

PRESIDENT REPORT VIENNA 2012

Formally opening EHMA's 39th annual General Meeting, President Peter Bierwirth warmly welcomes all participants, and before presenting his report, asks the audience to stand up and honour the memory of the 5 members who sadly passed away in 2011 with one minute of silence:

- **Adamo BUSELLI, Meritorious member in Italy since 1974**
- **Lucien CHAPAT, Meritorious member in France since 1981**
- **Georges HANGARTNER, Meritorious member in Switzerland since 1982**
- **Antonio LOPERA, Meritorious member in Spain since 1987**
- **Heinz ZELLERMEYER, Meritorious member in Germany since 1983**

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Dear EHMA members, Ladies and Gentlemen, dear Friends,

For the second time I have the honour to present the President's annual Report:

First of all I would like to congratulate the Organizing Committee on the outstanding organization. Thank you so much Verena and Kurt and the whole team. My thanks go also to Michel Fernet, our First Vice President who has helped the organizers with engagement and dedication.

This year, as you know, the theme of our conference is "**The Hotel of the Future**". We have indeed to look ahead to the years to come. Never before in history change came so fast and so radically. **Technology** created and still creates unprecedented wealth – and poverty at the same time. **Globalization**, worldwide travel and instant distribution of news shake the foundations of our society, understanding of **ethnic differences** and beliefs become a must for everyone dealing with people. Hotels are built with rooms one thousand meters above ground (**Dubai**) and swimming pools are built 60 or so floors up in the sky – overlooking **Singapore**. New materials are tested to create rooms with a **view – without windows**, etc.

Hoteliers of tomorrow will no longer sell rooms – they will sell **experiences**, fun, pleasure. We will have to be prepared for the future. If we (in Europe) want to stay attractive for the rest of the world, we need to adapt – we need to change with the times.

*« Plus ça change – plus ça reste la même chose. » This epigram of **Jean-Baptiste Alphonse Karr of 1849**, has conserved its actuality ever since. One could also say: if you want to stay the same, you need to change with the times.*

Good to know that quality will always remain – and there will always be people who will pay for quality. For quality of goods, of services, of security and for true hospitality: the aim of EHMA.

The Management Council has met three times during 2011, in St. Petersburg on the occasion of our General Assembly, in Vienna in July and in Paris mid November. The executive committee met in conjunction with the Board meetings and my thanks go to our colleagues in these cities who have organized and hosted the meetings: Yulia **Pashkovskay** together with Leon **Larkin** in St. P., Sonja **Bohrer**, Elisabeth **Perwanger** and Verena **Forstinger** in Vienna and Francois **Delahaye** in Paris.

Major issues have been addressed during the course of 2011 and are still ongoing this year:

- **Report and evaluation (conclusions)** on the 38th General Meeting in St. Petersburg 2011 which was an amazing success due to outstanding efforts of a dedicated team. Let me take this opportunity to again congratulate Yulia Pashkovskaya!
- **Organization** for the present General Meeting in Vienna, its program, events, speakers, panels, sponsorings and exhibition, pre- and post convention travel, etc.
- **Supporting partners:** this is one point holding great importance on the agenda of the Board meetings each time. We are grateful to EHMA's traditional supporting partners, who despite difficult times have been continuing to support our Association enabling us to put together another high calibre annual General Meeting. Improving our attractiveness for sponsors has never been more obvious than these two last AGMs. Your president in close cooperation with the First VP have developed new ideas which shall be scientifically surveyed and tested by students of the EHL who graciously offered their services.
- **EHMA Awards:**
 1. Tonight during the Gala Dinner the **"EHMA Hotel Manager of the Year 2011"** will be announced. As you know this important award goes to a General Manager for his/her outstanding professional work accomplished during the year.
 2. I am very proud of a new prize called the **"EHMA Sustainability award by Diversey"**: this special award is destined for a General Manager who has been successful in ecology matters and sustainability issues. We all know that sustainability has become increasingly important for hotels – in particular for resort hotels: a perfect topic for Hotels of the Future.
We were very pleased having received several candidatures which have been submitted to a jury composed of EHMA Treasurer **Johanna Fragano**, **Ed Roberts** European Sustainability Leader at Diversey and **Arjan van Rheede**, Hotelschool The Hague – who after a thorough discussion have chosen the worthy winner who will also be awarded during the Gala at the Hofburg Palace.
- **Membership:** As you have seen on the Membership Situation list which you all have previously received, during the last years the number of members has slightly decreased. Over the past five years our membership decreased by 20. Several members resigned – others were dismissed for non activity and/or no payment of their fees.
Needless to say your help in recruiting new qualified members is more than welcome!
- **Relationship with Hotel Schools** : EHMA is very proud to continue the collaboration with leading hotel universities such as EHL Lausanne, Cornell University, Stenden and Glion.
The **University Day** has been as a matter of fact again organized in collaboration with EHL and I would like to thank for their participation **Dr Ray Junius**, responsible for alumnin and external relations, who has moderated yesterday's very interesting panel discussion, **Professors Ian Millar and Horatiu Tudori**.

