



EUROPEAN FEDERATION OF FUNERAL SERVICES



EFFS Activities Report – 2014

2014 draws to a close....

Looking back on a year filled with activities and events, we'd like to extend our appreciation to all of our members for another harmonious working year and look forward to continuing to move forward on our common goals in 2015.

What happened throughout the year? Following a successful General Assembly in Barcelona to round off 2013, we continued working on our agreed challenges in the New Year.



In March 2014, the Board held its first technically successful virtual Board meeting. Undoubtedly a sign of times that we are more than happy to follow. We also started planning for our General Assembly, for our booth at the BEFA and also launched the funeral icon competition.

Our President, Claus-Dieter Wulf and our Executive Director, Dr. Rolf Lichtner, then participated in the Tanexpo in Bologna, Italy at the end of March along with our Italian members. Successful meetings were held, new contacts made and "old" contacts refreshed.

EFFS had a small booth at the BEFA, one of the largest funeral expos in Europe.



Many EFFS members met up in Düsseldorf, not only on the occasion of the BEFA but also at the FIAT-IFTA world convention, which was held simultaneously. The EFFS as always was represented at all meetings, ensuring close business relationships with other organizations and thereby making sure that we identify synergies and act and react effectively.

The EFFS opened a unique competition to European designers to create an icon to signify the location of a funeral home European wide. The competition was open to anyone and the winning design will be rewarded with € 2,500.

The working committee for the funeral icon competition was overwhelmed at receiving some 70 entries to the competition from all over Europe.





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Although it was not an easy task, the committee has chosen a winner just in time for Christmas.

Congratulations to our winner, who will be announced as soon as he/she has been informed.



One of the common goals of many organizations is the quality of education in our business sector. It was with pleasure that we announced the re-launch of the FuSeMBA (Funeral Services MBA) in October 2014 at our General Assembly. Our special guest, Jaume Massons from the University of Barcelona, gave our membership an in-depth overview of what the FuSeMBA consists of. Pre-enrolment started in November 2014.

The funeral services sector is continuously striving for further excellence and professionalism in our specialized field of business. By enrolling for the FuSeMBA, you can personally contribute to sustaining the quality of our profession in Europe.

Our biggest challenge is still the topic of European repatriation. However, we are happy to report that we have been able to move one step ahead. The German Association of Funeral Directors is a longstanding member of the ZDH (The German Confederation of Skilled Crafts), who are based in Berlin, have a liaison office to the European Union in Brussels. The ZDH liaison office represents the interests of all German skilled crafts sector at European level. We have joined forces with the head of the ZDH liaison office in Brussels and are hence in a position to have them lobby our cause for the funeral profession on a European level.

In September, our Vice President Eduardo Vidal from Spain, represented the EFFS in Panama at the 3rd World Summit of the Funeral Industry. A statement signed by leaders and representatives of our profession is another excellent example of how we can continue to ensure highest professionalism in what we do.





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To commemorate the 20th anniversary of the EFFS, we thought it was appropriate to hold the General Assembly in the country where the EFFS was founded and therefore our members gathered in Vienna. We were pleased to see so many first time visitors to the Assembly and were happy to have so many members from all corners of Europe join us this year.

We started things off the previous day with a very constructive Board meeting.



Board members and guests

Events continued the next day with our General Assembly, where we continued with productive and constructive work with the membership.



From left to right: Christopher Henley, Vice President, Claus-Dieter Wulf, President, Dr. Rolf Lichtner, Executive Director

Incumbent President Claus-Dieter Wulf honoured Eduard Schreiner of Austria at our Annual General Assembly for his longstanding and extraordinary contribution to the funeral profession. We all wish "Edi" the very best for this upcoming retirement.



Claus-Dieter Wulf, President EFFS (left), Eduard Schreiner (right)

Off to Russia! Following our General Assembly, Dr Rolf Lichtner flew to Moscow as one of the keynote speakers at the Necropolis. The Russian Federation share our EFFS goals of working on the solid foundation of European standards and ensuring a high quality of education in our sector.

The exhibition Necropolis-Tanexpo World Russia 2014 was well visited and surpassed our expectations.



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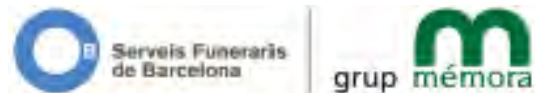


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Cremation Business Exhibition, which is next door at the exhibition center. We were happy to present EFFS' activities and our European standards to these regions and look forward to achieving our common goal of professionalism in our sector, which the Visegrad countries are striving to achieve with our fullest support.



