



# The 8th Annual International Mobility and Talent Management Conference

## Schloss Herrenhausen

On September 22, 2022, corporate global mobility leaders from throughout Europe convened at Schloss Herrenhausen in Hanover, Germany, for the International Mobility and Talent Management Conference. During the rich exchange and best practice sharing, three distinct themes emerged:

- 1. THE TRANSFORMATION AND MATURATION OF THE ROLE OF GLOBAL MOBILITY**
- 2. HOT-BUTTON TOPICS OF SUSTAINABILITY AND ESG**
- 3. HOW TO BRIDGE GLOBAL MOBILITY WITH TALENT AND THE ENABLEMENT OF A GLOBAL WORKFORCE**

The IMT Conference is the largest conference organized in Germany around the topics of international mobility and talent management. It has been a productive partnership between Allianz, Deloitte, and NetExpat, and once again this year we were pleased to welcome 52 corporations, representing 30% of the DAX, each contributing to the conference content and poll results (read more below).

Thank you again to Airbus, Allianz, Bayer, Continental, Deloitte, NetExpat, RWE, Siemens, and VW for your wonderful content, discussions, and presentations.



Click here for a short taste of our time together.



Sönke Schiricke, Head of Global Mobility Services, Continental AG

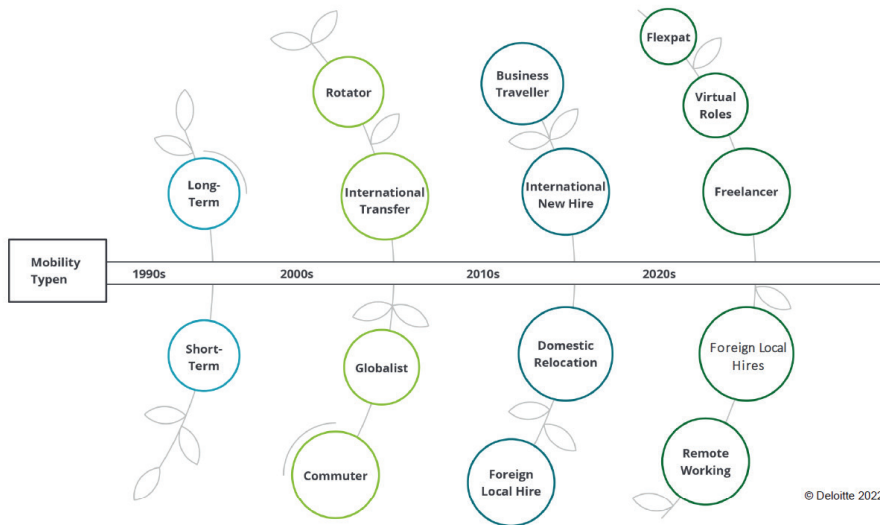
### THE TRANSFORMATION OF GLOBAL MOBILITY – THEN AND NOW

While the origins of global mobility began with the necessity to address essential compliance requirements such as tax and immigration support for employees sent on international

assignments, it has now evolved into a much more strategic function, making global mobility very impactful to the business and global workforce. This focus has moved from efficiency and cost reduction into the realms of talent attraction and retention through positive employee experience. This evolution of global mobility means that the function also requires the ability to see the bigger picture. Global mobility is taking its place among the essential and strategic human resources functions because of its long-term impact on succession plans: Compensation & Benefits, Compliance, Talent Acquisition and Retention. It is no longer just operational but rather an essential part of strategic business planning. This begs the question that is being tackled by many multinational companies: How should global mobility best be organized?



Dr. Winfried Guba, VP Global Advisory Services, Central Europe, NetExpat



“Many factors speak against the mobilization of ‘post-corona-couch-potatoes’ like the family situation, political instability/ protectionism in some countries, pollution, changed working behavior, etc. It is therefore the aim of Global mobility as a strategic function to uncouple the jobs from an employees’ physical presence and to enable a global workforce.”

