

PRESS RELEASE



DIGITALIZATION DOMINATES THE HOTEL BUSINESS

The impressive impact of digitalization and the use of smart data to improve business were discussed at the 45th EHMA Annual General Meeting in Marbella



**45th Annual General Meeting
SMART DATA FOR LUXURY DESTINATIONS**

The Organizing Committee together with EHMA President Hans E. Koch

The exponential development of the digital world and the importance to utilize smart data to increase business were the theme of the 45th Annual General Assembly of the European Hotel Managers Association (EHMA) that took place in the famous Spanish tourist destination of Marbella from March 16th to 18th, 2018. Two awards were presented at the closing gala dinner: Hans J. Kauschke, General Manager of the Steigenberger Grandhotel Handelshof, Leipzig, Germany, was elected Hotel Manager of the Year 2017 and Robert Herr, General Manager Bürgenstock Resort Lake Lucerne, Switzerland, was the winner of the EHMA Sustainability Award by Diversey.

The event was organized by a Committee composed of Manuel Otero, EHMA Spain National Delegate; Rocío Galán Pérez, General Manager Gran Meliá Don Pepe; René Zimmer, General Manager Finca Cortesin Hotel, Golf & Spa; Jorge Manzur, General Manager of Puente Romano Beach & Resort. The Gran Meliá Don Pepe and the Hotel Puente Romano Beach & Resort hosted the event.

THE HIGHLIGHTS OF THE MEETING

The official welcome on Friday March 16th was given by Count Rudolf von Schönburg, better known as Conde Rudi, an iconic figure in Marbella and former member of EHMA, who launched the famous Marbella Club; Susana Ibáñez, General Secretary for Tourism; and Kika Caracuel, Vice President of the Diputación de Málaga.

During the General Assembly 10 new members were announced, three of whom won a Professional Development Program course at Cornell University in Ithaca (USA). The lucky

winners are: Michel Wittwer, Hyatt Regency Paris Charles de Gaulle, France; Ernesto Noschese, UNA Hotel Rome & UNA Hotel Naples, Italy; Eduardo Manero, Royal Plaza, Ibiza, Spain. **École Hôtelière de Lausanne** represented by Valérie de Corte, Alumni & Industry Relations Director offered two courses: the Executive Education Module to Valentino Piazzzi, Hotel Regina, Paris, and the Women & Leadership in the 21st Century Module to Rocío Galán Pérez, Gran Melía Don Pepe, Marbella.

EHMA is very much concerned with Social Responsibility and has started a collaboration in September 2017 with **AIPD (Italian Association Persons with Down Syndrome)**. The National Coordinator, **Anna Contardi**, presented to the assembly "**The Valueable Network**", a project funded by the European Commission whose objective is the **professional inclusion of people with intellectual disabilities in the hospitality sector**.

This year's innovation was represented by the **Young EHMA Project**, which is the result of the Association's need and desire to open up to the younger generation and to aspiring future leaders in the hospitality sector. The project is a yearly incentive for deserving employees from EHMA members hotels to participate at the annual conference. The group composed by 10 young hoteliers joined a separate educational session in line with the topic of the conference – that took place at Melia Don Pepe at the same time as the General Assembly – conducted by Ian Millar, Project Manager METRO Innovation Chair and Senior Lecturer at EHL, and the educational program on Saturday. **This first group is the nucleus of Young EHMA and hopefully they will become members one day.**

A sparkling and typical **Welcome Cocktail** at the Gran Meliá Don Pepe closed the first day.

The Educational Day on March 17th was focused on digitalization and its effects on the hotel business.

The keynote speaker was Dietmar Dahmen, one of the leading experts in business innovation, trends and technologies of the future. His dynamic and motivating presentation highlighted the need to adapt to an ever-changing digital environment. He explained that the key words are: **simplicity** in using Internet in the easiest possible way; **speed** in the reaction time since processes are faster and faster; **connectivity** because companies will either create or join platforms with unlimited growth and become search engine themselves thus owing information and data; **experience** that hotels have to offer in order to make fans out of customers through individual unique selling propositions.

The need to **find talents to employ** in an industry that is estimated to have **a growth of 3% in the next 10 years** concentrated mainly in the US and Europe was explained by **Carlos Díez de la Lastra**, CEO of Les Roches Marbella, part of the global network of Les Roches International School of Hotel Management.

The UNWTO (**United Nations World Tourism Organization**) identifies the Silk Road concept as one of the most important emerging tourist brands in the world, and **Kurtz Grösch**, CEO Silk Road Experience Group, advised that the hotel sector could and should consider this project as an **opportunity to participate in the development of the brand with themed hotels**.

José Maria Gonzales presented Brainn, a total talent system that provides **an innovative model to evaluate the potential** of an employee or a department. Brainn simplifies the process and provides a tool of assessment as well as development actions.

Alexis Darphin explained **Beekeeper, the new internal communication tool of EHMA**, an app connecting all EHMA members in real time through mobile devices or laptop to streamline communication.

Technological trends and the coming future were the subject presented by **Álvaro Carrillo de Albornoz**, General Director of IT Hotel Technological Institute. According to several studies, in 2020 **each of us will have between 5 and 8 “things” connected to Internet** that will interact with each other and generate information among them: devices, wearables, household appliances, cars, epidermal chip etc. These technologies will impact on the behaviour of individuals making it a necessary point for the hotel industry to carefully look at by employing **digital marketing and customized services**.