We were most honoured to be invited to a workshop on the topic of ebola by the European Commission for Public Health and Health Threats. Anke Teraa attended for the EFFS and was able to make new contacts which will support us in our communication at European level in the future.



To commemorate the 100th anniversary of our Spanish national association, the association had a wonderful idea of interviewing 100 key people in our profession in 100 days and of course our President, Claus-Dieter Wulf was honoured to be a part of that group.

The interview:

What is the human and social role of your Federation?

The role of the EFFS in this regard is to ensure that funeral professionals in Europe perform their duties honestly and with integrity and dignity.

How could you describe the evolution of the funeral sector in the last decades?



Our EFFS members in the Visegrad region - Slovak Republic, Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland held their FIRST INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON FUNERAL SERVICES IN VISEGRAD REGION on 4 – 6 NOVEMBER 2014 at the EXPO CENTER in TRENČÍN Slovakia.



Ladislav Striz, President Slovakia Funeral Association, (left), Dr. Rolf Lichtner, Executive Director EFFS (right)

As representatives for the EFFS, Dr. Rolf Lichtner and Anke Teraa joined our Visegrad members in Slovakia for this event. It was combined with the 2nd edition of the International Funeral and



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Society is more open for new things, more creative and more tolerant to people with other cultural backgrounds. Funeral rituals are more individual than years ago. Often the rituals include a tribute to the life of the deceased person and members of the family get involved themselves by playing music or painting a picture or decorating some flowers on the coffin. Funeral services have become simpler over the last years. It is a matter of money and also a question of the importance of large public ceremonies. Families in our time prefer more intimate ceremonies within the family and only nearest friends. Certainly this is also often a question of money.

What are the improvements of the funeral sector in the European Union from a legal point of view? We played an instrumental role in achieving a European quality standard for funeral services, the EN 15017, and the Services Directive 2006/123/EC facilitating cross border provision and receipt of services came into effect in 2006.



Do you think that death is still a taboo? To a certain extent yes it is still a taboo. In the last decade, i.e. 2000 to 2010, the taboo on death was revived for a short time but in this decade it is becoming more and more clear and accepted in our culture that death is a part of life.

Could you value the evolution of the Funeral Services of Barcelona now that celebrates the first 100 years of existence?

When it started out, Funeral Services of Barcelona was state-run but following the partial privatization, we have been able to observe that the individuality in funeral services has increased, which has a positive impact for the bereaved. Furthermore, your Funeral Museum in Barcelona greatly contributes to the preservation of funeral heritage.

As a German, what are the main differences between your country and our country in the way you deal with the death, rituals...?

I believe both Germany and Spain deal with death and burial rituals in a similar way. Although our younger generations are more open for new things, the majority pay special attention to upholding traditions passed on through generations.

Is cremation the dominant way of getting rid of a corpse? Why do you think people choose it instead of the traditional burials?

In some European capital cities we now have a cremation rate of over 70 percent. Often this depends also on the religious structure of a society. Sometimes there is also the reason that in a rural area outside of a capital city, there is no crematoria and therefore burials are the normal and only possible forms for funeral services. Several factors have an impact on which type of burial to choose, amongst others rituals and tradition, finances or religion.

Why don't exist borders in Europe for the people alive and instead they exist for the death people? Unfortunately politicians and current legislation law no longer classifies a deceased person as a living person and as such is treated as property and not as a person. The reason behind these politics is something that I personally am not able to answer but I can assure that the EFFS is working on changing this as a priority.

What is the main goal of the EFFS for the next 20 years?

The EFFS wishes to continue to ensure a professional, qualified and most importantly a dignified and ethical handling and interaction of



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all funeral services throughout Europe. A European regulation for repatriation of the deceased continues to be our short-term goal so that future generations are not facing the same challenges we have today.

A personal question, do you fear death?
Personally I don't fear death and am trying to live life to the fullest before that happens.

Last but certainly not least, our Treasurer Dr. Petr Rambousek spoke at the opening ceremony of this year's Memento Expo in Posen in Poland.



That brings our year to a close. Remember that you can access more details to activities, minutes of meetings, special reports on our website www.effs.eu.

Don't forget to mark your calendars for our 2015 General Assembly which will be held in Milano, Italy in September 2015. The World Expo and the 50th anniversary of our Italian Funeral Association Feniof, is something we are already looking forward to. Dates and timing will be provided in due course.

On a final note, on behalf of the EFFS Presidency and Board, allow me to wish you, your families and loved ones a peaceful and joyous holiday season. Merry Christmas and a very Happy New Year. We look forward to seeing you all in 2015!



Anke Teraa / December 2014