

AMERSFOORT

'Stakeholders working well together'

Gijs Verbeek is Executive Director of the MPI

Netherlands Chapter. On 29 and 30 March, he organised, along with a team of MPI volunteers and Amersfoort 'standard bearer' Jeannette van Namen, the annual MPI NL Conference in the Rijtuigenloods in Amersfoort. The event was attended by over 250 industry professionals: planners, conference organisers, event agencies, suppliers, hoteliers, venues and exhibitors.



"What is central to conferences and events? The individual! The theme of the MPI NL Conference was 'Evenemens' ['event human'] and was about the importance of live encounters in the world of social media, online marketing and digitisation. Sometimes we forget that live encounters still yield the best results. Given the fact that Amersfoort is the centre of the Netherlands, and because the Amersfoort region, thanks to the Citymarketing Region Amersfoort Foundation, is perfectly equipped to host national and international conferences, it was logical to host the inspiration conference for the Dutch event industry there. The appreciation of the participants was great. Amersfoort has much to offer: stakeholders working well together, good accessibility, a beautiful historical and compact city centre, many extraordinary accommodations, museums, festivals; in short, everything that a participant or organiser could wish for."

'The beating heart of the Netherlands when it comes to IT innovation'

Gabriella Meijnckens is Manager Marketing & Events Business Media at

IDG Nederland. IDG is the leading publisher in

the field of ICT in the Netherlands. In Amersfoort, on 24 September 2015, she is organising the third edition of IT Innovation Day in 'De Nieuwe Stad' as part of the IT Innovation Week. The event will attract between 500 and 600 visitors, all of them IT decision makers from Dutch top companies (CIOs, CMOs, IT directors, senior IT management).

"IT and digitization are drastically changing the world. Business models, businesses and functions are subject to constant transformation. Is the Netherlands ready for the digital future of tomorrow? That is what this event is all about. Innovation Day is an inspiring meeting with interesting examples of innovative IT applications. The day will demonstrate the importance of IT Innovation for the Netherlands, the business community and the labour market. Why Amersfoort as the location? The city is centrally located in the Netherlands and is easily accessible. But that's not all. The municipality namely presents itself explicitly as the beating heart of the Netherlands when it comes to IT innovation and has established itself as a strategic partner to the event.

As the organising party, we are obviously very happy about this."



AMERSFOORT

NETWORKING IN AN HISTORIC SETTING

Amersfoort offers the unique combination of an historic city and a modern, vibrant network economy. The only true centre of the Netherlands is increasingly demanding its position as a central meeting place.

“We have a beautiful city with a historic centre, but also modern museums, fantastic art and culture, lots of water - lakes, rivers, ponds and even canals - and a huge variety of landscapes in the region within a relatively small area.” The enthusiasm that Jeannette van Namen has for 'her' Amersfoort is contagious. And to think that this Professional Congress Organiser was neither born nor raised here. With her company, JVN Congress Management, she settled in the city a decade ago.

“From my long years of experience, I know how important it is that a meeting takes place at an inspiring location in a

fascinating city. I can assure you from personal experience that Amersfoort is an extraordinary city that has tremendous added value for all types of meetings.”

Pampered conference participant

“Amersfoort is a city with a human dimension, a lot of it is within walking distance,” she continues. “The city has a varied night life, festivals, modern and classical concerts, theatre, a great variety of culture and fantastic restaurants with cuisines from all over the world. That makes it pleasant for conference participants to plot their own route, next to or alongside of the official conference programme. In short, there is a lot to enjoy, even for the most pampered conference participant.”

Amersfoort is the only city that can actually invoke the fact that it is centrally located. The historic medieval 'Onze Lieve Vrouwetoren' - at 98 meters, the third highest church tower in the Netherlands - is the geographical centre of the country. This is more than a fun fact to know, because it makes the city, as the central hub, easily accessible. Thus, Amersfoort is also directly connected by rail to many places, including Schiphol Airport (45 minutes), Amsterdam, Rotterdam, The Hague, Groningen and Berlin. The city is

also easy to reach by car, thanks to the nearby A1, A28 and A12 motorways. In the city, transportation by boat, coach, bicycle or tuktuk are fun and efficient options, says Van Namen by way of a good tip.

