

Margreeth Kloppenburg

In Dutch we have an expression, not too commonly used according to Margreeth Kloppenburg, which is called 'blij ei'.

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One happy little egg

Translated into English, we would probably go with something like 'happy little egg'. Although that sounds a bit like Bob Ross' happy painting. The saying tries to express a kind of naive, very basic happy feeling. Eggs are very much present during these days, with Easter coming up. A Christian holiday that celebrates the belief in the resurrection of Jesus Christ. The whole egg thing is said to be an ancient symbol of new life. Germanic people used to bury eggs into the fields hoping it would help creating big crops. And we still hide them in the garden for our kids to find them. Not sure what we want to create with that these days, except for some fun. Because for most people Easter comes down to painting eggs, having long brunches and listen to Matthew's passion by Bach.

I felt like one happy little egg, because I'm in the middle of interviewing auditors from abroad who have come to work and live in the Netherlands. And their stories really warmed my heart. So, I gathered, this might be a good moment to share what I experienced during these energizing encounters. As we feel somewhat depressed sometimes. Well, at least I do. Not having people around for so long, being unable to visit friends and family, restaurants, museums or concerts and desperately waiting for the Spring sun to come out. We do need our sparkles of joy.

The reason for me interviewing these auditors is that we, as in the Foundation of Professional Honor (Stichting Beroepseer), are writing and editing a PDF especially for auditors from abroad who are coming to work here. Besides these interviews, we'll present facts and figures about the Dutch auditing industry, have essays translated which were previously published in '*Artikel 5, de beroepseer van de accountant*', we describe some background on the history of auditing (yes, Pincoffs, Limperg etc), with the aim to help new auditors feel (even more) welcome here. The PDF will be free of charge and the project itself is financed by the *Accountantsfonds*.

So, what brought this big smile to my face? Well, hearing a lot of positive things about living and working in the Netherlands in a way that was really refreshing. For example, for auditors from abroad we are an English speaking, green, open-minded, and fun country with great art culture and music. A country where most of the auditors decide to stay long term. Defying the weather ("when the sun does shine, make a run for it"), the lack of a decent food culture, especially during lunch in the canteen ("drinking *karnemelk* is pure horror") and of course getting around by bike (a friendship between two foreign auditors started at a biking shop). We also spoke about what it brings to the table working with so many nationalities in a highly international environment, and, very interesting too, what it adds to the holy grail of the profession itself, audit quality, to have such diverse teams. And a lot more of these examples of positive returns.

And it made me realize, aside from this publication which we'll take good care of, that as a community of auditors you might be able to do more to make these auditors from abroad feel welcome. Simply by offering them information in English on developments in the auditing industry so they feel included. And by appreciating, maybe more explicitly,

that they undertake so much effort to come over here and in becoming an RA. For sometimes it means they actually have to study stuff they have already known or studied for many years. Something that is being looked at now by the NBA and the Ministry of Finance.

Borders are shrinking, and the numbers of auditors from abroad are rising. Talented people who bring more perspectives to the table. It's a good time to reach out, connect and welcome them wholeheartedly.

Margreeth Kloppenburg is adviseur voor professionals in onder andere de accountancy. Zij is auteur van 'Artikel 5, de beroepseer van de Accountant'.