

Dear Colleagues, Friends and Family,

Looking back at my career in immigration law, you may say it has been consistent; I established a law firm with three others and stayed with it for over 35 years. Looks pretty classical, quite dull even, at least after a while, not at all the profile of a brilliant legal career in the 21st century. Taking for granted that I was not cradled for any brilliant career, you may wonder what made me take the step back then, what kept me with Everaert, making it grow, leading it along and watching it from now on, as it sails on in the global market of legal services?

Do not worry; I am not taking you on a long exposé of history and motive. I cannot wait to meet and greet you all and have this long awaited drink. You can imagine that I for one do need a drink after the Laudation rendered by Bram. Well then, what was so special for me to hold on to my firm for so long and make it - I must admit - rather hard to let go?

Well let me just say, it was not the brilliant career in law we were after, nor the commercial success we have become after many years of hard work. Yes, we may have achieved some of that, but I believe the cement, the fertilizer of all achievements has been plain and simple professional passion. We were and still are passionate about (the) Rule of Law for migrants and immigrants. This the fundamental choice we made, the following through, the persevering in casework, networking and management. All based on a broad recognition that for ages the Netherlands was shaped and kept alive by immigrants and migrants. For the founders of the firm, it started by taking the stand for the paperless 'Gastarbeiter' and asylum seekers in Amsterdam. Then, we became the first law firm in the country exclusively dealing with immigration and citizenship law. 35 Years later, we offer a full spectrum of immigration-related legal services to private and corporate clients. The business section I set up some 15 years ago has become one of the best in the global market. I am proud of that. However, thanks to our Mission, we have not become a boutique law firm exclusively focusing on legal services to corporate clients. Everaert ranks partners and lawyers who are the finest for family life, adoption, for citizenship, for medical treatment and for refugee status. This firm is a bank of knowledge and expertise in the field of immigration and citizenship law. I am so proud of that.

To my colleagues, partners, lawyers and invaluable staff, both in the business practice and in the private practice, I say; thank you, my friends, for sharing the Mission and keep carrying the torch! Thank you for not taking me too seriously all of the time.

The other outstanding feature of Everaert is our commitment to the rule of law for migrants and immigrants in the International Bar. From the early nineties in the last century, we have set up presided and fostered networks of law firms, in Europe and beyond, seeking exchange and alliance with lawyers of excellence dealing with immigration, migration and citizenship in their own jurisdiction. These lawyers have become dear colleagues and friends working with us in the expert panels at the immigration law conferences of the International Bar Association and the American Immigration Lawyers Association. I must say; working with my colleagues of the International Bar, focusing on the exchange of knowledge and expertise on EU free movement law, has always been a favorite and very inspirational pleasure. I am so happy to see a good number of them have come to this 35th anniversary of my firm. Thank you so much, dear friends, for your being great colleagues through the years and honoring us with your attendance.

Finally, to all gathered here, my family, dear colleagues and friends from the Dutch and the International Bar and from the academic world, I say,

The Rule of Law is simple but not always easily applied and respected by the governments of this world. In the core, the Rule of Law is about fair treatment of all, including the immigrants and the migrants of this world. This simple conviction has been the driving force of my legal career.

Now let us have that drink and bring out a toast to the Good Fortune of Everaert and Fair Treatment of all.

Thank you so much.
Ted L. Badoux