



CERC 2021: THE YEAR IN REVIEW

The year 2021 started out full of promise and hope with the unprecedented development and deployment of COVID -19 vaccines. Sadly, it ended with disappointment as the rapid spread of the Omicron variant brought restrictions on travel, gatherings and even curfews to some regions of Canada.

Once again, the pandemic has brought sadness and loss to the lives of so many people on every continent. For most of us it's been the inconvenience of lockdowns, travel restrictions and limited access to family and friends – minor frustrations in the big picture of life.

And, as if COVID was not enough, millions of people around the globe were impacted by floods, fires and other natural disasters that resulted in loss of life, property, and livelihood.

We witnessed how fragile democracy can be when rioters stormed the U.S. Congress. We also saw how fragile our supply chains are when the Ever Given cargo ship blocked the Suez Canal for six days.

The pandemic has also brought out many qualities in our human spirit including greater resilience and adaptability, attention to our mental health and well being and a desire to collaborate.

There has been a continuum of rapid innovation in the workplace and the mobility industry, with advances in technology and remote work arrangements. We all became very adept with work at home technology and digital meeting platforms to remain connected.

In 2021, although the numbers of relocations were well below pre-COVID levels, the complexities of those moves created many new challenges for mobility professionals. Our industry came together to meet those challenges head on.

Below is a summary of key activities at CERC over the past year.

GOVERNANCE

A major setback was the postponement of the 2021 conference. The pandemic made it impossible to meet in person, but once again our conference planning committee delivered an outstanding online program providing valuable learning opportunities and networking.

CERC recorded a loss on operations of \$38,205 for the year ended May 31, 2021. This loss was directly attributable to reduced conference and membership revenues. In the face of ongoing cutbacks and spending restrictions in the relocation industry 46 new members joined CERC in 2021.

Despite these ongoing challenges, with the support and commitment of a dedicated board of directors and scores of volunteers, we have managed to navigate through this turbulent time.

The board of directors met six times during the year to review and adjust plans resulting from COVID.

At the annual meeting of members in November, four new directors were appointed by the membership. Meet your board members [here](#).

The DEI sub-committee of the board worked to expand communication of CERC's commitment to DEI and developed a survey to gather input from members about their DEI experiences within their respective organizations and in CERC.

RESEARCH

CERC maintained its commitment to providing members with in-depth information to assist in managing global mobility amidst the chaos and complexity of the pandemic. This included a publication of [surveys on remote policies and the impact of work permit delays by Canada's immigration department](#).

In November 2021 the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada ([NSERC](#)) confirmed funding for phase II of a compliance research project in partnership with Seneca, IBM, and CERC. When completed, phase II will provide an accessible web portal that can provide access to up-to-date mobility compliance information from a knowledge-base of documents and links to government regulatory websites, including automated alerts from around the globe when regulatory changes occur.

Articles in *Perspectives Magazine* and 51 virtual learning sessions throughout the year provided members with insights into the management of remote working with a particular focus on the complexities of immigration, employment law and tax compliance.

CERC's [COVID resource page](#) continues to provide ongoing updates on travel restrictions, health guidelines and compliance updates from across the globe.

GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

A major consequence of the pandemic is a labour shortage. Across virtually every sector and region of the country, businesses of all sizes are experiencing labour shortages. Immigration and improved mobility systems that provide efficient and predictable access to international talent are critically important to addressing this problem.

During 2021 CERC met with the Minister(s) of Immigration to share our views and recommendations. [Read more here](#). These recommendations include the implementation of a Trusted Employer Program – which the Liberal Government has committed to do, and the establishment of a Business Advisory Council on Economic Immigration.

We were very pleased with the Canadian Government's decision to grant pathways to permanent residency for temporary foreign workers and international students. This has been a long standing recommendation made by CERC and, in 2021, 401,000 permanent resident approvals were granted.

As we emerge from the pandemic, economic immigration and access to international talent will be vitally important to Canada's economic recovery.

COLLABORATION

CERC continued to serve as a member of the steering committee of the Business Advisory Group on Migration, the private sector network that provides input to the global migration debate taking place across a range of platforms, including at the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD). Read more about the [work of the Advisory Group here](#).

With 325 attendees and 18 speakers from around the globe, the WECAN conference in April, a collaborative project by WorldwideERC, EuRA and CERC was a tremendous success. At the conclusion of the conference the three organizations issued a [declaration](#) committing to collaborate in areas of research, education, and advocacy in our respective countries and through participation in international bodies to make it easier and faster for employers to recruit and deploy international talent.

EDUCATION

Improvements and updating of CERC's professional development program continue. Our strategic partnership with Seneca for delivery of the program has been a success, with improved program administration, enhanced marketing, and content update.

Over 1,200 people have taken the first level of the program since its introduction. Today there are 198 Canadian Employee Relocation Professional (CERP) graduates and 136 Canadian Global Mobility Professional (CGMP) graduates. [Learn more about the program](#).

Although the pandemic prevented us from meeting in person, CERC maintained connection with the membership throughout the year. We hosted 56 virtual events, including member roundtables and webinars, with 1775 attendees. Webinar topics included immigration and tax compliance, remote work policies and economic updates.

Once again, our conference planning committee quickly responded to the restrictions on in-person meetings and pivoted to a virtual conference in September. With 14 sessions, 39 speakers, 10 sponsors 8 exhibitors and 212 delegates the conference was a success, receiving very positive satisfaction ratings from attendees (4.7 out of 5.0). A sincere thanks to all members that attended, to the speakers, and sponsors and exhibitors for making this a successful event.

COMMUNICATION

Throughout the year CERC continued to expand its communications - especially through social media channels and digital platforms.

Over the year we expanded our online presence to build awareness of CERC. We saw an increase of 20% in the number of online followers, and an overall increase in the level of traffic on the CERC website.

We also hosted networking and trivia events throughout the year to help members remain connected.

LOOKING FORWARD

As we enter the early days of 2022, the OMICRON variant has strained health care systems and created chaos across the globe, with work from home, restrictions on travel, and social gatherings the norm in many regions. Let us hope that with the roll out of vaccines life will begin to resume a more normal pattern very soon.

In February the CERC board of directors will meet to review plans for the coming year and take stock of progress made on many of the projects currently in place, including CERC's commitment to building DE&I in our organization and across the mobility community.

With 40 conference submissions received from the membership, plans for an in-person conference in St John's NL. September 11-13, are taking shape. 2022 marks CERC's 40th Anniversary so there will be plenty to celebrate throughout the year and in St. John's in September.

Looking to the year ahead, and as noted in this report, immigration and mobility will continue to play a pivotal role in Canada's future growth. CERC will continue our work with government providing constructive recommendations that enable business to efficiently access international talent.

In the post-COVID world, with talent in such short supply, global mobility professionals and service partners will play a vital role in all aspects of talent recruitment, management, and retention. Whether in person or digitally, CERC will continue to deliver high quality education to members to assist them in meeting this challenge.

We will work to identify opportunities to collectively grow and strengthen the mobility industry by collaborating with our industry partners and like minded organizations once again with a WECAN event planned for the spring.

I would like to extend a special thank you, to our volunteers and partners for their valuable support, to the CERC board members for their guidance, and to our dedicated staff during another very challenging year.

I invite you to participate in one of the many CERC volunteer committees; it's a great way to expand your network and grow your professional career.

From all of us at CERC, our very best wishes for a safe, healthy, and prosperous 2022.



Stephen Cryne, President & CEO
Canadian Employee Relocation Council