HOTREC is the voice of the Hospitality Industry at EU level and president **Susanne Kraus-Winkler** briefed the audience on the latest news of the Association. The remarkable growth of European inbound tourism was coupled with the changes in the hospitality world. **We are faced today with challenges** like sharing economy, digitalization of distribution and communication as well as of operational processes, over tourism in some destinations, a dramatic lack of skilled labour, transparency and political changes and security challenges in some areas. All these issues require **common solutions, and intensive cooperation** is needed to manage the future of the industry.

Ramón Estalella, General Secretary CEHAT, based its presentation on studies carried out by Instituto de Impresa (IE) Business School, the so called Premium Travel Barometer, that spotlights **the essential nature of innovation**. Luxury tourism undergoes an evolution. There is a tendency towards **personalization of services** which is becoming increasingly important, new concepts in the fields of catering, customer loyalty, quality of food service management, high connectivity, and the change of the concept of mass marketing to specialized marketing.

Standards matter. **Maricruz Cádiz**, Technical Director of the Spanish Institute for Tourist Quality, spoke about the **ongoing ISO project** concerning accommodation conducted by the Technical Committee responsible for **developing internationally accepted standards**.

What can the cleaning industry do for the hospitality world? **Rafael Echevarría**, VP Global Corporate Communication at Diversey, explained that the company's mission is to protect people and care for them and the environment on a daily basis for sustainable success by pioneering future focused **cleaning and hygiene technologies** through strategic pillars such as social responsibility, resource efficiency and value creation. To achieve its mission, **Diversey has created “Internet of clean”**, a platform that unites products, data and services to boost productivity and profitability in the cleaning operations through asset visibility, predictive analysis, remote monitoring and value reporting.

What can be expected in the next years from a technology perspective? **José Luis Calvo Salanova**, Cognitive Computing Director Sngular, highlighted **4 technologies**: Artificial Intelligence as the main driver, Virtual Reality, the Internet of Things and Blockchain as the most promising technologies for the next years and potentially able to impact the industry. Hoteliers should consequently be prepared to **accelerate their innovation pace**, which means to start to experiment fast in a cheap way and to learn from it.

The member of the Italian Chapter **Palmiro Noschese**, Managing Director Italy Meliá Hotels International, presented the project on **Certification of the Hotel Manager** in order to evaluate its feasibility at European level.

A panel on Smart Data closed the Educational Day. The subject was debated among Peter Agel, Global Segment Leader Hotels Oracle Hospitality, Piotr Lipiec, Senior Business Development Manager Hotel TV Europe and Dietmar Dahmen. The moderator was Rebeca J.Cirujano, Spanish journalist, coach and presenter. In recent years, companies have **accumulated through**

digitalization a large amount of "Big Data", which need to be interpreted and appropriately used - thus becoming **"Smart Data"**.

Many sponsors have participated making possible the organization of the event. The business lunch was dedicated to them and **President Hans E. Koch** on the occasion thanked all supporting companies and their representatives.

On Saturday **the accompanying persons visited old Marbella**, a city that boasts a significant archaeological heritage, many museums and the beautiful Plaza de los Naranjos, an example of Castilian Renaissance design.

The conclusive **Cocktail & Gala Dinner was held at the Hotel Puente Romano**, during which the two prestigious Awards of **"Hotel Manager of the Year 2017"** and **"EHMA Sustainability Award by Diversey 2018"** were presented by EHMA President Hans E. Koch.

THE HOSTING HOTELS

In the heart of the Costa del Sol, at the foot of the Sierra Blanca, the **Gran Meliá Don Pepe Hotel** has many advantages: a **seafront location** near the historic center of Marbella, luxurious and comfortable spaces in contemporary style, excellent quality of services. It also offers sea-view rooms, various restaurants; pools, playground, two tennis and two paddle courts, 12 meeting rooms with a maximum capacity for 350 people. It also features an **exclusive Spa by Clarins** with a menu of exceptionally effective treatments and a Smart Life Clinic.

Hotel Puente Romano is 4-minute walk from the beach, with a **fantastic atmosphere**, where guests can pamper themselves in the Spa, have a drink in the open courtyard or in the pool bar, stroll through the lush gardens, play tennis and eat in **11 different restaurants, one of which, led by Spanish chef Dani Garcia, boasts 2 Michelin stars**, or enjoy the Nightclub. The rate also includes 1 green fee per person per stay, to be used at the Marbella Club Golf Resort. Among the many diversions there is a kids' club and yoga and pilates classes for adults.

EHMA in brief

EHMA was **founded in Rome in 1974** by a small group of top quality hotel properties general managers of the Italian capital. The European Hotel Managers Association aims **to improve qualification of professionals** through training in view of increasing the standards of services to be provided to guests. At present the Association gathers more than **400 members**, many of whom are **general managers** of the most prestigious hotels in **29 countries** that make a total of **300 represented hotels, 80,000 rooms, and 62,000 employees**. EHMA admission requires a **minimum of ten-year experience in the hotel sector**. Members meet once a year to discuss about shared themes such as: new technologies, trends, issues, relations, European hotel data and market search. **Next annual General Meeting will be held in Paris in 2019 from . to 15 to 17 February.**

EHMA SECRETARIAT

c/o Hotel Quirinale, Via Nazionale 7, 00184 Rome, Italy

Tel. +39.06. 47824556, fax +39.06.4788.0826

e-mail: secretariat.ehma@ehma.com

www.ehma.com - www.ehma-italia.it



PRESS OFFICE: Marina Tavalato, Rome, Italy

Tel. +39.06.822.940, Mobile +39.333.1299.646

e-mail: martav@rmnet.it – www.marinatavalato.com