

Lucas van Wees:

HR needs a voice in Europe and beyond

How is the HR profession developing and what makes a modern HR management? Persorama asked Lucas van Wees, EAPM President.

Persorama : What should EAPM members know about you? Please give us some details from your CV.

Lucas van Wees : The main part of my professional career has been in Corporate life. I've been working for over 30 years in HR, commercial and line jobs at Philips, Shell, KPN and KLM. At KLM I was involved, amongst others, as Vice President HR with post merger processes all over the globe with Air France. Late 2016 I became the Director HRM of the University of Amsterdam, the largest University in the Netherlands. I have a particular interest in the development and the international site of HR.

What interested you in becoming EAPM President?

Leaving the corporate and international role at KLM as well as my Board position of the Dutch Association on HRM and hav-

ing served as Vice President of the EAPM, next to the previous and current Vice President, it made sense to take this step forward. EAPM and our member associations could benefit from this previous experience and insights.

Which projects are you driving?

As President, I hold the overall responsibility to drive our European agenda forward. We have modernized almost all of our internal routines and procedures and we're now ready to focus more on benefits for our members. By means of our four sub-committees, we've developed a number of projects which will deliver tangible results in the coming period. Amongst others our scientific survey will deliver an international survey on relevant topics, our event committee will launch webinars for our members and we're working on an international HR day to celebrate our profession.

What kind of commitment and how much time does your task as EAPM-president require?

In essence it's a commitment for 3 years and will come to an end by late 2020.

I have the honor to chair a Board with 5 dedicated and committed professionals from the UK, Italy, Rumania, Switzerland and Germany supported by a strong secretariat from our German colleagues. Besides the Board meetings itself and our annual Delegates meeting which happily will take place in Luzerne in September 2018, I represent the EAPM in the Board meeting of the WFPMA, the World Federation of Personal Management Associations. The WFPMA represents 600000 HR professionals from 90 national associations worldwide. The EAPM organizes a European Congress every 2 years, last one was held in Paris in October 2017 and the next one will be



Lucas van Wees, EAPM President.

EAPM

The European Association for People Management (EAPM) was founded in 1962. The Association forms an umbrella body of national organisations which represent HR professionals. It is purely professional and specialist in nature. It is an experience exchange organisation without profit-related objectives. It is independent of all employers, trade union, state or political bodies. (www.eapm.org)

in Ljubljana, Slovenia in April 2019. The World HR Congress also takes place every 2 years, next one will be in Chicago in June 2018 where some 16000 participants will be expected. In Chicago the location of the next world HR Congress in 2020 will be launched.

HR Swiss is responsible for EAPM – Treasury in accordance with the Articles of Association – what are the objectives here?

There is and has been a long, strong and fruitful relation with HR Swiss as the EAPM is based on Swiss law since its origin in 1962. Over the years the EAPM has grown rapidly, nowadays as the umbrella organization for 31 national HR Associations representing 250000 HR professionals in Europe.

A reliable and solid financial management is therefore a crucial base to nurture this growth. The EAPM is in good hands with our strong cooperation with HR Swiss and I would like to take the opportunity to thank our Swiss colleagues and in particular Max Becker as an outstanding professional who is and has been important for the EAPM. Late this year Max will step down but we're sure that HR Swiss will propose us a successor who will continue to serve this important work as treasurer and Board Member of the EAPM.

What connects you to Switzerland? How well do you know Switzerland?

I've been living and working in Switzerland for some time. I did an executive MBA at IMD in Lausanne and visited Switzerland for a number of days every year as I was appointed as Lehrbeauftragter at a Swiss University.

What is EAPM's mission to make a difference in terms of HR?

Europe and the HR profession needs a platform in which we can share our national and international best practices, our national associations are also in demand how to further professionalize and communicate their own added value to their members. Finally, Europe has its own perspective on HR and people Management, based on its history and unique place in the world, which needs to be voiced in Europe and beyond. All of these are good reasons for EAPM's existence.

What are your goals as President?

To further grow EAPM and to build on what was done before, to represent EAPM as an important and unique vehicle in support of our member national associations and to communicate and inspire on the challenges of today and tomorrow.

What will the EAPM be like in 2025?

The EAPM in 2025 might have even more member associations as still some European

countries are eager to be part of the European Union. Technology, demographics and geopolitical events will have an ongoing impact on the shape and form of the workplace and people Management. The EAPM and our HR professionals will need to foresee and adapt to these challenges and still needs to be relevant. New questions will be raised and new answers will be needed to support our organizations. As EAPM we can be confident that we can build on a strong base to address these challenges.

How would you outline in a few sentences the job description that makes up a modern HR today?

Modern HR needs to be credible, relevant and with a strong eye for impact.

How do you think the HR profession has changed in recent years? And what training does the HR profession need today in order to meet the requirements of the company and be fit for the future? From service to business function: Is this the way?

The HR profession has changed over the years. The administrative part has been standardized, centralized, automated and in a number of cases outsourced.

In some segments of the higher added services of the value added chain of HR, specialized firms have taken their part and a number of HR models have been put in place in large corporates reducing the number of the more generalist HR roles and bringing more of the HR roles into the business roles.

At the same time, societies and organizations has become more complex and dynamic which has lead to a demand for HR professionals also in smaller organizations. Due to this, the training on HR is changing and needs to change in the future as well.

As much of the business is now getting into service oriented business, intangibles become more important as a competitive advantage between businesses. The need and importance of a solid and meaningful people Management will become even more critical as we will need more and more people who are willing to make 'the extra mile'.

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