Modern network economy

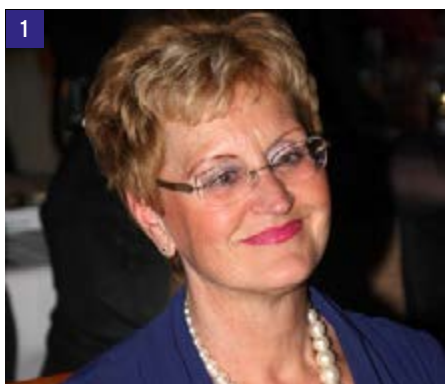
In Amersfoort, history and the modern network economy come together. The city received city rights in the year 1259 and has a beautifully preserved historic centre with no fewer than 650 monuments. The medieval streets, canals, bridges and city gates are remarkably well preserved and give the city a special atmosphere; as if time had stood still. On the other hand, a vibrant network economy has developed. From the centre of the Netherlands, the established organisations and businesses serve the entire country and they often also operate worldwide. For example, Amersfoort has the most German subsidiaries and sister companies in the Netherlands. Areas in which the region excels are: business services, ICT, architectural and technical design, management consulting, health-care and sustainability.

Numerous national and international knowledge institutes, industry associations and NGOs have established themselves in the region in recent years. Also, such medical organisations as the Lung Fund, the Gastrointestinal Foundation, Alzheimer's's Netherlands, the Diabetes Foundation, the CliniClowns and Ronald

FACTS & FIGURES

- Within 45 minutes from Amsterdam Schiphol Airport
- 1.2 million visitors per year
- 650 monuments
- Largest auditorium De Rijtuigenloods with 1.200 seats
- 1,244 hotel rooms available

<http://ow.ly/MrsjL>



1. PCO Jeannette van Namen: 'There is a lot to enjoy, even for the most pampered conference participant.'
2. The historic medieval 'Onze Lieve Vrouwetoren' is the geographical centre of the Netherlands.
3. There are various industrial sites such as the Rijtuigenloods

McDonald Foundation have found their home base in Amersfoort. National and international companies, such as FrieslandCampina dairy and Royal Haskoning/DHV (engineering and project management consultancy) have their headquarters here.

Industrial venues

The city is home to thousands of freelancers who work for all these organisations, institutions and companies. The economy of Amersfoort anno 2015 is also typical of the current network generation. Since 1970, the population has doubled from 75,000 to 150,000. Among them are many highly-educated young people. They are attracted to Amersfoort because of the dynamics of this growing city combined with the pleasant living environment. In addition to employment growth, the companies and institutions in the Amersfoort region ensure a strong growth in the number of professional knowledge and networking events in the region. The result is that, in recent years, various meeting locations have been added. These often authentic buildings are currently available for a wide variety of business events.

The Rijtuigenloods

Thus, right next to the train station in the city centre, we can find the characteristic coach workshop which has been preserved and has now been made suitable for the reception of conventions and events. This was the place where, historically, trains were built and maintained. In this area, there are various industrial sites such as the Rijtuigenloods, the Veenmederij and the Centraal Ketelhuis [Central Boilerhouse], which can be used individually and in combination with each other.

The Rijtuigenloods, for example, is suitable for conferences of 200 to 2,000 people. Here, events are organised ranging from conferences for ministries and other government organisations and trade fairs and festivals for large companies. The location has 3,000 m² and that can be flexibly divided, with 15 smaller rooms. For discussion sessions and workshops, several historic train cars offer an original setting. The location has high-quality catering options, modern facilities and high-quality technical facilities in all areas. The partially glass roof provides ample use of daylight. It is also possible to dim

the roof with the push of a button.

In addition, the location is Green Key Gold certified, which ensures compliance with the most stringent requirements in terms of sustainability.

Several new Hotels

The number of hotel beds in the region has been greatly increased in recent years. Several new hotels have been built, such as the modern Van der Valk Hotel Amersfoort on the A1 motorway, the NH Hotel Amersfoort and the Mercure Hotel Amersfoort Centre in the city centre. Many existing hotels have significantly increased their capacity. Examples include the Conference Hotel Kontakt der Continenten and the estate, Landgoed ISVW. The acronym ISVW stands for International School of Philosophy. This estate, situated on six hectares of private woodland, celebrates its 100th anniversary in 2016.

Cityhosts

PCO Jeannette van Namen has one last tip. "We have the Cityhosts here, our living business cards, who are provided free of charge by local entrepreneurs. These are the ambassadors for the city of Amersfoort. They give groups, among other things, a warm welcome, tell them something about the city, arrange arrival and departure points, share information about Amersfoort and act as resource persons." ■