

# ECN CONFERENCE 2024

## PRESS ARTICLE



Zwolle (NL), 6-7 June 2024 - Last week, more than 130 managers of crematoria and their suppliers gathered in Zwolle (NL) for the annual conference of the European Cremation Network. The conference is the place to be for professionals from the funeral and cremation industry to share knowledge and experiences and to expand their network. For the first time, participants from the US, Canada, Australia and New Zealand were also present. The conference ended with the festive opening of the new premises of Orthometals, the specialist in recycling precious metals after cremation and also host of this year's conference.

The conference covered a wide variety of topics that were highly appreciated by the participants.

The first speaker gave an introduction to some possible tools for crematoria to meet their ESG obligation, say the process by which companies report their sustainability and social responsibility efforts, also known as 'non-financial reporting'. We then humorously explored the question of why everyone always talks about 'communication' but is not always successful in applying it.

With the same critical reflection, we examined why funerals are always organised in the same way. The speaker first elaborated on the power of habit (orthodoxy) which often causes us to limit or close our minds and do things the same way every time, including in funerals. Using some possible innovative suggestions and questions, the speaker pushed for changes that are more in line with the real needs of bereaved families.

A fourth lecture dealt with leadership and creativity. How can we use different styles of leadership to shape creativity to make our organisation resilient and agile? The way we shape leadership and creativity offers opportunities to connect more with employees, customers and suppliers. At the end of the conference, an architect explained a project in which he is transforming existing crematoria, which have been in use for several decades, into contemporary and sustainable buildings in which the experience of the bereaved plays a more important role. In this lecture too, the emphasis was on more customisation for the families and on creating an (immersive) environment that better supports farewell ceremonies.

In other words, it was a successful edition of the ECN Conference, not only because of the varied subjects that were addressed, but also because of the exchange and contacts between the participants.

Orthometals was the perfect host and treated all participants to a great evening party in their brand-new buildings. With this important step for this family-run company, they are ready to support crematoria in recycling their precious metals for decades to come.

The second day of the conference was traditionally taken up by technical visits. Some participants visited two crematoria that focus on alternative fuels and a project to cremate on hydrogen. The other half of the participants visited crematoria where electric furnaces are used.

After this intensive two-day event, all participants returned home satisfied with the great prospect of next year's conference. Next year, we will meet in Athens (Greece) for another fascinating meeting and lot of network possibilities in the historic surroundings of a vibrant city. Make sure you are there next year!

(<https://cremation-network.com/>)