

SUPPLEMENTARY HUMAN DIMENSION MEETING ON FREEDOM OF RELIGION OR  
BELIEF

Session III

*Intervention of the European Humanist Federation*

Mr. Chairman,

As far as cemeteries are concerned I just wish to point out an emerging trend which accommodates the wishes of a growing multi-cultural population as well as an increasing number of humanist or civil funerals. In some countries like Belgium cemeteries tend to have secular sections and sections for religions other than the Roman Catholic one, whereas in many other countries, we see a growing number of so-called “religion-neutral” burial grounds, that is places designated for funerals (whether burials or cremations) where religious symbols can be either removed or covered for non-Christian ceremonies. In the UK “eco-burials” or “green burial grounds” are having an increased popularity.

Besides, in a number of countries, like Iceland for example, old laws banning the spreading of ashes have been liberalized or repealed altogether which further confirms the trend to secularisation.

As for places of worship in public structures, some airports have changed their Christian chapel in non-specific chapels suitable for most if not all people to use. Others, as well as a few stations, have general purpose quiet rooms. The Brussels airport is the first to offer the services of a humanist moral assistant alongside those of the chaplain.

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