Great thanks also to **Tom Kline** and **Dr. Bill Carrol** from Cornell University that continue to support EHMA. This time with our keynote speaker and in sponsoring for our new members three PDP (Professional Development programme) in Ithaca New York.

We are pleased that **Stenden University** has again published a booklet on profiles of well known hoteliers which will be presented by Prof **Craig Thompson** later on.

Also, as you know, EHMA collaborates with EHL and Glion by assigning an annual award to particularly deserving students.

The winning student of the “**EHMA Nadio Benedetti award**” at the **Glion** Institute of Higher Education is currently undertaking the internship foreseen at **Hilton Buenavista Toledo**. Let me take this opportunity to thank the General Manager **Andres Cheminade** for his support!

- **Special relationship with HOTREC:** EHMA is strengthening its ties with Hotrec, joining forces in issues of common interest. Your president was invited to present EHMA and its aims and discuss major professional issues at the occasion of Hotrec’s AGM in Copenhagen in November. We found out that there are many common interests that we could fight on a European level against increasing bureaucracy and ‘mushrooming’ costly regulations. President **Kent Nystrom** cannot be with us this year; he sends his best regards and we look forward welcoming him next year in Milan.
- Your president actively participated in some other professional events, i.e. as a speaker at the Vienna **Hotel Investment Club**, as moderator at a **Hotel Forum** with MEP in Dortmund, as key note speaker for the **European Hospitality Award**, London and as participant in London’s **WTA** and at **IHIF** Berlin.
- **Special relationship with GKIA:** EHMA is very happy to collaborate with “Golden Key International Alliance” a Chinese service and network association of hotel activities, properties and services which is represented today by its **founder President John Sun Dong**, its **CEO David Wu** and European VP **Aldo Giacomello**. Founded in 2003 in Guangzhou, it has over 200 members worldwide, united under the Golden Key International Alliance brand, with its own standards of quality and common aims of customer satisfaction. The Alliance provides their members with a wide interactive platform of cooperation, assistance and an efficient network in China and internationally. You have heard much more about GKIA from David Wu yesterday. Your president and VP were invited last year to their AGM to **Hailaer in Inner Mongolia** and Michel Fernet took part as guest of honour at this impressive event. Your president sent a video address, Michel Fernet held a speech on Marketing followed by intensive publicity in the media. With our assistance GKIA is about to found a AHMA as a pendant to Europe
- **Finance** : One of the main priorities in 2011 was the accounting and auditing of the association being handled efficiently, professionally and correctly thanks to our dedicated treasurer **Johanna Fragano** and to Studio Pedrotti. (Special thanks)
- **Organization/Future of the Association** Some Statute amendment proposals have been put forward and already examined by the Management Council. Later on during our Extraordinary General meeting you will be asked to vote for final approval by completing your ballot cards. Long discussions took place in regard to the status and importance of active membership whereby the changing situations as to the scope of work of hotel managers will have to be taken into consideration. The Executive Committee and Management Council will continue to exchange views and ideas to defend the spirit of EHMA and at the same time facing realities of a changing business life of hoteliers.

In cooperation with **EHL Lausanne** studies shortly will take place with a team of EHL students to elaborate a new strategy of collaboration between EHL and EHMA for the organization of **University Day and Educational Day** in order to gain more time and optimize professional contributions similar to other international conferences (i.e. IHIF) and at the same time secure more long term sponsors. Another objective will be to get more PR and gain new members. This study is fully sponsored by EHL and will be made available to us at no cost.

- **IMAGE:**

The official EHMA website now contains more interesting and useful information: links to our supporting partners, affiliates, brief reports and photographs on meetings held in the various chapters and by your Management Council, as well as Hotel School Awards, Membership List, and Career file opportunities. Since January 2011 we have a **bimonthly newsletter** to keep you informed and also to stimulate the EHMA Family feeling.

We welcome the individual national EHMA websites of **Italy, Greece and Germany**. Here we conduct surveys, exchange news, post pictures and check job opportunities – also linking with facebook. Other national delegations are welcome to follow suit.

Your president is also writing monthly articles in the German '**Top Hotel**' magazine and in **Hotel Management International (HMI)**, London and occasionally for the French **Cleverdis** and for the **SBID / Society of British Interior Design**.

I would like to remind you that 10 pages in **HMI** p.a. can be used by EHMA, and therefore any articles on interesting issues that other members would like to write and see included are welcome. (see home page)

International Herald tribune has again sponsored the 2012 edition of the Membership List which you will be receiving tonight in your room.

Last but not least let me congratulate one of our past presidents who turned from a hotelier to an antiques dealer to become a writer. He published a book called '**INN JOKES**' – which is truly delightful to read. We got 20 issues of his book that we will give as a token of appreciation to the one who helped us organize this event in Vienna: **John Iversen**, who cannot be with us this time but sends his best regards and lots of success.

This is what I also wish you and us for the rest of this Annual Meeting in delightful Vienna.
Thank you for your attention and for your support !

Peter Bierwirth