– Eric Gangney, Head of RWE Global Mobility Hub

Global mobility is taking its place among the essential and strategic human resources functions because of its long-term impact on succession plans: Compensation & Benefits, Compliance, Talent Acquisition and Retention. It is no longer just operational but rather an essential part of strategic business planning. This begs the question that is being tackled by many multinational companies: How should global mobility best be organized? Global mobility no longer means only relocating employees, families, and their households from A to B, but rather now encompasses the International Business Travelers, Cross Border Remote Work, and the cooperation and experience of global teams.

The pandemic has sped up this transition to alternative ways of working and connecting while also helping us recognize that nothing replaces face to face interaction fully. Julian Hansen, Global Assignments Center of Expertise at Volkswagen, revealed that Volkswagen has recently started a pilot phase for hybrid assignments, providing the possibility for employees to partly work from the home location during an assignment. Different stakeholders at Volkswagen view hybrid assignments as a chance to select candidates from an extended talent pool, decrease costs, and provide more flexibility.



Laurenz von Eickstedt, Manager Human Capital, Deloitte

Cross Border Remote Work (CBRW) is one of the very challenging topics facing global mobility given its potential impact on compliance. 66% of corporations have a policy in place with the objective of limiting CBRW. An additional 7% do not allow CBRW in any form. Only 9% are extremely receptive and allow it with few limitations.



Eric Gangney, Head of RWE Global Mobility Hub, RWE AG



Tracy Paech, Head of Cross Border Workforce, Bayer AG





Constantin Betz, Partner Global Employer Services, Deloitte

Constantin Betz, Partner at Deloitte in Germany, highlighted that many companies in Germany are still struggling to operationalize their cross border remote work policy - main reasons being the complexity of compliance issues and stakeholder involvement, along with cultural aspects within the organization. Since March 2022, Continental offers their employees in Germany the opportunity to work 20 days per country in up to two different countries in the EU/EEA and Switzerland per rolling 12-month period. During the first months of 2023, the program is being expanded to Continental employees across all countries of the EU/EEA and Switzerland. The Cross Border Mobile Work Program at Continental, along all other mobility types, is governed under the organizational roof of Global Mobility. Sönke Schiricke, Continental AG Head of Global Mobility Services, and Dr. Christina Keerl, Continental AG Head of Centre of Expertise Global Mobility, explained how the program manages the regulatory requirements within a policy and through a streamlined process.



Tobias Nehls, Head of Global Mobility Management, Siemens AG

## DE&I AND ESG - WHAT DO THESE HAVE TO DO WITH GLOBAL MOBILITY?

At first thought, it may seem that the current “hot-button topics” of Sustainability along with Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion may have little to do with the topic of Global Mobility. However, Tobias Nehls, Siemens AG Head of Global Mobility Management, and Tracy Paech, Bayer AG Head of Cross Border Workforce, both gave sharp insights into the potential of global mobility to positively affect these areas and the need to keep them in focus.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion have been issues when sending employees abroad where they may face different cultural norms and laws that could directly affect themselves and their families. Yes, as discussed above, it also becomes an issue when addressing the strategic function of global mobility. What percentage of women are sent on assignment? Of diverse nationalities? How are they being supported, especially when not part of the majority demographic?

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**“The implementation of diversity, inclusion and environmental sustainability is not a one-time project. They are elements that need to be imprinted on our DNA; they are like new glasses through which we have to look at every project that we undertake in the future – not only in mobility.”**

– Tracy Paech, Bayer AG Head of Cross Border Workforce

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Benoit Pivin, Head of Global Mobility, Airbus SE



Dr. Christina Keerl, Head of Centre of Expertise Global Mobility, Continental AG

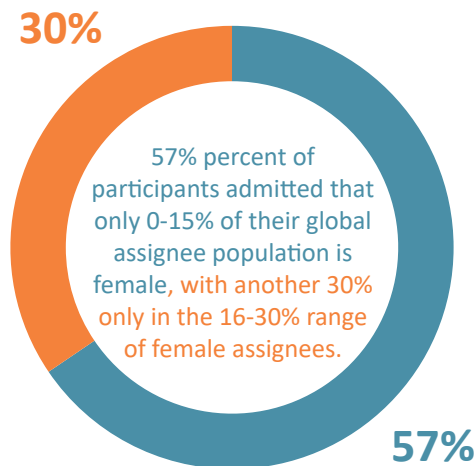


## GLOBAL MOBILITY'S BRIDGE WITH TALENT - ENABLING A GLOBAL WORKFORCE

To segue into Global Mobility's bridge with Talent, Tobias Nehls also reminds us that, "Clever management of international travel in post-covid times also requires a needs-based and effective intercultural preparation."

