore has an important role. The issues that arise when employees

are expatriated are often complex; the employees will not be able to organize these themselves. If they would be required to do so, unfortunate situations can arise. Either expatriated employees would become unhappy or employees would no longer wish to be sent out. Both these scenarios are harmful to the company, which highlights the importance of the HR GM professional.

4. Which qualities are important for a HR GM professional?

The HR GM professional is responsible for a very broad set of issues, depending on the country involved. In the first place the HR GM professional needs to have good understanding of people and of their nature. More substantively, they have adequate knowledge of foreign cultures, certain elements of the law, international tax law, pensions and social insurances. The HR GM professional has practical skills in issues, e.g. housing and schooling for the children. A good HR GM professional must possess skills and expertise on a wide set of issues, both substantive and practical.

5. What is the biggest challenge in HR GM at the moment?

The biggest challenge now is the corona crisis. This crisis has a great impact on the lives of expats. Amongst other things, the HR GM professional needs even more skills than before. Regulations are changing very rapidly, which makes many things complicated. The knowledge of HR GM professional must stay up to date. This makes this profession quite challenging.

6. The topics of the MasterCourse are given by twelve different lecturers.

What is their background?

The previous part of this interview has made clear that the HR GM professional needs to possess many different skills, both substantive and practical. The teachers have been selected with this in mind. Every lecturer has their own specialization, has many years of practical experience and are fully up to date with the relevant regulations. They work in an environment in which expats play an important role and therefore have an excellent understanding of the employees that a HR GM professional has to support and assist. This is very useful for the students.

7. The MasterCourse has seven different subjects, varying from International Employment Law to Return on Investment. What is your favourite subject within the MasterCourse?

I am a tax specialist and specialized in international tax law and international social insurance law. Of course, these are my favourite subjects.

8. The MasterCourse has an academic level. Why is the academic perspective on Human Resources and Global Mobility important?

This has to do with the application of regulations and the developments thereof. The regulations are complex and will be discussed on a high level

during this MasterCourse. The students therefore need to be able to interact on an academic level.