

People

Charlie Patrick heads home

5 years of Forensic in CEE



When Charlie Patrick stopped by recently to talk about the end of his tenure at the CEE practice, he tossed three different mobile phones down on the desk in front of him, indicative of the kind of ‘on-the-go’ life Charlie has lived for the last five years.

“I’ve kept them so people in local countries wouldn’t think I’d left,” he explains. Charlie has spent three years working in Hungary, some time in the Czech Republic and most recently been based out of Poland.

But now Charlie isn’t just leaving one country and headed for another in the region. After establishing and heading Forensic here over the last five years, he has decided to return home to the UK. He says he’s leaving for personal reasons. But it seems like he’s just a little ‘burnt out’ from the hectic schedule which has characterised his work.

“It’s a waste of time,” Charlie says of the travelling part of his work in CEE. “Whenever I travel I try to get into the office by 9, instead of getting in by 11, when half the day is gone, which means I have to take the early flight. So it’s quite tiring and inefficient.”

Charlie says he’s worked on over 100 Forensic jobs in CEE over the last five years.

“We had about 35 jobs both this year and last,” he reports. “We’ve made people recognize that this is a profitable service line, so it’s definitely raised awareness. What we’ve failed to do is to get steady teams assembled in the right countries.”

“They weren’t really doing it until I got here,” Charlie says of Forensic for the CEE practice.

“They have a large support network in the UK, and here you do everything by yourself - you don’t have a backup team. Of course you can’t be an expert on everything, so I have relied on UK Forensic for support, and they’ve put people on planes and have helped out in general.”

Before coming to CEE, the only other time Charlie had previously spent abroad was the 18 months he’d spent in Switzerland. Five years ago he was looking for a secondment in either CEE or in France and thought our region might be more fun.

“I was looking for a challenge – something different. I had no preconceived ideas about it at all,” he says of the region. “I had never visited CEE and had no knowledge what it would be like. I did know that the economies here would not be as developed as in the west.”

Little did Charlie know that not only would the economies in CEE sometimes be work in progress, but for a select few places in the region the living conditions could be downright challenging.

For one CEE Forensic job in particular Charlie fondly recalls the time he spent in Kosovo, where, in the dead of winter, he filled the poorly insulated windows of his ice cold hotel room with toilet paper and attempted to warm the place up with a hairdryer.

“It works,” Charlie reports with glee.

“Any other fond memories?” I ask him.

“Well, I’ve only received one death threat in five years,” he states dryly. “I think it was week number two.”

But don’t think we’ve seen the last of Charlie Patrick: he will continue his involvement in three ongoing jobs in CEE, and provide some guidance for his successor.

“I’ll be back,” he jokes.