Global Mobility is tied directly to employee experience and needs to continue to partner with Talent Acquisition and Retention with careful consideration of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. The "War for Talent" is very real and careful consideration of the Employee Experience is how to win it. Ideas for doing so include addressing individual employee concerns prior to assignments and supporting employees and their families through relocation.

Satisfaction surveys and data reporting to measure the success (and costs) are more important than ever to learn about actual employee needs and to arm stakeholders with data to support investments in employee experience.



usual cross-cultural communication problems disappear. On the contrary, an even more acute awareness of diversity, equity and inclusion can inform the necessary cultural sensitivities of cross-border work in any form.

Tobias Nehls from Siemens discussed the obvious ways business travel and relocation impact sustainability and how sensitivity to this is increasingly important to the younger workforce.

The easiest starting point for many companies tackling diversity and inclusion is often to address gender gaps by increasing female representation in not only leadership but in international assignees. The support of this more diverse global workforce also requires a clear examination of benefits and a company's duty of care. As Tracy Paech mentioned above, these issues will only grow in importance and must become a normal consideration in the decision-making process.

Covid taught us that in-person contact is very important to fostering relationships, but we are now better equipped to collaborate virtually. This has a direct and positive environmental impact that matter very much to young talent joining the workforce from Gen Z. Business travel programs can be an essential part of GM, but this does not mean the

**“Failing to address Gen Z's environmental concerns not only puts a company's reputation at risk but also its future workforce.”**

– Tobias Nehls, Siemens AG Head of Global Mobility Management

It is a careful balance that needs to be struck between business needs and environmental concerns when considering travel. The following questions need to be regularly considered: When can virtual connection serve our purposes? When is face to face absolute necessary? Addressing these questions and establishing clarity about them is not only good for sustainability concerns but also contributes to the ESG rating of a company, which is increasingly important in today's business environment. Remaining aware and mindful of these issues is literally good for the bottom line.



Julian Hansen, Tax Advisor Global Assignments Center of Expertise, Volkswagen AG



Global virtual teams and business travel also require intercultural awareness and sensitivity. This is no longer training that should be reserved only for those being relocated but should rather be a regular part of all Learning and Development beginning with the onboarding process. Interfacing with Learning and Development can also help the global workforce, whether being fully relocated internationally or simply working virtually in international. A different type of intercultural learning module is necessary for different populations of employees, including a broader variety of solutions for different target groups, trending toward an ongoing support system to increase overall effectiveness.

“The design of effective intercultural learning solutions nowadays means leveraging the power of social learning, coaching and cognitive neuroscience.”

– Laurette Bennhold-Samaan, NetExpat  
Vice President of Global Advisory and Intercultural Services

From a Learning and Development point-of-view, business travelers should also be considered for intercultural training: with the right preparation and support, these trips are more efficient and more attractive to fully prepared employees. All of this is a win for Talent Management along with Talent Attraction and Retention.



## CONCLUSION

This more mature role of Global Mobility is requiring us to rethink the best models for our Global Mobility Ecosystems. The future will require more impactful Global Mobility departments, able to take the best of their entire eco-system of partners and providers. Shared Services along with both in- and out-sourcing will emerge with increased sophisticated hybrid format to further enhance Global Mobility impact on the entire organizations.

Join the debate and the IMT conference: our mandate is more than ever to stimulate best practices exchange in these very interesting disruptive times to help reshape Global Mobility and International Talent Management.



Alain Verstandig, President, NetExpat



Kai Grossheim, Sale Manager Germany,  
Allianz Partners

